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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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POSTAL MONEY ORDERS AND EXPRESS MONEY
ORDERS ARE SAFE.

There is no danger in making remittance by postal money
orders, express orders and bank drafts, for even if these were
stolen (and destroyed by the thief, to prevent detection) duplicates
could be obtained, and thus the money would not be lost.
Besides, just as soon as the thief finds that no money is being
sent here he will discontinue his depredations.

Some have expressed surprise that money sent to us has
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answer that it is not to be presumed for a moment that all post office employees are thieves, nor even any considerable proportion of them; and generally the risk of detection is too great, even if the man were disposed to steal. Quite a good many of our subscribers got into the careless habit of sending money, and it evidently became too strong a temptation for some one through whose hands the mail passed. With the discontinuance of the mailing of money, and thus the removal of the temptation, we trust we shall have no further difficulty.

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THE VOLUNTEER WORK.

The open winter has been very favorable to the Volunteer work thus far, but we advise that those who have not already commenced this work make all their preparations for the springtime, when we hope to hear from all, and to have a goodly supply of reading matter ready for their use.

Meantime you will do well to have a meeting, call for enlistments in the service, appoint a committee with a central head to lay out the work systematically, that all congregations in your city may be served without duplicating, appoint your scribe to communicate with the WATCH TOWER office respecting the number of Volunteers, the number of churches, the average attendance of each, and the time at which you will be ready to begin the service.

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THE PEOPLE THAT KNOW THE JOYFUL SOUND.

"Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance."--Psalm 89:15.

SALVATION is the joyful sound, as the poet has well expressed it,* saying:--

"Salvation! O the joyful sound,
What tidings for our race!
Deliv'rance for the world is found
Through God's abounding grace."

This joyful salvation sound is the Gospel, as declared by the angelic messengers--"Good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people." But alas, how few have heard this joyful sound! As mentally we glance over the sixteen hundred millions of the world's population, we find that even the most extravagant claims would show that not one-fifth of the whole have ever heard these blessed tidings; the four-fifths are totally blinded by the god of this world, and see nothing and hear nothing of God's grace. And the matter has been as bad as this, or worse proportionately

for six thousand years. How we should rejoice that under divine providence we were born in lands where the light of truth sends forth at least a feeble ray, and where many are not totally deaf to "the joyful sound!"

Yet coming to civilized lands, we are surprised, almost appalled, at the gross darkness which beclouds the minds of the people of so-called Christendom, and by the dimness of vision and dullness of hearing of the vast majority in these most favored parts of the earth --of the majority of those whose lines have fallen unto them in pleasant places comparatively. Mentally we see nearly two-thirds of the so-called enlightened fifth

*POEMS AND HYMNS OF DAWN, No. 255.

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of humanity bowing to the Virgin Mary, addressing her in prayer, and crossing themselves with reverence at the mention of her name, and generally grossly ignorant of the divine character and plan--believers in an eternity of torment for all except those of their own communions, and in long periods of purgatorial agony for the great majority of their members. Heart-sick with the picture, we exclaim, O that these people could hear the joyful sound! for evidently they have at very most merely heard an indistinct strain of it conglomerated with the jargon of Babel's confusion and Satanic discord.

Looking expectantly to the remaining third of the so-called enlightened fifth of humanity, known as "Protestants," we enquire, Are these the blessed people who know the joyful sound? A hundred discordant voices answer, Yes! but we enquire, If you have heard it, why such discord, such clashing of doctrines, such separation from each other by creed-fences? Are not all the people who know the joyful sound one people--the one Church of the living God, whose names are written in heaven? This at once arouses doubt respecting "Protestantism," and we hearken for evidences to the contrary, that many at least, if not all, know "the joyful sound." We perceive that in many respects amongst these are found people who know more respecting the divine character than do the outside fifteen hundred millions; and yet here also we find great blindness, obscure mental vision, great deafness to the voice from heaven. Truly amongst these also the great Adversary has done a work, so that altho in their midst more may be heard of "the joyful sound" than amongst other classes of the world, yet Satan has here also introduced the discords so as almost to drown the heavenly music--"the joyful sound." For while to some extent Protestantism discerns God's

love and justice, the Adversary has beclouded its vision and dulled its hearing for the truth, by whispering theories that are at variance with divine justice and love, and make void and meaningless "the joyful

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sound." To some he whispers that God never had either sympathy or provision for any except "the elect;" to others he whispers that God has the sympathy for all, but lacks the wisdom and power to give practical assistance to any but the few: and thus in the minds of nearly all "the joyful sound" is reduced to a song of praise and joy and thanksgiving and salvation from a little flock, with which will mingle to all eternity the anguishing wails of the vast majority of thousands of millions.

There are a few (but alas how few!) who not only hear "the joyful sound," but who discern that the discord is of the Adversary, and that the joyful sound, if separated from Satanic inharmonies, is beautiful, harmonious beyond any other sound or song. Full of the spirit of the song themselves, they haste to make its beauty known to others, and to point out the origin of the discord. They feel certain that it will be merely necessary to indicate the discord and its source to have others like themselves instantly discern and reject the discord, and rejoice more fully than ever in "the joyful sound"--the true Gospel. But alas! what disappointment is theirs: they find that even amongst the "Protestant" fifteenth of humanity not only is the darkness great, but the depravity of heart and mind are so dense that the darkness and discord are preferred, and "the joyful sound," the good tidings of great joy for all people, is spurned, and considered to be the discord that is of the Adversary. Only here and there can any be found who "know the joyful sound"--who can distinguish the joyful sound of the heavenly message from those by which Satan has "deceived all that dwell upon the earth."--Rev. 18:23; 19:20; 20:3.

SOUNDING THE JUBILEE TRUMPETS.

The question may arise, Why did God permit Satan, through his human agencies, to bring false doctrine amongst his people during the dark ages, thus to blind and deafen them to the true light, and the heavenly harmonies of the divine plan?

We answer that God's purpose during this age has been the selection of merely the "little flock" of "overcomers" to be joint-heirs with his Son in the coming Millennial Kingdom which is to "bless all the families of the earth;" and by permitting darkness to come upon this nominal church class he has (1) taught

a great lesson both to angels and men concerning the necessity of not only starting right, but remaining loyal to the Lord and his Word, and maintaining a teachable attitude of heart. (2) Doubtless the majority of the "little flock" has been selected from the two ends of this gospel age--its beginning and its closing years. (3) There may have been much more knowledge of the joyful message amongst God's people during "the dark ages" than we now have means of knowing, since the history of that time had few recorders, and their records then dealt chiefly with the error-blinded systems and ignored or misrepresented the unpopular instrumentalities used by God in making "the joyful sound"--some of whom quite probably were denominated heretics, because they knew the joyful sound of the true Gospel, and proportionately denounced the popular "doctrines of devils."

At all events, under divine providence the joyful sound is now heard above the din of "Babel" by those who "have an ear to hear," and it is found to be the very same gospel which was preached by the Lord and the Apostles and announced by the angels on the plains of Bethlehem--a "joyful sound," "good tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people." Moreover, as we have seen in other studies,* we are now in the early dawn of the Millennial Day, which in the Scriptures was typically represented to Israel by their Jubilee Year--of release from bondage and the return to original possessions, etc. And as the priests were to announce the Jubilee Year in the Day of Atonement, by the blowing of silver jubilee trumpets, so here we have the antitype: the royal priests in this, the close of the antitypical Day of Atonement (the Gospel age), are to blow the trumpets of truth (silver being a symbol of truth), announcing to the people that the grace of God is come nigh unto them, and that during the Millennial Day (of one thousand years) now dawning the great High Priest, also Prophet and King, shall stand forth as God's representative, and by virtue of his own sacrifice shall give the needed blessing of knowledge to all mankind, and shall lift up out of degradation and sin and death, by his providence and grace, all who seek to come back to righteousness and fellowship with the Father through him.

So then, as it was appropriate in the type that this announcement should be made at the close of the Day of Atonement, so that indicated that it is a part of the divine plan that the sounding forth of the joyful sound, the message of the Jubilee of divine love and favor and blessing should be given at the present time --just in the closing days of the Gospel age--the closing hours, so to speak, of the great Day of Atonement,+ and at the dawning, so to speak, of the Millennial age of Jubilee.

Now another matter, little in itself, and easily overlooked in our translation of the Bible, is the fact

that the very word (turnah) used in our text, rendered "a joyful sound," is the same Hebrew word that is used in Lev. 25:9, where the sounding of the Jubilee trumpet is commanded. How strikingly the Lord has

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

+See Tabernacle Shadows of Better Sacrifices.

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arranged his Word, to make it a basis for faith and joy to his people. How clear it is to those who "know the joyful sound," and yet how obscure to all others! Well does our text say, "Blessed are the people who know the joyful sound!" The blessing upon them is certainly not because of their own merit, for we are all conscious of the fact that in our flesh dwelleth no perfection, and that none of us could be commended to God by our own righteousness--all of these blessed people who know the joyful sound have reason, therefore, to give thanks unto him who loved them, and who bought them with his own precious blood, in whose merit alone they have standing with the Heavenly Father. And yet these blessed people have something to do with the matter of their blessing--something to do with the fact that they have heard, and hearing have known or discerned the joyful sound, while others hearing have not discerned it. They have the hearing of faith: from the little which they first heard they must have cultivated a love for righteousness, and a hatred of iniquity; they must have cultivated honesty with themselves, honesty with the Lord, honesty in handling his Word--"not handling the Word of God deceitfully." (2 Cor. 4:2.) They must have consecrated their hearts fully to the Lord, and thus have come fully under the guidance of "the spirit of the truth," else they would not be able to discern better than others between the joyful sound of the truth and the discordant sound of error. Evidently in these we see fulfilled the Scripture, "He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him [to know him, to know his will]."--Heb. 11:6.

THE NEW SONG OF MOSES AND THE LAMB.

Our Lord in symbol pointed out to us the fact that the message of his grace in the closing days of this Gospel Age would be so different from the commonly accepted message, misnamed the Gospel, that it would properly be termed a new song, altho it would be the old song of Moses--the message of blessing typified by the writings of Moses and by all the ceremonies of

the Law, and the message of the Lamb, the good tidings announced in connection with our Lord's birth, and throughout his own ministry, when all the people "bare him record, and wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth" (not threats of eternal torment to nine-tenths of the human family); and the testimony of all the apostles respecting the Lamb of God and the great work to be accomplished by him in taking "away the sin of the world." It is

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merely this same song that is now being sung by those whom God has blessed with a knowledge of present truth--it is "the joyful sound" which only the people thus blessed know or can sing.

It is a worldly proverb that truth is stranger than fiction, yet this proverb is illustrated throughout "Christendom" today--the vast, vast majority of professed followers of Christ are strangers to the truth, but thoroughly familiar with the fictions of human invention --"traditions of the elders," which "make void the Word of God." It is in full accord with this that the angel declares to the Revelator that no man can learn to sing this song except the elect--the 144,000, the "little flock." (Rev. 14:3.) Indeed, nothing is more manifest than that it is necessary to be somewhat of an "overcomer" of the world and its spirit which pervades nominal Christendom, ere any would have the courage to sing this song--to declare before men the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the goodness and grace of the divine plan, of which Jesus and his sacrifice are the center. To all others "the fear of man bringeth a snare," and stoppeth their mouths from speaking "forth the praise of him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light." "But the people that do know their God [his character and plan] shall be valiant and do exploits," and like the apostles of old will feel and say, Whether it be right to obey God or men, judge ye; but we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. --Dan. 11:32; Acts 4:19,20.

Nor need we suppose that the fact that only the 144,000 can sing this song implies that those able to sing the song could not fall from their steadfastness and become castaways, and lose the privilege of singing it. On the contrary, the Scriptures most distinctly assure us that only by unceasing faithfulness will any be permitted to continue to be reckoned as members of that elect company, foreknown and prearranged of God. Our Lord clearly intimates that he will blot out the names of those who are unfaithful, that other names may be written in their stead. He clearly intimates that unfaithfulness will cause that the crown set apart for the faithful will, if he prove unfaithful, be given to another.--Rev. 3:5,11.

THE WALK OF THE BLESSED PEOPLE.

In harmony with the foregoing is the intimation of our text which implies that in order to be of the people who will know the joyful sound it will be necessary to "walk in the light of God's countenance."

Or, reversing the statement, the thought is that all who walk in the light of God's countenance shall be his blessed people, and shall know the joyful sound.

What a lesson of holiness is here: not a lesson of human perfection and self-commendation to God, but a lesson of abiding in Christ under the robe of his righteousness, and of walking continuously with him and in the path of the just, which "shineth more and

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more unto the perfect day." And whoever would walk with Jesus in the light of divine favor, in the smile of divine approval, must needs walk the narrow way of self-control and self-sacrifice--"even unto death." Whoever delights in sin and sinful practices cannot walk in the company of Jesus, cannot be recognized as a member of his body or under his robe-- can have neither part nor lot in this matter, whatever may be done with him or for him in the future age. As the Apostle expresses it, those accepted of Christ, and who would maintain affiliation with him, must remember that all of the "royal priesthood" are given the truth, not to make them vain or boastful, or heady and high-minded, but to purify them, and to sanctify them. He declares "He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

A TEXT FOR THE YEAR.

We suggest to the friends of the truth the adoption of the precious words of our text as a talisman for the year, if not for the remainder of the pilgrim journey. We believe that these inspired words will help all who understand them to more and more measure up to the divine ideal which they present to our minds: "Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance."

Another line, in full harmony with this, from the succeeding Psalm, might profitably be added: "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us." Only those who see the beauty of the great King, who discern something of his justice, his mercy and love, his wisdom, his power, can clothe their new minds with

these glorious graces which more and more shine before our anointed vision as the beauty of the Lord our God. And the more clearly they are discerned, the more faithfully can we copy them, and the better do we love the joyful sound, and the better can we sing the Song of Moses and the Lamb.

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WE HAVE FOUND HIM! EUREKA!

--FEB. 4.--JOHN 1:35-46.--

AFTER his wilderness temptation, Jesus returned to Bethabara, where John was preaching, fully convinced of the character of his mission--that it was not to be after the manner of Satan's suggestion of worldly methods, leading on to popularity and honor of men--that on the contrary it would be his part to bear witness to the truth in such a truthful and simple manner as would commend it and him to such only as were Israelites indeed. No doubt by this time he saw that before the glorification could come the new Israel must be selected, the "royal priesthood, the holy nation, the peculiar people"--antitypical or spiritual Israel. He had reason to expect that there was at least a remnant of this class in the nation of Israel after the flesh, and altho fully realizing that no man could come unto him except the Father which sent him should draw him, he nevertheless recognized the propriety of putting himself in the way of those whom the Father would draw, that he might receive them as quickly and as favorably as possible. Hence his return from the wilderness was to the vicinity of John's mission work, where not unreasonably he might expect to find some of the Israelites indeed.

Our lesson shows that the Heavenly Father had made use of John the Baptizer's Mission and had exerted through it a drawing influence upon the hearts of some who by this time were quite ready to learn of Jesus as the Way, the Truth and the Life--the channel of approach to God. The drawing power which the Father exerts during this age is the truth--the knowledge of divine compassion toward mankind manifested through the sending of Messiah to save the people from their sins--to deliver them from the power of sin and Satan, as well as from the death penalty.

It was after our Lord's return from the wilderness that the delegation of priests and Levites, sent from Jerusalem, came to John asking, "Who art thou?" to whom he replied that he was not the Christ but merely a forerunner, a herald. To these John pointed out Jesus, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," explaining how he knew

Jesus to be the Messiah by a previously appointed sign which God had given him--the descent of the holy spirit in the form of a dove.--Vss. 19-34.

