
CONTENTS.

Views from the Watch Tower..... 3
 Fallen from Grace vs. Collapsed..... 3
 The Federation of Babylon..... 4
 The Time of Opportunity is Short..... 5
 The Prospect for 1900..... 5
 To Him That Hath Used Shall
 More be Given..... 5
 A Fresh Call for Volunteers..... 6
 Poem: Our Elims--To My Beloved
 Pastor..... 7
 "The Word Was Made Flesh"..... 7
 "Jesus Increased in Wisdom
 and Stature"..... 12
 Interesting Letters..... 15
 Items: A Post Office Thief is
 Still Robbing Our Mail, etc..... 2

THIS JOURNAL AND ITS MISSION.

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

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

is constantly made, to facilitate such testing.

TO US THE SCRIPTURES CLEARLY TEACH

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

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

That the Basis of Hope, for the Church and the World, lies in the fact that "Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man," "a ransom for all," and will be "the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," "in due time."--Heb. 2:9; John 1:9; 1 Tim. 2:5,6.

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

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

That the hope for the World lies in the blessings of knowledge and opportunity to be brought to all by Christ's Millennial Kingdom--the restitution of all that was lost in Adam, to all the willing and obedient, at the hands of their Redeemer and his glorified Church.--Acts 3:19-21; Isa. 35.

CHARLES T. RUSSELL, Editor.

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SUBSCRIPTIONS AND BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS

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WATCH TOWER BIBLE & TRACT SOCIETY,
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TERMS TO THE LORD'S POOR, AS FOLLOWS:--

Those of the interested who, by reason of old age, or other infirmity or 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 continually.

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A POST OFFICE THIEF IS STILL ROBBING OUR MAIL!

We specially request that no money be sent by mail. Altho this is mentioned in every issue quite a number fail to heed it. They thus not only lose the money sent but cause themselves and us trouble and postage writing about their losses. Furthermore they trouble others who properly send Postal Orders, Drafts or Express Orders; for the mail-thief frequently by mistake takes these (which he cannot use and must destroy lest they betray him). Hence the many who do right in this matter are put to trouble even tho they suffer no financial loss. If all would observe the proper rule, the thief would be spared temptation, and he would soon cease to rifle letters addressed to us-- finding no money therein.

One dear Brother sent a donation in money, which went astray. He wrote subsequently that his thought was--This is the Lord's money and for the Lord's cause and he will protect it. He erred in this, failing to realize that his course was a tempting of Providence: "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." (See Matt. 4:7.) Nor should we tempt our weak fallen fellow-creatures.

page 2

ALLEGHENY CHURCH MEETINGS.

Preaching and divine worship every Sunday afternoon in Bible House chapel, No. 610 Arch street, at 3 P.M.

Cottage meetings for prayer and testimony on Wednesday evenings; and Dawn Circles for Bible Study on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings--various localities, Pittsburg and vicinity. Inquire at WATCH TOWER office.

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R2553 : page 3

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER.

FALLEN FROM GRACE VERSUS COLLAPSED.

MORE evident does it become, daily, that our Lord's declaration, "Babylon is fallen!" does not signify the outward collapse of "Churchianity;" but that nominal "Christendom" has fallen from divine favor;--just as the fall of national Judaism from divine favor, at the rejection and crucifixion of Messiah at his first presence, meant not the collapse at the moment of that religio-political system. The collapse of Judaism came after it had been fallen from divine favor for 37 years, viz., in A.D. 69-70; and during that interim God's true people, "Israelites indeed,"

were called out by the voice of the Gospel Dispensation. And just so now, the collapse of nominal Christianity, "Christendom" or "Babylon," is not to be expected until A.D. 1914, tho fallen from favor since 1878. The collapse will be sudden and awful when it does come: and while only the few realize the fallen-from-grace condition of Babylon in the present, none will be ignorant of her collapse when it comes. But to know then will be too late so far as the little flock of overcomers is concerned;--they are all called now, during the interim, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues"--punishment.--Rev. 18:2,4.

The collapse of Babylon is graphically described by the Revelator as like the casting of a great millstone into the sea, saying, "Thus [suddenly], with violence shall that great city, Babylon, be thrown down and be found no more at all." Her sudden destruction is described as a great conflagration, and the declaration is made that it is because "the hour of her judgment [krisis]" will have come, that she will thus suffer overthrow or "plagues." "Therefore shall her plagues come in one day [prophetic time is a day for a year], death and mourning and famine, and she shall be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her." Whoever are worthy the name, "my people," will hear and obey the Lord's voice and come out of Babylon and "receive not of her plagues;" because their obedience in fleeing out as soon as they see Babylon's real condition will prove that they were never in real accord with her sins. Those who remain after seeing Babylon and her blasphemous doctrines in the light now shining are reckoned as endorsing the blasphemies and deserving the "plagues" most thoroughly --as much or more than the "tare" class of Babylonians, because they have greater light.

Many err in not fleeing promptly when first they realize the true condition of affairs. Some say,--I will use my office or influence in Babylon, and then obey the Lord after I have gathered some of the "wheat." They forget that obedience is better than all else in divine estimation--better even than sacrifice. Are they wiser than God that they may even for a month advantageously or safely ignore his Word? Later on they find that even the "tare" class consider them as having for a time at least "dissembled" and misrepresented their own faith as well as misrepresented the faith of the denomination which they had agreed to uphold. Their influence which at first might have been powerful for the truth becomes vitiated by reason of their neglect to obey God's voice--by their attempt to guide themselves and to lean to their own understanding.

Others say, I am free from Babylon in spirit, God knows! Altho my name is still on the denominational rolls, I take no interest in her affairs--my sympathies

are all with the truth, and I rarely attend other meetings.
But is this right--to be half out and half in

R2553 : page 4

Babylon? Is this the obedience required of an "overcomer" and pleasing and acceptable to God? Surely not. He publicly entered into a covenant with the denomination when he joined it, and he should faithfully live up to all the conditions of that covenant until he as publicly renounces or cancels his membership.

Others say, I merely retain my membership in the church and sing in the choir, etc., for the sake of peace in my family: otherwise I would speedily withdraw. But is this "overcoming," or being overcome? The latter, surely: it is a balancing of regard for God and his Word, with regard for husband or wife or children or friends and their wishes. Thus the Lord tests us, whether we love houses, lands, reputation, friends, husband, wife or children, more than him! We should be prompt to obey and thus to show that to us God's will is superior to every other consideration.

Additionally, we once said to a dear brother who made such a remark as the above: Brother, excuse the illustration, but it may help you to see your position on this question in its true light if I tell you of a matter which, seems to me, aptly illustrates your position in a way you have not thus far thought of it. It is this: In Chicago, at one of the great butchering establishments (perhaps at all) they have a trained bullock whose duty it is to decoy the cattle that are ready for slaughter. The bewildered cattle are naturally fearful of harm and would be difficult to drive to the butchering spot, but with the decoy bull they are easily led. He gallops up to the herd tossing his head and tail as a friendly greeting and then, wheeling around, he becomes their leader and gallops off along the narrow passage where they can go only single file. He knows well his business, and when near the killing place he steps aside into a little space provided for him alone, while the herd push one another along to their slaughter. Now, dear brother (we remarked), you and others in the nominal churches, who know better and who merely sing, or preach, or hold some petty "office," or merely help to count another one on the reports of Babylon's prosperity or to give another dollar to her millions, are like the decoy bull--using your knowledge and influence to the injury and bondage of others who, seeking the right way of true liberty and life, are looking to you for counsel and being misled by your example. The brother in question at once thankfully acknowledged the force of the illustration, and requested that some of the free "Withdrawal Letters" and tracts to accompany them be sent him for his use in getting free and setting a worthy example to others.

THE FEDERATION OF BABYLON.

"Christendom" was united in the dark ages, and the results were terrible, every way. The more truth and reformation came in, the more did "Christendom" split up. Had the reform continued, and had the light of truth shined still more clearly, the result would have been that split after split would have occurred, until each individual Christian would have stood free, and all denominationalism would have perished. This would be the ideal condition; for all the unions of the past and present are unscriptural and tend to impede the Christian's progress. They are mechanical unions, and not heart unions: they are the

R2554 : page 4

work of Satan, and not God's workmanship: they tend to prevent heart-union and foster errors, which otherwise would quickly die. Not until enlightened by the spirit of God's Word are any prepared to exercise the liberty wherewith Christ makes free indeed, and to come out from all false Christian unions or sectarian communions into that broad place which recognizes one Lord, one faith, one baptism and one Church, whose names are written in heaven. And only such are prepared for proper union on the same basis as that of the primitive church of Apostolic times.

When, therefore, we from time to time in these columns allude to the growing evidences of a federative union among all the great denominations of Christendom, and when we point out that the Scriptures indicate such a union, let no one suppose that either we or the Scriptures approve of such a union, or consider that its influence will be favorable to either the truth or the "saints." Quite to the contrary, the influence will be baneful: whatever is encouraging or helpful to Babylon is proportionately injurious to the true Church. The various sects of Christendom realize that many of the doctrinal errors, which have heretofore bound their votaries helplessly and mechanically, will no longer hold as firmly as before, and they are supplanting these with new bonds of later device: viz., love of respectability and pride in denominational name and prosperity--a party spirit. And instead of the discredited doctrines (which can no longer be unfurled as standards, but which must be carried along tightly closed) they are raising the standard of moral and political reform, the banner of a new crusade.

No one can say that their crusade is an evil of itself; and only the few who are spiritually minded (the true Church) in and out of their sects can so much as see that moral and political reform is a worldly work and not the commission of the Church which is anointed to preach, not such reforms, but the cross of Christ

and complete regeneration of heart.

Those who are looking for a union in Christendom in which denominational names and denominational lines will be obliterated, are looking for what they will never see until the great collapse comes, and the entire "Christendom" system, social, religious, political

R2554 : page 5

and financial goes down in the great anarchious trouble with which the present age will close. The union which will be cemented will be largely one of common sentiment and cooperation in moral and political reforms. And this federative union, as already pointed out, began in 1846 in the organization of the Evangelical Alliance. We are looking yearly for its final knot to be tied in some manner that will include with other Protestant denominations the Episcopal Church, and a working agreement with Papacy.

Thus the "Image of the Beast" (Rev. 13) will receive life--vigor, energy--be made active. And that activity which will seem to promise great things for Babylon, and which will actively suppress liberty and be exerted powerfully against the spread of the truths now published by us, will be but the lifting up of the great millstone preparatory to its being violently and quickly destroyed, for it will soon be evident that such a new union of church and state (wholly different from that of the past) will be a union of the classes against the masses: and it will be the rising of the masses in revolution that will, as God's agency, hurl the Babylon system to utter destruction.

THE TIME OF OPPORTUNITY IS SHORT.

The more clearly we see present conditions and foresee those approaching, the more it should stimulate our zeal to be and to do while we have the opportunity --for a dark night approaches, wherein no man can work. Whoever desires to lay up treasures in heaven, by voluntarily sacrificing time, money, influence and other earthly considerations for the service of the Lord by service of the "brethren," should bestir himself, lest the harvest pass, and the summer of opportunity end, and he find that he has failed to offer his sacrifice which he presented to God theoretically when he was baptized into Christ's death. And whoever, having become nominally a member of the "royal priesthood," does not offer any sacrifice during this Gospel Day of sacrifice forfeits his place as a member of that priesthood--his name will surely be blotted out and the crown, apportioned to him on the strength of his covenant to sacrifice, will be set over to another who will appreciate and use the privilege of self-denial, self-sacrifice,

suffering with Christ.

THE PROSPECTS FOR 1900.

It is our opinion that the year just beginning will be a very prosperous year for the truth. This is not merely "a wish, father to the thought," nor is it because the "Good Hopes" already sent in seem to give promise of funds for a wider spread of the truth; for, as an offset, we have noticed that our paper (the chief item of cost in our publications) will cost us nearly double what it did last year--in other words, a dollar will do only about sixty cents worth as compared to last year. No; but we have felt for several months past that Churchianity has reached and is at a crisis, where a cleavage is sure to take place,--which will separate from her some true saints who hitherto have been perplexed respecting the Lord's will, but who will now gradually become convinced that "Babylon" is no longer his mouthpiece, but already spewed out of his mouth (Rev. 3:16), and that her evolutionary teachings are not of him but in radical opposition to his Word and plan.

We have confidence that God's time is ripe for present truth to be more widely made known among his people as a part of the gospel which is either a savor of life unto life or of death unto death. We have confidence, too, that all the money and all the colaborers necessary will be forthcoming, and we are arranging plans accordingly. Those who cooperate will share the service and the blessings attendant; those who do not use their privileges will but mar their own blessings, but shall not hinder the work that is due to be done. "The Lord will provide!" Indeed, we expect that each year now will note rapid spread of the truth until "the door is shut;"--until the work is interfered with forcibly by outside influences. Then we shall understand that our work is done--that the "elect" have all been sealed, and that nought remains but to "stand" and assist others to stand. Indeed, this, as we all know, is a most important part of the present; for, while others are being reached with the truth, those already blessed are being assaulted by the Adversary, so that all may be tested and only the faithful be able to stand.--See Eph. 6:10-18.

TO HIM THAT HATH USED SHALL MORE BE GIVEN.

The "Volunteer" spirit is growing. Those who have served thus have been blessed and are more anxious for the conquest than they were for the first. They look abroad and see thousands blinded by the

god of this world enlisting to kill and be killed, and they read the reports of the killed, wounded and prisoners, and the hardships endured, and the taxes to be borne; and then they say: How small is the service, how slight the hardship and suffering and self-denial our gracious King is willing to accept as "reasonable service" from us who have consecrated to him our all --even unto death--and to whom he has already given such rich rewards as well as promised us a share in his Millennial Kingdom. We are resolved that neither cares of this life, nor pride, nor self-ease shall hinder us from engaging in this battle against darkness and the influences of the Prince of Darkness. On the contrary, we will be yet more vigilant, yet more enthusiastic

R2554 : page 6

in planting the Truth, the standard of our King, where it can be seen by many now ignorantly fighting against him and it.

Let none think of the "Volunteers" as illiterate "hand-bill-distributers." Quite to the contrary, these "ministers of the truth" who are reaching larger numbers and exerting a greater influence than if they occupied the chief pulpits of the land, are far above the average of those whom they serve--both in secular and in Biblical intelligence. One is a stove-manufacturer and dealer; several are storekeepers, one owning and successfully managing five stores; some are college graduates, architects and civil engineers; some are clerks holding remunerative positions of trust--one of the latter, besides doing diligent "Volunteer" work, economized rigidly his living expenses and accumulated five hundred dollars during last year, which he sent to our Society to assist in publishing more "good-tidings-amunition." Several are the chosen leaders of meetings in their various localities; several are stenographers (male and female); at least two are artists, one of these of distinction as a portrait painter; others are house-wives; others are mechanics, who, after a week of toil, find recreation and heart-refreshment by spending part of each Sunday as messengers (angels) of the Lord to carry to their "brethren" yet in Babylon the true gospel message,--"good-tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people" through "him who loved us and bought us with his own precious blood."

Plenty of worldly business can command such servants because of the pay offered; but no other religious work has ever called for and gotten volunteers of this class, nor for a work of this kind, whose only pay in the present time is the divine blessing "a hundred fold more in this present time with persecution, --and in the world to come eternal life"--"glory, honor and immortality." No other gospel was ever worthy of so intelligent a class of servants: but as respects this gospel its most honorable servants feel that

all that they have and are, are offerings far too insignificant to testify to God their new-found appreciation of his glorious character and plan. They feel impelled to pay their vows unto the Lord, to keep their covenant

R2555 : page 6

of self-sacrifice even unto death, because they have the genuine faith in the Lord's promises, which works by love and purifies the heart from pride and selfishness.

