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THE COLPORTEUR WORK.

God has been pleased to specially use and bless the colporteur
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nearly a million copies of the various volumes of
MILLENNIAL DAWN series are now scattered throughout this land
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"HE THAT REAPETH RECEIVETH WAGES AND GATHERETH FRUIT UNTO
ETERNAL LIFE."

This testimony is true now, as it was in the Jewish "harvest;"

and hence we urge all who are so situated that they can engage in this work, to do so. It is one of the best opportunities we know of for preaching the true gospel: going from house to house all are reached--not only those who attend church services, but also those who do not; the latter class including some of the true "wheat" who absent themselves because they cannot there obtain the spiritual nourishment for which they hunger and thirst.

Do not think of this as a "book business;" for it is no such thing. It is "preaching," "evangelizing," "teaching" in the truest and best sense of those terms. The Colporteur is one with the books and tracts which he circulates, and their teaching is associately his teaching.

This work is open to both brethren and sisters who are not hampered by family obligations. It is not merely for those who are out of employment and know of nothing more profitable; it is specially for those who have talents and employment and who desire to sacrifice something for the privilege of being co-workers with God in the greatest and grandest work men or angels were ever privileged to engage in. "He that is ashamed of me and my word, of him will I also be ashamed," said our Savior.

Write to us for "Hints to Colporteurs."

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"IF GOD BE FOR US, WHO CAN BE AGAINST US?"

--ROMANS 8:31.--

WHAT wonderful thoughts these words arouse! God for us! God on our side! It means almighty wisdom enlisted in our interest, almighty power to be exerted on our behalf, almighty love and infinite goodness watching over us and caring for and helping us. What immeasurable lengths and breadths, heights and depths of infinite grace are here so forcibly and so concisely set before the mind!

But, we notice a limitation: The Apostle's suggestion is not that God is for every one, but for "us." To whom does he refer by this word "us?" Is it possible that divine love and energy, wisdom and power are not being exerted on behalf of the world, but only on behalf of the Church in this present time?

Christian people are divided in their opinion respecting this matter. Our Methodist friends and generally Universalists and Unitarians hold that God is

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not for us, the Church, specially; but that he is for everybody, everywhere. They hold that he is today trying to save everybody, and that he has been so trying for the past six thousand years. They must of course admit, when making such a claim, that thus far

the divine plan has failed of success for six thousand years; because, men are not saved, and only a small proportion have yet had the necessary opportunity for salvation; namely, a knowledge of the only "name given under heaven or amongst men whereby we must be saved." They must realize that the logic of facts is against their contention, and against all hope that by present methods and arrangements the world would ever be converted; for, they are aware that while it is claimed in a general way that nearly a million heathen have been converted during the last century (and it is safe to say that a very large proportion of these are not as thoroughly converted as might be desired--that comparatively few of them could be termed "saints"), yet, during the same time it is estimated that the numbers of the heathen have increased, in a natural way, to the enormous sum of two hundred millions. How long would it require at this rate, at this ratio of conversion, one million converts to two hundred million births, to convert the world? All can see that such hopes are quite illogical. Nevertheless, we can sympathize with and greatly appreciate the warmth of heart on the part of many of these whose theology we now criticise. Many of them--at least the founders of the systems--were forced to such conclusions (namely, that God is doing the best he can do for the world), in opposition to the doctrine of election and foreordination, as it has heretofore been misunderstood.

On the other hand, the great majority of Christian people, namely, the various branches of the Presbyterian, the Episcopal, the Lutheran, the Baptist and the Congregationalist churches deny the theory that God has been trying to save the world for the past six thousand years and has failed of his purpose. They hold, to the contrary, that his purpose has been to select or elect out of the world a Church and that this work of election has been progressing and will finally be consummated; and that thus God's Word through the prophets shall be fulfilled, "My Word that goeth forth out of my mouth shall not return unto me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." (Isa. 55:11.) They hold that, since all of God's purposes shall be accomplished, it can not have been his purpose either to have converted the world, or to have brought every creature to a knowledge of Christ during the past six thousand years; because neither thing has been accomplished, therefore neither thing could have been purposed.

We were about to say that we agree with the last

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mentioned numerous families of Christians in reference to the doctrine of election; but we cannot make so broad a statement. While we find in the Scriptures

the declaration that an election is in progress during this age especially, and to some extent during all the past, yet it is not the kind of election to which such large numbers of our Christian friends hold. Their view of divine foreordination implies not only the election of a Church, but the damnation of all who are not elected; and here we must differ; for we find nothing of this kind in the Word of the Lord. We find nothing in it to imply that all the non-elect are hopelessly lost; but, on the contrary, the teaching that the election of the Church (Christ the head, the Church his body), during this Gospel age, is for the very purpose that they as the "seed of Abraham" may fulfil the divine plan as expressed in God's promise to Abraham, namely, that in this seed (Christ and the Church--Gal. 3:16,29), as the heirs of the divine promise and benevolent intention, "all the families of the earth shall be blessed." Not only is the character of the Scriptural election a very different one from that which has generally been held by Calvinism, but the object of the election is as widely as possible different from their conception. We would use the same language as our Calvinistic friends in speaking of the "us" of our text, in that we would say that it refers to the elect Church, but we deny that the damnation of all others is either stated or implied.

In the preceding verses (29,30) the Apostle explains the character and methods of the divine selection of the elect Church: and we cannot do better than notice its details, because so much depends upon this point. If we can find in the Apostle's description good and sufficient evidence to assure us that we are of this elect Church, then we shall have great cause for thankfulness, confidence and joy, in realizing that God with all his almighty power, and wisdom and love is enlisted on our behalf. A great difficulty with many seems to be, not that they doubt that there is such an election in progress, nor that they doubt that God is for some, but that they doubt that they belong to that elect class--doubt, therefore, that they are of the "us," and that God is for them; and that he is causing all things to work together for good to them.

By reason of their natural constitution, some of the humble-minded of the Lord's people lack the confidence which they should have, while in some instances others who have such confidence, have no real basis for it. Knowledge, therefore, clear knowledge of the Apostle's argument, is essential to proper faith respecting this subject, and proper confidence in God's care over those who have been adopted into his family and are seeking to make their calling and election sure. Our faith is made necessarily dependent to a large extent upon our understanding of the divine revelation on these subjects. Let us therefore critically examine the Apostle's statement with reference to the various steps in this election, and note our own connection with the

same, step by step, that we may know to a certainty whether or not we are of the "us" class which he mentions, on behalf of whom the Lord's power and wisdom are and will be exerted.

The Apostle begins by asserting divine foreknowledge; a divine attribute which will not be questioned by any Christian. God not only foreknew the sin that would enter into the world through the liberty given to father Adam and mother Eve, but he also foresaw the fall that would take place as the result of his own sentence, and the mental, moral and physical degradation which have resulted. Moreover, he foreknew that in due time he would send his "Only Begotten Son," our Lord, to ransom all from sin and its penalty, so that ultimately he might be the Deliverer of all who desire to return to harmony with their Creator. He not only foreknew the humiliation of our Lord, his First-begotten Son, from his condition of glory and spiritual nature to the lower conditions of human nature, but he foreknew his trials, and his faithfulness through them, even unto death, even the death of the cross. In all this he foresaw our redemption sacrifice. He foresaw also the glory which he designed to bestow upon our Lord Jesus following his obedience, as expressed by the Apostle Paul, saying, "Him hath God highly exalted, and given him a name [title, honor, etc.] above every name."

But our Heavenly Father foreknew and foreordained still more than all this,--the selection of the Church to be the "body" of Christ, the "bride" of Christ, his associate, not only in the sufferings and trials of the present life, but also in the subsequent glory, and great work of "blessing all the families of the earth." This is distinctly stated by the same Apostle in his letter to the Ephesians (1:4), where he declares that "God hath chosen us in him [Christ] before the foundation of the world." The same foreordination is distinctly stated by the Apostle Peter, who writes to consecrated believers, addressing them, "elect according to the foreknowledge of God, the Father, through sanctification of the spirit," etc.--1 Pet. 1:2.

But the predestination of this verse (Rom. 8:29) is not at all what has generally been understood: it is not said that God predestinates that some should go to heaven and others to eternal torment. That is where false human reasoning has corrupted the testimony of God's Word and made it of none effect, or worse--of bad effect. The Apostle's statement is very clear, that God predestinated that all who shall be of this elect,

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foreknown and foreordained Church in glory must first be "conformed to the image of his Son"--or, as the literal reading would give it, "copies of his Son." How reasonable this predestination, how unreasonable the

false view! God is calling a number of sons to "glory, honor and immortality," and has made Christ Jesus the Only Begotten, faithful in every trial, the Head or Captain of this foreordained company, whom he has since been calling, testing and preparing for the foreordained glory. And as it was but a reasonable thing that God should determine that if our Lord Jesus would be faithful he should receive the highest exaltation, so it was equally right and proper that the divine will should be forcibly asserted and that he should predestinate that none could be of that glorified "body of Christ," except as they would become imitators of Jesus, who is the firstborn among these his "brethren."

Having thus stated the matter concisely, the Apostle proceeds to apply it to the Church individually, and to show the steps which God is taking during this Gospel age for the purpose of finding amongst men this class which he has foreordained shall be found. The Apostle gives the particulars in the following verse (30); and altho it is simply stated, it has very generally been stumbled over, not only by believers in general, but also by theologians, because of two things.

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(1) The last word of this verse translated "glorified" should be translated "honored;" and should be understood to refer to the honor conferred upon all who, during this age, are brought to any knowledge of Christ--the true light. This honor went first to the Jews, and selected a "remnant;" but when that nation proved unworthy of this "honor" it was turned to the Gentiles, to gather out of them a peculiar people, a holy nation, to bear the name of Christ. (Acts 15:14.)

(2) The reader naturally expects the Apostle to begin with present conditions and trace them up to the grand result--the glorified Church,--while on the contrary the Apostle very properly begins at the other end, and traces the results downward. He does not begin, as is generally supposed, by saying, God honored you with the knowledge of the Gospel of Christ, and when you believed he justified you, and after you were justified he called you, and if you are faithful to your calling he will by and by exalt you to the condition which he foreknew. Indeed, it would not be possible to state the matter truthfully from that side; because, many are honored with a knowledge of the Gospel of Christ who are never justified (because they do not accept the knowledge--do not accept Christ), and of those who do accept Christ and who are thus justified, it would not be true to say that they will all be sanctified; nor would it be correct to say that all who once are sanctified will reach the condition of glory; for "many are called but few chosen:" few "make their calling and election sure."

But the Apostle argues the matter from the only

proper and logical standpoint: having stated that God has foreknown or fore-intended the election of the Church, he steps forward to the time when God's purpose and intention will have been completed, accomplished --the time when the election will be finished and the Church accepted to glory. From that future standpoint he indicates the various steps which led up to it, saying,--All those of the foreknown ones, glorified, will previously have been called; because it is a matter of grace, and no man taketh this honor unto himself, but "he that is called of God;"--as the "Head of the body," so each member of the body. And, says the Apostle, every one thus "called" will previously have been "justified;" because God calls no enemies, no unreconciled sinners, to this high position. It was for this reason that Christ died, that through faith in his blood repentant believers might be "justified" and might be thus prepared to be "called." It is thus evident that the high calling to this glorious position of joint-heirship with Christ is a very different thing, indeed, from the calling of sinners to repentance. Sinners are called to repentance anywhere and everywhere and at any time. And when they repent, the Lord engages that in due time he will point them to

"The fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
Where sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains."

When they have lost their guilty stains, through repentance and faith in the Redeemer, they have reached the condition of justification, and are ready to be "called" to sonship and joint-heirship. But the Apostle is still going backward in the argument and, having told that the foreordained class would all be "called," and that they would all previously have been "justified," he declares that the justified ones would all previously have been favored or "honored" (not glorified): honored or favored with a knowledge of the truth, a knowledge of the gospel.

Perhaps only a comparatively small number of Christians have realized what a great honor was conferred upon them in the first knowledge brought to them of the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. This "honor" has been so widely dispensed that many forget that it is a special honor, a special favor, just as they forget to recognize as special blessings the sunshine and the rain. But this "honor" is not yet as common as some other of God's blessings. "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust," throughout the whole world: but not so the gospel

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sunlight and the spiritual showers. These blessings have been general only in certain quarters.

"THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD IS JESUS."

When Christ as the "Great Light" arose in Palestine, and when on the day of Pentecost the Church was illuminated by him, as a light for the world,--that light was not sent Southward into the darkness of Africa: the Africans were not "honored" with having the gospel of Christ. Neither was it sent Eastward through India to its hundreds of millions: India was not "honored" with the gospel of Christ. Neither was it sent still farther East to the hundreds of millions of China: China was not "honored" with the gospel of Christ. But it was sent Northward and Westward through and to Europe and America. These lands were "honored," these peoples "have seen a great light," and with that light have received a great blessing. But how comparatively few have really seen this light, even when it shone around them on every hand. Alas! like the partly cured blind man of old they see a brightness and can discern something, but see nothing clearly. The Apostle explains their case, saying, "The god of this world hath blinded the eyes of them that believe not."--2 Cor. 4:4.

Having followed the Apostle's reasoning, we are enabled to see clearly each step of divine providence taken in connection with the divine purpose and foreordination.

(1) We see that first of all, to a certain extent, God was "for" us, for the people of Europe and North America: he was for them or favorable to them to the extent of "honoring" or favoring them with the light of grace "as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ, our Lord."

(2) In a still fuller sense God was "for" or favorable towards those who accept the light of truth, those who through repentance and faith in the precious blood are "justified" from sin, through his grace.

(3) He was yet more "for" these justified ones, to the extent that he "called" them,--to suffer with Christ during this Gospel age, and by and by to share his glory.

(4) In a still fuller sense he is "for" all those who accept the call and who are seeking to "make their calling and election sure." God is in an especial sense "for" all these who are so running as to obtain the prize which he offers. "They shall be mine, in that day when I make up my jewels."

It is to this called and faithfully running class that the Apostle speaks as "us." He and those whom he addressed ("called to be saints"--Rom. 1:6,7) had first been "honored" with the light; second, they, by repentance and faith, had accepted it and been justified; third, they had been "called;" fourth, they had

accepted the calling and given themselves wholly to the Lord. And with the Apostle and the early Church all who to-day can recognize themselves in this same position, as having taken these same steps, may properly apply to themselves the Apostle's words and say, God is for us. Who can be against us!

All the "saints" throughout the whole world, who have taken the afore-mentioned steps, are probably altogether not a great multitude; but rather, comparatively, a "little flock:" yet each one of these may say to himself, and realize to the very bottom of his heart as applicable to himself, these wonderful words, --God is for us. He may endeavor to grasp the significance of these words, but he will surely fail of getting all of their wonderful meaning. It is not possible for the human mind to grasp the riches of divine grace and love and power. We cannot comprehend them, we can merely apprehend them. If God be for us, with all of his infinite wisdom and power, it implies also that Christ is for us, for he is one with the Father; it implies also that all the angels, Cherubim and Seraphim, and all the heavenly powers of our knowledge and beyond our knowledge are for us;--all enlisted upon our side, to do us good, to help us, to succor us in time of need, to uphold us in time of temptation, to strengthen us to do the Father's will. "All things are yours, for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

The view granted to Elisha's servant, of countless horses, chariots and horsemen of fire or like fire, was of course merely a vision, nevertheless it represented a truth,--that divine power is round about God's people on every hand for their protection and their deliverance. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that are his and delivereth them." "Are they [the angels] not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. 1:14.) Our Lord expressed the same thing, saying, of his faithful followers: "Their angels [messengers] do always behold the face of my Father." It matters not whether we shall understand this to signify that spirit beings continually surround those called to be the "elect" of the Lord, to guide and shape their interests for their highest good, or whether we shall understand it to be merely a figure of speech, signifying that divine power surrounds God's people; for the results would be the same, it matters not by which means the Lord would deliver them from the evil and help them in trial and adversity. The fact that God is "for us," and that he is making all things to work together for good to those who love him, is the central thought, the essence, the strength of this message to "us."