It was the very next day after this testimony to the priests and Levites that John, in the presence of two of his disciples, looking intently upon Jesus as he passed near (no doubt wondering how our Lord's Messiahship would be made known), exclaimed, "Behold the Lamb of God!" This was the same testimony (only abbreviated) that he had given to the priests and Levites, and which had evidently fallen, in their case, upon dull ears. But note the difference in the case of those who were "Israelites indeed;" the two disciples immediately followed Jesus. John's testimony became to them the drawing power of God, because they were in a condition of heart to be susceptible to that influence. Thus we see clearly illustrated how some are drawn and others are not drawn by the same message, and we see also that the divine drawing does not operate arbitrarily, but in accordance with certain fixed principles pertinent to the divine plan. It was not sufficient that a testimony should be given, it was not sufficient that a curiosity should be aroused; it was necessary additionally that the interest awakened should be so powerful as to lead to action on the part of those who were drawn, as the poet expresses it, "He drew me, and I followed on."

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The Lord is seeking not merely the curious, but the truth-hungry, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, and for fellowship with himself, and here, as in every instance, he that seeketh, in this proper attitude of heart, findeth. The two disciples had not followed the Lord far until their faith and zeal began to be rewarded: the Lord turned to them and was the first to speak, and thus he illustrated his own words respecting those drawn of the Father to him, "He that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." Had our Lord not thus condescended it would have been a difficult matter for these humble fishermen to have approached one so far above them in dignity and in appearance--one whom they had just learned was the great Messiah, long promised of God to be the Prince of the kings of the earth. Applying this feature of the lesson to ourselves, and remembering that the Lord is the same yesterday, today and forever, helps us to appreciate his condescension manifested toward all who would come unto the Father through him--we who now come to him because of the hearing of faith and the sight of faith, as well as those who then approached him because of the sight of the natural eye and the hearing of the natural ear.

Our Lord's salutation, "What seek ye?" not only overcame the diffidence of those who sought him, but

the more they would consider his words subsequently, the more meaningful they would find them, as we do today. And this seems to be the question which the Lord puts to all those who approach him, and essay to become his followers, "What seek ye?" Are you seeking loaves and fishes of earthly advantage? Are you seeking earthly honor and social and political influence and preferment? The answer soon or later will be manifested by the conduct of the seekers, tho evidently all do not realize, at the time, what are their real motives in seeking the Lord. It were better, however, that each should remember our Lord's own expression on this subject, and sit down and count the cost at the very beginning--that each one should learn that to seek the Lord truly is to seek after righteousness, fellowship with the Father and with the Son; and that this means the forsaking of sin, so far as the heart is concerned, and so far as possible the purifying of the flesh by the "washing of water through the Word."--Eph. 5:26.

All should learn also that seeking to be disciples of Christ implies not only a fellowship with him in the glory that is soon to be revealed, but also a fellowship with him in the sufferings of this present time--a "filling up of that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ." If, as our Lord suggested, each one would sit down and count the cost beforehand, there would be less subsequent disappointment, and altho the number of his followers would be much smaller there would be many less "tares" amongst the "wheat," and this would mean the better spiritual prosperity of the "wheat."

The would-be disciples of Jesus heard the question without discerning, of course, its depth; nevertheless, being in the right condition of heart their answer was along proper lines--Rabbi (master), where are you stopping? They seem to have understood that like themselves he was a Galilean, and that like themselves and others he was merely visiting in that vicinity on account of John's mission work, which drew great multitudes. Their question implied in a pleasant way a desire to become more intimately acquainted with Jesus. And he accepted it in this manner, and invited them to his stopping place; as it was about four o'clock in the afternoon they remained with him the remainder of the day, and we may well imagine what the Evangelist has not recorded respecting the pleasure and profit which came to them during these hours of intercourse. As a result they were convinced of Jesus' Messiahship--their own intercourse with him tending to corroborate John's testimony. And thus it is with all who of a true heart seek to know of God's appointed way; not only are they kindly received by the Lord, but the very opportunities for knowledge, fellowship and communion which they desire are granted to them.

Andrew was one of these two disciples of John,

and altho the other is not definitely mentioned it is the general supposition that it was the Apostle John himself, who seems to have been of a very modest disposition, quite unwilling to make his own name very prominent in his writings. Thus on other occasions he mentions himself not by name but as "that disciple whom Jesus loved."--John 13:23; 19:26.

Andrew and John both had brothers, and the implication of the Greek text seems to be that both at once sought their brothers, to bring them to the Lord, but that "Andrew first findeth his own brother Simon," and it may be surmised that John through modesty neglected here to mention that he also found his brother James, and brought him to the Lord. This is a good illustration of the proper course for those who have found the Lord--they should at once begin to think of their brethren, friends, neighbors, and should carry the good tidings to them as quickly as possible. It was quite proper that these disciples did not follow the course that some are inclined to follow today, viz., to seek to learn of the Master all that he would communicate, and then go forth and pose as wise ones amongst their friends, giving them the information they had received in dribblets, and avoiding the mention of Jesus as the Father's channel of communication of the truth to them. Properly, they investigated

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privately to an extent sufficient to justify their confidence, and then immediately began to tell the good tidings to their friends. So each one who has found the Lord should seek to make him known to others; and more than this, like Andrew we should not only seek to acquaint our friends with the fact, but should seek to bring them to the Lord for personal contact with him--such spiritual contact that they may see him with the eye of faith, and hear him with the ear of faith, that they may know him, whom to know is life eternal. Too many take a different course, and are satisfied merely to tell the good news to their friends without bringing them through faith and consecration into contact with the Lord. Let us more and more learn the right way to serve our friends. Let us learn that knowledge is valueless except as it succeeds in bringing the hearer into faith contact with the Savior.

When Peter was brought to the Lord, "Jesus looked upon him," or as we might express it, "read him through and through," and then said, Your present name is Simon, and you are the son of John, but you shall be called Cephas,--Hebrew for Peter (Greek, petros, a stone). This may be understood as a kind of prophecy on our Lord's part respecting a great change in Peter's character. Peter was naturally very impulsive--not sufficiently solid, too easily carried

about; and yet our Lord evidently saw in him sterling qualities of heart, honesty, sincerity of purpose: and knowing the influence which his teachings and the holy spirit would exercise upon such a character, he foretold a change which would make of Peter one of the staunchest and most substantial of his corps of disciples. This prophecy of change was implied in the new name given him, signifying solidity--a stone --whereas his previous name, Simon, signified a listener.

Altho Peter was the only one of the twelve whose name was thus changed we may readily suppose that the characters of all were considerably changed, under the influence of the great Teacher and of the holy spirit, which came upon them at Pentecost. And so it is with all who become the Lord's disciples: to enter the school of Christ and to remain there means, as the Apostle expresses it, that we will be "transformed by the renewing of our minds." And the Lord promises all such that they shall have "a new name," expressive of the new character, but which no man can appreciate except those who receive it--the name of Christ.

--Rev. 2:17.

In the case of Philip, the order of procedure was reversed, and instead of his coming to the Lord, as did the first two, and instead of his being brought to the Lord, as in the case of Peter and probably James, the Lord, on the contrary, "found him" or approached him on the subject, inviting him to become one of his disciples. This shows us the diversity of divine operation in respect to those who are ready for the truth.

It may reach them in one way or in another, but all who are ready for it we may be sure will be brought in contact with Messiah--drawn of the Father. We are not to question that Philip had been previously under divine preparation and drawn into a condition of heart ready to receive Jesus, else he would not have become his follower when invited.

Philip was doubtless acquainted with Andrew and Peter, since they were of the same city, and like Andrew he seems to have thought at once of telling the good tidings to another, and he remembered his friend Nathaniel, whom he knew to be God-fearing, and living in expectation of the fulfilment of the divine promise of the Messiah. We note with pleasure the directness of his presentation of the subject, "We have found him of whom Moses in the Law [in the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament] and the Prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth." He did not attempt to interest Nathaniel merely with the prospect of joint-heirship in the Kingdom, tho that of course would be implied indirectly; but he drew attention to our Lord's person. And his language shows that he was not a mere enthusiast, but that he had been making a study of the fact that Messiah had been described by Moses and the prophets, and that he had evidently been endeavoring, to the best of his ability,

to test our Lord's title by those predictions and had found satisfactory evidence that Jesus was indeed the Christ, the Sent of God. So it should be with all of us when we attempt to present the message of Christ to the attention of others. We should have the promises of God and their fulfilment in mind; and these should be our argument. It is not calling attention to Christ, nor at all following the example of Philip, to assail men with threats of eternal torment, and to

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urge them to join some human society called a church; nor is it following Philip's example to present as inducements the prospect of financial and social prosperity through church affiliations. On the contrary, the message to be delivered is respecting our Lord, and that he is the Deliverer whom the Father has sent, and that whoever would have the Father's fellowship and blessing must come to Messiah and in him find the wisdom of God and the mercy of God unto salvation.

Nathaniel is commonly understood to be another name for Bartholemew, and he probably, like the others, had been in attendance at John's mission. We may readily suppose that John's work not only attracted to him the social outcasts of Israel, seeking a life of reformation, but that it drew to him also certain colaborers in the work, who were known as his "disciples,"

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and who assisted him in administering baptism to those who came as repentant sinners. (John 4:1,2.) This offers another suggestion respecting these Israelites indeed who were of John's company, and were thus introduced earliest to Jesus, and were ready to become his disciples: their fidelity to righteousness, and their endeavor to serve the Lord according to the best of their ability, led directly to their more intimate association with Jesus and his service. So doubtless we will find it today, that some who are engaged in works of reform from proper motives are specially prepared for deeper truths, and grander privileges in connection with the present harvest work, and we should be willing to put ourselves in the way of such, after the example of our Lord with these his first disciples.

Nathaniel seems to have been rather of the incredulous type of mind; he was fearful that his friend Philip was being deceived by an impostor, and he began to offer objections. Nazareth itself was noted as being rather a fanatical city; besides, no doubt Nathaniel had in mind the declaration of the prophet respecting Bethlehem as the city that would be honored as Messiah's birth place, and so he inquired, Is it reasonable for us to expect that any great good would come from Nazareth? Is there any Scripture to that

effect? He was of course ignorant of the fact that our Lord was born in Bethlehem, and taken as an infant to the home of Joseph in Nazareth. His question, and the reasoning which it implies, were evidently very proper. But as we note Philip's reply, we are full of admiration for its simplicity and wisdom. He did not attempt to explain matters which are difficult to be understood, and which had not yet been explained to him; nor did he waver in his faith because of this suggestion of doubt. On the contrary he said, "Come and see:" when you have seen the man, and have heard him as I have, no doubt will remain in your mind that he is no ordinary man, and that he is all he claims to be.

It would be well if all of the Lord's dear followers would learn well a proper, simple directness of approach on religious subjects, exemplified by Philip's words to Nathaniel; and also they should learn not to attempt to take the Master's place, but to bring all true Israelites direct to him, as the Teacher, the explainer of the obscure features connected with himself and his work. Matters often look differently on the outside from what they appear on the inside, as faith and greater privilege display them. God has purposely arranged it so that those who look from the outside only see many inconsistencies, inharmonies, and undesirable features, while those who get to view matters from the inside standpoint of faith can see riches of grace, beauty, harmony, divine workmanship. And this exterior view is the one that naturally comes to all of us first, as it came to Nathaniel, and the proper course to be pursued is that suggested by Philip, --come on the inside and see how it looks; take the standpoint of faith in the divine revelation, and from that standpoint note the grandeur of the divine plan.

This same lesson is pointedly illustrated by an anecdote told by Pastor Spurgeon, deceased, of a man who was invited into an orchard to eat some of the fruit; he refused, for he said that he had picked up some of the apples by the roadside that fell from the trees, and they were poor and bitter. The owner replied those trees were placed there on purpose, so that bad boys would not be attracted into the orchard to steal. "But" said he, "come inside, and there the apples are delicious." Thus it is with those who see Christianity only from the exterior. They see many misrepresentations of true religion and true faith in prominent places, and even if they be able to distinguish as between the true Christianity and its misrepresentation in churchianity, they are apt to see only the self-denials, the crosses, the persecution for righteousness' sake, etc., and know nothing comparatively of the heavenly peace and blessing enjoyed by those who have entered into newness of life with Christ, who are supported well by the gracious promises of the divine Word and by the fellowship of spirit granted to them, which permits them to rejoice even in tribulation

and count their disadvantages as but light afflictions enduring but for a moment, when compared with their higher joys, and their hopes that these shall be eternal.

Let us leave this lesson with two thoughts specially clear before our minds: (1) The importance of finding the Lord, and not merely of gaining information about him. (2) The propriety and importance of seeking out the "brethren," and of bringing them not merely to a knowledge of abstract truth, but especially to the Lord, and to intimate communion and fellowship with him.

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THE KINGDOM ATTAINABLE ONLY BY A NEW BIRTH.

--FEB. 11.--JOHN 3:1-18.--

NICODEMUS was evidently a good man, and "not far from the Kingdom"--not far from the attitude of heart necessary to the attainment of the Kingdom. He was a man of learning and influence, a prominent member of the chief sect of the Jews, and one of the judges of their chief or supreme Court, the Sanhedrim. His wealth, learning, etc., gave him advantages over many of the poor and unlearned, and yet they also brought disadvantages, as our Lord on another occasion expressed it: "How hardly [with what difficulty] shall they that have riches [of any kind] enter into the Kingdom of God." It would naturally be more difficult for a man of large influence and social standing to receive instructions from Jesus, and to become his follower, than for humble fishermen to do so; pride, social caste, thought of what people would think and say, etc., would all tend to hinder him. For these reasons, as well as possibly with a hope to have a more quiet conversation, Nicodemus visited Jesus by night--semi-secretly.

Evidently he had been impressed by the teachings and the miracles of our Lord, for we find him ready to acknowledge Jesus as a great Teacher sent of God, altho not ready to confess him the Messiah. Our

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Lord's ministry, while commending him to Nicodemus, was evidently a very different one from what he had expected of Messiah. As a Jew he of course had the usual Jewish thought respecting the Kingdom of God, viz., that Israel was that Kingdom, merely shorn of its power by the Gentiles until Messiah should appear for its deliverance and to subjugate all nations before Israel, that the Jewish Law might become the law of the world, going forth with power from Jerusalem.

Nicodemus discerned the wide difference between such hopes and the kind of a kingdom proclaimed by Jesus and his disciples. We may reasonably infer, therefore, that his queries, tho not stated, were along this line, and our Lord's replies, quoted with greater detail, so intimate.

It was with astonishment that Nicodemus heard from the great Teacher that himself and others of the Jewish nation could not possibly enter the Kingdom without being born anew; and naturally his mind ran to the natural birth and he inquired how it was possible that a full-grown man could be born over again. Such a question was desired by our Lord, and gave opportunity for the explanation that the first birth which all experience, viz., the birth of the flesh, by which mankind is born to human nature, and with a flesh body, is a type, a figure, an illustration of a higher spiritual birth, to a spiritual nature with a spirit body. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, that which is born of the spirit is spirit." As a man cannot see trees, houses, flowers, etc., nor enter into the enjoyment of these, until after he has been born of the flesh, so likewise no one can either see or enter into, the heavenly Kingdom, except he be born of the spirit. In other words, a human being can see earthly things, but only a heavenly or spirit-born one can see and share in the heavenly things: and the long promised Kingdom of God, the Millennial age, for which Israel was waiting, is to be a spiritual Kingdom and not an earthly one, composed of spirit beings and not flesh beings; and only those born of water and of the spirit would ever see or enter into that Kingdom.

The reference to water was probably suggested by some question from Nicodemus, respecting John and his baptism unto repentance--whether or not this had anything to do with the new birth. Our Lord's answer associates John's baptism of water unto repentance with the spirit begetting which began at Pentecost. Repentance from sin was essential to the right condition of heart which would prepare a Jew for transfer from the earthly typical kingdom, and make him ready for the begetting of the holy spirit

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through which, if obedient, he would finally be born into the heavenly Kingdom in "the first resurrection." This use of the word "born" as representing resurrection is a Scriptural one, for do we not read that our Lord Jesus in his resurrection was "the first-born from the dead"--"the first-born amongst many brethren"--and was it not in respect to these "brethren" who would with him be sharers in the Kingdom that he addressed Nicodemus?--Rom. 8:29; Col. 1:15,18.