A FRESH CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS.

In the world's warfare defeat leads to fresh calls for soldiers: with us success calls for more "Volunteers" and more success and more blessing, "riches of grace" (with possibly more persecution and slander) and by and by "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." There is more, much more work to be done, and we are desirous that many more of the Lord's consecrated people should share the heart-cheer and character-strengthening which this service affords.

Here is the very opportunity for which you have prayed--an opportunity for serving the truth, and the Lord and the "brethren." You wished and prayed for the needful talents to present these good tidings, and you hoped and prayed for opportunities and for means: and now, behold! the Lord has provided you all these in this "Volunteer" work. Notice that it is a "reasonable service" as no other is; because--

(1) It is not an unreasonable misrepresentation of God's character and plan and methods with drum and tambourine, and singing of hymns to concert-hall tunes, misnamed divine worship and service.

(2) It is not the unreasonable misrepresentation of the divine character and plan as preached in one-half the 200,000 pulpits of "Christendom" which blasphemes God's character and misrepresents his plan by declaring that only the saints of the present time will ever be saved--far less than one out of every thousand of the world's population;* and that the great mass, both of the living and the dead, will spend an eternity in torment indescribable.

(3) It is not the unreasonable misrepresentation of God's character and plan presented in the other half of the pulpits of "Christendom"--which, ashamed of their "hell fire and damnation creeds," hypocritically acknowledge them, while actually they deny them and preach "another gospel" of Evolution and Higher Criticism, which makes void the Word and plan of God, and repudiates the cross of Christ and all necessity for his atoning sacrifice.

(4) It is a "reasonable service" because it appeals

only to reason and Scripture, as no other gospel message on earth or known among men appeals to these, and to no other authorities and standards. And it does this, too, in a most reasonable manner: not like some by making false professions and taking vows in order to get into pulpits and into college-professorships, and under good salaries, to capture the sects ("creeping into houses and leading captive silly women"), but by kindly proffering without money and without price the priceless jewel of consistent truth which from our own experience we know will bless every true recipient. Nor has the Lord given us cause for shame respecting the form in which our messages are delivered--they are neat, creditable to the most refined who engage in the service. And in turn "the adornment of a meek and quiet spirit" which the Lord's faithful take to this humble service (laying down their lives for the brethren)

*One in a thousand of the world's population would be 1,600,000. That many saints would be a power for good.

R2555 : page 7

is one of the strongest sermons or epistles of Christ-likeness that can be presented to those we may hope to interest, and it already has spoken loudly to those who at first were too prejudiced to read.

(5) Could there be a more blessed or a more reasonable service than this? Nay, verily! We can fancy, indeed, that the heavenly angels look down upon our privileges and opportunities and fondly desire that in divine providence it might have been their privilege to join with us in this most reasonable, most honorable and most blessed service.

THE PLAN OF CAMPAIGN FOR 1900.

Confident of the reenlistment of the veterans of 1899, we have prepared for them a new campaign which we believe they will heartily enjoy. We will get ready for Spring campaign hundreds of thousands of pamphlets which we believe you will enjoy using. We will call for Volunteers and reenlistments about March, so please be ready.

Meantime most of the "volunteers" have plenty of work for the suitable weather between now and spring; and the spirit of the Lord--the spirit of love for the Lord, love for the truth and love for the "brethren"--is constantly constraining fresh volunteers for places not yet served with the booklet, "Bible vs. Evolution," and we are printing and will continue to print, plenty of these to supply the demand.

The new booklets will be supplied only for the fields where the other distribution has been made. This free offer for this special work will not affect the regular selling prices of the booklets;--they are not free for any other kind of service, tho all are supplied at very low rates. We hope that we may have many and prompt responses to this call for Gideon's Band, armed with the Jubilee trumpet to give the joyful sound, and with lights in their vessels,--ready and willing to break the vessels, to let the light shine out while they cause the joyful sound of the real good tidings to sound throughout the land.--See Judges Chap. VII.

page 7

OUR ELIMS.--TO MY BELOVED PASTOR.

Our way winds upward on the rocky steep,
And narrow is the path our feet must tread;
We still press on through shade or noontide heat--
Pilgrims to Canaan through a desert led.
The way is rough, and weary grow our feet,
Yet faint we not--the goal is fair and sweet.

Yet, as we onward urge our weary way,
Sometimes a sigh escapes, a tear will fall;
Our load grows heavy, and the glaring day
And heat and wayside dust our hearts appal.
Yet our Leader loves us well and notes our sigh,
His help is sure, His presence ever nigh.

We lift our eyes, and lo! a shelving rock
And sparkling spring and waving palms are near;
With glad and quickened feet and eager joy,
We haste to this fair Elim-grove of cheer.
We loose our sandals by the brooklet sweet
And in its waters bathe our weary feet.

And as we take again our onward way,
We pluck fair blossoms, delicate and rare,
We breathe their perfume sweet throughout the day,
The rugged path has grown most strangely fair;
And thus our Father in His tender love,
Doth bless us and His loving-kindness prove.

And thus, dear friend, as you go on your way,
Walking this path our loving Master trod,
With patient, trusting heart from day to day,
Keeping the road that leads to "Home" and God,
May these blest "Elims" often cheer your heart,
That you may ever choose the "better part!"

May blossoms, too, along your path be found,

Blossoms of love, and true and kindly deed,
Most fair and sweet--fragrant with tender thoughts,
And loving gratitude--your earthly meed.
And may I hope, dear friend, my gift may be
One of these wayside blossoms sweet to thee?

With much Christian love, "A happy Christmas and New Year."
ALICE G. JAMES,--Illinois, Dec. 25th, 1899.

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R2555 : page 7

"THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH."

--JAN. 7.--LUKE 2:1-16.--

"Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall
save his people from their sins."--Matt. 1:21.

JESUS is the topic of the International Sunday
School Lesson course for the entire year 1900.
It should be a very profitable study, for the more intimately
we know our dear Redeemer in the light of the
Scriptures the more we shall appreciate him, love him
and seek to copy him. No other life than his could bear
so continual and close a scrutiny, yet always be full of
fresh revelations of moral dignity and character--any
other life similarly studied and criticised would reveal
its seamy side of weakness, sin and ignobility.

Of the four records, only John's attempts to trace
our Lord's genealogy to the heavenly source, and to
show us that before he was made flesh he was a spirit
being with the Father and a sharer of his glory--a god
with the God. But all of the Evangelists are clear in
their statement that he "was made flesh"--not
that he remained a spirit being, and assumed flesh as
clothing in which to appear to men, but, however explainable,
that the life power of the spirit being, the
Logos, became the life power of the human being, born
of a woman and under the Law, subject to all the conditions
and circumstances of the Jews. Matthew traces

R2555 : page 8

Joseph's genealogy; for altho the statement is clear
that Jesus was not the son of Joseph, nevertheless, being
adopted by him as his son, he might, without impropriety,
inherit through him. Luke shows the
genealogy of Mary, by which our Lord was actually
related, according to the flesh, to our race and to the
royal family of David through the line of Nathan.*

The time of our Lord's birth was an auspicious
one in several respects, and very evidently divine wisdom
had exercised itself in respect to the world's affairs
by way of preparation for this important event:

(1) The spirit of world-conquering that began with Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom was favorable to it, in the sense that it brought the various families or nations of mankind into closer contact with each other, broadening their ideas. (2) This policy had resulted in the transplanting of peoples from one land to another, and thus had made them more cosmopolitan in their sentiments. (3) Israel and Judah, thus transplanted in their captivity to Babylon, became so attached to the new conditions that comparatively few of them availed themselves of the offer of Cyrus to return to their own land, only about fifty thousand of all the tribes, out of several millions. The Jews among the Gentiles were by no

*See MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. V., Chap. 6.

R2556 : page 8

means lost and had by no means abandoned all of their hopes in the Abrahamic Covenant nor all of their faithfulness to the Mosaic Law--altho they were lax in these matters and too full of a love of gain and ease to cultivate the spirit of Israelites indeed. Nevertheless, they had their influence amongst all the nations with whom they dwelt, and were witnesses to the hopes of Israel in the one God and in a coming Messiah, the Son of God, to be the world's Deliverer. (4) The triumph for a time of the Greek Empire had brought to the civilized world a highly developed literature--the Greek language had reached its zenith, and was the literary language of the civilized world. (5) The Roman Empire had conquered the world and was in the height of its power, and as a result there was a time of universal peace, and hence a more favorable time than any before for the announcement of the Gospel and for the safety of its representatives in passing from nation to nation. (6) Israel itself had reached probably its highest development, intellectually, morally and religiously, and additionally we are told in the Scriptures that "All men were in expectation" of the Messiah's coming.--Luke 3:15.

It was just at this most appropriate time, as divinely arranged for, that Caesar Augustus, the Roman Emperor, issued his decree respecting the taxing of his worldwide empire. The decree was not merely an assessment of taxes, but was rather a census, or enrollment for taxation. But instead of sending assessors to the people, according to the present custom, the arrangement then was that every male citizen must report himself at the headquarters of his own family line. This was the occasion for the coming of Joseph and his espoused wife, Mary, the mother of Jesus, to Bethlehem, their native city or family city, for they were both of the house of David (tho through different

lines), and Bethlehem was "the city of David."
Thus in a providential manner and by a decree over which they had no control whatever, Joseph and Mary were brought to the very city in which most appropriately the great heir of David should be born, as had been foretold by the prophet.--Micah 5:2.

The noting of these little incidentals by which divine providence prepared for our Savior's birth and for the sending forth of the Gospel message, are strengthening to the faith of the Lord's people. Realizing God's care in the past over even the little things, gives a foundation for confidence in his wisdom and provision for the features of his plan which are yet future--the fulfilment of all the exceeding great and precious promises which centered in him who was born in Bethlehem. And so also a realization of the divine providence in the larger affairs of the divine plan stimulates faith also in the Lord's providences as respects the personal and more private affairs of his people. Let us more and more realize that, as even the smallest incidents connected with the birth of our Savior were ordered of the Lord, so also he is both able and willing to order all of the affairs of his spiritual children. Let us reason with the Apostle that, if God loved us while we were yet sinners, so as to make such careful provision for our redemption, much more now that we are no longer rebels, aliens, strangers, foreigners, but have become his sons, fellow-heirs with Christ and all the saints, we may have confidence in his love and in his providential care, that according to his promise all things shall work together for good to them that love him--to the called ones according to his purpose.--Rom. 5:8-10; 8:28.

The same decree that brought Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem brought many others of the numerous family of David, and as the inns or hotels of that time were comparatively limited in numbers and in capacity, it is not surprising that the inn proper was full of guests when Joseph and Mary arrived. Indeed, it was rather the custom for many travelers to carry with them their own lodging outfit, and to provide for their own conveniences in the courtyard connected with the inns. And hence the experiences of Joseph and Mary were by no means exceptional. When therefore the Babe Jesus was born, a manger became his most convenient cradle.

The city of Bethlehem still exists, and probably

R2556 : page 9

is not so dissimilar to what it was in that day, for in that land customs seem to have changed but little in centuries. A certain grotto is claimed to be the one which nineteen hundred years ago was the stable of the inn, and a certain stone manger is shown which, it is claimed, was the one in which the Babe Jesus was

laid. Over this has been erected a Catholic church, and various ceremonies are continually performed in and about and connected with "the sacred manger." With such ceremonies we can feel little sympathy, believing them to be rather of the nature of idolatries. To us the center of interest is not the holy ground on which our Savior trod, nor the holy manger in which he lay as a babe, nor his holy mother; yea, tho we reverence his flesh, and are deeply interested in all that pertains thereto, especially in all its experiences, from the time of its consecration to death, at baptism; nevertheless, our still greater interest is in our risen Lord, the new creature perfected, the spiritual One, far above manhood, far above angels, principalities and powers and every name that is named--next to the Father, and exalted to his right hand of power. The Apostle voices this sentiment well, saying, "Tho we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him [so] no more"--our knowledge of him as the risen and glorified Lord and Savior thoroughly outshines all of our interest in his earthly life. (2 Cor. 5:16.) And yet his earthly life is interesting and profitable to us, as we have seen and shall see.

Had the people assembled at Bethlehem realized who this was that had come to their city--that he was from the heavenly courts, that he was the Logos made flesh, that he had come to "save his people from their sins"--how gladly they would have welcomed him into the inn and have given to his use and comfort its choicest apartments! But they knew him not, and hence lost this great privilege of ministering to him. Similarly, in every city and town where the Lord's people are (his true saints), there are many who would make them welcome and give them the best at their disposal, did they but recognize them as the messengers of Jesus and of the Heavenly Father; but as the Apostle says, "The world knoweth us not, because it knew him not." (1 John 3:1.) The disciple must not expect to be above his Lord, and hence, even when going upon missions of mercy and benevolence and as ambassadors for God, we should expect that the Lord's providence would furnish for us, not the most palatial conditions, but more probably very humble conditions. And when we find it thus we should rejoice that to some extent at least we have experiences which harmonize with those of our Lord. The Lord's people will obtain a blessing in proportion as they are prepared to receive all opportunities for God's service as divine favors and to appreciate them, no matter how humble the conditions: and it is noteworthy that neither Joseph, nor Mary, nor Jesus, nor the disciples, nor the Evangelist who recorded the incident, offers the slightest complaint or suggestion of dissatisfaction with the arrangement provided by divine providence. In proportion as they would have felt dissatisfied with the arrangements provided, in that proportion the divine

plans would not have worked for their good.

The vicinity of Bethlehem is a pastoral country, and today is covered with flocks. It was the custom at that time for the shepherds to remain with their flocks by night as a guard against thieves as well as against wild beasts. It was in this vicinity that David (afterward king), when a shepherd-boy protecting his flocks, slew on one occasion a lion and at another time a bear. The shepherds as a class were not particularly well educated people as respects schools, and yet many of them were thoughtful and thus secured, in their leisure time while watching their flocks, by reflection and by conversation, considerable knowledge, so that they might be termed an intellectual and thinking class of people--their minds being turned more to reflection on large subjects than are the minds of some who are constantly immersed in trade and mechanics. The shepherd whom God honored in making him king of his typical kingdom, was a great poet, and evidently much of his time while shepherding was given to the muse, and one of his most beautiful poems (Psalm 23) represents Jehovah himself as the Shepherd of his people,--his flock, for which he cares. It was to men of this thoughtful class, and no doubt men familiar with David's Psalms, and with the Messianic hopes therein set forth, that the Lord sent the first message respecting his Son made flesh.

The description of the appearance of an angel, and of the fear which the brightness of his countenance engendered, is both simple and natural. All mankind more or less feels instinctively a fear of the supernatural, a trepidation at the very thought of being in the presence of the holy angels. And this is proper as well as natural, for all realize their own imperfections through the fall, fearing more or less that the results to themselves would be unfavorable if divine justice were laid to the line and to the plummet in respect to their affairs. All seem instinctively to realize their need of mercy at the hands of him with whom we have to do. And so it was with these shepherds; they were affrighted as they beheld the heavenly visitor in their midst; but his message was not one of justice nor in any sense of condemnation, but of divine mercy. He soothed them with the words, "Be not afraid; for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people." Can we wonder that joy took

R2557 : page 10

the place of fear in their hearts as they heard the gracious words? Surely not. And so it is with all who from that day to the present time have heard this true Gospel message, not merely with the outward ears, but truly, with the ears of their understanding--comprehending it.

