

CONTENTS.

"Love as Brethren;" Be Sympathetic;  
 Be Courteous.....195  
 Philadelphia Convention Echoes.....198  
 A Useful Stone versus a Stumbling  
 Stone.....198  
 Peter a Useful Stone in God's House.....199  
 The Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven.....200  
 Binding and Loosing in Heaven and  
 Earth.....201  
 Cast not Pearls Before Swine.....201  
 Peter a Stumbling Stone.....202  
 A Vision of Coming Glory.....203  
 Least and Greatest in the Kingdom.....205  
 Battling for the Truth.....207  
 Bible Reading Indispensible.....208  
 The Colporteur Harvest Service, etc.....194

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.

=====

BRITISH BRANCH NO. 131 GIPSY LANE, FOREST GATE,  
LONDON EAST, ENGLAND.

=====

R2654 : page 194

"THE SERVANT OF THE LORD MUST NOT STRIVE, BUT  
BE GENTLE UNTO ALL."

2 TIMOTHY 2:24-26.

We commend this text and its context to the careful consideration  
of all--especially do the "Volunteers" need to remember

it in connection with the service they are seeking to render to the Lord's true sheep still in Babylon. All thus engaged are "ministers" and "teachers" and hence amenable to the same instructions as Timothy.

Some have exposed themselves to rebuke and criticism justly, by intruding into church property uninvited. It is usually best to keep off the pavement fronting a church where there is any reason to think the service would give offence;-- and to apologize if asked to move off it. If possible it is desirable to keep at such a distance from the building as to avoid seeming to want to serve its attendants more than other passers-by.

Especially make sure that your heart is so full of the love of the Lord and his brethren that it will shine out in your face; --then it will not be necessary to urge your gift, but merely to say--Accept a free paper! Lay stress upon the word free, because some refuse thinking that either a price or donation will be expected in return.

page 194

#### THE COLPORTEUR HARVEST SERVICE.

The wide circulation of the Volunteer Tower should open the minds of people for further reading matter: and then nothing will fill the place of MILLENNIAL DAWN as the text book for Bible study. We shall be glad to hear from such as desire to enter the Colporteur work--such as have the heart for it, and some natural ability, and freedom from family responsibilities.

=====

R2654 : page 195

"LOVE AS BRETHREN; BE SYMPATHETIC; BE COURTEOUS."

-----

"Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, and showeth favor to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time."

--1 PETER 3:8; 5:5,6.--

THE APOSTLE has been addressing the elders of the Church, exhorting them to give attention to the feeding of God's flock, and pointing out what should be the constraining influence to such a service. That they may feel his sympathy with them he points out that he also is an elder, and then warns them against a tendency, natural to all fallen humanity in any place of influence, to misconstrue their position, and to think of themselves as lords of God's heritage rather than as servants of the flock.

In our day, the natural tendency in this direction is greatly accentuated by the long established custom of all denominations of Christians to regard the ministers

or servants of the Church as of a different class from the others of the flock,--a class vested with authority from God, and not amenable to the same regulations which govern all the members of the body.

But how great a mistake this is! The Apostle distinctly points out that a servant is not a ruler, that a servant has no authority. Indeed, so far as the true Church is concerned, the only authority in it is the Lord, the Head of the Church, and his Word, and the words of those whom he specially chose to be his mouth-pieces, the apostles.

Where these speak, all of the body of Christ are to give attention to hear. Where these are silent, no one has authority to speak. And while an Elder should be chosen to the position of serving and feeding the flock because of special aptness to teach (to point out the instructions of our Lord and the apostles upon any subject), and while such an Elder should, therefore, in this way be specially helpful to the body of Christ in drawing the attention of all to the inspired authority of the Word, nevertheless any member of the body of Christ has the same privilege--not of exercising authority, but of calling the attention of his fellows to the Word of authority. The Apostle exhorts the Elders that so far from in any manner or degree exercising a lordly or authoritative position in the Church, they should rather be "ensamples to the flock." They should be examples in the matter of meekness, in the matter of patience, in the matter of brotherly kindness, in the matter of courtesy, so that the more any of the brethren would copy these Elders the more would the spirit of the Lord prevail in the flock, and the fruits and graces of the spirit be manifested. On the contrary, we know that if the Elder or leader of a little company of the Lord's people be self-assertive, dogmatic, imperious in manner, tone or look, the effect upon the company under his influence is to produce bickerings, rivalries, ambitions, strifes as to who is greatest, etc.

Manifestly, whoever occupies the position of an Elder amongst the Lord's people, however small the group may be, occupies a position fraught with responsibilities to the Lord and to the flock, as well as with besetments to himself. Great care should therefore be exercised by every company of the Lord's people, to so far as possible select for the position of leaders or Elders in the Church such persons as would not be likely to be injured by the privilege of service--such as occupying this post would indeed be ensamples of the flock in humility and in all of the graces of the Lord's spirit. It would seem to be with reference to the special trial of such as occupy this position of service in the Church that the Apostle speaks, saying,

"Be not many of you teachers, brethren, knowing that we [occupying such a position] shall receive the severer testing."--James 3:1.

It may not be amiss that here we notice the fact that altho the word "Elder" has the significance of "older," yet amongst the Lord's brethren it is not merely years of natural life that is to be taken into consideration; in the Lord's family we sometimes see "babes" with gray hairs. Nor can we even count eldership according to the number of years that have elapsed since the begetting of the spirit, for some grow rapidly and mature quickly; others who receive the truth permit the "thorns" of cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches to choke the word, and hence never get beyond the position of "babes,"--never bring forth the ripe fruits of the spirit.

Nor can we reckon this matter of relationship merely according to the degree of knowledge of the divine plan attained; for, as the Apostle assures us, it is possible for some to have much knowledge and yet be but "tinkling cymbals" according to the Lord's standpoint of estimation. While therefore an Elder, in order to be "apt to teach," must have attained to some considerable degree of knowledge of the divine plan, nevertheless the real evidence of his fitness for the service of an elder must not be determined by his knowledge merely, but additionally must be measured by his growth in grace. So then such of the brethren in any place as possess clear knowledge of the divine plan and are "apt to teach," and who additionally give unmistakable evidence that they have grown in grace and are bearing in daily life the fruits of the spirit of the Lord, in considerable measure of maturity,

R2655 : page 196

may be considered qualified to be elders;--and such may properly be chosen to the eldership by their brethren, regardless of their age according to the flesh.

According to the flesh Peter and several others of the apostles of our Lord were his elders, but according to the spirit our Lord is the Elder Brother of all accepted to the family of God. According to the flesh both Timothy and Titus were young men--young in years--so that the Apostle needed to write to one of them, "Let no man despise thy youth." (1 Tim. 4:12.) And yet these young men the Apostle recognized as Elders in the Church, who, because of their spiritual development and knowledge of the divine plan, and aptness to teach, were well qualified to feed the flock of God and to be overseers in it--but not lords, not rulers, not masters, and not vested with any authority --merely privileged to call to the attention of the flock the voice of the great Shepherd and his twelve chosen assistants, and to lead them to the green pastures and still waters of divine truth.

It was after specially enjoining modesty and humility upon the ones most advanced and most capable of the flock that the Apostle, in the language of our text, urges that each one of the Lord's sheep, so far from seeking to be a leader in the sense of a ruler or lord or master, should seek to be subject one to another --to hear gladly from the humblest of the flock, and to be willing to yield his own preference, so far as his judgment and conscience would permit. A Church operating under this spirit would not be likely to be rent with contention, for each would be so anxious for the interests of the cause and so willing to condescend to the wishes of others, that even the will of the majority would not be considered satisfactory, but rather all would seek, if possible, to reach such a modified conclusion as would meet with nearly or quite unanimous approval.

The Apostle most distinctly points out that the quality essential to such proper conduct on the part of Elders and on the part of all, is humility. How beautiful is his exhortation, "Be clothed with humility." The thought would seem to be that outside of every other adornment of character, and covering all others, should be this robe of humble-mindedness, the opposite disposition to pride.

By way of clinching his argument, the Apostle reminds us of the principle upon which our Lord deals with his flock and with all;--that he disapproves of pride, and that all who are actuated by pride may be sure that the Lord, so far from receiving them, fellowshiping them, leading them, blessing them, will resist them, push them from him. The natural inference is that thus resisted of the Lord, the tendency of such as come under the influence of a spirit of pride and ambition will be not toward the truth nor toward any of the fruits and graces of the spirit, but further and further from these. "The Lord resisteth the proud, but supplies his favor to the humble." Come then, dear brethren, says the Apostle, let us cultivate this humility which the Lord so loves and appreciates and promises to reward. Let us humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt us in due time.