While we hold that this Scripture in its full, ultimate meaning, relates to the first resurrection of the

Kingdom class into Kingdom power, glory, honor and immortality, we nevertheless concede that the word *genao* is sometimes rendered begotten. We concede also that everyone who is to be born of the spirit in the first resurrection must first be begotten of the spirit in the present life. We concede also that the new life now begun is frequently spoken of as tho the new creature were already born by a figurative resurrection to newness of life. "You hath he quickened [made alive, by a figurative resurrection] who were dead in trespasses and sins." But these partial and figurative uses of the words "alive" and "resurrection" and "born" should not be permitted to discount our thought respecting the realities and powers and glories which can be attained only by a share in the actual first resurrection --"born from the dead."

While Jesus was talking with Nicodemus quite probably the wind whistled through the apartment in which they were sitting, rattling the doors, etc., and Jesus seized upon this as a good illustration by which to convey to the mind of Nicodemus the difference between human beings and spirit beings, and to give him a clearer conception of the nature and powers of the class who would compose the spiritual Kingdom when set up in power and great glory. He said, The wind blows where it pleases; you hear its sound, but cannot know whence it comes nor whither it goes; and so it will be with those born of the spirit--all inheritors of the heavenly Kingdom: they will be as invisible and can go and come as the wind, and men in the flesh will be unable to see them, as they are unable to see the wind, tho they will be everywhere present and influential, as is the wind.

Nicodemus was astounded at the thought that the Kingdom of God would be so different from what himself and others had expected. All this should not have been so strange to Nicodemus: he should have remembered that the powers which our Lord described as those which would belong to the spirit-born class were the very powers which in the past from time to time had been manifested through holy angels, who being sent on special missions appeared suddenly, and when their mission was accomplished vanished just as suddenly, coming and going like the wind,--none knew whence or whither. Nicodemus, as a teacher of the Law, should have had these things in mind, and

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our Lord rather reproves him for not grasping the subject quickly: Are you, a teacher in Israel, ignorant of these things? Is it difficult for you, who are acquainted with the Law, to realize these teachings? I have been telling you only such things as are known and to a considerable extent have been demonstrated amongst men through the ministry of angels, yet you

are unwilling to receive the testimony. How could you expect to believe, if I should proceed to explain to you heavenly and spiritual things pertaining to that Kingdom? You surely would be unprepared for such information. Nor would Nicodemus have been to blame for not understanding spiritual things if our Lord had told of them; for only the spirit-begotten can clearly grasp and appreciate those things. Our Lord was explaining to him that he must not expect a comprehension of such things at that time, but should merely expect a partial understanding, sufficient, however, as a basis of faith; clearer comprehension would come with the spirit baptism at Pentecost. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.... God hath revealed them unto us [spirit-begotten ones] by his spirit" (1 Cor. 2:14,10), and we may enter into the realities when born from the dead in his likeness.

Continuing, our Lord reminded Nicodemus that no man had ever ascended into heaven [none had ever been there, or seen heavenly things] except he himself, who had come down from the heavenly condition to the earthly condition--even the Son of Man.* Altho aside from the main line of this lesson, it is not amiss that we here note the harmony of our Lord's words with the words of the Apostle Peter in his discourse on the day of Pentecost, "David is not ascended into the heavens." (Acts 2:34.) All the testimonies of the Scriptures are in harmony on this subject, altho opposed by nearly all uninspired writers, heathen as well as Christian, who follow the traditions of men instead of giving heed to the sure Word of God.

Having thus answered Nicodemus' questions to the very limit of possibility at the time, our Lord turned the subject, and by way of showing the grand basis for this spiritual Kingdom of God, and that he himself could not enter into that Kingdom while still in the flesh, (1 Cor. 15:50) but that he must also be "changed" to spirit conditions by resurrection, he points out his coming ignominious death, and how it was illustrated and typified by Moses and the brazen serpent in the wilderness. The whole world is bitten by the fiery serpent of sin. The whole world is dying, and it was needful that our Lord Jesus should be lifted up as a sin-offering on behalf of the world, that he might subsequently be lifted up in glory, and in order that having thus paid the penalty for all, eternal life might be offered to all--"that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

In passing the point, let us notice that our Lord said not a word respecting any danger of the world going into eternal torment, nor did he utter a word respecting the salvation of any in ignorance. His declaration was that the world was perishing, and that the only way in which they could obtain eternal life

at all would be through believing in him. So then to all who are willing to take the simple statement of God's Word, it is clear enough that the wicked who reject the Lord cannot have eternal life, and hence could not spend an eternity in misery, because without life there can be no feeling--without life they are perished. It is clear enough also that whoever shall be saved in this age or in the age to come must be saved by believing in Jesus, and cannot be saved through ignorance, according to this Gospel, which is the only authorized one.

Then our Lord gave Nicodemus a brief statement of why the Heavenly Father has provided the blessing which he had been describing--the Kingdom, and the lifting up or sacrifice of the Son of Man as a prerequisite. The reason is God's sympathetic love for humanity. He beheld that altho mankind were sharers in father Adam's sentence of death, yet many amongst them would, if granted an opportunity, gladly accept the divine arrangement, and come back into at-one-ment with their God, and rejoice to abide in his favor and to do his will. On this account God had sympathy for mankind, and prepared a great plan of salvation, of which the first coming of Jesus in the flesh as a sacrifice for sins was the first step or manifestation. "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son [to humiliation and sacrifice in death], that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have [obtain] everlasting life." It has been said by some one that this 16th verse is the golden verse of the Bible, containing more than any other one a condensed statement of the Gospel. Luther called this verse "the little Gospel," or "the little Bible."

Perhaps in answer to another question, or perhaps merely as a part of the further discourse to Nicodemus, our Lord next explained to him that God's object in sending his Son into the world was not to have the world condemned, for the world was already condemned, sharing with Adam the original condemnation or sentence of death. On the contrary, God sent his Son to save the world--to recover mankind from that sentence or condemnation. This is in harmony with another statement of Scripture which declares of believers, that "There is now...no condemnation to them that are

*Oldest Greek MSS. omit the words, "which is in heaven."

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in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1), yet only believers have thus escaped; all the remainder of the world are still under wrath, "children of wrath," and there is no other way of escape except through Christ, for "There is no other name given under heaven or among men

whereby we must be saved."

The 18th verse is in harmony with this thought, that believers escape the condemnation that is on the world, but that those who do not accept of Christ remain under the condemnation already upon them at birth, as Adam's heirs. Nevertheless, as is declared in the 19th verse, the condemnation already upon men is justified by their course, if after seeing the light they do not love it, but reject it, and fight against it. However, we are to remember in this connection the Apostle's declaration that many in the present time see only in part, the god of this world blinding them more or less completely. (2 Cor. 4:4.) And we rejoice in the assurance of the same Apostle (John 1:9) that Jesus is the true Light, which ultimately, in the Kingdom, shall be a great Sun of Righteousness, with healing in his beams, which shall shed forth light and knowledge to every member of the human family during his Millennial reign; so that all shall have the fullest opportunity of ceasing to be "children of wrath," and of escaping the condemnation that is on them through Adam's disobedience, and of coming back through the Mediator, during the times of restitution,

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to all the good things lost through sin.--Acts 3:19-21.

While our Lord in his discourse to Nicodemus dealt only with the new birth of "the Church which is his body," and which with him, born of the spirit, shall constitute the Heavenly Kingdom that shall bless the world, he nevertheless elsewhere intimates that the restitution blessings which shall come to mankind will be also after the nature of a new birth, tho not a birth to spiritual conditions. Speaking to his disciples of the Millennial Kingdom, when they should sit with him in his throne--the times of restitution--he calls that Millennial age and work regeneration--Greek, palingenesia. (Matt. 19:28.) This is not the same word rendered "born again," but signifies more nearly restitution, restoration or renovation.

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NOTHING TO DRAW WITH AND THE WELL IS DEEP.

--FEB. 18.--JOHN 4:5-26.--

"God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

SAMARIA was the name of a stretch of country lying between Judea and Galilee; we might call it a county, and say that its chief city, of the

same name, was its county-seat. Its inhabitants were known as Samaritans, and the Jews, while dealing with them commercially, would have no intercourse with them socially and religiously, but treated them in every respect as they treated Gentiles in general, as being outside of divine favor, "aliens and strangers to the commonwealth of Israel, without God, and having no hope in the world." (Eph. 2:12) The ancestors of these Samaritans were Gentiles, and were transported to Samaria centuries before, as the Israelites were transported to Babylon, by Nebuchadnezzar. (2 Kings 17:24-41.) These Gentiles, through contact with the Jews, and through intermarriage with certain renegade Jews, obtained a smattering of knowledge of the Jewish hopes and worship, combining these to some extent with false ideas of their own. As a people they are described by the Apostle's words as feeling after God, if haply they might find him. (Acts 17:27.) But the time had not yet come for God to reveal himself to the world, or in any sense of the word to accept Gentiles: thus far all divine favor had been concentrated upon Israel, the seed of Abraham, and upon only such of those as maintained their covenant relationship by circumcision; hence the Jews were right in not acknowledging the Samaritans, and in having no dealings with them religiously, nor intermarrying with them socially. This was not a matter of bigotry, but of divine regulation and prohibition. --Deut. 7:1-6.

It will be remembered that our Lord distinctly set the seal of his approval to this course, when sending forth his disciples to declare the Kingdom of God at hand. He said to them, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not; for I am not sent save to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." We remember, too, the city of the Samaritans concerning which the Apostles James and John said, "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire from heaven, to consume them?" To whom Jesus answered, "Ye know not what spirit ye are of. The Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." Nevertheless, we remember that Jesus would not perform his miracles in healing the Samaritan sick, and that it was for this reason that the Samaritans resented and would not receive him, or permit him to pass through their city on his journey.-- Luke 9:51-56.

It was during one of these numerous journeys from Judah through Samaria, en route to Galilee, that our Lord, wearied from the exhaustion of preaching and from the further exhaustion of his vitality in healing the sick, and from journeying, rested at Jacob's well, while his disciples turned aside to a village to purchase provisions.

Jacob's well had a great reputation throughout that region, because of the purity of its waters; that

being a limestone country most of the water found was brackish, but Jacob's well, sunk to a depth of over a hundred feet, and about eight feet in diameter, struck a crevice in the rock, which yielded a large supply of

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desirable water. We are to remember, too, the scarcity of water in that part of the country, especially at some seasons of the year, which accounts for the fact that the Samaritan woman of our lesson had quite a distance to come to obtain her supply at this good and never failing well-spring. When she arrived, Jesus, who was sitting on the curb of the well, resting, was at once recognized by her as a Jew, and she was at once recognized by him as a Samaritan, not merely by facial lineaments, but also by distinctive features of dress--the Jews having a white fringe on their garments, while the Samaritans used blue.

For a Jew to make a request, to ask a courtesy, of a Samaritan, was unusual; and consequently when Jesus asked for a drink of the water the woman was drawing she was astonished enough to inquire how it came that he, a Jew, would make such a request of her, a Samaritan, and her question has in it the element of boldness, which is explained later on by her acknowledgment that she was not a virtuous woman. All this, however, makes it the more remarkable that our Lord would condescend to have any intercourse with her. There is a lesson in this, however, along the line of the Apostle's words, "Condescend to men of low estate." We cannot avoid supposing that the reason why many Christian people would utterly disdain to speak to such a woman is that they have almost unconsciously to themselves imbibed the spirit of their religious teachings, which would declare that God would so abominate such a person that he would deliver her over to the devil, to be eternally tormented, as soon as she came into his hands at death. They reason, almost unconsciously, that one so despised of the Lord should be shunned and spurned by humanity. They need a clearer knowledge of the divine Word respecting God's attitude toward sinners, his unwillingness that any should perish, and his provision that the wilfully wicked, who reject all his mercies, shall not be tormented, but be blotted out of existence. (2 Pet. 3:9; Acts 3:23.) True views of the divine character and plan are very helpful to God's people in shaping their course properly.

Had there been a company of Jews to whom the Lord could have talked at this time, we are bound to suppose that his energies would have been expended on their behalf, to the neglect of the disreputable Samaritan; but there being none of the "children" to be "fed" at the time, he let some of the crumbs of knowledge and blessing fall to the Samaritans, who,

like the Gentiles, were not "children," but in comparison were "dogs." (See Matt. 15:27.) Our Lord's course here is an instruction for his followers, an illustration of the Apostle's words that we should "do good unto all men as we have opportunity, especially to the household of faith." Further, it illustrates our Lord's own declaration, that it was his meat and drink to do the Father's will, to be engaged in the Father's business. Altho he was weary, and knew that further talking would interfere with his rest and refreshment, he was ready to sacrifice his own convenience that he might be helpful to another, even to a social outcast. So the Apostle exhorts all of the Lord's people to be "instant in season and out of season," in preaching to willing ears.

There was wisdom in our Lord's method of introducing himself to the woman. He made a request that would not be difficult for her to comply with, and at the same time he laid himself under obligation to her; and experience shows that this is one of the best methods of approaching all--condescension and an expression of confidence in their generosity, with the implication which it gives of willingness to return the favor in some manner.

Not heeding the rudeness of the woman's reply to his request, our Lord proceeded to teach a lesson respecting the grace of God, using the good water of Jacob's deep well as an illustration, telling the woman that if she understood the privilege she enjoyed she in turn would be asking him for "living water"--flowing water, not stagnant, always fresh. She perceived that there was some deep meaning to our Lord's words. He could not refer to Jacob's well, for he had no leather bucket and cord with which to draw from it; hence her inquiry, Whence hast thou living water? Father Jacob provided this well, and knew of no better water for himself and family. Are you able to provide better water than this? Are you greater than he? Our Lord then led another step in the exposition of spiritual things, assuring her that the water which he had to give was of a different kind; that it would not only satisfy thirst for the time being, but would be a continual well-spring within, ever giving satisfaction.

Water, living water, pure water, is a wonderful symbol, very expressive to everyone: and thirst is another. Thirst is desire, craving, longing. Physical thirst is said to be much more painful than physical hunger. The latter loses its powers gradually in weakness, but thirst continues and intensifies hourly until the very last breath. Water is that which quenches, which satisfies this demand of nature: and so there is also a soul-thirst, and a water of life which alone can satisfy it.

Every ambition and desire is a thirst. A man's greatness, his individuality, is measured (1) by the number of his thirsts or desires; (2) by the character

or quality of those thirsts or desires; (3) by the capacity and intensity of those thirsts or desires. And true education is the instructor of men as respects proper

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and improper desires, or thirsts: and respecting which should be gratified, and how to do so most wisely. He who has no desires has nothing to satisfy, and is practically a nonentity. The lesson of life is not that we should be without desires and plenty of them, but that these desires should be transformed from sinful desires to righteous desires, from sinful cravings to holy cravings. Thus the followers of the Lord are to hunger and thirst after righteousness, and are to be filled--satisfied--not by losing their desires, but by realizing them--by appropriating the Lord's provision, which is abundant and continuous, satisfying all proper longings. Improper longings are to be resisted, controlled, rooted out, while proper longings are to be built up, cultivated, to be supplied and to be enjoyed forever.

This satisfying water of life can be obtained from no other source than our Redeemer, and all who have received it well know it and can never be sufficiently thankful for it; for in it they have the peace of God which passeth all understanding ruling in their hearts. Instead of thirst for honor amongst men, they have the thirst for fellowship and honor with the Heavenly Father and the Redeemer. Instead of a thirst for earthly wealth, their transformed desires now thirst for heavenly treasures. Instead of thirst for sensual pleasures, their desires are transformed so that their chiefest joys and desires are for spiritual pleasures. And all these thirsts are abundantly and continually satisfied through the refreshment of the Word of Truth, and the holy spirit of the Truth--the water of life which is communicated to us by our Redeemer, and is in each one a perennial living fountain.