How wonderful is all this! Let us cast our minds

for a moment over the world with its fifteen hundred millions of inhabitants. Let us remember that they

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are all under the "curse," under the sentence of divine displeasure, except the few who have heard of the redemption --of the Way, the Truth and the Life--and who have by faith and obedience "escaped the condemnation that is on the world" and come back into harmony with the Father and into fellowship with his Son. Let us imagine, if we can, this "little flock" of the "honored," "justified" and "called," heaven-led and heaven-blessed, scattered here and there amongst the fifteen hundred million fellow-creatures. O, what joy, what comfort, what peace, what strength the thought must bring to each one who can realize that he has taken all of these steps thus far, and that he is still pressing along the same line "for the mark of the prize of our high calling!" And this joy is not dimmed, but is greatly enhanced, by the thought that soon, in conformity with God's gracious foreordination, all the "elect" may have a share in the great work of blessing, with the knowledge of the True Light, the masses who are yet in darkness, "without God and having no hope" in him. For altho a redemption has been provided for all, the knowledge of God's grace has not yet reached any but the favored or "honored" minority.

As the Apostle declares in this very same chapter (Rom. 8:22), it is indeed a groaning creation; it has been groaning ever since the sentence of divine wrath was expressed in Eden, and it must continue to groan until the great Deliverer shall have established his Kingdom, and shall have rolled back the "curse" of death and depravity. Oh, what riches of grace have come to "us" through Jesus Christ, our Lord! And yet, as the Apostle says, altho we have all this blessing and favor, we have also with it certain trials, difficulties and painful experiences, which the Father sees necessary for our development in order that we may come up to the terms of his predestination, "copies of his Son." And in consequence of this, as the Apostle declares, "We ourselves also [as well as the whole creation] groan within ourselves [while suffering with the world we suppress the groan,--"We lay our burdens at his feet and bear a song away"] waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body"--"the body of Christ," the elect Church.

The word if in this text does not signify a doubt or question on the subject; but quite the reverse. The Apostle has given the evidence that God is for "us," in the preceding verses, and now uses if as tho he said,--If I have proved that God is for us, then who can be against us!

"WHO CAN BE AGAINST US?"

Who can be against us, if God is for us? The Apostle does not mean that, having God on our side, none would dare to oppose our way. Quite to the contrary, we have bitter enemies and relentless foes. Who are against us?--Their name is legion. The devil is against us, as the Apostle declares, Our adversary, the devil, goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. The same Apostle assures us that we must contend against "the wiles of the devil." Our Lord declares that we must "resist the devil." The Apostle informs us that Satan is cunning and deceitful, as well as desperately wicked; and says that therefore we must have a battle, and as good soldiers we must have on the armor of God, and use it faithfully. Thus we are to resist the devil, and he will flee from us. We are to "quench all the fiery darts of the adversary" in open attacks, and yet to remember that we battle not with flesh and blood, but with a demon host; with "principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in high places."--Eph. 6:12.

Nor is this all: we have a great enemy in ourselves; --the "carnal mind," "the old man," reckoned dead, which must be kept in subjection. Perhaps the greatest battles and the greatest trials, which we are called upon as "new creatures" to endure, are these battles of the new self, the mind of Christ, against the old fallen self, the mind of the flesh.

Furthermore: we have the "world" as "children of darkness" arrayed in opposition to us. They love the darkness and consequently hate not only the light, but also the "children of the light." This our Master declared, saying, "Ye are not of the world, for I have chosen you out of the world." "Marvel not if the world hate you; you know it hated me before it hated you." "If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but now ye are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you." And the world's hatred is not conducted along honorable lines of warfare. It would be ashamed to declare that it loved darkness, and ashamed to declare that it hated us because of the light. Its policy, rather, guided by the great adversary, is, to "put light for darkness, and darkness for light:" to misrepresent our best efforts to be evil and selfish, and to misrepresent its own selfish efforts as being honorable and good. "Marvel not, if the world hate you." "The darkness hateth the light."

Nor are these great adversaries the only ones to oppose us: we must expect to endure from still another quarter. As our Lord declared, "A man's foes shall be they of his own household." Those whom you have dearly loved of your own family circle, and with whom you have had Christian fellowship, may turn against you and hate you for the truth's sake. Nor

will this always be because of wickedness of intention: sometimes at least the persecutions will come conscientiously; as for instance, Saul of Tarsus (who afterward

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became the great Apostle Paul) was once a persecutor of "this way," and ignorantly did many things against Jesus and those who loved him. He himself tells us that he obtained mercy because he did it ignorantly, thinking that he did God service. And so doubtless it has been with much of the persecution that has come to the Lord's faithful ones in every age. Much of it has been inflicted conscientiously. It is quite remarkable, too, how the Adversary succeeds sometimes in deceiving those, who once knew better, into thinking that anger, malice, hatred, strife, bitter words and slander ("works of the flesh and the devil") are "duty." Alas, how blinding is the spirit of the Adversary!

All these adversaries must be resisted, unto blood, unto death, if need be,--must not be permitted to hinder our walking in the footsteps of him who set us an example,--must not be permitted to prevent us from becoming copies of our Lord and thus making our calling and election sure. But while resisting them with all our might, we must avoid carnal weapons and not render railing for railing; rather, so far as possible, we should use the sword of the spirit, the Word of God, and Michael-like say, "The Lord rebuke thee." God is "for us," and declares that in his due time he will right present wrongs and falsehoods, saying, "Vengeance is mine, I will render recompences." Indeed, toward the class who war against us ignorantly and conscientiously we should feel no bitterness, but rather sympathy, love and an earnest desire and effort for an opening of the eyes of their understanding.

The Apostle was not ignoring all of these great adversaries which, like "roaring lions," would terrify us, and if possible arrest our progress in the path of consecration and sacrifice, which leads on to glory. This is not his thought when he says, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Quite to the contrary, his thought is, that notwithstanding all these things which are against us, we may realize that God is for us, that he has predestinated a Church in glory and has justified and called us to be members of it, and brought us on the journey thus far, through all of these various steps. And if we can realize that God has thus been leading us up to the present time, to bring us to share his glory, and that all things thus far have been working for our good, this is our assurance that all wisdom, power and love shall be exerted on our behalf down to the very end of the racecourse, if we continue to abide in Christ, faithfully.

What shall we fear? What could oppose our way

so as to hinder it, if God be on our side? This reminds us of the adage, "God with one is a majority." So, God with us, and for us, and leading us, makes us mighty indeed, stronger than all these adversaries with all their arts and wiles and perversity, and able through his grace to come off conquerors, yea, more than conquerors through him who loved us and bought us with his own precious blood.

We urge that each reader mark the various steps of progress through which divine grace has already led him, and that, whatever he finds to be his present standpoint, he go on as the Lord leads,--not content with anything short of "the whole counsel of God." The reader has been "honored" with a knowledge of the grace of God in Christ: if he has not yet accepted, let him quickly accept this grace by repentance for sin and with faith in the ransom. If he has done this and has received the grace of justification, and, as the Apostle expresses it, has "joy and peace through believing," then let him remember that still there's more to follow, and that the justified are "called." Not called to glory merely, but called to obedience, called to present their bodies living sacrifices to God in his service, holy and acceptable through Christ.

Alas! how many who have received the grace of justification stop there: they hear the call to suffer with Christ for the truth's sake, they hear the invitation to stand up for Jesus, in their thoughts and words and deeds, but heed not. They perceive that such a full consecration would necessarily mean not only the giving up of sinful pleasures, but also the giving up of some not sinful, that they might devote their words and thoughts and deeds as far as possible as he did, doing good to others. But of those who hear the call to present themselves, how few obey it, how few surrender themselves to him who bought them with his

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own precious blood! Yes, many are called; tho few are chosen. All the justified are called to self-surrender, full obedience, full trust in the Lord and full submission to his will. And of those who do accept the call and who have made the covenant, and who are therefore of the "us" class mentioned by the Apostle, how many become "overcharged with the cares of this life, or the deceitfulness of riches," or the perplexities of poverty, and so fail to obtain the fullness of heart-obedience, and consequently will fail to make their calling and election sure.

We are not now discussing what will be the fate of those who fail to be victors and to gain a crown and to sit with Christ in his throne; we are considering, rather, the privileges of those who have been "honored" of the Lord and led step by step up to present attainments of knowledge and privilege. We are seeking

to bring before our minds at least a faint conception of the wonderful provisions of divine grace, and the full ability of every one so called to make his calling and election sure by laying hold of this grace of God, provided in Christ, by which, to them, all things shall work together for good, because they love God and are the called ones according to his purpose.

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A QUESTION IN RE JUSTIFICATION.

Rhode Island.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--There is some difference of opinion amongst the friends here respecting a point of Scripture teaching, and we request your aid in its solution at your earliest convenience and, if you think proper, in the columns of the WATCH TOWER. Briefly stated, it is this:--What is the faith taught in God's Word, by which the sinner is justified in God's sight?

With Christian love, Yours in our Lord,

G. W. A_____. and J. B_____.

IN REPLY:--It is faith in "the redemption which is in Christ Jesus," that justifies the sinner. But this implies much more than appears on the surface--much more than many suppose. It implies:--

(1) That the sinner recognizes his own condition of imperfection, sin, separation from God, and his sentence, even if he does not understand fully and correctly what the penalty for sin is--death, destruction. It implies this, because to admit that God has provided a redemption implies that there was need for redemption on the part of the sinner, and that a condemnation rested upon the sinner justly, because of sin.

(2) Faith in this redemption implies that the sinner discerns at least something of the sinfulness of sin; and that he desires to escape, not only from the extreme penalty of sin (death, destruction), but also from the other features; viz., his own imperfections and his alienation from the divine mind. Such a faith, therefore, implies repentance--a desire to return unto God and to righteousness. It means, therefore, dissatisfaction with sin, and a longing desire for righteousness, which is willing, yea, glad, to avail itself of the divine provision in Christ. This faith, therefore, implies not only a desire for the forgiveness of "the sins that are past through the forbearance of God," but also a desire to live godly, righteously, soberly, and to henceforth avoid all sin, so far as possible.

(3) This faith is said to justify us in the divine sight: that is, God, through the merit of the great sacrifice,

can be just in recognizing those who, altho still blemished by sin, and unworthy actually of his notice, have thus, by his appointed way, through the merit of the redemption, come back to a condition of mind, of heart, which he can thoroughly approve.

(4) It is called justification by faith, because it is not an actual justification. An actual justification would mean that the sinner was made absolutely perfect or correct, but a justification by faith signifies that, altho actually imperfect, still he is now accepted of the Lord, and treated by him as tho he were perfect, because his heart or intentions are now perfect, and the sacrifice for sins, in which by faith he has shared, is reckoned as covering all his past shortcomings.

(5) This new condition of justification, having been entered upon, implies, therefore, as we have seen, a determination upon the part of the justified one to live in thought, word and deed righteously, to the extent of his ability. At first this may seem to him to be a comparatively easy thing--simply to do right, and to avoid doing wrong. But whoever tries to do this will shortly find that it is no easy task, that the weaknesses and tendencies of his own fallen nature, and similar weaknesses in those with whom he daily and hourly comes in contact, have a tendency to oppose his resolves for a life of righteousness, justice, equity, toward God and men. He finds the necessities of life and the conditions of the world, socially and financially, to be a strong current, to be against which would imply much more than he had at first thought. As he looks the question squarely and honestly in the face, he finds that neither his own flesh, nor the world in general, are friends to grace to help him on to God, and that the only thing to do is either to join with the majority in unfaithfulness to the highest sense of righteousness, truth and love, or else to reckon himself dead to the world--a living sacrifice to God and his righteousness.

(6) This is a turning-point in the pathway of all the justified during the Gospel age. There is no escaping it. They must either go onward to a full consecration to the Lord (Rom. 12:1), or they must retrograde from the standard of righteousness, and be content to avoid the grosser sins, and to live on the common plane of nominal Church worldliness. This the majority seem to do. So far as we may be able to judge, they, in thus compromising themselves, lose their position of justification, which was reckoned to them at the

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time of their earliest faith and resolves to follow righteousness, justice and truth. Their justification remained so long as they were conscientiously doing this. Their justification would seem to lapse from the moment that, coming to the place where they realized that obedience to righteousness in this present time would mean self-sacrifice,

they turned back and followed no further in the footsteps of him who has set us an example that we should walk in his steps.

(7) Some, yea many, stop when they reach the point of decision: unwilling to compromise righteousness, and yet unwilling to bear the reproaches and losses or sacrifices demanded by a life of full consecration. These show that they have the spirit of the truth, tho not in overcoming measure,--not in the measure of sacrificers, "priests." These the Lord bears with patiently for a time, peradventure under his disciplines and the instructions of his Word they may see their privileges and learn that the things they would sacrifice are but loss and dross as compared with the glory, honor and immortality they would gain. If these do not learn the lesson and make the sacrifice they will ultimately be forced by divine providences to the point of decision

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with its reward of everlasting life or its punishment of everlasting death.

But such as need to be forced are not to be counted amongst the overcomers, the "elect," the "little flock," who will sit in the throne with the Lord. No, they are represented in the undetermined number who will come up to spiritual conditions through great tribulation.-- See Rev. 7:9-17.

If we have not fully answered your question, it is because we have failed to get at its point, and if so, please state it again.

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HEZEKIAH'S GREAT PASSOVER.

--NOV. 6.--2 CHRON. 30:1-13.--

"Yield yourselves unto the Lord, and enter into his sanctuary."

OUR LAST lesson respecting Isaiah's vision and his commission, to announce the fall of Israel, was "in the year that King Uzziah died." (Isa. 6:1.) The wicked king, Ahaz, succeeded Uzziah in the throne of Judah, and reigned wickedly, in neglect of God and his law, for sixteen years. It would appear, however, that he had an excellent wife, Abijah, under whose careful training their son, Hezekiah, was prepared for the kingdom, and became in many respects a model ruler, and a faithful servant of God. It is even supposed that the Prophet Isaiah, who was related to the royal family, was Hezekiah's tutor, and helped to guide him into right ways of thinking and doing. The fact that so good a son could come of so evil a father is an evidence

to us that under divine providence it is not necessary that we should inherit all the evil traits of our ancestors. Altho we cannot overcome them completely, so that none of the fallen race of Adam can ever hope to regain perfection as a result of personal effort and of training, nevertheless, we see that favorable conditions, religious training, etc., lead to a vast improvement in those who are rightly exercised thereby.

And here we get a suggestive hint of the methods which the Lord will employ in the world's blessing and uplifting during the Millennium. The human family is unable to lift itself out of the degraded condition in which it is, because of shortness of life, and because of the general prevalence of evil; hence, the power that will lift mankind must be a power from the outside, uncontaminated by the fall. Moreover, under the terms of the divine sentence, the penalty of man's sin must be cancelled, his penalty must be paid for him, before he can be fully released from its condemnation and weaknesses. It is this redemption or purchase which has already been accomplished for mankind: the deliverance out of sin and its consequences, mental, moral and physical depravity, is a future work, made possible by Christ's great sacrifice. And, gracious thought, it is he who redeemed mankind, and who has been highly exalted to power and great glory, who is shortly to use this power on man's behalf, in uplifting to righteousness and perfection whosoever will accept his grace, of all the families of the earth. The uplifting, nevertheless, will be along lines of instruction, chastisement and correction in righteousness, in which the individual will be obliged to cooperate in order to the attainment of full "restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began."--Acts 3:19-21.

That Hezekiah was already well instructed, and thoroughly consecrated to the Lord, at the time of his father's death and his own entrance to kingship, is evidenced by the fact that he immediately began, in the first month of his reign, to inaugurate reforms of the character noted in our lesson,--the restoration of the worship of Jehovah, as divinely appointed. Had he not been consecrated to the Lord, and thus in the proper attitude of heart, his accession to power would have had an influence the very opposite of this: it would have led to self-gratification and personal vanity.

