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THIS JOURNAL AND ITS MISSION.

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THIS journal is set for the defence of the only true foundation of the Christian's hope now being so generally repudiated,--Redemption through the precious blood of "the man Christ Jesus who gave himself a ransom [a corresponding price, a substitute] for all." (1 Pet. 1:19; 1 Tim. 2:6.) Building up on this sure foundation the gold, silver and precious stones (1 Cor. 3:11-15; 2 Pet. 1:5-11) of the Word of God, its further mission is to--"Make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery which...has been hid in God,...to the intent that now might be made known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God"--"which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed."--Eph. 3:5-9,10.

It stands free from all parties, sects and creeds of men, while it seeks more and more to bring its every utterance into fullest subjection to the will of God in Christ, as expressed in the Holy Scriptures. It is thus free to declare boldly whatsoever the Lord hath spoken;--according to the divine wisdom granted unto us, to understand. Its attitude is not dogmatical, but confident; for we know whereof we affirm, treading with implicit faith upon the sure promises of God. It is held as a trust, to be used only in his service; hence our decisions relative to what may and what may not appear in its columns must be according to our judgment of his good pleasure, the teaching of his Word, for the upbuilding of his people in grace and knowledge. And we not only invite but urge our readers to prove all its utterances by the infallible Word to which reference is constantly made, to facilitate such testing.

TO US THE SCRIPTURES CLEARLY TEACH

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That the Church is "the Temple of the Living God"--peculiarly "His

workmanship;" that its construction has been in progress throughout the Gospel age--ever since Christ became the world's Redeemer and the chief corner stone of this Temple, through which, when finished, God's blessings shall come "to all people," and they find access to him.--1 Cor. 3:16,17; Eph. 2:20-22; Gen. 28:14; Gal. 3:29.

That meantime the chiseling, shaping and polishing, of consecrated believers in Christ's atonement for sin, progresses; and when the last of these "living stones," "elect and precious," shall have been made ready, the great Master Workman will bring all together in the First Resurrection; and the Temple shall be filled with his glory, and be the meeting place between God and men throughout the Millennium.--Rev. 15:5-8.

That the Basis of Hope, for the Church and the World, lies in the fact that "Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man," "a ransom

for all," and will be "the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," "in due time."--Heb. 2:9; John 1:9; 1 Tim. 2:5,6.

That the Hope of the Church is that she may be like her Lord, "see him as he is," be "partaker of the divine nature," and share his glory as his joint-heir.--1 John 3:2; John 17:24; Rom. 8:17; 2 Pet. 1:4.

That the present mission of the Church is the perfecting of the saints for the future work of service; to develop in herself every grace; to be God's witness to the world; and to prepare to be the kings and priests of the next age.--Eph. 4:12; Matt. 24:14; Rev. 1:6; 20:6.

That the hope for the World lies in the blessings of knowledge and opportunity to be brought to all by Christ's Millennial Kingdom--the restitution of all that was lost in Adam, to all the willing and obedient, at the hands of their Redeemer and his glorified Church.--Acts 3:19-21; Isa.

35.

CHARLES T. RUSSELL, Editor.

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If we do not thus hear from you, your name will be dropped at once, as we cannot know that you desire its visits further. Then, if you should write later, it would cause us extra trouble to reset your name for the list.

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WILL IT BE A YEAR OF BLESSING?

--1898--

DEAR FELLOW Pilgrims on the "narrow way" to the Heavenly Kingdom, we feel for you an earnest brotherly love and take this opportunity at the beginning of a new year to tell you of it, and to formally express to you our earnest wish that the year beginning may be a very happy and a very favorable one for us all--as new creatures in Christ Jesus. And we would fain say something that would be helpful in this direction. What shall we say?

We would remind you and ourselves that the amount of blessing that shall come to us each will depend almost entirely on the course we shall pursue in seeking those blessings. It will not depend on God;

for he sets us at rest on that point, by assuring us in advance of his willingness to help and bless us, along certain lines which he has foreordained as the best and only proper ones. He thus throws the responsibility upon us. If we follow his directions we shall be blessed: to the extent that we shall neglect the Divine Counselor's instructions we shall surely fail of the blessings.

It is thus that we are to obey the instruction, "Keep yourselves in the love of God." (Jude 21.) To those who thus obediently abide in God's love, the lights and the shades of life, its storms and its calms, its sorrows and its joys, are all blessings and helps onward and upward;--"Nearer my God to Thee."

Nor is it either reasonable or Scriptural to expect that the major portion of our path should be smooth and bestrewn with flowers of prosperity, while we follow in the footsteps of our dear Redeemer. We remember that his path was both rough and thorny, and if ours were very different we should feel sure that we were not walking in his footsteps. And if it were needful that he, the perfect one, should be disciplined and learn obedience by the things which he suffered, much more do we who are imperfect and seriously "out of the way" need to suffer in learning the lesson of obedience to God, enduring the trials which would prove us to be "copies" of God's dear Son.

Beloved, the more thorough and warm our consecration, the greater will be the progress we shall be able to make in developing the fruits and graces of the spirit. Now what will most help us to be "fervent in spirit,

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serving the Lord?"

We answer, faith! Faith in the exceeding great and precious promises which God has given to us; and faith in God's testimony that the narrow way alone leads to the glory promised. Obedience naturally follows in the wake of such a faith. We believe, then act accordingly. Hence it is the wise course as well as the Scriptural one to keep in close touch with the Scriptures, God's presentation of the basis of our faith and hopes, the expositor of our shortcomings and the delineator of the perfection which we are to copy and as nearly as possible attain outwardly as well as in our hearts.

So, then, that the year 1898 shall be one of even more than usual progress and spiritual blessing to us all, we recommend that each of us give more attention than ever before to God's promises to us as his Church and to the conditions upon which they shall be made sure to us. To this end we commend Sunday meetings and mid-week meetings, where practicable, for our own help and for the helping of others by word and example. We advise also a continuance of the course recommended a short time ago--of reading alternately

each Sunday our Lord's delineation of the graces which will insure his blessing (Matt. 5:1-16) and the Apostle

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Paul's description of the same graces summed up under the name Love. (1 Cor. 13:1-13.) We have heard from very many already blessed by these readings, and now we desire to urge all who are praying for and hoping for great blessings during the year beginning to try this simple prescription which the Great Physician of our souls has prepared for us. Where we have heard from scores that they have been blessed by this course during the past three months we hope to hear from hundreds and thousands as being similarly blest during the year beginning.

Now another part of the prescription. Let us begin each day with prayer for wisdom and grace that we may serve the Lord acceptably and be a blessing to others and be blest ourselves: and let us close these morning prayers with the inspired petition--"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my Redeemer." (Psa. 19:14.) Then at the close of each day let us square our day's account with the Lord at his throne of grace: recounting so far as we are able its opportunities used and neglected, its victories won or its defeats, its self-sacrifices and its selfishnesses;-- thanking God for the grace that helped in time of need and apologizing for all errors and defeats, craving forgiveness in the name and merit of our Savior and promising greater faithfulness and zeal by the Lord's grace the next day. And pray for us and all the interests of the truth and all the dear colaborers, as we also remember you and all the household of faith. These are straight paths for our feet and all those who take them will find them ways of pleasantness and paths of peace for their souls, however stormy the way for the flesh.

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JOSEPH L. RUSSELL, DECEASED.

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THE EDITOR has lost his oldest, tried and true friend--his Father according to the flesh, his Brother according to the spirit; well known to quite a number of our readers. He was in his 84th year, and the burdens and disabilities of life under present conditions had gradually come to outweigh its pleasures, so that he was glad to enter into rest;--the rest that remains for the people of God.

The Editor's mother, a noble Christian woman, whose instructions and example are still fresh to his memory and will never be forgotten, died when he was but nine years old; and from that time his father filled nobly the office of both parents. His care, his admonitions, his help into paths of righteousness will never be forgotten.

But it was after we had come under the first rays of "present truth" that his fellowship became most precious. He was one of the first to accept the harvest message as set forth in ZION'S WATCH TOWER, MILLENNIAL DAWN, etc. Altho not gifted as a teacher of the good tidings, either by voice or pen, he manifested his zeal for the Lord and his cause in various ways--he loaned and gave away thousands of tracts and DAWNS, besides contributing financially for their publication. He was one of the founders of the Tract Society; voluntarily giving \$1,000 in the first subscription at its organization,--a large donation for his means. His greatest helpfulness however was in his personal encouragement of the Editor; in every visit and in every letter, he sought to "hold up our hands." This was specially noticeable at such times as the Lord permitted the great Adversary to assault the work, and the Editor as one of its representatives.

In his case we have been reminded of the Apostle's words in Hebrews 10:32-34. He had the spirit of martyrdom, and if he did not get into the thickest of the fight and did not bear the brunt of the Enemy's attacks, he surely was a faithful encourager and "companion of them that were so used" and "had compassion on me in my bonds." And as the Apostle adds so add we for the encouragement of all such whom the Lord has not assigned to duty in the front of the battle:--

"Cast not away therefore your confidence which hath great recompense of reward." "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love which ye ...have ministered to the saints, and do minister."  
--Heb. 10:35; 6:10.

Our last conversation before he became unconscious was respecting our blessed hope of eternal life through Christ, our dear Redeemer, and the promised future glory in which the Apostle intimates there will be different degrees of brilliancy, as "one star differeth from another star in glory." (1 Cor. 15:41.) Humble minded, unostentatious and neither vain nor boastful, he declared that he did not expect a great or prominent position in the Lord's Kingdom, but that he had full confidence nevertheless--not in his own perfection but in the Lord's perfection and sacrifice and love and grace,--and was confident therefore that a place was reserved for him, and he was satisfied to have the matter thus.

It is not for us to say what shall be his blessing and reward: the gracious Judge will esteem us none the less if our confidence is in him, rather than boastfully

in ourselves; but we can say of father a few things without boasting of him or for him. He was a lover of

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righteousness. He walked not after the flesh but after the spirit. He was a true yoke fellow and helper in the Lord's cause. He fought a good fight--striving to conquer self-will and inherited sin and to resist the world and the devil. He kept the faith--did not deny it,--confessing it in word and deed to the very last, leaning on and trusting in the dear Redeemer. He has finished his course, and the righteous Judge, in whose grace he trusted, will grant him a goodly portion in the Father's house of many mansions.

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THOU SHALT GUIDE ME WITH THY COUNSEL

AND AFTERWARD RECEIVE ME TO GLORY.--PSA. 73:24.

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HOW WONDERFUL is the thought that the Almighty God offers to guide his people through the difficulties of the present life by his divine counsel. One of life's most important lessons is our own insufficiency, our own lack of wisdom. In childhood days we naturally sought parental counsel. In after years even, while recognizing perhaps the fallibility and imperfection of all human counsel, we nevertheless have found such counsel helpful--perhaps at times absolutely necessary to our welfare: nevertheless, under the realization that to some extent selfishness is a trait in all humanity, we have found it necessary to be on guard on this point also; lest the counsel which we received should be not only fallible but possibly biased by the interests or preferences of the counselor.

But when, after learning of the grace of God and his provision in Christ Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins and the reconciliation of ourselves to him, we not only accepted the forgiveness, but turning over a new leaf, sought to walk in life according to the rules of justice, conscientiously, we found that more than ever we needed counsel--good counsel, unselfish counsel. We found that the course we had adopted is quite contrary to the spirit of the world; and hence that the number who would be able and willing to counsel us along these lines is comparatively small. Then it was that we first learned to go to the Lord's Word for counsel: and as we studied it we found in it more and more of a heavenly wisdom, profitable not only respecting the life to come, but also respecting the things

of the present life.

After we had learned more of our own weakness and imperfection and more of the wisdom and grace of God, and after we had heard him inviting us, "calling" us to a full consecration of ourselves to him, and thus to a jointheirship with our Lord Jesus in the coming Kingdom, and after we had found the narrowness of the way to the divine nature and glory, we came more than ever to appreciate the necessity for a Counselor, and a very wise one. We found that even the best of earthly counsel is of value only as it has been directed by the divine counsel: and hence we learned that in every condition in life, in every perplexity, we should listen to the Voice Celestial. When we arrived at this stage of experience the words of our text brought us great comfort and joy, prophetically assuring us of the very thing which we had desired, namely, guidance by divine counsel. Moreover, there is in it the additional assurance that this counsel shall be sufficient for us, so that ultimately, by giving heed thereto, we shall reach the everlasting prize at the end of the racecourse.

It is not surprising that, misinterpreting the divine Word and hence the divine plan for human salvation, many should fancy that they are being guided by God's counsel when really they are merely following the imaginings of their own minds. How many have been even led to absurdities by following what they imagined were impressions of the holy spirit. We know of no more fruitful source of error than this: no channel which the Adversary more frequently uses to delude and mystify those who consecrate themselves to the Lord; some of them finally becoming bound with their own erroneous views as with a chain.

It is usually after having stumbled through severe experiences of disappointment by following their own imaginings, thinking that they are led by the holy spirit, that God's people ultimately, if honest with themselves, find the falsity of this method and look further and lay hold upon God's counsel provided for us in his Word--the Bible.

The Adversary seeks to keep us from it and therefore misrepresents it as self-contradictory, contradicted by assurances of Scientists so-called, etc., etc. But the child of God not satisfied with self-deception, but really in earnest in the matter, learning his need of a counselor, and seeking grace to help at the throne of grace, will be providentially led of the Lord to his Word. He may even then be turned aside by some of the Adversary's devices, but if he be truly begotten of the truth, the heavenly Father will doubtless correct him with chastisements and disappointments, and providentially bring him again in contact with his Word, at a time when his heart will be more mellow, and when he will more than ever feel his need of divine counsel.



We are not claiming that divine power is limited, so that no other channel than the Scriptures could be

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used in communicating between God and his people. It would be far from our thought to limit the Almighty; but it is quite our desire to ascertain if he has in any degree limited himself as respects the channels which he would use in counselling his people. We believe in divine providences, but believe that they are means for the bringing of God's people into a condition where they can be taught of God from his Word; and that providences do not supplant God's written Word. We know of nothing whatever in the Scriptures to indicate that God is pleased to reveal his will to his people, or to counsel them, by impressing thoughts upon their attention. Perhaps we ought to make an exception of the apostles, for possibly the Lord may so have dealt with them, inasmuch as they were used in the writing of the divine counsel for our instruction --the Scriptures.