How false and how sad has been the understanding

of this message by many of God's people as it has echoed to them down the ages! How few have heard it gladly, appreciatively! How remarkable that nearly all of the different churches and their thousands of ministers and hundreds of thousands of Sunday School teachers should unite in a complete contradiction of this message of the angels--a contradiction which not only wounds their own sentiments and grieves their own hearts, but which robs our dear Savior's mission of nine-tenths of its majesty, and thoroughly dishonors and maligns the name of our gracious Heavenly Father by its misrepresentation of the salvation which he has provided in Christ Jesus.

Some perhaps may be surprised, and even shocked, at such an arraignment of the message which they and other well-meaning but blinded Christians are delivering in the name of the gospel--for the word "gospel" is derived from the words "good tidings." We are quite ready to believe that the vast majority of those who promulgate the bad tidings of eternal misery, as being the divine message and sentence to the vast majority of mankind, are wholly unaware of how seriously they misrepresent the divine character and government in the message which they carry to men;--they misstate the Gospel, not of intention, but of blindness, the very blindness mentioned by the Apostle as originating with the great Adversary--the blindness by which he blinds the minds of the vast majority, to hinder them from realizing the glorious light of God's goodness revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord.--2 Cor. 4:4.

O, if we could only get all true Christians to study this tenth verse of our lesson, and to see the depths of its significance, it would quickly revolutionize the teachings of Christendom! But as our Lord declared, some of the deep things of the divine plan are hidden from many of the wise and prudent according to the course of this world, and are revealed only to the humble--the babes. Nevertheless, the testimony of God standeth sure, and all whose understandings have been opened and who have been enabled to comprehend some of the lengths and the breadths, and the heights and the depths of God's love, may rejoice that the ignorance of the world in general on this subject and the opposition of the great Adversary who is blinding them, cannot continue forever, but must soon give place, when the Lord's due time shall come;--when he who died on Calvary for the world's redemption shall begin his glorious reign by binding that old serpent, the devil, Satan, that he should deceive the nations no more for the thousand years of the Millennial reign. Then all shall see out of obscurity; then all shall discern what at present is the privilege of only the favored few to see, respecting the divine character and plan--that the message of the angel was true, every word of it--that the grand results to flow from the birth of the Savior in Bethlehem justified the message

sent by the great Jehovah,--a good message of great joy which eventually shall be to all people--whose enlightenment and blessing shall have no hindrance, no restriction, and as a result all shall come to a knowledge of the truth and to an opportunity of availing themselves of the grace, mercy and peace provided for all in the great salvation secured by the ransom-sacrifice of our Lord Jesus.

The angel further explained his great Gospel message, showing its basis, and declaring that all the good things mentioned should come to pass because the Savior, Messiah, had been born--the one so long looked for in Israel, the promised seed of Abraham in whom not only Israel should be blessed and exalted to honor, dignity and cooperation, but in whom also "all the families of the earth should be blessed." And let us here remark that the order of presentation used by the heavenly messenger, and evidently divinely ordered, is the proper presentation of this subject which should be adopted by all who seek to be used of the Lord as his ambassadors in the calling of the elect Church. First, there is the grand pronouncement of divine favor and blessing, that it is a cause for joy, and that ultimately it shall extend to every creature; secondly, there is the specific explanation of how all this is to be accomplished--through a Savior, a Deliverer, who, as stated in our Golden Text, in order to deliver his people from the wages of sin, death, into eternal life and blessing, must first of all save them from their sins. And we see from other Scriptures that this salvation from our sins signifies not only the payment on our behalf of the penalty for Adamic sin, but also, subsequently, man's instruction in righteousness and lifting out of sin; in which uplift each one is required to cooperate to the extent of his will and of his ability.

So all teaching of the grace that is to come to mankind should be coupled with the philosophy of the salvation--the Savior made flesh and the flesh devoted or sacrificed for our sins, and the Savior glorified, that in due time after the selection of his Church he might, with her, according to the divine plan, establish his Kingdom of righteousness for the uplifting of the world of mankind out of ignorance, superstition and general degradation into which the great Adversary

R2557 : page 11

has gotten them through the fall and through his subsequent blinding and misleading. In this connection it is well to remember that our Lord's name, Jesus, signifies Savior, and that all who would be of the elect Church must have the spirit of the Bridegroom (as well as by faith be covered with the garment of his imputed righteousness): and that his spirit is one of opposition to sin to the extent of self-sacrifice. We also

are to "resist unto blood [death] striving against sin."
--Heb. 12:4.

Then the angel gave the shepherds an intimation of the humble conditions under which this great King of earth was born into the world--as a babe, wrapped in swaddling bands and lying in a manger. This was necessary, not only to their identification of Jesus, but necessary also to bring down their thoughts from the great and grand results to its humble beginnings, lest they should be misled in their expectations. And as it is with every part of the divine plan, so also it should be in respect to all of our proclamations of the same. We are not only to tell of the future glory and greatness and grandeur, but we are to tell also of the present humiliation--not only of our Savior who humbled himself to take a low estate amongst men, and to die for our sins, but also to point out that the "elect" are called to walk in his footsteps, under similarly humiliating circumstances--to suffer with him, if they would reign with him; to die with him, if they would live with him. And thus also the prophets spoke not only of the glory that should follow, but also of the sufferings of Christ (head and body) which must precede the glory. (1 Pet. 1:11.) The lesson to every one who has ears to hear it is, "No cross, no crown." Let us, then, humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, and rejoice in every step of the humiliation, that he may exalt us in due time to share the glories of his Son our Lord, and to share with him the grand work of blessing all the families of the earth.

It was a fitting climax that, after the one angel had told the surprised shepherds of the good tidings of great joy for all people and was ready to depart, he should be joined by an angelic host, singing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." This was but a reiteration of the Gospel message already delivered. It declared that the work which should be accomplished by the babe just born, should redound to the highest glory and honor of Jehovah God, his Father. It declared also that through this work to be accomplished by Jesus should come to earth divine good will and consequently peace, --and all that these would imply in the way of blessings of restitution and privilege of attaining everlasting life. But how much in conflict with all this are the erroneous theories which have gained credence in Christendom, which teach that, notwithstanding the ransom which our Lord Jesus gave, and notwithstanding the turning aside of the original sentence upon our race as the result of the propitiation for our sins accepted by the Father, the vast majority of the human family will nevertheless, to all eternity, be in rebellion against God, and in torture will continually blaspheme his name;--and that without ever having had a full, reasonable opportunity to know the Savior or to accept his salvation. How strange that any should think

that such a plan would be glory to God in the highest!

How strange that any should refuse to see the very plain statement of the Scripture that God has provided through Christ that every member of the human family shall have a full opportunity of coming to a knowledge of the truth, and then of relinquishing sin and of accepting new life of righteousness under the New Covenant--and that then whoever still refuses and will not submit himself to this righteous arrangement shall be utterly destroyed from amongst the people--in the Second Death,--that none will be suffered to live in sin and opposition to God to blemish any part of God's dominions, but that all the incorrigible shall be as tho they had not been. In no other way can we possibly imagine that the time will ever come when there will be full peace among men. "There is no peace for the wicked, saith my God."

The only solution which God offers respecting the establishment of peace is in connection with the establishment of his Kingdom, for which our dear Redeemer taught us to pray, "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." That will mean peace in its fullest and most absolute sense. The Scriptural proposition does not include the violation of

R2558 : page 11

any man's will, but merely the offering through Christ of an opportunity for his everlasting blessing and peace, or his cutting off in the Second Death if he fails to appreciate the divine offer.

The shepherds having heard of God's grace manifested their interest by visiting and paying their homage to the Savior: and so each one who has heard of the grace of God with an appreciative heart can do nothing less than seek the Lord and do him reverence and serve his cause by proclaiming the gracious message with which he has been favored. Let us each do so, and thus more and more increase in our hearts the joys of the Lord and our appreciation of his grand gospel.

Respecting the date of Jesus' birth, we hold that it was about Sept. 25th to Oct. 1st B.C. 1, and that the annunciation (Luke 1:28) was nine months earlier, namely Dec. 25th B.C. 2. The evidences re this position are given in detail in MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. II., pages 54-62.

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R2558 : page 12

"JESUS INCREASED IN WISDOM AND STATURE."

--JAN. 14.--LUKE 2:41-52.--

"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature,
and in favor with God and man."

MUCH peculiar speculation has been indulged in respecting the childhood, boyhood and young manhood of our Lord Jesus, with which we have no sympathy whatever. The Bible student should confine himself to the Bible record, and not give loose rein to imagination and speculation more likely to be untrue than correct. Had the Lord foreseen necessity for information respecting this period of our Savior's career he undoubtedly would have provided for it in the inspired record. This does not imply that there was nothing noteworthy or commendable in our Lord's earlier life, but rather that by comparatively ignoring this the Lord would point us more particularly to the three and a half years of public ministry following his baptism, in Jordan, and by the holy spirit. In a word, the Lord thus points out that it was not the man Jesus whose words and acts were valuable to us and lessons for our emulation, but the words and acts of Christ Jesus, the Anointed Jesus--Jesus after he had been anointed with the holy spirit without measure. Nevertheless, keeping strictly within the lines of the little that is written in the Scriptures we may draw some valuable and helpful lessons from the boyhood and young manhood of our Master.

Nothing is known respecting the first twelve years of our Lord's life, except that under divine direction his mother and foster-father took him down into Egypt, out of the reach of Herod, where they remained with him for a few months until after Herod's death, returning then to their home city, Nazareth in Galilee. It will be remembered that the occasion of the flight into Egypt was Herod's fear that a king should arise in the family of David, in harmony with the Jewish traditions, and that thus Herod's own family would be ousted from the kingly position. Herod was not of the family of David, nor a Jew at all--he was of the family of Esau, Jacob's brother. The story of the wise men coming from the East seeking a new-born king of the Jews will be remembered, and now Herod, learning of their mission, urged that when they had found the infant they sought they should inform him, Herod feigning that he also desired to do homage to the new king. But the wise men, under divine direction, ignored Herod's request. Subsequently, learning some of the particulars respecting the birth at Bethlehem, Herod caused the death of the male-children of that city of two years old and under--thus endeavoring to insure the death of the newborn king. It is not at all probable that the number of babes slaughtered under this decree was great; as the population of Bethlehem was small the number of male children of such an age would necessarily be few.

The Golden Text informs us that Jesus grew like

any other boy--that his development was gradual, both as respects physical and intellectual stature. We are not, therefore, to think of Jesus in boyhood's days as a sage a teacher, a healer, etc., as we find him subsequent to his anointing with the holy spirit. Nevertheless, we may properly suppose that the perfect boy would in many respects be keener and brighter than the average boy who inherits sundry imperfections from the fall.*

The testimony respecting Mary and Joseph leaves no doubt that they were pious people, and this is confirmed by the first verse of this lesson, which informs us that it was their custom to go every year to the Feast of the Passover: this requirement of the Law was observed by the most devout Jews only. It is as unnecessary as it is improper for us to go beyond the Scriptural declarations on this subject, and to assume, as some do, that Mary herself was miraculously conceived and born free from sin. Indeed, if we had no record testifying to Mary's piety the fact that she was honored by the Lord above all other women, in that she was chosen to be the mother of Jesus according to the flesh, would prove her nobility of character and purity of heart;--for it is not even supposable that the Lord would so specially honor, bless and use any other than a noble character. Whom the Lord uses we may safely esteem honorable.

Altho the Jewish Law does not so stipulate, tradition informs us that it was the custom to consider every boy who had fulfilled his twelfth year as "a Son of the Law," and to a certain extent from that age amenable to the requirements of the Law: and the narrative of our lesson seems to confirm this tradition, telling us that when Jesus was twelve years of age (in his thirteenth year) he accompanied the family to the Passover Feast at Jerusalem. Is there not a lesson here for all godly parents, suggesting that the training of the infancy period should be of such a character as to prepare the child for the consideration of sober and religious matters at the very threshold of boyhood? We think there is. And we think it a serious mistake made by some well-intentioned parents when they conclude that their children of twelve years have sufficient mind to have grasped the elementary principles of a secular education and to be prepared for higher studies of a secular character, but unfit for higher religious studies. The children who are ready at that age for higher secular studies have already been carefully instructed along elementary lines; and if any are unprepared for higher studies in religious matters it is

*See MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. V., Chap. 4.

at least possible that their elementary religious training may have been neglected by their divinely appointed instructors--their parents. No Christian parent can avoid this his natural responsibility toward his children --in moral and religious training as well as in the secular and physical.

The Feast of the Passover continued seven days, but it was the custom for many of the pilgrims from distant parts to remain over only two days, until after the principal ceremonies. It is probable that Joseph and Mary, in company with their kinsfolk, started on the return journey on the third day of the feast. It was customary for the women of a caravan to move on ahead, the men coming after, and a boy of Jesus' age might be with either of the parents and not be missed until nightfall; and so it seems to have been in this case. As one day had been spent in the journey, so another day was spent returning, and a third day in searching throughout the city; finally they found Jesus in the Temple, sitting with the teachers of the Law, the "Doctors." This was not so unusual as might at first appear; for at that time information was gained less from books and more from oral teaching, and the Doctors of the Law were supposed to be ready to instruct all who desired information, especially during the holy Passover week. Many young men availed themselves of such opportunities, and the custom seems to have been for the Doctors to sit on a special semi-circle of seats, while before them were low benches for the older students: the younger boys sat on the ground, literally "at their feet." Thus Paul, as a youth, was a pupil to Gamaliel, or, as the record reads, "sat at the feet of Gamaliel," to learn of him. Gamaliel was one of the chief Doctors of the Law in his day.

We are not to understand that the boy Jesus was bold, and that he went before the learned men of his day to denounce them as ignorant and as incapable teachers, and to show himself off, as some precocious but ill-trained youth of today might attempt to do. On the contrary, we are to suppose the boy Jesus to have a well-balanced mind, which probably recognized the fact that he had lived but few years in the world and had comparatively small experience in life, and that he by no means knew all, but recognized many questions upon which he would like to have further information, and that he asked his questions honestly, with a desire and hope of obtaining satisfactory answers from the teachers who "sat in Moses' seat."

The nature of the questions is not stated, but the time and surroundings would seem to indicate that they were of a religious character, and that the mind of Jesus was already grappling with the great questions which properly belonged to him as a member of the Jewish race to which God had made certain great and

precious promises as the Seed of Abraham;--promises of divine blessing under Messiah, of exaltation to be the chief nation of the world, and of the subsequent privilege of blessing all nations and of being the mediaries through whom all mankind might be brought to the knowledge of God and to his service. From what we know of the operations of our own minds at the age mentioned, we may presume that Jesus was brimful of questions respecting the hopes of Israel, and no doubt from his mother he had received some intimation at least that divine providence had indicated that he himself was to bear some important part in connection with the fulfilment of the Scriptures; and he was seeking to know the part marked out for him by the Heavenly Father in the testimony of the Law and the Prophets.

Altho he did not have a Bible in his home, that he could consult respecting the divine testimony, he did have the common privilege of the youth of his day of attending meetings in the one little synagogue of Nazareth, which was but a small country town. There, from Sabbath to Sabbath, he heard the Law read and to some extent commented upon, sometimes also the psalms and prophecies. With these sources of information the eager mind of the boy had grappled, and now, on the occasion of his first visit to the great city of Jerusalem, nothing attracted him so much as the Temple and its symbolical services, and happening upon a court or chamber in which the great questions of the Law and the Prophets were being discussed by the ablest teachers of the time, Jesus became so deeply interested and enthused in the Bible study that seemingly he forgot all earthly things, so intent was he in studying about the Heavenly Father's business--the plan of God, in which he himself was to be so principal an actor.