His first public work was to open and prepare the Temple of the Lord, which had been closed and out of repair for years, and in which had been permitted to accumulate a vast amount of rubbish, etc. The king called to his aid the proper assistants for this work--the divinely appointed tribe of Levi. The cleansing of the Temple proceeded according to the law of Moses, and when completed the first thing in order was a great sin-offering. King Hezekiah was broadminded, and gave special instructions that the offering was to be, not

only on behalf of the people of Judah, the two tribes, but on behalf also of their separated brethren--"for all Israel." He recognized properly that the nation was still in some respects one, in the sense that the divine promises were made to all the seed of Abraham: whoever, therefore, of all the tribes would recognize the Lord God and seek his face was properly to be esteemed a brother-Israelite.

It was the time for the Passover Feast, in commemoration of the Lord's deliverance of Israel from Egypt; typical of the deliverance of Spiritual Israel from the bondage of sin and Satan; and typical also of the ultimate deliverance of those who love righteousness, and desire to serve the Lord, from Satan's bondage, by his complete overthrow during the Millennium. It was determined that this Passover Feast should be properly observed that year, for, altho, from the account, it had evidently been kept by a few Israelites, yet the general

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religious disorder was such, that apparently it was not observed by the nation, nor with all its appointed particularity by any. This time the king determined that its proper observance should be reinaugurated, preceded by all the proper arrangements of the law respecting the cleansing of the people (Exod. 12:15-20) and the putting away from their houses of leaven, a symbol of sin: thus, in figure at least, typically, the people were sanctified, in order that they might properly keep the feast. But all this required time--to issue the decrees, to succeed in stimulating the zeal of the people, and on their part to perform these works, symbolizing holiness to the Lord and separation from sin. The nation being thus defiled, the time was too short to be ready to observe the Passover on its appointed day, the 14th day of the first month, and hence the 14th day of the second month was observed instead--as the Lord had given permission.--Num. 9:10,11.

The same breadth of mind and heart which characterized

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Hezekiah's instructions that the sin-offering should be on behalf of all Israel, still controlled him, and led him to desire not only a reformation of "Judah," but also amongst their separated brethren, known as "Israel." Accordingly, special messengers were sent, from Beer-Sheba, the most southern town of the land of Israel, to publicly invite all Israelites of every tribe to return to the worship of Jehovah, and to specially come up on the occasion of this feast. The postal system of the present day was not in vogue, and hence a special postal arrangement was made for the carrying of these letters.

The time for such an invitation was most favorable,

for the prophecy of Isaiah respecting the carrying away of Israel into captivity was already in progress: the ten tribes were at this date paying tribute to Assyria, and the carrying away of many of the people had already actually begun. Thus, the Lord's arrangement served to draw attention of any who might be "Israelites indeed" to the fact that their captivity was a punishment for their rejection of the Lord, and thus to incite those who had any faith and zeal to return to the Lord's worship. King Hezekiah's letters, briefly summed up, were an exhortation to remember the past and to return to Jehovah: "Be not ye like your fathers and like your brethren, which trespass against the Lord God of your fathers, who therefore gave them up to desolation, as ye see....Yield yourselves unto the Lord, and enter into his sanctuary,...that the fierceness of his wrath may turn away from you."

The exhortation held out the suggestion, not only of present deliverance, but also of the return of their brethren already deported. But the postmen who bore these messages were laughed at in the northern kingdom. In proportion as the people were far from the Lord they were proud and vain, as is always the case; and it was in large measure, no doubt, their pride that was leading them on to destruction as a nation. All who are in harmony with the Lord are humbleminded, and only such receive the Lord's gracious messages with appreciation or love and well entreat the servants who bear the messages. We may note also that their obedience under such circumstances would imply considerable faith and devotion to Jehovah, for they would be the subjects of the scoffs and scorns from the unbelieving masses, as well as the messengers who invited them. Some, but not many, we are told, yet in all a fair number, humbled themselves and came, from the tribes of Asher, Manasseh and Zebulun, and of course got the blessing which God always grants to those who humble themselves and are obedient. In addition to this mention in verse 11, we find another, that "many" came also from the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, Issachar and Zebulun. (Verse 18.) Thus, at least five of the ten tribes were represented more or less numerous, and of the remainder two were already in captivity,--Reuben and Gad. We are to remember, furthermore, that some from the ten tribes had already allied themselves with the kingdom of Judah, because of the idolatry prevalent in their own land and of the better religious opportunities in Judah.--2 Chron. 15:9.

Throughout Judah the invitation to the Feast of the Passover seems to have been well received: "The hand of God was to give them one heart to do the commandment of the king and of the princes by the Word of the Lord." In consequence there was an unusually large assemblage of the people at Jerusalem that year. The record is, that no such Passover had been observed since the days of Solomon,--over two hundred

and fifty years. The Feast was observed with great joy and gladness, singing and praising God; and so imbued did the people become with religious fervor, that it was by their own proposition that the Passover week of praise and sanctity to holy things was prolonged for an additional week.--Verses 21-26.

We break from our topic here, to call attention to the fact that the true faithful Israelites were gathered out of the ten tribe kingdom into the two tribe kingdom at that early day. After the later captivity of Judah the division of Israel was lost sight of. The decree of Cyrus permitting return from captivity ignored any division and was to all Israel: and the faithful of all the tribes who returned were unitedly recognized as Israel, and are subsequently so referred to in the Bible. Use a concordance and note the New Testament references to Israel. It was the remnant of Israel and not merely of Judah that was gathered into the Gospel age, while the remainder were "blinded" and broken off from the covenant promises, until after the Gospel age shall have

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selected the "elect," Spiritual Israel.--See Rom. 11:7,25-32.

Nor did the revival of true religion inaugurated by Hezekiah stop with that Passover. While it filled the people with zeal for the true worship of the Lord, to give liberally for the support of the priests and Levites, the maintenance of the sacrifices, etc., it led also to a strong movement against every form of idolatry throughout Judah, extending even throughout the land of the ten tribes: as a consequence, there was a general destruction of idols out of the land, a cutting down of the obscene high places, devoted to the licentious worship of Baal, etc. The result of this proper turning of the people to the Lord brought to them and to their king great earthly blessings, in harmony with God's covenant made with that nation. The king became very rich, and the people also, so that their tithes and offerings to the Lord were not only sufficient for the supply of the priests and Levites, but far in excess of this, so that store-houses had to be built to receive them.

Looking for analogies in Spiritual Israel, we find several. (1) All true religion is identical with order and cleanliness, as the Apostle intimates, saying, If any man defile the Temple of God, him God will destroy, and correspondingly we may say that whoever attempts to cleanse the Temple of God, and to bring it into accord with the divine arrangement will be blessed now, as were Hezekiah and his kingdom, only we should remember that the rewards promised to Spiritual Israel are spiritual and not temporal blessings. As heretofore noticed, the congregation of the Lord in the present time may be considered nominally his Temple, tho the real Temple is the Church triumphant, not yet completed.

Nevertheless, it is proper also to apply this lesson to our own individual hearts; for, as the Apostle also points out, each Christian is a temple of the holy spirit, and the Church in general, therefore, may be properly considered, even in its present imperfect condition, a temple of the holy spirit, devoted, consecrated, to the Lord. So then, each individual Christian, justified and sanctified by the great atonement of our High Priest, should seek to keep himself (and, so far as possible, all others associated with him, and imbued by the same spirit) free from all worldly contamination, if they would have the Lord's blessing in spiritual things. All of the Lord's people need to remember the necessity for cleansing from worldly defilements, not only those of the past, but also those which are ever present in the world. We remember the Apostle's words, "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."--2 Cor. 7:1.

Not only should the cleansing be done, but it should be done according to the divine arrangement. As Hezekiah and the priests and Levites cleansed and sanctified "according to the law of Moses," the mediator of Israel's covenant, so we, who belong to the house of sons, are to seek cleansing and sanctification in strict accordance with the law of Christ, the Mediator of the New Covenant, under which "we are accepted in the beloved." As there was a formal ritual to be observed under the law, so there is a form of faith, of sound words and of obedience, to be observed under the Gospel. Our cleansing is not with the blood of bulls and goats, but through the merit of the more precious blood of Christ, which does not call for vengeance upon us because of his death, but on the contrary calls for mercy, pardon, grace, to all those who come unto the Father by him.

(2) There is a lesson for us also in Hezekiah's broad conception that all Israelites who were willing to join in the worship of the Lord were to be esteemed as brethren, and to be invited so to do. Nor would it have been sufficient that he should have broad and liberal and Scriptural ideas on this subject: it was his duty, as well as his privilege, to make sure that there were no fences of separation between any of the Lord's people, and the arrangement for the Lord's worship in the Lord's house, the Temple. So with Spiritual Israelites, there should be a realization that all "Israelites indeed" are one in Christ Jesus, and all are to be esteemed and treated as Israelites indeed who trust in the precious blood of Christ, as the great sin-offering of atonement, and are consecrated to the service of the Lord. Such a general recognition of Christian character is, we are glad to believe, greatly on the increase during the last half century. But more is still to be done along proper lines: sectarian fences should all be pulled down and sectarian names and creeds all be abolished, and true Christians (all who trust in the precious blood, and are

fully consecrated to the Lord, to obey the instructions of his Word as best they can understand them) should mingle together, and be one people, without other distinctions than that some may have attained to greater knowledge and sanctification than others--all, however, seeking to "come to the full stature of manhood in Christ Jesus."

(3) There is a lesson for us also in the fact that such a message of true fellowship to the true Israel, and in the promises of God, made alike to all, and ignoring

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all creeds and parties, would not be popular to-day, as it was not popular with many at that time. Now, as then, the majority are disposed to "laugh with scorn," and to mark as visionary enthusiasts those who advocate the simplicity which is in Christ Jesus, as taught in the Scriptures, and practiced in the early Church. Nevertheless, now as then, some are attracted by what they realize to be the proper message, the truth. Many will hear the message, no doubt, who will not have sufficient

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courage to act upon it, as no doubt there were some in Israel. A few, nevertheless, from almost all sects and parties and creeds will be attracted; and they will be found to be the meek, those ready and willing to humble themselves. The proud will stand up for sectarianism and for the honors and dignities which go therewith, and will fail to get the divine blessing, "Blessed are the meek."

(4) A true revival of religious sentiment toward God, and his worship in the beauty of holiness and in accordance with the directions of his Word, will imply now, as well as in Hezekiah's day, a general breaking up of idols. And Oh! how many idols there are which the Lord's people should be zealous in overthrowing. They are many in form and feature, but one in general character. One of these idols, before which thousands upon thousands prostrate themselves in the dust, is Sectarianism; another is Money; another is Lust; another, Selfish Ambition; another, Pride; another, Ease; and on the whole, they are legion, with the one family name, Selfishness. Whoever has come into a condition of full consecration to the Lord through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whoever has come to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness, will readily realize the abominable character of these idols which the great Adversary has induced him, through sin, to bow down to and worship. And in proportion to our zeal for the Lord, in proportion to the measure of his spirit in our hearts, will we be zealous in putting down all these idols, and bringing not only the words of our mouths and the acts of life, but also our very thoughts,

into subjection to the will of God in Christ.--2 Cor. 10:5.

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TWO PRAYERS AND THEIR ANSWERS.

--NOV. 13.--2 KINGS 19:20-22,28-37.--

"God is our refuge and strength; a very present help in trouble."--Psa. 46:1.

HEZEKIAH, king of Judah, is one of the most notable characters of Old Testament history, and our present lesson relates to him. The preceding lesson showed us the beginning of his reign, accompanied by a great religious reformation and revival amongst the people. The present lesson shows him under severe trials, and how they developed and manifested his faith in the Lord, and the Lord's responses to his trust and prayers.

The Assyrian king, Sennacherib, had invaded the northern or ten-tribe kingdom, and carried its people captive, and had placed peoples of other nationalities in the land in their stead; and eight years after that conquest he determined upon an invasion of the kingdom of Judah. Already, one after the other, the Assyrians had conquered various nations, and were now evidently bent upon conquering Egypt, but first were disposing of the intermediate kingdoms, and Judah was the last of these which lay on the route between Assyria and Egypt. Bent upon conquest and mastery, rather than upon destruction, Sennacherib, while laying siege to some of the intermediate countries, first sent letters and subsequently his representative and general, Rabshakeh, with an armed host to Jerusalem, demanding the full surrender of the kingdom, that the people might be deported to other lands, as the people of the ten tribes had been.

These letters and the message were full of boastings of the power of Assyria, and the conquests already made, and promised the people of Judah homes and circumstances similar to those then enjoyed, the object, apparently, being to establish the Assyrian empire on a firm basis by obliterating as far as possible the feelings of patriotism in the various peoples conquered. Not only did these messages boast of the power of Sennacherib, as exemplified in other wars, but taking cognizance of the fact that Israel trusted in Jehovah, they first declared that the Assyrians were sent there by Jehovah for the very purpose of overthrowing the kingdom, and taking the people captive, and secondly declared that their trust in Jehovah was vain, because the various nations which had been conquered trusted severally to their own gods, and yet all alike failed; and that Israel's

God, Jehovah, could do nothing more for them than could the other gods for the other peoples, against the mighty power of Assyria, which was rapidly becoming a world-empire.

Hezekiah's first move was to placate his adversary, by becoming his vassal, and paying annual tribute, and as a preliminary step in this direction he sent Sennacherib a present of great value, gold and silver, ivory couches, etc.,--even stripping the gold and silver ornaments from the Temple for this purpose. Herein we believe he greatly erred, and it would appear to have been as a consequence of this failure to at once recognize Jehovah as the almighty ruler and preserver of his people and typical kingdom, that the Assyrians were permitted to assail them, and to destroy many of the outlying smaller cities, and to besiege Jerusalem, the capital city, with fortresses, etc. Nevertheless, when it came to the extremity, Hezekiah's faith in the Lord increased in proportion as the power of the Assyrians was manifested, and the condition of his own city and people became the more critical. Then it was that he did what he should have done at the very beginning--he, with Isaiah, the prophet (his faithful friend and adviser and supposed

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tutor in earlier years), joined together in prayer to the Lord (2 Kings 19:1,2,14-19), in the Temple, laying before the Lord the letters received from the haughty Sennacherib, and recounting his boastful words, beseeching the Lord to have mercy upon his covenanted people, who now, more than for centuries, were seeking to please and serve him, and to grant them deliverance from their enemies, when there seemed no hope from any other quarter.

It was in answer to this prayer that Isaiah sent to Hezekiah the message of our lesson: "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, that which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib, king of Assyria, I have heard," etc. The remainder of Isaiah's message was evidently intended to be the answer which Hezekiah should send to Sennacherib, through Rabshakeh, that the people of Jehovah laughed to scorn his boastful message and ultimatum. The answer calls attention to Sennacherib's boastful pride and his blasphemy of the only true God, the God of Israel. The threat of the hook in the nose and the bridle in the mouth is figurative, representing the manner in which bullocks and horses are controlled: thus would the Lord control the Assyrian army. "Isaiah said unto him, Thus shall ye say to your master [Hezekiah], Thus saith the Lord, be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria has blasphemed me. Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumor, and shall return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own hand." (2 Kings 19:6,7.)

The message calls attention to the success of the Assyrian monarch previously, and points out that it was because the Lord had so permitted, designed and foretold, but points out, also, that Sennacherib is equally under the divine power, and on the present occasion, having blasphemed Jehovah, would be unsuccessful, would be turned back, while his people, Israel, and their king Hezekiah, would be heard and succored.

Spiritual Israelites may draw valuable lessons from the foregoing. We should beware how at any time we lose sight of the Lord's power on our behalf, no matter how threatening or great or dark the evil which assails us. A proper faith will look up to God, under such circumstances, and relying upon his promises will seek his aid, rather than seek to purchase deliverance from the great adversary, Satan, by any compromises. But how many, on the contrary, are disposed to do as Hezekiah did, purchase peace with things consecrated to the Lord, --to compromise the truth: for instance, if threatened with the disfavor of friends or neighbors or employers, how many are willing to conciliate such adversaries by a more worldly course, by subtracting from the time, influence, means, etc., consecrated to the Lord, considerable portions to be given to worldly service, or to secure domestic peace or social advancement, or commercial prosperity. So surely as the Lord's consecrated people do this, we may expect that the Lord will permit to come upon them the very difficulties which they dread and seek to avert by unholy compromise.