But there is no intimation that God's people of the Church in general are to have any plenary inspiration, after the manner of the prophets and the apostles. Quite to the contrary, the Church is continually urged to search the Scriptures, that they may know the will, the counsel, of God, and the Apostle declares that the written Word is sufficient "that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished." (2 Tim. 3:16,17.) "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God"--the Word of God which liveth and abideth forever. It is in harmony with this that our Lord prayed to the Father for the Church, saying, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy Word is truth." (John 17:17.) It is for the same reason that the Bereans are commended, "in that they ...searched the Scriptures daily." (Acts 17:11.) It is for the same reason that the strongest and most faithful Christians in every period of the world's history have been those who loved and revered the Bible, and who went to it as the Word of God when

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they desired counsel from the Most High. This is the oracle of God, and as the prophet Isaiah declares, "If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." The prophet David says of some that "sit in darkness" that "it is because they rebelled against the words of God, and condemned the counsel of the Most High: therefore he brought down their heart with labor; they fell down, and there was none to help. Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses." --Psa. 107:11-13. Compare Prov. 1:25,30.

Some reject the Word of the Lord in toto: others accept it nominally, but really never accept its counsels in the sense of putting them into practice in their daily lives. These latter are as truly rejectors as the former, altho they include the vast majority of nominal Christians. The Apostle calls attention to the difference between the hearer of the Word and the doer of the Word: also in the first Psalm the Lord points out to us the blessedness of those who walk according to the divine law or counsel, and not according to the counsel of the ungodly, saying, "He shall be like a tree planted by the river of water that bringeth forth fruit in its season. His leaf therefore shall not wither; and the thing which he doeth shall prosper." This class has one great, chief object in life: it is to serve the Lord acceptably, and thus to cultivate the character which he enjoined, and thus to be fitted and prepared for the glories and blessing promised to such in the life to come. As the Apostle Paul declared, so say all of these: "This one thing I do"--and such shall prosper in that one thing which they are doing; such will win the great prize set before us in the gospel.

Even in earthly matters, how great wisdom do we find in the Lord's counsel, the Lord's Word. How often his people have ascertained years afterward, that it would have been wise for them, even from a selfish standpoint, to have sought first the counsel of the Lord in reference to the smallest affairs of life. For instance, how many have learned the wisdom of the Lord's counsel which says, "Be thou no surety for another." How many people have made shipwreck, financially, by the neglect of this admonition from the great Counselor. Nothing in this implies selfishness however, for the counsel of the Lord is that his people should be of a generous disposition. He counsels, "Do good, and lend, hoping for nothing [for no corresponding favors] again." (Luke 6:35.) We may do good and lend according to our opportunities and abilities, but are not to obligate ourselves beyond what we would be willing to give or to lend outright.

How many would have found it of great advantage to them in life to have followed the Lord's counsel which says, "Owe no man anything but love." How often in the neglect of this divine counsel, God's people as well as the worldly have suffered for years in endeavoring to pay debts which should never have been contracted. On the other hand, the Lord counsels us that we should "lay by in store" that we may have to give to charities. (1 Cor. 16:2; Eph. 4:28.) Economy and frugality, and provision for the necessities of our own household, and generosity toward others needing assistance, spiritual or temporal, are the good counsels of the Lord.

How many have suffered themselves and brought suffering upon others through neglect of the Lord's counsel which says, "A soft answer turneth away

wrath; but grievous words stir up anger." Who cannot see that the whole world would be blessed by obedience to this counsel and that a very large proportion of the domestic infelicity of the whole world arises from a

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total or partial neglect of the course here pointed out by the divine Counsellor.

How many have failed to properly apply the divine counsel which assures us that, if rightly exercised thereby, tribulation worketh a hope which will not be put to shame, because of the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by such experiences. If all the Lord's people would give attention to this, what a willingness to endure tribulation for the truth's sake would take the place of fear; and what growth in grace would speedily be manifested.

The Lord's counsel speaks to us again, instructing us as to the attitude of heart necessary if we would receive and be profited by his counsels. He says, "The meek will he guide in judgment, the meek will he teach his way." Ah, yes! But how often pride, and haughtiness of language and demeanor, mark those who would be teachers of God's people. But such marks to those who are looking to the Lord for counsel, should be indications that such teachers are not meek, are therefore not taught of God, nor in an attitude to receive his instruction; and that consequently they would be very unsafe helpers and guides respecting the heavenly counsel.

The heavenly Counselor instructs us, saying, "Forget not the assembling of yourselves together-- and so much the more as ye see the day drawing on." The meek who receive the counsel will seek so far as they are able to make use of all the means of grace which the Lord provides, for all possible fellowship of spirit with those who have the mind of Christ they will enjoy and seek to use. Those who do otherwise are rejecting the counsel of the Lord against themselves-- to their own detriment and injury. Wherever the spirit of the Lord is in any heart, it will surely seek fellowship in others of like spirit. Hence, if our own hearts are in good condition, we will proportionately desire fellowship with the Lord, expressing ourselves in prayer and hearing the testimony of the Lord through his Word in reply; and similarly we will enjoy mingling with the Lord's people. "He who loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen." Any lack of fellowship with all who love the Lord and are consecrated to him should be considered by us as a sure sign of a spiritual decline, and should be correspondingly opposed with all our energy, until our hearts come back to that condition in which we have (as an assurance that we have passed from death unto life) the fact that we love the

brethren.--1 John 3:14.

Our heavenly Father counsels us again in the words, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." How often would this good counsel of the Lord, if remembered, bring a blessing and a relief from the attacks of the Adversary who fain would make us believe that our unavoidable weaknesses and imperfections are proofs that we are not the Lord's. With this counsel before us, what a strength we should have in combating the besetments of the world, the flesh and the devil. How it should lead us in the moment of temptation to lift up our hearts in prayer to the Lord for "grace to help in time of need." The Lord wishes us to learn the lesson of our own weakness and imperfection and to learn to go to him for strength and succor--not before we need it, but "in time of need," in every time of trouble.

What a blessing comes to us with a true appreciation of the Lord's counsel, "Godliness with contentment is great gain." The combination of godliness and contentment is necessary to our peace and spiritual prosperity. However much godliness the discontented may have or seek to have, they cannot have true happiness. However contented any may be in sin or ungodliness, he is certainly losing a great deal in not having godliness--not only as respects the present life, but also that which is to come. Godliness with contentment does not mean indifference to our condition and welfare, either spiritual or temporal: the child of God is to be ambitious, especially in spiritual things, and in the use of every earthly talent to the Master's praise: but while putting forth every energy and not slothful in the Lord's business, nor in any other business in which he may engage with the Lord's approval, but fervent in his spirit, serving the Lord, he may be content with such blessings upon his efforts as the Lord is pleased to grant, so that while still pursuing and still achieving he may continually be thankful and restful at heart, singing,--

"Content, whatever lot I see,

Since 'tis my God that leadeth me."

No counsel of the Lord could be much more important than this at the present juncture; for we are in a time when more and more the whole world of mankind is growing discontented as well as losing Godlikeness. God's people have therefore all the more need to cultivate these qualities; not only for their own sakes, but also as helpers, counselors and exemplars for the world.

How many of God's consecrated people, through neglect to appropriate it to themselves, have lost the great comfort and peace which should go with the promise of our Counselor, "All things work together for good, to them that love God; to the called ones according to his purpose." The well-instructed soul has learned that the good here referred to is not always,

nor very often, earthly good,--temporal advantage:  
they that love God and are called according to his purpose,  
and have been giving attentive heed to his counsel,

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know that the "all things" include chiefly the trials  
and disappointments and perplexities and difficulties  
and temptations of the narrow way, in which they have  
consecrated themselves to walk; and that the "good"  
which will be worked out, will be in the chiseled and  
polished characters, likenesses to the character of  
Christ, which through faithfulness unto the end will  
be perfected in the divine honor and glory and immortality  
promised by the Lord to his faithful.

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What good counsel comes to us in the words, applicable  
to all who desire to please and serve the Lord,  
"I will set a guard upon my lips, that I sin not with  
my mouth." How many heart-aches and heart burnings  
would be saved by a careful compliance with this  
good counsel. And a great blessing comes from every  
attempt to follow it; because, the lips merely give expression  
to that which is in the heart. "Out of the  
abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Whoever,  
therefore, starts to guard his lips will find if he  
be a child of God, if he have a new heart, that the controlling  
of the lips will necessarily mean a correction  
of the heart in righteousness. He who would guard  
his lips will soon find that the easiest as well as the  
best way to do it is to get his heart filled with love and  
good wishes--to the Lord's people and to all others;  
then the good thoughts and good sentiments within  
will leave no room for bitter expressions, slanders,  
malice, expressions of hatred or strife, which gender  
roots of bitterness and defile many.

Another counsel of the Lord which seems to be  
overlooked of late is, "Be not forgetful to entertain  
strangers, for some thereby have entertained angels  
unawares." In olden times the spirit beings on  
numerous occasions presented themselves in human  
form to deliver messages to mankind, but the Lord's  
general method during this Gospel age seems to be to  
use his people in the flesh as his messengers. Yet, it  
is nevertheless still true, that all who have the Lord's  
spirit should be hospitably inclined; especially toward  
any whom they may have reason to believe are fellow  
pilgrims in the path of life and fellow servants of the  
great King. And all who are ever thus entertained as  
the Lord's servants, and because they are his, should  
be extremely careful that as ambassadors for God their  
influence, wherever they may go, may be an influence  
for good, a blessing upon their fellow servants, an influence  
that will glorify our Lord.

We might take up hundreds of the testimonies of our great Counselor and find them full of wisdom and blessing to us; yet the blessing would be not merely in the knowing of his counsel, but in proportion as we should obey the counsel, and thus do the will of our Father who is in heaven. We will not go further with this part of the subject, except to call to memory that the point of the Lord's counsel most prominently set forth is, as the Apostle declares, summed up in the word, Love--to God and to our fellows. All the meekness that he instructs us to have, all the patience, together with all the experiences in life which he permits, are designed merely to cultivate, and to bring to a large development in us, the spirit of Love which, as our Counselor declares, is "the bond of perfectness;" because Love represents the only condition of the heart which could be entirely acceptable to God.

While the outward affairs of life are to be regulated and harmonized with the Lord's character and will, as expressed to us in his Word, yet the object sought is to have these good qualities proceed from an inward source, a regenerated heart; a heart from which Selfishness has been dethroned, and in which Love has been enthroned as the moving impulse of life. Love to God will regulate all of our obedience to him, so that it will not be merely outward and formal ceremonies, but worship in spirit and in truth. Love to fellow-men --especially to the household of faith--will guide us in our dealings with them; for love thinks no evil, love slanders not, love backbites not, love bears no false witness, love seeks not her own interests merely, but also the welfare of others, is not proud, but humble, meek, gentle, easy to be entreated, long-suffering and patient.

Let us remember, however, that this condition of perfect love is not to be attained in a moment, but is to be the result of the experiences of the present life, in obedience to the divine counsel. However, the degree of success and rapidity in cultivating this spirit depends very largely upon our zeal, and the heed which we give to the great Counselor. Those who have given themselves wholly to the Lord and who have been accepted of him, have doubtless even from the beginning of their new life in Christ known considerable of this devotional love for God and for his people, which should increase daily. But the devotional flame which at the beginning of the Christian's experience is fearful and merely seeks the Lord for safety, may by and by reach such a development that it cries out to God, "Oh Lord, I delight to do thy will. Gladly will I toil and suffer, or bear thy reproaches, and serve thy people; if thus I may know that I am pleasing and acceptable to thee!" This is the right spirit, and this spirit should continue all the way down to the close of the battle. But such will find testings and trials by the way, to prove how deep and how sincere

is their spirit of love: and where it is genuine, where the good seed of the divine truth has fallen into an honest heart, it will grow, it will thrive upon trials, disappointments; and against every opposition it will bring forth in life a fruitage of good works, of service

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for the Lord and for his people,--which may be large or small according to the opportunities enjoyed by all the "overcomers."

"AND AFTERWARD RECEIVE ME TO GLORY."

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It will be noticed that this prophetic promise is not, "Thou shalt guide me by thy counsel" and if I will render obedience to the counsel, I will afterward be received to glory. On the contrary, the statement is made, not to nominal Christians, nor even to all who make a consecration to the Lord; it refers merely to those who will ultimately be overcomers and constitute the body of Christ, the glorified Church, the bride. The promise in other words is to the entire Christ, Head and body. Each member of the Christ will be guided by the divine counsel and as a result will be received to glory. All who hear the counsel of the Lord and are guided by it in this present time, will be ultimately accepted as members of the body of Christ, and as such will be received to the divine glory.

The Counselor is wise, infallible, unerring; he knows the end from the beginning, he knows exactly what will please himself; he knows therefore how to direct us in his way. His Word of counsel "is sufficient." His spirit is the spirit of holiness, the spirit of love, the spirit of the truth; and wherever this spirit dwells in the hearts of his people it must be through a conformity to his Word of counsel, his guidance. For all who thus put themselves completely under the Lord's supervision, and who resign their wills entirely to his will, there can be no question as to the result. Assuredly, such will afterward be received into glory.

Our Counselor through his Word tells us that there is an earthly or terrestrial glory, and that there is a heavenly or celestial. (1 Cor. 15:40,41.) Hence his counsel is appropriate not only to the class which is now running for the prize of the heavenly glory--seeking to make their calling and election sure through faithfulness unto sacrifice--but the same counsel will be appropriate to the world in the coming age. It will be just as necessary for the world to hear the Voice of the great Counselor as for us. They, too, will need to learn the various lessons which the elect learn in the present life.

Those who will hear the Voice of the Counselor

then, in the Millennium, will hear it through the glorified High Priest; and those who will render obedience to that counsel will be received to the earthly glory while those who will not hear his Voice will be cut off in the second death. (Acts 3:23.) The earthly glory was represented in the first man, Adam, and such as attain to it will attain to a condition of glory similar to that which he enjoyed before he sinned. The heavenly glory is represented in our Lord Jesus since his resurrection, highly exalted, the express image of the Father's person, and all the faithful of this Gospel age (tested by the severe trials of the present time) shall be made like unto their Lord and share his glory; as it is written,--"We shall be like him and see him as he is"--"partakers of the divine nature."

If there are difficulties in the race-course set before us in the Gospel age, there are advantages also. If we are required to walk by faith and not by sight, nevertheless the Lord's grace is sufficient for us, and the results promised are "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." If the trial is sharper and the conflict more intense, it has also the advantage of being shorter than that coming upon the world in the Millennial age; so we may say with the Apostle, these "light afflictions which are but for a moment," work out for us a better hope.

Let us, dearly beloved, take yet more earnest heed to the Word which has been spoken, remembering the Master's expression, He that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him to a man who builded his house upon a rock and the rain descended and the floods came and the storm beat upon that house and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock--a sure foundation.

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"TEMPTED IN ALL POINTS LIKE AS WE ARE."

--JAN. 9.--MATT. 4:1-11.--

"For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted."--Heb. 2:18.