Of course the Samaritan woman did not grasp the meaning of our Lord's words, nor could we, under the same circumstances, for we are to remember that the well from which our Lord gives us to drink is deep, and that neither the Samaritan woman nor we have anything to draw with. We however, living under the new dispensation of the holy spirit, have been abundantly supplied, for, as the Apostle declares, "The spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God...That we might know [appreciate, be satisfied with] the things that are freely given unto us of God."--1 Cor. 2:10,12.

Our Lord did not answer the woman's request for the true water of life, (1) because the time for bestowing the holy spirit of the Truth had not yet come, and did not come until after the great sacrifice at Calvary --until Pentecost. (2) Because she was a Samaritan,

and as such could not receive divine favor and the holy spirit until the appointed time which was not until the door of favor would be open to all Gentiles,--not until three and a half years after Pentecost: nevertheless the woman's interest and faith and the faith of her townsmen seem to indicate an honesty of heart pleasing to the Lord, on account of which he let fall to them some "crumbs" of comforting truth which may have prepared them for the Gospel when later it was fully opened to them and to all Gentiles. (3) Because the woman was not yet in the condition of heart to receive the water of life. It was unnecessary to explain to the woman the first two reasons, since the last was a barrier which she could more readily understand, and hence our Lord called her attention to the fact that she was living in sin. She perceived that he was gifted with a prophetic insight which permitted him a stranger to know of her sinful course of life, without asking.

It may be queried, why our Lord would thus confer with a woman unprepared to receive the blessings he had to give, and one to whom he could not have given the blessing then, even if she had been prepared. The answer is (1) that he was making use of an opportunity to its fullest possible advantage; (2) that despite her sinful course of life the Lord saw traits of honesty in the woman's character, evidenced from the narrative; (3) he might reasonably hope that the influence of this discourse might tend toward righteousness and toward a true thirst for the water of life, which six years later, under the general preaching of the Gospel (without restriction to the Jews) might bring some of these Samaritans to a realization of the fact that the well of the water of life is deep, that they had nothing wherewith to draw, and that if they would have this satisfying portion they must receive it as a gift from him who laid down his life that he might have the privilege of supplying the water of life to whosoever wills. And should the poor Samaritan woman never have come under the influence of the Gospel, with an opportunity to drink of the water of life, we have the assurance of the divine Word that such an opportunity will be granted to her in the future, together with all who do not now have an opportunity.

We praise the Lord for the information afforded us in his Word, that altho the water of life is now given individually, and enjoyed only by the "elect," "even as many as the Lord our God shall call," yet the time is coming that it shall no longer be thus a well of water springing up within the Lord's people, but during the Millennial age will be a river of water of life, broad and full and clear as crystal, flowing out from the throne of God and of the Lamb, and of the Bride the Lamb's Wife and joint-heir, to all the families of the earth: and that then there will not only be trees of life, whose leaves will be for the healing, restitution,

of the nations, but that the Spirit and the Bride (then glorified) shall say, Come, and he that heareth may say, Come, and whosoever will may come and have the water of life freely.--Rev. 22:17.

The Samaritan woman seemed anxious to avoid any discussion of her own character and life, and skillfully turned the question to a theological one--whether the Jews or the Samaritans were right in their different views respecting divine worship and its proper place. And in this we see that human nature is much the same today. Men and women of today would rather discuss theological problems and denominational

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controversies, than turn their glance inward, and note the inconsistencies of their own lives, with a desire to reform them. Nor did our Lord too closely press the moral question he had so promptly touched and to some extent made sensitive, and his course in this should be a lesson to his followers. It is sufficient that attention be called to a wrong, and often this is more efficacious than if they be teased and angered, and put on the defensive, by disrespectful "nagging."

Our Lord summed up in few words a great lesson respecting the proper worship of God. He told the woman most pointedly that the Samaritans had neither part nor lot in the matter, and worshiped they knew not what, while the Jews, on the contrary, were following the divine instruction. Nevertheless, he pointed to the fact that a great dispensational change was imminent, in which all distinctions and barriers of place and manner would pass away, and that under the new dispensation of this Gospel age, any and all having ears to hear and eyes to see God's grace would be permitted to worship God anywhere, but only in spirit (with the heart, sincerely), and in truth, in harmony with the divine arrangement, in the true way--through Christ, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life, and by whom alone there is access to the Father--the Messiah, the procurer and dispenser of the water of life.

An Oriental fable tells of a fountain whose waters were infused with a peculiar power, so that wherever a drop of this water fell on a barren plain it caused a new fountain to gush forth, so that provided with this water the traveller might pass through any desert, however wide or dry, and be always refreshed.

"Wild and fanciful the legend; yet may not meanings high,
Visions of better things to come, within its shadow lie?
Type of a better fountain, to mortals now unsealed,
The full, free salvation of Christ our Lord revealed!

"Beneath the cross those waters lie, and he who finds them
there,
All through the wilderness of life the living stream may bear;

And blessings follow in his steps, until where'er he goes
The moral wastes begin to bud, and blossom as the rose!"

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INTERESTING LETTERS.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--A few days since dear Brother Norcott was in to call on me, and in the course of our conversation he mentioned you, and that he had often had a desire to meet you in the flesh, but that it was quite improbable now. He is getting very feeble, and it is a great effort for him to get about much, but he is anxious to do all he possibly can. Some time ago he felt a little better and took his horse and cart and went out and sold nine DAWNS. He returned beaming with joy that the Lord had so blessed his work. It is hard for him to write, and he wished me, some time when I would be writing to you, to tell you of his great love for you as a brother in Christ, and his gratefulness to you for all the interest you had taken in him while he was in the colporteur work. He said that doubtless you knew of his love and prayers already, but that sometimes it was strengthening to us if some of the brethren came to us with a message of love, and he was sure you would appreciate the motive with which it was sent. Also that he was remembering you before the throne of favor, that our dear Master would grant you the needed grace to finish the work before you. So I write this to you.

And, my dear brother, I can also add that that is my own prayer on your behalf. I sometimes think we are too apt to hide our love and not express it as we should, and thus others may come to feel that we do not love them. May the dear Lord bless you abundantly, more than you are able to think. We wish to thank you for the strong nourishing food you have been spreading before us in the TOWERS lately.

Your brother, by the favor of the Lord,
W. E. VANAMBURGH,--South Dakota.

[We cannot express in words our deep appreciation of the love of the brethren so often expressed in their letters as above. We assure these dear brethren and all that their love is most heartily reciprocated. We love the brethren and take pleasure in laying down our life in their service. We are glad to know that you remember us and the Lord's "harvest" work, which he has been pleased to center here in Allegheny, in your prayers. If we may judge from the letters received, thousands of prayers ascend daily on our behalf. We cannot tell you how deeply we appreciate this: it keeps us humble as we remember our needs, and it strengthens us as we remember the Lord's sufficiency

and his willingness to pour out his blessings in answer to your prayers and ours. These prayers and the divine power to which they are attached are to our hearts a bulwark against the many Satan-blinded foes who beset you and us continually because of our loyalty to the Lord and his Word.

"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:

They shall prosper that love thee."--Psa. 122:6.

These words are as true of the Jerusalem the higher and her children of peace as of the earthly Jerusalem. Those who are praying the Lord's blessing upon his cause are seeking to serve it and are proportionately blessed. Those who are indifferent to the welfare of Zion and the Lord's cause now, are standing in a slippery place and are in great danger of falling.

Continue, dear brethren and sisters, to pray for us (1 Thes. 5:25; Heb. 13:18), and be assured that, as the Apostle Paul said, we have a care for all the churches and for the scattered sheep, and continually bear you upon our heart before the throne of the heavenly grace, and watch as well as pray for your interests and welfare.--See Heb. 13:17; 2 Cor. 11:28; 2 Thes. 1:11; Phil. 1:9. --EDITOR.]

DEAR BROTHER:--Spiritual feasts, comforting, encouraging, instructive and edifying, did all the meetings, conducted by our dear Pilgrim Brother, Frank Draper, prove to be, and our only regret is that his stay with us was of necessity so limited, altho even longer than we had hoped for. The public meetings, of which we had two, in a non-sectarian chapel were well attended considering the inclemency of the weather, fully fifty being present at each. As an immediate result of one of these, it is with pleasure that we announce at least one party was apparently thoroughly aroused and keenly interested, who formerly opposed present truth.

We desire to gratefully thank you and those contributing

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to the support of these Pilgrim brethren, for the blessed season we have enjoyed, and can heartily commend to any of the household of faith Brother Draper as an able and loving expounder of the Word of God, doing indeed a noble work for the cause of Truth, as it is in Christ Jesus our Redeemer, Exemplar and Lord, in thus visiting and exhorting to deeper consecration the little scattered groups.

Hearing of the beneficial nature of the recent conventions, it has been mentioned that perhaps much good would result in a similar gathering at this place during the State Fair and Exposition next fall, and we were glad to learn through Bro. D. that hopes of

such a meeting were also entertained and mentioned by interested ones he had thus far met in Texas, Arkansas and Indian and Oklahoma Territories, and we therefore take the liberty of mentioning the matter to you for advisement. If so, a cordial, brotherly welcome awaits you and other friends who would be entertained to the extent of our ability.

The Musical Towers ordered were promptly received and used to advantage at meetings.

Our prayers are with you and we crave yours, to the effect that we may be faithful overcomers, even unto death.

Yours in Christ,
E. W. BRENNEISEN,--Texas.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--I feel inclined to give you a brief account of our Volunteer work even tho you may hear from others concerning the same.

We put out about 450 of the booklets last Sunday evening. I felt impelled to go out with the others as I had been thinking of the letters in last TOWER and of the blessed privilege thus offered us of sharing in the blessing that surely comes to those who do thus serve Him. I would urge all, in every place to take up this good work of serving God's household of faith (of whom there may be many yet in Babylon) with this "meat in due season."

By a singular coincidence, I went first to the M. E. Church where I was converted 25 years ago. The second booklet I gave out was to a young man who offered to pay for it. Upon being assured that it was freely given to all Bible students, he still urged that I accept a dime and send it to the Tract Society, which I will do quite soon.

A little boy came running down asking me if I would give him another one of those "little Bibles" for an old lady who wanted it.

How true that "Obedience is better than sacrifice," as it is first, or preeminent, and surely involves the true and acceptable sacrifice. How many we see, especially among the sisters of the Roman Catholic system, and also foreign missionaries who are making great sacrifices, yet not according to a knowledge of his plan, and consequently misdirected.

Jesus said, "My sheep hear (obey) my voice." "We ought to obey God rather than men." I firmly believe that all are doing this, who engage in the Harvest work which is evidently under the guidance of the Chief Reaper.

The Church here has been greatly benefited by the publication of the Washington and Boston letters in last TOWER. This is clearly discernable in the increased zeal of all for the work. May we not reasonably hope that the increase of zeal here and in other places may be prophetic of a larger work during the coming year?

May our Heavenly Father bless the work to the

glory of his name, and preserve us all with you unto the establishment of his Kingdom!

Yours in the hope of the high calling.

MRS. C. A. OWEN,--Indiana.

[Two letters have been received from sisters in Christ who are mothers, who are surprised at our advice to Hugo Kuehn in the January 1st WATCH TOWER. One is surprised that we would approve of anything that would bring the boy into touch with sectarianism; the other wonders whether or not all boys' clubs under church auspices are of the kind known to her, and if so she wonders very much that we could advise boys who are seeking to walk in the footsteps of Jesus to have anything to do with them. She says that in addition to the gymnasium for physical culture, they have cigars, cigarettes, billiards, boxing gloves, etc., all calculated to lead a boy far from the narrow way of true discipleship.

We certainly did not suppose that the basements of churches were used in such a manner, nor can we yet think that this is the usual custom; it would seem too extreme to be general. We hope that those known to this sister are rare exceptions. We assuredly would advise all boys who seek to walk in the footsteps of our Lord to shun all such places, and rather to do without the gymnastic exercises, if they could only be obtained under such conditions.

Our thought, in answering Hugo's question, was that the boys' clubs were merely lecture and recreation guilds, entirely harmless and at the same time profitable, and that the only question was whether or not its association with a nominal church system should properly separate from it those who sought to please the Lord. Our answer was along these lines, and we still think that a wide distinction should be observed as between joining a church, being bound with a misrepresenting creed, etc., and joining a boys' club without creed or other bondage except as respects good morals, and not for religious purposes, but merely for cooperation in obtaining the privileges of the lecture course and the use of the gymnasium at a moderate expense. To mingle with moral boys in this way is, in our judgment, merely a business transaction, and the same rules which would hinder a boy from thus associating with other boys in a moral and creedless club would similarly hinder the Christian father of the boy from dealing in any kind of worldly business with sectarian

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Christians and others. The Apostle seems to imply this point in 1 Cor. 5:10.

But we would sincerely regret to be understood as advising countenancing or having any sympathy with the kind of boys' clubs described by our sister's

letter. Far better that the Christian boy should have no use of gymnastic appliances, or that he should construct some for his own use; far better that he should never mingle with other boys at all, than that he should run the least risk of having his heart polluted: for we remember how broadly applicable are the Apostle's words, "Evil communications corrupt good manners." --EDITOR.]

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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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"WITHDRAWAL LETTERS."

These are not samples to be copied by pen, but regular letters all ready to date and sign and can be posted unsealed for one cent each. It is a kind but plain statement of our view of the true invisible Church and its head Christ Jesus and its bondage of love as contrasted with human institutions under Synods, Conferences and Presbyteries and held together with creed-bondage. All who get free from "Babylon" should send one of these letters to each church member with whom he associated in "Babylon." It will do them good and it will insure that you will not be misunderstood and misrepresented unintentionally. Otherwise your withdrawal is almost certain to be misrepresented as "Infidelity"--as leaving the true Church and not merely leaving a human organization never recognized by the Lord nor instituted by him, but by fallible men.

Order all you need with tracts and envelopes accompanying free--after getting a sample and deciding that you wish to use them.

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THE MEMORIAL SUPPER.

The anniversary of our Lord's death reckoned according to Jewish calendar will this year be April 13 at 3 P.M.--consequently the celebration of the Memorial Supper will be on the previous evening, April 12, after six o'clock P.M. We make this early announcement for the sake of friends afar off. Further statements and local announcements later.

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LOOK AT YOUR TOWER ADDRESS LABEL.

If your name is not properly spelled or if improper street number is given, please write us a postal card at once correcting same.

OUR SUPPLY OF "BIBLE VS. EVOLUTION" PAMPHLETS FOR "VOLUNTEERS" IS EXHAUSTED.

It will require considerable time to obtain a sufficient supply. As soon as ready another CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS will appear in this column. Our printers are much rushed and we are keeping them on the DAWNS.

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VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER.

PULPIT VIEWS ON THE MILLENNIUM.

THE PHILADELPHIA PRESS recently interviewed the ministers of Pennsylvania and New Jersey on the subject of the Millennium, asking:--
Do you believe that the Biblical Millennium is at hand?
The majority of the responses denied faith in a Millennium, some expressed an expectation that the churches would bring it about by missionary effort and a few declared faith in a reign of Christ near at hand, as follows:--

Rev. William McNally, Harrisburg, Pa., has made a careful study of the "Millennium" question. He says:--

"I believe that the millennium period is near--that we are living in the 'last days,' foretold in the Bible. The prophecies are all being fulfilled and the signs of the time all indicate it. There are 'wars and rumors of wars' now; there is moral laxity everywhere; the average church attendance is startlingly small, only 36 people out of every 100 attend any church in this country. There is moral and political corruption.

"All of these things indicate the approach of the millennium, as anyone may see by looking up the references in the Bible on this subject.