They need just such a lesson; and as a faithful father will give needed chastisements and corrections to his son, so the Lord deals with those who have been adopted into his family. But with the world in general matters are different; God's special dealings and special corrections are the manifestations of his special care for those whom he is now selecting from amongst mankind for a great future work, for which they need to be prepared, and for which unlimited faith and trust in the

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Almighty are absolutely essential. As David expressed it, "Before I was afflicted I went astray:" in other words, it was because he went astray, and because he was a consecrated servant of God, therefore, instead of permitting him to go far astray he was corrected in order to bring him back. So with all who have entered into the New Covenant, and accepted the call to joint-heirship with Christ; they are not permitted to go astray and make compromises whose tendency would be to lead them further and further astray from faith and trust in the Lord. Therefore they are chastened, and happy it is for all of Spiritual Israel who, like Hezekiah, permit the divine chastisements to develop more and more of faith and obedience.

It required great faith and courage on the part of

Hezekiah and his princes, and the people of Judah in general, to resist the great power of Assyria, and to send to Sennacherib such a reply as the Lord had indicated, yet evidently their faith and trust were developed in proportion to the difficulty; and shortly they beheld the fulfilment of the Lord's declaration respecting the Assyrians. Rabshakeh returned to meet Sennacherib, and to give him Hezekiah's answer, and then, apparently was fulfilled the catastrophe upon Sennacherib's army, referred to in our lesson.

In one place this is called "the blast of the Lord," from which some have supposed that it was a simoon, or sandstorm, not uncommon in the vicinity of the Arabian desert. In the lesson it is spoken of as the smiting of the angel of the Lord, and others have assumed from this that it was a pestilence which broke out in Sennacherib's army and destroyed in one night one hundred and eighty-five thousand of his warriors; because elsewhere pestilence is spoken of as being the work of a destroying angel or messenger. (See 2 Sam. 24:16,17.) Jewish tradition ascribes the destruction to a pestilence. The word "angel" here, as often elsewhere in the Scriptures, does not necessarily refer to a member of the angelic order of beings, but simply signifies "messenger;" and God is as able to use winds or waves,

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lightnings or sandstorms, or pestilence, as any other agency in the execution of his will. "Who maketh the winds his angels, and flaming fire his servants."-- Psa. 104:4.

Egyptian history contains an account of the remarkable departure of Sennacherib's army, and ascribes its retreat to an invasion of field mice, which gnawed the quivers and bowstrings and the thongs by which their shields were managed. But some have suggested that this is the Egyptian figurative way of speaking of a pestilence, because with them the mouse was a symbol representing pestilence. There are many other notable instances in history in which, apparently, divine providence has similarly intervened and protected those whom it was not the divine will should be further injured. For instance, the notable case of the Spanish Armada, designed to work great havoc upon the people of Great Britain, and apparently well qualified to do the work, was destroyed by a remarkable storm. Similarly, Napoleon's army, which had invaded Russia, and was encamped at Moscow, was, it is said, forced to retreat because of a heavy fall of snow, which is said to have caused the death of 20,000 of Napoleon's horses, and compelled the retreat which involved the almost complete destruction of his army, numbering over a quarter of a million. In the churches of Moscow the narrative of the destruction of Sennacherib's army is read on the anniversary of the retreat of the French from their city,

as marking a similar interposition of divine providence.

As the Israelites accepted the overthrow and turning back of Sennacherib's forces as of divine interposition, altho the sceptically inclined might view it differently, and ascribe it to natural causes, so Spiritual Israelites often find that God's answers to their prayers, and fulfilments of his promises are of such a kind that the trustful may see in them the hand of God, while those living less near to the Almighty will see in them nothing but the casualties of nature. Thus it is that our own spiritual condition has much to do with our joy in the Lord, and our appreciation of his care over us, and of the fulfilment of his promises. All of the divine leadings are along this line, namely, "According to thy faith be it unto thee." He who will not exercise faith in God cannot have the joy and peace which come to and are intended for believers only. It is the proper thing that as the Lord's people we should not only trust him for his goodness and providential care, and call to mind his promises, and plead them before him in our supplications, but it is also equally proper that we should seek to see at every step of life's journey how divine providence is directing our way, and causing all of life's affairs to work together for good to those who love God. Such expectations of divine care, and such waiting for it and looking for it, are evidences of true faith, and pleasing to the Lord. Accordingly, he assures us that without faith it is impossible to please him and again he assures us, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith."

In those days wars were not accomplished so quickly as at the present time, and the Israelites might well have been fearful that the retreat of Sennacherib's army was only temporary, and that he would come upon them again, and hence the Lord gave them a sign; viz., that altho they had been hindered from planting their crops that year they should have a sufficiency of food from that which would spring up of itself, and likewise the year following. The sign was fulfilled, and the people understood that they were effectually delivered: and altho Sennacherib lived for some twenty years after his retreat, he did not again attempt to conquer the land of Judah, and subsequently was assassinated by his own sons, as was set forth in the Lord's prophecy.-- Verse 7.

Assyrian history records, on tablets and cylinders of baked clay (the books of those days), Sennacherib's many victories, but they make no mention of this disaster which the Lord brought upon him, just as upon Napoleon's tomb in Paris are inscribed the various battles of his wars, but Waterloo is omitted. The first features of Sennacherib's victory over Judah are described in these words, on what is known as the "Taylor cylinder," now in the British Museum: "Because Hezekiah, king of Judah, would not submit to my yoke I came up against him, and by force of arms, and by the

might of my power, I took forty-six of his strong fenced cities; and of the smaller towns, which were scattered about, with the march of a host and surrounding of a multitude, with attack of ranks, and force of battering-rams, and mines and missiles, I besieged and captured a countless number. From these places I took and carried off 200,150 persons, old and young, male and female, together with horses and mules, asses and goats, sheep and oxen, a countless multitude, and Hezekiah himself I shut up in Jerusalem, his capital city, like a bird in a cage, building towers round the city, to hem him in, and raising banks of earth against the gates, so as to prevent his escape....Then upon this Hezekiah there fell the fear of the might of my arms, and he sent out to me the chiefs and the elders of Jerusalem, with thirty talents of gold, and eight hundred talents of silver, precious stones, of large size, couches of ivory... woods of every kind--an abundant treasure...all these were brought to me at Nineveh, the city of my dominion, Hezekiah having sent them by way of tribute, as a token of submission to my power." Thus Sennacherib boasts of Hezekiah's mistake, but wholly omits Hezekiah's subsequent victory, through prayer and the manifestation of divine power.

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ANOTHER DEFEAT AND ANOTHER VICTORY.

In consequence of this marked deliverance of Judah from the superior power of Assyria, we read, "And many brought gifts unto the Lord at Jerusalem, and presents to Hezekiah, King of Judah; so that he was magnified in the sight of all nations from henceforth. ...And Hezekiah had exceeding much riches and honor, and he made himself treasuries for silver and gold, and for precious stones, and for spices, and shields, and for all manner of desirable instruments," etc. (2 Chron. 32:22,27,30.) But prosperity is often a severer test of character than adversity, and hence we read, "But Hezekiah rendered not again, according to the benefit done unto him, for his heart was lifted up. Therefore there was wrath upon him and upon Judah and Jerusalem. Notwithstanding, Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants in Judah, so that the wrath of the Lord came not upon them in the days of Hezekiah."-- 2 Chron. 32:25,26.

"In those days Hezekiah was sick unto death." It was somewhere in this period of time, we may not be certain exactly when, but evidently the sickness had somewhat to do with Hezekiah's prosperity and consequent pride; but his sickness, in the midst of various great projects for the advancement of his country, and the welfare of his people, was a sore disappointment to Hezekiah, and led him to the Lord in prayer. Doubtless

he realized from the nature of the message delivered to him by Isaiah, that his sickness and premature death were penalties for his failure to render unto the Lord according to the multitude of his blessings. And so realizing, the king prayed most earnestly for forgiveness and help, promising that henceforth "I shall go softly all my years....We will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the Lord." Isa. 38:9-22 records, in poetic form, Hezekiah's resolves, and is evidently the embodiment of his previous prayer, with thanksgiving for his deliverance: for the Lord was gracious to him, accepted his prayer, covered his sins, and healed him. The prophet

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was sent back to him with the message of his recovery.

The king, anxious to assure himself that he was indeed the subject of a divine miracle, requested a proof of the increase of his life fifteen years. Isaiah proposed that the proof should be that the sun's record on the sun-dial should be suddenly advanced ten degrees, but Hezekiah thought it would be a still greater miracle if it should be turned back ten degrees, and his request was granted. The possibility of such a miracle has been questioned by many, who have insisted that it could in no way be possible, that it would involve not only stoppage of the motion of the earth upon its axis, but an impossible retrograde movement, to be accomplished in a moment of time. However, Professor Garbett, writing for a magazine called Knowledge, declares that he knew of an afternoon some years ago when, on many sundials in Southern England, there occurred exactly the wonder described in the book of Kings.

Asked by Astronomer R. A. Proctor to describe it, he writes as follows:--"The shiftings of the shadows on the dial, that Isaiah predicted to sick Hezekiah, are liable to occur at any place, when these two circumstances occur: (1) That the upper atmosphere is in that condition which causes two bright parhelion or mock suns to appear on opposite sides of the sun; and (2) that the lower air contains drifting clouds, massive enough to hide often two of the three [apparent suns]. When the real sun and eastern mock sun are hidden, there is only the western [mock sun] to cast shadows, which then coincide with what the sun would cast an hour and a half later; but if the cloud shift so as to hide the west parhelion, and disclose the eastern, the shadows instantly become such as the sun cast an hour and a half earlier....On March 29, 1858, these effects occurred, had any one been looking, on every dial of Portsea, and very probably of much of Hampshire besides. The parhelia were present and bright enough at about 11 A.M. and still better at 1 P.M."

But the fact that Joshua's long day can be accounted for by the reflected light of the sun in clouds of a peculiar

kind, and the fact that the turning back of the shadow for Hezekiah can be accounted for somewhat similarly, as above, by no means lessens either of these as miracles; because they were not accidental, but specially given as proofs of divine power. The fact that we may learn how the divine power acted in the fulfilment of the divine prediction subtracts nothing from the miracle, just as in the case of Hezekiah's recovery the fact that a fig poultice was applied, and that God thus made use of a means to an end, detracted nothing from the miraculousness of his recovery. As children of God, this is an important lesson for us to have deeply engraven upon our memories: God still uses natural means for the accomplishment of the exceeding great and precious promises of a spiritual kind, which he has bestowed upon us. Has he not promised us grace to help in every time of need? It is not necessary that we should suppose that this grace will come to us without a channel; it probably will come through a human channel. Has God promised to us meat in due season to the household of faith? It is reasonable for us to expect that it will come to us, as his other mercies and blessings have come, from his Word, and through the helpfulness of the fellow-members of the body of Christ, whom the Lord will make use of in serving the meat to the household of faith.--Matt. 24:45.

Hezekiah's experiences in respect to the Lord's remarkable answers to his two prayers seem to have wrought in him a commendable faith and trust, so that subsequently, when servants of the king of Babylon visited him with a present, and to congratulate him upon his recovery from sickness, and to view the wonderful aqueducts and evidences of engineering skill which he had accomplished, and when Hezekiah unwisely had shown these foreigners the great wealth of his treasures, etc., and Isaiah was sent to reprove him for this, and to tell him that the king of Babylon would ultimately come and despoil the city of its treasures, etc., but not in Hezekiah's day, he said, with prompt resignation to the divine will, "Good is the word of the Lord, which thou hast spoken." He said, moreover, "For there shall be peace and truth in my day."--Isa. 39:3,8.

Similarly all who are learning to trust the Lord, or who have tasted that he is gracious, should more and more be coming to this attitude of heart and mind: to a recognition of the fact that all God's ways are perfect, so that they can say, "Tho he slay me yet will I trust him." "I will rejoice in the God of my salvation."

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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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SAMPLE COPIES OF THIS ISSUE FREE.

Friends are invited to send in lists of addresses of persons
already interested in the pre-millennial coming of our Lord,
but not familiar with what we here present as "present truth,"
in re the spiritual nature of the Kingdom to be established.

OLD THEOLOGY TRACTS.

We have these in good variety and supply. Order all you
can judiciously use, as sample copies, free.

ABOUT BIBLES--WANTED BEFORE CHRISTMAS.

Last year about this time, through no fault of ours, many of our customers were greatly disappointed by delays--the publishers being unable to fill our orders. This year we have sought to guard against such a contingency by laying in a large supply: still we fear a dearth toward Christmas.

WHAT SAY THE SCRIPTURES ABOUT HELL?

This is the title of a pamphlet in which every text of Scripture containing the word hell is cited and examined in the light of Scripture and reason, together with other Scriptures and parables supposed to teach eternal torment. Price 10 cents, post-paid; 50 cents per doz.; \$4.00 per hundred.

WHAT SAY THE SCRIPTURES ABOUT SPIRITUALISM?

--ALSO--

WHO ARE THE SPIRITS IN PRISON? AND WHY ARE THEY THERE?

This booklet is now ready and will be supplied at 10 cents each: wholesale rates 50 cents per dozen are open to all TOWER readers who may desire to circulate these among their friends. In leatherette binding, 25 cents. Prices include postage.

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LETTERS FROM EARNEST COLABORERS.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--I want to quote an extract from a letter received from a dear Brother who for many years has been a minister in the Presbyterian Church. I think the letter will be interesting also to WATCH TOWER readers. It serves to show that some are on the side of truth at heart from whom you and we all very rarely hear pointedly of their deep interest in the divine plan of the ages. The extract from the letter follows:

"I have not tried lately to get any articles into the 'Observer.' The last one sent was on 'The justice, love and power of God'--showing his dealings with this world in the past, and the hope we have for the future. In returning the article the explanation given was that it was not quite what they wanted. The truth is that religious newspapers do not want to let their readers see the truth now due--they do not see it themselves. It is a sad condition to hear them cry out, 'Peace! Peace!' when there is no peace.

"I have had MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. IV., for the last ten days and am reading it through with carefulness. What a strong presentation Brother Russell makes of present conditions; and how clearly he shows these conditions portrayed in God's Word. But only a few will receive the truth, and only a few will read

the book--compared to the vast multitude who spend days over trashy and worthless books. I thank God that this truth was brought to my notice, and that I was led to give it prayerful consideration.

"The other day, sitting in my study, surrounded by my books--about a thousand,--this thought came to my mind:--What book, except the Bible, do you value most? I answered to myself, I value MILLENNIAL DAWN more than all the rest: and would rather part with every one of them than with this set: for from these books I have gotten more Bible truth and help in understanding than from all the rest put together.

"Truly, we are living in a wonderful age, and may God help and strengthen us to stand the test of this day. Many will not stand, and only those can stand who trust in the blood that was shed on Calvary for a lost world. I often wonder at the carelessness and indifference of God's preachers, when they profess to believe that so many are being eternally lost without a ray of hope: and yet, believing thus, they seek to get all the ease and comfort they possibly can for themselves, and to lay up as much of this world's goods as possible. Blessed be God, his grace and favor will yet be revealed to all mankind, and the whole world will see and be privileged to rejoice."

I am still seeking to serve the truth as I find opportunity, and regret that I cannot be regularly and constantly in the colporteur work. Pray for me that the Lord will more and more open up before me the door of opportunity to serve him, his people and his truth. Your brother and servant in the Lord,
J. M. DAVIDSON,--Bells Valley, Va.

MY DEAR BROTHER:--Altho we have never met each other face to face, yet somehow I feel attached to you. Seven years ago when I for the first time began to read the DAWN, VOL. I., my pastor rebuked me for doing so and told me that I should first leave "my teens" before I attempted to read heresy. That man (Wm. Roeber, pastor of the 67th street German Baptist Church of New York City) committed suicide a year ago. How sad! Men judge by outward appearances. God sees the hearts. I took his advice but only to my disadvantage. Altho I have been a pre-millennialist for years and fought post-millennialism during my Theological course at the Rochester Seminary, yet the doctrine of Christ's second coming has become more precious to me since I have read your books. Thanks be to God for such a clear unfolding of his precious Word. We want more of it. Within us there is an unquenchable yearning to see God in his beauty, in his love, and it makes us sad when modern theologians misrepresent God's plan of the ages by confounding the doctrines of the Bible respecting the "present evil world" and "the world to come." The DAWNS have found much opposition here, but notwithstanding that, I have been trying to be faithful to my Master in preaching Christ's pre-millennial coming. Last Sunday evening I explained from the chart the Plan of the Ages as given in DAWN. Tomorrow evening (D.V.) I shall preach on "Are we living in the end of the world?" (the present evil world).