The Lord's mighty hand has not yet been stretched out to take hold of mankind in general and its affairs, to bring order out of confusion; but it is stretched out over his Church, his flock. He has called us to be his "sheep," and we have responded and have put ourselves under his care, under his powerful hand for guidance, for direction, etc., that he may ultimately make us "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light," "joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."

Seeing that we are under this mighty hand of

God, and that too by our own volition, how shall we act? Shall we yield ourselves to his will, and permit him to "work in us both to will and to do his good pleasure" and our ultimate exaltation, or shall we resist the Lord's power, resist his Word of instruction, resist the example set us in the meek and lowly Lamb of God, and seek to exalt ourselves and to be somebodies, either in the world or in the Church? Nay, let us remember that it would be folly to attempt to work against the divine arrangement; we might indeed to some extent seemingly succeed, and bring upon ourselves, and perhaps upon others also, more or less of separation from God through such resisting, on account of a wrong spirit; but in the end we should utterly fail of God's favors, both as respects the fellowship of the spirit now and the fellowship of glory by and by, for these he assures us will be bestowed only upon the humble. Every proper incentive and inducement speaks to us, saying,--Humble yourself: become more like a little child, forgetful of self, devoid of selfish ambition: be actuated merely by a desire to serve the Lord, to serve his flock, and to serve his cause, the truth; forget self entirely.

Perhaps, as a result, the Lord may increase our opportunities and responsibilities in service in the present life, and perhaps he may not; but no matter for this. It is not for the present life that we are seeking and striving, but for the glory, honor and immortality which the Lord has promised to them that love him;--that love him so much that they hearken to his Word and seek to develop those elements of character which are pleasing in his sight, seeking to become more and more copies of God's dear Son.

The Apostle adds, "Casting all your care upon him." All true saints of God are care-full. They have an interest in the Lord's work; they have a care in respect to it. They cannot be indifferent to the interests of Zion. Altho their hearts and affections and cares have been lifted from a sectarian channel, it is only that they should be placed upon true people of spiritual Zion, whose names are written in heaven. Of course, therefore, every Elder in the Church must feel such a care, especially for the flock in connection with which he has been appointed to service, "to feed the flock of Christ:"--not to shear them, not to frighten them, not to club them, not to exercise authority and lordship over them, but to feed them.

This care, affecting the chosen Elders (and all the elders or advanced ones in the Church), altho it is a right sentiment in itself, might easily be so perverted as to be dangerous. The Elders, either individually or collectively, might become so nervously careful of the flock as to destroy their own peace and joy in the holy spirit; and it might also lead them to take various

improper steps, as in their over-zealous judgment necessary for the welfare of the flock. Many in times past have been led, under the influence of such a care, to in various ways take away the liberties of the flock in this or that or another matter: fearful that these liberties would be injurious to the cause. We see such a spirit of carefulness and over-solicitude marked prominently in the past by the various creeds and regulations and restraints put upon the Lord's flock, contrary to the Scriptures and to the liberty wherewith Christ makes free his people. The motive undoubtedly was in some respects a good one; the difficulty was that some Elders, some advanced sheep, caring for the interests of the flock, forgot that they were only its servants, and that they were not authorized to make any laws or restraints whatsoever for the flock. They forgot that the Lord himself is the Good Shepherd of his flock still, that he has not given over his care of it, nor his authority to anyone, to permit such to exercise lordship or to make laws of any kind for it, he having made all the laws and regulations necessary, and desiring that his sheep shall be free, with the liberty wherewith he made them free, in the fullest sense of the word.

The remedy for all such unauthorized over-carefulness for the interests of Zion is pointed out by the Apostle, saying,--"Casting all your care upon him [the Shepherd of the flock], for he careth for you [all]." Each sheep is to remember that the Shepherd's mighty hand (mighty power) is still in the midst of his people, and that because of his care we do not need to overburden ourselves with care, nor to feel that we must make changes in his plans and arrangements to meet what we might fancy to be new exigencies in the case. All such over-carefulness leads to fear, and fear indicates a lack of faith, a lack of confidence in the Shepherd; and is generally used by the great Adversary as one of his most powerful levers to lead the Lord's people into a wrong course.

Let us all, then (all of the advanced or elder class), have a care for the flock; yea, a deep solicitude; but let us cast the weight of this care upon the Lord, and let our faith trust him that he who has been working out so grand and glorious a plan as his Word reveals to us now, "the plan of the ages," has made full provision for every feature, every circumstance, every condition; and let us thus be ready to cooperate with him in harmony with his Word, but not to run where we are not sent, nor in any manner to take our Lord's place, nor attempt to do his work. But only the humble-minded are likely to receive any lasting blessing, present or future, at the hands of our Lord; for he resisteth the proud and showeth favor to the humble.

=====

PHILADELPHIA CONVENTION ECHOES.

-----

ALL WILL REJOICE to know that the Philadelphia Convention, June 16-18, was a blessed success: so far as we have heard all who attended got a blessing, as we had hoped. Indeed, quite a few expressed themselves as so much refreshed and profited that, the Lord permitting, they would also attend the next Convention, at Chicago.

The attendance was about two hundred, except on Sunday, when it ran up to about four hundred. The three cities which have been leading in the "Volunteer" work were best represented at the Convention; --Boston 19, Washington City 13, Scranton 13. Thus it is always: those most awake to note and use opportunities for serving the truth are the most blest of the Lord every way,--warmer in their love and service, they are less exposed to the besetments of the Adversary: laying down their lives in the Lord's service in fulfilment of their covenant they are in the way which leads not only to fellowship in the sufferings of Christ but also in the glories to follow.

Nineteen states were represented--Maine, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Kansas, Wisconsin, Nevada, California and District of Columbia; --and Great Britain was represented by Brother Randle, who, after doing a little further "Pilgrim" work here, will for a time make England his home and labor-field.

At the baptism service thirty-nine adults, after making a good public confession, symbolized their consecration to the Lord, even unto death, by immersion in water. It was an impressive service to us all, and the entire congregation gave hearty thanks to God for the privilege of witnessing and participating. The janitor of the Baptist church remarked that not only had there never been such baptism service in that old church, but that never before had it contained a congregation all of whose faces were so happy looking. We were glad that the inner light of truth and its spirit of love was manifest to others. We trust that they took knowledge of us that we had been with Jesus and been "illuminated" by his holy spirit.

We cannot present the subjects discussed, but in a word would say,--It was the old, old story of God's love exhibited in Jesus, and the coming glory of the Church and blessing of the world: the story that is as fresh as ever to all in heart-harmony with the Lord, and which daily becomes more precious in the light of



present truth;--things new and old.

None, we believe, were more blessed than the Philadelphia brethren who so kindly and efficiently and generously entertained us. They provided a splendid hall for the meetings, paid for the use of the baptistry, looked after the arriving friends and saw to their comfort, and provided free entertainment for those of the visitors too poor to pay their own way. May rich blessings of spiritual kind be their reward for all these services to the Lord's body. By an oversight we neglected to call for a united vote of thanks from the Convention; and as this was owing chiefly to the fact that the last meeting was a Question Meeting, we think to remedy the matter by having the closing service of future Conventions a "Love Feast."

=====

R2656 : page 198

#### A USEFUL STONE VERSUS A STUMBLING STONE.

--MATT. 16:13-26.--JULY 22.--

"If any man come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

PETER, THE APOSTLE, was a grand character, as this lesson well illustrates; yet, like all strong characters, he had proportionate opportunities and liabilities to misuse his strength for evil. This lesson, relating considerably to him, points a moral respecting the necessity for meekness, humility, and wise direction of those who possess strength of character.

