

page 225

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CONTENTS.

Special Items.....226
 "Ye Serve the Lord Christ".....227
 Poem: Some Better Thing.....230
 Interesting Questions Answered.....230
 Elisha Doing Restitution Work.....231
 General Naaman Healed--Mercies
 Appreciated.....233
 General Naaman's Gratitude.....236
 The Covetous Servant.....238
 "Are They Not All Ministering
 Spirits?".....238

page 226

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R2343 : page 227

"YE SERVE THE LORD CHRIST."

"Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto
men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward
of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ."--Col. 3:23,24.

SERVANTS are specially addressed by the
Apostle. He points out to them not only
here but elsewhere that all service should be good
service, and that whether the person served were one
of the Lord's people or an enemy of the truth, the

work should not be slighted. The principle of the thing is pointed out, namely, that we are servants of the Lord and therefore his representatives. So then, if we find that we are in the place in which Providence has placed us, we are to serve in that place or position faithfully, perseveringly, interestedly, as tho we were laboring for the Lord, and not for men: whereas if we considered ourselves as merely laboring for men, we might labor hard and faithfully for the good, and slightly for the unkind and froward. But a point to be remembered is that we are all servants: none are called to be masters under the gospel call; one is our master, even Christ, and we all are brethren and fellow servants.

The effect of such advice is good: first, upon the world, and secondly, upon ourselves. Worldly people are keen to appreciate good service, altho they may not always acknowledge it or properly reward it: and the Apostle's instructions here, if diligently followed, would soon have the effect of making Christians the most desirable servants in any and every field of usefulness, because their work would be more faithfully and more carefully performed, and hence more satisfactory in its results. The effect of this would be that Christian intelligence and skill would be appreciated and sought; and under the operation of the general rule, being appreciated, they would be advanced to positions of more and more responsibility, where their carefulness might be the more valuable to their employers. Thus, the name of Christ would come to be respected amongst the most intelligent people, and the inquiry would naturally be, What is there about these Christians, or about their teaching and doctrines, that makes them more capable and efficient as servants?

The answer would be, This is the spirit and result of their law of Love: they are not only forbidden to do injury to anyone, even their enemies, but they are enjoined to be faithful to everyone, and to do good even to their enemies. They are instructed to labor daily, not merely for the praise and approval of their earthly masters, but especially for the praise and approval of their heavenly Master. And then, if the inquiry came, Why should they do so? the answer would be, These Christians are not expecting earthly rewards but heavenly rewards: they are content to be "pilgrims and strangers" in this present time, and servants, if Providence so orders for them, and to learn lessons in patience, submission and love, anticipating that the time is coming when they shall be highly exalted, --when their present efforts to please their Master, by faithfulness in humble positions, shall be exchanged for a most glorious service,--when they shall be united with their Master in the great work of ruling and instructing the world of mankind, during the Millennial age.

And if the intelligent employer continued questioning,

and asked, What has such a hope of the future to do with their faithfulness in the little affairs of the present life? his question would bring the answer, Their King, Master and Teacher has instructed them that all the little affairs of the present life have a bearing

R2343 : page 228

upon the development of character, and that they must develop characters of obedience, meekness, patience, love, else they will be unsuited to the future service in glory, to which they are called. Their Master has instructed them that in his view of matters he that is faithful in little things is the one who will be faithful in great things, and that only as they show their faithfulness and subordination to him, and their willingness to do his will in the present life, can they hope to be accounted worthy of the high position and great rewards which he has in reservation for those that love him. The employer would be informed further that all the tests and trials of patience and faith, in obedience to the Word of the Lord, are understood by Christians to be tests of their love for and loyalty to their Master and King, because he has so instructed. Who can doubt that the influence of such living epistles would be great for good in the world?

And what is true as respects those who are engaged in serving masters literally is true also of the entire household of faith, whatever may be their stations in life,--master or servant, mistress or maid, manager or subordinate; because all of the Lord's people are his servants. True, we are termed his brethren also, but there is nothing inconsistent with the thought of our being his brethren and still being his servants; nor would there be anything inconsistent with the thought that while all of the Lord's people are brethren some of them might, in a particular sense, be servants of brethren; and both of these thoughts are prominently set before us in the Scriptures. Each one is to share in the others' love. "Love as brethren;" and each one is to share in serving, and to esteem it a special privilege to "serve one another."

Nothing could be much more contrary to the spirit of the world, than this. The spirit of the world is to make other people your servants, and as for you, avoid serving anybody as much as possible. The spirit of Christ, on the contrary, is a spirit of service, and not a spirit of mastery, browbeating, domineering, force, compulsion: it leads those who possess it to seek opportunities for service--to "do good unto all men as we have opportunity, especially to the household of faith;" and to the contrary it leads those under its influence to be very generous and to ask or require only reasonable service from others.

The foundation principles of the Christian religion

are laid upon these lines, which are the reverse of the world's lines of thought and conduct; namely, that the greatest one in the Church is the one who is the greatest servant, the one who renders most assistance to others. The greatest servant in the Church was the great Head of the Church himself, who gave even his life on our behalf. And those of his followers who desire to be great in the estimation of the Lord and so esteemed of their fellows, are enjoined that they should follow closely in the Master's footsteps, and with humility of heart be ready and seek to lay down their lives for the brethren. (1 John 3:16.) Nor does this mean simply formal service; it means an actual service. Our Lord's sacrifice, we see, was not merely a form or a show of interest and of love: it was the giving of his life as the purchase price for ours. So with us; we are not merely to love one another and to serve one another, in word, in profession, in title (as for instance, the word "minister" signifies servant); but we are to serve one another as we are to love one another, "in deed and in truth."--1 John 3:18.

Looking about us for opportunity of service we find our Lord's instruction through the Apostle, that we should seek to do good to all men according to our ability and opportunity, but especially to the household of faith. As we look first to the household of faith to see what service we can render, we find in this household some who are naturally more attractive to us than others, some whom we would find it a pleasure to serve; while others, because of more perverse natural conditions, we find less congenial, even repellent; and these we feel less disposed to serve. But this is because of a wrong view of the subject. We are to remember that all consecrated believers are new creatures in Christ Jesus and accepted of the Lord as members of his body, fellow-members with ourselves. From this standpoint only can we realize to the full the significance of the Apostle's words in our text, "Ye do serve the Lord Christ." The Master informs us that the slightest service done to the least of his brethren is accepted as done to himself. With this view of matters clearly in mind, we see our duty of service in a new light. We see that the brother or sister of high spiritual development and possessing more of the Lord's likeness and grace, whose company we find so congenial, and whom we would delight to serve, often needs our service far less than others who are of the same Body, acknowledged by the same Head, who have much more natural depravity, unconquered, to contend with. These need our special sympathy and love and care and helpfulness; for the proper conception of service is a desire to render some benefit: and there is the more opportunity to benefit or help those who most need assistance.

Of our Lord it is written that he "pleased not himself," in his serving. He did not come into the world

on a mission of self-gratification and pleasure; but to render service. He himself said, "The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many." We are to have his spirit,

R2343 : page 229

and the thought with us is not to be our own pleasure or convenience, but on the contrary the necessities of those whom the Lord would have us serve,—namely, those of his household most in need of our aid. We may have less pleasure, according to the flesh, in serving such than we would have in serving others, but it is not fleshly pleasure that we are seeking; and we can

R2344 : page 229

have as much or more spiritual pleasure serving those who are the most needy members of the body of Christ, because we realize that this is the will of our Master. It is to him that we really render the service, and our highest spiritual pleasure must be in doing those things which are pleasing in his sight. And it is because our Master has so ordered, that the household of faith is to be served in preference to any other class; consequently we are to ignore the opinions of the worldly and of the nominal church and not to seek out the most degraded people of the world, and spend our energies upon them, but we are to seek the most needy members of the body of Christ, that we may be most helpful to them. The Lord will attend to the poor heathen world in due time, and the time is now nigh at hand. The first work is, as we have seen from the Scriptures, the preparation of the body of Christ; and it is to this end that we are to "edify one another, building up one another in the most holy faith."

Another thought respecting service is that the true service of the Lord and his truth may be a small, humble and comparatively insignificant service, or a larger and more prominent service. And of course, if two opportunities for service offer, which were otherwise alike, we should choose and use the larger and the more important of the two opportunities. But we are to guard ourselves against seeking for large opportunities for service, and overlooking or intentionally passing by smaller opportunities. We believe this is a common error amongst those who seek to serve the Lord Christ. They desire to do some great thing for him; they would be overjoyed with the privilege of addressing thousands of intelligent and interested hearers. They fain would sway nations to the Lord's standard. Some would be willing to use smaller opportunities, and to address a hundred or fifty or even less, yet perhaps would think it not worth while to use the little opportunities of everyday life in speaking to one or two or three, or a dozen or a score, in a day, or of

handing a tract, or of loaning a book, or of circulating tracts in the railway train, or upon the street corner. These services they would esteem too insignificant to render to the Master; they feel that they must do some great thing.

This is a serious mistake, and any who find such a disposition in their hearts should at once analyze their sentiments carefully, to ascertain whether or not they have the desire to serve the Lord, or whether theirs is a desire for self-glorification,--a desire to be identified with something great, prominent and distinguished. The Lord's rule is, not to put a new servant into a very important place. The captains in the Lord's army are expected to rise from the ranks. He tells us the process of his judgment respecting fitness for prominent service, when he says, "He that is faithful in that which is least will be faithful also in that which is greater." "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted; he that exalteth himself shall be abased." And the more we look at the principles here set forth, the more we see of their wisdom and correctness. The person who is earnest and zealous to serve the Lord, so willing and so anxious for the opportunity that he will do what his hand finds to do with his might, that is a true servant; that servant shows his love for the Master,--shows that his is not a love of self and of self-advancement. Such servants, the Lord sees, can be trusted with a more important service, and consequently, when a more important service is to be attended to, usually the Lord selects one who has been faithful in a few things, to give charge over larger things. And who would dispute the wisdom of the Lord's method? He who has not humility enough to do the smallest service for the Lord, for the truth, and for the fellow-members of the body of Christ, has not humility enough to be entrusted with any larger service; for larger service might prove a great injury to himself, since it would tend to cultivate a quality which is latent in every member of the fallen race, and one which would thoroughly incapacitate him for further service, namely, pride,--self-conceit and its concomitant evils.

In thus requiring that all who would be followers of him shall be servants, not merely in name, but in deed and in truth and in spirit, our Lord lays down a rule which tends to keep out of his real flock the selfish and ambitious wolves. Yet the danger remains that, if the Lord's flock as a whole in any place loses the real conception of their call, that it is a call to service, the self-seeking disposition is apt to spread as a contagion from one to another of the entire company, until, instead of being servants one of the other, they may become a group of self-seekers; each seeking his own welfare and honor and position, and each neglecting the fact that the chief business of life is to render service to others. And each one who gets into this

attitude of self-seeking himself is thereby to a large degree blinded to the proper principles that should govern. And a group of Christians in such a condition might, and very probably would, select as their principal one or leader a person of self-seeking disposition, a lord over God's heritage, instead of a servant of the flock.

R2344 : page 230

Seeing that this is the Lord's arrangement, that we are to grow in this grace by noticing and using our opportunities as servants, we exhort all who may read these lines to be more faithful, henceforth, in seeking for opportunities of service to the Church which is the body of Christ; and that thus carefully seeking they take heed that they do not pass by some of the small opportunities. Let us remember that our great Master set us an example in this direction, preaching some of his most wonderful sermons to extremely small audiences. For instance; his discourse on the Water of Life, to the woman of Samaria; his discourse on Heavenly versus Earthly things, to Nicodemus; his discourse to Nathaniel, and his discourse to the two who were going to Emmaus, after his resurrection. If we take care of the little opportunities for service, in a humble way, and are faithful in these, and render this service heartily as unto the Lord, we will by and by be granted larger and still larger opportunities. To him that hath used his opportunities shall be granted more, and from him who hath not used his opportunities, that which he has had will be taken from him. "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord, and not unto men, knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward. For ye serve the Lord Christ."

R2344 : page 230

SOME BETTER THING.

Tho wintry wind the yellow leaf displaceth,
For spring's sweet harbingers it maketh room;--
Ere long the tender bud the forest graceth,
New verdure waketh from old Nature's tomb.

The snowy blossom from the orchard fadeth,
'Tis then the earnest of fair fruit we find;
Tho morning mist the landscape overshadoweth,
The sunlit mountain-peaks are just behind.

Lo, in the crimson West the glory dieth,
And from his throne Day's monarch hath withdrawn!

Herein the promise of the sunrise lieth--
Already we are waiting for the dawn.

O heart bereaved, some better thing remaineth,
Tho God should seem thy treasures to remove;
Some better thing his gracious hand retaineth,
He will not fail the children of his love.

Some better thing! Thy life-joy all departed--
Its glory trailing sadly in the dust;
O cleave to him,--the Savior tender-hearted;
Thou canst not understand, but thou canst trust.

Perchance he leads to depths of self-abasement,
And storms awake, and billows round thee roll;
Give thanks! Contrition is the open casement
Through which the Dove of Peace shall reach thy soul.

O patient heart, thy best, thy brightest bringing,
With full consent upon his altar lay!
Some fair new blessing even now is winging,
All unobserved, its sure but noiseless way.

Thy purpose crossed, each sunny prospect clouded,
Still to his changeless promise learn to cling;
Altho his ways may be in darkness shrouded,
Jehovah hath reserved some better thing.
--LUCY A. BENNETT.

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R2344 : page 230

INTERESTING QUESTIONS ANSWERED.

Question. Had Adam a knowledge of death by observation of it in the lower creation?

Answer. There is nothing to show that he had. But whether he had or had not witnessed death, he probably understood to some extent what God meant when he used the words, "Dying, thou shalt die." He was not deceived. Tho Adam's experience was limited, he undoubtedly understood what it meant to have life, and had some idea of what it would mean to lose his life and to be resolved into the elements from which he had been created.

Question. In Gen. 1:28 and similar passages the word "replenish" seems to indicate that the earth had been peopled before Adam's creation. Is there anything in the claim of a pre-Adamic race? or that some of the more barbarous nations are not Adam's offspring?

Answer. You would find it of advantage when such questions come up to consult Young's Concordance

and show the advocate of any erroneous view the definitions there given, and also other passages in which the word in question occurs. If "replenish" be the meaning here, it should fit the other instances in which the word is used; but it does not. The proper rendering of the word is fill.--See margin.

The Scriptures are positive in the declaration that Adam was the first human being. In 1 Cor. 15:45,47, he is called the first man. In Acts 17:26, it is stated that God "made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth;" in other words, all the peoples of the earth are descended from Adam, no matter how different in color, stature, intelligence, etc., they may now be.

Furthermore, the entire testimony of the Bible must needs be set aside to give color to such a theory: for the Scriptures record that present races had their start in father Noah and that only his descendants survived the flood. And in the New Testament our Lord and several of the Apostles corroborate this record--of Noah and the flood. The negro race is supposed to be descended from Ham, whose special degradation is mentioned in Gen. 9:22,25.