Last Sunday morning I tendered my resignation as pastor of the Church. Brother, I am disgusted with the hireling ministry.

We are God's servants and should therefore depend on him for the sustenance of our lives.

Yours in Christ, J. A. KIEFERLE,--Nebraska.

WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY,

DEAR FRIENDS:--Inclosed please find one dollar for my subscription.

I saw a note in a dictionary this morning that reminds me of Daniel's prophecy as you explain it in DAWN, VOL. III. It reads, "All attempts to read hieroglyphics had for centuries been given up when in August, 1799, the French found among the ruins of Ft. St. Julien near the Rosetta Branch of the Nile a stone which has since been called the Rosetta Stone." It tells of an inscription upon the stone, "first in hieroglyphics, next in the hieratic character of Egypt and in Greek, which afforded a key to the hieroglyphics, but one very difficult to apply" and how several "made advances toward solving the enigma [of hieroglyphics] so that Dr. Birch and other Egyptologists are now continually translating hieroglyphics from the monuments."

[The point is that 1799 was the very year beginning "the time of the End" when many would run to and fro and knowledge be increased."--DAWN, VOL. III., Chapter II.--EDITOR.]

Sincerely Yours, WM. BRADLEY,--Virginia.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--Your good letter of the 15th inst. came duly to hand and is highly appreciated by Sister Owen and myself. We are glad to know that you were surprised at the goodly number of the dear friends in the truth who met you at our home on the occasion of your recent flying visit. We are glad, too, that you were so favorably impressed by their appearance and conduct. We do not feel that we have done much, but as you suggest we are glad the dear Lord has permitted us to minister to his flock here; and that in a small degree at least we have been instruments in his hands in bringing about the happy condition which you noted. To him alone be all the praise!

I cannot tell you how precious to all our hearts was that one hour's meeting with you at our house; and I am sure that it will prove profitable to all. I know that it has already been of great benefit to one very dear brother, who for some time has been lukewarm, but now seems full of love and zeal again. I must tell you about our meeting last Sunday. I had announced the week before that I would speak on the subject of baptism, by request. My work the last three days of the week had been very heavy, and when Sunday morning came I was so tired that I could scarcely stand or think; and but for the fact that I had made a special announcement of my subject, and several had come who did not fully understand our position. I would not have attempted to lead the meeting at all. But looking to the Lord for strength, I was not disappointed. He wonderfully sustained me, while I spoke for an hour and a quarter; and Oh! what a precious season we had, every one in the house being sensibly moved by the Lord's blessed holy presence.

I am glad to tell you that my temporal affairs are brightening of late. Almost providentially I have gotten into a business which, besides meeting my expenses, is gradually putting me into a position where I shall soon be able to contribute more

to the Tract Fund than I have been able to do for several years. It may be that there are others who, like myself, are unable to engage in the noble and effective work of colporturing the DAWNS and are not profitably engaged, and who are able and willing to do a moderate day's work. As I have all the business I can attend to in this city, I could operate the business through brethren (and sisters too) in other places, and will pledge 10 per cent. of all such receipts to the Tract Fund, which amount may be increased hereafter, if the business prospers.

Unable to give much time to the service of the truth, I consider this my best opportunity aside from my humble ministry to the Lord's people in this city, and occasional trips to the surrounding towns. Mention this matter as you may think proper to any out of employment. Yours in our dear Redeemer,

C. A. OWEN,--623 W. Michigan St., Indianapolis, Ind.

DEAR BROTHER:--I am thankful for the interest you take in my welfare and for your prayers on my behalf. I am an old man, in my 90th year, and I cannot expect to be of much use; but Oh! how gladly I would proclaim the good news, if the infirmities of age did not prevent. Both of my parents were Methodists, and I gave my heart to God and joined the Methodists in my 13th year, and my name has been enrolled in their books (a good deal of the time as an official member) until last conference held in Guelph, when I withdrew.

I loved God's Word and tried hard to understand it, but there were very many passages that I never understood until I was providentially led to read MILLENNIAL DAWN and other WATCH TOWER publications: then I saw that the blasphemous doctrine of the eternal torture of the finally impenitent had so obscured the light as to hide many of the glorious features of God's plan from view.

I rejoice in the promised restitution of all things; and that Christ will be King over all the earth in that day; and that the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. In short I am a firm believer in that glorious plan of the ages so Scripturally, clearly and logically unfolded in the volumes of MILLENNIAL DAWN. Yours in Christ, HENRY HALL,--Ontario.

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 TERMS TO THE LORD'S POOR, AS FOLLOWS:

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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A FULFILMENT OF PROPHECY.

"They shall cast their silver in the streets, and their gold shall
 be removed: their silver and their gold shall not be able to
 deliver them in the day of the wrath of
 the Lord."--Ezek. 7:19; Zeph. 1:18.

NO DOUBT some others as well as we overlooked
 important items of news respecting the
 ferocity of the bread riots in Italy during the early
 Summer. These accounts are so graphic, and so clearly
 foreshadow what may be expected during the dark
 trouble approaching, in which all law and order will
 go down before anarchy, that we think it well to give
 them space here even tho too late to present as news.
 The items were cabled from London and Berlin, as
 follows:--

"London.--Italy has got to the brink of revolution
 almost unobserved by a world intent on Spanish-American
 affairs. Years of discontent and grinding
 poverty on one side and tremendous taxation and almost
 unparalleled official corruption and thievery on
 the other, then a few bread riots as advance rumblings

of the storm, have so inflamed the masses, that to-day throughout the peninsula there are burnings and murders, a peasantry in arms against the existing order.

"A secret junta has been at work organizing rebellions. The present outbreak was sooner than they planned, but may serve their purpose. It is against the dynasty, against the nobility and against the rich. Scenes already enacted bear startling similarity to those in France before the fall of the Bastille. The murder of Miller Bartella, who thanked the Virgin for dear bread, then offered the mob in vain his fortune for his life, is a picture throwing lurid light upon the situation.

"Reports coming in to-day are of renewed fighting by well armed mobs, the government in panic and a growing fear that the army may go over to the populace. Only the sternest repressive measures will serve to check the rebellion, and these are acknowledged inadequate for the bottom trouble."

"Berlin.--The accounts that reach here of the troubles in Italy show that in some parts of the country the worst outrages of anarchism have occurred. Murder and incendiarism are the order of the day. It is already known how the mob did Physician Brandis to death at Minerveno. From his house, which was set on fire, the rioters went to the residence of a mill owner named Bartella, whose mills had already been plundered. This man did not have the reputation of being a philanthropist. Only a few days before he had a thanksgiving mass read in the presence of all his employes in his private chapel because the madonna had made it possible for him to sell corn at 50 francs per hundred-weight.

"When the mob reached the house of this miller millionaire he had shots fired from the windows at them. This doing no good, he threw 1,000 francs in small nickel pieces into the crowd, but all in vain. The doors of the house were battered in, and a terrible scene followed.

"Bartella bargained for his life. He offered thousands upon thousands of francs, all his fortune, but amid savage cries of 'We want your head,' the old usurer was beaten to death. His wife was frightfully injured by blows from a hatchet, and the children barely escaped being dashed from a balcony.

"The mob then went on plundering. They penetrated all the houses occupied by the better classes, robbing and burning. After eight hours plundering the military arrived on the scene and the mob fled, heavily laden with loot."

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THE FORCES of evil, and their effect, not only upon ourselves but upon others, especially the influence of the parents upon children, already referred to in these columns, was recently set forth by Prof. Gates, showing that our various mental conditions exercise a strong influence for good or evil, as respects the health or disease of our bodies. His claim is that anger, malice, hatred, fear and in general all the evil passions which sweep over fallen mankind, mentally exercise a deleterious chemical influence, through our nerves, upon the blood, while wholly pure, happifying, loving thoughts exercise a healthful influence. Referring to this subject, the Congregationalist says, "Prof. Elmer Gates asserts that the malevolent passions create poisons in the blood which are detectable by chemical analysis. It has been demonstrated, over and over again, that the nursing child can be poisoned, or even killed, by a sudden fit of anger in the mother, and we begin to understand why, when we realize that the anger actually caused material poisons to germinate in the lifegiving fluid [the mother's milk]. Then we can begin to comprehend how a state of unrest, of fear, of rage, of jealousy, of lack of self-control, in the mother, will interfere with perfect nutrition of the child, and fill its tissues with the poisons which these malevolent passions generated in the mother's blood."

Thus we see how it comes that wherever the purifying and uplifting influence of the Gospel of Christ goes, not only are the parents benefited, and caused to enter into a rest and peace and joy which the world can neither give nor take away, but additionally the influence of the spirit of righteousness, through kindness, love, extends to the neighborhood, and especially to the families of the consecrated. Thus it is that during centuries those who have come in contact with the Word of God, the fountain of the pure Gospel, have been most blessed and most uplifted in the scale of human civilization, and are the most noble specimens of the race, the best mentally, possessed of a larger degree of the spirit of a sound mind than others. And the more Christian people learn respecting the good influence of the true religion, taught in the Lord's Word, upon the health and happiness of themselves, their children and others, the stronger and the better that influence should be.

When last we referred to this subject of the influence of the mind over the body for health or for disease some seemed to get the impression that it was a concession on our part to the theories of so-called "Christian Science" which claims to be a "mind-cure," pure and simple. But we answer No; there is not the slightest sympathy between the view which we have just expressed and the theory of "Christian Science." The two theories are exact opposites. "Christian Science" teaches

that there is no pain, no sickness, no sorrow, no death, except as people imagine these. Their system of cure is that people should lie to themselves and stick to the lies until by anti-suggestion self-hypnotization is effected and they believe the lie--Satan cooperating to establish this latter-day delusion that, if it were possible, the very elect might be deceived and perverted from the truth as laid down in the Lord's Word, and that still others might be confused and made skeptical.

The opposite of all this is what we teach. It is not new but old. It truthfully admits the fact (1) that the whole creation is groaning and travailing in pain; (2) that this is a part of the dying process, the result of the original sentence or "curse" upon father Adam, as the just penalty of sin. But (3) it not only assures us that we are sadly and seriously wounded, physically, morally and

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mentally undone, but it presents an all-healing remedy --the blood of Christ, the merit of our Redeemer's sacrifice on our behalf,--and offers us "life more abundant" through obedience to him. It is to such as have thus laid hold of the hope set before us in the gospel, that we declare that true faith and trust in this Savior rests the mind as well as binds up the broken heart, and thus in proportion to our faith, trust and obedience it becomes a fount of joy, peace and blessing which extends its influence to all of life's affairs and to a considerable extent to our physical health. "Blessed [every way] is the man that trusteth in the Lord:" he is able to rejoice in tribulation, in sickness, in poverty-- in every condition he is blest, and may be joyous in realizing that the light afflictions of the present time are working out a far more exceeding and an eternal weight of glory to those who are rightly exercised by them.

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JUSTIFICATION MUST PRECEDE SANCTIFICATION.

DEAR Brother Russell:--The Nov. 1st WATCH TOWER is at hand, and I note the answer given my question re Justification. But you have not quite satisfied me. I fear I did not make the question sufficiently clear. Let me state again the point respecting which I am specially solicitous:--

Do you understand the Scriptures to teach that the sinner is justified in God's sight before he is "a new creature in Christ Jesus," or, is he justified at the moment he is accepted as a member of the body of Christ, as a new creature?

ANSWER:--He is justified before he becomes a new creature in Christ.

Your difficulty arises from a failure to discern that justification and sanctification are two separate steps, both of which are necessary to those who would accept the high calling of this Gospel age, the only calling now

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extended to any. Sinners cannot be sanctified or set apart in the divine service: sinners therefore are not invited to present their bodies living sacrifices to God.

Sinners are called to repentance, and to the exercise of faith in Christ as the Redeemer and only way by which they can approach God. The moment the sinner accepts Christ by faith, with a desire to approach God, he is justified by his faith, and at once becomes privileged as a justified man.

The next step of consecration should follow quickly, as soon as God's grace is fully appreciated, yet with many, because of lack of Scriptural instruction, the second step of consecration is neither seen nor taken for some time, and God apparently exercises mercy for a season, waiting for his justified creature to realize his privilege, and to present himself a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, and his reasonable service. He is reckoned holy and acceptable to God, because he has been justified--he is accepted as a sacrifice upon the Lord's altar because his sins and blemishes are not imputed to him, having been transferred to his Redeemer's account, at the moment of his justification.

We understand, however, that no one can maintain his reckoned justification who indulges in wilful sin--nor can he long continue in a justified attitude without progressing to the next legitimate step of full consecration and self-sacrifice. If he loses his justification without making use of it in consecration, etc., he has merely slipped back again to the plane of the world, and if he has not enjoyed full opportunity for consecration, he probably will have some future opportunity to revive his justification and to consecrate himself; but in any case he loses all the precious opportunities of the high calling to the new nature, besides the blessings which he might have enjoyed in this present life. Furthermore, his greater knowledge having added to his greater responsibility, he may expect "many stripes" in the future, or disciplinary judgments, in proportion to his resistance to the light, and failure to use it.-- Luke 12:47,48.

But for those who have been clearly enlightened, and who have made the covenant of consecration, there is no Scriptural hope of a future opportunity with the world in the Millennial age. They, having received their full share of the ransom-bought blessings and opportunities for eternal life as human beings, and having exchanged those for the proffered "new nature," with

its terms and conditions, of sacrifice of his justified human nature, must proceed to offer themselves willing sacrifices, and thus ultimately be accepted as overcomers. Or (2), hesitating and being overcome by the cares of this life, they will be liable to the "great tribulation," to be of the second company, who shall be "saved so as by fire." Or (3), by repudiation of the Lord, or the repudiation of his principles of righteousness (transgressing against their clear enlightenment), they will be reckoned as the sow which returned to her wallowing in the mire, and will have their portion in the Second Death.

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"MANY SHALL BE PURIFIED AND MADE WHITE AND TRIED."

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--Just a few lines to let you know that we are well.

I was sorry that I was unable to be present with you at the Convention, but was with you in spirit. That very same Sunday, somehow, we seemed to have a special blessing in our afternoon meeting, and I feel sure that all the little gatherings were remembered by the brethren who were present at Council Bluffs: the spirit of that Convention overflowed and reached us who were obliged to stay at home.

I have just received a letter from one of the brethren at _____ stating that they have had a severe shaking up and sifting, at which I am not altogether surprised, considering the circumstances in the case.

The Church of this place sends love, and please accept much love from Sister Thorn and myself.

Your Brother in Christ, W. J. THORN.

IN REPLY:--We are glad to know that the influence of the Convention was far-reaching. You are quite right in supposing that the dear flock of the Lord in every place was feelingly remembered by the company there assembled. The fellowship of spirit which you mention, and the attendant blessing, is undoubtedly a part of the divine provision for the Lord's flock: where our love and sympathy go out toward the fellow-members of the body of Christ, it is sure to bring us nearer to our great Head, and thus to bring us increased blessing of fellowship with him.

Respecting the "Sifting" at _____: It should not surprise us to hear of "siftings" in every direction. That which we have reiterated for the last eighteen years becomes daily more strikingly manifest; viz., that the harvest-time

of the Gospel age, which began in the Autumn of 1874, and will end with the Autumn of 1914, is to be not only a period of great spiritual enlightenment and refreshment to some, but also a period of sifting and testing to the same class. And it is but reasonable to expect such sifting to follow such blessing: for where much light is given much responsibility follows. It was just so in the "harvest" of the Jewish age; the blessings of the new dispensation, and the light from the Lord's presence (subsequently represented in his apostles), were accompanied with trials, siftings, testings, proportionate to the blessings then enjoyed.