Naturally his questions would be deeper and more logical than those of other boys of his age, and naturally the Doctors of the Law would be deeply interested in him because of this in conjunction with the modesty which we may be sure accompanied it. And as during these feasts great hospitality was exercised, especially toward strangers from a distance, Jesus was probably entertained by one and another of these new-found friends.

The narrative records that, when found by Joseph and Mary, Jesus was both hearing the Doctors and asking them questions. There is a valuable lesson here for all young persons respecting their conduct toward their elders and instructors. How different the thought we get from this statement than we would have gotten had it read that they found Jesus instructing the Doctors, or attempting to teach them. We

do not doubt for a moment that the Doctors were as much instructed by Jesus as he was by them, possibly more so on some points at least; nor do we doubt that if they were truly great men they would be humble-minded enough to receive instructions from any one--even from a child; and it is even intimated in the context that they asked Jesus certain questions, "and were astonished at his understanding and his answers." In both cases the proceeding was that of deference to the other, as implied in the asking of the questions: Jesus having deferred to the Doctors and asked them questions which manifested his depth of mind and clearness of understanding and logical reasoning, led them in turn to ask questions of him.

This question plan we commend to all of the dear friends of the truth as a wise and proper one, no less to us of today than to the boy Jesus and to the Doctors of the Law. We have seen instances in which some of the Lord's dear people have greatly injured their influence in the truth by display of too large a degree of self-confidence, self-assurance, in speaking of the divine plan to others--especially to the learned. Meekness is a jewel wherever found, and is especially desirable as an adjunct and sling for the truth. Let the truth be shot forth with all the force it can carry, but always with meekness and humility; and the question form of suggesting truth will often be found the most forceful.

Naturally Joseph and Mary were astonished to find their little son in the company of and receiving consideration from the greatest teachers of their day, and probably nothing was said to Jesus publicly respecting their disappointment and their subsequent search for him: probably when alone Mary upbraided him for his neglect to be with the caravan: yet she did this in a very kind and moderate manner, which seemed to indicate that it was a very unusual occurrence, which in turn speaks to us of parental obedience on the part of Jesus.

Mary's expression, "Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing," has been questioned by some as being a confession that Joseph was the father of Jesus, but we answer, Not so; it would be unreasonable to suppose (1) that Luke would particularly trace the genealogy of Jesus through Mary, and ignore Joseph, and subsequently imply that Joseph was the father of Jesus; (2) Joseph having accepted Mary, accepted also her son, Jesus, and became his foster-father, and under just such circumstances today the child would be taught to consider such an one a parent, and to call him "father." (3) It is not at all probable that the story of the immaculate conception of Jesus was ever made known to any but the closest members of the

family, and it is highly improbable that the subject had ever been discussed with the boy Jesus, only twelve years of age,--nor would it have been proper to do so. Mary's language, therefore, is entirely consistent with all the facts set forth in the Gospel narrative.

Quite possibly the mind of the boy Jesus, while investigating the subject of his own responsibilities toward the Heavenly Father and his plan, had wondered whether or not his mission might not in some degree begin with his thirteenth year, since at that time he was recognized as a "son of the law." Quite possibly some of his questions before the Doctors of the Law were along this line, and quite probably he had finally about reached the conclusion that the types of the priestly office indicated clearly that his mission would not begin until he was thirty years of age. His reply to Mary's chiding was along this line: Did you not expect me to be about my Father's business? Did you not know that I had reached the age when I am a "son of the Law," and that therefore certain responsibilities have come upon me in respect to the Heavenly Father and his Word and his plan? And then, as tho remembering the conclusion that he had just reached in discussing the subject with the Doctors, he broke off the conversation, yielded himself to their wishes, and accompanied them to Nazareth, making (so far as recorded) no further suggestion of any other than the ordinary course of life until he had attained the age of thirty years. This is expressed in the words, "And he was subject unto them." Joseph and Mary realized clearly that the boy was more than ordinary, very extraordinary indeed, yet they did not fully comprehend the situation nor fully grasp the import of his words. Nevertheless, Mary treasured this with the other peculiar testimonies respecting him in her heart, and doubtless it was from her lips that Luke received the information contained in our lesson.

Tradition declares that Joseph died while Jesus was yet young, and that the latter took up the carpenter's trade and became the support of the family. This finds some support in the Scriptural testimony where Jesus himself is called a carpenter, and his mother and brethren are mentioned, but Joseph is ignored. (Mark 6:3.) Furthermore, no reference is made to Joseph in connection with our Lord's ministry, tho his mother and his brethren are several times mentioned. It is quite probable, then, that the long period of eighteen years of our Lord's life, from the time of the incident of this lesson to the time of his baptism, was spent in the performance of the ordinary duties of life. What a thought this gives us with respect to our Lord's development of patience--patiently waiting until the Father's time should come and he should begin his ministry; patiently studying meantime, as best he could, to know more and more of the Father's will

R2559 : page 15

and plan; patiently waiting for the baptism of the holy spirit, which would enable him to fully comprehend the situation and his own personal relationship to it. What a lesson there is here for all his followers, and everyone of us may well realize the truth of the words, "Ye have need of patience," and again, "Let patience have her perfect work." What a lesson there is for us also in the thought that we are not to attempt to hasten the divine plan, but to wait patiently for its unfolding--not to attempt to begin any work for the Lord unless we are sure that his time has come, and that he has called us to do it; then, like our Lord, to be instant in season and out of season, when convenient and when inconvenient, under favorable and unfavorable conditions; to do with our might what our hand has found to do,--what the Lord has called us to do. And we gather the further thought that the most humble forms of labor are honorable when they are ours in harmony with God's providence.

Happily for us, we are not born under the Law nor under the limitations which hinder us from receiving the call and responding to it before thirty years of age. On the contrary, under the New Covenant of grace it is our privilege to present our bodies living sacrifices to the Lord's service at as early an age as our knowledge of divine things and our enlightened judgments will permit. We, instead of waiting to grow to the fulness of stature mental and physical, are permitted to begin at once, as members of the Royal Priesthood, and to be growing at the same time we are serving. But let us not forget the necessity for growth,

R2560 : page 15

--adding to faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge self-control, and to self-control patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly-kindness, and to brotherly-kindness love.--
2 Pet. 1:5-8.

"In malice be ye children, but in understanding be ye men."--1 Cor. 14:20.

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R2560 : page 15

INTERESTING LETTERS.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--In regard to the work here in Boston the report is good. The Volunteer work is blessing all who engage in it and goes on grandly. Scarcely a Sunday but that we distribute the tracts at some church where the preacher's theme is Evolution. Two Sundays ago the Pastor of Tremont Temple

preached a sermon advocating the doctrine of Evolution. This is the largest Protestant church in New England (congregation of 3000 and over), and the Pastor is the gentleman who notified police headquarters last June to have a stop put to further distribution of our tract. But he did not succeed. We are finding more work than was at first anticipated and are giving more books. Our report for month of November is as follows:--Nov. 5th in Dorchester 11 churches, 1024 booklets; Nov. 12th in W. Roxbury and Jamaica Plain 14 churches, 986 booklets; Nov. 19th in Dorchester and Roslindale 18 churches, 1269 booklets; Nov. 26th in Newton 13 churches, 1444 booklets; also in Brookline during month 4 churches, 154 booklets; total of 60 churches, 4877 booklets; average 81.2+. We find churches larger than we anticipated. Quite a number with congregations of from 300 to 600 which accounts for our using more booklets than expected as well as the larger average. We still have 25 to 30 (brethren and Sisters) engaged in work, and tho we have accomplished a good work, the end is not yet. We are anxious to do all the important towns accessible by electric cars, provided you can keep us supplied. We leave that part for you to decide. Unquestionably all who work are receiving blessings, and are being built up in zeal and love in the Lord's service.

Sr. G. desires to be remembered. Your brother,
in love and service of our Redeemer,

ALEXANDER M. GRAHAM,--Massachusetts.

[We are filling orders right along. Let the good work proceed. God bless the "Volunteers." EDITOR.]

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--I am glad that at last I have concentrated my mind enough to write to you. Not till Mrs. Boehmer was here did I read and study anything in the truth so much as to do me any good, but while she was here my whole attention was turned. She gave me Vol. I. of M. DAWN but at first I could not read it without a great deal of will power. I read it only to show her I used the gift--it seemed so uninteresting. But at last it grew more interesting and I devoted most all of my time to reading it and I gave up almost all of my play especially with everybody but my brother and sister. (Do you consider this wrong on my part?) And I went to all the DAWN Circles and meetings here while she was with us, and mamma said the holy spirit was upon me.

When Sister Boehmer left us all of my holy interests seemed to die out of me. I could read nothing Scriptural so that I could remember it or act upon it in my daily course of life. I think the reason why God let it happen so was because I got to thinking I was far ahead in the race and looked boastfully down on my neighbors. (Don't you think so, too?) But I went

to meeting every Sunday and learned O, so much good! from Brother Wright and I think he is the best leader that could be chosen--that is, a human leader. But I could remember nothing through the week.

Now here is another case: A large "tough" is always trying to catch us for no reason at all but he claims for an excuse that we throw stones at him, but we did not. I wrote to Bro. Boehmer about it and he said I should avoid him as best I could, and in doing this I am obliged to run sometimes or get hit. Now do you consider this right or wrong? Twice we stopped and asked him what he wanted but he only hit us.

When Bro. Boehmer was here he said it would do me good to enter a gymnasium which I did the 1st. of Nov. It is in a Congregational Church; I am also entitled to a privileges of boys' club and six lectures. Do you think I will fall into wrong there?

Here is \$1 which will at least be enough to make

R2560 : page 16

one WATCH TOWER which will help some one along just like the TOWER of Nov. 1. issue helped me along; especially the articles about Nehemiah which induced me to write. So many things fit my case exactly,--like where it says while we are in the truth we will be assailed the most, and when we get drowsy and lazy about studying the truth we will not be assailed. This is exactly right because it went so with me and I shall be happy in the hardest of earthly troubles. Your remark that each should build the walls near his home, has opened my eyes enough to see that I was in the wrong, because I do better in school and away from home than I do at home. Now I will try to do the best I can at home but will not lose my good part away from home.

I felt like opening my whole heart to you, and I have done it with the best intentions. I hope that your answer to this letter will come soon and bring tidings that will do me good.

Yours sincerely, HUGO KUEHN,--Ohio.

[REPLY:--I am always deeply interested in the young who give their hearts to the Lord. My Christian life began at about the same age as your own (13), and I know how great a blessing it is to become a soldier of the cross at an early age. At no time do we more need divine wisdom and grace than in boyhood and entering manhood, and how comforting it is to all such to be able to realize that having committed their all to the Lord he is caring for them, guiding and shaping their affairs in the course which will be most to their advantage as respects the present and the eternal life.

In re the rude youth disposed to attack you with stones: My advice would be that you go to play in another quarter, and that generously you consider that

the man may be just as much unbalanced in mind or as soured in disposition as some who in the language of Scripture, "Shoot out arrows, even bitter words, at the righteous." (Psa. 64:3.) On the whole I believe that those who throw literal stones are much less dangerous than some who are outwardly more decorous who have the "poison of asps under their lips" (Rom. 3:13), and who backbite, speak evil of and slander others--even the Lord's "brethren." Let us thank God that the time is coming when there will no longer be in the world any except those who have the "spirit of a sound mind"--the disposition of the Lord.-- 2 Tim. 1:7.

Respecting your attendance at a gymnasium, and the hearing of lectures: It would seem to me that no evil need result from merely availing yourself of these privileges, and should advise that you do so, unless there would be something in the way of a bondage connected with this--some obligations--and quite likely there are none that would be objectionable in such a club. With much Christian love, Your brother and servant in the Lord, THE EDITOR.]

WATCH TOWER BIBLE & TRACT SOCIETY.

DEAR BRETHREN:--The Volunteer distribution of the booklets, The Bible versus the Evolution Theory, has been completed in the District of Columbia, after a campaign lasting seven months. 14 Volunteers--brothers and sisters--visited 154 churches and distributed 10,934 booklets, besides other tracts. The congregations in the various churches varied all the way from 400 down, the average attendance being 71.

This work was taken up in accordance with the offer made in TOWER of April 15th, '99, it being our desire in this manner to show our love and appreciation of the Lord and his truth--by engaging in a work which might result in the blessing of his true "brethren." The work has progressed with perfect harmony of hearts, hands and a willingness to serve in any channel, however humble, and has most evidently been under divine direction, for we have had many indications of providential guidance in selection of churches to be worked, etc.

We have been greatly blessed in this work which has given us many opportunities for letting our light shine for the Master,--upon some occasions the brethren being invited within the church building to explain the object of the visit and something of God's plan as testified to in the literature distributed. We were well received on the whole, notwithstanding some cases of opposition. We are thankful to God for these great privileges of serving his truth, and also to Brother Russell and the Tract Society as instruments in his hands. We are still "Volunteers," and ready

to carry the good warfare into the adjacent towns with the booklets still on hand.

With love to all who are similarly engaged in the Volunteer work, Your fellow "Soldiers,"

THE CHURCH AT WASHINGTON, D.C.

page 16

MY DEAR BROTHER:--I am feasting on the wonderful and comprehensive subject of the atonement, as set forth in the new volume of DAWN. The more I study and comprehend its beautiful harmony and reasonableness, the more I am constrained to lift up my heart in thankfulness to our loving Heavenly Father who has designed such a beautiful plan for the redemption of mankind. And so, as the marvelous light shines in my heart through the merit of Jesus Christ, I can constantly say, Praise God for the truth! Praise him for the wondrous things made known!

With much love in Christ and kindest wishes for your welfare, spiritual and temporal, I remain,

Your brother in the service of Immanuel,
JAMES McFARLAND,--Colporteur.

MY DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--Herewith I send you five dollars; after paying for enclosed order put balance into the Tract Fund--some of it is from my daughter. I have read the fifth volume of DAWN once, and am going over it a second time, finding the references. It is the best of the DAWN series, if there is any best to them; they are all so wonderful and grand! But I think the last one has the most meat in it, now due for the household of faith: I enjoy it so much, I do not know when to stop reading it. And some parts are so good. I read them over and over again, till I am satisfied, and thank God, our Father, that he has blessed Brother Russell with wisdom and understanding, to write things so plainly. May God continue to bless and keep you faithful unto death!

Your Sister, in hope of the coming Kingdom,
MRS. J. A. MARWOOD,--Nebraska.

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page 17

VOL. XXI. JANUARY 15, 1900. No. 2.

CONTENTS.

New York's One Day
 Convention, Jan. 21st..... 18
 Views from the Watch Tower..... 19
 Churches as Social Clubs..... 19
 Christianity in Japan..... 20
 Poem: A Little While..... 21
 Preaching of John the Baptizer..... 21
 Consecration Followed by
 Temptations..... 26
 Temptation to Use Spiritual Favors
 for Personal Profit..... 29
 Tempting God by Unauthorized
 Efforts..... 30
 Temptation to Obtain Desired Good
 Results by Compromise..... 31
 Interesting Letters..... 32
 Higher Prices for Cheap Bibles..... 18

page 18

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS
 --ADDRESS TO--
 WATCH TOWER BIBLE & TRACT SOCIETY,
 "BIBLE HOUSE," 610, 612, 614 ARCH ST., ALLEGHENY, PA., U.S.A.