"The millennium will not be brought about by any human agency. We are not growing better."

Rev. Clarence E. Eberman, Lancaster, Pa., pastor of the Moravian Church and president of the Pennsylvania Christian Endeavor Union said:--

"Sentiment or speculation can decide very little on this great question. The Bible alone offers the authoritative teaching. I believe confidently that Christ is coming again and that his second advent will usher in his kingly reign of a thousand years upon this earth."

Rev. George Fulton, Lebanon, Pa., pastor of the Fourth Street Presbyterian Church, said:--

"I believe that the evidence of the nearness of the millennium is stronger than ever before. Signs have been found in every generation since Christ's ascent that pointed to his coming. The principal proofs are wars and earthquakes, distress of nations, sea and waves roaring, lawlessness and iniquity prevailing to an alarming degree. The Bible says 'When the Gospel of the Kingdom shall have been preached to all the world as a witness unto all nations, then cometh the end.' This is a sign. It belongs only to our own age and the evidence here is strong. Another sign is the prophetic movement,--the restoration of Israel which has begun."

Rev. Sydney N. Ussher, West Chester, Pa., rector of the Church of the Sure Foundation, said:--

"The Millennium is a divine conception, with Scripture the only source of light and authority. No definite time is stated therein. I believe, however, the world is fast preparing for it."

Rev. William J. Houck, Carlisle, Pa., pastor of Grace United Brethren Church, says:--

"I believe that the Biblical millennium is at hand."

Rev. M. E. McLinn, Bloomsburg, Pa., pastor of St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, says:--

"I am certain that a great change is imminent. Everything points clearly to a mighty social and religious upheaval and reconstruction. The very fact that this subject occupies men's thoughts so largely and that the 'secular press' asks the question is proof of it to me."

Pastor F. Jonte Stanley, of the First Presbyterian Church, Atlantic City, N.J., believes "that the signs of the times, as I read them, point to the millennium as not being far off. One of the indications is the gathering of the Jews at Palestine; another that the Gentiles hear the Gospel the world over, and still another is that the nations are coming together commercially, intellectually and religiously."

Rev. W. W. Moffett, D.D., Lambertville, N.J., pastor of the Centenary M.E. Church, says:--

"The trend of revelation on the subject of the millennium seems to teach that a time will come in

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the history of the world when the Gospel shall dominate all nations and Jesus shall reign in the majority of human hearts. To the close student of the world to-day there seem to be many indications that this happy period may be enjoyed in the near future."

Rev. Dr. James Lisk, Bordentown, N.J., pastor of the Baptist Church, said:--

"As to your first question, I certainly do so believe. However students of the Word may interpret your phrase 'Biblical millennium,' there can be little doubt that some great change is soon to take place. The divine programme is being rapidly completed, so far as the present order of things is concerned. Prophecy is rapidly being fulfilled."

* * *

The majority of those who saw no evidence of a Millennium meant that they saw no evidence of the speedy conversion of the world to such a condition that God's will would be done on earth even as in heaven. And in this we must commend their judgment as sound. But alas! that so many should be so

deluded by human theory as to so misunderstand the plain statements of God's Word--that Christ's Millennial reign is for the very purpose of subduing all things. (1 Cor. 15:25,26,28.) False ideas of the "Kingdom" and of the "Judgment Day," and imperfect views of the character and scope of the Atonement, are at the bottom of this blindness to the signs of our times.

METHODIST FIGURES FOR 1899.

Rev. A. B. Sanford, D.D., editor of the "Methodist Year Book," says in "The Philadelphia Methodist,"--
"Your readers may be interested to hear concerning the total membership of the church for 1899, as the statistics have been prepared for the new "Methodist Year Book," now passing through the press. In some measure, the result is preliminary, since the receipt of the figures from a few recent fall conferences will slightly change the additions that later appear in the General Minutes. The "Year Book" totals will not, however, be greatly affected, and show a decrease in members and probationers during the past year amounting to 21,934. In the analysis of this result, several interesting facts appear.

"1. The increase in full members through the whole church has been but 6,661. It is a serious fact that such strong bodies as the New England, the New York, the Philadelphia, the Central Pennsylvania, the New Jersey and the Wilmington Conferences suffered considerable losses, the decrease in these instances varying from the minimum of 1,368, to the maximum of 2,436.

"2. The decrease of probationers in the year 1899 has been 28,595.

"3. This decrease in members and probationers is accompanied by a decline in Sunday School scholars during 1899 of 16,716. It is a noticeable fact that the decline in Sunday School scholars thus occurs in the spring conferences, which as a body contribute a total loss in probationers of 22,572.

"It may be said in conclusion, that the net decline in members and probationers of 21,934 is the first positive decline that has occurred since 1881, and, with that exception, since the year 1863. The above facts are serious, but are such as it may be wholesome for the church to know.

* * *

We do not rejoice in such evidences of a decline in denominationalism: nor do we expect it to continue. If the losses of denominationalism meant that God's children were getting out into the liberty wherewith Christ makes free indeed, then we would rejoice. But

only a small proportion of the present decline can be credited to the spread of present truth. It means, therefore, indifference, worldliness.

It will not surprise us if in the near future a Trust Churchianity will have a season of great prosperity, lasting until the grand collapse which the Scriptures declare will be sudden.

PROPOSED FEDERATION OF PROTESTANT CHURCHES IN GERMANY.

Prof. Beyschlag has issued an appeal to German Protestants which is being regarded favorably by many of them. It tends in the direction of the general religious federation we have long been expecting-- which will revive religious tyranny and suppress religious liberty and stifle present truth; but not until it

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has borne its witness and gathered the "wheat" of the Gospel "harvest." The Literary Digest gives a summary of the proposed plan as follows:--

"There is to be no formal union of the various state churches, nor are these to lose their historical identity in the proposed new arrangement. Not a union is proposed, but a federation of the state churches, with the Prussian Church, which represents the Emperor, the summus episcopus of the Protestant Church of that kingdom, as the head. The confessional status of each church shall remain undisturbed.

"The object of the federation is to unite the churches of the empire for practical purposes. Chief among these purposes is cooperation in providing for the religious needs of the Germans in the Diaspora, i.e., those who are scattered in the various foreign lands and need religious care. Then, too, the Protestant Church of the empire must have some means by which it can, as a body, be represented, just as the Catholic Church has a representative in the Pope. A further but later purpose is to secure unity in church government and polity. In other words, it is to be, with the necessary changes, a federation for the good of the church such as the organization of the empire has been for the state.

"This federation is to find its expression in an imperial Protestant synod, which shall consist of representatives of the various state church governments, as also of the congregations, in such proportions as shall be agreed upon. The officials of this synod shall be the representatives and the executive board."

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A CONGRESS OF RELIGIOUS HISTORY.

This, at the coming Paris Exposition, is proposed as instead of a Parliament of Religions such as was held at the Chicago World's Fair. It is proposed to avoid doctrines and merely to show works--missions, charities, etc., and in all these matters Catholicism hopes to make the chief showing, and reap the greatest advantage.

Disapproving of the proposed Congress The Midland, a United Presbyterian journal, refers to the Chicago Parliament of Religions as follows:--

"Missionaries tell us that their work has been made more difficult, in India at least, by the boasts of devotees of the false systems of religion there that in Chicago they had met and triumphed over Christianity. Tho not intolerant, the Christian religion is absolutely exclusive. It can have no fellowship with systems which insult the true God and know nothing of that blessed Name by which alone salvation comes to any human soul. Its mission is to expose and uproot all other systems and rescue men from their delusion and destructive influence. We are convinced that these parliaments tend to obscure the distinction between the only true religion and the systems of error it must seek to destroy. One such experiment was one too many. If a second is to be attempted we hope the good sense of Christian people will keep them from participation."

We are pleased to note an expression of so much loyalty to the Gospel, and the only Name in which is salvation. It is as rare as it is refreshing in these days of evolutionary unbelief and Higher Criticism infidelity. Would that this editor and his readers might see that the blessed day of Christ's Millennial Kingdom is near, in the which all the deaf ears shall be opened to hear the joyful sound of salvation and to know of that only name and of the eternal life offered to all who will obey him.

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"THIS CHARGE I COMMIT UNTO THEE, SON TIMOTHY."

--1 TIMOTHY 1:18.--

MORE than a year ago we intimated a desire to do something more than has been hitherto attempted to assist God's dear "sheep" in Great Britain and Ireland to hear the great Shepherd's voice and thus to be led into the green pastures of present truth. Our thought was to send

over one of the "Pilgrim" brethren, but the Lord's providence did not seem to open the way for it, and instead Brother Hemmery, already there, was started as a "Pilgrim," and we believe with beneficial results, for which the Lord be praised.

Still we are not satisfied that all is being done there that could be done, and since our last annual report we have been seeking to know the mind of the Lord respecting the great increase of his work in the spread of the "harvest" message, which we believe we may reasonably expect in the next few years. While we expect that most of the increase will as usual be in this land, specially prepared and specially favored and favorable, it seems to us that the thirty-five millions of Britain for several reasons deserve special consideration and special effort. (1) Because of our unity of language and religious ideals. (2) Because of the prevalence of a religious sentiment among the masses. (3) Because we have reason to hope that the present lamentable war is not only awakening the people, as wars always seem to do, but additionally because some of the reverses met with may prove to be blessings by bringing to the people a larger degree of humility and specially causing the religious to ponder over the evidences we present respecting the completion of the "elect" church and the speedy inauguration of the Millennial reign of righteousness. (4) Because so large a population of one tongue being within comparatively so small a space should make efforts there doubly effective of results, all other considerations being equal.

Accordingly we have planned, and from the first of the year have been arranging to send to Great Britain a representative to look the field over, with a view to the establishment of a branch office in London from whence that whitening field could be more thoroughly harvested. The proposition is, that the "Colporteur" work, the "Volunteer" work and the "Pilgrim" work could be much better carried on there from such a home office and by one thoroughly familiar with the methods the Chief Reaper has been pleased to bless here. True all these branches have already been started in Great Britain, but none of them work as smoothly and efficiently as we believe they will operate under the proposed plan. Many, we believe, hesitate to order tracts, papers, and books because of the distance, difference in money, etc.

The next question naturally was, to whom shall so important a mission be entrusted? And the question, under the requested guidance of our Lord, seems to be satisfactorily answered. With his hearty consent we have chosen our dear Brother Henniges, in whose efficiency for this service we have fullest confidence and who has given many proofs of his loyalty to the Lord and his cause, and of whose full consecration of heart to the Lord we have no doubt. He

has had personal experience in all departments of the work for the past eight years--the last seven of which he has spent in the Watch Tower office and as a member of the Watch Tower family, whose "table talks" are in the nature of Bible schools.

We could not send you, dear British brethren, anyone in our judgment better qualified to assist you in carrying on the work we all so dearly love to serve. We trust that you will welcome him heartily and co-operate with him to the extent of your judgments and opportunities. We shall greatly miss him here, but will feel a pleasure in sacrificing our own conveniences for your sakes--that the grace of our Lord may abound toward many who have not yet

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"tasted that the Lord is gracious." May he always abound as at present in the knowledge of the truth and in its spirit of love for the Lord.

We have been in correspondence with the British Postmaster General and find that the postal rates and terms are less favorable there than we had expected --less favorable than ours; but having gone thus far we are not yet discouraged--hoping for some good results from a personal inspection of the field anyway. Brother Henniges will go direct to London, view the situation and write us,--meantime awaiting our reply, he will make a "Pilgrim" visit to various cities and towns where already there are little gatherings of Watch Tower readers; and this alone we believe will justify, should the London "branch" proposition prove to be infeasible.

Of course, Sister Henniges will accompany her husband, not only as his natural help-mate, but as his helper in the Lord's work. We commend our dear sister very highly to you all as a very earnest and faithful child of God and servant of his cause; full of the spirit of self-sacrifice, and firm for every principle of righteousness as she discerns it. Sister Henniges has been a member of the Watch Tower family for twelve years, joining in the office work with her brother when quite young. May God's blessing continue with both these dear members of our family, making them blessings in various ways to the household of faith across the great deep.

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THE GOOD TIDINGS DISCREDITED.

--FEB. 25.--LUKE 14:16-20.--

"He came unto his own, and his own

received him not."--John 1:11.

REMEMBERING the proverb, "A prophet has no honor in his own country," our Lord did not begin his ministry in Nazareth, where almost twenty-eight years of his life had been spent and where consequently he was well known to the people. His ministry began in Judea, and the people of Nazareth undoubtedly heard considerable respecting the marvelous works and words of their suddenly notable fellow-citizen, before he came thither.

All this would be in their favor, and tend to prepare them to receive Messiah and his message, offsetting the familiarity which so frequently begets contempt.

Our lesson shows that our Lord had been in the habit of attending the religious services of the synagogue every Sabbath day, and intimates that it had been his custom to do the reading of the Law--which implied an education far beyond that of the majority of his day. As synagogue-attendance was not strictly a part of the Law, our Lord's example in thus seeking to associate as far as possible with the most religious people of his day, and his willingness to take part in the public services, are a lesson to his people everywhere, in harmony with the words of the Apostle that we should not forget the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, for the Lord's worship. --Hebrew 10:25.

The passage of Scripture read by our Lord from the prophecy of Isaiah was quite probably the stated Scripture lesson for that day, for it would appear that it was a custom of the Jews to have Scripture readings each Sabbath day, taking up various parts of the Old Testament Scriptures alternately. At all events, the lesson read by our Lord is easily identified as a Greek translation from Isaiah 61. He read the first verse of the chapter, and stopped reading in the middle of the second verse, closed the roll, and returned it to the servant having charge of the closet in which the rolls were kept, and then, according to the custom of the time, as an indication that he was ready to make remarks, Jesus sat down. How much of an explanation of the Scriptures he gave his hearers we are not definitely told, but doubtless he commented liberally upon the various features of the prophecy, summing up his remarks with that which is recorded, viz., that the prophecy was in process of fulfillment at that very moment.

The audience, composed chiefly of his acquaintances, had a mixed sentiment as respects him; with the natural feeling of irreverence for those with whom we are intimately acquainted was blended another feeling of pride in a fellow-citizen, who had attained such renown; and as they listened to his exposition of the prophecy they were filled with admiration, "and all bear him witness, and wondered at the gracious

words which proceeded out of his mouth." They said within themselves and to each other, We have never heard such wonderfully good tidings before in our lives, and this from our neighbor, the carpenter. Little did they realize, when thus admiring his gracious message, that something would occur in a few moments which would completely frenzy them, and lead them to desire to murder the one who now declared himself to be the fulfiller of this prophecy, the Anointed of the Lord, the Messiah, ready to give in due time the blessings mentioned by the prophet.

The people of Nazareth were more interested, however, in the miracles of Jesus than in his claim to be the Messiah. The miracles were practical, and they could appreciate them, but his teaching that he was the Messiah seemed farfetched, when they had known him for so long as the son of Joseph, the carpenter. They therefore began to wonder, and possibly to question, how soon he would do in Nazareth some of the wonderful miracles done by him at Capernaum and elsewhere, of which they had heard. Knowing this to be the attitude of their mind, our Lord anticipated their request for miracles, and explained that they must not expect miracles from him--though they evidently expected more miracles amongst his friends than they had heard of his doing amongst strangers. This made necessary a little explanation, which was not at all flattering to them.

Our Lord does not say that he was not permitted of the Father to do miracles at Nazareth, although this is implied in the fact that he did none, and implied also in the explanations and illustrations which he gave. Doubtless he was guided in the matter by certain principles governing his use of the power from

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on high. As we have already seen he might not use this power selfishly in his own interest; we may likewise suppose that he would not be at liberty to use it simply as a gratification to curiosity, but that it could be used only in response to proper faith. The people of Nazareth evidently were not in the attitude of faith, not therefore in the proper attitude of heart, to receive God's blessing--the wrong condition of their hearts was manifested by their actions, when our Lord refused to gratify their curiosity. We note the difference between this curious and unbelieving desire for miracles, and the course of action following it, in contrast with the faith of the Syro-Phoenician woman, her humility of heart, and the manner in which she received our Lord's first refusal to grant her request. (Matthew 15:22-28.) We can but suppose that had the people of Nazareth been in a proper attitude of heart they would have accepted our Lord's refusal to work miracles in a different manner, and would have

said, "Well, we enjoy the gracious words from his mouth anyway, for they have brought a healing and blessing to our hearts." And if such had been their attitude no doubt later our Lord would have performed miracles of healing in their city also.