Since the Lord has granted to us so clear a knowledge of his own character and plan, and granted us to

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see the wonderful harmony and beauty of the word of his grace, it is but reasonable that he should look for the spirit of the truth in those who have become blessed with so clear an appreciation of its letter. Judged from this standpoint, "What manner of persons ought we to be, in all holy living and godliness?" It would appear, too, that these siftings specially take hold of those who have been for some time enlightened, and do not as readily affect the beginners, altho when a root of bitterness springs up its defiling influence may affect the beginners also.

It would seem as tho worldly minds have reached certain standards respecting conduct in life which are helpful, and that while the standard of the fully developed children of God, fully enlightened by his Word, should be a still higher one, viz., the "perfect law of liberty," yet if the advanced Christian has not developed, or if he subsequently loses the spirit of love, which is the very essence of the truth, he is in a worse condition, in some respects, than those who have never looked into the perfect law of liberty;--for, losing the element of fear, and not proportionately developing the spirit of love, he is much more likely to go to the extremes of inconsistency than are those who have enjoyed the grace of divine truth in a lesser degree. Hence, while knowledge is a great blessing, and a great power, an absolute essential to the Lord's people in the present time to enable them to "stand," it is also a great responsibility.

God's object in furnishing his people "present truth," and all truth, is to develop in them faith, and all the various fruits of the spirit, which unitedly come under the name Love. Whoever, therefore, is blessed by the knowledge of the truth, and fails to cultivate in himself the fruits of the spirit, Love, fails utterly to realize

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the Lord's design in his call and in bringing him

to the light of present truth. Our Master summarized this whole matter, respecting the object of giving the truth, in his prayer to the Father, "Sanctify them through thy truth." Where the truth has been received, and has been held in unrighteousness, and has not produced sanctification of life, it has been received in vain; and the only thing to be expected is that the Lord, after a reasonable trial, will cast out of the light, out of the present truth, out of the fellowship with those who are in the light, all who have any other spirit than the spirit of the truth, Love,--the law and mainspring of the new life in Christ. "For if any man have not the spirit of Christ [the spirit of love], he is none of his."

The Apostle mentions just such a condition as prevailing in the Church at Corinth, and its attendant "sifting." He first points out to them (1 Cor. 1:10) that there should be no divisions, but that they should "be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." There is one line of judgment which should govern all who have the Lord's Word and spirit; viz., the letter and spirit of the truth. All should be familiar with the teachings of the divine Word, or if not familiar should be teachable, and amenable to it; and all having the spirit of love, the spirit of the truth, will be so: such, while contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, will not be contentious along other lines, but patient, forbearing and meek --not envious, not heady, not high-minded, not boastful, not slanderers and backbiters.

But gradually the Apostle leads his readers onward and points out to them their low spiritual condition (1 Cor. 3:3), as evidenced by the facts which he cites, saying, "There is amongst you envying and strife and divisions" (a party spirit, dividing themselves under human leadership rather than uniting themselves under Christ, the true and only head). Let it be noted that the Apostle does not accuse the Church at Corinth of what would be termed gross worldly sins, murder, theft, blasphemy, etc., but of the more refined evidences of a wrong condition of heart--a lack of the spirit of love: And yet, as our Lord pointed out, anger, hatred and malice are murder in the heart. Proceeding further, however, he shows that not all of them, but only a part, are in this seriously wrong condition of heart. He adds, therefore (11:18), "I hear that there be divisions amongst you, and I believe it respecting part of you; for there must be also parties amongst you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you."

Likewise the siftings in progress during this harvest time are not only to separate those whom the Lord disapproves, but are also to make manifest those whom the Lord does approve: and in no way can this matter be more clearly and distinctly noted than in respect to the difference of spirit manifested where there is a division, a sifting, in progress. We do not refer particularly to the difficulty which you mention, of which we

have no other knowledge as yet: we are dealing merely with general principles, which seem applicable in every such case. Those who have not yet had a sifting have had special opportunities to grow strong in the knowledge of the truth and in the spirit of it, and when their sifting does come, it probably will be severe in proportion to the blessings previously enjoyed.

We urge, therefore, upon all of the Lord's people, everywhere, that they set their own hearts in order, purging out all the leaven of malice, envy, strife, hatred, evil speaking (incipient murder), and fill every corner and interstice of their nature, so far as possible, with the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of the truth, Love: and that when siftings or separations shall come, they take heed and be not deceived by the Adversary, who always will attempt to put darkness for light, and will

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not hesitate at misrepresentations, back-biting, evil speaking, slander, etc. And as the Adversary does not hesitate at these, neither do those who become, either knowingly or unknowingly, his agents and tools. Such seem to lose not only their self-respect and sense of propriety and justice and love of truth (which even the world and nominal Christians would have), but in their bitterness of spirit seem to give full testimony respecting which spirit it is that animates them. In these trials and siftings we may be sure that only the one class will come off victors, viz., those who abide under the shadow of the Almighty, trusting in the precious blood, and seeking in all things to be conformed to the image of the Lord, not only in their doctrines, but also in the acts of daily life, and in their words and thoughts. Remember the words of the Apostle Peter, respecting the necessity for putting on the graces of the spirit:-- "If ye do these things ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

The duty of the faithful in every case is the same: to hold up the light--to manifest the spirit of the truth and to refuse to tolerate the evil--to reprove it by the Word of the Lord and in a spirit of love and gentle firmness. The sooner all who love evil--anger, malice, hatred, etc.--depart from those who delight to speak the truth in love, the better. As the Apostle suggests of this class--"They went out from us, because they were not all of us." Let not those who love the truth and have its spirit of love depart; but let them forget not the assembling of themselves together, and so much the more as they see the Day drawing on.

But nothing in the foregoing should be understood to advise the forcing of a breach, or carelessness as to who may "stumble." Quite the contrary, true love of the brethren means patience, long suffering, gentleness,

kindness,--willingness to yield to them and accommodate them in anything non-essential--in anything not opposed to the letter or spirit of the truth. For love and faithfulness to God alone takes precedence to love and faithfulness to the brethren. Each, therefore should not only sacrifice his own non-essential preferences (to preserve the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace), but more: the Apostle declares the proper measure of this love is willingness to "lay down our lives for the brethren."

Only after we have thus done all in our power to preserve unity along Scriptural lines and a rupture is unavoidable, may we regard it as a providential sifting from which good will result. And each should previously carefully and prayerfully scrutinize his own heart and conduct to make sure that not selfishness and vainglory are ruling him, but only love. And when a rupture does occur, each should be careful to avoid any unkind words or acts and looks, which later on might be barriers to hinder the return of any who, seeing the error of their way, might subsequently desire to return to holy fellowship. And such returning ones should be most heartily and joyfully received;--"pulling them out of the fire," etc.

These "siftings" seem to emphasize the Master's words,--"Take heed that no man take thy crown." Our joy at seeing some come into the light of present truth is necessarily modified by the thought that they are probably taking the places in trial of some who have been weighed in the balances and found wanting. "Let us fear," as the Apostle suggests, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of us should seem to come short of it by losing either the faith or the spirit of the truth: for the loss of either one means soon or later the loss also of the other.

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MANASSEH'S TRANSGRESSION AND REPENTANCE.

--NOV. 20.--2 CHRON. 33:9-16.--

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."--1 John 1:9.

MANASSEH was the son of the good king of Judah, Hezekiah, the reformer, whose faith and works we considered in our last study. And tradition being true that Hezekiah's wife was the daughter of the Prophet Isaiah, we might reasonably expect from such parentage a noble son, with large reverence and spirituality, who would follow closely in the steps of his father as a reformer. But we find to the contrary, that Manasseh made the people to err and to do worse

than the Canaanite nations whom the Lord had destroyed before the children of Israel when he brought the latter into the land of promise.

Manasseh was but twelve years of age when he entered upon his kingdom at the death of his father, Isaiah, his supposed grandfather, having died previously. It does not surprise us that one so young, even tho well-born and well-endowed naturally, should be in danger of taking the wrong path; indeed, it is the brightest children, the most precocious, that are in greatest danger if placed in positions of responsibility and influence early in life, without experienced advisers. Lacking experience, this precocious boy-king evidently concluded that the inferiority of the kingdom of Judah to some of the surrounding nations in riches and strength was in great measure because it did not have the same kind of gods and of religious worship. Consequently,

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it was probably within ten years of his accession to power that he began to institute what he no doubt regarded as a religious revolution, in recognition of the various deities which his father had neglected to worship and to propitiate. No doubt he was helped along

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in such a course of reasoning by friends of the false religions or by evil counsellors, who adopted his views and pandered to them and extolled the wisdom of his course, to thus gain his kingly favor and to feather their own nests;--for there seems to be plenty of such an unprincipled class in every age, everywhere.

Some have spoken of Manasseh as a most wicked person, comparing him to the worst character on the pages of history; but to us this seems unjust. We concede that he "did wickedly" as do all who violate righteousness: but we do not concede that he was a wilful, intentional evil-doer. It appears rather that his wrong course was in large measure the result of his youth and inexperience, and his ambition to be great,--which led to his loss of confidence in his father's God and his nation's religion and tradition. The religious qualities (veneration and spirituality) inherited from good parents, took a turn in a wrong direction, so that instead of being a zealous, earnest champion of true religion, he became the zealous promoter of false religion, idolatries, etc. His zeal and conscientiousness are both attested in the fact that he spent large sums of money in establishing idolatry, and even caused his own children to pass through the fire of Moloch,--a sacrifice to these false gods.

Thus it has been with zealous promoters of false religions, we believe--the largeness of the religious organs of their heads, which would have made them

zealous for the service of the Lord, being misdirected made them zealous in evil, tho unwittingly. We have no record that Manasseh was a promoter of moral wickedness, except as his false religions sanctioned immoralities and led to them, and the statement that "he shed innocent blood very much:" and we consider it quite probable that this latter crime was done in ignorance also--under the frenzied zeal of false religion--Satan blinding his eyes.--2 Cor. 4:4.

The intimation of the context is that Manasseh got under the influence of wicked spirits, spiritism, as we would call it to-day: he placed himself under the guidance of wizards, necromancers, etc., and was guided by a wicked spirit, "a familiar spirit," who, pretending to represent the dead, and to be able to give him super-human wisdom and advice, deceived him, as they have deceived the whole world, under various forms and by various errors,--leading mankind more and more into separation from God and his righteousness, as they come under their influence.*

There is a lesson in this for all;--to the effect that no matter how well-born, how intelligent, how zealously conscientious they may be, they need right instructions --they need to become the Lord's people by the New Covenant and consecration; that they "may be all taught of God." Whosoever does not get the right teaching--the truth--to direct his conscience and zeal will be sure to be found by the great adversary and be blinded with plenty of false teaching, to pervert his talents and opportunities to the interest of falsehood, error and sin. And the same wicked spirits which deluded and misled Manasseh, and which we find are active in all parts of the world, opposing the true God and his instructions, are ready still to assist and to mislead all who have not found the only true guide to life --the Lord. How important then that all, and especially those who would make progress in religious life, should seek and find the true guide, and the wisdom that cometh from above.

The record is that God spoke to the king and to the nation respecting their wrong course, but they were so infatuated that they would not hearken--the glitter, show and sensuous fervor and spirit of sacrifice of the false religion, appealing more to the degenerate mind and heart, than the reasonable, true religion. The Lord probably spoke to these people through his prophets,--Micah in the early part of the reign, and Nahum later on.

The arch-deceiver, Satan, the forwarder of all false systems, is still at work in the world; and while he has not been able to hinder the advancing light of Christianity, which rising in Judea, has spread with more or less effulgence over Europe and America, he nevertheless does not abandon his efforts to seduce those who have been partially enlightened with this true light. He well knows that it would be absurd to attempt to

turn back Christianity, and to substitute therefor the worship of Moloch, and he makes no such attempt: but he continually endeavors gradual encroachments upon the simplicity of the gospel of Christ. With some he favors ritualism, vestments, ceremonies, genuflections, etc., that he may thus lead as near to idolatry as civilized, enlightened minds could sanction: to the intent that the worshipers might the more draw near to the Lord with a merely lip service and outward formalism, which would satisfy the cravings of their religious organism, while their hearts might be far from grace. With others the adversary suggests an opposite extreme, which equally ignores the Word of the Lord, leading the deceived to reject the simple and meaningful arrangements which the Lord has prescribed.

The Adversary's attempt upon those who have been enlightened with the present truth are more along the latter line. Those who have been made free by the

*See What Say the Scriptures About Spiritualism?--10c., this office.

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truth from various superstitions and false doctrines, from the worship of God as a fierce, merciless Moloch, and who have been brought by the truth to the liberty wherewith Christ makes free, and to the simplicity of the gospel arrangements set forth in the New Testament; these the Adversary would fain seduce to what he is pleased to represent to them as a still larger liberty--a liberty beyond that which our Lord and the Apostles and the early Church recognized--a liberty to ignore the assembling of themselves together; claiming a greater blessing through private communion with the Lord and the study of his Word than through any human help or communion. Those whom the Adversary gets to this point, of considering their own judgment superior to the testimony of the Lord's Word, respecting his will, are in a fair way to be side-tracked entirely and very quickly.

Others he persuades to believe, that since they see the real meaning of baptism to be a heart consecration to the Lord (burial to self and the world), it is wholly unnecessary that they should perform the symbolic immersion in water--persuading that since it would be only a symbol or an outward form, to represent an invisible transaction, therefore it would be improper,--or at least not obligatory. This is an extreme of anti-formalism, which has its basis often in too great self-confidence, too large an appreciation of their own wisdom, a too small appreciation of the wisdom that cometh from above, and that has been plainly set forth to us in the Word of God. Such persons evidently do not realize that by their arguments and conduct they are claiming to be

more wise than our Lord, who not only performed the true baptism, but also submitted to the symbolical one, saying, "Thus it behooveth us to fulfil all righteousness."

They also set themselves up as being more wise than the Apostles, who both taught and practiced the symbol. Our Lord commended them to us as his mouthpieces, assuring us that he would guide their judgments and teachings so that we might have full confidence in the same, saying, that Whatsoever they would make binding upon earth we might know would be binding in heaven;--so fully would they be under the control of the holy spirit in their doctrinal presentations to the Church. How unwise on the part of any who admit that God has taught them all that they know of his grace through these very Apostles, to claim a superiority of wisdom on one or two points. Such as are thus "heady" will pretty surely soon or later stumble over other truths; because it is one of the conditions that those who are "taught of God shall be the meek, the teachable: as it is written, "The meek will he guide in judgment; the meek will he teach his way."--Psa. 25:9.

Others still hold that it is not proper to celebrate the Eucharist since we discern that the real spiritual significance of the Last Supper is our partaking of the merit of our Lord's sacrifice by faith, feeding on him in our hearts,--and our consecration to be broken with him in the service of his truth, and to drink with him the cup of suffering and self-denial for the truth's sake. Seeing these realities they hold that we should no longer perform the symbol of these by commemorating our dear Redeemer's death, as he commanded all his followers should do, saying, "Eat ye all of it;" "drink ye all of it:" and as the Apostles did and taught the early Church to do. Surely, such renouncements of the beautiful and simple symbols which our Lord left us is not "taught of God"--and cannot be sustained by his Word. It is the great adversary, who thus would seduce us from the simplicity and obedience which is pleasing to the Lord and acceptable to all the "meek." Let all who have been "taught of God" adhere closely to his teachings, as presented in the Scriptures, ignoring on the one hand a tendency toward formalism and idolatry, and on the other hand a tendency to lean to their own understanding and wisdom, and to ignore the simple and meaningful observances which the Lord has commanded. No other course is either reasonable or safe.

As a punishment for taking the wrong course, and to open the eyes of the king and the people, the Lord permitted the king of Assyria to invade the land, and cause much affliction, and to carry away the king a fettered prisoner, to Babylon. There the king came to his senses, and came to realize that the gods he had so zealously worshiped and sought to propitiate had no care over him: realizing his mistake, he bethought him

of the religion and God of his fathers, and prayed to the true God for deliverance, and was heard and brought back again to his capital city and to power. The record is that "Then Manasseh knew that Jehovah is God." The clear intimation is that previously he did not know, was honestly mistaken. That his sin was largely of ignorance is testified to by his subsequent zeal in the Lord's cause--pulling down the idols and the altars which he had previously mistakenly built, under a misguided religious enthusiasm.