IMMEDIATELY after his consecration to death, in harmony with the Father's plan, and after he had symbolized that consecration by baptism in Jordan, our Lord, instead of beginning at once his ministry, turned aside into the wilderness. The record is that he was led of the spirit to do this, and that it involved very trying temptations. We may readily surmise the reason why our Master took this course. He knew that he had come into the world to fulfil a great mission, to perform the Father's will, whatever that might



be: he knew that it involved the rescue of mankind from sin and death: and, since it was the Father's will, he had left the glory which he had with the Father from before the world's creation, and had willingly come to a lower nature, human nature, in order to carry out to the full the divine plan. But the divine plan could not be carried out by him as the babe of Bethlehem, nor as the boy of Nazareth, nor until he had fully reached manhood's estate at thirty years of age. We saw in our last lesson that he waited not a

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moment, but started to come to John for baptism before he was quite thirty, in order that at the very earliest possible moment he might make his full consecration to the Father's will and begin the Father's business --the work he had given him to do. We have seen, also, that the holy spirit without measure was granted to our Lord as soon as he had finished his consecration and its symbol, as he came up out of the water. It was under the enlightening influence of this holy power that he had just received, and by means of which he was enabled to see and understand much more clearly than before the things of God--the divine plan and his connection therewith--that he sought the wilderness solitude for study, prayer and reflection. He took this course because he realized the importance of the work he was beginning, and desired to make no mistake respecting the same, and its proper method. He turned aside and, freeing himself from all uninspired earthly counsel, sought to know by the holy spirit given unto him the true import of those Scriptures with which he was already familiar, and concerning which he had disputed with the Doctors of the Law in the temple as early as his twelfth year. (Had there been other spirit-begotten ones then, our Lord no doubt would have communed with them; just as his followers are instructed to do.--Heb. 10:25; Jude 19-21.)

We can imagine our Lord during those forty days praying to the Father for counsel and guidance, and searching the Scriptures which he already had stored in his memory, to find the answer to his prayers written aforetime in the types of the Law and the writings of the prophets. The various features were called up, and the harmony between them sought;--the prophecies which refer to Messiah as the Lamb led to the slaughter, and the other prophecies which describe the glorious majesty and power of Immanuel as King of kings. He saw also that the typical lambs and bullocks sacrificed must have an antitype, because their continued repetition showed that they never really cancelled sin: and furthermore that in some way there was an identity between the Priest who offered the sacrifice and the sacrifice itself; and that the same Priest was typified in Melchisedec as no longer a sacrificer,

but enthroned in power. The putting together of these different features of the divine Word, and weaving out of them a knowledge of the divine plan, and of his own relation thereto, was probably a large and important part of our Lord's occupation during those forty days in the wilderness. The more he studied the picture, the more he saw that it represented ignominy, shame and death as preceding the glory of his Kingdom. Naturally the influence of these reflections would weigh heavily upon him, rather depressing him in spirit,-- particularly since the continuous fast necessarily weakened him mentally as well as physically.

Whether or not the tempter was with the Lord, testing him throughout the forty days, we do not know; but we know that the severity of his trial came at its close;--when he was at his weakest, physically, and when consequently the prophetic study, which indicated to him his path of suffering, exercised upon him its most depressing influence.

The first of the recorded temptations was a very subtle one. (1) It implied a sympathy on the part of the tempter, a desire for the Lord's welfare. (2) It implied a doubt on the part of Satan respecting our Lord's identity, and a desire for proof, with the indirect intimation that, if such a proof were given, Satan himself would believe and be ready to fall into line as a servant of righteousness. (3) Knowing that he was the Son of God and that he had been anointed with the holy spirit, this demand of the tempter would seem to be a challenge to prove himself to be the Son of God, and to prove that he had received the holy spirit in full power, and that, if he did not do so, his claim might be considered fraudulent. (4) It was an appeal to one of the strongest cravings known to human nature; one which we, who have never fasted much, can with difficulty conceive. The gnawings of hunger are said to be terrible, and it has become a proverb that hunger or "necessity knows no law." Shipwrecked sailors have been exonerated for turning cannibals under the stress of hunger when they have been without food much less than forty days. As foretold by the prophet, and recorded by the historian, mothers ate their own children during the siege of Jerusalem, under the stress of hunger. All these circumstances considered together prove that this was a most severe temptation upon our Lord, perhaps as severe as any.

But the question arises, Wherein was the sin? Why should not our Lord use his power for the preservation of his own life?

We must assuredly look for the answer to these questions, because if obedience to Satan's proposition had not been wrong, a serious wrong, there could have been no temptation in the matter. The fact that it was a temptation proves that for our Lord to have created bread out of the stones would have been a sin. It proves also that he had the power thus to transform

the stones into bread, otherwise there would have been no temptation. The wrong, as we understand it, would have consisted in the misuse of the holy spirit or holy power so recently conferred upon him. This spirit was poured upon him because of his consecration, his self-sacrifice to do the Father's will in the interest of others and to lay down his life in this service. Consequently, to have used that power in harmony with any other purpose than that for which it was given would have been a misuse of it. This avoidance of the use of his

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special powers for or upon himself may be noticed in connection with our Lord's entire ministry. All of his miracles were in the interests of others; none of them for selfish purposes. For instance, when at Cana the water was turned into wine, while our Lord may have partaken of the wine with the rest, it was made for their use and to manifest forth his glory, and was not for himself. The same was true when the five thousand were fed in the wilderness, and again when the four thousand were miraculously fed. But to have turned the stones into bread would not have fed others either physically or mentally. Indeed, so far from using his miraculous powers selfishly, we find that many of our Lord's miracles, especially those of healing, were done at his own personal expense--at the expense of the loss of vitality; as it is written, "Virtue [vitality] went out of him and healed them all."

There is a lesson in this for the Church, which is the body of Christ; for we are tempted like as he was. It is well to note that it is not all mankind that is tempted as he was tempted, but only his "brethren," the members of his body. These are tempted like as he was, and for the same reasons. A failure to realize this fact has led many to inquiry as to how our Lord was tempted in all points as every father and mother is tempted, and as every husband and wife is tempted and tried, as drunkards are tempted, etc. But all these fail to get the thought. Our Lord was not so tempted, but merely tempted on the same lines of testing and trial that apply to his consecrated Church.

Applying this lesson to the Church, the body of Christ, we find it applicable. We, having been justified by the grace of God through faith in the precious blood, are reckoned as perfect; in order that we may present our justified selves as living sacrifices to God, under the conditions of the New Covenant. With our Master this signified a consecration or baptism into death: so with us, it signifies a giving up of human rights, that we may obtain the more excellent inheritance, of which the holy spirit now given us is a foretaste. But the tempter comes to us to suggest such a use of our new nature, its talents, privileges and opportunities as would make it the servant of our earthly

nature and its appetites. This temptation should be resisted as from the evil one. To our understanding this temptation may come in various ways; for instance, (1) our privilege of communion with the Lord might be perverted into merely an opportunity for begging for temporal blessings, wealth, or ease, or health. On the contrary we are to realize that our earthly interests have all been consecrated to the Lord, and we are to seek chiefly the interests of the heavenly Kingdom--to spend and be spent in its service, according to our covenant; and to commit all earthly interests unto him who careth for us, and who has promised that they

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shall work together for good to those who love him, and are called according to his purpose.

(2) Another form of this temptation might be to use heavenly gifts to earthly advantage; as for instance, a minister, finding the truth unpopular, might be tempted to sacrifice it in the interest of his daily bread, or comforts, or luxuries or fame. The same temptation is common to all; for all the members of the body of Christ are members of the "royal priesthood" whose commission is to minister to truth, "holding forth the Word of life." And suggestions will naturally come to all, to the effect that boldness and fearlessness in the use of their spiritual talents would soon or later lead to temporal losses and crosses; and thus to these also the Tempter suggests that the truth be used only in such a manner as will bring the largest proportion of the loaves and fishes. We all, therefore, should remember well our Master's answer to the Tempter along this line: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." The word from the mouth of God is that if we are faithful in laying down our lives now we shall have eternal life and jointheirship in our Master's Kingdom. His word is that "whosoever seeketh to save his [earthly] life [at the expense of his covenant] shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his [earthly] life [laying down his life in harmony with his covenant of consecration, faithfully, unto death] shall find it [eternal life]."

The second temptation was a challenge to our Lord to prove his relationship to God, and the divine providence over him, by leaping from the highest point of the temple into the valley below. We need not suppose that our Lord was taken physically to the top of the temple, but that he was taken mentally there by the suggestion which, if amplified, no doubt would be somewhat as follows: If you are the Son of God, it is proper that you should give some test or proof, and I suggest that it be a leap from the top of the temple into yonder valley: which would be proof not only to me but to the most zealous of the Jews, who would then

know of a surety of your divine power and commission, by seeing you arise unhurt after the fall. Satan even sought to back up this temptation by a text of Scripture, quoting from Psa. 91:11,12. It was a misapplication of Scripture, however, for the prophecy relates to the symbolical feet of Christ--the last members of the body of Christ in the end of the Gospel age--pointing out how these will be preserved and helped in the time of trouble and stumbling with which this age will close.

Our Lord's answer shows that he possessed the "spirit of a sound mind." He answered the Tempter

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that it would be wrong, sin on his part, thus to tempt the Almighty, to tempt Providence, no matter how good the objective result.

There is a lesson here also for the members of the body of Christ, the royal priesthood. In seeking to serve the Lord we are not to tempt Providence by expecting miracles where they are unnecessary. As it would have been sin for our Master to have leaped from the roof of the temple, so the temptation may come to us to fearlessly put ourselves into positions of difficulty and danger (moral or financial, physical or spiritual) and expect God to work a miracle in our deliverance. For instance, we have known Christian people who would go into debt without any assurance of being able to pay, and who explained the matter by saying that they had faith in the Lord that he would provide the money by and by, and not suffer them to be put to shame, as frauds, and thus to put him to shame. These people were jumping off the pinnacle of the temple financially and morally without any authority in the Word of God for so doing. Such are likely soon or later to meet with disaster. Their duty would be rather to remember that obedience is better than sacrifice, and that obedience demands that they "owe no man anything." Another temptation of this same character comes to some people in connection with the Lord's work: urging them to expect divine interposition and miracle to put the truth into their mouths and hearts while they fail to obey the divine instruction to "Search the Scriptures" that they may be "thoroughly furnished" unto every good word and work. Our Lord's reply to Satan is one that should be treasured by all of his followers for use under all such temptations; namely, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

Our Lord's final temptation in the wilderness was the display to him of the kingdoms of the world, their power and magnificence, and the proposition that all of these should be turned over to him if he would but acknowledge Satan and become a cooperator with him. We do not suppose that the high mountain to which he

was taken was a literal mountain, but suppose that our Lord was all the while still in the wilderness of Judea, and that mentally he was taken into Satan's mountain and given a view of the majesty of the earthly dominion and the subserviency of all the kingdoms of the world to Satan the "prince of this world, who now worketh in the hearts of the children of disobedience." Here, as elsewhere, "mountain" stands for kingdom, and the high mountain, from which earth's kingdoms were viewed, was the Kingdom of Satan, his rule and authority over mankind. Satan in the first temptation had found our Lord fully obedient to his consecration and unwilling to use his heavenly powers selfishly. In the second, he had found him unwilling to exercise anything but a proper, rational trust in God, in harmony with the Lord's Word.

Now he tried a new plan, wholly different: He would no longer dispute with Jesus that he was the Son of God, he would no longer ask him to prove that proposition; but taking that for granted, and taking for granted his divine title to the dominion of the world, he now proposed a compromise. He said in effect, You are anointed of God to be the King of Earth; yet you yourself must see what difficulties must lie in your way. You see how the whole world is under my sway, and even according to your own expectations (as you have been reasoning the matter over from the Scriptures) the divine plan for blessing mankind, which you have undertaken to carry out, would be at very best a slow, tedious plan, full of difficulties if indeed at all practicable. And as for yourself, you perceive that the path marked out for you in Jehovah's arrangement, by which he proposes that you shall become the Lord and King of the earth, is a path of severe trials, difficulties and dangers, amidst which, if you make but one misstep, you will forfeit all. Now, therefore, my suggestion is this: I am not so bad, not so evilly disposed, as I am reputed to be. True, I did instigate sin, but not because I preferred to see mankind in sin, but because I wished to have an empire of my own, and to have mankind as my subjects. Really, I should be glad to have you undertake the work of rescuing mankind from its degradation and establishing just such a kingdom as you propose to establish--a reign of righteousness, justice, peace and love; and I would be willing to cooperate. Now, therefore, my suggestion is that, instead of combatting me and incurring my opposition and enmity, you recognize me in connection with this world of mankind, and undertake the work of bringing mankind to righteousness under my patronage, and I, on the other part, will promptly and speedily, and without contention or strife, deliver to you, to be blessed, all the families of the earth, according to the desire of your heart. Consider well now, how much better is this plan which I suggest than the one which you have been entertaining as outlined in

the Scriptures. Furthermore, this would involve my own conversion to righteousness, which surely would not be amiss either in your sight or in the sight of Jehovah. You need have no hesitation about adopting this my plan, because you do not find it in the Scriptures; for of course God never anticipated that I would make such an offer, a free delivery up of the world to you and to a reign of righteousness.

Here was the strongest temptation of all. Our Lord knew that the Father's will was to reconcile the world unto himself; he knew that it was for this purpose

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that he had come into the world; he foresaw that according to the divine arrangement (as outlined in the Scriptures, in type and in prophecy), a long, tedious battle with evil was involved; and now, here, suddenly, a door of escape from his anticipated troubles was opened almost seemingly providentially at the beginning of his ministry: this path led upward at once to the glory and power and dominion of earth, and speedily to the blessing of all mankind; whereas the divine plan led first down into the valley of the shadow of death, humiliation, ignominy, suffering, trials and, by and by, a long way off, promised glory to follow.

Which path should he choose? There were many strong reasons pointing to the proposition of Satan, and the depression of spirit which had come over him through the study of the Scriptures, and finding the narrowness and difficulty of the path of life which the Father had marked out, combined with the physical weakness resulting from his forty days fast, placed our dear Master at a great disadvantage, and served as a test of the severest kind to his love, faith, and loyalty toward God. But he came off victorious, and promptly so; answering, "Get thee hence, Satan [do not try to tempt me to become your follower and servant], for it is written, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve [I will follow the divine program at any cost]."