The incidents of this lesson transpired toward the close of our Lord's ministry, probably about six months before his crucifixion. For about three years the Lord had, with his disciples, been proclaiming the Kingdom near at hand and working miracles which testified that he was Jehovah's Anointed One. Meantime, his fame had of course spread in every direction. Herod, who had beheaded John the Baptist, seems to have started the suggestion that Jesus was John risen from the dead --probably having little information respecting Jesus while he had considerable knowledge of John. Others, wishing to properly credit our Lord's wonderful works and mighty acts, claimed that he was the Elijah prophesied to precede Messiah's coming. Others thought of him as Jeremiah or some of the great prophets risen from the dead; but very few seemed to have thought of him as the Messiah,--expecting Messiah, when he would come, to be very kingly, very great, and of very high standing with the nation and the ruling class. They no doubt thought they greatly honored Jesus in crediting him with being the forerunner of the Messiah. And apparently our Lord had not particularly expressed

the matter of his Messiahship during these years, leaving it rather to be recognized by those who should obtain the opening of the eyes of their understanding. He

R2656 : page 199

spoke of himself as the Son of God; he spoke of his relationship to the Father, and testified that his mighty works were done in the Father's name and power, but he said little, if anything, respecting his being the Messiah until now.

Now the proper time had come that the disciples should recognize definitely his office, and his question regarding what people in general said of him was merely to introduce the matter to the disciples, and give the opportunity to ask them, "Whom say ye that I am?" Then it was that Peter displayed not only the strength of his faith in the Lord, but also his own strength of character and his zeal, answering promptly, "Thou art the Christ [Hebrew, the Messiah], the Son of God--the Living." And altho we may safely assume that Peter spoke for all of the apostles, in harmony with our Lord's question, nevertheless, the fact that he was the spokesman would imply that he was the most thoroughly imbued with the sentiment that he expressed. His statement is quite comprehensive, too: not only did he recognize Jesus as the Messiah, but he recognized his divine authority and paternity; and while it is possible that Peter meant to say "the Son of the living God"--the Son of the God who is the author of all life--yet it is probable that he meant more than this. It is probable that he meant, Thou art the Messiah, the Son of God, the Living One,--the one who has a right to life according to the Law, while all others, being imperfect, are under condemnation of the Law and under sentence of death.

Evidently it was a refreshment of heart to our Lord to have this full and frank statement from Peter. One, at least, of his disciples had profited by the lessons of the preceding three years, and had come to the point of full assurance of faith in him: and the others, while less expressive, were probably making progress nevertheless, and would be greatly helped and strengthened and built up by this good confession.

PETER A USEFUL STONE IN GOD'S HOUSE.

-----

Our Lord's response, "Blessed art thou, Simon, son of Jona," does not so much signify, I wish or will grant a blessing upon you because of this confession, but rather, You have been blessed of God greatly in that you have been enabled to discern this great truth, hidden from so many. Flesh and blood (mankind in general) do not so believe, and could not have so taught

you nor convinced you; you have been drawn of my Father in heaven, and through responding to the leadings of his providence the eyes of your understanding have been opened that you are thus able to see and appreciate this great truth.

Then followed a blessing, a prophecy of coming usefulness, partly, at least, the result of this good confession, as it was the result of a proper condition of heart:--"Thou art Peter [petros, a stone, a rock] and upon this rock [petra--this great stone or rocky mass --the great truth which you have confessed, namely, my Messiahship] will I build my Church."

The Lord did not propose to build his Church upon Peter, but upon the great truth which the Father had laid as a foundation for his plan and had revealed to Peter and which Peter had so nobly expressed. But Peter, indeed, might be one of the living stones of the spiritual temple erected upon this great foundation-fact. Peter himself gives us this interpretation of the matter in his Epistle (1 Pet. 2:4-7), assuring us that the whole Church as a building of God is growing more and more complete through the addition of each member, who, as a living stone, is built up into and under the headship of Christ, the great chief corner-stone and capstone of the whole--the figure being that of a pyramid. --See MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. I., Chap. v.; Vol. III., Chap. x.

The same thought is given in the description of the New Jerusalem, in which Peter is represented by one of the Twelve Foundation Stones, the other apostles being equally foundation stones, and all the faithful in Christ being built upon the foundation of the divine plan, and upon the testimony of these twelve apostles. Rev. 21, see verse 12.

R2657 : page 199

This was probably the first intimation the Lord had given of his intention to build a Church, or that any period of time would elapse between the work he was then doing and the establishment of the Kingdom. This was a gradual way of bringing great matters to the attention of the apostles,--matters which necessarily would conflict with many of the ideas and hopes that already had taken possession of their hearts.

It cannot be claimed that our Lord referred to any of the Christian sects when thus speaking of his Church: all are forced to admit that these earthly systems are entirely ignored, not only in this statement, but in every other statement which our Lord ever made respecting his Church. He never recognized more than one, nor did the apostles; and both Jesus and the apostles reckoned that every true sheep, every true grain, every wise virgin, and every faithful servant of this Gospel age would belong to the one Church of Christ, of which the Apostle says that "their names are written in

heaven." (Heb. 12:23.) They need no earthly record, and such of them as are rightly informed will want no sectarian name, but will be thoroughly satisfied with the name of their Lord; and they will want no earthly creed-fences to separate them from each other, but will desire more and more to be one in fact and in theory.

The Church of Rome, as being the oldest of all human church systems, claims the name of Christ, and

R2657 : page 200

holds that Peter was its founder, but it can produce no evidence to this effect, for there was no Roman Catholic Church in existence until centuries after Peter's day. The primitive Church, authorized by our Lord and built upon the testimony of the apostles and through their ministry, after the day of Pentecost, was a very different institution from any of the present-day man-made, creed-bound and clergy-lorded systems. We understand that the Lord is now calling his true people out of this Babylon or mixed condition of present-day "churchianity" into the light, the liberty, the fellowship, with him and with all who are his, which properly belongs to the one flock, which has but "one Lord, one faith, one baptism."

Our Lord's declaration that "the gates of hell [hades, the death state] shall not prevail against" his Church, is worthy of careful notice; especially in view of his words following this declaration, to the effect that all who would be his disciples must follow him in sacrifice into death. This must have been an astounding thought to the apostles, as they had, so far from expecting death, expected some kind of transformation to glory, honor and immortality. Our Lord's declaration, therefore, that the gates of hell, the gates of the grave, shall not prevail against his Church, signified not that his followers should not enter those portals of death, but that eventually those prison-doors of death would open,--would not be permitted forever to prevail against the faithful. As a matter of fact, the gates of hades did close over our dear Redeemer himself for portions of three days, but they did not prevail. On the contrary, God's power prevailed and he arose from the dead, he left the prison-house, he came forth a victor. And so likewise throughout this Gospel age, the gates of death closed behind the apostles one after another, and after all the faithful of the Lord's people, as well as others, and our Lord's assurance then is still comforting to his followers, that the prisonhouse of death, with its strong bars and gates, the grave, shall not prevail, shall not in the end conquer, but that he who was raised from the dead by the power of the Father will raise us up also, making us also victors over death and over the grave, so that eventually we can say, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" But we cannot say this so long as we are subject

to death, nor so long as we are under death's power; but only when the deliverance shall come in the resurrection.

Altho our Lord does not here speak of others than the Church prevailing against the gates and bars of the tomb, he does elsewhere give us the assurance that through his prevailing and our subsequent prevailing through his name and assistance, ultimately the whole world of mankind, or so many of them, at least, as will accept of the favor, will be delivered from the power of death into perfection of life: and then shall be brought to pass, in the fullest, most absolute sense of the word, the prophecy just referred to. (Isa. 61:1-3.) Adamic death and its victory over the human family will then be completely annulled, through the atonement accomplished by our Lord, and the restitution which he, with his Church, will accomplish as a result. And any who shall fail of eternal life shall not fail because of the present prevalence of so-called Adamic death, but will be the victims of their own wilful sin, and will experience its penalty, the Second Death, whose bars and gates will never open, and against which they can never prevail, for Christ dieth no more and will release none from the Second Death.--Rom. 6:9; 2 Thess. 1:9; Acts 3:23.

#### THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

-----

The apostles, of course, could not understand our Lord's words at the time, as they did afterward, and as we now understand them. (John 7:39.) Nevertheless, these various declarations respecting the future immediately followed, our Lord declaring, "I will give thee the keys of the Kingdom of heaven." What a riddle this must have seemed to poor Peter and his associates! They would doubtless conclude that it meant that in view of Peter's confession he would make him grand treasurer of the Kingdom, or something of that kind; and only in the light of their fulfillment in subsequent events can we judge accurately the meaning of these words. But looking through the experiences of Peter and the Church, we find that there were two doors which required to be opened, and that Peter was used of the Lord in opening both of them, and hence that it was properly stated of him that he had the keys, the power, the opportunity, the authority to do the work in both instances; and he did it.