Manasseh's character and experiences remind us considerably of Saul of Tarsus: both were religious enthusiasts; both for a time were evil-doers, through lack of knowledge of the truth; both were remarkably chastened of the Lord, and found it "hard to kick against the pricks." Both were prompt to acknowledge divine disciplines, and to profit thereby; and both showed their sincerity by their subsequent zeal in the Lord's service.

The Lord evidently loves warm, ardent natures, altho they may be more liable to mistakes than more coldly calculating ones. It was their ardent temperaments

that caused our Lord to specially love Peter and James and John and Paul, and which caused them to manifest so fervent love for him. If Peter did make some blunders through impetuosity he learned afterward a better exercise of judgment, under which his zeal found glorious exercise. If Paul's zeal for a time made him a bitter opponent of the truth, it afterward, under the control of the "spirit of a sound mind," made him a most valiant soldier of the cross and defender of the faith.

Therefore, let us never despise opponents or even persecutors; for they may be conscientious, but blind: they are worth far more if turned to the truth and its service than many of the cold, indifferent, listless. And if we find ourselves cold or luke-warm, let us cultivate fervency, let us fan the flame of sacred love in our hearts by frequent reflection on the Lord's grace toward us--our covenant with him--and the exceeding great and precious promises of his Word.

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"AVOID IT, PASS NOT NEAR IT, TURN FROM IT."

--NOV. 27.--PROV. 4:10-19.--

"My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not."--Prov. 1:10.

HOWEVER well or illy Solomon followed his own teachings, it is conceded by all that those teachings were sound wisdom--as true to-day as when uttered. While Solomon's writings may not be ranked exactly with the inspired prophecies of the Scriptures, the fact that we are told that the Lord heard his prayer for wisdom, and granted the request, together with the fact that his writings were accepted as a part of the sacred canon in our Lord's day, and not objected to by New Testament writers, but on the contrary quoted from, is sufficient guarantee to us that the wisdom of these Proverbs is of a kind that cometh from above.

In the lesson under consideration the wise man represents himself as a father giving good advice to a son, and it were well for all the youth of the world, if their fathers more frequently communed with them and gave them the benefit of their experiences in life. Fathers recognize a responsibility for those whom they bring into the world, in respect to natural things, food, clothing, etc. Have they not a much greater responsibility respecting the culture of the minds and hearts of their children in the path of wisdom, justice, righteousness, truth?

One of the growing evils of our day, even amongst Christian people, is the disposition of parents, and we believe particularly of the fathers, to shirk this responsibility which they assumed when they became fathers. They incline to leave the instruction, reproof, guidance, counsel of their children entirely to others--to the church minister, to Sunday School teachers or to mothers. It is well that children whose fathers are so lacking in the proper parental instinct should have the counsel, advice, etc., of others, especially of their mothers; but all of these will not properly take the place of the father's counsel, if he be a father in the true sense of the word,--taking watch-care over the highest interests of those committed to his care by divine providence.

Nor is it merely the children who are injured by such parental carelessness of divinely imposed responsibilities: the matter reacts upon the parents--the neglected child realizes the neglect of its highest interests, and depreciates the parent correspondingly. The result is a home lacking respect for parents and hence lacking obedience to parents; therefore a home in which disorder is sure to reign--an unhappy home. In such a home it is most difficult for the Christian graces to take root or flourish in any member of the family; yet it sometimes does take hold in just such a place. Many parents learn when it is too late, how seriously they neglected to cultivate right principles in the gardens of their children's hearts, and allowed them to become overgrown with weeds of ill dispositions,--unkindness, disobedience to parents, unthankfulness, etc. We cannot urge too strongly, upon Christian parents, the necessity

of training up a child in the way it should go: in precept and also in example, illustrating patience, kindness, thankfulness, gentleness, meekness, love, as essential rules of daily life. Such are giving their children a good start in the right way; a start which they need at the entrance to life, and which they and society have a right to expect at the hands of those who brought them into being.

Father Solomon suggests that the obedient son of a wise father will prolong his days, by giving heed to the good counsel. The parent's whole course of life should manifest toward his children his love for them, and his deep interest in their welfare. The child is naturally disposed to think highly of its parents, and to appreciate their advice, unless this childlike confidence has been shattered by unkind treatment, threats and parental neglect. Children reason often as correctly as do older people, sometimes more so; they should be able to reason, upon evidence, (1) that they have the parental love and interest in their welfare; (2) that parental experience in life should be valuable to them at its threshold, to start them properly. And who will say that the child thus guided and helped by parental counsel would not be saved from many of the difficulties and pitfalls and troubles in life, and from much

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sickness, physical debility, etc., to a longer life? Moreover, the parent thus interested in the child, and seeking to give it lessons from his own book of experience, will find himself profited by his review of the successes, disappointments and mistakes of his life, and the causes of these. Whoever, therefore, performs his duty as a father is blessing himself as well as his child--and adding to his own years as well as to the years of his child.

How blessed for any parent to be able truly to use the words of the eleventh verse of our lesson as he lies upon his death-bed, addressing his children, "I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee [by my example] in right paths," and how blessed are such children; how much less liable than others to stumblings in life's pathway: how much more likely they are to be ready to hear and heed the voice of the Heavenly Father, and to walk in his paths.

Indeed, we may profitably apply this lesson to the sons of God, and consider God to be the speaker: for in holy things we but copy the Heavenly Father. While we were yet sinners he redeemed us, and by his love and justice he has drawn all that have been so far drawn to Christ as the Redeemer. Coming to Christ for forgiveness of sins, even justification, through faith in his blood, we thus came to the Father. It was then that the Heavenly Father addressed us, through his Word, saying, "My son, give me thine heart"--thy affections

--thy love. And those who gave their love, their affections, to the Lord, gave their all; for our affections control us, whether for good or for evil. When we accepted the Lord's invitation, and gave him our hearts, our all, a living sacrifice, to be his and to do henceforth his good pleasure, it was not because we first loved him, but because he first loved us, and gave his Son to be a propitiation (satisfaction) for our sins. Now, therefore, having been accepted of the Father as new creatures in Christ, having been adopted into his family, by receiving the spirit of adoption and sonship, he speaks to us as to sons, in the language of Solomon,--that we take heed to his Word; and he promises us that by so doing the years of our life shall be many--very many, everlasting.

All who have been "taught of God" can bear testimony to the applicability of the 11th verse to themselves and to all the sons of God: "I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths." And all such, relying upon the exceeding great and precious promises of the Scriptures, can look forward in confidence to the 12th verse as a prophecy respecting the divine care over all those who have put themselves thus under divine protection and instruction as sons of God, and who will to abide in his love. They are assured that their steps in the spiritual way, in the narrow path, shall be guided of the Lord, and that in their race for the great prize of their high calling they shall not stumble, so long as they are followers in that path in which the Lord's providence guides them: yea, all things shall work together for good to those who love God, supremely.

And the older and more experienced the son may be,--the spiritual son of the Heavenly Father, or the

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natural son of the earthly father,--the more he should appreciate the testimony, "Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go; keep to her; for she is thy life." It is along these same lines that the Apostle urges the Church, saying: "We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest...we should let them slip." (Heb. 2:1.) It evidently is not enough that we should hear the Lord's Word; nor yet that we should receive it into good and honest hearts. It is necessary that we take fast hold of it; that we act upon it; that we incorporate it as a very part of our being: thus the spirit of the truth becomes the spirit of all the children of God;--the holy spirit in them is in harmony, in full accord, with the Heavenly Father's mind, disposition, will.

What better advice could be given to either natural or spiritual sons than is presented in the 14th verse? We are to remember that, no matter how far along we may have gone in the "narrow way," there are always

branching paths leading from it--paths of self-will, of pride, of worldly ambition, of selfishness, which lure us to leave the direct path, and which sometimes we may be in danger of entering, unintentionally, unwittingly. These paths at first emerge so gradually from the "narrow way" as to seem very little different from it, but gradually they diverge more and more from it, so that any of the Lord's people, filled with the spirit of righteousness, truth, love, may soon discern the change, the different spirit and tendency.

All pilgrims seeking the heavenly city, the Kingdom, are exhorted by the Word of God to be very watchful against all the wiles of the Adversary, especially his disposition to switch us from the "narrow way." It is well that we should be on guard, to note the spirit of all with which we have to do, and to refuse to go forward in any direction in which the spirit of holiness, meekness, purity, love, does not lead. Thus, if we have gotten into the wrong way, and our hearts be still loyal to the principle of love, we need not go far upon the wrong course without finding out and retracing our steps: but it is still better, as expressed in our lesson, that we enter not the path of the wicked.

Once entered, we may be able to retrace our steps with more or less difficulty, but the safe program is never to enter these by-paths. One of the Adversary's seductions, by which many are led astray into by-paths

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of wickedness, contrary to their consecration vows, is through the human quality known as curiosity. They reason,--"I know it is untrue and has a wrong spirit, but I want to see and know: the knowledge of evil will but do me good." But we remember that it was mother Eve's curiosity and her fearlessness to disobey the Lord's command, that got her into difficulty as the first transgressor; and this reminds us of the Apostle's words, "I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity which is in Christ." (2 Cor. 11:3.) The wise man seeks to impress the lesson of the necessity of not tampering with evil, not touching it, not tasting of it, not putting himself within the reach of its influence, saying,--"Avoid it, pass not near it, turn in another direction away."

The spirit of liberty is a part of the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of the truth, and no Christian can too highly appreciate this liberty, nor too faithfully maintain his hold upon "the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free," nor too carefully avoid any "yoke of bondage." But this is made one of the Adversary's strong points of attack--liberty. He even used this argument upon our dear Redeemer--Use your liberty--Command that the stones be made bread, etc. The only safe or proper course for God's children is to walk

carefully in the footprints of our Redeemer and Forerunner, Christ Jesus, and to avoid every appearance of evil--avoid the use and exercise of liberty where there would be the slightest danger of being led into temptation and into sin. And be it noted that our Adversary never tempted us along the lines of liberty until our Lord set us free. The slavery from which we were set free by our Redeemer was the bondage of Sin, and being thus made free, we in consecration presented our bodies living sacrifices to the Father, in order that we might receive the adoption of sons in his spiritual family. This meant that we voluntarily gave up all human rights, liberties and preferences, accepting instead the divine will represented in the divine law, summed up in the one word, Love.

Since we have taken this step, we are no longer at liberty to do anything contrary to this law of the New Covenant, Love, even as God himself has no liberty to do contrary to it. We are therefore to scrutinize carefully all the matters, incidents and affairs of life as they come before us, lest the Adversary should beguile us from this "narrow way" of self-denial, self-sacrifice: lest he should seduce us into doing something that would be contrary to our Father's Word, and in violation of his spirit of love. Hence, if any pathway has the slightest appearance of evil, or the slightest antagonism to the spirit of our law of Love, we (as obedient sons of God) should "avoid it, pass not through it, turn from it away."

Next we have a description (vss. 16,17) of those who, having become the servants of Sin, have pleasure in unrighteousness. We all know of some wicked characters (men and women) who make it their business in life to entrap others, financially, morally or socially: persons to whom it seems the chief end of life to do evil, and to seduce others into evil doing; and often, as in verse 17, their business in life takes on this form of entrapping the unwary. In this sense it is their food and drink to do evil: they make their living in that way.

And we regret to say that we have knowledge also of a similar class of Satan's more or less deluded servants, who seem to make it their business in life. They accept good salaries for misrepresenting, yea, blaspheming, the Heavenly Father's character and plan: it is their business--to entrap the ignorant and to bind them with superstitions. Still others delight in mischief, in sowing discord, in slanders, malice, hatred, envy, strife, to stumble and entrap, mislead, the spiritual sons of God. They are not content to have these evil principles at work in their own hearts, but are active agents of the great Adversary in planting roots of bitterness, and misleading those who wish to walk in the right way. And if these last do not live literally by their evil work, it is at least their spiritual life--an evil spirit--their light become darkness. In any case the Lord's children and the world's children are to pass by all

such, recognizing the unrighteousness of their course, and have neither fellowship nor sympathy with their evil work, nor countenance it in any respect.

The next two verses show us the two paths, and give us their general characteristics, and especially their terminations. Since there are none who are absolutely just, "None righteous, no, not one," we must understand the reference to "the just" here to signify the justified children of God--reckonedly justified by faith. And from this standpoint this entire lesson may properly be regarded as a prophecy or teaching to the justified class of this Gospel age. It is true of every one of the Lord's children--justified sons--that his path through life should be one of increasing light and blessing: one of personal progress and of blessing to others, through the light of the knowledge of the truth.

However, the application, we believe, is specially for the entire Church as a whole--Head and Body:--Christ the Just One, we his justified members. Our Lord was the great Light, which came into the world; his consecrated followers are his representatives in the world, who seek to let their light shine before men, and to glorify their Father in heaven. The pathway of this Church, Head and Body, has lain through a wilderness state, and a night of darkness, "gross darkness covering the people" of the world in general. Divine favor

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has been manifested toward this consecrated holy Body, in that the light of the divine Word has shone upon the pathway step by step. Of this light Solomon's father wrote, prophetically representing the Body of Christ, saying, "Thy word is a lamp to my feet, a lantern to my footsteps." The Head of the Body was thus enlightened by the Word of God, and guided in doing the divine will--even unto death; and so each member of the Body has been similarly guided by the same lamp of truth.

We have the assurance that no part of the true Church's pathway has ever been left in darkness, nor will it be--even to the end of the age. As the Apostle said, "Ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief." The text under consideration seems to harmonize with this declaration, that the path of the Just would shine more and more clearly (lighted by the lamp, God's Word) even unto the perfect day. Since we have not yet reached the perfect day, we cannot know how much more brightly our lamp may shine in the future; but we do know that it is now shining more brilliantly than ever before for all those who are walking in the "narrow way." In its light we can see, as never before, the glories of the divine character, illustrated in the divine plan of salvation for mankind. We can see also our own position as sons of God, justified through the precious blood and

called to be heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord, with a clearness and distinctness that before was unknown. And yet all this light, this increasing light, as we near the perfect day, is coming from our Lamp which God provided,--the Bible.

But while the Bible lights the pathway of the true Body of Christ, the consecrated "little flock," it sheds no particular brilliancy upon the world's pathway: that is to say, no light that the world can specially profit by. What light may be reflected to the world's pathway is perhaps fully counteracted by shadows which rather confuse and perplex them. And this also is set forth

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in our lesson: "The way of the wicked is as darkness; they know not at what they stumble."

In the light of our path the Body of Christ now sees that we are in the "Day of Vengeance," that a testing is taking place with those who have named the name of Christ,--to test, to prove, to separate the true from the untrue; and again, to separate amongst the true, the consistent "wise virgins," who faithfully follow the Lord in self-sacrifice, from the "foolish virgins" who attempt to please both the Lord and the world, and make a failure of both. Our lamp shows us that as soon as this testing in the nominal Church is completed a great time of trouble will break out: "a time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation." Our lamp shows us the great stumblingstone in the path of the world's progress in its present course. It shows us that the Christian world is about to stumble over that Stumblingstone and Rock of Offence over which the typical Israel stumbled eighteen centuries ago,--that the Christian world is to stumble over the second presence of Christ, as the Jewish nation stumbled over his first advent; and that the stumbling here will mean the wreck of Christendom, as the stumbling there meant the wreck of Judaism.

The light upon the path of the Just--the path of the Christ--shows that the present social order of Christendom is to stumble and be wrecked in a time of anarchy, because the time has come for the establishment of God's Kingdom, and because the world is not in the condition of heart to be ready to receive it, and hence are kept in darkness respecting it: "They know not at what they stumble," altho they realize that we are living in peculiar times, and that there is great danger of stumbling over something in the darkness with which they realize they are surrounded.