A temptation similar to this comes to the members of the body of Christ through the same Adversary and his various agencies. It is a temptation to adopt some

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other plan than the Divine plan for doing good, blessing mankind and establishing a Kingdom of righteousness in the earth. How many honest Christians, finding the Lord's way very narrow and yielding good results very slowly, have undertaken to improve upon the divine method by schemes and arrangements devised by themselves or by others. For instance, altho Christian people in general admit that sectarian divisions in the Church are entirely contrary to the divine

instructions, they nevertheless lend their influence to these systems, declaring that they yield better results than the Scriptural plan, and supposing that, however good the Lord's plan might have been at first, they have found a better one for the present. They find in the Scriptures a very simple outline of faith,--"One Lord, one faith, one baptism and one God and Father of all:" but not satisfied with this, every denomination makes for itself certain doctrinal tests, and holds that it has a right so to do; because times have changed, and the divine plan in its simplicity would not be appropriate now.

It was not long after the apostles fell asleep in death that the Adversary succeeded in deluding the Church to try his easier way of reaching the desired results;--blessing the world and establishing it in righteousness. When Satan succeeded in getting some of the principal ones in the Church to hearken to his schemes and to go into partnership with him for the control of the world and its blessing through a combination of religion and politics, the organization called itself the "Church of Rome," "The Holy Catholic Church." After corrupting her through priestcraft and superstition, and introducing into her system and worship the greatest of blasphemies, he had measurably succeeded in making the world believe that it was living under the dominion of the Kingdom of God, for which Christ had taught his people to pray,--"Thy Kingdom come." Yet not all were deluded thus; a remnant still remained loyal to the Lord and his Word, and preferred persecution for righteousness' sake rather than share the pleasures of sin and the glories of the false kingdom for a season.

When by and by under divine providence the torch of truth was caused to blaze forth in the hands of the Reformers, a new era was ushered in, and the Adversary immediately set about to oppose the truth and its servants who were denouncing him and his false Antichrist kingdom. He persecuted at first with sword and flame and rack and dungeon; but later he has taken new methods, and, persuading each band of reformers (each sect) that they have won a great victory, he has gotten them settled down self-satisfied in the belief that, while Papacy was corrupt, it was nevertheless the Kingdom of God; and that now both they and Papacy are unitedly God's Kingdom blessing the world by the establishment of civilization;--by political reforms, temperance reforms, social reforms; and converting the heathen by sending war vessels, seizing their territory, appropriating their customs duties, and forcing upon them Christendom's whiskey, tobacco and profanity in combination with monopolies and trusts.

Nor is this temptation confined to those who are identified with the grossest errors of sectarianism. Many who have a considerable knowledge of the present truth seem willing to bow the knee to wealth, to



influence, to Satan's various systems, hoping thereby to have better opportunities of serving the Lord and his truth, than they could find by following in the path which the Lord himself took, and directs his followers to take;--the "narrow way." Let us each see to it most carefully that we worship and serve the Lord only, and that we follow only his directions. All other voices, except those which merely reecho the Shepherd's voice lead more or less astray. All other paths are violations of our engagements with the Lord. In victories over such temptations we are overcoming the world: and in order to have such victories and to overcome the world absolute faith in the Lord is indispensable. We must realize that, however matters may appear on the surface, the Lord's way, the narrow way, is the best way, and the only way, that leads to the prize of our high calling in his Kingdom.

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#### THE BEGINNING OF JESUS' MINISTRY.

--Jan. 16.--Matt. 4:17-25.--

"The people which sat in darkness saw a great Light."

FOR a while after the temptation of the wilderness our Lord's ministry was of a private character, until after John had finished his ministry and been cast into prison. This interim of time before our Lord began his public work is frequently estimated at from six months to a year. To have begun sooner might have aroused some rivalry between his followers and the followers of John; but even as it was, we are informed that Jesus baptized more disciples than John, tho Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples. The calling of Peter and Andrew mentioned in this lesson was not their first introduction to Jesus, but merely our Lord's invitation to them to become special associates in the work of proclaiming the Kingdom. The account of their first introduction to Jesus is found in John 1:36-42. Our Lord evidently resided for some time at Nazareth with his mother and brethren,--until the time of John's imprisonment and the consequent stoppage of his mission-work. It was then that our Lord with his mother and brethren removed as a family to Capernaum. (Compare Matt. 4:13; John 2:12.) "From that time Jesus began to preach, and say, Repent; for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

For centuries Israel had been looking for the Kingdom of Heaven--the Kingdom of God--expecting according to their covenant that the chief place in that Kingdom should be theirs, as the servants of God, the ministers of righteousness and truth; and that they

should be used of the Almighty to rule and instruct all nations: in fulfilment of the promise made to Abraham, that in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed. All true Israelites had this promise distinctly before their minds as their great hope, and indeed the only object of their national existence.-- See Acts 26:6,7.

To these, therefore, the proclamation, "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand," meant,--God's time has now come for the fulfilment of his promise to this nation, in its establishment as his representative kingdom to rule and to bless the world; but in order to be fit for this Kingdom every Israelite should prepare his heart, humble himself before God, repenting of sins and thereby reforming his life, seeking a readiness for the divine blessing and exaltation, in whatever form it might come. This message was the same which John delivered in his public ministry; the same also that was given to the twelve disciples, and afterwards to the seventy also, whom Jesus sent forth, clothed with a share of his power over diseases and unclean spirits, to announce him in all the cities which he later would visit.

Thus did God fulfil toward Israel both the letter and the spirit of his engagement; but while the people of Palestine were the children of Abraham, and professedly God's covenant people, yet with the vast majority this was but an empty profession and an outward form; for their hopes respecting the great promise of which they were heirs were not the proper, laudable ambitions to be God's servants and messengers in carrying his blessings to mankind, but a selfish, arrogant pride, which concluded that there must have been some special merit in their race, which led God to seek it, and on account of which God would be rather obligated to that nation, as the only people capable of carrying out his benevolent designs. Against this arrogance our Lord warned them frequently; and assured them that God could get along without them entirely, and was able to raise up for his purpose, instead of them, children of Abraham, who would have Abraham's loyalty of spirit,--even if it were necessary to create these out of the stones. (Matt. 3:9; Luke 3:8.) As a matter of fact we know that after the "wheat" class had been separated from the "chaff" of that nation, and been gathered into the Gospel "garner," the Lord has been seeking others from among the Gentiles during the past eighteen centuries, to complete the elect number of Israelites indeed, the true seed of Abraham, to constitute this promised Heavenly Kingdom, whose mission it shall be, as the divine representatives, to bless all the families of the earth--"in the world to come"--in the age to follow this Gospel age--in the Millennium.

And the same message, "Repent, etc.," has come all the way down the centuries, notifying us that whoever

would be of this holy Kingdom must reform his course of life and come into heart-harmony with the laws of this Kingdom: Otherwise they would not be in a condition to be made members of the "royal priesthood" which is to offer the great blessings which God has designed and promised to the world.

While the four fishermen mentioned in this lesson were already at heart disciples of our Lord Jesus, and recognized him as the Messiah, this was the first call to public ministry as his colaborers, and their promptness in obeying the call is worthy of notice as a mark

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of their earnestness and faith; for our Master declared, He that obeyeth my words he it is that loveth me, and he shall be loved of my Father. There is a good lesson here on promptness of obedience for all of the Lord's people. It is worthy of note also that our Lord called to the special, active service of preaching the Gospel, men who were not "slothful in business:" they

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were not idlers, nor did they join the Lord's company with the expectation of becoming idlers. Doubtless they had already heard our Lord's dissertation to the effect that no man need come after him except prepared to take up a cross in the service. No doubt they knew already that our Lord was poor and without standing before the influential of that day. Nevertheless, they gladly joined his company upon his assurance that under his direction, altho their work would be no less arduous, they should be "fishers of men."

For a considerable time our Lord's ministries were confined to Galilee, except as occasionally he went up to Jerusalem on national holidays. His message is called the gospel--the good news: because Israelites, like the rest of the groaning creation, had been long waiting for the promised Golden Age, when all the bitterness of the curse would be removed, and when the blessings of the Lord would come down richly and bountifully upon the earth. It was indeed good news then as it is good news now to everyone that believeth. But then, as now, it was difficult to believe. Then the Scribes and Pharisees and Doctors of the Law rejected Jesus, repudiated his claims and jested about him and his followers, that they must be lunatics to think that any knowledge on this subject of the Kingdom of God could come through the carpenter and some fishermen associates, and not through the great and notable Chief Priests, Scribes, Pharisees and Doctors. Moreover, they ridiculed the fact that without wealth and social influence, and by the preaching of the Gospel of repentance, an army could ever be raised which could vanquish the Roman legions, and deliver Israel and

conquer the world before her, so as to give her the chief position of authority as the Kingdom of God. Their hearts being in the wrong condition, the religious rulers were less prepared to grasp the truth than were the hearts of the humble, faithful, unlearned fishermen. Likewise to-day, the Doctors of Divinity and all the socially and religiously great of Christendom scout the idea of the establishment of the Kingdom by the power of God in the hands of Christ and his little flock of the royal priesthood; and declare on the other hand that they are the Lord's Kingdom, and leave us to infer that notwithstanding all the pride and crime and ungodliness abounding in so-called Christendom, nevertheless, God's will is "done on earth as it is done in heaven." And, with their show of wealth and power and learning and dignity and influence they say to-day as the Scribes and Pharisees said of old-- Have any of the great ones of church or state believed in this coming Kingdom of God which you preach, saying that the Kingdom of heaven is at hand, and the elect membership being gathered? The answer to the question now, as in the past, must be No; not many great, not many wise, not many rich, not many learned according to the course of this world have believed in the coming Kingdom and are looking for it, and are waiting and laboring to enter into it; but chiefly the poor of this world, rich in faith, whom God has ordained to be heirs of the Kingdom.--1 Cor. 1:26,27; Jas. 2:5.

The healing of sicknesses by our Lord and his followers at the first advent was a foreshadowing of the blessings which would more fully come when the Kingdom itself would be established; and the miracles served also to draw the attention of the people to the message proclaimed, and to spread abroad the fame of the Teacher, and, incidentally, his message respecting his Kingdom to come, and the repentance necessary to a share therein. This multitude was not merely a local gathering, but one from various quarters, some coming great distances, as people naturally will do in hope of relief from physical disease. Alas, how much more anxious people seem to be to get rid of diseases of the flesh than to be rid of the diseases of the soul--sins: yet of the two the latter is the much worse disease and the more difficult to cure, and in our Lord's preaching these were given first place, as of greater importance, as expressed in the word "Repent;" the physical healing being merely an incidental matter, unworthy to be mentioned in the general proclamation.

We will not dispute as to whether or not the period of miracles is wholly in the past: we will even admit that since we are in the Dawn of the Millennial age a certain beginning of restitution work may be properly due to the world as a part of the divine plan. We urge, however, upon the Lord's people, as a matter of far greater importance than any physical healing,

the necessity of bringing their friends and coming themselves to the Great Physician for healing of soul-sickness, --for the opening of their eyes that they may see clearly the "goodness of God as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord;" for the opening of their ears that they may hear fully and clearly the great message of salvation and understand distinctly the terms and conditions of self-sacrifice upon which depends their attainment to the Kingdom glories as members of the "little flock" to whom it is the Father's good pleasure to give the Kingdom. Let those who are lame through pride and self-will, and unable to follow in the "narrow way," cast away these crutches, and, coming to the Lord in full submission and contrition and humility, let them learn to walk in his ways of meekness and gentleness, patience and suffering and brotherly-kindness, that he may exalt them in due time. These sicknesses, these infirmities, these diseases, with which the new nature contends, and the evil spirits of selfishness and pride, and the palsy of fear of man, which bringeth a snare, are diseases far more terrible than earthly sicknesses, and from these, we are sure, the Great Physician is both able and willing, yea anxious, to relieve us.

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INTERESTING LETTERS.

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California.

DEAR SIR:--I received your valuable paper ZION'S WATCH TOWER this afternoon and I thank you very much. It made my heart glad. I love the glad tidings, though it is sometimes hard to apprehend it. In my 21 years of Christian experience I never heard of anything like it, until I saw the MILLENNIAL DAWN in our Sunday School library catalogue. Being hungry to learn about my Lord's return I got it to read, and I have read it over and over again. It has greatly strengthened my faith in the Lord. I want to know more, so enclose one dollar for which please send me the three volumes of your book, and ZION'S WATCH TOWER for the next three months.

Respectfully yours, MRS. J. BENGSTON.

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New Jersey.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL: I have just returned from a little missionary tour. The Lord blessed me wonderfully, and I succeeded in making the truth plain to some very hungry individuals. Please send me some

tracts--as many "Do You Know?" as you can spare,  
for it is the most wonderful tract that ever was printed.  
I distributed them everywhere I went.

You will see throughout eternity the good you  
have done by having the TOWER readers read Matt. 5:1-16,  
and 1 Cor. 13. They have borne me out in  
many difficulties, and pictured to full view so many  
of my shortcomings. Sister Neely wishes to be remembered  
to you and says she has been greatly helped  
by the Sunday morning reading, and has been able to  
overcome many things that overcame her in the past.  
Your sister in Christ, CAROLINA A. WAYMAN.

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Rhode Island.

DEAR SIRs:--I desire to express my thanks for  
the fourth volume of the DAWN series. I believe these  
books contain a wonderful unfolding of God's great  
plan of the ages. The last issue is a most remarkable  
volume, and in its gathering together of the views held  
by some of the most eminent men of our day, in all  
the walks of life, touching the great crisis ahead, is a  
most valuable addition to the library of the student of  
latter day truth. May we meet the obligations which  
so much light entails upon us, and be ready to hail  
with joy the ushering in of the Millennial day, when  
the mystical body of Christ will be made complete  
and share with him his throne. Again let me thank  
you for your kindness in sending me the book.

Yours in the Master, R. E. STREETER.

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Pennsylvania.

DEAR FRIEND:--Your fourth volume of MILLENNIAL  
DAWN came duly to hand. I have just read it  
through the second time. Many books are not worth  
reading at all; others will bear reading but once; and  
some can be read with profit two or three times. There  
are others again that are indispensable as text books.  
Of the latter class is volume four of M. DAWN. It is  
indeed a rich storehouse of information that I believe  
can be found nowhere else in modern literature. It  
gives us a birdseye view of the present condition of the  
nations of the world--moral, political and financial--  
and also spreads out before our eyes the hopeless condition  
of modern nominal Christendom.