By way of explaining to them why he might not perform his miracles in their midst, as well as toward others, our Lord cited two illustrations from the prophets of the past--Elijah sent to the poor Gentile widow, to be a blessing to her home, while widows of Israel were passed by; and Elisha healing Naaman of leprosy, while many lepers in Israel were passed by. These apt illustrations were unkindly received by his hearers, because, drawing the parallel, it likened them to starving poor and diseased lepers and implied our Lord's comparative greatness and superiority to them as a dispenser of divine bounty. After the same manner our Lord elsewhere told the Pharisees that he, as the Good Physician, had come to heal the sick and that the well needed not a physician. That this was their attitude of heart, and feeling no need of him, and the blessings he dispensed, they did not realize their sin-sickness, and their deadness in trespasses and sins, and hence did not realize their need of redemption and deliverance from the power of sin and death.

The effect of our Lord's illustrations was almost electrical upon the proud hearts before him, whose only interest in him from the first had been that of pride in him as a fellow-citizen and hope for miracle-proofs of his power. Now, however, this pride was turned to bitterness, and they would murder the one who had spoken so disrespectfully of them as to compare them to hungry widows and lepers, needing his aid. The congregation immediately became a mob, filled with angry passion; and surging forth with him the crowd led in the direction of a precipice with a view to casting him headlong from it. But by the exercise of some power, possibly a power natural to a perfect human being, our Lord mastered them with his mind, and passed from their midst, none daring to stay him, and went on his way.

Let us note carefully the message which our Lord declared was in process of fulfillment that day. He declared himself to be the Anointed One mentioned by the prophet--his anointing of the holy spirit dating from the time of his baptism, when John bore witness that the holy spirit descended upon him and abode with him. The anointing was for a purpose, as the prophet declared, and our Lord confirmed the same, saying that he was anointed to preach the gospel.

THE GOOD TIDINGS BORNE BY THE MESSENGER OF THE
COVENANT.

We are to distinguish between the preaching of the gospel or "good tidings" and the good things promised, which are to come to pass in due time. The preaching was begun by our Lord and has been continued throughout the Gospel age, by all those who by the grace of God became "members in particular of his body," the church over which he is the head

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forever. (1 Cor. 12:27; Eph. 1:22-23.) After this preaching of the gospel shall have been given, and shall have accomplished its purpose and intention, then will follow the glorious actualities referred to in it. And if the mere description of the coming blessings is called the Gospel, good news, good tidings for all people, what may we not hope respecting the blessings themselves, of which only the message is now given to the hearing and sight of faith?

The gospel was to be preached by the Anointed Head and by the anointed members of his body, to all who have ears to hear it, in the special interest of one particular class, viz., the poor, the broken-hearted --not the literally poor any more than the literally broken-hearted, but the "poor in spirit," the humble-minded, who are also the sympathetic, the tender, the heart-broken, as in contrast with the hard-hearted. We make this distinction as between the poor in purse and the poor in spirit because it is a very necessary one, which some failing to discern have been misled into grievous errors. True, not many rich, either in purse or intellect, will attain the Kingdom, the majority, being chiefly the poor of this world in purse and intellect, but rich in faith. (1 Cor. 1:26-29; James 2:5.) However, it is not because of their poverty of intellect and of purse that there will be more of this class chosen, but merely because poverty of purse and intellect are much more favorable to the development of humility than are riches of any kind; and humility is a prime essential to an inheritance with the saints in light.

While all of the anointed gossellers may during this age bear their message without restriction as to nationality or color or sex, to whomsoever has an ear to hear, Jew or Gentile, bond or free, and while they may not be able to discern in advance which will prosper, this or that--nevertheless they will not waste time and effort upon those whom they find to be mentally "rich and increased in goods, and feeling that they have need of nothing." (Rev. 3:17.) No; they are rather to take note of those who, when they hear the good tidings, give evidence of proper "ears to hear," the meek, the poor in spirit, realizing that it is this class that the Lord is specially seeking during this age.

Similarly, the anointed ones are not to spend their time endeavoring to break the hard hearts of the worldly, for this is not a part of its commission. God himself, through various providences, is attending to the work of breaking the hard hearts; some are

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broken and softened by the trials, difficulties, perplexities and adversities of the present life; some are torn and bleeding through severe trials of life and earthly disappointments; and the time of trouble fast approaching is specially designed of the Lord as the time for breaking and melting many hard hearts, in preparation for the Millennial Kingdom and its blessings of restitution, etc. Now, however, the message is to "bind up the broken-hearted."

How much there is of this very kind of work that needs doing! The poor in spirit, contrite and mellowed of heart, disappointed with the world, vexed with the flesh and the adversary, are to be found in nearly every quarter of the world; and whosoever has received the anointing of the holy spirit should realize that this power upon him is given to be exercised upon this needy class--pouring in the oil and the wine of the divine promise, to cheer and comfort and bless, and prepare for joint-heirship in the Kingdom, some of the very class whom the Lord will be pleased to accept. To these the gospel may be preached freely; they will not turn again and rend the messengers, but will hear it, and it will comfort and bind up their wounded hearts.

If then we have found the class to whom the anointed ones are to specially address themselves, what is the special message of peace and blessing which they are to bear, and which the Prophet and our Lord denominate the "gospel"--the good tidings? Is it the announcement of the election of a handful to glory, and the reprobation of all the remainder to an eternity of torment? No; this is not the gospel which the Prophet and Jesus declared. Is it the message of God's goodness of intention, but incapacity of execution, which will result in a very few being saved and the great mass of humanity being eternally tormented? No, not so. Evidently our Lord was not sent to preach this gospel (?) of damnation, so common to-day--for it is no part of the message here declared, nor would such a reprobation to eternal misery be called "gospel" truthfully.

Let us see what is implied in this "gospel" message set forth in the Scriptures. Let us know how widely it differs from the various messages of heathendom, and from the commonly accepted messages of "Christendom." Let us note the true gospel message that should be proclaimed by all who have been anointed with the holy spirit. It is divided by the

Prophet into five parts: (1) Deliverance to the captives; (2) recovering of sight to the blind; (3) setting at liberty them that are bruised; (4) the announcement of the acceptable year of the Lord, as preceding these blessings; and (5) the announcement of a day of vengeance in the close or end of the acceptable year of the Lord,--a "time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation." This last part, tho proper to be proclaimed by the anointed "body," was not due to be proclaimed by the anointed "Head" at the time of our Lord's discourse. All mankind are captives, all are blind, all are bruised; hence it is a universal blessing that is announced in this Scriptural "gospel" message.

(1) The captives are the slaves of sin; Adam and all his race, "sold under sin." (Rom. 7:14.) Through disobedience in Eden the race was born in this slavery, "born in sin, shapen in iniquity." Some of the sin-enslaved race have already been remanded to the great prison-house of death, while all others are on their way thither. The "good tidings" which Jesus preached and which all his followers under the same anointing of the spirit must preach, is the resurrection of the dead, or as the Apostle expressed his teaching, it is "Jesus and the resurrection." (Acts 17:18.) Jesus, the Redeemer, Jesus the anointed Head of the spiritual Seed which, as God's Kingdom, is shortly to bring to mankind full opportunity of release, not only from the prison-house, but from all the other incidents of their slavery through the first Adam,--he having redeemed the first Adam and his posterity with his own precious life.

None but the anointed body of Christ are commissioned to preach this good tidings, and every member of that body is so commissioned irrespective of human distinctions of "clergy" and "laity"; and whoever does not fulfil this mission is unfaithful to his commission. And alas! as we look around us, throughout the length and breadth of Churchianity, falsely called Christianity, we find that evidently very few indeed have been anointed, because very few indeed know this message of the resurrection,--indeed that the majority of ministers in all denominations are heartily opposed to the doctrine of the resurrection, because it is in direct conflict with their unscriptural theories.

(2) The promised recovering of sight to the blind has a far deeper signification than mere natural eyesight. It refers to the blindness which sin has brought upon the hearts of men, perverting their mental vision, hindering them from seeing the divine being and his divine attributes in their true light,--as loving, gracious and true, just and wise. The blindness that is upon mankind, and "the gross darkness that covers the people" in general, is described by the Apostle as being the work of the great Adversary Satan, who by

false doctrines not only amongst the heathen but also amongst Christians, has misrepresented the divine character, the divine Word, the divine plan, "putting light for darkness, and darkness for light," and has thus deceived the whole world, all nations, with the very small exception of the few whose eyes of understanding have been enlightened with the true light.

We have no hope for this general opening of the blind eyes in the present age--only the few now get the eyesalve. In some respects indeed it is better that the majority should be permitted to remain blinded until by the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom the conditions shall be much more favorable than at present, that when then the eyes of their understanding have been opened, and their responsibilities proportionately increased, it may be under circumstances more favorable to them.

(3) "To set at liberty them that are bruised" gives the thought of sin's captives sore and distressed from the manacles with which they are bound. This figure fitly represents the bondage of corruption, infirmity, etc., which are concomitants to the death penalty. The promise for such a deliverance means "restitution" in active operation (Acts 3:19-21), in the assistance and uplifting of the world of mankind during the Millennial age--to all the glorious perfections lost

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for all through father Adam's disobedience, and its sentence of death. What a glorious hope is here! No wonder this also was included as a part of the good tidings. How comparatively valueless would all the other features of blessing be, if sickness and pain and imperfection continued. It is when we see not only Sin, the taskmaster, itself removed, but also all of its results counteracted, and all the sinner-race privileged to return to the full liberty of sons of God, and that all this is provided for through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, and through the Kingdom which is to be established in his hands for the blessing of all the families of the earth--then we discern why it is called "good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people," and hear the echo of John's prophecy from the standpoint of the future perfection, saying, "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for

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the former things are passed away."--Rev. 21:4.

(4) "The acceptable year (or acceptable time or epoch) of the Lord" is this Gospel age, which began with our Lord's consecration at his baptism, and his anointing with the holy spirit, and which will continue until the last member of the body of Christ has "filled

up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ"-- until all the sufferings of Christ (head and body) are complete, when the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.--Isa. 40:5.

This Gospel age is called the acceptable epoch, because during this time God is willing to accept sacrifices for sins. First he accepted the sacrifice of his only begotten Son our Lord, and secondly he has been accepting throughout the age all those who come unto the Father through Jesus, and who, justified by his merit, present their bodies living sacrifices to God as a reasonable service, and thus become joint-sacrificers with Jesus, and joint-heirs with him in the coming Kingdom, as it is written, "Heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."*--Rom. 8:17.

WE WALK BY FAITH AND NOT BY SIGHT.

However, it is well to notice that while the "gospel" includes all the foregoing blessings for mankind in general, it brings a sooner and still greater blessing to the "little flock" whose ears are blessed that they hear, and whose eyes are blessed that they see, in advance of the world. To these all of the coming blessings are anticipated,--not literally, but by faith, for "We walk by faith, not by sight." Already the true Church ("whose names are written in heaven" Heb. 12:23) is not only justified by faith, and thus reckonedly released from captivity to Sin and death, but also reckonedly is risen with Christ, reckonedly has become "new creatures" in Christ, reckonedly, under the New Covenant, are no longer in the flesh but in the spirit, and so accounted of God, and so accounted also of each other, who henceforth know each other, not after the flesh, but after the spirit--as new creatures.--2 Cor. 5:16.

These have a new sight, seeing with the eye of faith things that are not visible to the natural sight. They are guided into all truth, as it becomes due; yes, they discern "the deep things of God," because they possess the spirit of God (1 Cor. 2:9,10), seeing with the eye of faith things which the natural eye hath not seen, hearing with the ear of faith things which the natural ear has never heard, neither has entered into the heart of the natural man to conceive of or imagine --the things which God hath in reservation for them that love him,--and who manifest their love by their devotion to him and his. The eyes of their understanding being opened, they are enabled to "comprehend with all saints the length and breadth, the height and depth, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth (human) knowledge."--Eph. 3:18.

Altho this special class is not set at liberty from

the bruises and imperfections of the mortal body during the present life, but require in this as in other things to walk by faith and not by sight, nevertheless, in one sense of the word they are set at liberty from these imperfections, because under the terms of the New Covenant they have the assurance of the Lord that none of the natural blemishes and imperfections and physical weaknesses are henceforth counted against them, their standing being reckonedly that of new creatures, and their judgment in the Lord's sight being according to their intentions of heart, and not according to the weaknesses of their flesh, which is reckoned dead.

We exhort all of the redeemed who have made a covenant with the Lord, "a covenant of sacrifice," to remember why they are reckoned as members baptized into the body of the anointed one (the Christ)--here plainly set forth by the Head of our body, viz., that each one is to be a preacher of this Gospel and not of another Gospel. Let us be faithful for yet a little longer, until the great High Priest shall fully qualify us as the "Royal Priesthood" in the glory of the Kingdom, that then it may be our privilege with him to bring to mankind all the wonderful blessings forestated in his gospel, for the blessing of all the families of the earth, with a full opportunity of attaining the light of truth and the liberty of the sons of God.

*See Tabernacle Shadows of Better Sacrifices.

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"AND HE HEALED MANY THAT WERE SICK."

--MARCH 4.--MARK 1:21-34.--

JESUS made Capernaum his home and the center of his work in Galilee for a considerable time. It will be remembered that it was here that the Roman centurion, whose servant Jesus healed, lived, of whom the Jews testified that he was a friend of their nation, and had built them a synagogue or house of worship and Bible study. (Luke 7:5.) Some ruins in that vicinity have recently been exhumed, which are supposed by scholars to be the remains of this synagogue, because they seem to be on the site of Capernaum, and represent the most substantial synagogue structure in all that region, the walls being ten feet thick, seventy-four feet nine inches long, and

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fifty-six feet nine inches wide, with a roof supported by four rows of columns.

As indicating our Lord's strict attention to the Father's business, we have the statement that "straightway," at once, on arriving at Capernaum from Nazareth, our Lord went into the synagogue (probably the one built by the centurion), and began his teaching. This reads peculiarly at the present day, when custom has completely barricaded every opportunity for free expression of opinion in almost all places devoted to worship. The Jewish arrangement was certainly a liberal one, and every way favorable to the truth, because whatever errors might creep in, the truth always had an opportunity for challenging them and exposing their weaknesses and referring to the divinely inspired oracles. Who can doubt that if we had just such simplicity or arrangements to-day, by which truth could challenge the various errors which have crept into all sectarian teaching, the result would be favorable--not favorable to sectarian systems, it is true, but favorable to the establishment of each individual in the truth, as presented in the divine oracles.

The people who heard our Lord's discourse were astonished. (1) At the things which he taught, and (2) at the manner in which he presented them. He taught with authority, that is to say, our Lord had a clear understanding of the subjects he handled, and his presentations were not vague suppositions and imaginations, and foundationless hopes and speculations; but were clear-cut and distinct, and well proven by the testimonies of the Law and the Prophets, so that they were conclusive in the minds of his hearers, who hitherto had been used to hearing the scribes guess, wonder, suppose, etc. Since the Lord has not seen fit to provide us with even a condensed statement of his discourse, it implies that a full knowledge of it would not be specially advantageous to us. However, a hint or inference respecting a portion of the sermon is furnished in the statement that during its progress a man present, possessed by an unclean spirit, cried out--evidently opposing something Jesus had said, saying, "Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us?"