Our Lord himself did not open the door into the Kingdom, in the full sense of the word. He merely called out faithful laborers, who should afterward in his name open wide the doors. Indeed, the doors into the Kingdom could not be opened to any until first of all the great transaction of Calvary had been accomplished. Our Lord came to give himself a ransom for mankind,

because a ransom was necessary before mankind could be released from the Adamic condemnation, or have any part either in the Kingdom proper or in the hoped-for blessing promised through the Kingdom to all the families of the earth. Hence the apostles (whom the Father had specially given to Jesus, and of whom none were lost save the son of perdition, whose place was subsequently filled, through the Lord's appointment, by the Apostle Paul--John 17:12; Rom. 1:1), did not and could not receive recognition from the Father until

R2657 : page 201

after our Lord Jesus had finished his sacrifice and had arisen from the dead and had ascended up on high to appear in the presence of God on their behalf,--and on behalf of all men for whom he died. So soon as the sacrifice for man's sin was presented to the Father, the evidence of its acceptance was indicated to mankind by God's acceptance of the faithful apostles and of all who then were in the proper condition of heart, to the plane of sonship and their begetting of the holy spirit to a new nature,--and this was marked or indicated by the outpouring of the holy spirit at Pentecost, accompanied by "gifts" of the spirit.

It was then that Christ's Kingdom was established in those who had received him; and then began the work of declaring the good tidings of great joy, which must eventually be to all people, but which at first was restricted for three and a half years to fleshly Israel, in fulfillment of God's covenant with them, that favor should continue to the full end of seventy weeks mentioned by the prophet.--Dan. 9:24. See MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. II., Chap. III.

In this work of opening the door of the Kingdom to Israel we find, according to the record, that Peter took the first, most prominent and initiatory part, as we read: "Peter, standing up with [the others of] the eleven, lifted up his voice and said." (Acts 2:14.) Peter was the spokesman, Peter used the "key," Peter opened the door, the other apostles cooperating and assisting.

The other of the two "keys" was not used for three and a half years afterward, because not until then could the door of favor be opened to the Gentiles. But when the time came for opening the door, we find that it was Peter who was specially designated of the Lord to do it, being sent from Joppa to Cornelius, to tell him words which should be to the saving of his house--the opening to him of the privilege of membership in the Kingdom of Christ, he being the first Gentile converted, the first one to whom the Lord authorized the preaching of the high calling of joint-heirship with Christ in his Kingdom. And the Apostle Peter referred to this matter subsequently, saying, "Ye know how that a good while ago God made choice amongst us that the Gentiles

by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel."  
--Acts 10; 15:7.

#### BINDING AND LOOSING IN HEAVEN AND EARTH.

-----

Our Lord further said to Peter, "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." This statement has given rise to the claim amongst Romanists that Peter was the first pope, and that he had an authority superior to the other apostles; but we find that very nearly the same words were used

R2658 : page 201

to all of the apostles as recorded by the same Evangelist. (Matt. 18:18.) Again, a very similar declaration was made to them all, as recorded by John, saying, "Whose soever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them, and whose soever sins ye retain they are retained." (John 20:23.) We understand these declarations not to be general and applicable to all of the Church, but chiefly to the apostles, on the strength of our Lord's words. (John 6:70; 15:16; Rev. 21:14.) We deny that the popes of Rome, or any other persons, ever have been apostles, or ever have exercised apostolic authority. In a word, we deny the central claim of Romanism and Episcopacy, viz., "Apostolic Succession."

We understand this investment of Peter and the other apostles with special authority to bind and to loose, to remit and to hold, to signify that God would specially control their utterances, so that their decisions and writings might properly be considered authoritative. Not that God bound himself to do and to decide according to the imperfect judgments of the apostles, but that he has guaranteed us that he would so guide and providentially overrule in the affairs and in the language of these chosen and faithful ones that his people might rely upon it that such things as the apostles fixed had the divine approval. For instance, it is at their mouth that we learn that we are justified from all sin through faith in the redemption; they did not make it so, but under divine direction they were guided in the stating of it so; and we may implicitly rely upon their statements, which, moreover, we find to be in full accord with the principles of righteousness and the various declarations of the divine Word.

They inform us also that certain sins can be remitted or forgiven--sins of weakness and of ignorance, traceable to our fallen nature, which we have received by heredity, and the penalty for which our Lord has already borne. They inform us also that other sins, viz., wilful sins, are not forgivable, and may be indeed sins unto death, unto the Second Death. And we see herein

reasonableness also; for we perceive that Christ did not die for any except the Adamic transgression, and those sins which directly or indirectly may be traceable to it; and that wilful, deliberate transgressions cannot therefore be forgiven, but must be expiated--if committed with considerable light, but not full light, the expiating penalty may be "stripes," but if committed with full wilfulness and against full light the penalty could be nothing short of death--the Second Death.--1 John 5:16; Luke 12:47,48; Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26,27.

#### CAST NOT PEARLS BEFORE SWINE.

-----

Following this conversation with the disciples, our Lord charged them particularly not to make his Messiahship generally known to the people. This corroborates

R2658 : page 202

the thought that neither the disciples nor our Lord had previously been enunciating his Messiahship, but rather preaching that the Kingdom of heaven was at hand, near at the door, without saying precisely who was to be the King. The command not to make the matter known was evidently because the result of such a program would have been to have aroused at least a party spirit amongst the people, some of whom accepted his miracles, etc., and would have espoused his cause, while others, with the Pharisees, would have opposed, and thus an insurrection would naturally have followed;--besides, it would have interfered considerably with the program which our Lord saw marked out for him in the divine Word,--his death as the sin-offering. He did not need to proclaim his Messiahship, for he already knew, as he had stated, that whomsoever the Father would draw would come, and that those not drawn of the Father, and not disposed to become his disciples, should not be specially drawn by the proclamation of his Messiahship and the prospects of the Kingdom.

#### PETER A STUMBLING-STONE, AN ADVERSARY.

-----

Having prepared the minds of the disciples, by the foregoing declaration, that hades, death, would not be permitted to triumph over his Church, etc., our Lord from that time forward began gradually to break to them information respecting his own decease and his resurrection from the dead. It was then that the same noble Peter forgot himself, as we would say, and undertook to correct the Lord and to outline for him other things. He was moved to this, not merely by selfish motives of



prejudice and hopes of sharing in the Kingdom, and avoiding the ignominy, but doubtless also by his love for the Lord and his desire to see him honored and exalted, rather than to be set at nought and killed. But, as on another occasion this noble Apostle said things "not knowing what he said," so now he evidently did not realize the import of his language, and how, if it were followed, it would mean to our Lord the rejection of the Father's plan and the substitution therefor of a plan more agreeable to the flesh.

The text says that "Peter took him," and this we may understand to signify that Peter took him apart from the others--it was a private interview and exhortation, and no doubt Peter intended to bring in various supporting arguments; for instance, that the disciples would be discouraged with such talk, etc. However, he only "began," and did not get to finish his argument, the Master being so full of the spirit of loyalty to the Father and his plan that he could not even endure a suggestion to the contrary, and must needs hasten to repudiate such a disloyal suggestion. His answer was a severe rebuke to Peter, yet doubtless was a blessing to him so long as he lived, and probably helped him afterward to be much more modest in the matter of opposing his plan to that of the Lord.

When our Lord said, "Get thee behind me, Satan," he did not mean that he considered Peter possessed by the Adversary: rather, the word Satan in the original is "adversary," and was properly used in respect to any person taking a position adverse or in opposition to another. The Adversary is called Satan, that word being used for him as a proper name. Our Lord turned from Peter at this time, and addressed his words so that all the apostles might hear him, that the matter might be the more impressive and all the more a valuable lesson to them: that they might all know that their Master never compromised his Father's will in any sense or degree. "Get behind me, Adversary; thou savorest [partakest] not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men"--you are viewing matters not from God's standpoint, but from the standpoint of fallible, fallen men.