Many do admit that there will be great changes in  
the near future, but they are all to be of a pacific character.  
Babylon is fully equipped with men and money  
to convert the world. Her missionaries will soon be in  
all lands; the present nations of the world will soon be  
Christianized; all that is needed for this purpose is men

and money. Your neighbor the Rev. I. W. Sproull, D.D., writes: Money, money, money! Give me the money and I will evangelize the world in three years. Mr. Sproull forgets that he is at the head of a foreign mission in Syria which has been in existence since the year 1850 at an expense to his church of about \$15,000 per annum. And what is the result to-day? Not a single native teacher; but expensive mission buildings with high stone walls built around them for protection. These buildings are simply boarding houses for native children whom their parents allow the mission to feed and clothe until they get able to work; that is all. And the missionaries themselves admit that they could not stay in Syria a single day were it not for the protection of American war ships cruising in the Mediterranean sea. Here then we have an expenditure of about \$600,000 on one little spot in Asia Minor with no result as yet. How much money would Mr. Sproull need to evangelize the heathen world in three years? We will not wait to count. Such a computation would be utterly beyond our reach. Does our reverend doctor really believe that the establishment of Christ's Kingdom on this earth is a matter of dollars and cents, or that it is dependent on the contributions wrung out of a deluded people? So he writes--"Hundreds and thousands of the heathen are descending into everlasting torment every day--and their blood will be required of all those who refuse or neglect to support foreign missions."

Yours respectfully, JAS. N. DOWNEY.

[Many of the Lord's people have been blessed in giving to missions, whatever the good to the heathen. An increase of light should not deprive us of the blessing of giving, but should guide us to the choice of the best ways and means, and redouble our zeal.--EDITOR.]

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Illinois.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--Seven years ago I was on the eve of infidelity, and had given up all hope, when I by chance came in possession of the first volume of DAWN. Since then I have read and re-read each volume as it has come out, and the last one I have just completed. Some of them I have gone through three times.

Do you want to know what the truth has done for me? At the time I was led into this marvelous light

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I was one of the worst cases of bedridden paralytics in town. I had become addicted to the morphine habit, and used sixty grains of the drug in one week; but by the grace of almighty God I have overcome the habit and have not touched it for over four years. I

have been able to walk without crutches now for over two years. I have vowed to God to labor in the vineyard to the best of my ability.

Yours in Christian love, C. M. CARPENTER.

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VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER.

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"AGNOSTICS IN HEAVEN."

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DR. Lyman Abbott, like other thinkers, finds it difficult to believe that the divine plan is as narrow as Calvin's creed would make it appear. But Dr. Abbott is more fearless than many preachers and hence keeps well to the forefront as an expounder of the advanced thought which is invading all denominations. He is reported in the public press as having recently expressed the belief that there would be agnostics in heaven. It would appear that he received a considerable number of letters criticising his position, and urging that, tho hope might be entertained for the heathen, none should be extended to unbelievers in Christian lands. In response he preached a discourse from the words, "He that believeth in me, believeth in him that sent me."

Discoursing on the text, he is reported to have declared, "There is more faith in Christ in many an agnostic who spends his life in the service of humanity, than there was in Torquemada. There are many people who are trying to believe in Christ but cannot, and so call themselves agnostics."

The Doctor is sure that many unbelievers are far too good to be everlastingly tormented, and who in justice should not be punished in any manner for not believing creeds and theories contradictory to each other, and to reason, and much of which their own adherents repudiate unqualifiedly. Mr. Abbott feels that these moral people should not be consigned to torment for not acting the hypocrite and professing to believe what they do not believe, as so many professors in the churches do.

Quite right thus far, Dr. Abbott. But are you not wresting the Scriptures, and perverting the Lord's word of your text, in trying to convince these unbelievers that they are saved by morals and good works, and that these constitute faith? Are not these unbelievers better men for confessing their lack of faith, than many in the churches who profess faith and have it not? Are you not in danger of making these honest unbelievers two-fold more the children of Gehenna, than they are at present, by getting them to profess a lie; as the Master said to some of the Doctors of the Law at his first advent?

But if God were to let Dr. Abbott have his way, and take to heaven all the unbelievers and all the heathen who cannot believe for similar reasons, we fancy that heaven would be so barbarous and uncouth, and its denizens so characterless, that Dr. A. and others who advocate the same unscriptural theory, that faith in the precious blood of Christ is unnecessary to salvation, would like to get away from such a heaven to some more civilized place.

How strange that, seeing the difficulties and unreasonableness of their unscriptural position, Dr. A. and the growingly large class who think along the

same lines do not see and accept heartily the Scripture position,--(1) That faith in Christ is essential, and a development of character also, to any who would receive the gift of God, everlasting life; (2) That the present Gospel age is intended merely for the selection of a "little flock" along a "narrow way" which "few" find and still fewer care to walk in; (3) That another age of a thousand years is to follow this and be the Kingdom age, in which Christ and the "little flock," developed in the Gospel age, will be the world's instructors and judges--"kings and priests unto God" (Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6) whose reign shall bless the

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world with full, clear knowledge and opportunity for the development of character and its reward of eternal life.

How strange that men, learned and thinking men too, will oppose this divine scheme of "restitution" which St. Peter tells us God has declared through all the holy prophets since the world began! (Acts 3:19-22.) Doctor Abbott and all thinking people see the necessity for just such an opportunity of salvation, for the ignorant heathen and others, whom the "god of this world has blinded" so that they cannot now see and accept the divine provision (2 Cor. 4:4); yet these thinkers prefer to wrest and twist the divine Word, and teach the salvation of unbelievers in heaven in preference to the better as well as Scriptural plan of restitution and education and trial for eternal life on the earth during the coming Millennium.

This is passing strange indeed. Surely, they are "blind guides," as the Scriptures declare, and are leading their followers into the ditch of doubt and skepticism. Surely, they are not wilfully choosing the error! Surely, they do not see the beautiful, reasonable, Scriptural plan of God! The matter reminds us of an incident that is related respecting the great river Amazon. A sailing vessel at sea had encountered adverse winds and had lost its way, and had exhausted its supply of fresh water and the crew was famishing for water. Sighting another vessel, they signaled, "Famishing for water. Can you supply us?" The other vessel signaled back, "Throw your buckets overboard and dip all the fresh water you want." They were in the mouth of the Amazon River while still out of sight of land. The water they craved was all about them, but they knew it not. So it is with our friends who want to find some way of salvation for the heathen and honest skeptics: if they would only taste and see, they would find in the Bible on their pulpits and in all their homes the very water of life for all the willing and obedient, which their reasons crave and their hearts seek: they would find a plan of salvation there which fully meets every reasonable requirement.

Thanks be unto God for his grace which has brought some of us "out of darkness into his marvelous light."

"ADMITS HE LIVED A LIE."

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Under the above and similar captions the daily press of our land is calling attention to Mr. Henry Morehouse Taber, deceased, President of the Board of Trustees of the First Presbyterian Church, New York City, and long highly honored as a Christian millionaire, and prominent in Presbyterian circles. But tho Mr. Taber did not have the courage of his convictions while he lived, he at least wished to be honest in his death; and hence he left a Will, recently probated, which has caused quite a stir by its candor respecting his total unbelief. It denounces all religions as frauds and shams based on superstition. In it he desires that no funeral services be held over his corpse, and that the same be cremated, instead of buried.

Was not this man positively injured by reason of being cajoled into a dishonest profession of faith in the Westminster Confession, by membership in the Presbyterian Church? Who will deny that this man would have been in a much better condition to meet his Redeemer and Judge in the General Judgment of the Millennial Day, if he had not lived a lie respecting his faith? There are thousands, we doubt not, in the pulpits as well as in the pews of all denominations, who are similarly living a lie; and the majority are not honest enough to make even a post-mortem confession, as Mr. Taber did.

These dishonest people do not wish to be dishonest, but act a lie for fear the truth would do injury to the Church. How much better to be honest and let God take care of all consequences. "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her [Babylon's] sins and that ye receive not of her plagues," is the Lord's command to all who are his people, as soon as they get the light of present truth and thus get out of harmony with the falsities of Babylon's professions and confessions.

"AN INVISIBLE HAND IS SHAKING."

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Rev. R. Heber Newton, one of the prominent New York preachers, on January 9, among other things said (as reported in the New York Herald):--

"All religions are moving in the same direction--reaching forth toward something new. The end of this century has been looked to by prophetic students as the end of a dispensation--the opening of a new

order. Our fathers believed that Jesus Christ was to come again somewhere about this time.

"An invisible hand is shaking the intellectual kaleidoscope, and the figures familiar to generations are changing before our eyes. The traditional systems

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of divinity seem to hosts of men to-day of as much help as the charts of New York harbor drawn up by the primitive Knickerbockers would be to our steamers. Men are slowly and painfully realizing that there is no answer in the Thirty nine articles and Westminster Confession for us in the year 1898. Their whole thought is as antique and obsolete as the language of Chaucer and Spenser. Men ask now for a gospel in the vernacular of the nineteenth century: not necessarily a new gospel, but at least a translation of the old gospel of the mediaevals and ancients into a 'tongue understood of the people.'

"Sublimely unconscious of the day that is breaking outside the church walls, our priests go on droning the old refrain about an impossible Bible and an unnatural

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Christ, and anathematizing those who don't care to come in and listen to their music of the past. Pulpits are timorous and silent on questions of the age. Conventions reauthorize, at every triennial session, as text books for theological seminaries, treatises which are as accurate maps of our present knowledge as the celestial charts of the Ptolemaic astronomers....

"What is needed is not denunciation, but the quickening of a new idea and the kindling of a new ideal which shall once more guide and inspire man to a life higher than that of pleasure.

"The close of this century has witnessed the growth of monster nationalities. Are they under the inspiration of the Christian law? It does not look much like it, as we see the great Christian powers standing around China, waiting to dismember it. Have our Christian States become pirates, flaunting above their ensigns the black flag? The bishop of Breslau may invoke a benediction upon the fleet which goes forth for the protection of the cross, but the average man smiles cynically at such conception of Christianity.

"Every new advance of humanity is won against obstructiveness of the churches. Every social and political injustice that, one after another, is swept violently away--slavery, land monopoly, the tyranny of capital, war--is defended, up to the last, by the sign of Him who came to break every yoke and to let the oppressed go free; over whose cradle the angels sang, 'Peace on earth, good will among men.'

"Humanity is growing conscious of its magnificent

possibilities of glorious life, which are still postponed from generation to generation because the churches, which should be consecrated to this task of social regeneration, have not the mind nor the heart to grapple with it. They are busied, as their prototypes of old, with their pretty, petty play of charities, while neglecting the weightier matters of the law, the stern and solemn sentences of justice.

"A GREAT REVOLUTION POSSIBLE."

"The era of competition is ended. The era of combination has opened. All business is concentrating. In this massing of capital there is coming to be an absolute domination over the wage worker, over the interest of the people at large, over the life of the State itself. Yet this movement is natural and necessary. It is in the line of economic progress. The real question concerning it is, Can this new order grow a soul within it, a spirit capable of mastering these monster powers and using them, not for self-aggrandizement, but for human service? If it cannot, there is a revolution ahead worse than any the world has hitherto known. If it can, there opens an era of boundless, beneficent progress. This is a question of religion. It is the old need of an ever fresh faith and hope and love.

"Plainly a real religion of some sort is needed, more needed than ever," said the speaker in conclusion. "It is the one thing which alone is really needed. All else will flow from it. Without it all else will disappear--political institutions, wealth, civilization, everything. Our duty as we find ourselves in this epoch of transition is to keep our minds open for the new light that God is preparing to send forth into the world, and our hearts eager for the new life into which he is preparing to lead us."

\* \* \*

How many more see the same thing? and fear the same thing? What is lacking that these people do not receive the "present truth," the "meat in due season" for the household of faith? The trouble is that they have too much faith in each other, and not sufficient faith in the Lord and his Word. The blind people are looking to and following the blind leaders; and the latter are looking in the wrong direction to see "the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his beams." If the Lord's message of "present truth" and Scripture harmonization presented in the four volumes of MILLENNIAL DAWN were promulgated from some source more "highly esteemed among men," who can doubt that it would--

"Satisfy men's longings, as nothing else can do?"

So also, if our Lord Jesus had been a Pharisee and from a notable family and city, his message would

have been received, and he would not have been crucified. God still hides his truth from the great and wise and prudent, and reveals it unto babes--the humble minded, the teachable. Nevertheless, the congregation of "All Soul's Church" which heard the above sermon should be an excellent field of labor for some earnest friends of the truth to labor in,--seeking to present the "harvest" message contained in MILLENNIAL DAWN volumes. And while a discourse like the above may not convert any one to Christ, it undoubtedly may shake loose some of the true "wheat" from Babylon's bundles and thus prepare this class for the food for which they are starving spiritually.

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WHAT THE PRINCE OF PEACE MIGHT SAY,  
IF HE WOULD SPEAK TO-DAY.

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"I have come, and the world shall be shaken  
Like a reed at the touch of my rod,  
And the kingdoms of men shall awaken  
To the voice and summons of God.  
No more through the din of the ages,  
Shall warnings and chidings divine  
From the lips of my prophets and sages  
Be trampled like pearls before swine.

"Have ye 'seized' all my lands and my cattle?  
Would ye keep back from labor her meed?  
Would ye challenge the outcasts to battle,  
When they plead at your feet in their need?  
And when clamor of hunger grows louder,  
And the multitude prays to be fed,  
Will ye answer with prison and powder  
The cries of your brothers for bread?

"I'd turn from your altars and arches  
And the mockings of steeples and domes,  
To join in the long, weary marches  
Of the poor ones bereft of their homes;  
I'd share in the sorrows and crosses  
Of the poor, the hungry and cold,  
For dearer to me are their losses  
Than your mines and your altars of gold.

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"I will wither the might of the Spoiler,  
I will end the reign of his hate;  
The servants of Sin shall no longer

Be prospered in Church and in State.  
Aye, the prayers of the poor are ascending  
To be written with lightnings on high!  
And the wails of all captives be blending  
With bolts that shall leap from the sky.

"Then the thrones of your kings shall be shattered,  
And the captives and surfs shall go free;  
Then I'll harvest from seed that I scattered  
On the borders of blue Galilee.  
Yea, I come not now as a stranger--  
Lo, my reapers shall sing through the night,  
Till the star that stood over the manger  
Shall cover the world with its light." --Selected.

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#### SECRET FAULTS AND PRESUMPTUOUS SINS.

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"Cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.--Psa. 19:12-14.

THIS prophetic prayer represents well the heart attitude of the fully consecrated and earnest Christian. While realizing a forgiveness of the "sins that are past through the forbearance of God," through the grace of God which was in Christ Jesus, which imputed our sins to him and his righteousness to us who believe in him, nevertheless the well-instructed soul realizes its faults, its short-comings. These secret faults may be of two kinds: (1) They may be faults which were secret to ourselves at the time committed--slips, unintentional errors. Of course the earnest heart, desiring full fellowship with the Lord, will regret even his unintentional short-comings and will strive and pray for divine grace to get the victory over these: but besides these there are other secret faults, which are secret in the sense of being unknown to any one but ourselves and the Lord: imperfections or faults of the mind before they take the outward form of actual and presumptuous sins.