Question. Please briefly give us your views on Rom. 2:14,15.

Answer. These verses assure us that some heathen people do some good things in harmony with the

R2345 : page 230

divine law, and that to that extent their conduct meets with the divine approval. But the Apostle clearly

R2345 : page 231

shows that neither the Jews nor the heathen do all things in harmony with the divine law, nor can they, because of inherited imperfections. Hence, neither the Jews nor the heathen would be justified under the Law. God, however, has provided through Christ a justification, under the terms of the New Covenant, which excuses and forgives whatever is not wilful sin, on the part of both Jews and heathen, who receive Christ, and through his merit. Thus it is that God will justify the heathen through faith--not all the heathen, but all the heathen who will exercise the faith when the knowledge of Christ shall reach them, in God's due time.

Question. I was surprised to note your advice to any who might be drafted into the army. Would not your advice seem like compromising to avoid trouble?

Answer. It is proper to avoid trouble in a proper manner. It is proper to compromise when no principle is involved, as in the case mentioned. Notice that there is no command in the Scriptures against military service. Obedience to a draft would remind us of our

Lord's words, "If any man compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain." The government may compel marching or drilling, but cannot compel you to kill the foe. You need not be a good marksman.

Question. You suggested in a recent WATCH TOWER that, if drafted and in the army, we need not shoot to kill. Would such a course be right? Would it not be fraudulent?

Answer. No; it would be quite right to shoot, not to kill. You forget, perhaps, our provisos, which were that we explain our conscientious scruples against war, and seek to be excused; if not excused, that we seek non-combatant positions, as nurses, etc.; but if compelled to go a mile or many miles as a soldier, we still need not kill anybody.

Question. Will we know each other in the Kingdom?

Answer. When the Apostle says (1 Cor. 13:12), "Now we see through a glass darkly [i.e., as through an obscured glass], but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know, even as I also am known," he undoubtedly included in the future knowledge the recognition of friends, even as he realized himself already known of God. If we are to be partakers of "the divine nature" and inheritors of all things, we must expect to be acquainted with the beings who form a considerable part of our heritage for a thousand years as well as with our associates in that inheritance.

Question. Were not the Psalms inspired specially for song service; and is it not therefore improper to use other hymns?

Answer. David's thought in writing the Psalms may have been merely their use in song; but the Lord's object was to give prophecy to assist his people of a later period. See what Peter says on this subject. (1 Pet. 1:10-12.) Other prophecies of the Old Testament are written in poetical form, particularly Isaiah and Job. Our Lord quoted from both, as did also his apostles, and showed that in some of the Psalms David typified the Lord.

While some of the Psalms seem to us very suitable for singing, others we regard as less appropriate than hymns of praise of modern date. When the apostles said that we should sing "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" (Eph. 5:19), he recognized a distinction between the three kinds of songs and commended all. We believe it is safe to follow his instructions, remembering the instruction, "Be not wise above what is written." However, on this subject we believe each one should follow his own conscience. Doubtless the Lord accepts the offering of song, whatever its form, so long as it comes from the heart,--just as with prose prayers; for hymns and psalms should be regarded as union or concert prayers.

ELISHA DOING RESTITUTION WORK.

--AUG. 14.--2 KINGS 4:25-37.--

"Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee."--Psa. 55:22.

ELISHA did receive a double portion of Elijah's spirit, or power. Not only did Jordan part before him, in obedience to his faith and at the stroke of the mantle, but other important works followed. Coming to a school of the prophets, they found that in preparing the dinner of vegetables something had gotten into the stew which they recognized to be poisonous, and the dinner was spoiled; but Elisha miraculously antidoted the poison, and made the dinner wholesome. Again, the people of Jericho complained that the fountain of water which supplied them was brackish, and he healed the waters so that the fountain became known as the fountain of Elisha, and the place is so known to-day.

These may be considered as typical of the restitution works which the Elisha class will introduce to the world. What do people who are religiously disposed, and who seek to understand the Word of the Lord, need, as the first feature of restitution blessings? Will it not be that something shall be put into their mess of pottage, that will destroy its poisonous errors, and make it health-giving, nutritious? Surely the peoples of civilized lands have God's Word in their hands, and its contents are good and nourishing and health-giving; but some of the theological cooks have unintentionally added doctrines of the Evil One so that it is made to the people a poisonous dinner, injurious, as represented in the various creeds of Christendom. And what does the world in general need more than that the springs of the water of life (which have become corrupted and brackish, through false theories and misinterpretations of the divine Word and plan) should be corrected, healed, made sweet and pure and refreshing? And such restitution work will be accomplished,

we understand, by the successors of the Gospel Church in a much larger measure than the Church itself is able to accomplish it now--the Church's work being specifically the making of herself ready.--Rev. 19:7.

Further, we have the record of how the poor widow and her sons were helped by the prophet Elisha, to whom she appealed in her distress. A debt was upon her, and, according to the terms of the Law,

her sons would be bound to serve the creditor until the indebtedness had been discharged, or until the Jubilee year should be ushered in; and as she was a widow she needed her sons' assistance at home. The prophet saw her distress, sympathized with her, and assisted: the assistance being rendered in a manner which helped to develop her faith in the Lord. The only merchantable thing she had in her house was a pot of oil; and the prophet directed her to send among her neighbors and borrow all the empty vessels that she could obtain, and to pour all full of oil, which then she could sell, and from the proceeds pay the debt and have something left; and so she did, according to directions. Does not this act of relieving the poor illustrate restitution powers and work also? Are we not told that in that time the Lord will "lift up the poor and the needy, and him that hath no helper?" There is in this a lesson of the Lord's sympathy with us in our earthly difficulties; a lesson of his willingness to assist us to pay our honest debts; and a lesson of the propriety of paying honest debts. And there is another lesson respecting how God is pleased to bless the use of the things which we have, rather than to send us other things, or to miraculously put the money into our pockets. There is also a lesson for faith, because it was in proportion to her faith that the woman gathered a large or small number of vessels, and therefore got a larger or a smaller evidence of divine bounty and mercy. Let us, when dealing with the Lord, remember that all the gold and silver are his, and the "cattle on a thousand hills," and let our works be in harmony with our faith.

We come now to the particular feature of this lesson, the Shunammite woman and her son: and this also contains a suggestion of the great restitution blessing of awakening the dead. This Shunammite has the record of the Scriptures that she was "a great woman." Apparently she and her husband were comfortably situated in life; perhaps indeed the greatness referred in part to wealth, but evidently she was a more than ordinary woman in other respects, as is indicated by the narrative. She may have been superior to her husband in intelligence, as the narrative seems to indicate. She had the kind of greatness, too, which recognizes goodness, and reverences the Lord, and those who are his. Seeing the prophet pass her place occasionally, probably on his way to the schools of the prophets, she hospitably urged him to take dinner with her, and so, apparently, every time he passed that way he stopped to partake of her hospitality. And the more this great woman saw of the Lord's prophet the more she realized that it was a favor to have him under the roof, so she said to her husband, "Behold now, I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually. Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall, and let us set for him there

a bed, and a table, and a stool and a candlestick: and it shall be when he cometh to us that he shall turn in thither." Altho apparently the husband was less religiously

R2346 : page 232

inclined than his wife, and perhaps less "great" in some other respects, yet this courteous request, expressed in so wifely and proper a manner, appealed to him, and was acted upon, and we may say that part of the woman's greatness is manifested in this her dealing with her own husband. How many women there are who, if they felt themselves the greater of the two, would altogether forget the propriety of consulting with the husband, the divinely appointed head of the family, and requesting cooperation in religious work and benevolence, rather than demanding it. Modesty and humility are true signs of greatness, both in men and women.

Hotels and lodging houses and restaurants were not arrangements of those days, and consequently hospitality was more practised than to-day. In some respects we have lost considerably by the change of customs, for the spirit of hospitality seems to be considerably less than in olden times. We believe that so far as possible every Christian family would do well, if their means would justify, to have such a spare room for the entertainment of the Lord's servants who may come their way. We believe that a blessing, spiritual if not temporal, comes to all who seek to cultivate this spirit of loving generosity, benevolence, kindness, in the entertainment of the Lord's servants,--and in general the household of faith, as they may have opportunity.

A similar spirit of benevolence and thoughtfulness for others was in the Prophet, who requested his servant to notice whether or not the kind entertainer was lacking of anything which would minister to her comfort, which he could supply. The answer was that she was childless; and seizing the opportunity the Prophet informed her that she should have a son. There is a lesson here for each of us, to the effect that if we are the recipients of favor from others--either from the Lord or his people--if we have the same spirit we will seek to do something in return. Those who accept of the favors of others, and lack the desire and fail to seek the opportunity to do as much or more in return, are certainly lacking the Lord's spirit in this particular.

R2346 : page 233

Years passed; the child grew to boyhood, and while in the harvest field was taken ill with something like sunstroke, and died. The mother, with exhibitions of great faith, laid the dead child in the prophet's room, upon his bed, and immediately started with her servant in all haste to find the Prophet. When the

Prophet by the mouth of his servant asked, "Is it well?" she had faith enough to answer, "It is well;" and reaching the prophet's presence she reminded him of the fact that she had not requested the son, that he had been a gift, and intimated that if now the lad were taken away, instead of being a gift or benefaction to her the matter would be only a sorrow; yet she did not say that the boy was dead, apparently having full confidence in the power of God, through the Prophet, to awaken him, even from the sleep of death. The Prophet, full of faith also, sent his staff to be laid upon the child, at the hands of the servant; but the mother had not so much faith in the staff as in the Prophet, and would be satisfied with nothing else than a visit from him. When Elisha arrived he found the child dead, but neither did this stagger his faith: he shut the door, and prayed to the Father in secret, but not only did he pray, but he used restorative means, which finally resulted in the awakening of the child from the sleep of death, when he delivered him to his mother, whose faith had thus its reward.

There are several lessons here for us. Considering Elisha as a type, and his works as typical of the works of restitution in the beginning of the Millennial age, we note what the New Testament Scriptures clearly affirm, that vitality will be restored to humanity so that "All that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man, and shall come forth." And the earthly agents in the Kingdom will no doubt be participators to a considerable extent in restitution work along this line, as well as along other lines. Thus Elisha in his companionship with Elijah seems to represent the "tribulation saints," and subsequently the work and workers of the entire Millennial age.

But we may draw lessons of profit for the present time from the Shunammite woman's faith and the Prophet's faith and works. Apparently the Prophet was perplexed by this case. The staff in the hands of his servant had been without avail; his own efforts for a considerable time were without avail. Here was room for doubt as to whether or not the Lord's power had forsaken him. He walked the little room repeatedly, and again and again laid his face upon the child's face, and his hands upon the child's hands, presumably the meanwhile praying the divine blessing. But finally faith triumphed. This case reminds us of the one in which the disciples failed to cast out the devil from the boy, while the Lord and Peter, James and John were in the Mount of Transfiguration. Our Lord's remark was, "This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." So, apparently the Lord is pleased to exercise his power either slowly or quickly, according to circumstances and conditions.

We are not to consider this as a resurrection of the dead, in the proper Scriptural sense of the word resurrection. It was merely a temporary awakening

from the sleep of death, as in the case of Lazarus and the son of the widow of Nain and the daughter of Jairus. These parties all, later, relapsed into death. Nor could their subsequent death be properly termed the second death, unless, after their awakening, they by wilful sin came under its condemnation. And to whatever extent we are less than perfect and possessed of life in its completeness, to that extent each is already in death, whether he have a greater or a smaller spark of vitality remaining. As heretofore seen, in discussing the subject of resurrection, that word signifies a raising up--all the way up to all from which we fell in Adam, namely, to the perfection of life.-- See our issue for April 1, '93.

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R2346 : page 233

GENERAL NAAMAN HEALED--MERCIES APPRECIATED.

--AUG. 21.--2 KINGS 5:1-14.--

"Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved."--Jer. 17:14.

ELISHA'S fame was evidently very general throughout Israel, and this lesson tells us of its spread to Syria, the adjoining kingdom, through one of its captives--a maidservant in the household of one of Syria's principal generals. For some reason the Lord seems to have had more interest in Syria than in the other nations of the world outside of Israel and Judah. The reason of this probably lies in the fact that King David conquered Syria, and incorporated it as a part of the twelve-tribe kingdom, and it so continued during the period of Solomon's reign. It was thus considerably permeated with Israelitish influence. At the time of the revolt of the ten tribes and the division of Israel into two kingdoms, the kingdom of Syria seems to have regained its independence: nevertheless, because of its intimate relationship with the people of Israel we found (in our lesson of July 24), that Elijah the prophet was sent to anoint Hazael to be king over Syria, as indicating a special oversight of that people on the Lord's part, more than of other Gentile nations. No doubt because of this intimacy with Israel, Syria is frequently referred to also in the

R2346 : page 234

prophets, and her captivity to Babylon was foretold.

At all events, affairs so shaped themselves as to bring to the chief general of Syria a better knowledge of the true God, Jehovah, and that through the instrumentality of the little bondmaid. Naaman, with all

his prowess in war, and his favor with the king, and the honor done him by the people, had a very serious ailment--leprosy. A man of wealth and position, he would have given almost anything to be free from the loathsome disease. The little maid, so far from feeling envious, revengeful and wickedly toward her captors, was evidently exercised by a very benevolent, kindly disposition; and perhaps indeed she had been well cared for by her captors, and was appreciative. Seeing the general's trouble she called the matter to the attention of her mistress, assuring her that there was a prophet in Israel who could heal him.

She probably knew nothing about the name of the prophet, nor about his resident city, but her account was sufficiently explicit to awaken the interest of her master, the leper, who started out on his journey to the land of Israel, to see the prophet. Naturally, he sought to bring as much influence to bear as possible, and hence took letters from the king of Syria to the king of Israel, as well as valuable presents of money, fine apparel, etc. This would be expected of a wealthy man, dealing with a wealthy man, a king. And the thought in mind of the general, as well as in that of the Syrian king, evidently was that any prophet so notable as the one indicated, and able to cure any kind of a disease, and who had already performed wonderful cures, would be found at the royal court, specially favored of the king, and made a high officer in some sense in the kingdom.

Hence it was that so remarkable a letter was written, which for the time confounded the king of Israel. It read: "I have herewith sent Naaman, my servant, to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy."

R2347 : page 234

Leprosy was recognized as being an incurable disease; therefore the king of Israel at once surmised that the king of Syria wished to pick a quarrel with him, and to have an excuse for another invasion, to carry off more spoil and more captives. The rending or tearing of the outer garment was, in olden times, a sign of sore distress, perplexity of mind; but it was much less of an operation than it would be with modern clothes. The action of the king was evidently soon noised abroad, and came to the ears of Elisha, who at once sent word that the king need have no perplexity, but should send the leper to him; intimating that he would be healed. All of this experience doubtless seemed very strange to Naaman, as he found that the king knew nothing about such a person at first, and finally had sent him to a lowly house. He was still more surprised and disappointed when the prophet did not even think it worth while to come out and salute him, or do obeisance, or make particular inquiry or say any words of enchantment, etc., but sent him a commonplace

message, that he needed to go and wash several times. He was indignant; he knew that the waters of the river Jordan were muddy, far less likely to wash away any defilement than the waters of his own city, Damascus, which were beautiful, clear mountain streams. Naaman was wroth: had he come a long journey, and with imposing outfit of chariots and servants, to be treated like a dog? Was he not a great man with his master, the king of Syria, and was not the latter an influential king in those parts? "So he turned and went away in a rage."