So it is to-day, and ever has been with the Church, the body of Christ; if they are intent upon following the footsteps of the Lord they must expect adversaries to arise who will seek to turn them away from the path of sacrifice and duty: to make it seem too difficult, or to attract their attention to other plans or methods less costly--more in harmony with the fleshly mind. We should remember the Master's course and take a similar one, and point out to these, if they be friends, and in the truth (and such they frequently are, as was Peter), that their influence is being exercised in a wrong direction, against the truth, against our best interests, against the divine plan, and hence that they are not only adversaries to us, but also adversaries to the Lord. We

should thus seek to reclaim them and to help them to walk in the same way with us,--instead of leaving the narrow way to follow their kindly meant but pernicious influence.

The word here rendered "offence" would more properly be translated, as in the Revised Version, "a stumbling block," or a stone of stumbling. Thus we see that it was the same Peter whose noble confession had so refreshed the Lord and blessed the disciples and himself, and who on this account was designated a stone, indicative of strong character, that was now, by reason of the same strength of character, strong-mindedness, strong will, in danger of becoming, not a stone in the Lord's Temple, but a Stumbling Stone. And should some of the Lord's people, strong in character, become stumbling stones to us, we have here our Lord's illustration of our proper course--to turn from them, refusing to be stumbled, refusing to be lead away from the consecration which we have made.

Our Lord took this occasion to lay pointedly before

R2658 : page 203

his disciples the fact that if they loved the present life, with its advantages, etc., more than the future one, with its present disadvantages, they had no business amongst his disciples: that anyone who would be his disciple should reckon self-denial, self-negation, absolutely necessary to discipleship; and should be prepared, with no uncertainty of mind or purpose, to follow after Jesus with a cross,--not a literal cross, but the crossing of human self-will with the divine will.

Then come the terms of discipleship very clearly stated. All who become disciples, and who hope for life in the Kingdom, must expect to sacrifice the present life, and whoever does not sacrifice the present life shall not find that glorious eternal life which God has in reservation only for the overcomers. But, our Lord reasons, what would a man be advantaged were he to gain all of this world, all of its advantages and riches (which none could hope to do) if thereby he should lose his own being, his own soul, his life, his existence; or what would a man not be willing to give in exchange for the perpetuation of his life eternally. (The word soul, in this verse, is psuche, the same Greek word rendered life in the preceding verse.) Surely anyone possessed of a sound mind and able, therefore, to rightly weigh the advantages and disadvantages of the present life, as compared with the eternal life in God's Kingdom

R2659 : page 203

of righteousness, must confess that it would be a bad bargain to gain the whole world in every sense and to lose his own being.

It is in view of the logic of this argument that our

Lord and the apostles urge all true followers of Christ to present their bodies living sacrifices, holy, acceptable to God, and their reasonable service;--to lay down their lives for the brethren, that by these means they may attest their devotion to the Lord and attain to his Kingdom and life everlasting.--Rom. 12:1; 1 John 3:16; 2 Cor. 5:14,15; Phil. 3:10,11.

=====

R2659 : page 203

#### A VISION OF COMING GLORY.

LUKE 9:28-36.--JULY 29.

--"This is my beloved Son: hear him."--

CONTINUING his lessons to the apostles, showing them that his glory and Kingdom could not come until after his suffering and death, our Lord declared, "There be some standing here who will not taste of death until they see the Son of Man coming in his royal majesty." (Matt. 16:28; 17:1.) Then, six days later (or eight days, counting the one in which this was uttered and the one in which it was fulfilled) our Lord took Peter, James and John, the three apostles most advanced in faith and zeal, into a high mountain, and while praying with them the transfiguration scene of our lesson ensued.

It was a further lesson of instruction in harmony with what he had already explained, viz., that the Son of Man must be set at naught by the chief priests and the elders, and must be crucified, and must rise from the dead, ere he could enter into his glory;--the Kingdom in which he had promised them a share. The transfiguration scene was therefore a picture or "vision" of the Lord's glory in his Kingdom, and was intended to assure the apostles respecting the certainty of the Kingdom, notwithstanding the apparent failure of all kingdom-hopes in our Lord's crucifixion. And this vision was doubtless essential as an assistant to the apostles' faith in Jesus as the promised Messiah, since the course of events which would follow in the next few months would be so different from everything that they had expected.

Peter, one of those present on this occasion, fully substantiates this view--that the transfiguration was a vision of Christ's dignity and glory in the Kingdom--for writing respecting it he says: "We have not followed cunningly devised fables in making known to you the presence and power of our Lord Jesus, but were eye-witnesses of that majesty, for he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory--'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' And this voice which

came from heaven we heard when we were with him in the holy mount."--2 Pet. 1:16-18.

The several accounts show that our Lord entered into the mountain to pray, and that the apostles fell asleep during the prayer, but subsequently awakened and beheld the vision, the Master's face shining like the sun, and his garments glitteringly white, and in his company two persons who, for some reason, they recognized as Moses and Elijah, altho of course they had never seen either of these men, and would not have known them without assistance. These they overheard talking with the Lord, the subject of the conversation no doubt being intended for the ears of the disciples--to convince them that the matters which would occur before long in Jerusalem and on Mount Calvary would all be features of the divine plan, harmoniously working out the blessed results promised and longed for, through the Kingdom. "They spoke of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem."

What is the interpretation of the picture? is a proper question. We reply, that it represented, first of all, that altho our Lord Jesus must suffer death, even

R2659 : page 204

the death of the cross, in harmony with the divine plan, "being made a curse for us" (Gal. 3:13), nevertheless, he was still the Son of God, whose glorious majesty and kingly power would later on be fully shown forth. And Moses and Elijah, representing the Law and the Prophets, illustrate how the death of Christ was fully attested beforehand. Moses spoke of the sufferings of Christ in all the arrangements of the Law, its sacrifices, etc., and the prophets declared not only the coming glories, but also the sufferings which must precede them, as our Lord subsequently pointed out to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, saying, "O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Messiah to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?"--Luke 24:25-27.

Again, this picture may be understood to represent the Kingdom during this Gospel age--the Kingdom as recognized by the Lord's people, but not recognized by the world. In this view of the vision, our Lord's face shining as the sun, and his garments glistening white, would represent him in his present condition, as no longer the man Christ Jesus, but the risen, glorified Son of the Highest, a spirit being. In this view of the matter, Moses might be understood to represent the faithful of the past ages, and Elijah the faithful of this Gospel age, the body of Christ in the flesh,\* who are to be associated with him in the glory of the Kingdom, and who meantime behold his glory with the eye of faith, and recognize the great transaction of Calvary as the basis for all Kingdom hopes and blessings.

In harmony with this view is the fact that at the same time that this vision was taking place the other disciples of the Twelve at the foot of the mountain were contending with the Adversary, seeking to cast out the devil from the young man. Thus the Lord's people of the present time are still in the valley of conflict, still contending with the will of the flesh and the devil; yet their eyes of faith behold at the top of the mountain the glorious Lord, with all power in heaven and in earth, their Friend, their Teacher, and soon to be their deliverer, who will cause them to share in the glories of his Kingdom into which he has already entered.

We have called this scene on the mountain a vision, and so indeed our Lord calls it, in the account given by Matthew (17:9): "As they came down from the mountain Jesus charged them saying, Tell the vision to no man until the Son of Man be risen from the dead." And indeed a vision was just as useful to the purpose as a reality could have been. Thus it was that the Lord showed many things later on to one of these three witnessing disciples on the Isle of Patmos. He showed him in vision, angels and thrones and crowns and multitudes and dragons, etc., in a manner which served the purpose equally as well as tho all those beasts, dragons, etc., had been actually created for the purpose. So in this vision: Our Lord's transfiguration was merely an appearance--actually he had undergone no change. He appeared like as spiritual beings are described, bright, shining like the sun, etc., yet he was not yet a spirit being, and did not become such until his resurrection from the dead; he was still "the man Christ Jesus." But in the "vision" his countenance and his garments were caused to appear to be bright, glistening, etc., and the appearance served every purpose. Likewise, Moses and Elijah appeared to be present, but they were not actually present, because it was merely a "vision." The Apostle distinctly informs us that Moses and Elijah and the others of the ancient worthies are not yet made perfect--and that they cannot be made perfect until after the Church, the body of Christ, is complete and glorified with the Head, "God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."--Heb. 11:40; John 3:13; Acts 2:34.