All Christians of experience in the good way and in the battle against sin and self have learned that there can be no outward or presumptuous sins that have not first had their beginning in secret faults of the mind. The sinful thought may be one of pride suggesting self-exaltation; it may be one of avarice suggesting unlawful acquisition of wealth; or it may be some other

fleshly desire: the mere suggestion of the thought before our minds is not sin; it is merely the operation of our faculties, and of the influences which surround us, inquiring of our wills whether or not we will consent to such thoughts. Many consent to thoughts of evil who at the time would utterly repudiate any suggestion to commit evil deeds; but if the thought be entertained it is a secret fault, and the growing tendency would surely be toward the more outward and presumptuous sinful conduct, the tendency of which is always from bad to worse. For instance, to illustrate, suppose the suggestion should come to our minds of a method by which we could advance our own interests of fame or honor or reputation by the undermining of the influence and reputation of another, how quickly the evil, selfish thought, if entertained, would lead to envy and possibly hatred and strife. Almost surely it would lead to back-biting and slander and other works of the flesh and the devil. The beginnings are always small, and correspondingly much easier to deal with than in their developed form. Hence, the prophetic prayer, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults" and thus restrain or keep me back from presumptuous sins.

In the Epistle of James (1:14,15) we read, "Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own desire and enticed. Then when desire hath conceived it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." Here we have the same thought differently expressed. The temptation consists at first in the presentation to the mind of suggestions which are impure or unkind or unfaithful to obligations; but there is no sin, no fault, as yet. The fault begins, when we harbor the evil suggestions, begin to turn them over in our minds and to consider the attractions which they may have to offer. This is where desire (taking hold of the evil thing instead of resisting it) causes a beginning of the secret fault; and it is only a process

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of development which in many instances under favorable circumstances may be very rapid, that sin, the presumptuous or outward acts of sin, results;--for instance, bearing false witness against a neighbor, or slander, or other evil deeds. And the evil course having begun in the fostering of the evil suggestion, and having progressed to presumptuous sin, there is a great danger that their entire course of life will be ultimately affected thereby and bring the transgressor into that condition where he will commit the great transgression --wilful, deliberate, intentional sin--the wages of which is death, second death.

It would appear then that every intelligent Christian would continually pray this inspired prayer, for cleansing from secret faults that he might thus be restrained from presumptuous sins; and thus praying



heartily, he would also watch against these beginnings of sin and keep his heart in a cleansed and pure condition, by going continually to the fountain of grace for

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help in every time of need. He who seeks to live a life of holiness and nearness to the Lord by merely guarding and striving against outward or presumptuous sins, and who neglects the beginning of sin in the secrets of his own mind, is attempting a right thing in a very foolish and unreasonable way. As well might we seek to avert the smallpox by outward cleanliness, while permitting the germs of the disease to enter our systems. The bacteria or germs of presumptuous sins enter through the mind, and their antiseptics and bactericides of the truth and its spirit must meet them there and promptly kill the bacteria of sin before it germinates and leads us to such a condition of evil as will manifest itself in our outward conduct.

For instance, whenever the bacteria of pride and self-importance present themselves, let the antidote be promptly administered from the Lord's great medical laboratory for the healing of the soul: the proper dose to offset this species of bacteria is found in the words, "He that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted;" and "Pride goeth before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall."

If the thought presented to our minds be the bacteria of envy, then let us promptly apply the antidote which declares that envy is one of the works of the flesh and of the devil, and contrary to the spirit of Christ, which by our covenant we have adopted as ours. And let us remember that envy is closely related to and apt to be followed by malice, hatred and strife, which under some circumstances mean murder, according to the New Covenant and our Lord's interpretation.--1 John 3:15; Matt. 5:21,22.

If the bacteria which presents itself to our minds is avarice, with the suggestion of unjust methods for its gratification, let us promptly apply to it the medicine furnished in the Lord's Word, namely, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" "For the love of money is a root of all evil, which some, coveting after, have erred from the truth and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

The more attention we give to this subject, the more we will be convinced, from our own personal experiences, of the truth of the Scriptural declarations respecting the beginnings of sin as secret faults in the mind; and the more we will appreciate the statement of the Word, "Keep thy heart [mind, affections] with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."-- Prov. 4:23.

But we are not to wonder that God has so constituted us as to permit temptations to come to our minds,

nor are we to pray that we may have no temptations; for if there were no such presentations, no such temptations, then there could be no victories on our part, no overcoming of sin and of the wicked One. But we know that for this very reason we are now in the school of Christ; not that we shall there be shielded from all temptation, but that we may learn of the great Teacher how to meet the Tempter, and by our Master's grace and help to come off conquerors, victors in the strife against sin. The degree of our success in this conflict will depend largely upon the keenness of our faith and trust in the great Teacher. If we feel confident in his wisdom, we will follow closely his instructions and keep our hearts [minds] with all diligence. Faith in the Lord's wisdom and in his help in every time of need is necessary to us in order that we may be thoroughly obedient to him; and hence it is written, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith;" i.e., it will be by the exercise of faith and the obedience which flows therefrom that we will be enabled to "come off conquerors and more than conquerors through him that loved us and gave himself for us."

Nor are we to seek divine aid far in advance, as, for instance, to be kept throughout the year to come, or month to come, or week to come: rather we are to know that if we have made a covenant with the Lord and are his, that he is near us at all times in every trial, in every temptation; and that his assistance is ready to our use, if we will but accept it and act accordingly. Hence, our prayers should be for help in the time of need, as well as general prayers for the Lord's blessing and care for each day. In the moment of temptation the heart should lift itself to the great Master, in full assurance of faith, recognizing his love, his wisdom and his ability to help us, and his willingness to make all things work together for good to those who love him. Asking for assistance in such a time of need would surely draw to us the Lord's counsel and help and strength for righteousness, truth, purity and love; and thus we should be hourly victorious, daily victorious, and finally victorious.

The difficulty with many is that they are looking for some great battles, instead of averting the great battles by availing themselves of the Lord's provision, and keeping their minds cleansed from secret faults. The little battles, and much more numerous, are the ones in which we gain the victories with their ultimate rewards. "Greater is he that ruleth his own spirit [mind, will] than he that taketh a city."

Finally, the grand results of obedience to this counsel of the Lord, the grand attainment of those who have faithfully kept their hearts with diligence, is expressed in our text, and may well be the repeated earnest prayer of all the sanctified in Christ Jesus,--"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength

and my Redeemer."

A year from now we hope to hear from very many of great blessings received through this counsel of the Lord's Word, as suggested in our last issue.

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#### THE BLESSED ONES PORTRAYED.

--JAN. 23.--MATT. 5:1-12.--

"Ye are the Light of the World."--Matt. 5:14.

THE beatitudes--or the blessed--designate the particular graces necessary to our Lord's followers, if they would receive the blessings which the Father designed they should enjoy through Christ. These constitute the text as it were of our Master's great "Sermon on the Mount." It is supposed to have been delivered from a site known as the Mount of Beatitudes, sloping gradually, about sixty feet in height and situated about seven miles South-west from Capernaum where, as we saw in our last lesson, Jesus had taken up his residence. Strange to say, it was on this very site on July 5th, 1187, that the last remnant of the Crusaders was destroyed, after their army had been defeated by Saladin in the valley below. Those Crusaders claimed to wage their warfare in the interest of the Lord's cause, but had they remembered and properly applied to themselves even remotely the lesson which we are about to consider, spoken by our Lord on this very Mount, they would not have been defeated and exterminated, for they would not have been Crusaders at all. Alas, how many cry, Lord, Lord, and attempt in the Lord's name to do many wonderful works who, neglecting his Word, are not his people and fail to get the blessings now offered.

At this time our Lord's ministry was fully inaugurated: he had collected his first disciples, had performed some miracles, and the multitudes began to follow him, saying truly, "Never man spake like this man." With his disciples nearest to him and the multitudes surrounding, he began his celebrated discourse the text of which we have under consideration.

(1) "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." This first beatitude or blessed state really in some respects comprehends all the others. Through it the other graces and blessings are accessible. It is the gateway and the main roadway from which all the other avenues of blessing branch off. Some one has said, it is the hallway of the house of blessing, from which all the various rooms or apartments are accessible.

The word blessed signifies much more than happy;

happiness proceeds usually from outward causes, while one might be blessed while in misery, in pain, not joyous but grievous. The root of the word blessed here carries with it the thought of great or honorable: our Lord is describing the characters which from his standpoint and that of the Father are truly great, honorable

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characters, which God is pleased to bless and ultimately to reward.

The Greek word here translated poor has the significance of utter destitution, extreme poverty. Hence, the thought is that a full appreciation of our own spiritual destitution is essential before we will be ready to receive the measures of divine grace provided for us by the Father in Christ Jesus, our Lord. And not only must this destitution be realized at the beginning of our approach to God, but it is necessary that the same dependence upon divine grace and realization of our own insufficiency shall continue with us all our journey through, if we would finally be acceptable and be granted a share in the Kingdom which God has promised to them that love him. There is nothing in this text to signify earthly poverty and destitution: nevertheless we know from experience, as well as from the Lord's Word, that not many rich or great, but chiefly the poor of this world, rich in faith, shall be heirs of the Kingdom. Very evidently moderate poverty is the most favorable condition for us in our present weak and fallen condition: earthly prosperity and riches very frequently tend to choke the new nature and hinder it from bringing forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness --tending rather to a spirit of self-sufficiency, pride, etc. As our Lord Jesus expressed it, "The cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches choke the Word, and it becometh unfruitful." Let us all then in seeking the character which will be approved of God and accepted to the Kingdom of God's dear Son, seek more and more continually this humility of mind which so far from being boastful and self-sufficient, humbly accepts with gratitude every good and every perfect gift as coming from the Father of Lights.

(2) "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." We apply this in connection with the first blessing; for it is not every one who mourns who will be comforted, but merely the poor in spirit: their mourning will be from the right standpoint and will bring a blessing of heavenly comfort--a realization of sins forgiven, iniquities covered and divine reconciliation and favor. We sometimes sing,

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

There is a proper thought in the poet's expression: for we need not continue to grieve over our "sins that are past through the forbearance of God," which are

"covered" by the merit of the precious blood: nor should our lives be destitute of the "joys of the Lord" and the "songs in the night" which he gives, according as it is written, "He hath put a new song into my mouth, even the loving kindness of our God." But hilarity and boisterous "gayety" are certainly inappropriate to the children of the Great King. Why? Because all such should realize that life is a stern reality,

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not only to the Christian but to the whole world, "the groaning creation." A sympathy with the sorrows, difficulties and privations of the masses, at home and in heathen lands, no less than a realization of the grandeur of the high calling of the Church in this Gospel age and of the exceeding great and precious things which hinge upon our faithfulness to him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light,-- these all should be saying to us continually, in the language of the Apostle, Be vigilant! Be sober! Watch! Quit you like men!

Besides, all who are earnestly striving for the victory over self, and the world, and sin, are sure to make a sufficient number of failures along the way to insure them considerable experience in mourning for these deflections,--if their hearts are in the right attitude toward the Lord. Gracious indeed is the promise to such, "They shall be comforted." Our Lord does comfort such with the assurance that he notes their tears as well as their efforts in opposition to sin, and that he is thus preparing them through present experiences and the development of character for the Kingdom.

(3) "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." Nothing can be more evident than the fact that this promise also waits for the establishment of the Kingdom, for its full fruition. Certainly the meek are not in this age favored with the ownership or control of any considerable proportion of the earth's surface. Rather it is the arrogant, the proud, the domineering, the selfish and pushing who chiefly inherit the earth at the present time--under the rule of "The Prince of the power of the air, who now worketh in the hearts of the children of disobedience." Very evidently this blessing also belongs to those who inherit the first blessing--those poor in spirit who shall be heirs of the Kingdom. The Kingdom class--Christ Jesus and his Church, his body, will inherit the earth --purchased, as well as man, by the great sacrifice finished at Calvary. And when this Kingdom class shall inherit the earth, it will not be to oppress mankind, but on the contrary for their elevation, restitution and blessing. This is in harmony with the Heavenly Father's promise,--"I will give thee the heathen for thy inheritance; and the uttermost parts of the earth

for a possession."

But the time for this inheritance has not yet come. It will be introduced as soon as the last member of the elect Church has been fitted and prepared for the inheritance by the development of the graces of character here portrayed by our Lord. Yes, blessed are the meek--all who shall be accounted worthy of a share in the Kingdom and in its inheritance must be meek, teachable, humble, for "Jehovah resisteth the proud but showeth his favor to the humble."--James 4:6.

(4) "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." To whom is this blessed promise applicable? Surely to none other than "the elect," the Church, referred to preceding as "the poor in spirit," "the meek." These, and these alone at the present time, are hungering and thirsting for truth and righteousness, in respect to the divine revelation on every subject and affair of life. Others may have a little hunger for truth, but they are soon satisfied;--especially when they find the truth unpopular and that, however sweet to the taste, it afterward brings bitter gripings of persecution and ostracism under present unfavorable world-conditions. To a considerable number honesty and righteousness are the best policy, to a limited degree,--so far as public opinion sustains them; but a righteousness and honesty and love of the truth at the cost of persecution, at the cost of having men "separate you from their company," is only hungered and thirsted after by the "little flock"--the overcomers. "They shall be filled." They will be filled to the full by and by, very shortly, in the "change" of the "first resurrection," when this mortal condition shall be exchanged for immortality; when this animal body shall give place to a perfect spirit-body. Then partial knowledge and partial attainment of righteousness shall be superseded by a full, complete knowledge, then "we shall know, even as we are known." But even now this class enjoys much larger measures of knowledge of the truth and experiences in the blessings of righteousness than are possible to any other class.

(5) "Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy." Human mercy, sympathy, pity, compassion, are but reflections of the divine character: these qualities may be found in the natural man, but not infrequently when so found they are traceable to some extent to pride, selfishness, ostentation, show. The mercy, pity and sympathy which would exercise themselves irrespective of human knowledge and approval, and irrespective of divine reward, are not frequently met with except in the "poor in spirit, heirs of the Kingdom." And all who are of this class must be merciful, pitiful, loving: their own relationship with the Lord and all their hopes respecting the Kingdom to come depend upon their being merciful; for only the merciful shall obtain mercy, and those who pray, "Thy

Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth," are instructed to pray at the same time for the forgiveness of their trespasses (only) as they also forgive the trespasses of others, their fellow-creatures.

(6) "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." We are to distinguish sharply between purity of heart, will, intention and absolute purity of

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every word and act of life; for the one is possible while the other is impossible, so long as we have our present mortal bodies and are surrounded by present unfavorable conditions. The standard set before us in this very sermon however is a standard not only for the heart but for all the conduct of life, "Be ye perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect." By this standard we are to measure ourselves, and that continually, and not with one another; and to this standard we are to seek to bring the conduct of our lives and the meditation of our hearts. But only our wills (hearts) have yet been transformed and renewed and purified: our present imperfect earthen vessels in which we have this treasure will not be "changed" or renewed until the resurrection. Then, and not until then, will we be perfect in the divine likeness, but now nothing short of purity of heart, will, intention, can be acceptable to God and bring the blessing here promised.