In harmony with this is the statement in our Lord's Word, respecting the testing of this day of the Lord: "It shall come as a thief and as a snare upon all them that dwell upon the earth [the world in general, especially the Christian world who, having made a covenant with the Lord, are living contrary thereto, and therefore

are styled "wicked"--as was that servant who hid his Lord's money in the earth, and returned it to him unused]." (Luke 21:35.) "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief." Of these same classes the Prophet declares, "None of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand." --1 Thes. 5:2-4; Dan. 12:10.

Let us, dear brethren, as sons of God, heed our Father's Word most carefully, that we take not the wrong paths, but that we follow strictly and carefully and watchfully the "narrow way" of consecration, self-denial, humility, love, in which shines the light of the Lamp of Truth, and which alone leads to the Kingdom.

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THE LOST BOOK FOUND.

--DEC. 4.--2 KINGS 22:8-20.--

"Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart."

MANASSEH'S son, Amon, succeeded him as king of Judah. Born and reared during the period of his father's blind idolatry, he seems not to have shared in his father's repentance and reformation: his short reign of two years was full of wickedness and endeavor to reestablish idolatry, and ended with his own assassination by his servants. He was followed in the kingdom by his son Josiah, a lad of eight years, who developed a very different character, became a true servant of God, and one of the greatest reform kings upon the throne of Israel. We are not to regard this as a miracle, but rather to expect and look for natural causes, as having something to do with it. We find some suggestion along this line in his name, for in olden times names were given to indicate the characters hoped for, and thus at least became a manifestation of the attitude of the parental hearts. The name Josiah signifies, "Jehovah will support." He was born during the period of his grandfather's reformation movement. His mother was doubtless,

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according to the custom of that time, chosen by his grandfather, Manasseh. Her name indicates that she was of godly parentage,--Jedidiah signifying "the beloved of Jehovah;" and her mother, the king's grandmother, was by name Adiah, "The honored of Jehovah." From such good parental stock, on the maternal side at least, we should expect the foundation of

a good character, and developments substantiate this.

This religiously inclined boy, we may reasonably infer, was under the council of his religious mother, and his state counsellors were probably those whom Manasseh had gathered about him after his reformation, and who were evidently rejected by Amon. Josiah's sixteenth year dates his conversion--the date at which the chronicler says, "He began to seek after the God of David, his father." And this brings to our attention a fact that is lost sight of by many; viz., that it is one thing to be well-born and well disposed, and another thing entirely to consecrate the heart to the Lord; and this last step many morally inclined, "good" people, neglect to take,--to their own permanent disadvantage. It is not sufficient that we be well disposed, moral; it is necessary that we become the Lord's, devoting ourselves wholly to his will, and then seek after him to know his will that we may do it. It is only to those that thus draw near to the Lord that his promise extends--"Draw near unto me, and I will draw near unto you."

The result of the king's thus seeking the Lord culminated four years later, when he was twenty, in a determination to use his influence and power for the complete overthrow of idolatry throughout the kingdom; and the next six years of his reign were devoted to this work. He prosecuted it not only in Jerusalem and throughout Judah, but extended his influence over a large portion of the territory once ruled by the ten-tribe kingdom, and pushed the work of reformation and destruction of idols as far as Naphtali on the sea of Galilee. Apparently there was a certain amount of opposition to this reform-work, which required six years for its accomplishment; moreover, it seems to have required the king's presence with his servants, to insure thorough destruction of the symbols of idolatry which apparently abounded in every district.

It was on the king's return to Jerusalem, after having seen to the accomplishment of the cleansing of the land of its idols, that looking about for the next proper step to the service of God, he determined that it should be the repair of the Temple. Altho his grandfather, Hezekiah, had cleansed the Temple, repairing its doors, etc., it would appear that it had subsequently been entirely neglected, so that many of the rafters were broken, and thorough repairs were requisite. Accordingly, money donations were invited for the repair of the Temple, and the work was carried to completion.

As it was with Josiah's public work, so it should be with the heart work of all who present themselves to the Lord: they should first begin by breaking off their sins in righteousness, by utterly destroying the fleshly idols of the heart, selfishness in various forms, as the Apostle suggests. "Put away all filthy communications out of your mouths." "Put away all

filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit [mind] perfecting holiness in the reverence of the Lord." (Col. 3:8; 2 Cor. 7:1.) After having thus become servants of righteousness in our own hearts and lives, we may properly begin to look out for other conquests, fields of usefulness and service to the Lord. We may then begin to lend a hand in building up the true Temple of God, the Body of Christ, the Church--in cleansing it from defilements and in instituting in it the proper reforms. But all reform should begin with our own hearts first. He who has not sought the Lord personally, and then, obedient to the Lord's leading, broken down the idols of his own heart, and begun a thorough cleansing work in his own life and heart, has no business whatever to take hold of the repairs of the great antitypical Temple.

Josiah's repairing of the Temple was over two hundred years after the very similar repairing made by king Jehoash, and brought to light a very ancient manuscript of the Law, probably the book of Deuteronomy. Presumably this was the copy of the Law which Moses wrote with his own hand, and commanded to be placed in the side of the Ark, with the golden pot of manna and Aaron's rod that budded. Quite probably the Ark, as the most sacred and most valuable of the Temple's furniture, had been secreted at the time the Temple was denuded of much of its golden ornamentations to pay tribute to invaders, and was now discovered. We are to remember too, that books were little in that day, and that few could either write or read them, and that the Law of Moses was communicated to the people orally by the priests, from memory.

It is not surprising, therefore, that when the Book of the Law was found by the priest Hilkiah, it was esteemed a treasure, delivered to Shaphan, the king's secretary, and read in the king's hearing. Its delineations of the Law of God incumbent upon his people Israel, were so different from what the people had been taught by the priests, by word of mouth, that the king was astonished, and rent his garment (an expression of dismay). Nor could we expect otherwise, when we

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remember that idolatry had flourished to a considerable extent for over three hundred years, with only occasional reformations, and that during all that time the priests and Levites who had in any degree remained faithful to the Lord were without support from the people; for they had no land of their own, and were largely dependent upon the tithes, and consequently during the period of idolatry would be obliged to engage considerably in secular employment.

Realizing how far short Israel had come of the demands of the Law, and noting the punishments prescribed in that Law for unfaithfulness, the king was

greatly troubled. Accordingly he sent several of his court officers with the high priest, to inquire of the Lord, through a prophet, respecting the status of the case, and respecting what should be done by

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Israel to escape the punishments which he realized justly belonged to the nation under the conditions of that Law Covenant. The prophets Jeremiah and Zephaniah were then living and prophesying, but the king for some reason sent his messengers to a prophetess, Hulda, daughter-in-law of one of his court officers. Why the king passed by two prominent prophets, to make inquiry at the mouth of one otherwise unknown in the Scripture narrative, we can only conjecture:

(1) It may have been that, of a woman the king might hope to receive a softer and more peaceful message than from a man, especially as this woman, through her father-in-law, was connected with his own court, and would therefore be disposed to give as kindly a message as possible. (2) Another suggestion is that Jeremiah and Zephaniah may have been absent from Jerusalem, on preaching tours, and thus could not be readily communicated with. (3) An additional and even more forceful suggestion is that Jeremiah and Zephaniah had been prophesying in the name of the Lord publicly--foretelling the judgment of the Lord about to come upon the nation, and that their preaching probably had somewhat to do with the reformation which Josiah had inaugurated. Thinking favorably of his own reforms, the king doubtless thought their predictions unwarranted and extreme. He felt, therefore, that he knew what answer these prophets would make to his questions, and desired to hear through still another channel which he might hope would be less severe. (4) Besides, Jeremiah was the son of the high priest, Hilkiah; and Zephaniah was the king's own cousin. The king's desire, therefore, would seem to be to obtain an outside testimony, and as favorable as possible.

A moral may be drawn from this part of the lesson, applicable to individual cases. At first, when we began to seek the Lord, we recognized certain things and conditions of heart as sinful and requiring the divine forgiveness, and necessary to be put away to the extent of our ability; Josiah destroyed the idols: but it was only after we had been considerably exercised in the matter of reform in our own lives, and in connection with the Temple, the Lord's Church, that the Lord supplied that clearer knowledge of his own perfection and the righteousness of his law, which enabled us to see that with all the reforms and cleansings accomplished we still came far short of the grand standard set forth in the divine law--Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy being, and thy neighbor as thyself.

And as the king rent his garment, and manifested greater contrition of heart after years of zealous service, so it is usually with the Christian who has passed through several stages of reform, and whose mind at last discerns the true meaning of the great law of Love. Then it is that he feels more than at first his shortcomings. While the world may be considering him as a great reformer, a great saint, he himself has gotten to a place where he sees the majesty of the divine law as with a telescope, and his own imperfections as with a microscope. Then it is that he also seeks the Word of the Lord for guidance, instruction, help.

The Lord's reply through the prophetess was most direct--confirmatory of all that had been declared by the mouth of Jeremiah and Zephaniah, but adding words of comfort and consolation for the king himself. --"Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the Lord, when thou hearest what I spake against this place...and hast rent thy clothing and wept before me, I also have heard thee, saith the Lord." It was too late for any national reformation; the nation had been tried for several centuries, and it had been found wanting, and according to the divine plan the time was near at hand when the typical kingdom should be entirely overthrown--overturned until he should come, Messiah, whose right the antitypical Kingdom is, and to whom it will be given. There was no reason, from the divine standpoint, why this course should be altered, and the repentance of the king could therefore only be treated as an individual matter, and dealt with accordingly, for God has an individual providence over all those who are consecrated to him, as well as a general supervision of the affairs of the nations.

Much in this narrative reminds us of the somewhat parallel condition and circumstances at the present time. Looking back through the vista of "the dark ages," we see the parallel to Israel's and Judah's tendency towards idolatry, superstition, etc. We see false religions, doctrines and dogmas set up and worshiped in Christendom. We see here, as we saw in Judah's history, not only the worship of false gods, but also false worship of the true God--worship contrary to the commandments of his law. We see in the Reformation movement of the sixteenth century something corresponding in many respects to Josiah's reformation. It has led to a considerable smashing of false doctrines, errors and false gods--and of misrepresentations of the character and teachings of the true God. The present reformation movement also has had much to do with the cleansing and repairing of the Temple--the true Church, the saints,--and in the reestablishment of a true worship, based upon truth more clearly discerned, and better sacrifices. And finally we have found the book of God's Law--we found the Bible. It was rescued from seclusion by the Reformers, and through

the printed page has been laid before all Christendom. Not only so, but to us also it is being "read,"--explained, made clear, under divine providence. We are seeing its heights and depths, its lengths and its breadths, as never before.

In this Book also, "we read the righteous sentence of the crumbling thrones of earth." We read of the "Day of Vengeance" that is coming upon the antitypical Israel, and as we inquire of the Lord respecting it, and whether or not it may be averted, we hear his decision in the Scriptures, as Josiah received it concerning his kingdom. The Word of the Lord informs us that so far as Christendom is concerned there is no balm in Gilead that will help and recover her. Her case has gone too far to be rectified, and to have the old garment patched. The Lord's decision is that the present social structure shall pass away in a great time of trouble, and that on its ruins he will establish through the glorified Church, the Kingdom which he has so long promised, and for which we are to pray, "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven."

Nevertheless, the Lord's promise is comforting to all those who mourn in Zion, to all those who are out of sympathy with evil and unrighteousness, to all those

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who love the law of the Lord their God, and who are seeking to serve him with all their mind, soul and strength, and to exercise his law of Love toward their neighbor also. To this class, fully consecrated to the Lord, comes the assurance, "They shall be mine, saith the Lord, in that day when I shall make up my jewels, and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him."

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INTERESTING LETTERS.

Chefoo, China.

WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY,

DEAR BRETHREN:--The two boxes of books--MILLENNIAL DAWNS, pamphlets, tracts--despatched by you three or four months ago, via New York to Shanghai, came thence to this place where they were safely received. To me they are most welcome, even as precious bearers of light. I heartily thank you for such a bountiful supply of tracts. I will do my best to secure readers for them all. I have now studied the present truth carefully for two years, at first critically,

then I wondered and admired, then was I captivated and satisfied. I read the DAWNS first alone, then with my wife, and now am reading them again with my children. Spiritual food,--such as I never before tasted, --they have been to me, meat in due season indeed.

Being persuaded that this testimony is of God, and having feasted thereupon, I desire now to rise and serve others. I have been a Baptist missionary in China since 1876. How often have I been pained, aye groaned, to see the most evident failure of missionary work, to produce self-denying followers of Christ, from among the Chinese! Last May I resigned my connection both with the Mission Board, and the Baptist Church, that I may be free from all creeds and parties, to do the Lord's work in the Lord's own way.

My desire now is to reach all missionaries and other Christians (foreigners specially) in China, Japan, Corea and Siam, and this can only be done by correspondence and advertisement, both of which methods I hope to use, to spread abroad in these Eastern lands some knowledge of the present truth. I ask your prayers for all the necessary equipment for this service,

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and that the light of the dawning of the Day may find its way into many hearts. I am, dear Brethren,

Yours, in hope of the Redemption which draweth nigh,
HORACE A. RANDLE.

"Cincinnati, Ohio.

"TO THE AUTHOR OF 'The Day of Vengeance,'

"DEAR SIR:--In its application of spiritual principles to social, political, economic and ecclesiastical questions, your work is the peer of Henry George's 'Progress and Poverty.'

"Respectfully, GEORGE M. HAMMELL,--

Literary Editor Western Christian Advocate,
Member Cincinnati Conference M.E. Church."

"'The Day of Vengeance' is VOL. IV. of the MILLENNIAL DAWN series--a literal exposition of Sacred Scripture seriously offensive to papists, hierarchic ecclesiasticism, world-conforming Christians, monopolists, hypocrites, politicians, adherents of parties, sects and lodges, paganized rulers of the earth, aristocrats and anarchists, money-lenders and usurers. It is an open attack upon all existing social, political and ecclesiastical organizations, in the name of New Testament Christianity. Primarily, an appeal to pessimism, it is ultimately an appeal to that optimism which believes that, after the day of vengeance, the Kingdom

of Christ will come in all its glory."--Western Christian Advocate.

Chicago, Illinois.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--You will be interested in the young Hebrew I brought to the Chicago meeting. It seems a remarkable series of Providential interpositions in this case, and it makes me think it may be for some ulterior good. I expected to bring this Brother Segall to the afternoon meeting, but he came to the evening meeting. We were late, but his interest was very great; he said he had frequently thought of subjects you mentioned, and believed in the same way, but had never met any one who had talked upon them as yourself. The next Sunday we arranged to go to Brother McPhail's meeting on the West Side. He was most kindly received among the brethren, and Bro. M. had a very interesting talk with him. I had already (a week or two before) given him a copy of DAWN, VOL. I., and I asked him if he had read it. He said that he had not had time. I asked him to bring the book, and we would go through it together which we did. He has a very bright mind, and quick of apprehension, that it is a pleasure to talk on these matters to him. He said he would from that time read DAWN steadily. Two days after this he was to return to Milwaukee. We have received several interesting letters from him, and of course have replied thereto. He is staying with his parents who are orthodox Hebrews, but his conversation has been such that his father (from Germany) seems quite desirous to read the DAWN in the German language.

The history of Brother Segall's conversion from Judaism is one of the most interesting experiences I have heard of: this was some years since, but he tells me he has not been a consistent member of any Christian church, as his ideas on the trinity, on hell and on other points, were not what are generally received in the nominal church. I was most surprised at this and showed him more of the divine plan and Word, and this has stimulated his desire to be with us. We seem still to be in the days of persecution, as in the earliest Christian times, when the disciples on that account were scattered abroad, everyone preaching the glad tidings. I think this dear Brother, notwithstanding his tribulations, will take a delight in spreading the good news among his friends. In fact he has already commenced....

The preparations of Great Britain to be ready for any combined attack upon her sphere of influence seem to betoken that the rumblings of the great storm may soon be heard. May God protect those peoples who most love freedom and his holy Word.

I will now conclude, dear Brother Russell, always yours, in love and fellowship. R. W. E. BRAY.