Leprosy in the Scriptures, because it is incurable, and because it eats as a canker, is used as a symbol of sin, which cannot be eradicated from the blood and the system, except by divine power. Sometimes great sinners, and wealthy sinners, recognize themselves as sinners, and desire to be cleansed; and some of these are inclined to think that there should be some special manner of dealing with their cases, different from the general one: for they are willing to give of their influence or of their means. They forget that our God is not poor; all the gold and silver are his, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. It is, therefore, difficult for wealthy people to humble themselves, and to come to the Lord in the only attitude of humble obedience, that will gain the desired end; hence it is that the Lord said, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of Heaven"--with what difficulty will they get in,--how few of them will get in. And this applies not only to great riches of money, but also to riches of reputation and to wealth of learning. Hence we see that it is much easier for poor people, and unlearned people, and people without great reputations to come to the Lord and to accept the great gift of his grace, upon his conditions. In coming to the Lord there is no difference between the king and the beggar; both need his bounty, his grace, and it is offered to both upon precisely the same terms.

WISE COUNSEL HEHEDED.

Naaman had evidently some sensible companions, servants, or possibly under officers, who "came near," approached him in a moderate and wise manner, and offered him some good advice, saying in substance, We know how disappointed you feel; we know that if this prophet had demanded of you some great thing, you would have been pleased to perform it, and not only so but would have been pleased to have rewarded him handsomely, and now because he has ignored your wealth and your presents, and has bidden you do something which seems quite common-place, it is well calculated to make you resentful; but consider the

other side: it is an easy thing to perform, and we advise that you do so forthwith.

How excellent a thing is good counsel; it is needed, not only by the foolish, but needed also by the wise, as in this case. Naaman was undoubtedly a wiser and abler man than his servants, yet in the present case he was so closely interested that his judgment did not act as well as theirs; and they were wise servants, and were surely the more appreciated by Naaman for not simply joining with him and agreeing with his every word and every thought. They might have assented to his proposition, and said, Yes! you are insulted; we are all insulted! Resent the insult, ask the king of Syria to permit you to bring up an army against them, and teach them a lesson of your greatness, etc. But instead, they wisely counselled their general to perform the simple thing which had been directed, and all the more willingly than if it had been a very difficult matter.

So there are everywhere people who are ready to counsel evil, and they are generally more numerous than those who are ready to counsel good--in favor of peace, harmony, obedience, righteousness. Yet this should always be the attitude of the Lord's people: they are always to be peacemakers--on honorable grounds, of course; but nevertheless always striving or making for peace. How often it is that those who are inquiring the way to the Lord, especially if they are wealthy, are misdirected, by the very ones who have opportunity to help them to take proper views of the matter--to humble themselves to learn the lesson of complete submission to the Lord and his methods of getting rid of sin.

TRUE GREATNESS MANIFESTED.

The true greatness of Naaman is also here incidentally brought forward. Had he been a man of inferior mind, he would have been so haughty and dignified that his servants could not even have offered him a suggestion; or, receiving it of them, he would have resented it, as being from an inferior source; considering that his servants were not qualified to offer him any suggestions. But being a wise man, "a great man," as our lesson expresses it, he was not unapproachable, nor inclined to disrespect sound, reasonable advice, even tho it came from an unexpected and humble quarter. All of the Lord's people should realize that the little child or a person least learned either in religion or science may be able to offer a suggestion which would be valuable to the most profound thinker. It therefore is not only the Scriptural course but the

reasonable, wise course, that all of the Lord's people should be so humble minded as to be approachable, and able to hear, weigh, and act upon sensible advice, even from those below them in the social scale.

Naaman dipped himself in the water of the Jordan, as directed, once--no sign of improvement; twice--still no sign; three, four, five, six times--still no sign. The prophet had said seven times; but he might reasonably have expected that the leprosy would begin to go away with the first dip; but no, he was to exercise faith. It required faith to go to the muddy river of Jordan to bathe at all; it required faith to continue the bathing until he had fulfilled the full number of times, according to the promise. With the seventh dip came the blessing, and he was clean. His flesh came again, soft, smooth, clean, not scurfy and dead, as in leprosy.

Thus it is also in reference to sin,--moral leprosy. Every man realizes that he is imperfect, that sin has a hold upon his mental, physical and moral powers; and many are the methods advocated for getting free, getting rid of sin. The natural man suggests that he can get rid of sin for himself, without any advice from any quarter; he can wash and be clean by moral reforms which he will some day begin in earnest; he can cleanse his own flesh and spirit; he needs no prophet to teach him where or how; he has as much knowledge on the subject as anybody. He has no great high Priest and wants nobody to redeem him as his substitute. Besides, to fulfil the conditions required for the forgiveness of sin would be taking a very open and courageous step, and he shrinks from making such an outward demonstration, and considers that it would do no special good anyway: that if the Lord would save him he can save him just as well at one time and place as another. Others make the mistake of being unwilling to do anything for their own recovery out of sin; they will not go to Jordan and wash; because they lack faith. Not a profession of faith, but the exercise of an active, living faith brings the blessing.

But the sinner who has come to feel the load of his sin, its grievousness, is prepared to do a good deal if he can only get rid of it. When he comes to this place of being ready to obey the Lord's voice, it not infrequently is the result of good counsel on the part of his friends--Christian friends. He is finally prepared to take the humiliating step of acknowledging that nothing that he can do for himself will relieve his own trouble; of acknowledging that there is only the one power that is able either to prescribe the remedy or to supply it; and that is the Lord. But when finally the sinner plunges into the antitypical Jordan, "the fountain filled with blood, drawn from Immanuel's veins," and when he dips therein seven times (that is, perfectly,--seven being a symbol of perfection) then he has indeed a cleansing. He is justified by faith, justified from all which the law would not justify; he

is made every whit whole, reckonedly, and has then a standing with God. We can imagine the rejoicing of

R2347 : page 236

Naaman and of his companions, and we know the still greater rejoicing of the one who, coming to the Lord, has had the moral leprosy of sin all washed away. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Our Lord refers to this miracle (Luke 4:27) saying: "Many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha, the prophet, but none of them were cleansed, save Naaman, a Syrian." Our Lord points out that there was a difference in the condition of heart as between some of these lepers of Israel and this particular

R2348 : page 236

Syrian leper, just as there was a difference in that particular widow of Zarephath with whom the prophet Elijah dwelt during the famine, and whose cruse of oil and crock of meal on this account did not exhaust. There was faith found in the widow. There was faith also found in Naaman. The "many lepers" of Israel had heard of this prophet, no doubt, as well as had the little bondmaid. But Naaman had faith in God to come seeking Elisha, and with large presents, while the lepers of Israel had not thought it worth while to seek Elisha, for help, altho in the same country. This illustrates to us the general lesson of the Scriptures, that "without faith it is impossible to please God." God tells us of his benevolence and willingness to forgive sins, yet only those who have faith in him, and who come to have their sins forgiven, only such get the blessing.

How comforting is the Scriptural assurance that the notable, general lack of faith is owing very largely to the influence of Satan, "the prince of this world," who shortly shall be bound for the thousand years of Christ's reign. "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not." Thank God that soon all these "blind eyes shall be opened." --Isa. 35:5.

GENERAL NAAMAN'S GRATITUDE.

Another matter which shows Naaman in an excellent light, and which assures us that God appreciates character, and made no mistake in sending word to Naaman respecting his prophet, etc., is found in the fact that, after he had been healed in Jordan, he did not thanklessly go on to his home, saying, Now that king and his prophet, who were so independent that

they would not come down and make more ado over me, and perhaps come to Jordan with me, to see whether or not it took effect, have missed getting the present which I brought from Syria for them, and I am the gainer by just that much. No; with a true nobility of soul he desired to make some acknowledgment of the goodness which had been bestowed upon him. He probably knew something about the true God, and probably with his heart and with his lips acknowledged him, and rendered thanks for his recovery from the leprosy, so soon as he was healed: but this was not enough. As God had seen fit to use an agent in bringing the blessing to him, he rightly judged that it was as little as he could do to recognize the same agent that God had recognized--God's own accredited agent in his healing. So he returned to Elisha with the remarkable words, "Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel; now therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing [a present] of thy servant." Here true dignity of character is shown. He was not seeking to see how cheaply he could get the favor of heaven; he did not say within himself, If Elisha had bargained with me for a large sum before I went down to Jordan, and got the blessing, then indeed I would have given him much to obtain this great benefit, but now I will put him off with some trifling gift, and no doubt, as a poor man, he will think a great deal of it.

On the contrary, he had brought a gift representing, it is claimed, over seventy-seven thousand dollars, besides much "goodly apparel," and he evidently was desirous that the prophet should receive all of this as a token of his appreciation of the great benefit conferred. Our Lord's reference to Naaman and his cure, and how the Lord's favor reached him, even tho he was a Gentile, reminds us of the fact that when our Lord healed ten lepers by the wayside, only one of them returned to give God the glory for his healing. Naaman, the Syrian, was more noble, evidently, than the other nine, if not more noble also than the tenth, who, so far as we know, offered no present--tho perhaps this was because he had nothing to offer.

This illustrates to us the difference in conduct amongst those who receive the blessing of the forgiveness of sins--cleansing from moral leprosy. Some receive it as a matter of course; some are thankful, but especially glad that they got it so cheaply--that salvation is free. It is only the occasional one ("not many learned, not many wise," not many altogether), who receives the divine blessing, forgiveness, who returns to give God the glory and to offer him a thank-offering. Not very many present either money or influence or their lives at his feet, in recognition of the boon of their forgiveness.

Addressing these who have been washed from their sins in the precious blood, who have received

forgiveness of sins through faith in that blood, and who consequently are reckoned of the Lord as justified freely from all things, the Apostle says to them, "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God [manifest toward you in the forgiveness of your sins], that ye present your bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable, to God, which is your reasonable service."

R2348 : page 237

Naaman had the spirit, the disposition, the mind, which under the favorable conditions of the Gospel age would have made of him a saint--a member of the elect "little flock," the Church. If he appreciated so largely, so heartily, his physical cleansing, who can question that he would have appreciated much more a moral cleansing, and the full reconciliation to God, and the privilege of coming into the family of God as a son and as a joint-heir with Christ? His conduct shows to us that he would have been ready to lay down his life, and all his wealth, all his possessions and his honor with the King of Syria. And this, we see, would be but a "reasonable service" for him as it is for us, and for all who have been made recipients of this great blessing of forgiveness of sins--cleansing.

But if the noble, proper spirit was manifested by Naaman, in desiring to render something in return for the mercies received, there was not less of the noble spirit in Elisha, in refusing to receive those gifts. To have received the presents would have meant the selling of the divine power which operated through him; and Elisha well knew that God's gifts are not for sale. Fortunate would it be for many who deal with the spiritual things of the Lord, in the cure of the leprosy of sin, if they could take as exalted a view of matters as did Elisha. We fear that too often the Lord's servants are ready to accept earthly rewards for their part in the healing of sin-sickness--costly apparel, gold and silver.

And then comes out still another lesson of nobility of character. Naaman requested that he might have as much soil from the land of Israel as two pack mules could carry, intimating that his desire for this earth was that he might place it in some suitable location in his own country, that he might kneel upon the sacred soil, which God had blessed, and might offer prayer to the true God, who had healed him, besides whom there is no God. And the keenness of his conscience is shown by his further remark that he knew that his king, as a worshipper of a false God, would expect him to go with him, as his servant, as usual, that he might lean upon his arm, when bowing himself before the false god; and he inquired whether or not Jehovah would pardon him for thus joining with and assisting his king in the worship which now he no longer would take part in from the heart. Elisha indicated

to him that he would be forgiven for joining thus unwillingly in the bowing before the idol, as a servant with his master, the king.

We cannot doubt that Elisha sought direction of the Lord in this matter, and that he had the Lord's mind in respect to it. But why even this much sanction to a false god should be permitted may be a question. We suggest, as an explanation, that God was not then dealing with any Gentile nation, but with Judah and Israel only; "You only have I known [recognized] of all the families of the earth." (Amos 3:2.) The other nations were without any of God's promises, or, as expressed by the Apostle Paul, "without God and having no hope." The redemption sacrifice for the sins of the whole world had not yet been offered, would not be offered for several centuries; consequently, altho Naaman was of so honest a heart that the Lord delighted to send him to the Prophet, and to heal him of his leprosy, and altho the Lord appreciated his nobility of character, yet the time had not come for making any offer of reconciliation to the Gentiles. The only offer thus far made was to the seed of Abraham, according to the flesh.

Consequently, altho Naaman recognized Jehovah, Jehovah had not yet recognized him,--could not do so, under the covenant then in force, the Law Covenant, --and had not prepared to recognize him or any other such noble Gentile characters, until the New Covenant would go into force, later. Hence, it mattered not, except to Naaman himself, how he worshiped. His worship would not be accepted. He had no mediator! It was entirely proper, therefore, that while Naaman, having recognized Jehovah for himself, should worship Jehovah and respect him alone, as the true God, yet nevertheless, as the servant of the king of Syria, he might join in any worship that might please his master, Jehovah not having accepted or even "called" him, to become his servant. We cannot doubt that, when the Millennial age shall have fully dawned, and when those who are in the graves shall come forth, and the turn of Naaman shall come, it will find in him one whose condition of heart and mind toward the Lord will make him very ready for the good tidings of great joy unto all people through the New Covenant, sealed by the precious blood of our Lord Jesus at Calvary. We cannot doubt that so noble a character will make rapid progress under the favorable conditions of the Millennial age back to the original perfection, the image and likeness of God, lost by the whole race through father Adam.

The conscientiousness of Naaman, the Gentile, who had never before heard much of Jehovah, is strikingly

R2349 : page 237

in contrast with the deficiency of this quality in

many who have enjoyed many privileges in Christian lands, and much advantage every way. We wonder much, for instance, when some of the Lord's people are translated out of darkness into his marvelous light, when their minds are relieved of the cloud of superstition and veil of ignorance which long have hindered them from seeing God's true character,--we wonder why these do not take an equally decided course and inquire of the Lord through his oracle, the Word of

R2349 : page 238

the testimony, whether or not it is longer permitted of them to bow themselves down before creeds of men, which misrepresent the divine character and plan: whether or not it is permitted of them to continue worshiping after the old manner, which they have found to be an erroneous manner: whether or not it is proper for them to lend their influence and presence at meetings whose tendencies and influences are chiefly against the truth, tho outwardly they are "religious" and have "a form of godliness." Such inquiries now, at the oracle of God, get the response, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

THE COVETOUS SERVANT.