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE, \$1.00 A YEAR IN ADVANCE.
 MONEY MAY BE SENT BY EXPRESS, N.Y. DRAFT, MONEY ORDER, OR REGISTERED
 FROM FOREIGN COUNTRIES BY FOREIGN MONEY ORDERS, ONLY. SPECIAL
 TERMS TO THE LORD'S POOR, AS FOLLOWS:--

Those of the interested who, by reason of old age, or other infirmity
 or 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 continually.

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NEW YORK'S ONE-DAY CONVENTION, JAN. 21ST.

Friends of the truth have recently started a meeting at Willard
 Hall, Grand Opera House Block, 23rd Street and 8th Avenue,
 New York City, of which we hear good reports. It is said to be
 quite convenient to Jersey City by ferry and generally accessible.

These friends have sent an urgent request that the editor
 of this journal shall be with them on Jan. 21st, and he has accepted.
 Meetings are regularly held at above hall every Sunday
 afternoon, but for this occasion (Jan. 21st) there will be preaching
 service at 10:30 A.M., and another at 2:30 P.M. Rather, we
 might say, there will be an all-day meeting with noon intermission
 for luncheon at nearby restaurants.

Friends in general are invited, and many residing within a
 radius of fifteen miles from New York City are expected. All
 such will be warmly welcomed; and each is requested to introduce
 himself to the editor.

Morning topic--"Blessed are the people who know the joyful sound." Afternoon topic--The Necessity of Justification as Precedent to Sanctification and Begetting of the Spirit.

HIGHER PRICES FOR CHEAP BIBLES.

The rise in price of paper, leather, etc., has caused an advance of prices in many Bibles quoted in the Dec. 1st, '99, WATCH TOWER, as follows:--

To Bibles quoted under 45 cents add 5 cents each.

" " " at 50 cents to 95 cents add 10 cents each.

" " " at \$1.00 and \$2.00 add 15 cents each.

The higher priced Bibles are less affected;--no change as yet.

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R2561 : page 19

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER.

CHURCHES AS SOCIAL CLUBS.

REV. JOHN WATSON, widely known in "orthodox" circles (as "Ian Maclaren," his literary nom de plume), wrote for publication recently, that in his judgment the churches of various denominations are rapidly becoming social clubs--ceasing to appreciate or use the place hitherto considered the true position of the church. The text for his criticism was found on a printed postal card sent out by an American Y.M.C.A., which read word for word as follows:

"DO NOT FORGET

"The next Social.

"The next Candy-pull.

"The next Entertainment.

"The next Song Service.

"The next Gospel Meeting.

"The next Meeting of the Debating Club.

"The next Chicken-pie Dinner.

"The next date when you ought to make the secretary happy with your cash."

Commenting upon this card, he says:--

"This remarkable list of operations, combining evangelistic zeal, creature comforts, and business shrewdness, requires no commentary; the items give us a convincing illustration of an up-to-date religious institution--a veritable hustler of a Y.M.C.A.

"The Christian church and a Y.M.C.A. are of course very different institutions, and the latter is free from any traditions of austere dignity, but one is not surprised to find that the church has also been touched with the social spirit and is also doing her best to make religion entertaining. One enters what is called a place of worship and imagines that he is in a drawing-room. The floor has a thick carpet, there are rows of theater-chairs, a huge organ fills the eye, a large bouquet of flowers marks the ministers place; people come in with a jaunty air and salute one another cheerily; hardly one bends his head in prayer; there is a hum of gossip through the building.

"A man disentangles himself from a conversation and bustles up to the platform without clerical garb of any kind, as likely as not in layman's dress. A quartet advances, and, facing the audience, sings an anthem to the congregation, which does not rise, and later they sing another anthem, also to the congregation. There is one prayer, and one reading from Holy Scripture, and a sermon which is brief and bright. Among other intimations the minister urges attendance at the oyster supper, when, as is mentioned in a paper in the pews, there will be oysters and meat--turkey, I think --and ice-cream. This meal is to be served in the 'church parlor.'

"No sooner has the benediction been pronounced, which has some original feature introduced, than the congregation hurries to the door, but altho no one can explain how it is managed, the minister is already there shaking hands, introducing people, 'getting off good things,' and generally making things 'hum.' One person congratulates him on his 'talk'--new name for a sermon--and another says it was 'fine.'

"Efforts have been made in England also to make church life really popular, and, in one town known to the writer, with some success of its own kind. One church secured a new set of communion plates by the popular device of a dance; various congregations gave private theatricals, and in one case had stage property of their own. Bible classes celebrated the conclusions of their sessions by a supper; on Good Friday there were excursions into the country accompanied by a military band, and a considerable portion of the congregational income was derived from social treats of various kinds. This particular town is only an illustration of the genial spirit spreading throughout the church in England. One minister uses a magic lantern to give force to his sermon; another has added a tavern to his church equipment; a third takes up the latest murder or scandal; a fourth has a service of song; a fifth depends on a gypsy or an ex-pugilist.

"If this goes on, the church will soon embrace a theater and other attractions which will draw young people, and prevent old people from wearying in the worship of God.

[Contrasting these modern and irreverent and unscriptural

R2561 : page 20

methods with those of the past, Dr. Watson continues:--]

"Perhaps it may be the perversity of human nature which is apt to cavil at new things and hanker after the good old times--which were not always good, by any means--but one is not much enamoured with the new departure, nor at all convinced that what may be called for brief the 'candy-pull' system is any improvement on the past. After a slight experience of smart preachers, and church parlors, and ice-cream suppers, and picnics, one remembers with new respect and keen appreciation the minister of former days, with his seemly dress, his dignified manner, his sense of responsibility, who came from the secret place of divine fellowship, and spoke as one carrying the message of the Eternal. He may not have been so fussy in the aisles as his successor, nor so clever at games, nor able to make so fetching a speech on 'Love, Courtship, and Marriage.'

"There are no doubt many points in which the congregation of the present has advanced on the congregation of the past, but it has not been all gain, for the chief note in the worship of the former generation was reverence--people met in the presence of the Eternal, before whom every man is less than nothing. And the chief note of their children, who meet to listen to a choir and a clever platform speaker, is self-complacency." --The Ladies' Home Journal.

* * *

We have frequently pointed out these same tendencies, but we are glad to be able to quote the words of another--of one who stands so high in Churchianity. But Dr. Watson will ere long find that he must not criticize "Babylon;" and that if he persists he will lose caste with the lords thereof. So conservative a journal as The Advance has already intimated that "Candy-Pulls" and other modern methods of making Christianity attractive must not be interfered with by "old fogies."

And so say we! Let the innovations proceed--they are essential to the very existence of "Babylon." And besides, the sooner the social Churchianity clubs act out their real sentiments all along the line, the better it will be for true Christianity, whose separation from Churchianity is now due to be accomplished in this harvest time--"wheat" from "tares." The more it becomes apparent that, with the vast majority, religion is merely "a form of godliness," the more will those who have the power of it as well realize the width of the gulf which really separates the two classes in divine

estimation. The louder grows the revelry and irreverence and the scoffing at God's Word by "higher critics" and the boasts of Evolution, the louder in the ears of the Lord's true saints will sound the Master's command: "Babylon is fallen, is fallen! Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."--Rev. 18:2,4.

* * *

The Editor of the Washington City Times gives his opinion of some of the methods of Churchianity, thus:--

"A sensational Brooklyn preacher lately discoursed on subjects like these: 'Would Christ Belong to a Labor Union?' 'Would Christ Go to a Brooklyn Theater?' and so on. It is rather difficult to conceive the moral status of people who actually approve of sermons of this sort. Undoubtedly a large part of the audiences which they attract come from mere curiosity, as they might come to any other sort of show; and they might as well be at the theater for all the good that it is likely to do them. One of the most deplorable features of modern American life is the tendency toward sensationalism in the pulpit. It is bad from every point of view. It excites emotions which are in no way religious, and are all the worse for passing under that name. It is in execrable taste, it misleads people to a sort of contempt for religion, and it makes the churches which indulge in it odious.

"It has grown out of another bad feature of our modern life--the plutocratic ideal. Any sensible person may easily understand that when the attraction of a church for its members depends on this sort of thing, and on the ability of the people of the church to dress well and pay for a handsome building and a showy choir, there is no more real religion in the whole business than there is in a circus....

"It would be much more to the point for the sensational preacher above quoted to ask himself, in private, whether his church is the kind which Christ would be likely to approve, or if it is full of money-changers and the sellers of doves.

"It is time that sensible and thoughtful religious people in this country understood what a church is really intended to be. It should not be a bad imitation of fashionable society, with all the meannesses, caste distinctions, pettiness, and jealousy of that society, veneered over with a coating of formal religion...."

CHRISTIANITY IN JAPAN.

Not long since Japan was considered the brightest example of progress in Christian missions, and with

good reason. Everything coming from Europe or the United States was looked upon with favor--the Christian religion included. In a few years the number of converts to various shades of nominal "Christianity" ran up to 40,578 in 1878. However, a great change has occurred there: and within the past two years the total converts claimed by all denominations is only 403.

The beginning of this change of sentiment seems to have dated from the time that the different denominations began more or less to compete. It would seem that at first denominational and creed differences were considerably hidden from the Japanese, and they seem to have embraced Christianity in something of its simplicity of spirit if not of doctrine. However, when they began to send some of their young men to American and English colleges, the fact of the great varieties of contradictory doctrines, all claiming to represent

R2562 : page 21

Christ's teachings, became known, and was naturally followed by denominational reappings, chiefly, we believe, Presbyterian.

The Japanese are a practical people, and concluded that, if Christians of the West were so confused and divided respecting the teachings of the Bible, the Japanese could properly exercise their own judgments on the subjects also. In doing so they are rapidly tending toward agnosticism, doubt, uncertainty, unbelief, just as thinking people everywhere are doing, except as they get the truth and with it the spirit of a sound mind. How we would like to put into the hands of these Japanese and all truth-seekers the light of present truth showing forth the divine plan of the ages. We are on the lookout for the Lord to bring forward to the light some earnest, fully consecrated Japanese capable of presenting the plan by translating DAWN, VOL. I., presenting it to his Christian countrymen. We thought we had found the one two years ago, but it proved otherwise;--Christianity was unpopular, but the truth much more so--too unpopular for him.

Rev. Dr. Christlieb, for years the representative of the "Evangelical Protestant Mission Society" of Germany, discussed the set-back in Japan in a volume just published, entitled, "The Tendencies of Japanese Civilization and Christianity," in which he explains:--

"The opposition now generally entertained by the Japanese against the Christian church is due to the changed attitude which they have in recent years developed in so marked a degree to all influences from abroad--a conservative reaction of a pronounced type. This return to nativism is largely due to the easy success in the war with the Chinese. This reaction from the former enthusiasm for innovation has assumed a particularly determined character. The Japanese have reached the conclusion that they had been too hasty

in discarding the old in favor of the new, and this spirit has found its way even into the Christian elements of Japan, which aspired to the establishment of a church independent of the churches in countries that have been Christian for centuries. Altho the Japanese have known Christianity only for thirty years and there is scarcely a single adult native who has been a Christian since his childhood, yet they began to regard themselves more capable to develop a Christian culture and life than those who brought them the new faith.

"These ideas and ambitions are largely due to the fact that attempts were made to build up a Christianity wholly divorced from the national character of the people. The reaction is, to a certain extent, the result also of the radical anti-Japanese type of life that representatives of Western Christianity aimed to develop, completely ignoring the many excellent traits that make up the national character of the people.

"Still another element that has entered into this reaction is the fact that the Japanese, who is naturally not too deep intellectually and who is but half civilized, has been made acquainted with Western agnosticism and atheism as found in the writings of Schopenhauer and Herbert Spencer. Through these a certain dangerous contempt for the supernatural has been developed, especially among the younger generation. All these factors and others have united to produce the modern opposition to Christianity in the Japanese empire."

R2568 : page 21

A LITTLE WHILE.

A little while with weary feet to tread the narrow way,
A little while, the time will not be long,
A little while the sinless One to follow day by day,
A little while to suffer and be strong.

A little while with faltering tongue to testify for God,
A little while to suffer scorn and shame,
A little while with voice and pen to spread the truth abroad,
A little while to glorify his name.

A little while with humble faith to wage the goodly fight,
A little while, grasp firm the two-edged sword,
A little while, Satanic hosts shall all be put to flight,
A little while, then, trust thou in the Lord.

A little while, a little while, Oh, let this be our song,
A little while, lay not the armor down;
A little while, a little while, the strife will not be long,
A little while, and we shall wear the crown!

--GERTRUDE W. SEIBERT.

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R2562 : page 21

PREACHING OF JOHN THE BAPTIZER.

--JANUARY 21.--LUKE 3:1-17.--

"Prepare ye the way of the Lord."

DOUBTLESS many commenters on this lesson will claim that John the Baptizer's ministry began with the year A.D. 26, and by positiveness of assertion seek to make up for their lack of evidence on this subject. Let all therefore bear in mind that such a dating of John's ministry will be purely arbitrary, to make it conform to the erroneous view which prevails among scholars in respect to the date of our Lord's birth. It should not be forgotten, however, that, altho it is well established from the Scriptures that our Lord was six months younger than his second-cousin, John, there is no other Scriptural date which so closely and definitely connects the history of our Lord and of John the Baptizer with general history, as does the statement of this very lesson, that John began his ministry (when he was thirty years of age) in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar. Those who claim that Jesus began his ministry A.D. 27, instead of A.D. 29, claim that John's ministry began in A.D. 26; and in order to make this fit with the statement of the first verse of

R2562 : page 22

this lesson, they are obliged to count the reign of Tiberius Caesar two years before its admitted date. For a particular discussion of this subject, however, we must refer our readers to MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. II., p.54.

Of John it is written that he was filled with the holy spirit from his birth. But we must not misunderstand this to mean that he was begotten of the holy spirit, in the sense that Christians are begotten of it, for he lived before the time of spirit-begetting--in the Jewish age, not in the Gospel or Christian age. Thus our Lord said of him that, altho there had not arisen a greater Prophet than John, nevertheless, the least in the Kingdom of God is greater than he--the least one in the house of sons is on a higher plane than the greatest one in the house of servants. (Matt. 11:11; Heb. 3:5,6.) The Apostle again explains that "the holy spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." --John 7:39.

In harmony with this we must understand that John was filled with the holy spirit, holy power or influence from God from his birth, after the same manner that the other prophets throughout the Jewish age had

been under that holy spirit. The expression would lead us to understand that, altho John was not borne immaculate, as was Jesus, he nevertheless was well born, under holy influences, which tended to develop in him natural characteristics suitable to the mission he was intended of God to fulfil. This does not involve the thought of divine interference with the free will of the individual, for Paul tells us that he also was chosen of God from his birth to be a special servant to do a special work. (Gal. 1:15.) Nevertheless, the Lord did not interfere with his exercising his own free will, even permitting him to go so far into blind error as to become the persecutor of the Church. And even when the Lord rebuked him in the way to Damascus, that was not an interference with his will or nature, but merely a removal of his blindness, his ignorance, permitting his true will to come into exercise. And so no doubt others of the Lord's people from time to time have been from earliest childhood special subjects of divine Providence which has guided and shaped their experiences without interfering with their wills, so as to make of them special instruments for the accomplishment of divine purposes.