In whom do we find the new hearts, renewed hearts, cleansed hearts, pure hearts? Surely, in none except those who are called, chosen and faithful,--the poor in spirit class, the meek, the "little flock," heirs of the Kingdom.

(7) "Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God." None will be accounted worthy to be called children of God who shall not have developed peace-loving dispositions. The anger, malice, hatred, envy, strife and generally quarrelsome disposition, which to some extent is inherited through the fall by every member of the race, must be recognized as belonging to "the works of the flesh and of

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the devil, and must be resisted in heart fully, and in outward conduct as fully as possible. Peaceableness must supplant quarrelsomeness in all those who would hope to share the Kingdom and be recognized as children of God. "So far as lieth in you live peaceably with all men." This of course does not mean peace at any price, otherwise our Lord, the apostles and the faithful body of Christ throughout this age might not have suffered, or at least might have endured very much less suffering for righteousness' sake. Hence, the significance of our Lord's statement, "In the world

ye shall have tribulation; in me ye shall have peace."

But surely, as we should be at peace with the Lord, so we should desire and strive and expect to be at peace with all who love the Lord, who have his spirit, and who are seeking to walk in the same way toward the Heavenly Kingdom. "Live in peace [among yourselves]" (2 Cor. 13:11), is the injunction of the Apostle to the Church. There is a great lesson in these words for all who are seeking to be heirs of the Kingdom and to inherit these blessings which our Lord enumerates. With perverse natural dispositions it may require considerable time and practice to learn to know and choose and love the path which leads to peace among God's people. This path is love;--love which thinketh no evil, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, seeketh not her own, but beareth all things, endureth all things, hopeth all things. And to be a peace-maker one must first be a peace-lover himself: to attempt to make peace without first having the spirit of love ourselves is to blunder, and will surely result in failure. Those who, wherever they go, make for peace, righteousness, love and mercy, in meekness, thereby prove themselves to be children of God.

(8) "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." This blessing also applies only to "the faithful in Christ Jesus." The elements of character which constitute righteousness, and imply harmony with God and heirship to the Kingdom which he has promised, have already been stated in the seven propositions preceding; and now our Lord calls attention to the fact that with all these graces and elements of righteousness, far above the standard of the world, this class would nevertheless be persecuted and suffer; because of these very elements of character which he approves. This is because the world in general throughout this age will be so blinded to the truth, and so in harmony with sin, that righteousness will be hated in proportion as sin is loved. But in order to be heirs of the Kingdom we must not only love righteousness, meekness, purity of heart, humility of spirit, etc., but must be ready and willing to endure persecution in support of these heavenly principles.

The great Apostle, Paul, declared, "All that will [in this present time] live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (2 Tim. 3:12.) Hence, the implication is that we must have all of the foregoing seven characteristics so deeply imbedded in our characters that we will endure the persecutions which they will bring, unflinchingly. Such the Lord elsewhere terms overcomers, saying, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne." So then, to have a share in the Kingdom implies a share in the persecutions which the Kingdom class will endure faithfully. The same thought is amplified in the two succeeding verses, which inform us that we should not only be



ready to endure persecution, but, rightly informed, will realize that the more we endure along proper lines the more cause we will have for rejoicing in heart, however sorrowful our outward conditions and circumstances may at times be.

Nor does the Lord leave us to suppose that the only persecutions to be endured are those of physical culture; he specifies that some of these persecutions, the endurance of which will be acceptable with him as

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proofs of our love for him, his kingdom and its rules of righteousness, are "revilings," "false-witnesses" and "all manner of evil" misstatements, because we are his, loyal to his Word and cause. Let us remember also that as the persecutions, misstatements, slanders, revilings, misrepresentations, against the early Church came not so much from the world as from those who professed to be God's people, Israel according to the flesh, so now we must expect that persecutions will come from professing Christians, who are not in heart-harmony with the Lord, and his Word, and the rules of righteousness which our Master laid down.

These same rules of course apply in a modified degree to the whole world, in proportion as they have these traits of character: even in uncircumcised hearts, and even tho they be only outwardly practiced and for effect, nevertheless to that degree do blessings attend. And we may reasonably suppose that when the Kingdom class, the Church, shall be exalted with their Lord and head, to share his Millennial Kingdom, and to bless the world of mankind with a righteous government, and to bring all to a knowledge of the Lord and of the truth,--then practically these same rules will apply to all who then will be on probation for divine approval and eternal life. Now however, during this Gospel age, these lessons are fully applicable to the elect Church, the "little flock," to whom only it is the Father's good pleasure to give the Kingdom.

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"AFTER THIS MANNER PRAY YE."

--JAN. 30.--MATT. 6:5-15.--

"Pray to thy Father which is in secret."

"PRAYER is the soul's sincere desire, uttered or unexpressed," says the poet: and he says truly, for the Scriptures inform us that God is a "discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart;" and again, that in the case of the saints the

spirit or intention is accepted by the Lord when we approach him in seasons of distress, when we can find no language in which to clothe our feelings and desires, --when we come to him with spirit-groanings which we cannot utter in words. (Rom. 8:26.) Nevertheless both by words and example our Lord instructed us that our prayers should be uttered, formulated, and, if possible, not be left merely to incoherent feelings and groanings. It was to this end that he gave the instructions of the present lesson, in answer to the request of the apostles, "Lord, teach us to pray."--Luke 11:1.

While certain rules should govern all prayers, all approaches to God for communion, namely, that we should approach with humility and simplicity and reverence and in the name of Jesus, yet circumstances may govern in certain particulars:--

(1) The prayer of the sinner, the alien and stranger from God, should differ from that of the child of God who has received pardon and reconciliation along the divinely appointed lines. For instance, the prayer of the publican, approved by our Lord, did not address Jehovah as "Father" but as God--"God be merciful to me a sinner." On the contrary, those who come into relationship with God under the terms of his covenant in Christ have the privilege not only of recognizing God as the Creator and Ruler, but also as their "Heavenly Father," and of addressing him as such.

(2) Amongst those who approach God in prayer as his children, different circumstances and conditions may have a bearing as respects the manner of worship: at times they may properly go aside and hold communion with the Father in secret,--where no earthly eye will see and no earthly ear will hear. Our Lord's own example should be an illustration of this privilege: we remember how it is written of him frequently that he went apart from his disciples and prayed alone, and how sometimes he spent the entire night in solitary prayer.

(3) Prayer at other times may properly and profitably be offered in the presence of fellow-believers and audibly, as the prayer of all and in which all are interested and join. An illustration of this may also be drawn from our Lord's example: for instance, his prayers recorded in John 11:41,42; 17; Matt. 11:25,26; Luke 10:21; 11:1. These prayers could not have been recorded if they had not been heard by the apostles: and the very object of their utterances in their presence was evidently for their benefit and blessing, as well as for the benefit and blessing of all the household of faith since then. The prayers of Moses and Solomon, David and Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel are also recorded, and hence were made publicly, at least before the Lord's people. The record respecting the early Church seems to imply that they met together as one family and that their prayers as well as their hymns and song-prayers were general, in common, for the benefit of

the whole company present. This is implied in the account given in Acts 1:14 where it is declared, "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren." Again, the words of one of their prayers are quoted in Acts 1:24; evidently this prayer was uttered audibly and in common. Again in 1 Cor. 14:16

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the Apostle shows the thanksgiving of the congregation was and should be presented before the Lord not only audibly but in a language heard and understood by the worshipers, so that all might be able to say "Amen" to the thanksgiving and petition.

(4) At times it may not be improper to give thanks to God in the presence of a mixed company--believers and unbelievers. Illustration of this course is found

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in our Lord's own conduct. His prayer at his baptism in Jordan was witnessed evidently by the multitudes. (Luke 3:21.) Again our Lord prayed in public, in the hearing of the mixed gathering, at the grave of Lazarus. Again at the close of our Lord's ministry, when he prayed, "Father, save me from this hour," "Father, glorify thy name," the multitudes surrounding evidently heard or in some manner knew of the prayer, as is shown by the statement of John 12:29. Again our Lord's last prayer, on the cross, was audibly heard even by his enemies.--Matt. 27:46,50.

We have gone into details of proof respecting this subject because some of God's dear people have fallen into the error of supposing from this very lesson which we are about to consider, that it is wrong, sinful, to pray with or in the presence of others, either the Church or the world; they evidently put more stress upon our Lord's words, "Enter into thy closet, etc.," than our Lord intended, as we have shown from his own course of conduct, which certainly is the best illustration of the spirit of his teachings,--for "In him was no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." We remark incidentally, however, that we have no sympathy whatever with a practice which seems to be very common with the majority of Christians, namely, that of preaching at transgressors and scoring them, in prayers ostensibly offered to God. That this general disposition is recognized by others, is well illustrated by the following statement which appeared in a Boston secular journal, in a favorable comment upon the discourse of a very popular minister in that city. It said: "His prayer was generally acknowledged to be one of the finest ever offered to a Boston audience." There are indeed strong reasons for believing that many of the prayers offered are offered more to the congregations

who hear than to the Almighty. This is a gross perversion of the wonderful privilege of prayer granted to God's children, and is of a piece with the hypocrisies of our Lord's day against which he warned his disciples, saying that those who thus pray are hypocrites and have their reward in being heard of men; for that is the reward they seek.

To this day the traveler in the far East will see and hear prayers in every direction. Some of them may be results of misdirected energy and conscience, but many of them no doubt, as intimated by our Lord, are the results of spiritual pride and desire to be thought pious. A traveler in the East writes: "I was awakened in the early morning by a sound of prayer that was evidently intended to be heard of men whether God should hear it or not; it was a prolonged and energetic intoning, with an occasional rise in the voice that would be sure to start the soundest sleeper--it was the dragoman [guide], who after the morning greeting, added, 'Did you hear me pray this morning, my master?' Indeed I did, was my reply. And then he told me of his zeal and earnestness in prayer." The customs of Christendom differ; and yet in every direction we may find evidence of the same spirit,--ambition to be thought pious, effort to make an impression upon men and women, rather than to hold communion with the Heavenly Father. Such hypocrisies cannot be too strongly guarded against in all those who seek and enjoy communion with the Father and with our Lord Jesus Christ.

#### TO WHOM SHALL WE PRAY?

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Our Lord's instruction is, "Pray to thy Father," "Pray, our Father which art in heaven." But this instruction is to be coupled with the further instruction, "Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name he will give it you." (John 15:16; 16:23.) "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." (John 14:6.) This excludes Jews, excludes Mohammedans, excludes the heathen, excludes all who have not a knowledge of Christ and a faith in him as the Redeemer. Only believers who have accepted Christ may approach God in prayer and call him "Father;" others may formulate petitions, but need expect no answers. It is only after we have accepted Christ and had our sins forgiven through faith in his blood that we may have the "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus by a new and living way which he has consecrated for us." (Heb. 10:19,20.) These privileges which we enjoy under the New Covenant sealed and ratified by the blood of Jesus, had their correspondence and type in fleshly Israel and the Law Covenant sealed with the blood of bulls and goats; hence it was

that the Jews as a people under their covenant were permitted to have access to God in prayer--tho not so directly and closely and intimately as we of the New Covenant.

"Use not vain repetitions as the heathen do."

The natural tendency of the human mind in approaching the Creator seems to be to feel its own poverty of expression, and to attempt to make up for this by repetitions. Thus the Chinese have the "praying wheels" in which long prayers that the worshiper cannot remember to repeat are turned round and round by him as representing his will, his wish, his prayers.

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The same principle is used amongst Roman Catholics, who repeat the same prayers scores and hundreds of times, and are promised by their priests certain special rewards for "saying" these prayers, a certain number of times,--the omission of so many days or years of future purgatorial sufferings. The same influences seem to operate upon Protestants tho less grossly, and often leads to long prayers and improper details of instruction to the Almighty. The Lord wished his followers to pray intelligently and realize that they were approaching an intelligent and reasonable God who knows already, far better than we, what things we have need of; and who is more willing to give them to us than earthly parents are to give good gifts to their children. Hence to repeat our petitions over and over is not only vain, in the sense that it will profit us nothing, but it indicates a low degree of spiritual development, very imperfect ideas respecting God, and a very imperfect relationship with him. The Christian neither needs to repeat certain prayers indefinitely, nor does he need to take up in prayer all the affairs of the world and the affairs of the Church, to tell God all about them and how they ought to be regulated. We have heard public prayers which implied that the worshiper had as much or more wisdom than the Almighty; because in them he undertook to tell the Almighty how, when, where and what should be done the world over, at home and abroad;--how many should be converted at the meeting in which he was praying, and how the heathen everywhere, the world over, should be dealt with.

All this is monstrously wrong. No man is in a fit condition of heart to approach God in prayer who has not first learned of his own ignorance and lack of wisdom, and learned also of the Lord's infinitely superior knowledge and wisdom and power and love. The Christian who is advanced in knowledge and experience in the heavenly way will on the contrary be so filled with a realization of his own ignorance and insufficiency that he will rather go to the Lord praying, Lord teach us thy will, show me what is thy way and plan of salvation

for Christendom and for the heathen, and show me how I may best be a co-worker with thee in the accomplishment of thy great and wonderful, wise and good purposes. Indeed, as the Christian's experience grows he is apt to come more and more to the condition of heart where his prayers to God will be chiefly thanks for mercies and favors already received, expressions of confidence in the Lord's willingness and ability to fulfil all the gracious promises of his Word, temporal and spiritual, and request merely that the divine will be done.

"Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him." The Christian's prayer therefore is not for the purpose of giving information to God, nor for the purpose of calling attention to matters which he might overlook or forget; but on the contrary he is enjoined to pray and required to pray, because it will benefit himself: God withholds many of his blessings until we approach to ask them in prayer, in order that we may realize our need of his aid, and our dependence on him. Our prayers therefore are not to induce God to give us things which he desires to withhold from us, but are merely to secure the things which he desires us to have and has promised to us, and is more willing to give than to withhold. And how wise is this divine arrangement: how many of God's people have realized great benefit from this divine arrangement that we must ask if we would receive, must seek if we would find, must "knock if it be opened unto us." And thus, in addition to the favors asked and received, the very necessity of prayer itself has brought us into close fellowship with the Lord--into the enjoyment of one of our greatest privileges and blessings.

"AFTER THIS MANNER PRAY YE."