There is still another feature of this narrative which contains a valuable lesson. Elisha had a servant named Gehazi, who had been with the prophet for a considerable time, and had witnessed many of his wonderful works; the same servant, probably, who carried his staff and laid it upon the Shunammite woman's son, and who very well knew that the Lord's power had operated through the Prophet for the recovery of the child to life. But all of this contact with divine power and goodness and mercy, and all of the illustrations of the Prophet's nobility of character and generosity--all of this counted for practically nothing, to Gehazi. He saw the rich presents that had been brought by Naaman, and allowed covetousness to enter into his heart, instead of allowing the spirit of righteousness and generosity to prevent it. He said to himself, What a pity to see this wealth thus rejected by the Prophet. I will contrive a plan by which I may get some of it for myself; then I can have olive groves and vineyards, and be a very wealthy man, and some of these costly garments will make me the envy of all my neighbors. So he ran after the departing chariot, to accomplish his purpose.

As a matter of fact, covetousness, with almost everyone, leads to various other sins--generally to lying, sometimes to murder. Nearly every crime is more

or less traceable to covetousness. In this case Gehazi did not hesitate to lie, and not only so, but to misrepresent his master, and thus indirectly to misrepresent God. His falsehood was, "My master hath sent me, saying, Behold even now there be come to me from Mount Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets: give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver [1944] and two changes of garments." Nothing doubting, the generous Naaman urged him to take two talents of silver, and bound them in two bags, with the changes of garments, and laid them upon two of his servants, and they bare them before him, and when he came to a secret place Gehazi took them from their hands and hid them in the house.

But Elisha called him and said, "Went not my heart with thee when the man turned again from the chariot to meet thee? Is it a time [a suitable occasion] for the receiving of money, garments, olive yards, vineyards, sheep, oxen, menservants and maidservants?" --intimating that all of these things had been the moving covetous cause before the mind of Gehazi: and no doubt at that period such an amount of money, nearly \$4000, would have purchased a great deal and have made Gehazi a wealthy man. But the penalty of his misconduct was severe, for the leprosy of Naaman was given him.

The lesson here would seem to be that while some who have been ignorant of the gospel of grace of God are mightily and properly actuated by it (like Naaman), others who are in daily contact with divine grace, fail to have the right attitude of heart to appreciate it, and know of it chiefly as so much merchandise (like Gehazi). This covetousness becomes to some, even if they had already been cleansed, a renewal of the leprosy or sin. The same influence which operates favorably upon one heart, operates unfavorably upon another. This reminds us of the Apostle's statement, which is applicable throughout this Gospel age, that the gospel of Christ is either a savor of life unto life, or of death unto death. It will either have the effect of bringing us near to the Lord, in appreciation and imitation of his goodness and love, or it will have the reverse effect of repelling us from the Lord, and bringing us under a spirit of evil and selfishness. Let all who have come in contact with the grace of God take heed, lest they receive the grace of God in vain; lest instead of being benefited by it they are hardened by it, and finally should be esteemed wilful sinners on their own account.

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--AUG. 28.--2 KINGS 6:8-18.--

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

THE SPECIAL feature of this Scripture lesson is that there are invisible powers on every hand for the protection and assistance of the Lord's people, while doing his work. As we have already shown, there are "wicked spirits," invisible to humanity, whose fiendish delight is to deceive, mislead and ensnare mankind.* But in this lesson we have the other side of the question presented to our attention. It is an encouragement to know that, tho beset by evil spirits, the Lord's people are surrounded by other invisible agents no less powerful, whose interest in their welfare is of the highest order, and who are near to guard us in proportion as our hearts are pure, and loyal to the Lord and his Word.

Tho we do not understand the process, we accept the fact, that God has both spoken and written and operated miraculously through holy men of old. We have had illustrations of this in the preceding lessons respecting Elijah and Elisha. But how these communications

*See What Say the Scriptures About Spiritualism?--10c. per copy.

R2349 : page 239

were made to the prophets we are not informed. Quite possibly they were made through the invisible spirit beings who serve the Lord and his people. Concerning these invisible spirit beings, angels, the Apostle says, "Are they not all ministering [serving] spirits, sent forth to minister unto those who shall be heirs of salvation?" It may be that they ministered to Elijah and Elisha the information which they possessed, and which therefore constituted them prophets. For instance, in this lesson, we are informed that Elisha sent word in advance to the king of Israel respecting the movements and intentions of the king of Syria, and that his fame as a seer had extended to Syria: so that the counsellors of Syria's king explained the matter to him, saying, "Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest secretly in thy bedchamber."

Is it unreasonable to suppose that it was these invisible ministering spirits which were the divine instrumentality in making known to Elisha the things proper to be told to the king of Israel for his protection? We think it not unlikely; we think it probable. In one of our previous lessons we saw that, when the Shunammite woman came to Elisha to inquire about her son, Elisha said, "The Lord hath hid it from

me, and hath not told me." (2 Kings 4:27.) From this it is evident that it was not by any power that the prophet himself possessed that he had any special knowledge, but by revelations from the Lord. And this agrees with the testimony of the Apostle Peter, who says, "Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the holy spirit." (2 Pet. 1:21.) Our suggestion is that the holy spirit of God communicated information to the prophets through the holy angels, the invisible spirit beings who encamp round about them that fear God. But for God to use this instrumentality in communication would make it no less his power, just as he may use the lightning or the storm to do his work, and it be none the less his work; just as we may speak by telephone or telegraph or cable, and it be as really our word and deed as tho done without those agencies of communication.

The folly of humanity attempting to cope with the spiritual powers is well illustrated in this lesson by the conduct of the king of Syria in sending an armed company to capture Elisha. He might well have reasoned that if the prophet had information of his most secret plans respecting the king of Israel, he would none the less have information respecting the proposed capture of himself. But the king of Syria and some of his people were to be taught a lesson respecting the power of the God of Israel, and of any man whom the God of Israel might choose to use as his channel or mouthpiece. Here, the foolishness of man was made to show forth the wisdom and power of God.

Elisha's servant (not Gehazi, we may feel assured, but another more worthy), seeing the armed host surrounding the city, was in terror, but the Prophet, who likewise saw the armed host, also discerned another host, more powerful, more numerous; and he entreated the Lord on behalf of his servant that he might have an

R2350 : page 239

opening of the eyes, to see that all the mountains round about them were filled with spirit beings--"horses and chariots of fire," or like fire, as all spirit beings are described in Scripture. (See Ezek. 1:13,14; Dan. 7:9; Rev. 4:3-5.) The Lord answered the prayer: and then the young man saw what Elisha had already told him, that "they that be with us are more than they that be with them."

It is important that every Christian should have the eyes of his understanding opened, that he may see by faith that which was shown to Elisha and his servant literally. During this Gospel age the Lord does not open our natural eyes to see the wonderful provisions he has made for us, and his power for our protection; but instead he gives us a still better knowledge of the subject through his Word of grace and

truth, so that we are enabled to walk by faith and not by sight; to see the armies of the Lord encamped around about us and to recognize their protection of us, without any miracle being performed upon our natural sight. None of us are sufficiently strong to pass through the fight of Christian warfare without just such assistances as these which the Lord has provided, and which faith beholds, accepts, lays hold of, rests upon and is strengthened by.

Shall we call this faith in invisible spiritual powers and agencies of God the true spiritualism of the Scriptures --in contradistinction to the evil spiritualism which is of Satan and his fellows, the fallen angels, the "wicked spirits in exalted positions?" We believe that this is so, and spiritualists admit that there are both good and evil spirits. They are sure that there are evil spirits, because they know how these have ensnared them in evil, enticed them into sin. They know that they are what the Scriptures term "lying spirits," because they have been lied to by the spirits which communicated with them; but they insist that there are good spirits, and they think that sometimes they have had communications with these. But this proposition we dispute: we hold that all the rapping, wonder doing and other manifestations of so-called spiritists are from the Evil One, and his consorts entirely.

A very small amount of common sense should convince anyone that the holy angels must have something better, higher, nobler, to do than are the various

R2350 : page 240

practices of these so-called spirits who speak through mediums and by obsession. Indeed, we hold that the good spirits, the holy angels, make no communications with man now: that these communications belonged to a previous time, when they were appropriate and necessary as the channels of divine communication. We do not need their ministry through mediums to-day, and are especially forbidden to seek communication or knowledge through such channels: this for the same reason that we do not need the testimony of the inspired seers and prophets to-day; because God has made an abundant provision for us through the prophetic utterances of the past, to the intent that we of this Gospel age should walk not by sight nor by communication with the angels, but by faith. We may realize no less clearly, but even more clearly, than did the ancients that he who is on our part is more than all they that be against us; we may discern by the eye of faith that the "angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them;" we may realize that all the powers of heaven--"more than twelve legions of angels"--altho invisible to us, are nevertheless present, and fully subservient

to every will of our glorious Lord; and that thus surrounded and protected we are living "under the shadow of the Almighty" and, as it were, in the hollow of his hand.

In this connection we are reminded of our Lord's words respecting his faithful disciples, his "little ones." He assures us that the very humblest of those who are his have high connections with the heavenly throne, saying, "Their angels do always behold the face of my Father in heaven." (Matt. 18:10.) That is to say, as the angels are all "ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation" (the Gospel Church), there are some of them who have a charge, a watch, a care over each member of the body of Christ. Perhaps one guardian angel to each saint, perhaps more than one; but we have the Lord's assurance that his provision is "sufficient." One thought that our Lord's words give to us is, that these holy angels, charged with ministering to and caring for the elect, are in no danger of being detained so that they must wait for a long time on more important business before having access to the Father: on the contrary, they always have access to him, they can always see his face; and through the Redeemer, and by these agencies, God is ever ready to respond to our cries and to cause all things to work together for good to them that love him.

Turning to the host of Syria, the prophet prayed to the Lord that they might be smitten with blindness, our Common Version says; but from the original text the thought would appear to be not the loss of sight, but a bewilderment or hallucination, somewhat similar to that produced by hypnotism; when a person sees or imagines that he sees things differently from what they actually are. Exercising this power upon the host, Elisha guided them to the city of Samaria, saying, "This is not the way, neither is this the city; follow me, I will bring you to the man whom ye seek." And this was true, for Dothan was not Elisha's city, his home was in Samaria, and thither he took them; and he did indeed bring them to the man they sought, namely, himself; but not after the manner that they had expected. The narrative proceeds to say that when he had led them into the city of Samaria (under the influence of some power like hypnotism), he then said, "Lord, open the eyes of these men, that they may see," and then they understood where they were. They were completely in the hands of their enemies; surrounded by the king of Israel and his soldiers.

The king of Israel inquired whether or not he should smite them with the sword? Such an inquiry seems to indicate a considerable change of the kingly attitude toward the Lord and his representative: the reformation work was taking effect; Israel's kings were learning gradually that the will of the Lord was to be considered, and that to neglect his counsel would be

unwise indeed. Elisha, in his reply, shows a large and benevolent heart, in full accord with the highest teachings of the New Testament. He showed the king that these men should not be put to death; but that instead a better way would be to return good for the intended evil. Accordingly, the king made a great feast and entertained his enemies and sent them home. We cannot doubt that they marveled at their peculiar experiences, and the happy outcome of what seemed for the moment so great a disaster. We may suppose, too, that they had a higher degree of respect for the Lord and his prophets and the king upon the throne of Israel, than they ever before had.

There is a lesson in this for us also: the best victories are the bloodless ones; the ones in which the spirit of righteousness and mercy and benevolence gains the victory over the spirit of rivalry, ambition and selfishness. This, under the New Covenant, among the soldiers of the cross is known as fighting the good fight and overcoming evil with good. It may not succeed in fullest measure in the present time, but nevertheless it will develop in ourselves the peaceable fruits of righteousness, and prepare us for a share in the strong government of the future, which with one hand will restrain the wicked and all the powers of evil, while with the other hand it blesses, washes, refreshes and anoints with the oil of gladness and blessing all the willing and obedient of the entire groaning creation.

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page 241

VOL. XIX. AUGUST 15, 1898. No. 16.

CONTENTS.

Items: Council Bluffs Convention, etc.....242
 "Be Content with Such Things as
 Ye Have".....243
 Few are Appreciative, etc.....246
 "Have Faith in God"--"Lord,
 Increase Our Faith".....247
 "Faith's Foundation Strong".....247
 "Elisha Died, and They Buried Him".....248
 "Woe unto Them that are at Ease
 in Zion".....250
 The Prophecy of Amos.....251
 Interesting Letters.....255

page 242

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS

--ADDRESS TO--

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Those of the interested who, by reason of old age or accident, or other adversity, are unable to pay for the TOWER will be supplied FREE, if they send a Postal Card each December, stating their case and requesting the paper. We are not only willing, but anxious, that all such be on our list constantly.

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COUNCIL BLUFFS CONVENTION.--OCT. 1-5.

SINCE the Omaha Exposition secures very low rail-road rates, the friends in that vicinity urge the holding of a Convention at which the Editor of ZION'S WATCH TOWER shall meet with them and as many as can conveniently attend, for a Bible Study, along the lines of the Divine Plan of the Ages; and to get personally acquainted. This kind invitation has been cordially accepted by the Editor who promises (D.V.) to attend.

The Convention is called for October 1 to 5, altho it is expected that the first day's meetings will be informal (social merely), time being necessary for getting visitors properly settled. Likewise no meetings are announced for the last day, the 5th, it being left open for social meetings and conferences and leave-takings. The general meetings will therefore commence Sunday, Oct. 2nd, at 9 A.M., with a Testimony Meeting, to be followed at 10.30 by a discourse by the Editor of ZION'S WATCH TOWER. Subsequent meetings will then be announced.

The meeting place is TEMPLE HALL, No. 400 BROADWAY, COUNCIL BLUFFS, IOWA. Excursion tickets should probably be purchased to Omaha, Neb., which is just across the river from COUNCIL BLUFFS, IOWA, where the meetings are to be held. Brother Adams kindly volunteers arrangements for visiting Brethren and Sisters at moderate rates,--that clean and comfortable accommodation (three meals and lodging) can be had at one dollar per day: it will be well, however, for all visitors to provide for expenses of at least \$1.50 per day to cover car-fare, etc. We mention this because we well know that the majority of those interested in "present truth" are poor in this world's goods, and must count the cost even of spiritual refreshments. There will be no other expenses and no collections: all else is provided for by the loving friends who have called the Convention.

Write a postal card to the WATCH TOWER office on Sept. 20th, if you expect to attend the Convention, stating the fact; and if others will go with you, say how many, so that your lodging may be arranged for in advance through Brother Adams.

OLD THEOLOGY TRACTS.

We have sent out great quantities of tracts lately and have depleted our stock so that several numbers are temporarily out; viz., Nos. 2, 21, 38, 40 and 41. We will have a good supply in about a month. Order other numbers freely as you can use them.