Of John's life from infancy to manhood we know nothing except the bare record, "The child grew and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the desert until the day of his showing unto Israel" (Luke 1:80)--not in the sandy deserts, but more properly in the wilds, the uncultivated regions, perhaps in the "hill country," where his parents resided at the time of his birth. Possibly a part of the Lord's providence in respect to John's training for his work consisted in the ordering of the affairs of his parents, so that possibly they were forced by circumstances to reside in such a wilderness-home, where they would have comparatively little intercourse with others, and where John, probably as a forester, would have the experiences which the Lord saw would best fit him for the work intended. All Christians should learn to trust to the Heavenly Father's guidance, remembering his special promise, which is applicable to each one who is in Christ, viz., that "all things shall work together for good to them that love God," and remembering this they should be content with the lot which Providence seems to mark out for them--not indolent, but content, when they have done all that their hands find to do,--not restless, peevish, dissatisfied, complainers against God and his providence. "Trust in the Lord and do good." It may be that the Lord is fitting and preparing us individually for some special service, and that the permitted experiences alone will prepare us for that service. Indeed, we know from the Word that God designs his "elect" for joint-heirship with our dear Redeemer in the glorious Millennial Kingdom; and we can well realize that because of our imperfection we need much moulding and fashioning, chiseling and polishing to make us "meet for the inheritance

of the saints in light." We are to remember also that we are incompetent to judge of our own imperfections, and hence incompetent to judge of the experiences which would be most helpful to us. It is difficult for us sometimes even to see ourselves as others see us; much more difficult, undoubtedly, it would be to see ourselves from the divine standpoint. Here faith in God comes to the front--"This is the victory which overcometh the world, even your faith."

The time of John's "showing" or presentation to Israel was undoubtedly the time when he reached the

R2563 : page 22

legally required thirty years of age; and then it was that the word of the Lord came unto him, causing him to begin his mission. We are not to think of this expression as having to John the same signification as it has to us who are of this Gospel age. The word of God came to John as a prophet, for our Lord declared,-- "There hath not arisen a greater prophet than John the Baptist." The Lord made clear to John that the time had come for the beginning of his ministry, not merely by an impression or surmise, but with positiveness, as in the case of all the prophets. In harmony with his commission he went to the thickly settled regions in the vicinity of the River Jordan, preaching repentance --that the people should reform--and baptizing in the Jordan those who professed a reformation. For this reason John sought the pools or deep places of the river;--for instance, he went to Enon, near to Salem, "because there was much water there"--a pool sufficiently deep for the purposes of immersion.

R2563 : page 23

We are not to fall into the too common error of supposing from the record that John preached to the people that repentance and baptism would work for them a remission of their sins. To so interpret these words would put them in direct conflict with the entire testimony of the Scriptures, which is to the effect that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. The usual representation of this subject is therefore clearly in error. To the contrary, we are to understand this verse to mean that John preached a baptism signifying repentance unto, or preparation for, a remission of sins. The time had not yet come for the blotting out of the sins, and John neither had nor could have obtained authority to declare sins remitted because of repentance and baptism. Had it been possible for him to have made such a proclamation, truthfully, it would have proven that there was no necessity for the coming of our Lord Jesus to give himself a ransom for Israel and for all the families of the earth. If repentance and immersion in water would bring the forgiveness of sins,

the "Savior and a great one" whom God had promised to Israel for so long would have been wholly unnecessary. But when we view John's work and preaching as merely a preliminary one, to make ready a repentant people, desiring to have their sins forgiven, desiring full at-one-ment with God, and expecting a Savior to accomplish all this,--then all is harmony.

And this thought, that the remission of sins was a work future from John's day, a work to be accomplished by Christ, is fully borne out by the succeeding context, a quotation from Isaiah the Prophet, which has not even yet been fulfilled, but includes the entire work of the Millennial age. That age will be one for remission of sins and blotting out of sins, and the full reconciliation of so many as will accept God's grace in Christ under the New Covenant. (Compare Acts 3:19-21.) In that time, under those favorable conditions, and not before, will the statement be fulfilled, "All flesh shall see the salvation of God."

We are to bear in mind that John's work as a messenger was exclusively to Israel, and had nothing whatever to do with any of the Gentiles. To Israel he acted as the Elijah or Forerunner of Messiah in the flesh, seeking to induce that nation, in its "harvest" time, to accept the formal offer of God's Kingdom by accepting Jesus as the King. But John's mission was not successful to his nation, and profited only a few of the people; those few who believed John's testimony, and received it into good and honest and repentant hearts, were prepared to receive Jesus and to appreciate and receive the remission of sins offered by God through him. The remainder of that nation, rejecting John's teaching, and being in an unrepentant condition of heart, were not properly exercised, were not ready for Jesus, and did not appreciate the offer of remission of sins through his blood as a consequence, and as a nation were rejected of God and wholly overthrown.

While John thus acted as the Elijah in introducing Jesus in the flesh to fleshly Israel, and gathered out a certain class who were ready to receive Jesus, and who were blessed by him, so we see that in God's plan there is a greater antitype of Elijah than was John, as there is a greater Christ than was our Lord Jesus. The greater Christ is the spiritual one, "The Lord from heaven"-- "Now the Lord is that Spirit." And this glorified spirit Lord is the Head of "the Church which is his body," and this body of many members will, in "the first resurrection," be made like him and to share his glory, and with him and under him constitute the great Messiah, who shall take unto himself his great power and reign, establishing God's Kingdom amongst men, and causing his will to be done "on earth as it is done in heaven." (Matt. 6:10.) The coming into power of this great Christ, the spiritual Christ (head and body) constitutes the Second Advent to mankind--"the manifestation of the sons of God" for the deliverance of the groaning

creation. (Rom. 8:17-19.) Thus the Second Advent of Christ the Head (with the Church his body) will be seen to be on a very much higher plane than was the first advent of our Lord in the flesh, altho the first advent was all-important in that without it and its sacrifice for sins there could have been no Second Advent of Jesus, the Head, in the glory of Kingdom power, and there could have been no glorified members of his body to be associated with him.

After thus noting the relationship of the two events, it is proper for us to note also that as the blessings of the first advent were offered to nominal fleshly Israel so the presentation of the blessings of the Second Advent will be to nominal Spiritual Israel ("Christendom"), and as a Forerunner or herald was appropriately sent to fleshly Israel, to prepare them for the first advent, likewise it would be appropriate that a proportionately greater Forerunner should precede the Second Advent, and seek to make ready therefor all nominal Spiritual Israelites. As we have already shown,* this greater Elijah, who heralds the spiritual Christ, is composed of many members; Jesus in the flesh was himself the Head of this Elijah class, and all of his true followers, who will be, when glorified with him, members of the glorious Christ, will have previously been in their earthly lives members with him of the Elijah class, whose mission it is to show forth the principles of righteousness and true holiness, and to exhort both by word and conduct all men to repentance and to preparation for the Second Advent--the glorious appearing, the setting up of the Messianic Kingdom, the actual blotting out of sins, the

*MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. II., Chap. 8.

R2563 : page 24

straightening of every crooked way, the leveling up of deep crevices of character, the leveling down of the hills of pride to the proper level of humility; and in every sense of the word seeking to prepare all flesh to see the salvation of God.

Nevertheless, we are to remember that the Scriptures distinctly indicate that the testimony of this greater Elijah will be equally unsuccessful with that of the lesser antitype of Elijah, John the Baptizer. The Church in the flesh has not succeeded in making straight the paths of the Lord for a triumphal entry to his Kingdom upon the earth. A few have heard, but the message has utterly failed as respects the vast majority, even those who profess respect for and to be waiting for the Kingdom. Nevertheless, all God's good purposes will be ultimately accomplished, tho necessarily introduced by troubles, calamities, distress upon "Christendom," in the end of this age or "harvest" time, similar

to those troubles which came upon fleshly Israelites who were unready for the Savior, and "knew not the time of their visitation," at his first advent. All this unreadiness, however, shall not hinder the work of the Messiah. As at his first advent he gathered all Israelites indeed to the new dispensation, so now he will gather his elect "little flock" to himself; his Kingdom will be established; it shall rule over all; it will accomplish the straightening of every crooked path; it will level up the path of righteousness and holiness, and make of it "a highway" freed from stumbling blocks of error and from Satan's deception. (Isa. 35:8,9.) All mankind then brought to a knowledge of the truth will have the privilege of progressing through the times of restitution up this grand highway of obedience to the grand perfection lost for himself and his race by father Adam's transgression, but redeemed for Adam and his race by the precious blood of Christ. All flesh indeed shall see the salvation of our God, and so many as will may share therein, for this is the blessing which God has provided for all the families of the earth, through the true spiritual Seed of Abraham--Christ and his elect Church.--Gal. 3:16,29.

It would seem that John's ministry at first was somewhat popular, notwithstanding his probably uncouth "backwoods" appearance and great plainness of speech; so that great multitudes came to him: amongst these were some who seemed to John to be so vile that he could not properly accept them until they had given some proofs of reform. These he denominates "children of vipers"--very harsh language, we would be inclined to say. We are not to understand that such language is proper to be copied by the Lord's people of to-day. We are rather to suppose that there were special conditions at that time which made this language appropriate, and that John, as a prophet, was divinely guided into giving this sharp reproof. The Lord's people of the Gospel age are instructed on the contrary to speak with meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, etc.,--"in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves"--"reproving with all long-suffering." The Lord's people of today are under general instructions of God's Word, as regards all their conduct, and are not to depart therefrom unless it would be under special divine direction, as were the prophets of old--

R2564 : page 24

such as is not given to any at the present time so far as we are aware.

When John speaks of his hearers "fleeing from the wrath to come," we are not to get the thought that he preached, or that the people believed in, the doctrine of eternal torment, and that the words referred to this. Quite to the contrary, there is no such teaching in the Scriptures. The "wrath to come" referred to by John

prophetically was the trouble that was about to come upon that nation unless they would receive Messiah, who had not yet been offered to them, but who would shortly appear, and for whose appearance they were to make ready by true repentance and baptism. The "wrath to come" did come upon the nation because of its rejection of Messiah, as our Lord and the Apostle Paul specially testify. (See Luke 21:23; Rom. 9:22; 1 Thes. 2:16.) It burned fiercely against them in the great time of trouble which led to the collapse of their national polity in A.D. 69-70, and they have been under that wrath and unable to reestablish themselves as a nation from that day to the present time. We shall find confirmation of this interpretation of the "wrath to come" further down in this lesson.

In John's preaching he found one difficulty, and that was that his hearers were imbued with the thought that they were God's specially chosen, "elect" people, whose glorification had been foretold in the prophets, and that since there were no better people in the world it was unreasonable to suppose that God would pass by the very best. They reasoned that he must take some, in order to fulfil his promises; and that they were not only the most obedient to his Law outwardly, but also were the natural seed of Abraham, to whom the promises were made. Likewise the principal opposition to the teaching of holiness, entire consecration to the Lord, today throughout "Christendom," is the same error. A false theory has gotten into the minds of Christian people, which leads them to reason that holiness cannot be essential to the Lord's favor. Their process of reasoning is this: Out of the sixteen hundred millions of the world's population there are only about three hundred millions that make the slightest profession of Christianity, and this includes all the Greek Catholics, Roman Catholics, and what Bishop Foster (M.E.) designated the "ring-straked and speckled" of

R2564 : page 25

Protestantism--infants and all. Now, say they, God must certainly intend to have some, and if he takes all kinds of Christians he will have only comparatively few, and if merely an ambition to be ahead of the devil were to move him, he could scarcely reject any who claim to be Christians, and who are even half-way decent. Consequently they reason that holiness to the Lord, sanctification of thought and word and deed, cannot be essential to divine favor, and is therefore rather carrying matters to an extreme. The declaration that only "the pure in heart shall see God," and that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord," are, to them, extreme statements, and must be passed by, or else the word "holiness" must be considered as used in olden times in a very restricted sense, as meaning not openly or violently wicked.

Thus we see that the antitypical Elijah to the Jews encountered the same difficulties that are encountered now by the antitypical Elijah ministering to nominal spiritual Israel. But note John's answer; he laid down the conditions very strictly: Do not permit yourselves to be deceived into thinking that God is under compulsion to accept such as you, and that otherwise his word would become void; do not think that he could not get children of Abraham that would be purer than you, and therefore that he must take you; God is unlimited in power and unlimited in resource, and, if necessary, he could raise up children to Abraham out of these stones--out of some that you consider as far from the possibilities of being Abraham's children as tho they were these stones at your feet. And similarly we answer "Christendom" today, that God utterly rejects hypocritical Christianity, as represented by the vast majority of its professors, still blinded by the god of this world, and ignorant of the true character of God and of Jesus Christ whom he has sent; because not pure in heart, not consecrated fully to the Lord. Would that we had a trumpet voice that we might tell the millions of nominal Christendom the true state of the case, and would that they had circumcised ears to hear and reform, and be prepared for the glorious events now due to be ushered in,--without being obliged to pass through the great trouble time. All we can assure them is that God will find the full number of his elect, and that the full number is nearly complete now, and that in all it is but a "little flock" to whom it is the Father's good pleasure to give the Kingdom; and that soon these will all be glorified with their glorious Head and Lord, and that then the Kingdom established will be revealed to bless all the families of the earth. Nevertheless, we deeply sympathize with them in the fact that their condition necessitates that the introduction of the Kingdom shall be with a time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation, and, thank God, shall never again be.--Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:21.

John, proceeding with his discourse, points out to his Jewish hearers that the time of judgment had come upon their nation. The axe was laid at the root of the trees; every Israelite who was not an Israelite indeed was to be overthrown, and to be cast into the "fire" of trouble with which that age and national polity terminated. The three and a half years of our Lord's ministry to the Jewish nation, and their final rejection by him, are represented by the barren fig tree parable, in harmony with the statement of John foregoing.--See Luke 13:6-9.

John evidently struck the chord of fear to some extent, but he struck it properly. There is a proper presentation of the truth, and a proper fear of God and his retribution, which may properly be kept before the mind of the transgressor; but this is wholly different from the terrorizing fear of eternal torment, which plays

so important a part in all the theological teaching, directly and indirectly, today, and which has driven some to insanity, some to skepticism and infidelity, and has hindered the great majority even of saints from appreciating the true character and plan of our God. Let us present the wrath to come, truthfully, not misrepresenting the character of our God; for assuredly God will not hold them guiltless who blaspheme his holy name.

Under John's preaching the people began to inquire what course they should pursue, and summing the matter up John's instruction was that they should practice justice, mercy, love, generosity; they should avoid violence, extortion, etc.; and should seek to be content with such things as they had. This was excellent advice, and undoubtedly those who followed it would be in just the right condition of heart and mind to welcome the Lord Jesus, and his good tidings of remission of sins through his blood and thus to become reconciled with the Father. And similarly if any now inquire respecting the coming trouble, the wrath that is to come in the end of this age upon "Christendom,"--What must we do? We answer them,--Practice righteousness, truth, godliness, kindness, benevolence, justice, trust in the Lord, seek to walk in his ways. Or we may quote them the words of the prophet, specially bearing upon this time, viz., "Seek meekness, seek righteousness; it may be that ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger." (Zeph. 2:3.) And furthermore, we may rely upon it that those who thus seek righteousness, etc., will be the ones most ready to welcome our King, and his Kingdom, and we may be sure that when in this harvest time some fail to make their calling and election sure, and prove themselves unworthy of the crowns apportioned to them, the Lord will be pleased to select from among such penitent seekers of righteousness some as substitutes to complete his elect Church.

So powerful was John's presentation of the truth,

R2564 : page 26

that the people began to wonder whether or not he might be the Coming One, the Messiah, but he set the thought at rest speedily, assuring him that he was so inferior to the Messiah that he would be unworthy the honor of doing toward him the most menial service of removing his sandals. Then, having given them a little glimpse of the character of Messiah, he proceeded to tell them respecting his work, that it would be higher than his own, and that those who received him would receive a higher baptism also: "He shall baptize you with the holy spirit and with fire"--some of them (the few) with holy spirit, the remainder (the mass) with the fire,--judgments, the great time of trouble which destroyed their national life and many individual lives.