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"Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name." This address of God as our Father, as we have just seen, does not imply the fatherhood of God to all mankind; for on the contrary we remember that our great Teacher declared to some, "Ye are of your father, the devil." And the Apostle declares that we were "children of wrath" even as others still are. We have "escaped the condemnation that is on the world," and have been translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of God's dear Son--out from amongst those who are children of wrath into the family of God; so that now, as sons of God, all who believe in Jesus may pray, "Our Father, which art in Heaven." This portion of the petition is an address of reverence, an acknowledgment of God's greatness, and implies our humility and littleness. It implies that the worshiper

reverences God and is not undertaking to address him in a light or irreverent manner: even his very name is revered as holy by the true worshiper.

"Thy Kingdom come: thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." This petition is not in the nature of a demand, nor even an expression of impatience. Rather it is an acknowledgment on the part of the worshiper that he has faith in the divine promise that a Heavenly Kingdom shall in God's due time be established in the earth. It is an acknowledgment that the worshiper not only believes God's promise but that he is in sympathy with it and desires the Lord's Kingdom --longs for it. It thus implies that he is not in sympathy with sin, nor with the kingdoms of this world and the present order and its imperfect social, financial, political and ecclesiastical arrangements. It is an acknowledgment,

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furthermore, that the worshiper is longing for the condition in which no sin will be possible;--in which God's will shall prevail on earth as well as in heaven. It thus implies that he is out of harmony with sin and in harmony with righteousness, truth, goodness. It is an acknowledgment, nevertheless that God's will is not done on earth, that his Kingdom has not come to earth as yet; for when his kingdom comes, when Christ, the appointed King, shall take unto himself his great power and reign, the result will speedily be as shown in the Scriptures, that Satan will be bound, evil in general restrained, and on the contrary knowledge, peace and blessing shall fill the whole earth. (Rev. 20:1-3; 21:1-5; 22:1-6.) There is no attempt here to tell the Lord, what must be done, and how and when his Kingdom must be established: the rightly instructed worshiper is supposed to know that he who made all things is thoroughly competent to govern and direct and overrule all things, and that he is "working all things according to the council of his own will." The worshiper, it is supposed, has gone to the divine Word for instruction and will continue to receive his instructions there respecting the divine purposes: in this petition he is merely expressing his full acquiescence to the divine arrangement and rejoicing therein.

"Give us this day our daily bread." The words of Matthew here differ slightly from those of Luke. Literally translated Luke's statement is, "be giving continually our daily bread." Matthew says "this day," while Luke says "day by day." The thought is practically the same, however. It is not an appeal to God for superabundance and much goods laid up for many days; nor is it a request for luxuries: but merely asking, Lord, give us those things which are needful to us daily. Contentment is the very spirit of this petition. Whoever prays to the Lord after this manner,

and from the heart, will surely be a very thankful and very contented person. And this petition is as broad as the divine promise respecting earthly things would warrant. "Thy bread and thy water shall be sure," leaves no room for requests for luxuries. Moreover, while this petition is the only one in the prayer of an earthly character, the only one taking hold upon earthly affairs and interests, it also may be understood as relating to spiritual things; indeed, we believe it will be so applied by all God's children, in proportion as growth is made in grace and knowledge and spirituality. The spiritually minded will be asking for the spiritual food, the spiritual necessities, day by day and will more and more realize that as the Heavenly Father clothes the lilies and feeds the ravens, so, much more, he will care for the temporal interests of all who are seeking first the Kingdom of Heaven and its righteousness, --the righteousness which it will enforce.

"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." What a thought! Who can offer a prayer "after this manner" and yet be under control of the evil spirit--filled with malice, anger, envy, hatred, strife, being unforgiving, unthankful, resentful, backbiters, slanderers? All these works of the flesh and the devil proceed from evil conditions--not one of them is prompted by true love, such as the Lord inculcates and his spirit inspires. The very essence of Christian principle is love, sympathy, forgiveness of the faults of others, even as we realize we have faults ourselves and that God has graciously forgiven us these for Christ's sake. Our Lord emphasizes the importance of this forgiving spirit before we can be children of our Father in Heaven, saying, in another place, "With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged;" and with what measure ye measure others, your own conduct shall be measured. (Matt. 7:2.) We remember, also, that he gave a parable illustrating the subject, representing his forgiven disciple as a servant who owed ten thousand talents, whose debt he had freely set aside, and did not press; but when that follower manifested so different a spirit that, finding a fellow servant who owed a few pence, he treated him unmercifully, then the Lord's mercy and generosity were likewise withdrawn from him.--See Matt. 18:23-35.

Let every Christian in approaching the throne of the heavenly grace, daily inquire of his own heart, whether or not he has forgiven those who are indebted to him, as he desires that God should freely forgive him for Christ's sake. This does not mean the forgiving of financial indebtedness and destruction of our account books, except that on the debtor willing but unable to pay, we should have mercy and patience, even as we hope for mercy of our Lord. Its special application is to moral obligations, transgressions and indebtedness. Nor does this imply that we should pay no attention to the transgressions of others against



ourselves--that we should not recognize offences. True, we should not be swift to take offense, we should be slow to anger, we should never take offense unless offense is most evidently intended. And then, while we may not forgive in the absolute sense until our forgiveness is asked, according to divine pattern on this subject, yet we should be always in a forgiving attitude of mind: that is to say, we should harbor no vindictive or malicious feelings, we should have no feelings except those of love and sympathy, and a desire to forgive the wrong that has been done us, as soon as possible, and an anxiety to make the way of reconciliation as smooth and easy as possible for the wrong-doer; and we should be on the alert to discover and prompt to rectify any missteps or wrong doings on our own parts.

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And "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." The thought here is slightly obscure; for we all remember that "God tempteth no man." Amplifying the sentence so as to give us what we believe is the literal translation of it, and adding in brackets some suggestive words to make more plain our conception of the Lord's full thought here, as it was understood by those who heard him, this passage reads thus:--"And bring us not into temptation [merely], but [also] deliver us from the Evil One." It is a part of the divine arrangement to bring us or permit us to be put into positions of trial or testing. We are not to rebel against the divine wisdom in this matter, but quite to the contrary to acquiesce in it, and to realize that trials are essential to our development. Hence, instead of praying to be kept from temptations, our prayer rather is that when our Lord in his providences brings us into places of testing, he will also stay with us during the trial, and let his grace be sufficient for us, and not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able to bear, but with the temptation provide also a way of escape--delivering us from the Evil One, Satan.

"For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, forever. Amen." These words, altho found in our Common Version and in some of the Greek manuscripts, are not found in the oldest Greek MSS., the Sinaitic and the Vatican. These would therefore seem to have been human words added to the words of our Lord. So far as this earth is concerned, these words have not been true throughout the Gospel age; the dominion of the earth has not been the Lord's; the power of earth has not been the Lord's; and the glory of the earth has not been the Lord's. On the contrary, Satan has been "the prince of this world" and has worked in the hearts of the children of disobedience, and has blinded the minds of them that believe not the gospel. And the kingdoms and powers of this world

have been Satan's, and God's people are waiting for God's Kingdom to come, as represented in verse ten, to overthrow the kingdoms of this world, and to establish the Kingdom of righteousness: to bind Satan and to destroy the works of the flesh and the devil.

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INTERESTING LETTERS.

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Kansas.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--It seems to me there should be a million of the booklet on Spiritism circulated this year. The error of Spiritism is increasing in a wonderfully rapid manner, and the regions here about seem pervaded with it. The "angel of light" phase seems to be wonderfully successful. How blessed the thought that the Lord will take care of his own. "I pray for them which thou hast given me out of the world." What joy to know that the Father hears the prayer of his dear Son. What a privilege to know that we may "abide under the shadow of the Almighty."

I enclose you a little booklet which I think should be titled "The Methodist Tenth," instead of "God's Tenth." I sometimes think if the Lord wanted to get money as badly as the preachers do he would get it. I hope it is not wicked to think such thoughts. Certainly my ideal of the Most High is very different from that. When the great work is completed, we will all see that He has done it all, and to Him belongs all the glory. Blessed be his holy name!

Yours for the truth, W. H. HOUGHTELIN.

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Missouri.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--I have to report a splendid meeting at \_\_\_\_\_; a regular camp meeting, where my audiences varied all the way from 50 to 200 people, many of whom were deeply interested in the truth, as never before. Three Universalists threw away their arms of rebellion, came forward, two of them for the 1st volume of DAWN, and the third one subscribed for the TOWER, overjoyed at the wonderful plan of redemption when brought forward from a true and reasonable standpoint. Many others were deeply affected by such a grand harmony of the Word of God. Certainly it was a feast of fat things.

With Christian greetings to yourself and Sister Russell and all the dear brethren and sisters,

Yours in the bonds of love and service,  
Z. A. RANSOM.

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Ohio.

DEAR FRIENDS:--Please find enclosed M.O. for \$1.00 to pay for my TOWER of '98. "To pay for" are not the words, however, to express my sentiments, as there is not money enough in the world "to pay for" the grand things it has been my great privilege to have, through the TOWER. May it please the Lord to continue the TOWER a true Herald of Christ's Presence and a firm defender of the Ransom, so as to keep it a true helper to us at all times.

Yours very truly, J. G. KUEHN.

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Illinois.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--The TOWER arrived this morning, announcing the death of your father. I was deeply touched by your article, and you have my earnest sympathy in your loss. What you said of his burdens and disabilities made me think of some verses in the poem, "Mortally Wounded,"--

"I lay me down to sleep, with little thought or care  
Whether the waking find me here--or there;  
A bowing, burdened head, only too glad to rest,  
Unquestioning, upon a loving breast;  
Not eager, bold nor strong--all that is past,  
Willing not to do, at last, at last!  
My long day's work is done, and this is all my part;  
I give a patient God my patient heart."

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What a great blessing this dear old father must have been to you! In his own quiet way, loyal to the truth and to you. I can understand well how his noble efforts to "hold up your hands" must have comforted

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and strengthened you through dark times when Satan assaulted the work. His was indeed--

#### A ROYAL SERVICE.

"Among the Master's callings of high honor,  
One oftentimes we miss,  
Because our hearts in their impatient yearning  
Fail to perceive its bliss;  
Fail to perceive the grandeur of its service,  
The deep, sweet joy it brings,  
And deem some other easier, or nobler,

With richer harvestings.

"And so we may not choose, but Christ appoints us  
The work of sitting still,  
And saith, My child, in quietness and patience  
This service now fulfil.  
We learn that we are given this sweet service,  
Because the Master sees  
That thus his delegates must oft be fitted  
For higher embassies.  
Until at last we hear his dear voice saying,  
Child, I have need of thee  
To fill this vacant place of trust and honor,  
To do this work for me.

"And then, as fellow-workers with the Master,  
We shall arise and go  
Forth to the harvest fields of earth, it may be,  
The reaper's joy to know;  
Or to some perfect, wondrous service yonder,  
Within some Holy Place,  
Where, veiless, in its full transfigured glory,  
His servants see his face."

Your father's humility and child-like faith in our blessed Lord were beautiful: and you could not have paid a higher tribute to him than this brief, loving article in the TOWER. While your present separation from him is sad, yet we sorrow not as those who have no hope, and we have probably only a few more years in the flesh. Then we, too, shall enter that better, more blessed life, and understand fully what now we know only in part. With much Christian love to you and to Sister Russell, I am

Yours in our dear Redeemer,

HATTIE O. HENDERSON.

[The EDITOR desires to express deep appreciation of all the many loving and sympathetic letters received from every quarter;--Love's testimonies and benedictions. What better evidences have we of the Lord's spirit than "brotherly love" and sympathy? Verily, "If one member suffers, all the members suffer with him." Please, dear Brethren and Sisters, accept this as an acknowledgement of all your kind and highly esteemed expressions of sympathy; and excuse me from a personal reply by letter, for we are extremely busy with the "harvest" work--as you will be glad to know.--EDITOR.]

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New Zealand.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--I cannot tell you how deeply thankful I feel for being enabled to come to a knowledge of present truth as set forth in MILLENNIAL DAWN and ZION'S WATCH TOWER. It has strengthened

and deepened my love for God and my desire to be of some use in the work of the present "harvest." There is a good field here for work, and I earnestly desire to engage in it. I do firmly believe that the Lord is calling me to it.

I have fully counted the cost, and I am prepared to devote my time, my talents, my all, in the Lord's work, and I wish to colporteur and devote the most of my time to spreading the truth. I have no one depending on me, so that I am entirely free to devote myself to the work. I enclose five dollars for renewal of TOWER and tracts, also some 1st volumes of DAWN.

Yours in the Lord,     ANDREW ANDERSON.

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Denmark.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. IV. and your welcome letter of the 12th inst. came safely to hand. Many thanks! I am reading the book with much interest and profit. It opens up many truths to me, so important for God's people to know; it is "meat in due season" for me. Oh, how I wish those books could have a wide circulation among the people, and enable many to see this wonderful light!

On the 17th of October there happened an event here that should not be left entirely unnoticed. The Salvation Army was then officially legitimized in Denmark. General Booth was then visiting here and opened up several new homes for destitute. And at one of his meetings he had some very big(?) people on the platform. Judge of Supreme Court F. Larsen, privy Counselor of State Goos, Lieutenant-General Bahnson, Secretary of State Tierry, Chief of Police Madsen, and several others, solemnly pronounced the Salvation Army legitimized as a useful institution for the present order of society, and promised it their best support.

But, for all that was said there, we know that it is not the promotion of Christianity these men are expecting by the efforts of the Salvation Army. It is not for the sake of Christianity, but for their own sakes, for the sake of Capitalism, that they have now legalized the "Army." And because the "Army" supports Capitalism, the great men bless its doings and step forth on the platform to thank the "Army" for all the good it has accomplished.

Please give my Christian love and regards to the office helpers and receive a large share to yourself and Sister Russell, from

Your loving brother in Christ,     J. S. WINTER.

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Bermuda.

MY DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--I am writing to thank you for the generous supply of tracts you sent

me and to tell you I arrived here after a very smooth and pleasant voyage. The people are very much scattered over the island, and in no place is there any very dense population, and as horse, steam or electric cars are entirely unknown here it entails considerable walking to make a thorough canvass of the entire colony; but (D.V.) I hope after about a week to start in and distribute the tracts and at the same time solicit orders for DAWNS, and as this is a virgin field, I trust my labor will not be in vain.

I hope, dear Brother, that you will remember me at the throne of grace that He may use me in this solemn harvest time in making me His humble instrument in this colony for separating the wheat from the tares, and that whatsoever I may do, it may be entirely for His honor and glory who has called us to be fellow-heirs with Jesus.

"Emptied, that so he might fill me, as forth to his service I go;  
Broken, that so unhindered his love through me might flow."

Yours in the love of Jesus, WALTER YARDLEY.

[This dear brother has already had 100 copies of VOL. I., and about all sold now.--EDITOR.]

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