"TABERNACLE SHADOWS OF BETTER SACRIFICES."

Our supply of this booklet is exhausted: and as the plates are worn it will require to be reset. We must ask you to wait patiently for these until November.

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R2351 : page 243

"BE CONTENT WITH SUCH THINGS AS YE HAVE."

"Be content with such things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.--Heb. 13:5,6.

BAD ADVICE, very bad advice, says Mr. Worldlywiseman; it is because this advice has not been followed that we of America have made such progress within the past century. It is because the workmen of the United States are ambitious, energetic, and not content with such things as they have, but constantly trying to make two blades of grass grow, where one grew before, and to put ten dollars in the bank to one that was there before, that our nation has stepped rapidly to the front, and become noted for the genius, thrift and progressiveness of its people.

We will not dispute Mr. Worldlywiseman's statement, except to say that all of the remarkable progress of the present century is not due alone to discontent: much of it is due to freedom, which has come chiefly as the result of greater enlightenment,--an enlightenment which has come largely as a result of having the Bible in the living languages of the people and in their possession. Another element contributing to the marvelous developments of this century is one of which few take note; namely, that since 1799 we have been in the period known in the Scripture, as "the day of his preparation:" the period in which the Lord has been lifting the veil, and letting in upon the world, through natural channels, a stream of inventive

genius designed to bring forward to perfection, through chemistry and mechanics and art, the devices and contrivances which will ere long most marvelously, under the guiding control of Immanuel, during the Millennium, make of this earth a Paradise. Nevertheless, we are willing to concede that ambition and discontent are present, and that they are helping in their way to bring forward the various devices which shall ultimately prove so great a blessing to mankind; but on the other hand, we contend that just in proportion as discontent is spread, in that proportion unhappiness is present, and an anarchistic spirit begotten.

We see more clearly than those looking in other directions, that discontent is permeating the entire fabric of society and making it restless, and rapidly leading to the great catastrophe of trouble and anarchy which the Scriptures point out will be the end of this present age, "a time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation." We notice also that discontent and selfish ambition are at work in the home, in the mill, in the factory and in the Church; and that wherever these touch and grind, somebody is bruised or crushed, or at least made sore and sensitive. Wherever they abound, they blight peace, joy and a holy spirit. They are in antagonism to the spirit of Christ --meekness, patience, gentleness, brotherly kindness, love. They tend toward the spirit of the Adversary, --anger, malice, envy, hatred, strife, bitterness. What wonder, then, that the statistics show that despite the great increase of medical skill, especially in the treatment of nervous and mental ailments, and despite also the more favorable conditions of birth and living, mental and nervous diseases are greatly on the increase, and asylums are being enlarged and new ones built. Nor are these conditions confined to this country; reports from Europe are to the same effect,-- even worse as respects insanity and suicide.

It would be useless to point the world to the fact that happiness, the desirable quality, is on the decrease as wealth and business are on the increase--that the grandfathers of the present generation, altho less favorably situated every way, enjoyed life better because more contented than their grandchildren of to-day:

R2351 : page 244

the world would be unwilling to go back to the conditions which were happifying in the past, and have a craving for still more of luxury for the future, and will have it or at least strive to get it, whatever the cost. Indeed, knowing this, and knowing also of the divine provision for the future, and how present discontent is shortly to teach mankind a great lesson through the wreck of the present social structure, built upon selfishness, covetousness, ambition, and discontent, we think it wisest to let the world alone,

to let it take its course and reap the reward of that course, and ultimately learn the lesson which Providence will teach. We therefore say little to the world on the subject of discontent, except as their cases may come close to us and properly under our criticism and advice. Even then our advice would not be that the world should attempt the impossible thing of being content while under a spirit of selfishness and discontent; rather we will advise such to seek and find the Lord and his spirit of love and peace and gentleness and goodness, and finding it, prove that "Godliness with contentment is great gain,"--"having the promise of the life which now is and also of that which is to come."--1 Tim. 6:6; 4:8.

THE THINGS WHICH WE HAVE--WITH WHICH WE ARE CONTENT.

Nor should it be overlooked that this is the standpoint of all Scriptural address--the inspired injunctions and admonitions are not to the world, but to those who have become the Lord's covenanted people. The poor world, and especially the poor world who are without God, and who have no hope, have surely very little cause for contentment;--they have neither the luxuries desired for this life, nor the exceeding great and precious promises for the future life. Indeed, under the false teaching inculcated by the great adversary of God and truth and man, many not only have a comfortless treadmill existence in the present time, but are led to look forward to awful tortures in the future--a hell of unending suffering, or a purgatorial period of suffering, to last for hundreds or thousands of years. Poor world! What wonder if it is downcast, discontented, morbid, anarchistic.

But with the Christian--the true Christian, begotten of the truth (by the Word of truth, not by the word of error), how different are all these things! He sees what the world does not see, namely, the reason why God has permitted the reign of sin and death in the world for the past six thousand years. He sees more, namely that God, who has been just to inflict the penalty of sin--death, and its concomitants of disease and pain and trouble,--is also loving and gracious, and has prepared a redemption from the sentence and an ultimate deliverance from the blight of sin and death. He rejoices to know that this ransom price has already been paid and that its payment was formally acknowledged by Jehovah at Pentecost. He is instructed by the Word of grace that as a result of this redemption the whole world which was first tried and sentenced in Father Adam is to be tried again individually; and that the provision for this fresh trial was made in the "ransom for all" given at Calvary. He learns also that the divine time for this trial of the whole world, under the offer of eternal life through

Christ, and the conditions of the New Covenant, is yet future--during the Millennial age--according as it is written, "God hath appointed a day in the which he will judge [grant trial to] the world, by that man whom he hath ordained--Jesus Christ."--Acts 17:31.

Having learned this much, he rejoices in the hope of eternal life, and longs for release from the present conditions of weakness and the fall, and for a full delivery into the liberty (freedom from sin) of the sons of God. While thus rejoicing in his new-found hope, and looking forward expectantly for its realization, at the second coming of the Redeemer, to inaugurate the times of restitution of all things (Acts 3:19-23), he receives a further message to the effect that since he appreciates the divine goodness already made known to him, he is privileged to know of and to share in a still further blessing. The steps of grace are explained to him as follows, by the divine Word:

(1) The step of faith and acceptance of the great redemptive sacrifice which you have already taken is reckoned to you for and as justification in God's sight; and now being thus reckoned as justified, you are to be treated as not only freed from the sentence of death in Adam, but also as tho freed from your imperfections, inherited through the fall, which are reckoned as being "covered."

(2) All this is in order that you may take the second step, which is now due; namely, you may present your body to the Lord by full consecration, and without reservation: to be or to do or to suffer, to have or not to have, to enjoy or not to enjoy further, the things of this present lifetime; and to spend yourself and be spent, with all that you have and all that you are, in the Lord's service, in the service of the truth, and in the service of all those who are in harmony with the truth.

(3) It is pointed out to you that in many respects this is the pathway which the great Redeemer trod, and that by walking in this difficult "narrow way" you will be following in his footsteps and along the same path of sacrifice which he trod.

(4) Furthermore, the assurance is given that, if you follow in this pathway faithfully, to the end of

R2351 : page 245

life's journey, all of your unwilling and unintentional blemishes will continue to be covered by the merit of

R2352 : page 245

your Redeemer's sacrifice: so that, at the end of the journey, all these who are now "called" and who thus gladly obey the "call," will be granted also the privilege of sharing with the Redeemer in the honors and glories of his Millennial Kingdom: and of being instruments

of God, with the Redeemer, for conferring upon the world of mankind all the gracious benefits and blessings purchased by the Redeemer's death, finished at Calvary;--sharing in the judging of the world, in the ruling of the world, and, as members of the royal priesthood, in the blessing and helping of the world back, by restitution paths,--to all that was lost in Adam and his transgression.

Whoever has heard this glorious message, in the true sense of hearing it--with the hearing of faith and acceptance--has received indeed what is called by some a "Second Blessing." If the forgiveness of his sins and reconciliation to the Lord, through the blood of the cross, the Christian's first experience in grace, was a great blessing that could scarcely be comprehended or measured, still more is this second blessing a cause for fulness of joy, in that it has brought to us begetting of the holy spirit, whereby we know that we are the sons of God, "and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, our Lord, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." It is enough to know that, "Now we are the sons of God, and [that] it doth not yet appear what [the full completeness of the glory and blessing that shall come to us at his second advent] shall be, for we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him."--1 John 3:2.

It is this class that the Apostle addresses in the words of our text. We that have such blessings would surely be unappreciative, unthankful, if we are not content with such blessed things as we have. We have such things as should make us happy under the most adverse circumstances, so far as the present life is concerned. We, by the grace of God, have found the pearl of great price, and are not only content with the terms upon which it is offered to us, but most gladly, willingly, joyfully, we count all else but loss and dross that we may retain our ownership in it,--win Christ, and be found in him,--members of the body of the great Prophet, Priest and King, who shortly, as the antitype of Moses, shall stand forth as the deliverer of all who love righteousness, from the bondage of Sin and Satan.--Acts 3:22,23.

All who have intelligently taken the position of followers of Christ, knew from their start in the narrow way to expect trials and difficulties and adversities, and have said to the Master:--

"Not for ease or worldly pleasure,
Nor for fame my prayer shall be;
Gladly will I toil and suffer,
Only let me walk with thee, close to thee."

We should view every affair and incident of this present life that is not painful as a cause for thankfulness to the Lord; because it is that much less than our covenant might legitimately require; for our Master distinctly informed us that the way was rugged, saying,

"Whosoever will live godly in this present time shall suffer persecution." And furthermore, our Lord's own example of suffering and enduring patiently the mockings, slanders, evil speaking, and general contradiction of sinners against himself, and the examples of the Apostles, who followed closely in his footsteps in the same path, all indicate that, all things considered, we of the present time who "have not yet resisted unto blood [death], striving against sin" and the machinations of sinners and the wiles of the Adversary, have much to be thankful for, that our lines have fallen unto us in comparatively pleasant places. We have every reason for thankfulness, no reason for murmuring.

And not only are we to be appreciative of the smooth places along the "narrow way," in which the Lord gives rest to our weary feet, but we are to be thankful also for all the trials and tribulations. If by faith we have laid hold, first, upon justification; and secondly, upon the high calling, and its exceeding great and precious promises, we must thirdly lay hold also by faith on the assurances of the Lord's Word that all things are working together for good to those who have made this covenant with him, and who are seeking to perform it;--to those who love God, and who were called according to his purpose, to this high calling. Viewed from the proper standpoint, all the trials and difficulties which come to us will be seen to be mercies and blessings, designed to shape us in conformity with the lines of character manifested in our Lord and Head, and to polish us and to make us fit for the inheritance of the saints in light. While, therefore, we are not to rush into temptation, nor to bring upon ourselves persecution by injudicious conduct, yet when these things come to us as rewards for fidelity to principles of truth and righteousness, exercised in the spirit of meekness, gentleness, patience and love, we are to rejoice in them, as so many ministries of evil toward us, which under divine guidance are fitting and preparing us to further reflect the Lord's likeness, and to further be his representatives and ministers of righteousness, now and hereafter. And to shrink back from and to avoid the trials and difficulties and persecutions incident to faithfulness to the Lord and to his service, would be, in a measure at least, to draw back from our consecration, which is to

R2352 : page 246

suffer with him, that we may also reign with him--to be dead with him, that we may also live with him.

**FEW ARE APPRECIATIVE--FEW VALUE THE THINGS
THAT THEY HAVE.**

But evidently only the smaller number of those

who have named the name of Christ, and who have made consecration of life and time and influence and all things to him, have ever appreciated these matters in their true light; and hence, not only are the so-called Christian nations the most discontented peoples of the world, but professed Christians are often among the most discontented and unhappy of individuals. Nay more, even some of those who have made the full consecration to the Lord, and some who have come to a considerable knowledge of present truth and respecting the wonderful time in which we are living, and the high calling and its object, and the glories to follow the sufferings of this present time,--many of these also, we fear, are among the discontented of the world,--unhappy, restless, not enjoying the rest which God provides for his people, not having "the peace of God which passeth all understanding" to rule in their hearts and keep all the other affairs of life in subjection and in order.

Brethren, these things ought not so to be. See to it that they do not so continue. Remember that according to our covenant we sacrificed all of our earthly interests and rights, that we might become sharers with our Master in the divine nature and all the heavenly promises. Remember that the only things of an earthly kind promised us by the Lord are that we shall have the things needful. If we learn aright the lessons of necessity, we will find that the things needful for our sustenance might mean a bill of fare of very limited variety and of very inexpensive food; and it might mean a wardrobe of great simplicity and of very little cost; and it might mean a home of very humble appearance and very small and very scantily furnished. Whatever we have more than necessity is that much more than the Lord has promised to us in this present time; and is a cause for thankfulness of lip, and gratitude of heart.

With these things rightly viewed, where is the occasion or the desire to murmur or complain about such things as we have? Where would be the desire to wish for, hope for, or ask for more than the Lord has promised to give us, and more than his unerring wisdom has seen would be best for us? If these lessons from the Lord's Word are received into the good soil of honest hearts, they will speedily bring forth, under the sunshine of the divine favor and the droppings of divine grace, a hundredfold more of joy and peace and trust and contentment and happiness and love, in the lives of all who put them into exercise: and the influence upon our families, neighbors and associates will be a good influence, for their happiness as well as our own.

Instead of complaining about the weather, that it is too hot or too cold, too wet or too dry, too bright or too dark, or that it is too foggy or cloudy or murky, or something, let us be content with such weather as

we have. We did not make it and we cannot change it. And since our wise and loving heavenly Father sees best to permit it so now, we see it best to have it so now. In his own good time his favor shall reach not only the world of mankind, to lift up and bless and heal it, but will reach also the home of mankind, the earth, to bring it into the Paradisaic condition which he has promised it shall have in the "times of restitution of all things."

If your health is not the best, do not go mourning and complaining all your days; be thankful--thankful that it is not worse, remembering that as a member of the fallen race the full penalty of sin against you is pain and suffering unto death. Whatever therefore you have, that is moderate or endurable or in some measure enjoyable, be very thankful, very grateful, and make the most of it.

Our text, then, is not only a good medicine to bring us spiritual health and joy in the Lord, but also very profitable to our physical health; for it is unquestionably a fact that the majority of people aggravate their physical complaints and diseases

R2353 : page 246

by their fretfulness and unhappiness of mind. If you are one of the Lord's children, remember the words of our Redeemer, Master and Forerunner in the narrow way, to the effect that the Gentiles (those who know not God, who are not his covenant people) seek continually after what they shall eat, what they shall drink, and wherewithal they shall be clothed, and that we should not be like unto them, because our Heavenly Father knoweth what things we have need of, before we ask him; and he has already promised, that we shall have what is best for us.