As a part of the "vision" came a misty cloud of light, which enveloped the group, including the disciples, who were fearful as they entered the cloud. This cloud, as a part of the vision, might properly be understood as saying to the apostles and to us, Altho the glory and majesty of the Lord Jesus are unquestionably his, as testified to by the Law and the Prophets, and as a result of his faithfulness unto death, nevertheless that glory will in a considerable measure be hidden, covered, obscured for a time, so that you will see your glorious Lord and King only with the eye of faith, which, altho more or less cloudy, will nevertheless be bright to those who look unto him. And the voice of

God speaking in that cloud and testifying to Jesus as the Son of God, and instructing that we should hear and obey his word, would seem to represent how that all through this Gospel age, while the misty cloud surrounds the glory of the Lord, we will have great need to continually hearken to the Word of the Lord, and to repose faith in its declaration respecting the Son of God, our Redeemer.

After the vision the Lord and the apostles descended from the mount to engage in the duties of life--to complete the lessons of faith and obedience, battling against the world, the flesh and the devil; and yet, as the quotation from the Apostle Peter's letter clearly shows, the influence of this vision continued with the apostles through coming days, as it still encourages us today. And may we not learn a lesson to the effect that as this vision was granted when Jesus and the disciples were at prayer, so all those who seek God in prayer may, to a large extent, with the eye of faith realize this same

-----

\*See MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. II, Chap. 8, "Elias Shall First Come."

R2660 : page 205

blessed vision of the Kingdom--the glories to come--and may, to some extent, with the hearing of faith recognize the voice of God saying, "This is my beloved Son"--to some extent be enabled to realize that as members of the body of Christ their sacrifice must also be accomplished in actual death before they can enter into his glory, since it is written that "if we suffer with him we shall also reign with him."

We cannot build tabernacles on the mountain heights of faith and hope, and expect to dwell there in enraptured vision always. We must remember that the duties and trials of present experiences in conflicts with sin and with self and with the Adversary are essential to our development and part of our covenant; but like the Master we should frequently seek the heavenly Father's blessing in prayer; and in proportion as we use this privilege will our hearts and our faces shine; and proportionately we will be enabled to "show forth the praises of him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light," and who has shined by his grace into our hearts, "to give the light of the knowledge of God as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord."

=====

R2660 : page 205

LEAST AND GREATEST IN THE KINGDOM.

--MATT. 18:1-14.--AUGUST 5.--

GOLDEN TEXT:--"Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such [like] is the Kingdom of God."

THE GOLDEN TEXT chosen for this lesson is most inappropriate and misleading. It was spoken respecting children, and as indicating our Lord's sympathy and love for them. Indeed, we cannot think of any truly great man or woman who would not look upon childhood with loving sympathy and interest; and viewing the blank pages of the life represented in them be awakened to tender feelings respecting the trials and difficulties and disappointments which must lie before them in the path of life, and with hopes and good wishes respecting their possible victories and attainments of desirable characters, as a result of those experiences and conflicts. That Jesus loved children, yea, loved everything guileless and pure, is not to be questioned, and our Golden Text substantiates this conviction.

The Kingdom of God will not be composed either wholly or in part of infants who died without either knowledge, experience or character attainments. Had such been God's purpose it would not have required nearly nineteen centuries to complete the "little flock" of "one hundred and forty-four thousand;" nor would it have been said that a good fight must be fought and victory achieved and graces of the spirit attained by "patient perseverance in well doing," and that all in all it must be through much tribulation to the flesh, voluntarily and joyfully accepted, that any can enter into the Kingdom. Infants can have no share under this Gospel call; but they will surely share the great world-blessing that will speedily follow the completion of the Church and its glorification as God's Kingdom.

This text is misleading, in connection with this lesson, because in the latter the expression "little ones" is used in a figurative sense, not literally,--the Lord referring to his humble and trustful disciples as God's little ones, God's children, whom he pities and cherishes as do earthly parents their little ones. Nor is this an exceptional case, for we find that repeatedly in the Scriptures the young Christian and the less developed are likened to babes, to children. Thus the Apostle Paul exhorts: "Brethren, be not children in understanding; howbeit, in malice be ye children, but in understanding be ye men." And the Apostle Peter exhorts the brethren, "As new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby."--1 Cor. 14:20; 1 Peter 2:2.

It was apparently after the journey back from the Mount of Transfiguration to Capernaum that the discourse of this lesson occurred. Comparing the accounts as given by Mark and Luke, we gather that the apostles on the way had a discussion respecting who

of their number were the greatest, and who would be the greatest or most honored in the Kingdom which the Lord had promised and in which they hoped to share. This discussion quite probably was instigated by the fact that only three of their number had been specially favored by being with the Lord in the mount. The discussion between them, altho carried on probably in subdued tones, not intended for the ears of Jesus, had become animated as the various sides and claims were advocated. It was a little later that our Lord inquired of them what had been the subject of their earnest and animated converse as they followed him in the way. According to Luke's account they were reticent, not liking to answer his question and to tell of their dispute, no doubt feeling rather ashamed of it. But, realizing that they could not hide the matter from the Lord, and some of them evidently anxious to have his decisive word on the subject, they asked him to settle the question for them.

Our Lord desired just such an opportunity for presenting to his faithful ones a needed lesson along this line; and according to his usual custom he illustrated it. Calling a little child, and seating it in the midst,

R2660 : page 206

he made the astounding declaration that only such as would become childlike could enter the Kingdom at all. As natural men, and most of them rather unlearned, the disciples had no doubt been aiming as far as possible from childlike simplicity, and striving rather to assume the dignity of mind and of bearing which would suggest itself to the natural man as being appropriate to those who hoped soon to share regal honors in the Kingdom of God. What astonishment it must have caused them to learn that the Lord was looking rather for simplicity, meekness, teachableness, child-likeness, than for astuteness, wisdom, dignity, etc.!

Yet our Lord's words were not merely a condemnation of the spirit which they had been cultivating, but a lesson of instruction regarding a change in this respect, his words intimating not merely the possibility, but the necessity of a change of course on the part of those who desired a share in his Kingdom. If, instead of reading our Lord's words as in the Common Version, "Except ye be converted," we read them as in the Revised Version, "Except ye turn," more will get the true thought our Lord wished his followers to learn, the word "convert" having lost its primary meaning to many by reason of misuse. They must turn their ideas on the subject, and study and practice lessons in the opposite direction--lessons of meekness, of humility, of child-likeness: and our Lord's declaration that those who attain to the greatest development in meekness and simplicity of heart will be greatest in the Kingdom, implies that those who strive after simplicity and meekness



will be granted a share in the Kingdom, but that none who are self-seeking and boastful will have part or lot in this matter.

Having thus defined the humble-minded and unostentatious amongst his followers as those upon whom he would bestow the highest honors and dignities of the Kingdom, Jesus proceeded to give a general lesson respecting such "little ones" of his followers, saying that all who receive such humble disciples in his name will be reckoned as having received him, and whoever stumbles or injures one of these humble or "little ones" will thereby commit a crime so serious that it would be better for him to have lost his life--better that a millstone were fastened to his neck and he be cast into the sea, and thus all hope of saving his life effectually destroyed--better that this great calamity should come upon one than that he should do an injury to one of the Lord's "little ones"--one of the humblest of the disciples, child-like, meek, following in the way of the Lord.

As we thus see how great a value the Lord places upon humility it should encourage all true disciples to cultivate this quality daily, that thus they might grow more and more guileless, honest, truly humble, and in the sight of the great King become more and more great, more and more fit for the high exaltations of the Kingdom to come. Seeing that without this meekness none can enter into this Kingdom, we need not wonder that the Scriptures everywhere exhort the Lord's people to humility--"Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God [now] that he may exalt you in due time" in the Kingdom. Yet notwithstanding all these exhortations of the Scriptures the perversity of human nature seems to be such that those who become the Lord's people and who engage to run in his way seem to find more trouble, more to contend against, in this matter than in any other. And some who feel themselves to be little enough seem very anxious that others of the brethren shall esteem them very highly. Would to God that all of the Lord's dear people, and especially all who seem to be leaders, and who have some natural qualifications for leading, and helpfulness in the Church,

R2661 : page 206

would study well this lesson, and learn from it how to advance themselves in the Lord's favor, and how to be truly great according to his standard, which alone shall prevail.