The clear inference is that Jesus had been speaking against sin, and the power which it exercised over humanity, involving all in the death penalty, with its sickness and pain and trouble; and incidentally no doubt he had mentioned demoniacal possession, so common at that time--and more common to-day than most people suppose. It is our guess that the gospel preached at Capernaum must have followed somewhat similar lines to the gospel preached at Nazareth, declaring the time at hand in which God would be pleased to receive back into harmony with himself those who had been alienated through sin, and who

had thus been brought under the bondage of corruption. He no doubt declared himself to be the great Life-giver, the Good Physician, sent to heal earth's woes and to reveal to mankind the Heavenly Father, and to become to as many as would avail themselves of it, "the Way, the Truth and the Life," by which they might return to divine favor in fullest measure. The language of the evil spirit, speaking through the man as its mouthpiece,* clearly implies that these fallen spirits had at least a general understanding of the time when their evil course would be run, and that they knew that the just wages of their sinful course is destruction --not eternal torment. They recognized Jesus and his mission and his holiness, and that he was the representative of the Heavenly Father, but they had no hope for themselves--no expectation other than that when the time should come they would be utterly destroyed, annihilated. From various Scriptures, however, we learn that these fallen angels, demons, wicked spirits, will not be destroyed without first being given an opportunity for repentance and reconciliation with God.*

Our Lord did not deign to hold conversation with these spirit beings, who had fallen under the ban of divine condemnation, and with whom the Heavenly

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

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Father could no longer have intercourse. He did not, therefore, explain to them that his first advent was merely to pay the ransom price, and to start the gospel message which would select the "little flock" to be members of his "body" and joint-heirs with him in the Kingdom, that when complete and glorified should bless and judge the world and judge the fallen angels also. (1 Corinthians 6:3.) And our Lord's course in having nothing whatever to do with these fallen spirits, but on the contrary commanding them to hold their peace, should be a lesson to every one of his followers, who should seek in this and in every other matter to walk in his steps. We have known some to get themselves into serious difficulties through curiosity--which led them either to spiritualistic seances or to privately have communication with these fallen ones. Their cunning and deceitfulness is far too deep for humanity, and he who seeks communion with them in any manner or degree does so in violation, not only of the Scriptural command (Lev. 20:6; Isa. 8:19), but in violation also of Jesus' example; and such run great risk of thus being entrapped and falling from their own steadfastness. The Apostle

gives us to understand that even unwillingly and unwittingly we frequently wrestle, not with flesh and blood, but with these evil spirits, who inspire and use fallen fellow-creatures.--Eph. 6:12.

The unclean spirit "tore" the man in coming out, that is, caused violent convulsions, and used the man's mouth in uttering a loud cry. Our Lord, of course, could have forbidden such manifestations of the demon spirit, but preferred to allow it to be so, that thus might be manifested the malignant disposition of the evil spirits, as well as the power of his command which, with all their malignity, they could not disobey. The effect of the miracle upon the audience of course was wonderful. They saw "the man Christ Jesus" exercising in their very presence a superhuman power --controlling spirit beings. No wonder they were amazed, and no wonder his fame spread throughout all Galilee.

Leaving the synagogue, our Lord, accompanied by James and John, went with Simon Peter and Andrew, his brother, to their home, where Peter's mother-in-law lay sick of a fever. Jesus visited her, and "rebuked the fever," took her by the hand and helped her up (Luke 4:39), and immediately the fever was

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gone, and even the usually accompanying prostration of strength did not remain, but on the contrary, she was able to entertain and serve her company.

The fame of Jesus spread rapidly, and at sundown, in the cool of the day, many sick were brought to him to be healed, and many possessed of devils, to have the evil spirits cast out. The concourse was a great one, from all parts of the city, and again our Lord manifested his mercy in healing ailments, and casting out demons; again, however, refusing to converse with the demons and even refusing and forbidding their giving testimony respecting him. Praise and commendation from an evil source are never to be desired.

The question naturally arises, Why did the Lord perform such miracles? If they were merely from benevolence and with a desire to help the afflicted, why did he not do more of them?--for instance, in the city of Nazareth, regardless of the condition of the hearts of those who were afflicted. Why did he not at one word rebuke all the fevers and all the other diseases which afflicted humanity, throughout the whole of Galilee, the whole of Palestine, the whole of Asia, the whole of Africa, the whole of Europe, and the whole of America? Quite evidently the performance of these miracles was not merely from benevolence toward mankind.

Indeed, we have reason to question whether or not it would be a benevolent act to cure all the ills of

humanity in the present time. The aches and pains, the troubles and sorrows, of humanity are in many senses of the word blessings in disguise, just as was the part of the original sentence of Adam, which declares: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." He who succeeds in avoiding the earning of his daily food by some kind of toil has succeeded in placing himself in an unfavorable condition, for idleness is not only the mother of vice, but the father of discontent. Similarly, there is a ministry of instruction in sickness and trouble which should not be overlooked. The Prophet refers to this blessing that inheres in tribulation, saying, "Before I was afflicted I went astray;" and many of the Lord's people can if they will trace some of their greatest blessings and greatest helps in the development of true character to their experiences in various kinds of troubles and disease. Note where we will throughout the world the finest and the noblest and the best balanced characters, and trace these characters in their development, and we find that much of the chiseling and polishing which has made them what they are was done by affliction of one kind or another--guided, if they were consecrated Christians--by the unseen hand of Providence.

The miracles which our Lord performed in the little country of Palestine, by which a small proportion of their sick were relieved temporarily, was merely a prophecy of the great healing blessing, freeing from the power of Satan and sin, which he preached, and which is to be fulfilled in due time--during his Millennial Kingdom.

His object in performing these miracles was not, however, merely to thus prophesy the future and greater universal blessings of his reign, but more particularly as signs, as evidences, as witnesses respecting his teachings. It was his doctrines or teachings that were to move men; so that as the power of God these might draw to him that certain class which the Father has given him during this age. If he would utter things respecting a heavenly condition, a birth of the spirit to a spirit nature, a spirit kingdom, etc., it would be eminently proper for any hearer to enquire respecting his authority for making such statements and promises, unknown to others and unproven from any earthly standpoint. It was therefore proper that our Lord should anticipate such enquiries respecting his authority for his teachings by giving miraculous demonstrations of his superhuman power, which he explained to be of the Father and witnessing to his integrity.

But someone may say, If such miraculous manifestations were proper and reasonable to the generation in personal contact with our Lord, why would not similar miracles be proper and reasonable for us of the present time, and for others all down through the Gospel age? We reply that some evidences,

proofs or miracles would be proper now, and that greater miracles are before us to-day, as witnesses to the truth of Christianity. These are not of the same order as those which introduced the Gospel age in the "harvest" or end of the Jewish age; they are, indeed, of a far higher order, and more in harmony with the age in which we live. They are none the less real than the miracles of Jesus' day, though they may be less obtrusive and less likely to be noticed, except as attention shall be called to them. Our Lord seems to refer to these present-day miracles when he said to his disciples, "Greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father."
--Jno. 14:12.

Which is the greater work--the opening of the eyes of the naturally blind, or the opening of the eyes of the understanding? Which is the more valuable? In the end of the Jewish age our Lord healed eyes that were blinded either by accident or poison or a sting or what not, and that was a miracle, but to-day the Lord's disciples, under the guidance of the holy spirit, and through it, are able in many instances to open the eyes of the understanding, that those who are blind to spiritual things might see them--and this blindness, the Apostle tells us, is not a mere trifling thing of accident or sting, but is the skillful and intentional injury of the mental eye by the god of this world, Satan. (2 Cor. 4:4.) Do we not, therefore, see many more miracles of this kind--the opening of the eyes of the understanding with the eye-salve of the truth in this harvest-time of the Gospel age--than are recorded of the natural sight restoration amongst the Israelites in the harvest of the Jewish age? And which is the more serious of the two blindnesses? Whether would we prefer to be blind naturally or to be blind to the spiritual things? Whether, therefore, is it the greater miracle to be relieved of natural blindness or to be relieved of spiritual darkness? Undoubtedly the latter.

Similarly with all the diseases, we might draw parallels and find these the greater miracles. Peter's mother-in-law was being consumed with a fever which the word of the Lord rebuked. But how many men and how many women throughout Christendom to-day are being consumed of a fever of ambition or

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pride or discontent, to whom the word of the Lord comes, through some of the household of faith, speaking peace, release from burdensome anxiety and cares of this life, lust for riches, and consuming ambitions and pride of life? How many have been restored to normal conditions and granted to have the peace of God ruling in their hearts, with thankfulness, and how many such have found their strength

renewed, so that being released from these fevers they arose to do vigorously the Lord's business, to minister, to serve, the Lord and his "brethren." Similarly also we might trace the lamenesses and impotencies of the past, and find analogies in the present-- dead hands, worse than dead, used actively in the service of evil, have been recovered for activity in the service of the Lord; men and women dead in trespasses and sins, awakened to newness of life in the service of the Lord and of the truth. Such miracles as these, far greater than the ones of Jesus' day in the flesh. He is now performing through his willing servants and handmaidens, and these are the greatest witnesses imaginable to the reality of the Lord's gracious message that he is the Sent of God, to bring

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blessing and salvation to our race.

The transformations of life and character, hopes and aims, by which some in the present time are blessed, like the physical healings in the harvest time of the Jewish age, are prophecies of what the grace of God can and will do for humanity when God's due time shall come, when his Kingdom shall come, and through its administration of love and justice his will shall be done on earth as it is done in heaven. He who can see now the earthly blessings and healings, accomplished by our Lord, were but foretastes of the coming general blessings to be accomplished during the Millennium, should be able also to see that the regenerations of heart and transformations of character now in progress in the "elect" church are merely foretastes or a first-fruits, illustrative of the blessings of transformed character which the Kingdom will accomplish for all who will come into subjection to its righteous arrangements.

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"THE SON OF MAN HATH POWER ON EARTH TO FORGIVE SINS."

--MARCH 11.--MARK 2:1-12.--

FOLLOWING the miracle of our last lesson and probably other miracles not recorded in this connection, our Lord apparently made another preaching tour; after returning to his home city of Capernaum the incidents of this lesson transpired. Evidently our Lord, with his mother and brethren, had been making Capernaum his home for some time, and it is entirely probable that the house mentioned in this lesson was our Lord's own home. Dr. Schoff suggests that according to the Greek text this

might read "at home," instead of "in the house." As we saw in our last lesson, however, Capernaum was the home also of Peter and Andrew, and the incident of this lesson might possibly have occurred there, though this is less probable.

The return of the young and wonderful Teacher to His own city and home was soon widely known--"noised;" the result was a considerable concourse of people, not only filling the house and the courtyard, but even the door or gateway. Amongst these callers were Pharisees and Doctors of the Law (rabbis, scribes), who came out of the various towns of Galilee and Judea to hear Jesus, and to note his miracles.-- See Luke 5:17-18.

Our Lord's mission was the preaching of the Gospel, and, as already pointed out, the healings, miracles, etc., were incidentals, and not by any means his chief work or object--the "times of restitution" (Acts 3:21) not having come, the miracles of our Lord were merely attestations to and corroborative of his teachings respecting the Kingdom and the Kingdom class which he had come to call and gather--out of Israel and from amongst the Gentiles. Undoubtedly he preached the same message delivered in Nazareth respecting the Lord's spirit being upon him, anointing him to preach the good tidings to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted and to declare a coming deliverance to the captives of sin and death, and the restoration of sight to those blinded by Satan, and the setting at liberty of all the captives subject to the bondage of corruption, but probably this one message was presented from various standpoints at various times, and various texts used, as also various parables introduced in illustration of it. This, however, was the "Word," the message, which our Lord was commissioned to deliver, and we may be sure he did it faithfully.

While our Lord was in the midst of his discourse a paralytic, evidently full of faith, borne on a stretcher of some kind by four friends, sought opportunity to reach him, with full faith in his power and willingness to heal. Finding no opportunity of making their way through the crowd, the bearers took their burden onto the roof by the outside stairway, customary in that country--the buildings being usually but one story in height. It is not at all probable that the building and roof were of the ordinary kind that would have obliged that lifting of stones and cement and dirt, and the breaking of the plaster beneath, for this would involve an absurdity, and the falling of the stones and debris and dust upon our Lord and the congregation would have been insufferable as well as dangerous. The more reasonable supposition is that the house was one of the less common kind, enclosing a courtyard capable of accommodating quite a large audience, the living rooms being built around the wall of the courtyard at one end, and a veranda

or porch-roof over a part of the open court, covered with tiles, which could be removed without much difficulty. The thought would be that our Lord stood under this veranda, preaching; that some of his audience were likewise under it and others standing out, exposed to the sunshine in the court. Dr. Thompson makes the following comment:

"The whole affair was the extemporaneous device of plain peasants accustomed to opening their roofs and letting down grain, straw and other articles, as they still do in this (Eastern) country. I have often seen it done, and have done it myself, to houses in

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Lebanon. I have the impression, however, that the covering, at least of the lewan (court) was not made of earth, but of coarse matting, or boards, or stone slabs, that could be quickly removed."--Compare Luke 5:19.

Our Lord was not offended by this intrusion; He doubtless remembered that all things work together for good to the Lord's people, who will accept them thus. So far from feeling offended at the intrusion and persistency, he entirely overlooked these when balancing them with the quality which he so much admires--faith. All of the Lord's people can well take note of this lesson, and learn more and more to accept the affairs of life as they come as being all subject to divine providence and all guaranteed in advance to be profitable, to work out some good result, if we will but so permit, by receiving them in faith. Let us learn also to overlook and forget rudeness, especially where they give evidence of sincerity of heart, faith, good intentions.

In various ways we learn that under the head of "paralysis" in olden times, in Oriental countries, various diseases were included, which are now specified under different names. For instance, titanus (lockjaw) would at that time and in that country be described as paralysis--indeed, any disease which would render the individual helpless, powerless--whether merely a deadness or accompanied by violent cramps. The incidents connected with this miracle would seem to indicate that it was a serious case, and had in it something of the element of urgency--necessity for seeing the Lord quickly and obtaining his help promptly. Otherwise propriety would have dictated a different course.

It might be questioned whether the faith was that of the palsied man or that of his friends, but we think the circumstances warrant the belief that the sick man himself exercised the faith and prompted his friends to take the steps they did in obedience to his request. This is implied in the fact that our Lord does not speak of the faith of the bearers, but

does speak directly to the paralytic respecting his personal faith. Our Lord must have seen a very proper condition in the young man's heart, else he never would have said to him, unsolicited, "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee." Nor was this expression unpremeditated; our Lord evidently wished that the miracle he was about to perform should not detract from the preaching which it interrupted, but, on the contrary, should impress it as well as illustrate it. He foreknew also that such an unusual statement would awaken in his hearers questionings respecting his authority, and thus the miracle subsequently performed would emphasize the fact that he was the Messiah, and that the redemption of sinners and the forgiveness of sins had been committed to Him by the Father.

The question of the scribes (that is, the Rabbis, the Doctors of the Law), Is not such a statement blasphemy? was a very proper one, and they are not to be blamed for making the enquiry. Our Lord did not deny its propriety, but answered it by saying, It would, of course, be easy for anybody to make the claim of forgiving sins, and it might be impossible to dispute his claim, but in my case I will substantiate my claim to be able to forgive sins by my power to heal this man physically; when, therefore, you shall perceive his miraculous cure of a physical ailment, it will be a lesson respecting the truthfulness of my statement in regard to his sins--that you may know that as the Son of Man I have power, authority, to forgive sins. (Compare Luke 5:24.) Then came the healing of the paralytic, which, put in this form, became a proof, not only of our Lord's healing power, but also of his power to forgive sins. And when the sick man, in obedience to our Lord's command, took up his couch or stretcher and went forth in the presence of all, no wonder they were amazed and praised God.