If your position in life is a lowly one, and requires continual labor to secure the things needful, do not complain, but, on the contrary, render thanks--thanks for the health and strength to perform the needed labor; thanks for the realization that the present brief life is only the schooling time, and that the lessons of the present, rightly learned, will bring riches of grace and glory which the world could neither give nor take away. Think then, on the other hand, of the fact that your condition is in some respects more favorable than that of some others who seem to be more prosperous or better situated: how many who have had wealth and leisure have found in them a curse! How

R2353 : page 247

many who have not been cursed by wealth have found that the deceitfulness of riches and the pride they are apt to induce are hindrances instead of helps in the "narrow way;" how many have found the meaning of

the Lord's words, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God."

Remember also the words of the Apostle, that not many rich, not many great, not many learned, are amongst God's chosen; that chiefly the poor of this world, rich in faith, shall be heirs of the Kingdom. Realizing that riches of faith, riches of trust, riches of contentment, and riches of godliness, with the fruits of the spirit which accompany these constitute the true riches, give thanks to the Lord that in his wisdom and grace he has so favorably situated you.

"HAVE FAITH IN GOD"--"LORD, INCREASE OUR FAITH."

The same principle holds good with reference to all of our affairs, no matter what. The lesson of faith, to those who have become the Lord's consecrated people, is not merely faith in doctrines and theories, nor, indeed, chiefly this faith. The chief feature of faith is confidence in God; that what he has promised he is able and willing to fulfil. This faith grasps not only the things to come, but also the things present; this faith rejoices not only in the glory that shall be revealed, but rejoices also in the sufferings and trials and difficulties and all the rich experiences which an all-wise Father sees best to permit. Let us therefore, as the Apostle exhorts, rejoice evermore, "in everything giving thanks."--1 Thess. 5:18; Eph. 5:20.

The best illustrations of this true faith, this continuous confidence in God, is found, as we should expect, in our dear Redeemer's experiences and their narrative. Realizing that he was in the world for the purpose of serving the divine plan, he realized also continually the supervision of divine wisdom in respect to all his affairs: consequently he not only went to the Father frequently in prayer, and went to the Word of the Lord for guidance, but every experience through which he passed, and all the opposition with which he met, he recognized as being under the divine supervision. He knew that he was fully consecrated to the Father, and seeking not his own will but the will of him that sent him; he knew consequently that the Father's providential care was superintending all the affairs of his life.

This is forcibly illustrated in his answer to Pilate; when the latter said to him, "Knowest thou not that I have power either to deliver thee or to put thee to death?" Jesus answered, "Thou couldest have no power, except it were given thee of my Father." Again he said, with respect to the cup of suffering and ignominy, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" Indeed, it was sufficient for him in any and every matter to realize that the Father was controlling: this thought gave him courage to do, to suffer and to bear.

And similar confidence in divine Providence is necessary to all who would come off conquerors through him who loved us and died for us. If we can feel sure that we have fully surrendered ourselves to God according to his call, we may also feel sure that all things are working for our good: we may realize in every emergency of life that the Father has prepared the cup, and will sustain and bless us while we drink it: our Lord Jesus, the Father's representative, oversees our trials and ignominy and suffering; he permits the cup to be prepared for us by blinded servants of Satan. This knowledge should not only enable us to take joyfully the spoiling of our goods (anything that we deemed precious, trade, influence, good name, etc.), but should enable us also to entreat with kindness and gentleness, and with a spirit of forgiveness those who prepare and administer the cup of our sufferings. But none can have this confidence of faith--none should have it--except one certain, particular class; and it is not a large class as compared to the world, but a "little flock"--those who have believed in the precious blood unto justification, and who have, as members of the body of Christ, consecrated themselves unreservedly to walk in their Redeemer's footsteps, to suffer with him, and to be finally glorified together with him.

"WHAT IS FAITH'S FOUNDATION STRONG?"

In our text, after the Apostle has urged us to be "content with such things as ye have," he adds the reason or ground upon which this advice is given, saying, "For he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." Yes; this is the true ground of contentment, the realization of the Lord's care, and that the Lord's wisdom and grace are being exercised towards us,--and that such things as he grants are the things which are best for us, and which we would choose for ourselves, if we had sufficient wisdom and insight into all the circumstances of the case.

The Apostle adds, "So then we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man shall do unto me." The whole world has wondered at the intelligent courage of the humble ones of the Lord's people. The secret of their courage and of their strength is in their confidence that the Lord is their helper, that he, with wisdom and love which are infinite, is both able and willing to make all things work together for their good.

Possibly some may be inclined to wonder why so much attention has been given in these columns of late

to themes similar to the one here discussed, and kindred topics calculated to develop more and more the spirit of love and the various fruits of that spirit, and to counteract the spirit of selfishness, and the evil fruits of that spirit. We answer, it is because we believe these lessons to be specially opportune at the present time. The Lord, by his grace, has removed many blinding errors from our minds, and given us clearer insight of his glorious plans, and revealed to us his glorious character in connection with his plan; and there has perhaps been more or less danger, that in such a study of theology the real object of all this knowledge, the object of the Gospel, may be lost sight of. It is not God's object to merely find an intellectual people, nor to instruct a people with reference to his plans, but to sanctify a people with the truth, and thus to make them "meet [fit] for the inheritance of the saints in light." We are of the opinion that the testings which the Lord designs for his people are not merely doctrinal tests, and consequently we expect, more and more, that the harvest siftings and separations amongst those who come to a knowledge of the truth, will be considerably along the lines of character, and of the fruits of the spirit.

The Lord's final decision is not, If you be ignorant of certain things you are none of mine; nor, If you have certain knowledge you are mine; but, "If any man have not the spirit [disposition, mind] of Christ, he is none of his." And if we are right in this, dear readers, it is of paramount importance that we, as soldiers of the cross, put on not only the intellectual covering, the helmet of salvation, but also the heart covering, love of righteousness and truth and goodness and purity, with the shield of faith. The breastplate of righteousness will be found to be one of the most important pieces of armor in the battle which is upon us, and respecting which we are told that thousands shall fall at our side.--Psa. 91:7; Matt. 24:24; 2 Thess. 2:11.

Not only so, but we believe that the lesson foregoing is of great importance, because the time is short; and those of the Lord's people who do not soon start to cultivate a spirit of contentment and thankfulness will not only not be fit for the Kingdom, but will as sharers of the world's spirit of discontent be in sore distress with the world very shortly, in the great time of trouble. Contentment and the faith which it implies, are necessary to godliness: and whoever is attempting godliness without striving for cultivation of contentment will surely make a failure of it. Godliness and the fruits of the spirit, meekness, patience, gentleness, longsuffering, brotherly-kindness, love, will not grow in the garden of the soul, where the weeds of discontent are permitted to sap the strength and vitiate the air with their noxious presence and influence.

The sentiment of one of our precious hymns is quite to the point, and we desire, for ourselves and for all of the Lord's people, that condition of faith and consecration and contentment which will permit us to sing from the heart, with the spirit and with the understanding

R2354 : page 248

also, the words:--

"Content with beholding his face,
My all to his pleasure resigned,
No changes of season or place
Can make any change in my mind.

"While blest with the sense of his love
A palace a toy would appear,
And prisons would palaces prove,
If Jesus still dwelt with me there."

Who can tell that the Lord may not ultimately put some such tests to us, as these mentioned by the poet which were applied to himself and to others of the faithful in the past? Let us remember that we will not be faithful in large things unless we have learned to be faithful in little things. Let each, therefore, begin, and faithfully continue, a transformation of his life along these lines of godliness with contentment in the most trifling affairs of life. He will thus not only be making himself and others the happier in the present time, but he will be preparing himself for greater trials and tests that the Lord may be pleased to impose later, to prove to what extent we are overcomers of the world and of its spirit.

"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith;" because faith lies at the foundation of all loyalty to God and his cause. Faith in the divine supervision of all our affairs not only gives peace and content, but it saps the root of all selfish ambitions and vain gloryings and boastings; because of our faith in the Lord's Word, that "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted and he that exalteth himself shall be abased." Faith in the Lord's supervision prefers the Lord's arrangement to any other as respects the sufferings of this present time and the glory that is to follow; and hence it doth not puff up but builds up in the character-likeness of our Redeemer.

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R2354 : page 248

"ELISHA DIED, AND THEY BURIED HIM."

--SEPT. 4.--2 KINGS 13:14-25.--

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."--Psa. 116:15.

MANY YEARS rolled by, and Elisha, the prophet, about eighty years of age, fell "sick of his sickness wherewith he died." Meantime there had been various experiences in Israel, and so far as the kings were concerned a better condition of matters had been reached, through the process of the reformation begun by Elijah. King Jehu had destroyed the worshipers of Baal, and his images and groves, and had in some measure sought to restore the worship of Jehovah, and the Kingdom had been established in the hands of his offspring, one of whom, Joash, otherwise called Jehoash, was now king of Israel.

Elisha's remarkable history as a prophet and representative of God in Israel continued during a period of nearly sixty-five years, it is presumed. He shared the difficulties and vicissitudes of Israel: sometimes much divine favor and blessing and deliverance; at other times trials and difficulties and famines, the punishments

R2354 : page 249

of neglect of God, departure from his worship, etc. One of these passed over was the siege of the city of Samaria, the capital of Israel, by the hosts of the Syrians. Elisha shared with the others the terrible ordeal of famine which the long siege developed. This was in the days of Jehu's son, Jehoram, and no doubt was on account of deflections from the Lord. In the remarkable delivery of Israel from that famine, by the overthrow of their enemies without a spear or an arrow, the Lord manifested his power as he had previously declared it through the prophet Elisha. These various lessons were in harmony with what the Lord had already covenanted with Israel as a nation; namely, that if they would live in harmony with him and his law he would bless them in every way, and that if they did not so live he would send plagues and disasters upon them.--See Deut. 28:45; Amos 3:6.

But now, at the time of Elisha's death, Jehoash was king and was evidently very humble and had come to realize that Israel's trouble lay in neglecting Jehovah; and hearing of the Prophet's illness he seemed to feel himself about to be bereft of his only helper and guide in the way of the Lord; and our lesson introduces him as weeping over Elisha. It is suggested by some that his peculiar remark, "The chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof," may have been intended to signify that he regarded Elisha as a host in himself, as the chief defence and protection of the nation of Israel. At all events, he was in a proper attitude of mind so far as we may judge, sincerely desirous of choosing and walking in the proper course, and sorrowful that he now would no longer have heavenly

counsel; perhaps remorseful, too, that he had not sooner appreciated the privileges which he did enjoy and had now come to realize.

Having gotten into a right attitude of mind, the Lord was pleased to release him and the kings of Israel from their subjection to the King of Syria. Accordingly, Elisha, under the secret counsel of the Lord, told the king to open the window to the eastward, and to shoot out an arrow, meantime placing his own weak hands over the hands of the king, he explained to him that this signified an arrow of divine power on behalf of Israel and against Syria. He further instructed him to take the remaining arrows from his quiver, and strike with them upon the floor: the king did so; but whether he had comparatively little faith in the Prophet's promise, or whether he was lacking in patriotism, and therefore lacking of appreciation of the Prophet's assurance of victory for Israel, whatever the cause, he seems to have struck the arrows in rather a feeble way, and three times only, not even asking how many times he should strike.

Elisha reproved him for this, and showed him that as a consequence he should have only three victories over the Syrians through this blessing. The Prophet evidently reasoned, and perhaps invisibly guided to such a view of the matter, that if Jehoash had been full of zeal and faith for the work of delivering Israel from its enemies, and of bringing to Israel all the blessings permitted by the Lord, he would have been more energetic to smite the floor, which to him was to represent Syria.

There is a lesson for us here, to the effect that what we do should be done with our might: if Jehovah be God, serve him; if Baal be God, serve him. But let the service be whole-hearted; for a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways; and such are not to expect much of the Lord: "Let not such think that they shall receive anything of the Lord." We have a spiritual conflict against a wily foe; and we are to be so much in earnest for the deliverance of ourselves and of all the Lord's people from his control, that we will smite him energetically, fighting the good fight of faith; and we should keep on smiting until our enemy is vanquished: we are not to be faint-hearted, nor indifferent, nor to slack our hands. Our part in the privilege of smiting down error will depend largely upon our humility, our zeal and our faith. And our works show what is the degree and character of our faith.

God evidently wished that the influence of these two reformers, Elijah and Elisha, should be deep and permanent in Israel: accordingly, the various miracles which they wrought were calculated to impress the matter upon the minds of the people. Even after Elisha's death, God gave another sign by which he would remind Israel of his power and his word, by reminding them of Elisha and his words; so that when,

nearly a year after Elisha's death and burial, the Moabites invaded the land, and were burying one of their number, as soon as the corpse touched the bones of Elisha, vitality returned. The history of those times is limited, but it is quite possible that the faintheartedness of Jehoash became all the more manifest when he felt himself alone, after Elisha's death, and that he and Israel did not serve the Lord with a whole heart, and that consequently these Moabites were permitted to come upon them, as a further chastisement. And possibly it was to draw the minds of the people back again to Elisha and to his teaching, and thus to revive their confidence in the Lord, that this miracle occurred in connection with his bones. The record, nevertheless, is that Jehoash succeeded in defeating the Syrians three times, as the prophet Elisha had promised, and thus he delivered Israel out of the hands of the Syrians, from whose dominion his father Jehoahaz had never succeeded in getting free.

The Golden Text gives a cheering thought, which

R2354 : page 250

applies not only to all the holy ones of the past, but in an especial manner to the fully consecrated ones ("saints") of this Gospel age. If it were not for such assurances from the Lord's Word, our increased knowledge of Jehovah (of his greatness), and our increased knowledge of ourselves (of our own littleness), might lead us to infer that we are altogether too small for

R2355 : page 250

his notice and attention. But when we realize that our Heavenly Father careth for us, so that not a hair of our heads might be injured without his notice, nor even without his permission; and when we know that our lives are precious to him, that he is not indifferent to our welfare, temporal or spiritual, it puts a new value upon life itself, and upon all that we have and are.

Altho God does not hinder his saints from going down into the great prisonhouse of death, altho he does not shield them from the experiences of the world, yet he does do something for them even in this respect; he informs them of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, and of the glorious time of refreshment and blessing of the future, when all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and come forth. Not only so, but he promises to the saints of this Gospel age that if they are faithful unto death he will give them the crown, the prize of life, in joint-heirship with their Lord Jesus Christ. What a kind, beneficent God we have! How different from all the heathen conceptions of God: how different from all the conceptions of the natural man. Our God is our Father; he remembereth that we are dust; he has compassion

upon us. "The Father himself loveth you,"
said our dear Redeemer. Precious in the sight of the
Lord is the death of his holy ones. He will not suffer
his holy ones to remain under the dominion of death.
In his own good time the prison shall be broken up
and all the prisoners of the pit shall go forth. Hallelujah!
What a Savior! He is able to save unto the
uttermost all that come unto the Father by him.

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R2355 : page 250

"WOE UNTO THEM THAT ARE AT EASE IN ZION."

--SEPT. 11.--AMOS 6:1-8.--

"They also have erred through wine, and through
strong drink are out of the way."--Isa. 28:7.