The word rendered "offend" in verse 6 and onward would be better rendered "stumbled," the thought being that of placing a stumbling-block in the path. The Lord intimates most distinctly that there will be plenty of such stumbling-blocks in the way of those who are truly his, and that too in proportion as they are "little"--humble. He declares it necessary that these difficulties,

these trials, these "offences," shall come. It is necessary, because it is the divine will that all the elect Church shall be thoroughly tested and developed in character, that thus they may become strong characters, copies of God's dear Son, willing to suffer for the truth's sake, and that gladly, joyfully, the loss of earthly things, that thereby they might please the Father which is in heaven,--thus developing humility and obedience, that by and by they may be ready for the exaltation which he has promised to those only who faithfully follow in the footsteps of Jesus.

Yet however necessary that the stumbling-blocks shall be in the way, and that the Church, the body of Christ, shall be tested thereby, this does not lighten the responsibility of those who, as the agents of the Adversary, lend themselves to his influence in placing those stumbling-blocks before the feet of the saints; and our Lord's words, without indicating exactly the nature of their punishment, assure us positively that such evil-doers will have a reward from him who says, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay."

In all probability many to-day are putting stumbling-blocks before the Lord's little ones, his faithful little flock, who do not realize what they are doing,--just as Peter unconsciously became a stumbling stone,

R2661 : page 207

a rock of offence, to the Master, when he attempted to dissuade him from the performance of his consecration vow. Those who place stumbling-blocks before the Lord's "little ones" now similarly seek to lead them from the narrow path of full consecration and self-sacrifice --seeking to persuade them that another and an easier way, a way less humbling to the natural man, a way more politic, more crafty, more wise according to the course of this world than the narrow way, is just as good as or a great deal better than the narrow way. Such testings are necessary, and it is also necessary that all who do not walk closely in the footprints of the Savior shall be sifted out, for the Lord seeketh only a little flock,--all of them copies of his dear Son. But there is a great responsibility upon those who aid in turning aside any of the flock--who to any extent are stumbling-blocks, causes of stumbling or "offence" in the pathway of the Lord's people.

Following this line of thought, that offences or trials and testings must come to all, our Lord urges that tho these tests mean the sacrifice of pleasure or hopes or aims or customs or privileges, precious to us as a right eye or a right hand, or useful to us as our foot, they must nevertheless be overcome, if we would enter into the Kingdom. This is another way of saying what he at another time expressed in the words, "Through much tribulation shall ye enter the Kingdom." Whoever has gotten the thought that the Kingdom is to be

granted merely on condition of believing in Jesus has gotten a wrong thought that is not imparted by the Scriptures. Faith is necessary to our justification, before we can do anything in the nature of self-sacrifice that God could accept; but whoever stops with the faith without the works, without the self-sacrifice, loses every hope and privilege in connection with the Kingdom. To attain it we must "strive," must "fight the good fight," must "endure hardness as good soldiers," must be willing to cut off, not only sinful pleasures, but all things that would interfere with our full devotion to the Lord's service and our fulfillment of our covenant to be dead with him; must "work out our salvation with fear and trembling,"--assisted by divine grace sufficient for every time of need, and by the exceeding great and precious promises of God's Word working in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

We are not to understand that any may be lacking a foot or a hand or an eye in the Kingdom; but rather we should understand that as the offending eye represents besetments which appeal to our natural tastes as beautiful and likely to charm and attract us to earthly things, and as the offending hand would represent the doing of things that would be contrary to our highest spiritual interests, and as the offending foot would represent the going into forbidden paths of sin of self-gratification, so the lopping off of these would properly signify that it would be better that we should enter the life eternal and into the share in the Kingdom without having enjoyed certain earthly privileges and gratifications, than that having enjoyed all the earthly gratifications we should thereby have missed our calling and failed to make our election sure.

The "everlasting fire" and the "hell-fire" mentioned are equally symbolical with the other parts of the figure, and undoubtedly refer to the destruction which is the wages of sin to be visited upon wilful sinners --"everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power." That fire is used here and elsewhere in the Scriptures to represent not torture, but destruction, is clearly set forth in a pamphlet entitled, "What say the Scriptures About Hell."\*

Branching out further along the same lines, our Lord gives the general caution to us all: "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones"--these humble ones that belong to the Lord. They may seem humble and insignificant when viewed from the worldly standpoint, but they are God's friends; yea, they are God's children, for whom he cares; and hence whoever does injury to them is insulting and antagonizing their Father which is in heaven. Moreover, our Lord assures us that each of his little ones, his faithful, humble little flock, have a constant representation in the Father's presence. There is a guardian angel for each

of the Lord's people, and we are to get the thought that there is no delay in the bringing of any and everything which pertains to their welfare and interest before the attention of the great King. What a thought is here for those who are inclined to be heady and to despise or in any manner over-ride or mistreat the humble ones of the body of Christ! And what a lesson is here also for the humble ones--that they are the special objects of divine care and providence, for whom, therefore, all things must work well, because they belong to the Lord!

The remaining four verses seem not to be properly a part of this lesson, and inasmuch as they will come up in another lesson later on and in their proper connection, we omit the discussion of them here.

-----

\*We will supply these free to applicants who so request.

=====

R2661 : page 207

#### BATTLING FOR THE TRUTH.

-----

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--At a recent meeting of the Church here the 28th chapter of Isaiah was brought up, and it seemed plain to us that this is an exact description of the condition of the nominal church of the present time, from the prophets and

R2661 : page 208

seers, who err in vision, down to the tables which are full of vomit, the bed which has become too short and the covering which is too narrow.--See MILLENNIAL DAWN Index references.

Now in regard to that part of the chapter which refers to those who drive back the battle to the gate, the thought was expressed that possibly this might refer to the present "Volunteer" work, and that the volunteers are pressing back the battle to the gate, and that the word "gate" might possibly be a symbol of dominion, representing Satan's stronghold, and that this stronghold is the doctrine of eternal torture, against which doctrine the present ammunition of the volunteers seems to be specially directed. Then again it was thought that this gate (or doctrine) might represent the restraint which the enemy has exercised over the race of mankind during all these centuries, lest the glorious light of the gospel should shine into their hearts.

Do you think the interpretation correct? And if

so, do you not think that if the attention of the brethren were called to this chapter at the present time it would serve to strengthen those who are already in the volunteer service and encourage others to enlist, inasmuch as the same chapter promises strength to those who drive the battle back? With best wishes,

Yours in the service of the King,

CONRAD KUEHN,--Ohio.

[In reply: We certainly do understand this chapter to portray events of our day; and while all true soldiers of the cross are now battling for the Truth against error we concede that none are doing more valiant service than are the "Volunteers." Nor do we know of any other service or method so likely to yield the desired results.

As to turning the battle at the gate: it might be viewed aggressively, as you suggest, or defensively.

R2662 : page 208

Really we are on the defensive--the stronghold Zion is attacked by enemies from without and within. The Bible is attacked by so-called Higher Critics, and the cross, the doctrine of the ransom, is attacked by Evolutionists and hosts of others, and the long entrenched errors of doctrine are now stumbling many who want to be on the Lord's side of this battle--the side of Truth. The enemy of Truth, Satan, and his deluded followers must be shown up and driven completely outside Zion's walls that now at last "wheat" may be distinguished from "tares." We know of no better aid in this conflict than the "Volunteer TOWER." It is an inspiring scene to see the Allegheny Church Volunteers going forth every Sunday morning, and it must be still more so to witness the larger company of the Boston Church--about 80 per cent. of the entire Church, we understand, are "Volunteers." The influence of such preachers and their message is bound to tell on the right class.--EDITOR.]

=====

R2662 : page 208

BIBLE READING INDISPENSABLE.

-----

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--I can heartily appreciate the advice given by you in the last WATCH TOWER, under caption of "Attention, Watch Tower Readers!" inasmuch as I am always benefited by a re-reading of the DAWNS, but permit me to say that I believe there are some who may misconstrue the last two sentences of the above article and think into them a meaning it is not intended they should contain, viz.,

that you are advocating the reading of the DAWNS exclusive of God's Word. I have learned from observation that those who merely read the DAWNS without examining the context of Scriptures quoted do not become well established in the truth, so that when the fire that tries every man's faith becomes more intense, they are unable to endure the ordeal. It has further been my experience that those who state that "they" have the Bible to read, and that it is sufficient for them without reading the DAWNS, never come to a clear knowledge of the truth, because they thereby ignore the instrumentality that God has been pleased to honor in setting forth his truth in these last days. And in ignoring the instrumentality they ignore not man, but God, "who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will;" and hence, as long as they maintain such an attitude, they cannot hope to be led into all truth. But happy are those who keep their minds in a receptive condition for truth, willing to receive it through whatever agency the Lord may be pleased to send it to them. May the Lord enable each one of us so to be.