He gave them an illustration of the matter, showing them that they had reached the harvest-time of their

age, and that now a separating was to be expected--the separating of the true wheat from the chaff; and he represented our Lord's work with Israel as being that of a reaper winnowing the "wheat," freeing it from the "chaff" element. How forceful was the figure! how true the facts! Our Lord indeed gathered from that nation all the true "wheat," we may be sure that not a solitary grain was lost. All that wheat was gathered into his barn, into a place of safety, into a higher dispensation, --they constituted the beginning or first members of the Gospel Church. It was upon this wheat class that the holy spirit came at Pentecost, and it has abode with this true Church since. After the separating (winnowing) of the "wheat," and the gathering into the barn, and its baptism of the holy spirit, in due time, the "chaff" of that nation was burned up with unquenchable fire--a time of trouble which nothing could stop or hinder. It will be remembered that various steps were taken to hinder the destruction of the nation of Israel, but all failed: even the Roman Emperor was desirous of preserving the nation, and of establishing

R2565 : page 26

order there, and the Roman army went not to destroy them but to establish peace in their midst; but the Lord had declared that the fire of trouble which he enkindled should not be quenched by any power, that it should do its work to the full; and it did.

Likewise it will be with the great "fire" of trouble with which this Gospel age shall end, and into which the "tare" class of Christendom will be cast; it will not be an utter destruction of life (altho many lives will perish in the great trouble of this Day of Wrath), but it will completely consume earthly governments and Churchianity in a fire of anarchy. Nothing shall quench that fire, or hinder that utter destruction of present systems. But praise God that when this fire shall have consumed the stubble and the falsities and deceptions of present institutions, it will have but prepared the way for the great blessing which he has designed and provided for in his coming Kingdom. This "fire," and the blessing to follow it, are particularly referred to in Zeph. 3:8,9.

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R2565 : page 26

CONSECRATION FOLLOWED BY TEMPTATIONS.

--JAN. 28.--MATT. 3:13-4:11.--

"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

AFTER JOHN had been preaching and baptizing

for about six months, about September, A.D. 29, Jesus, who had been residing in Galilee and was nearing his thirtieth birthday, set out to find John and to be baptized of him and to begin his public ministry at the earliest possible moment. He was to be a Priest as well as a King for his people, "a Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec," and the Law required of a priest that he be at least thirty years of age. Hence Jesus' ministry was hindered from beginning until this age was attained, but he was free to begin it at the earliest possible moment after that time.

He was of course acquainted with his second-cousin, John the Baptizer, who evidently well knew of his upright life and unimpeachable character, and who was astounded to have him apply for baptism, whereas the class John was seeking was the renegade and sinful. According to the original reading, John "would have hindered him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" Realizing that Jesus had no sins to wash away, it seemed to John inappropriate that this ceremony should be performed upon Jesus, for we are to remember that John's baptism was merely a baptism unto repentance--reformation--and not Christian baptism.--See Acts 19:4,5.

Our Lord did not attempt to explain to John that he was introducing a new baptism, not for sinners but exclusively for holy ones, and not, therefore, in any sense of the word symbolic of the cleansing from sin, but symbolic of a sacrificial death for the sins of others. It was not then due time to explain Christian baptism, and to have done so would merely have confused John and those who might have heard, without profiting him any, because the new baptism belonged to the new dispensation which did not begin until Pentecost, except in the person of our Lord Jesus himself. And in any case the force and meaning of the symbol is merely what is understood by the baptized one. It is perhaps well that we call special attention to this point, in view of the fact that a large and influential body of Christian people* are even today practicing John's baptism, "for the remission of sins," wholly failing to realize the import of the new baptism--Christian baptism--first symbolized by our Lord Jesus himself.

Our "Disciple" friends will not dispute the Scriptural statement that our Lord Jesus was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and hence that he had no sins to wash away, and consequently that for him John's baptism of reformation would have been worse than meaningless;

*The Christian denomination, otherwise termed "Disciples."

R2565 : page 27

it would have been a contradiction of fact and

contrary to faith; and "whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Hence it would have been wrong for our Lord Jesus to have been baptized for the remission of sins--John's only understanding of baptism. We may be sure, therefore, that since "in him was no sin," his act of baptism was the first of a new order of baptism--practiced by his followers after Pentecost. (Acts 19:4,5.) We here note the fact that Christian baptism is only for believers in Christ--not for unbelievers, not for sinners. Faith in Christ is the justifying power; we are justified through faith in his blood. When justified we are ready for Christian baptism, and not before, but when justified we have no sins to wash away, being "justified freely from all things." To the Christian believer, baptism symbolizes precisely the same thing that it did to his Lord, viz., consecration--the full surrender of his will, his life, his all, to the Heavenly Father's will. By such a surrender of his will he becomes dead to the world, to earthly hopes and aims, and becomes alive toward God, to walk in newness of life, and by and by to have that newness of life actually, as a sharer with Jesus, his Lord, his Redeemer, in the "first Resurrection." All this is symbolized in the proper Christian baptism.

Our Lord, being free from sin, required no justification by another, and when he had reached manhood's estate presented himself wholly, unreservedly, to do the Father's will. At the moment of consecration his earthly life was yielded up as a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world,--and this was symbolized by his immersion in water. The remaining three and a half years of his life were already on the altar, and he merely waited for his sacrifice to be consumed, crying with his last breath, "It is finished!" Likewise he has invited all of his faithful, elect Church to become joint-sacrificers with him, and ultimately to become also his joint-heirs in the Kingdom to be given to the Royal Priesthood. As Jesus' baptism, therefore, signified his death sacrificially for sins, so the baptism of Christians symbolizes their participation with the Lord in his sacrifice (after they have first been justified by faith freely from all things by the merit of his blood). In our Lord's case the consecration was quickly followed by the symbol, and with his followers the consecration should be followed by the symbol as quickly as they recognize the meaning of the symbol,--which for centuries has been beclouded and obscured.

Quickly following our Lord's consecration and its symbolization came the evidence that his sacrifice was accepted of God: the heavens were opened unto him. This probably signifies that he was granted a vision of heaven, confirming to him his relationship to the Father, and connecting up the interim of his experience as a man with his prehuman experiences: and there came a voice declaring him to be God's well-beloved Son, and he as well as John (John 1:34) witnessed a manifestation of the divine blessing descending upon him like a

dove. We are not informed that the people saw the heavens opened, heard the voice and saw the dove; on the contrary, the records seem to indicate that only Jesus and John saw and heard, and that the latter was granted the privilege to the intent that he might bear witness to the fact.

A dove was a favorite figure with the Jews as an emblem of peace and salvation. Indeed, Noah's dove, with its olive branch, seems to have become a symbol to all civilized peoples. It was most appropriate, therefore, that since some figure was to be used as an outward evidence of divine blessing, the dove should be that figure. Yet we are not to suppose that the holy spirit is a dove, nor that it has bodily shape like a dove, but as instructed in all the Scriptures, that it is a divine power or influence. The dove represented fittingly the meek and quiet spirit which is one of the striking ornaments of all those who possess the spirit of holiness unto the Lord. Such experiences as these which our Lord enjoyed are not granted to his followers nor to be expected today,--neither the voice nor the opened heavens, nor the dove. The coming of the holy spirit to the Church at Pentecost was signalized by an outward demonstration, which serves the entire Church throughout the age. Such outward demonstrations were essential at the beginning, as assurances to us that we are not following some vain imaginations of our own or other men's minds in respect to the holy spirit, and now we merely have the realities, which at first were symbolized or represented in tangible form. All who, after believing unto repentance, are justified from their sins, and subsequently present themselves to the Lord to be baptized into his death (Rom. 6:3), receive an opening of the heavens before them in the sense of an opening of their minds to see heavenly things, to appreciate spiritual matters; as the Apostle declares, "God reveals them unto us by his spirit; for the spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God,"--things which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of [the natural] man." (1 Cor. 2:10.) They also by faith hear the voice of the Father, speaking unto them, saying that, having thus come unto him through Jesus, and having thus consecrated their lives to him, they are now beloved sons, accepted in the well-beloved One. They also receive the blessing of the holy spirit, in the shedding abroad in their hearts of the peace-giving, meek and gentle spirit of holiness, and this becomes more and more a reality with them as they become more and more "filled with the spirit."

Jesus was led of the spirit--his own spirit, illuminated by the spirit-baptism which he had just received

R2566 : page 28

--to go apart from John and the concourse of people into quiet solitude, and for this purpose he chose a wilderness

place. Mark says he was impelled or "driven" of the spirit into the wilderness. The thought we get is that there was a great pressure upon our Lord's mind at this time. In a previous lesson we noted his study at Jerusalem at an early age respecting the "Father's business," and how he should go about it. We found the Law instructing him that it would not be proper for him to engage in the Father's business until he was thirty years of age, and that in consideration of this fact he desisted and served his parents. The momentous time for which he had been waiting for eighteen years had come. He hastened to present himself at the earliest moment, that his service should not be delayed; but now, under the enlightenment of the holy spirit, instead of beginning his ministry precipitately, he felt that he must know definitely the proper course to pursue: he must not make a mistake at the very out-start of his service; he must know the Father's will, that he might render his service in harmony therewith. Such motives impelled him to seek solitude for thought and prayer, and for reviewing the various Scriptures which hitherto he had studied and but imperfectly comprehended, but which now began to be luminous under the influence of the holy spirit which he had received.

How proper it would be that all of the Lord's people, when they have made a consecration of themselves to the divine service, should be impelled by the new mind, the new spirit, to go apart first and to commune with the Father, and to study his Word respecting how they should render their lives most acceptable in his service! Were this course pursued how many lives would be totally different from what they are; how many failures and changes and turnings, hither and thither, would be avoided! Our Lord expressed the matter in one of his parables, when he said that anyone taking up his cross to follow him should sit down first and count the cost--learn what the Father's will would be, as well as the results to be sought. And if any of God's dear children have neglected thus to seek the right path at the beginning of their consecration, we refer them to the example of our dear Master, who was wise in this as in all things, having not only the spirit of a sound mind, but a sound mind itself, through which that spirit operated perfectly. However, our study of the divine will need not be so completely alone as was our Master's --we have "brethren," he had none, being himself the forerunner. We may profitably take counsel of such as give evidence of faith in and consecration to God, that we may learn the more quickly and the more thoroughly the Father's will concerning us: especially may we have the aid of the words and example of our elder Brother, Jesus. We must never forget, however, that our consecration is to the Father's business, and that brethren can only be really helpful to us as they assist us in understanding the Father's plan and our part therein: otherwise they might become hindrances by

substituting their own or sectarian plans and seeking our consecration thereto.

Our Lord's temptations may be said to have begun at this point--those temptations in which "he was tempted like as we are, yet without sin." It was not the boy Jesus, nor the youth Jesus, that was tempted "as we are." And our Lord's temptations after his consecration were not like the temptations which beset the world, but like the Church's temptations. In other words, our Lord was reckoned a new creature from the time of his consecration at Jordan, as we are counted new creatures in him from the time of our consecration; and it was the consecrated Jesus who was tempted and tried like as his consecrated followers are tempted and tried. We shall see further evidences of this as we proceed to notice the character of our Lord's temptations, and to compare them with the temptations which come to his consecrated "brethren." Many have wondered why their temptations seemed to commence after their consecration to the Lord, rather than before: seemingly they expected that after consecration the Adversary would flee from them, and they should have little or no temptation--totally misunderstanding the divine arrangement. Such temptations or tests of character as come to the consecrated are not appropriate to the unconsecrated: the present is not the judgment day of the world, but the testing time for the Church.

It would appear that our Lord's temptations progressed throughout the entire forty days, but that the three temptations specifically described were the culmination of that period of testing. We may imagine our Lord in the wilderness solitude, intently thinking over the various prophetic references to himself, and linking these together, as an architect would first draw the outline of a building and subsequently fill out feature after feature of its internal arrangements. The outline before our Lord's mind from the Scriptures, beyond any peradventure, was the Kingdom. He was to be the King, the Seed of Abraham, under whose gracious government and wise instruction all the families of the earth were to be blessed. This, the profile, was already clearly delineated in his mind, but other features needed to be properly adjusted. How was he to fulfil the type of the Law which represented the priest as giving up his life for the sins of the people? Where would come in the type of the everlasting priesthood? Where would come in the class of Israelites represented by Rebecca, as he himself was represented by Isaac, and the Father by Abraham, in the type? And if Israel would receive him, and become the Rebecca, where would come in

R2566 : page 29

the sacrifice, and how? And then other prophecies no doubt pressed his mind for a place in the plan, viz., the declaration that altho Israel were as the sand of the

sea only a remnant should be acceptable, and how then would the predestinated number of the "elect" be found, to complete the glorious royal priesthood; and by what process would the blessing come to all the families of the earth, if himself, as the High Priest, and his true followers, as the royal priests, were all to suffer and to die for righteousness' sake, as sacrifices?

We may well suppose that adjustment and readjustment, fitting and refitting, with much reflection and prayer, occupied many of the forty days, and there may have been temptations intermingled with these all; as for instance, questionings respecting the necessity of those features represented in the types and specified in the prophecies of the sufferings of Christ which must take precedence to the glories that would follow. There may have been temptations, too, to deal dishonestly with the records, to "wrest the Scriptures," and thus self-deceived, to choose a way not in fullest conformity to the divine outline; but we may safely suppose that as soon as such suggestions, one after another, presented themselves, they were promptly rejected,--our Lord being fully determined that he would be absolutely obedient to the Father's will and accomplish the work which he had sent him to do in exactly the manner prescribed.

So intent had been his study, and so earnest his desire for quiet fellowship with the Father and his Law, that forty days were spent under such conditions, and apparently so deeply absorbed was our Lord that he did not even think of food. Nor does this appear so strange to us, when we remember that he was perfect, while we are imperfect, physically as well as otherwise. "He afterward hungered."

It was at the close of this period of Bible study and prayer, when our Lord was weak from fasting, that the Adversary assaulted him with three temptations particularized in our lesson.

The word here translated "devil" is *diabolos*, and is used with the definite article--the devil. The arch-deceiver is thus Scripturally distinguished from the fallen angels, who throughout the Scriptures are spoken of in the plural, designated by another word signifying demons. Here, then, is one place in the Scriptures where the personality of the prince of devils is definitely affirmed, and his person and power acknowledged by our Lord himself. It is not necessary for us, however, to assume that Satan appeared to our Lord in a human form; he may or may not thus have been personally manifest. If personally manifest, we may rest well assured that he presented himself in his very best appearance, as an angel of light. Indeed, we may well remember that our Lord, in his prehuman condition, had, as the Father's agent, been the Creator of Satan, and we remember that Satan was an angel of very high order, whose sin consisted in an attempt to usurp authority and to become the potentate of earth, by

stealing the sympathy, affection and obedience of humanity, and that on this account he fell under divine reprobation. We can imagine that a visit from him to Jesus would not be at all inappropriate, as he undoubtedly knew the facts of our Lord's consecration, and to some extent knew of the work which the Father had given him to do in the redemption of the fallen race of men. We can imagine him even presenting himself in a friendly manner, and assuring our Lord Jesus that he felt a great interest in him and in his work; that he himself had been painfully surprised to note the penalty of sin upon mankind, and the dreadful degradation which had resulted; and that now he would be glad indeed to have something done by which poor humanity might be delivered from its groaning, travailing, dying conditions. As a friend, thoroughly versed in the situation all around, and interested in its success, and thoroughly conversant with the mental moods and foibles of humanity, he was in a place where he felt qualified to offer some suggestions respecting the very work which our Lord Jesus wished to perform, the plan for which he was now considering.