THE THOUGHT of those who arranged the
International Sunday School Lessons evidently
was to make of this one a temperance lesson. Undoubtedly
there was need for the inculcation of temperance,
moderation, self-denial, self-restraint, in the days of
Amos, as there is to-day, and as there will be so long
as mankind is under the influence of depraved appetites,
and weak through heredity, and exposed to temptations
through association with others likewise depraved;
--especially while the great adversary, Satan,
is still at liberty, unbound, permitted to ensnare the depraved
by putting darkness for light, and evil for good.
We remember that temperance, self-control, is one of
the fruits of the spirit of Christ, and as such it should
be sought and cultivated by all who desire to be copies
of God's dear Son. But it is a too frequent mistake
to think of temperance merely as respects intoxicating
liquors: the Christian may reasonably be supposed to
have gotten such a victory over self, to have gained
such self-control, that he will no longer be in danger
as respects drunkenness, but he finds, nevertheless, a
great necessity for the exercise of self-control, temperance,
in respect to all the affairs of life--in matters
which previously gave him no concern, respecting
which he saw no necessity for self-control.

Temperance, self-control, in the Christian, is applicable
to all the affairs of life; he is to be temperate
in his language, not given to exaggeration or misrepresentation,
better or worse than the facts; his yea is
to be yea, and his nay, nay. He is to speak forth
"words of soberness," and even if it be necessary to
speak in correction or reproof, he is to be temperate,
making sure that he speaks the truth in love, and not
in severity or bitterness. His speech is to be with
grace--seasoned with the saltness, the preservative
quality, of his consecration to Christ,--for is he not a

part of the "salt of the earth?"

The Christian's temperance is to extend to his business. He is to be moderate in his aims and ambitions, in his money-getting and money-saving. He is to remember that under the Lord's call the riches which he seeks for are heavenly and not earthly, and that the Master says, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom." Christian moderation, then, will seek first the Kingdom of heaven, esteeming that its attainment would be great riches, and cheaply bought, even at the cost of earthly welfare, riches and comforts.

The Christian should be temperate in his food--his eating, as well as his drinking. As he has consecrated himself and all that he has to the Lord, is it not, therefore, a part of his bounden duty to obtain from life the largest possible yield to the Lord's glory? Must he not, therefore, consider what and how much he shall eat, to the intent that he may render to the Lord his largest, his best, service? This will mean self-denial, self-control, for the appetite of food, as well as the appetite of drink, is considerably depraved in all. True, gluttony will not rob one of his senses, and make him crazy, as will spiritous liquors, yet overeating

R2355 : page 251

does frequently, to a considerable extent, sap the energies of the mind, or by over-stimulation weakens them. Thus many are weak and sickly through self-gratification in the matter of food as well as drink. Temperance, self-control, is the command of the Lord to all such;--not that it will benefit the Lord, but that thus we may build up proper characters,--loyal to that which is right, good, reasonable, proper.

The Christian should be temperate in his joys. He should not set his chief affections upon the earth, or earthly things--pleasure, wealth, influence, popularity, etc. He is to remember that very much of the present order of things is wholly contrary to righteousness, and he is to seek to use even approved things of this world temperately, utterly rejecting those things which are contrary to righteousness, truth, goodness, purity: he is to find his pleasure in another quarter--in serving righteousness--in the service of the Lord, in the Word of the Lord, in the promises of the Lord, in the spirit of the Lord.

The Christian is to be temperate in his sorrows. He "sorrows not as others who have no hope," but he believes that Jesus died for the sins of the whole world, that he rose again in order to justification of those who believe and obey him, and that either now or in the age to come all mankind shall have a full opportunity to know of divine grace, and to accept and share therein, under the terms of the New Covenant. Thus may the Christian, living up to his privileges under divine

grace, be temperate in his sorrows:--

"He'll bear unmoved the world's dread frown,
Nor heed its scornful smile;
Him seas of trouble cannot drown,
Nor Satan's arts beguile."

This quality of temperance, once attained, will manifest itself also in kindness, and in patience. The Christian who has developed in self-control is the one who will be the most patient with the unwilling, unintentional faults and frailties of others: he will be ready to restore the repentant ones, remembering himself also, lest he should be tempted. The Apostle has reference to this temperance in all things, when he says, "Let your moderation be known unto all men." The cultivation of this moderation from the right standpoint of desire to be pleasing to the Lord, and in full harmony with him, leads to kindness, sympathy: for, finding how many are his own weaknesses, besetments, difficulties and desires, such an one can have a larger measure of sympathy with the entire "groaning creation." As a result, this temperance will work kindness of speech and of look and of act, inspired by the kindness of heart.

There is need for this temperance, moderation, self-control, and its accompanying spirit of kindness and gentleness everywhere; in the shop, in the store, in the schoolroom, in traveling, in visiting, at home with the various members of the family,--and above all, in the Church, the household of faith, the family of God. It will help us in cultivating this Christian temperance in all things to remember that we are the representatives of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ in the world. We are his ambassadors, and as such our lives of temperance and godliness, or of intemperance and ungodliness, are living epistles, known and read of all men with whom we come in contact. It is a part of our bounden duty, day by day, to see to it that not only the thoughts of our hearts, but also the words of our lips and all the acts of life are acceptable in the Lord's sight, and showing forth the praises of him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light.

THE PROPHECY OF AMOS.

Through Amos, the Lord foretold a speedy coming doomsday, a time of trouble and retribution, upon Judah, Israel and the adjoining nations. These adjoining nations, Moab, Syria, Philistia, etc., had been subjugated to Israel, and incorporated in the Kingdom of Israel, under David and Solomon, but subsequently had separated themselves, and latterly had been recaptured and temporarily were again under the dominion of Israel. Probably it was because of their

close identity with Israel, territorially and through intercourse, that they are made the subjects of this prophecy. (See chapters 1-4.) The principal burden

R2356 : page 251

of the prophecy, however, is against Israel, the ten tribes, and Judah, the two tribes, the Lord's covenanted people, the seed of Abraham.

The home of Amos was in Judah, where he was a herdsman, but under the Lord's direction he went into the territory occupied by the ten tribes, to deliver to them the Lord's message. Amongst other things, the Lord pointed out that the families of Israel (the twelve tribes) constituted his peculiar people, that he had brought out of Egypt, and of whom he had been specially careful to order their ways most favorably. He even declares of them, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore will I punish you for all your iniquities. Can two walk together except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:1-3.) The Lord had made himself known to no other nation, had recognized no other nation, had made a covenant with no other nation, had given his laws to no other nation; and hence this nation, Israel (in its two parts), had a special responsibility. Nevertheless, instead of God's favor making them loyal of heart to him, they had continually resisted his favor, and were not even faithful as eye-servants. The reason of this was that they

R2356 : page 252

were of a different spirit: they would not walk in harmony with the Lord while their hearts were really in harmony with sin and wickedness.

The Lord, in foretelling the troubles he would bring upon Israel, because of misused privileges and opportunities, and rebelliousness of heart, wished them to discern distinctly that these judgments of the then near future, like their previous judgments, were not matters of accident, not matters of chance, but of divine providence. Consequently, the message of Amos is likened to a trumpet of alarm, announcing the dire catastrophies that shortly would come. And the announcement is thus made in advance, not with a view to the bringing of repentance, but with a view to the proper appreciation of the judgments when they would come--that the people might know that the things coming were judgments and not accidents. Accordingly, it is written,--

"Shall a trumpet be blown in a city, and the people not be afraid? Shall there be evil [calamities, disasters] in a city, and the Lord hath not done it? Surely, the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." (Amos 3:6,7.) The Lord reveals his intentions thus that

his people may know and profit by the chastisements, and experiences, and recognize them as of the Lord's hand.

We are not prepared to say that all the calamities, famines, pestilences, etc., which from time to time afflict mankind, are of divine providence--judgments sent of the Lord. On the contrary, we believe that generally, so far as the world of mankind in general is concerned, they merely take their chances as respects famine, storms, pestilence, etc.; yet there are marked instances in which the Lord has evidently interposed to bring calamities upon certain nations of the world, as chastisements, as judgments for their correction in righteousness: for instance, the United States Civil War which resulted in the freeing of millions of slaves and the general awakening of fifty millions of people. Unquestionably God has made use of wars and human selfishness to awaken various nations at various times, and to let in the light of civilization. The present war with Spain may be of this character. The Spanish soldiers returning from Cuba will be wiser if not better men. All this does not prove that war is right, any more than it proves that pestilence and famine are desirable; but these things show us how God is able and willing to use even the wrath of man, and the selfishness of man, in the present time, and to overrule the effects indirectly for good, in harmony with his plan.

But there are many calamities and troubles not only national but individual, in which we have no reason to believe there is any divine providence whatever. There are epidemics of disease which very evidently are caused merely by lack of cleanliness, neglect of sanitary rules; and many calamities, such as earthquakes, cyclones, floods, etc., which give every evidence of being purely accidental, that is to say, without divine or human intervention or responsibility. We do not consider these beyond divine control, nor beyond divine foreknowledge: we do consider that in general they are the natural operations of the divine laws and regulations, which, as respects the earth at the present time, are not under special regulation for man's comfort and welfare: man's comfort and welfare being ignored, for the time being, because of sin and the curse or penalty of sin which rests upon man and upon the earth, his home. For, altho the ransom price has been paid for now eighteen hundred years and more, the results of the ransom, in the complete lifting of the "curse," have not yet been brought in, but are waiting for the Lord's due time--the Millennial age.

With fleshly Israel, the natural seed of Abraham, the Lord's dealing was different: his covenant with them was to the effect that nothing should happen to them by chance--in no sense or degree were they to be subject to the mutations of life, the accidents of nature, etc. This was God's special covenant with

this one particular nation--it was a part of the Law Covenant as recorded in Lev. 26. Under that covenant, the seed of Abraham was to be God's peculiar people, devoted to his service, and he was to be peculiarly their God, careful of their interests. So long as that nation would be faithful to the Lord, no calamity could befall them personally or nationally; they would be spared from wars and disasters, spared from famines and pestilences; they would prosper in proportion as they would be faithful to their covenant. But if unfaithful to their covenant, then they would not only be liable to the same accidents of nature with the remainder of the world under the "curse," but might know that God would assuredly bring upon them, as special judgments or chastisements, calamities of every kind, physical and mental, individual and national. This is distinctly stated to be the Lord's rule of dealing with them; and it was to this covenant that they gave their assent at Sinai. Consequently, their failure to keep their covenant made it to them a curse, a greater burden and disadvantage than rested upon the other nations of the world, with whom God had made no covenant, and to whom he had extended no promises, but who were "without God, and having no hope in the world."

With this thought in mind it will be seen to have stronger force, that the Lord calls his people's attention to the fact that whatever calamities, disasters,

R2356 : page 253

troubles (evils, pestilences, etc.), they suffered were and would continue to be a sure proof to them that God was again chastising them for violation of their covenant with him. It is in harmony with this that he says to them,--

"I have given you cleanness of teeth in your cities, and want of bread in all your places: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. And also I have withholden the rain from you...and I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city: one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereon it rained not withered....Yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. I have smitten you with blasting and mildew: when your garden and your vineyards and your fig-trees and your olive trees increased, the palmer worm devoured them: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. I have sent amongst you the pestilence, after the manner of Egypt: your young men have I slain with the sword [in war], and have taken away your horses...yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord...Thus saith the Lord unto the house of Israel,...Seek the Lord and ye shall live, lest he break out like fire in the house of Joseph, and devour it, and there be none to quench it in Bethel [the city of idol worship]."

Having noted the character of the Lord's dealings with Israel under their covenant, that all calamities were of his providence and for chastisements; and having noticed that in the case of the nations in general, the Gentiles, the world, the calamities which come are not generally chastisements or judgments, but only occasionally so, we turn with interest to the new nation, the holy nation, the peculiar people, spiritual Israel, the royal priesthood,--now being gathered out of all nations, peoples, languages and tongues,--and we inquire, How is with these? Are all the calamities of life that may befall these of the spiritual house, to be reckoned as accidents, or are they all to be reckoned as judgments of the Lord because of sin?

We answer, Neither. As this is a "peculiar people," and being selected by the Lord for a peculiar purpose, it need not surprise us to find that he has a peculiar manner of dealing with them. He permits them in a general way to be subject to all the conditions that are upon the world, but guarantees to them that all of these calamities and difficulties which will befall them, as a part of the world, shall be overruled of divine providence so as to bring them some blessing, instead of injury. Hence, as the Apostle says, "We know that all things shall work together for good to them that love God--to the called ones according to his purpose." (Rom. 8:28.) These have the satisfaction of knowing that any of the causalities of life which may befall them as a part of the human family,

R2357 : page 253

or even those which shall befall them as the ones against whom Satan and his blinded followers have a peculiar grudge and hatred, shall either be overruled and made to work a blessing, or else be warded off. For we are assured that,--He will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able to bear, but will with the temptation (too hard to be borne) provide a way of escape.

Thus we see that divine providence deals differently with spiritual Israel than with natural Israel, and still differently with the world. What a consolation to know that God is for us, not only to the extent of providing a Savior and redemption through his blood, but also to the extent of providing through that Savior "a present help in every time of trouble," and an ultimate salvation in the Kingdom to those who are faithful, loyal to him, obedient to his Word, under the New Covenant.

* * *

The lesson, and its connection, points out that certain ones in Israel were in a very ease-loving and self satisfied condition, that many of them abounded

in wealth, and drank the wine of earthly pleasure and extravagance inordinately, in bowlfuls. They neither were solicitous for the Lord's praise and worship, on their own part, nor on the part of others: nor were they solicitous for the poor--they were intemperately selfish, and hence the judgments were coming upon them, the evil days of their captivity and overthrow as a nation. That their sin of intemperance did not consist solely of literal drunkenness, nor perhaps specially of this, but rather that it consisted of a drunkenness of greed, by which many of the influential amongst them were disposed to swallow up the poor and the needy, is evident from the words of the Lord's reproof:--

"Forasmuch, therefore, as your treading is upon the poor, and ye take from him burdens of wheat; ye have builded your houses of hewn stone, but ye shall not dwell in them; ye have planted pleasant vineyards, but ye shall not drink wine of them. For I know your manifold transgressions, and your mighty sins. They afflict the just, they take a bribe, they turn aside the poor in the gate from their rights, and make it prudent for those who see the wrong to keep silence."

"Hear this, O ye that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail, saying, When will the newmoon be gone, that we may sell corn, and the Sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah [measure] small, and the shekel [price] great, and falsify the balancer by deceit? That we might buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes; yea, and sell [them] the refuse of the wheat?"

"The Lord hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob, Surely I will never forget any of their works. Shall not the land tremble for this, and everyone mourn that dwelleth therein?"--Amos 5:11-13; 8:4-8.