Apparently all were fully satisfied with the demonstration, Luke saying that they were all filled with fear--reverence--in view of so mighty a demonstration of divine power in their midst. It was not a lesson of fear toward God in the sense of a dread of an unthinkable everlasting future torment, but a fear, in the sense of respect for the God whose love and sympathy and compassion had been so wonderfully manifested--a God who not only was willing to forgive sins, but also willing to help and to relieve his creatures from the difficulties which sin had brought

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upon them. Say what we will about the depravity and crookedness of human reasoning, there is, after all, a power of common sense in humanity which, if properly actuated, is the strongest possible lever in moving them in the right direction--far more influential

with reasoning people than all the false and unreasonable theories which could be concocted.

One lesson for us, found in this incident, is that we, like our Lord, should seek to turn every earthly matter to some good account as respects our real mission in the world--the declaration of the good tidings, and the selection of the Kingdom class to be joint-heirs with our Lord in his Millennial glory. Another thought is that in every instance the healing of the soul from the sickness and condemnation of sin should be placed first, as the highest and most important thing, far outranking physical conditions and blessings.

Although our Lord proved to his hearers that his pronouncement of forgiveness was evidently backed by power and authority, as evidenced by the miracle, nevertheless he did not explain to them the how and the why of his conduct, and hence, while giving them proof, he left the questions of their minds unanswered. His hearers belonged to the house of servants, and not to the house of sons--the holy spirit of begetting and adoption not having yet been given because Jesus was not yet glorified. (John 7:39.) To the house of sons, however, this matter is explained in the Scriptures, in the light of the holy spirit, so that we may understand the how and the why as well as the fact, thus:

There was a provision under the Jewish law for the forgiveness or covering of the sins of the people, through the offering of special sin-offerings by the priests, but our Lord Jesus was not a priest of the Aaronic order, and the palsied man before him had not brought a sin-offering, under the terms of the Jewish law. However, we see the situation in a new light when we realize that the paralytic evidently brought to the Lord the sacrifice appropriate to the

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new dispensation, "a broken and a contrite heart," full of faith, and remember also that our Lord at his baptism assumed the office of the antitypical high priest the moment he was anointed with the holy spirit, and that his sacrifice of himself was counted as given by him and as accepted by the Father, from the moment of his consecration to death, symbolized in his water baptism. Hence we see that our Lord's authority to pronounce the forgiveness of sins was in virtue of his having sacrificed his humanity (which was in process of consummation upon the altar) while he, as a new creature, was a priest of the new order, the "royal priesthood," fully empowered to forgive sins.

Furthermore, this willingness of our Lord to forgive and to heal gives us a suggestion of his willingness and ability to do these same things (forgive the

sins and heal the body) when the times of general refreshment shall come from the presence of Jehovah --"the times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began."--Acts 3:19-21.

THE MIRACLE VIEWED AS A PARABLE.

The various difficulties under which humanity labors, called diseases, illustrate sin in various respects; for instance, palsy or paralysis represents a condition of sin in which the individual loses his power--sometimes merely becoming impotent, in the sense of helpless: at other times, in combination with this may come an insensibility of conscience, a deadness to all principles of righteousness, such as the Apostle describes as "past feeling." In this condition are quite a good many at the present time; they are not only helpless as respects all ability to go to the great Physician, but additionally they are devoid of any desire, any appreciation of their need; they have no feeling on the subject. These must be left for the present, but we may rejoice that the time is coming, according to the promise of the Lord's Word, when all shall come to a realization, a sensibility of sin, and to a knowledge of the way of escape from its condemnation and its penalties. In the present time, however, some, like this paralytic, are not past feeling, and yet are so helpless as to need the assistance of friends in bringing them to the Lord.

Every true Christian should be such a friend to every fellow-creature who has a desire for the Lord's blessing, and healing from sin-sickness; and such should be not only sympathetic but helpful in bringing their friends to the good Physician of the soul. Nor should they be readily stopped by impediments, obstacles, but like those in the illustration, they should be ready and willing to take advantage of every proper circumstance and condition to place their friend near to the Lord and his power, that the blessing might result. And will not the Lord be pleased with our faith as well as theirs, if we persistently do all in our power in their aid?

"True faith, like truest love, invents;
Denied the door, it circumvents."

Another thought here is that the first and most important thing for all is the forgiveness of sins. It is in vain that any would endeavor to avoid this first essential step toward acceptable Christianity. Some are inclined to put doctrine instead of faith and repentance, but this will not do. There is no use whatever in endeavoring to grow a crop of wheat on soil whose sod has not been broken. The fallow ground must first be broken up ere the seed can find proper

root and bring forth fruit. So only those whose hearts have been plowed and brought into the condition of meekness and contriteness, and a desire for fellowship with the Lord--these alone are proper subjects to be brought to the Lord. True, it is not within our power to break the stony hearts, nor to plow the fallow ground; all that we can do is to note those in whose lives experiences have produced such results, and to sow the good seed of the Kingdom in such hearts. This being the case, we must not be surprised that not many are ready for present truth; but toward those who give such evidence we are not to make the mistake of leading them to suppose that repentance and forgiveness are nonessential, but rather we are to point them to these as primary conditions upon which alone they can properly make progress, both in knowledge and in grace, so as to attain ultimately to the gracious things which God has promised to them that love him.

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THESE MANY YEARS.

--DEUTERONOMY 8:2.--

"These many years! What lessons they unfold
Of grace and guidance through the wilderness,
From the same God that Israel of old
In the Shekinah glory did possess.
How faithful He, through all my griefs and fears
And constant murmurings these many years!

"God of the Covenant! From first to last,
From when I stood within that sprinkled door
And o'er my guilt the avenging angel passed,
Thy better angel has gone on before;
And nought but goodness all the way appears,
Unmerited and free, these many years!

"Thy presence wrought a pathway through the sea;
Thy presence made the bitter waters sweet;
And daily have Thy hands prepared for me
Sweet, precious morsels--lying at my feet.
'Twas but to stoop and taste the grace that cheers,
And start refreshed, through all these many years!

"What time I thirsted and earth's streams were dry,
What time I wandered and my hope was gone,
Thy hand has brought a pure and full supply,
And, by a loving pressure, lured me on.
How oft that hand hath wiped away my tears
And written 'Pardoned!' all these many years!

"And what of discipline Thy love ordained
Fell ever gently on this heart of mine;

Around its briers was my spirit trained
To bring forth fruits of righteousness divine;
Wisdom in every check, and love appears
In every stroke throughout these many years!

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"Lord, what I might have been my spirit knows--
Rebellious, petulant, and apt to stray:
Lord, what I am, in spite of flesh and foes,
I owe to grace that kept me in the way.
Thine be the glory! Merit disappears
As back I look upon these many years.

"Thine be the glory! Thou shalt have the praise
For all Thy dealings to my latest breath;
A daily Ebenezer will I raise,
And sing Salvation through the vale of death--
To where the palm, the golden harp appears,
There to rehearse Thy love through endless years."

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INTERESTING LETTERS.

MY DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--Your letter announcing the visit of "Pilgrim" Bro. Hay just received and I write to assure you I will attend to arrangements to make his visit as profitable as possible and will write again as soon as arrangements are made, notifying Bro. Hay of same.

I am happy to be able to report that the Church at Muskegon is in better condition than ever before. We have succeeded in holding all interested ones since meetings were recommenced, two and one-half years ago, and occasionally add one to our number. Just lately a brother has joined himself to us--Bro. Stanfield, who bids fair to be a great acquisition. One or two others, very lovable brethren, are just beginning to come within the range of our influence. We have one great advantage over other meetings in ability to attract those who love the truth. We never make any attempt to catch any one; when strangers come into our meetings we go right on as tho they were not there and are merely cordial, trusting that the truth will attract those who love the truth supremely, and I tell you that is all the bait necessary to catch those whom it is desirable to retain. And it is gratifying to see how members of that class are attracted by the simple truth. At first while enjoying our meeting and being interested they are not usually prepared to assent to many of our propositions, but they come again. Somehow or other, they do not understand why, as they become familiar with present truth other meetings fail to interest them as formerly,--they associate

themselves more and more with us and if they be fully consecrated to the Lord, finally accept present truth in toto.

The brethren honored me with a reelection to the position of leader for the ensuing year. I feel entirely incompetent but as the brethren insist and are so kind as to say that they have benefited by my leading in the past I do not feel able to decline. I can truly say my greatest ambition next to a desire for personal righteousness is to serve the brethren, and though I frequently feel overcome with a sense of my unworthiness and incapacity to stand up before the brethren as an expounder of the blessed gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, still it seems to be his will as nearly as I can discern it, and I dare not shirk. I prepare myself as well as I can and then when the meeting hour comes I endeavor to throw the responsibility all onto the Lord, just turn myself, the meeting and all right into his hands, strive to forget myself entirely and to think of the truth and that only. And the Lord seems signally to own and bless our meetings. I can surely say, because I can see it in the brethren and in myself, that we have made great gains in the past two years. Of course by God's blessing one of the greatest, I believe I should say the greatest, factor in our progress is the truth brought to us through the DAWNS and TOWERS. I do not believe they are more keenly appreciated anywhere than here; nothing so excites our interest as the TOWER. We read it together; we exchange impressions drawn from it; we refer to it in argument as the authority next to Sacred Writ, with which it seems to be invariably in harmony; we prove its editorials by references given and by others which occur to our minds. Do not think us unappreciative if we are not as frequent correspondents as others.

We have pretty thoroughly canvassed Muskegon and adjacent country with evolution tracts but are planning to carry the work into nearby cities and to follow up with the new tract in the Spring. You will hear from us later. Meanwhile, with love, Yours,
ELWIN C. SMITH,--Michigan.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--I received the fifth volume of MILLENNIAL DAWN and have finished the first reading. I thank you for it very much, and cannot tell you how much good it has done me. The subject is one of very great importance, and the more it is studied and thought upon, the more every true Christian is desirous of becoming a copy of God's dear Son. I cannot tell what part interested me most. Some questions came to mind when I commenced it, but I found them all answered before I finished the book. The way is opening up wonderfully before me, and new truths are continually being unfolded. Surely the Lord's doings are

wonderful in our eyes, but as we grow in grace and knowledge we find ourselves more and more separated from the world, and more and more running against its practices and opinions, like one pushing his way through a crowd, going in the opposite direction. How joyful is the thought that we are so near the time when restitution privileges are due to begin, when the veil will be taken away and the world come to understand the things that are now spiritually discerned!

I have waited before writing this letter of thanks, to be able to send something more tangible than sentiment, but the needs here are so pressing and numerous that I cannot get beyond them, so thought I would wait no longer. Yours in Christ,

MARTHA E. SHERMAN.--Illinois.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--The truth grows more precious to me as the days go by. God only knows how I love it; words would fail to tell. At the last Memorial Supper my prayer was that I might grow in grace, knowledge and love from that time on, and the dear Lord has surely answered my prayer, but I want to keep on growing. I have been tried and tested more than ever in the last year, but with the dear Lord's help, not in my own strength, I am still in the "narrow way." And how I have enjoyed the fifth volume of DAWN! It has made so many things clearer to me,

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especially the witness of the spirit. And as I study and learn more of God's truth I love him the more. Thank God for the Truth! May he still bless and keep you faithful to the end!

Your sister in our dear Redeemer,
MRS. MARY KITCHEN.--California.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--I thought I would drop you a line to thank you for the welcome semi-monthly visits of the TOWER. The assistance and light they shed on our pathway are beyond price, and if the matter is sometimes familiar it serves to refresh our memories and deepen the impressions on our minds. My last trip to New York was a pleasant one. There was a good attendance, a strong interest and a most beautiful spirit manifested by all present. The questions were continued as late as would allow me to catch my train and were clearly those prompted by a desire to be instructed and helped along the lines of truth in the spirit of meekness. Your own visit left a deep and good impression. They referred to it again and again with a warmth of look and voice that evinced their appreciation

of the sacrifice you had made. I feel that the movement for a New York meeting is a good one and likely to produce permanent results.

The spiritual health of the Church here is good, so far as imperfect beings may be able to judge, and I trust that such is the case with those of the body in Allegheny. Sister Walker and the children unite with me in love to you and all those associated with you in the TOWER work.

Yours in Christ, SMITH WALKER,--Philadelphia.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--I am thankful to be able to fully endorse Sr. Owen's report of increased interest and zeal of the church here. The letters from the Washington and Boston Churches "stirred them up," as nothing else has stirred them for a good long time. So when you have any other good news to publish concerning what others are doing please send it along. It is very helpful.

You cannot realize how the "scattered members," relish the bits of news that appear in the TOWER from time to time. We had so many out to meeting Sunday morning that our large sitting room would hardly hold them. We are thinking of renting a hall.

Bro. Hall has been advocating the matter for some time, and is quite anxious that we make a more aggressive move "all along the line." My throat has regained its usual strength, and I am able again to conduct the Sunday services. We are having the best prayer meetings we have had for a good long time. At last meeting there were 16 present,--a very good turn out for our little company, some of whom for business and other reasons cannot get out after night.

As ever, yours in our dear Redeemer and King,
C. A. OWEN,--Indiana.

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DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--Enclosed find order for L.5--being L.2 10s. expenses incurred by bringing Bro. Houston to our October conference, which he handed back to us as a donation to the Tract Fund, to help defray the cost of "Bible vs. Evolution." The remainder is from the Church in Glasgow.

Sister Ferrie will tell you about our method of carrying out the Volunteer movement. Up to date we have given the books at 73 churches, and have distributed 10,093 copies, being an average of about 138. We have been greatly surprised at the smallness of the congregations. We distribute only at the forenoon service, which in most cases has the smallest attendance, but it invariably includes the more earnest portion of

the congregation, and we are of the opinion that by this method the ripe wheat will be reached. There have been a few inquiries for further literature, from whom we hope to hear again. We have suffered no other annoyance than an occasional refusal to accept the booklet.

All the brothers and sisters who are able take part in the work, and some occasionally travel a considerable distance in order to enjoy this privilege. A few of us meet in the morning for a season of prayer before going out, and have found it most refreshing and helpful.

We note with pleasure your promise of another pamphlet for distribution at the churches which have received the one on Evolution. The Church here feel very grateful for what you have given us, and deplore their inability to take a larger share in the financial responsibility. We are deeply interested in the work and are willing to do anything in our power to lessen your burdens.

Assuring you of the continued affection of all the members of our little company, and their high appreciation of your noble work, I am

Yours in the one hope, ALEX. TAIT,--Scotland.

[The "Volunteer" work in Great Britain naturally commenced later than here, but we are glad to note that it progresses splendidly. Ours is a campaign of blood--"the blood of the cross," and is far more worthy of time, energy, treasure and our life-blood than any other known in the world. Courage! dear fellowsoldiers. Steady! the eye of our Captain is for victory only by "laying down our lives for the brethren" as he set us an example. We regret that we are out of our error-destroying and new-hope and new-life-infusing ammunition. "Good Hopes" for this year justify us in beginning the work for this year liberally and paper mill already has our order for forty-six tons of paper for "Volunteer" work for immediate delivery. We hope to be able to begin filling orders about April 1.--EDITOR.]

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TEXAS AGRICULTURAL FRIENDS TAKE NOTICE.

A Brother in the Truth in the Nursery business at Post Oak, Texas, finds himself financially embarrassed and asks our aid in disposing of his large stock of fruit trees which he describes as of excellent quality one and two years old and 4 to 6 feet high. He has a descriptive catalogue which we will forward to all interested. He says the prices are right. He offers the Tract Fund one half the receipts from this forced sale: but as we do no advertising we turn this advantage over to the friends, who can thus secure good trees for Texas climate at HALF PRICE: packed

free and delivered at Express Office. No orders received for less than \$2. Drop postal card for free catalogue to us.

The catalogue at hand besides the fruit trees includes grape and other vines and shade and ornamental trees. The prices seem reasonable and the goods at half price should be a bargain.

This notice is quite a digression from our rule.

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