R2567 : page 29

TEMPTATION TO USE SPIRITUAL FAVORS FOR PERSONAL PROFIT.

First, he manifests his personal interest in our Savior by suggesting his weakness from lack of food and the necessity for taking proper care of his physical health if he would do the great and noble work he had undertaken. He reminded him also of his present power--that he had just been imbued with divine power, and that he had now full ability to supply his wants, and need only to speak the word and have the stones turned into food. Thus also, he suggested, he would be demonstrating to himself the verity of the new power which he witnessed coming upon him, and had subsequently felt. What more cunning temptation could be devised than this? Compliance with it evidently meant, not only the relief of his hunger and the strengthening of his physical frame, but additionally it apparently meant the conversion of Satan, who now seemingly was in a repentant attitude, and desirous of cooperating with him in the undoing of the evil work of the long ago. It was a strong temptation.

Such temptations come also to all the consecrated; not in exactly the same form, nor in the same language, but somewhat similarly--suggestions that the new relationship with God, and the strength which it brings, may be used to some extent at least in creature comforts

R2567 : page 30

--may be utilized for our temporal advancement;

may be made to make us shine before men as very honorable and favored of God; may be used to command large salaries, or at least as a means for seeking them, even if never found. We may then all note carefully how our Lord resisted his would-be friend and his worldly-wise suggestions. He flatly refused the suggestion of using his spiritual power to serve his temporal wants. The spiritual gift could no more be used to procure temporal comforts than it could be sold for money to Simon (Acts 8:18-24); but without going into details, and without boasting that he was too holy to think of such a sacrilegious use of the power entrusted to him, Jesus simply answered the Adversary in Scriptural language, that a man's life was not wholly dependant upon what he should eat, but that obedience to the Word of God would be a surer guarantee of life. And after this manner each of the Lord's followers should answer every question which in any manner proposes the acquirement of earthly blessings and comforts at the sacrifice of the spiritual. To quite a number of the Lord's "brethren" the Adversary has presented this same temptation in this form: If you follow too closely to the truth, and permit the holy spirit of the truth to make you very zealous in its service, you will soon have no bread, no food, for the world's people with whom you must deal do not appreciate such things. They will discharge you from their employ, or they will cease to deal at your store, or they will dismiss you from being their pastor, or they will withdraw from you their fellowship, their society, etc., and you will starve for all the good things of this present life. The proper answer is that God is able to take care of all those who respect his spiritual blessings too much to sell them for a mess of pottage, as did Esau in the type; and that we are convinced that whoever lives according to the Word of God, tho he may lose some of the comforts of the present time, will eventually gain the far better, the life eternal with exceeding glory.

Our Lord's positiveness of reply shut off the temptation quickly, and discouraged the Adversary from further proceeding along that line; and so it is with us, his followers: if we are positive in our rejection of temptation it increases our strength of character, not only for that time, but also for subsequent temptations; and it disconcerts to some extent our Adversary, who, noting our positiveness, knows well that it is useless to discuss the matter with persons of strong convictions and positive characters; whereas, if the question were parleyed over, the result would surely be the advancing of further reasons and arguments on the Adversary's part, and a danger on our part that we would be over-matched in argument, for, as the Apostle declares, the Devil is a wily adversary, and "we are not ignorant of his devices." Prompt and positive obedience to the word and spirit of the Lord is the only safe course for any of the "brethren."

TEMPTING GOD BY UNAUTHORIZED EFFORTS.

Disappointed in his first effort, the Adversary quickly turned the subject, not even dissenting from our Lord's judgment in the matter. The second temptation he presented is like all others that came to our Lord and that come to his consecrated followers, viz., not a temptation to gross wickedness--to steal, to kill, etc.--but a temptation to do the Lord's work in another way than that which the Lord had planned--the misuse of the divine powers given him by endeavoring to accomplish good results in an improper manner.

Satan took our Lord Jesus to Jerusalem and up to the flat roof of one of the wings of the Temple--not physically, but mentally, just as mentally we can go to various places and do certain things without change of physical location. The suggestion now made was this: I (Satan) can give you a good suggestion respecting a way to bring yourself quickly into prominence before the people of Israel, and you will be pleased with it, because it is a Scriptural way; indeed I have found that it is foretold in the prophecy that Messiah at his coming will do this: and the people will readily recognize it as a fulfilment of the words of the Prophet David, and thus they will embrace your cause quickly, you will become the leader of the people, and your work will go on most grandly: and as I said before, I will rejoice in seeing the prosperity of the work, for I am heartily sick of the degradation which I have witnessed for now four thousand years. My suggestion is that you go to the roof of the southern wing of the Temple which on its rear part overlooks the Valley of Hinnom, towering above it six hundred feet, and which also overlooks the court of the Temple, in which there are hundreds of devout Jews: then leap from this eminence, and arise unhurt by the fall. This will demonstrate more quickly than anything else you could do or say that the power of the Highest is upon you, and that you are the Messiah. This, I say, is referred to in the Scripture which says,--"He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone."--Matt. 4:6.

Similar are the temptations which Satan presents to the consecrated followers of Jesus:--Make a great show before the world and the nominal church; attract their attention by any means, and not simply by the preaching of the cross of Christ; use the spiritual powers and blessings that you have received for doing some great and striking work, which will appeal to the natural man, and thus secure quick and great success; do this instead of doing the quiet and less conspicuous

work of presenting spiritual things to the spiritual class, which work the vast majority can in no wise appreciate, but will only shun you, consider you peculiar, and which not only will lose you the sympathy of the mass, but will bring you specially the hatred of some of the principal professors of Christendom.

Again our Lord answered promptly and correctly: "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Satan would like to have us walk by sight, not by faith; he would like to have us continually tempting God, and demanding some ocular demonstrations of his favor and protection, instead of accepting the testimony of his Word, and relying thereon implicitly in faith. In the light of the unfolding of the Scriptures we see that Satan, probably unwittingly, quoted a passage of Scripture wholly out of its proper meaning and interpretation, a passage which referred, not to the literal feet of Jesus, and to literal stones, and to literal angels, but to the symbolic feet-members of the body of Christ today, and to the stones of stumbling, doctrinal and otherwise, which are now permitted in the pathway of the faithful, and to the angels or ministers of divine truth who in the present harvest-time would be commissioned to bear up the feet members with such counsels, admonitions and expositions of Scripture as would be necessary for them.--Psa. 91:11,12.

TEMPTATION TO OBTAIN DESIRED GOOD RESULTS BY COMPROMISE.

Satan's third temptation we may presume was presented likewise in a friendly and sympathetic manner, indicative of a desire for cooperation in our Lord's great work. He took him to a high mountain--not literally, but mentally. Indeed, there is no literal high mountain near Jerusalem, nor anywhere in the world, from which all the kingdoms of the world and their glory could be seen. Satan took our Lord mentally to a very high symbolic mountain (kingdom). He pictured before him the immensity of his (Satan's) own power throughout the world, his control of all the nations and peoples to a large extent, and this our Lord subsequently acknowledged when he referred to Satan as "the prince [ruler] of this world." This panoramic presentation of Satan's power and influence throughout the world was designed to impress upon the mind of our Redeemer the thought that Satan's friendship and assistance would be most valuable--nay, almost of vital importance to the success of his mission, and hence that it was very fortunate indeed that at this juncture Satan had called upon him in so friendly a mood, and that he apparently so sincerely welcomed his efforts and was ready to cooperate therewith.

Satan possibly pointed out to our Lord that Messiah was specially referred to as the King of Israel, and

to bless Israel, and he may have admitted that a light of influence would extend to all nations through him, but the center of his argument would seem to be that he proposed to Jesus a still larger kingdom than Israel.

R2568 : page 31

He proposed to him a kingdom embracing all the nations of the earth, and that he should have the control of all these, and be able to bring in the blessed reforms which were designed of God, only one condition being insisted upon, viz., that whatever kingdom or rule or authority might be established must recognize Satan. The Adversary thus seemed to see what he thought a favorable opportunity for consummating his original plans, for we cannot suppose that his original intention was to gain control of a dying and depraved race, but that he much rather would be the lord or ruler of a highly enlightened and well-endowed people. He was willing, therefore, to see carried into effect all the gracious work which God had designed, and willing to reform himself and to become the leader of reform, provided only that he should be recognized as having the chief place of influence in connection with mankind. It was after this manner that he wished our Lord to do worship or reverence to him--to recognize his influence and cooperation in the work, and not for a moment can we suppose that he expected him to kneel before him and to worship him as God.

Our Lord's reply to this last temptation shows that it fully awakened him to a realization of the fact that there was no real reformation at work in Satan's heart; that he was still ambitious, self-seeking, as at the beginning of his downward course; and he realized that to even discuss the matter further with one who had thus avowed his real sentiments would be disloyalty to the Father, and hence his words, "Get thee hence, Satan" --leave me; you cannot cooperate with me at all; my work is in full accord with the absolute standard of the divine will; I can be a party to no program contrary to this, however alluring some of its features might be in promising a speedy conquest of the world, and a speedy establishment of a reign of righteousness and blessing and an avoidance of personal suffering; I cannot serve two masters; I can only recognize the one supreme Jehovah, as Lord of heaven and of earth, and therefore could not recognize you in any position of authority except as the great Jehovah would appoint you to it, which I know he would never do, so long as you are of the present ambitious spirit. I am operating along the line of the declaration, "Thou shalt worship [reverence] the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

We may readily discern that this temptation of our Lord was but a sample illustration of such as beset his followers all along the narrow way, from the same source, directly or through agencies. Satan, through his various

mouthpieces, is continually saying to the saints, Here is a more successful way of accomplishing your object than that which you are pursuing, a more successful way than the Lord's way. Bend a little; make compromise with the worldly spirit; do not hew too close to the line of the word of God and the example of the Lord Jesus and the apostles; you must be more like the world, in order to exert an influence--mix a little into politics, and a good deal into secret societies; keep in touch with the fads and foibles of the day, and above all things keep any light of present truth under a bushel, --thus alone can you have influence and accomplish your good desires toward men. But our dear Master assures us that we are to be faithful to the Lord and to his plan, and let things work out as best they may along that line; and that we may rest assured that in the end the Father's plan not only is the best but really the only plan for accomplishing his great designs, and that if we would be associated therein with him as colaborers, it must be by recognizing him as our only Master, and with an eye single to his approval.

Our Lord's utter refusal of every other way of

R2568 : page 32

carrying out his mission than the one which the Father had marked out, the way of self-sacrifice, the narrow way, was indeed a great victory. The Adversary left him, finding nothing in him that he could take hold of or work upon, so thoroughly loyal was he to the very word and the spirit of Jehovah. And then, the trial being ended, we read that holy angels came and ministered to our Lord--doubtless supplying him with refreshment such as he had refused to exercise the divine power to obtain for himself. And such we may recognize as being the experience of our Lord's followers: with victory comes a blessing from the Lord, fellowship of spirit, refreshment of heart, a realization of divine favor that makes stronger for the next trial.

Another lesson here is that temptation does not imply sin. As our Lord was tempted "without sin" so may his brethren be if they follow his example and with purity of heart, purity of intention, seek only the Father's will. Sin could only come through yielding to the temptation. But let us not forget that hesitancy after the wrong is seen increases the power of the temptation. And we may note here that while Satan is a tempter, endeavoring to ensnare us into wrong paths and wrong conduct, God is not so; "he tempteth no man" (Jas. 1:13), and even tho he permit the Adversary and his agents to beset his people, it is not with the object of ensnaring them, but with the opposite object, that they may by such trials and testings be made the stronger, developing character through exercise in resisting evil. Let us remember too for our strengthening, the Scriptural assurance that God will not suffer us to be

tempted above that we are able to resist and overcome but will with the temptation provide also a way of escape.

To avail ourselves of this provision requires merely faith, and the more we exercise our faith in such matters the more of it we will have, becoming stronger in the Lord and in the power of his might; and thus by divine grace and under the Master's assistance we may come off overcomers--conquerors, and more than conquerors, through him who loved us and bought us with his own precious blood.--2 Cor. 12:9; 1 Cor. 10:13; Eph. 6:10; Rom. 8:37-39.

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page 32

INTERESTING LETTERS.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--I wish to thank you for Vol. V. of M. DAWN, for it has been a great help to me in clearing up many dark points; it has been to me indeed "meat in due season," and it is just what I wish to place in the hands of my friends and neighbors. There are now quite a number here who have read M.D. who are more or less interested, but so far I could not find any one who has come fully into the truth, and I have been thinking that perhaps if you could send a "Pilgrim" brother here for a few days some time this winter to present the truth orally to such as are interested much good could be done. I have the Mission hall promised me for this purpose, as I have succeeded in interesting the man who keeps this Mission at his own expense, and all he wants is two or three weeks' notice as to when I want the hall. He is a very liberal minded Christian who, I believe, will be open to the truth if only he could be brought to investigate it, but his time is so completely taken up by Prohibition, the "salvation of souls" and social reform movements that he finds no time. Now if you find it expedient to send a brother I will gladly receive him into my home and make all necessary arrangements about meetings and invite all interested ones to attend; we could hold at least one public evening-meeting a day and one in the afternoon for such as are interested.

I would also like to have some extra copies of the TOWER for distribution among such of the friends as are interested in the truth, who have read M. DAWN, to see if I cannot get some of them to subscribe for it, because I know from my own experience how very helpful it is. I would not be without it for ten times its subscription price. The publication of your discourse, "Which is the True Gospel?" has given me much pleasure, as it was impossible for me to attend either the Indianapolis or St. Louis Conventions, which was a great disappointment to me.

Your discourse is very logical, a clear statement

of facts, and would, I believe, make an excellent tract. I thank the Lord for giving me a small share in his harvest work; I would like to devote all my time and means to that glorious work, but as my family has a prior claim I will do what I can, knowing that the Lord sees my intention and willingness and accepts it. It is now a year since I gave myself fully to the Lord who bought me with his precious blood, and looking back over the year I can see his tender mercy in his leadings, and how he has kept me and revealed to me the hidden depths of my heart. His grace is sufficient at all times, and I have full confidence in him that he will continue and finish the good work which he has so graciously begun in me. I realize more than ever my own unworthiness and inability to do anything good in my own strength. May he also continue to bless and preserve you is my prayer.

Your brother in Christ, C. L. BAUER,--Indiana.

DEAR MR. RUSSELL:--I have just received enclosed card (saying that my subscription is in arrears) and deeply regret I am not able to send my subscription for the TOWER this month, but I think it is very probable I can remit before the end of next month.

As I read the remark of the card that I "cannot afford to miss the TOWER teachings if interested," I thought how little do the TOWER friends know of what these teachings are to me, or they would never have put it so mildly.

To me they are a part of my very life, inasmuch as they have opened up the Scriptures to me in a marvelously new light; to me they have revealed God as my Father, Jesus as my Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit as an ever present Guide in a manner hitherto undreamed of; for me they have shined with dazzling brightness upon the very darkest moments of my life; for me they are meat and drink, an all engrossing theme, and will be until the everlasting blessedness is mine, "partaker of the Divine Nature." I cannot explain it but the very thought of such a transformation while it humbles one to the very dust, exalts as if on angels' wings. Oh no! I cannot afford to do without the TOWER teachings, for through them "I have seen his face, and souls that once have looked upon their Lord, must die or look again." Just now I am feasting on "Our Lord's Return." What can be more convincing, more sublime, or more elevating than "The Parousia!" May His wealth of glorious goodness, love, wisdom and power be showered upon you and yours!

Yours, ever gratefully, ELEANOR MILLER.

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