R2357 : page 254

While this prophecy evidently applied specifically to natural Israel, and its captivity, nevertheless, some of the statements respecting that evil day that came upon Israel remind us of similar statements applied by the prophets and apostles and by our Lord to antitypical Israel--Christendom;--and hence, while noting the Lord's dealing with the natural Israelites, and their day of doom or punishment, it properly brings to our thoughts the judgments pronounced upon Christendom, "Babylon the Great," which are to come in the end of this age. And as we compare the conditions, now and then, the thought that the words of Amos have to some extent a double application is strengthened.

We find to-day a similar condition of things to that which the prophet describes. Many are at ease in nominal Zion: many are boasting of their prosperity, and symbolically are resting upon beds of ivory, taking

their ease, and trusting that the Church is being carried forward to the conquest of the world along a new pathway which the Master and the apostles knew not of, a pathway of roses without thorns, a pathway that is not narrow nor difficult, nor steep, but that is broad, pleasurable, easy. The wealthy are very generally members of nominal Zion, or at least liberal supporters of her arrangements, services, etc., and she in turn is appreciative, and boasts of her wealth, just as she is pictured prophetically by the Lord, in his description of the Laodicean period of the Church. Nominal Zion to-day is saying, "I am rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing," and knows not that she is poor and miserable and blind and naked; and hence she neglects to purchase the true gold and the only wedding garment. The announcement to-day to nominal spiritual Zion, of calamities coming upon her in the "day of vengeance" just at hand, is as unacceptable and disbelieved as was the message of Amos to those who were prospering and at ease in nominal fleshly Zion, as recorded in our lesson. How unacceptable to the priests of Israel was the message of Amos, is indicated by the record, which says:

"Then Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent to Jeroboam, King of Israel, saying, Amos hath conspired against thee, in the midst of the house of Israel: the land is not able to bear all his words [he is disturbing the peace of those who are at ease in Zion]....Also Amaziah said unto Amos, O thou seer, flee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread and prophecy there; but prophecy not any more at Bethel, for it is the king's sanctuary, and the king's court."--
Amos 7:10-13.

But as Amos was faithful in declaring the message of the Lord, and was not deterred into silence from prudential reasons, so those who to-day are spoken to by the Lord through his Word and are instructed respecting the things that are shortly to come to pass upon nominal spiritual Israel, are not to hold their peace from prudential reasons--for the fear of man bringeth a snare. They are to speak the truth in love, and to seek to pull as many as possible out of the fire of tribulation, and to bring as many as possible into the little flock of faithful ones, whom the Lord exhorted, saying, "Watch ye, therefore, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things coming upon the world, and to stand before the Son of Man."

In this prophecy of Amos, the Lord points out that the wrath he was about to permit to come upon Israel as chastisements, would, nevertheless, work out for them a blessing, and that in his due time he would bring them back again into harmony with himself, and that under more favorable conditions than in the past. We are not only to believe the calamitous portion of this prophecy, which we already see has been executed upon Israel in fullest measure, but we are also to

believe the features of it which are favorable to Israel --the future blessings. For instance, we see how literally has been fulfilled the prediction:--

"Behold the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth [as a nation, a kingdom]; save that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the Lord [the people of the nation were to be preserved as a separate people from others]; for lo, I will give the command, and I will shake about amongst all nations the house of Israel, as one shaketh things in a sieve, while not the least piece falleth down upon the earth." Amos 9:8,9.

The Lord thus shows his continued supervision of Israel, according to the covenant made with them. And how accurately this has been fulfilled: the Israelites as a people have been scattered throughout the whole earth, yet they have not lost their identity; as a nation they were utterly destroyed, yet unlike every other nation, they have preserved their national identity, and have not been mixed and blended with the world in general.

And if this feature of the prophecy has been accurately fulfilled to-day before our eyes, we certainly have every reason to believe that the remainder of the prophecy will be just as accurately fulfilled--that portion which applies to the restitution times, after the true spiritual Israel has been selected, when natural Israel shall be brought back into covenant relationship with God, and become the earthly agent of the spiritual Kingdom for blessing, instructing and restoring the families of the earth, under the terms of the New Covenant. This is clearly set forth in the closing words of the prophecy:--

"In that day will I raise up the standard of David which is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof, and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old, that they may possess the remnant of Edom and of all the heathen which are called by my name, saith the Lord that doeth this....And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them, and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them, and I will plant them in their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land, which I have given them, saith the Lord God."

We recall the quotation of this prophecy in the New Testament, by the Apostle James, and find it in full accord also with the words of the Apostle Paul, to the effect that after spiritual Israel has been developed as the true seed of Abraham, through Christ,

R2358 : page 254

then divine favor shall return to natural Israel, and

she shall obtain mercy, according to the terms of the divine covenant, at the hands of spiritual Israel then glorified.--See Rom. 11:1-25-32; Acts 15:16,17.

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R2358 : page 255

"OUT OF DARKNESS INTO HIS MARVELOUS LIGHT."

--INTERESTING LETTERS.--

MR. C. T. RUSSELL, Illinois.

DEAR SIR:--It is now about two years since I first became acquainted with your work--MILLENNIAL DAWN. The assimilation of the truth has been a very slow and laborious work in my case. The so-called orthodox doctrines of to-day had been so thoroughly instilled into my mind as to have become almost a part of my being. The force of the logic of chapter I, VOL. I., took a firm hold upon my mind from the start however, and led me to see the folly of church work as usually carried on. Gradually I was able to accept the truth regarding hell as presented in your little pamphlet "What Say the Scriptures about Hell?"

Now I have just finished reading VOL. I. for about the 6th time, and the truth has come to me in a very convincing manner, so clear, so simple, and yet so wonderful and sublime, that I have many times stopped to praise God for his wonderful plan, while I have been led to love and adore him as never before. The truth seems so clear now that I wonder how I stumbled over it so long. There is now a question in my mind as to just what my duty is regarding some money and notes in my possession which have been pledged to the China Inland Mission. The pledge was solemnly made before God before a house and lot which I used to own was sold, that if the Lord would send me a buyer the entire amount should be given to the support of a missionary in China. I now see the truth of God's plan in a different light and the sending of the remainder of the money to that field seems almost useless, and I have often wished of late that I could use the money here at home to spread the truth and help the poor, but my pledge still stands, and I do not know what to do regarding it.

I write to ask your advice and pray that God may give you wisdom in answering, as I desire to make no mistake. On a separate sheet I enclose an order for DAWNS and tracts with a renewal of my subscription to the ZION'S WATCH TOWER, also for one of the hymn books. May the Lord richly bless you and yours and may the truth shine out brighter and brighter from the gloom of the early dawn, is my prayer.

Yours truly, CALVIN DODGE.

[IN REPLY:--God be praised, dear Brother, that

under the guidance of his Providence you have been led out of darkness and uncertainty into his marvelous light. God speed! Be faithful to the light and let it so shine, that men may see your good works and glorify our Father in heaven.

Your responsibility to the Inland China Mission depends upon circumstances.

(1) Did you pledge the proceeds of your property unqualifiedly to the Missionary Society? If so, to it every penny should go.

(2) But if you pledged to the Lord, that as his steward you would use that money in his service in supporting a missionary in China, the case would be totally different: you may properly consider the Lord's guidance into present truth to be his instruction to you as his steward of "a more excellent way" of serving his cause.

(3) If the latter is your case, and if after pledging the money to the Lord, you gave the "China Inland Mission" more or less directly to understand that it would be the channel you would use as God's steward, you should judge, as best you are able, whether or not or to what extent the Society undertook any obligations as a result of your declarations to it. Then judge to what extent the amount you have already contributed has reasonably met those obligations.

(4) To sum up: So far as your consecration to God is concerned, it touches every penny of the pledged sum, but leaves you free at all times to act according to the highest intelligence given you of the Lord. So far as men are concerned your donation would generally be understood to depend upon your faith in the Society and your sympathy with its work; and your loss of either of these would be understood to imply the discontinuance of your cooperation. As a rule, Societies do not reckon definitely upon any contributor: on the contrary, their rule is to reckon on a certain average of discontinuances.--EDITOR.]

California.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--The TOWER of July 15th gave us great pleasure in the reading, and was helpful in "building up." We know that a clearer understanding of the conflict between the mind of the flesh and the mind of the spirit cannot but be helpful. How beautifully the Rotherham Translation puts Col. 3:15: "Let the peace of Christ be acting as umpire in your hearts." We were quite interested also in the question in regard to the Christadelphian Views.

About two weeks ago we were studying the question of Death, and among other things we came across the statement in Psa. 49:19, "They shall never see light." Never is a long time and seemed to conflict with ransom and restitution. We looked that "never" up in Strong's Concordance with this result:--

Never--"ad," as far as or until; "naytsakh," goal or the bright object at a distance traveled towards;

"lo," not.

Does not that word "never," instead of teaching everlasting death, teach "resurrection" and "the desire of all nations?" The more we study the wording of the Bible, through present-day helps, the more perfect our faith becomes in that wonderful Word of God.

Sister Bell joins me in Christian love and greeting.
Yours in Christ, CHARLES C. BELL.

page 255

Missouri.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--I often desire to write to you concerning the Church at this place, but am just as often hindered. We are all feeling very much encouraged spiritually at present. In the first place, ZION'S WATCH TOWER during this year has cheered and strengthened us in a wonderful degree. Divine principles have never been so clearly portrayed, or else we are in better condition to understand them. You have demonstrated the holy spirit of love until we comprehend more deeply what it is to "Bear all things" for righteousness' sake. We thank the giver of all good for the abundant blessing we have had through your kind instrumentality.

We have recently enjoyed a visit from our dear Brother Rogers, and we believe the fruit of his labor here will be quite marked as time rolls on. I do not know whether you have had a report of his meetings here or not. I attended two meetings at the home of Bro. Kuntz. Only a few were present, as the day was inclement, but as always "The Old, Old Story" was refreshing. In the evening Bro. Rogers and others

page 256

attended a "Mission," conducted by a Brother Dann. I was not present, but understand that Bro. Rogers gave them a rousing sermon on the ransom and restitution which was gladly received.

There are twelve in our class fully in the truth. Bros. Kuntz, Hutchinson and Bardelmier symbolized their baptism unto death last week. Sr. Grace McGee will do the same this week. How I wish Bro. McPhail could visit us now, he would be very helpful. Mother joins me in Christian love to you. We are praying for you constantly. In Christ, AMELIA POWER.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--I canvassed Helena, Millersville, Burgoon and Bettville last week, every house in each place, and left a tract at each home. At Toledo last Sunday we had two good discourses from Bro. Draper, and two good audiences. [Sixteen immersed] Enclosed please find order and M. Order. Expect, D.V., to try for a while to sell DAWNS as a specialty. I purpose to be faithful in that which is least, and to do what I can for the Kingdom and glory

of our Heavenly Father, who is infinite in Love.

Yours in the service of the truth, JAMES A. WEST.
Canada.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--Ever since the meetings, where we had the long-desired privilege of seeing you in person, and hearing your voice, I have wanted to write to you and tell you of the blessing and help received through that privilege. Indeed, I could not begin to express what those meetings were to me, of the misty places which now are as plain as noonday, of the realness of our Savior's presence, and of our "high calling," of the comfort, strength and encouragement received, to persevere in the "narrow way."

I am very thankful to God that what I had so longed for was made possible. But those four days of your stay with us passed all too quickly, and it seemed that we had to say good-bye to you almost directly after meeting you.

When I am at home, and that is nearly always, I have not one person with whom I can talk about the truths that are more precious to me than I can express. Being confident that I can pass the test of loving the "brethren," you will understand that this is a great privation. But I have my beloved books, the DAWNS; and the TOWER will be more welcome and more carefully studied than ever, if that is possible.

Your Sister in the faith, S. A. YENNEY.

R2358 : page 256

MR. CHARLES T. RUSSELL, Colorado.

DEAR BROTHER:--I must take the liberty of sending you a message of gratitude in reference to your article in July 15th TOWER on the double-minded man. It was particularly enjoyed by me for the reason that for a long time the questions reviewed have been thought over, and to a great extent in the very light in which you have so clearly presented them.

From several previous articles in the TOWER I had gained the impression that you were writing not only in the light of the blessed Savior's presence, but also with a clear understanding of the principles of Phrenological science. This has now been confirmed, for which I praise the Lord.

Phrenology (as taught by its true representatives) is certainly the correct theory of mental phenomena, and those who are ignorant of its principles must of necessity be in the dark as to a proper understanding of human nature.

For some years I have contended that there was too much truth--too much light--in the phrenological science for its general acceptance in the past and present time. This is proven, to my mind, by the fierce antagonism the subject has received at the hands of college professors, physicians and especially the clergy, as well as others, whereas if they had given the

matter honest investigation they could have verified its correctness time and again, every day of their lives.

Babylon's religionists refuse it because if admitted it would utterly condemn the eternal torment idea, and render that vicious theory unbearable, even to themselves. It would teach them the fact that many of our poor, fallen race have retrograded so far from perfection and the proper balance of faculties as to be entirely incapable of appreciating and accepting a "system of theology," and therefore to be doomed to eternal torture. Presume, however, they would manage to get this class of unfortunates through on their peculiar "infant and idiot" plan of salvation.

It seems to me that in the Millennium perfection will be attained gradually along the lines of phrenological principles--fully developed, of course, and under the direction of the earthly representatives of the Kingdom. In conclusion, I want again to express my thanks to our glorious Father and blessed Master for setting the truth so clearly before the remaining members of the Church. Your Brother and servant in the precious faith,
G. M. HUNTSINGER.

page 256

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--The Day of Vengeance (DAWN, VOL. IV.) in German would be more of a good thing to have, than I had dared to hope for, and would, I think, do a great deal of good. Glad of the opportunity, I herewith subscribe for a sufficient number of books to amount to five dollars and stand ready to double this number, should it be found necessary to reach the required sum to guarantee the cost of typesetting. Your Brother in Christ,
J. G. KUEHN.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--I subscribe to the IV. VOL. of DAWN in German to the amount of \$5 and hope that I can do better if it should become necessary. The meetings with Bro. Draper in Toledo have been a rich feast. Several of the brethren have come back again and accepted the ransom; two of them were baptized by Bro. Draper. Remember these brethren as well as myself before the throne in your prayers.

Yours in the Redeemer,
S. KUESTHARDT.

R2358 : page 256

Missouri.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--Rejoice with me, for my soul so long in darkness is illuminated with the glorious beams of the "MILLENNIAL DAWN." I have been in the world 61 years. I have lived in Babylon since 1854. I have been a Baptist minister since 1867. During all these years I never saw the "King in his beauty," until now. Through the kindness of Elder Job Chalfant I have been reading the first three volumes of your valuable book, MILLENNIAL DAWN, and

the WATCH TOWER. Never before has the gospel of our blessed Redeemer been so precious to me. The Bible seems like a new book--I see the glorious plan of redemption as I never have before. I cannot preach any more as I formerly did. The voice of the Master has reached my ears, "Babylon is fallen! Come out of her my people." I have obeyed the command, and may God help me from this on to speak the blessed present truth. Please send me the WATCH TOWER and the four volumes of MILLENNIAL DAWN.

Your brother in the present truth, D. SIMONS.

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