Before closing I must tell you that I was greatly encouraged by the article, "Keep yourselves in the love of God." How it has refreshed me in spirit! I appreciate more fully now the fact that it is one thing to possess the "love of God" and another thing to maintain it to the end of our course. How much effort on our part is implied in the word "keep!"--continuous effort, yet ever mindful of the fact that the Lord is the "author" as well as the "finisher of our faith." It is to "pray without ceasing," to "quench not the spirit," to "despise not prophesying," to "prove all things and hold fast that which is good."

Some three years ago, when I began to appreciate the beauty of "present truth," I realized I had lost much precious time, and desiring to make the best of the little I had left, I thought over several plans and finally decided on this one, "Every day I will try to become a little more like Jesus, and then he will make plain to me those things I do not now understand." And I find that my knowledge of the "deep things of God" has ever been commensurate with my progress in becoming more and more like God's dear Son, but herein I became aware of the greatest struggle of my life, a struggle to the death of the old nature, and oh, what a struggle it is, only those who have tried to stem the current of a fallen and depraved nature know. I found arrayed against me the world, the flesh and the devil, but "thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" How appropriate are the words,--

"Keep striving: the winners are those who have striven  
And fought for the prize that no idler has won;  
To the hand of the steadfast alone it is given,  
And before it is gained there is work to be done."

Enclosed find order for DAWNS. With much  
Christian love, I am,  
Yours in our Redeemer, E. J. COWARD,--Texas.

=====

page 209

SEMI-MONTHLY.

-----

VOL. XXI. JULY 15, 1900. No. 14.

-----

CONTENTS.

-----

Views From the Watch Tower.....	211
Is the China Trouble Prophetically Significant?.....	211
The Shepherds Disappointed and Chagrined.....	212
The Ministry of Comfort.....	214
"Forgive Us our Debts as We Forgive Our Debtors".....	216
The Parable of the Two Debtors.....	218
"Who did Sin, this Man or his Parents?".....	219
Orientalism, Mormonism, Theosophy.....	220
Is All Sickness of the Devil?.....	220
Christian Science Misbeliefs.....	222
Out of Darkness Into Light.....	224

page 210

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.

=====

BRITISH BRANCH NO. 131 GIPSY LANE, FOREST GATE,  
LONDON EAST, ENGLAND.

=====

R2664 : page 210

#### PROGRESS OF THE CAUSE IN GREAT BRITAIN.

The Lord's blessing attends the British Branch. Four colporteurs are at work there with good success. Brother Henninges writes of their work thus,--"The results of their labors for the last two months show that any one of average intelligence and activity can, with the Lord's blessing, sustain himself in the work. Give a clarion call from the WATCH TOWER for more laborers for this great field, advising would-be laborers to write to the British Branch for terms, territory, etc."

Respecting the "Volunteer" service Bro. H. says,--"The Volunteer work is progressing well; particularly in this city (London), where we have so far put out 14,000 copies. The work is going on in four sections of the city. Yesterday was the first day on "double turn" (A.M. and P.M.) and the total number of copies of the Volunteer TOWER distributed was 4000. At this rate we shall soon be obliged to call on you for funds for another 100,000 edition."

Our Society has just rented a very desirable meeting place where Sunday meetings will be regularly held. It is a public hall opposite the Great Eastern Ry. station, and near Wansted Park station of Midland Ry. The entrance is No. 79 Woodgrange Road, Forest Gate, London E. All who trust in the precious blood of Christ will be cordially welcomed. Seats free. No collections.

#### THE COLPORTEUR WORK AT HOME.

We have had many additions to this service lately, but still there is room for consecrated laborers. The harvest is great, the laborers few, comparatively, and the time is short--"the eleventh hour." Write us for particulars if you have the desire and the opportunity to thus "preach the Word."

page 210

CHICAGO CONVENTION, SEPT. 1,2,3.

ONE RAILWAY FARE FOR ROUND TRIP,--PARTICULARS NEXT ISSUE.

=====

R2662 : page 211

#### VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER.

-----

IS THE CHINA TROUBLE PROPHETICALLY SIGNIFICANT?



-----

Apparently a serious crisis in the world's affairs is being reached in China. For the past sixty years Europeans have been intruding themselves upon the Chinese, ostensibly for the benevolent purpose of blessing the Chinese with European civilization, but really for commercial purposes;--supplying their needs for a money consideration. Subsequently, about forty years ago, under compulsory regulations forced upon the Chinese, Christian missionaries were permitted to enter the Flowery Empire to contradict its religious and moral ideas cherished for centuries. The new religion brought family strife--especially because it taught the people that their ancestors (whom the Chinese worship as demi-gods), not being believers in the only name wherein is salvation, were lost eternally--doomed to everlasting torments.

These missionaries, and all foreign merchants who lodged with them, were specially protected by treaty laws and regulations, and thus were exempted from Chinese laws and became a favored people, possessed of greater privileges and liberties than the natives. Moreover, the missionaries (especially the Romanists, from all accounts) attempted to extend these special treaty rights to such Chinese as professed conversion --the priests became the attorneys of their people, and by arguments and threats, etc., generally got their faithful free from charges brought against them.

Thus inch by inch the white man forcibly intruded upon the yellow man, until the war between China and Japan, which displayed to the civilized world the helplessness of China, the second greatest nation of the world numerically (400,000,000). Since then the white man's arrogance has increased, and the newspapers of the world have told the Chinese that it is only a question of time until their nation will no longer exist, being divided among the nations of Europe, who have grasped ports and whole districts, compelling a nominal acquiescence on the part of the Chinese.

The Chinese are a thrifty people and peaceably disposed and not specially patriotic,--else they would not have submitted to these intrusions so long as they have. Indeed, they are quite tolerant toward foreigners who will adopt their civilization, submit to their laws and mind their own business. Understanding the circumstances, we cannot so much wonder at the recent uprising against foreigners under the auspices of an athletic society called the "Boxers." It is worthy of note that the present outbreak, while it has extended to all missionaries and all foreigners, nevertheless began with Roman Catholics exclusively. Much as we must deprecate the killing of many missionaries and many native converts, we must admit that such an uprising would have occurred long ago among

white men of any nationality. Lack of patriotic sentiment amongst the Chinese, and inferior armament, etc., accounts for the delay of this outbreak: the people have been kept so busy providing for life's necessities that love of money has crowded out love of country.

Europe is astounded at the late uprising, for two reasons. (1) It offers a suggestion that a patriotic feeling may yet take hold of the Chinese, which with their overwhelming numbers would make them a menace

R2662 : page 212

to Europe; for they could muster an army twice as numerous as could all Europe combined--an army accustomed to obedience, and very economical. (2) Even should the whites succeed in coercing the Chinese, and hold the kingdom as a vassal empire, or divide it amongst the "more civilized," the danger is that international jealousies over shares in the spoils, "spheres of influence," etc., would ultimately lead to great wars, far-reaching in their influence, and quite possibly involving all Europe.

It is from this standpoint that affairs in China are of special interest to those who know that we are living in the harvest time of the Gospel age, and who are instructed from the Word of God to expect this age to close with a great time of trouble--beginning with international complications, and ending with anarchy.

R2663 : page 212

From this standpoint we examine the Scriptures and note the following as seemingly pertinent, indicating that every nation of earth will be involved in the trouble, but that "Christendom," "Babylon," "Sheshach," will be the last to drink the cup of wrath. We quote from Jeremiah 25:15-33, as follows:--

"Thus saith the Lord God of Israel unto me: Take the wine-cup of this fury at my hand, and cause all the nations to whom I send thee, to drink it. And they shall drink, and be moved, and be mad, because of the sword that I will send among them....All the kings of the north, far and near, one with another, and all the kingdoms of the world which are upon the face of the earth: and the king of Sheshach shall drink after them.

"Therefore thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Drink ye and be drunken, and spue and fall, and rise no more, because of the sword which I will send among you.

"And it shall be if they refuse to take the cup at thine hand to drink, then shalt thou say unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts: Ye shall certainly drink: ...for I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, saith the Lord of hosts....The Lord

hath a controversy with the nations: he will plead with all flesh; he will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the Lord....

"Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts [boundaries] of the earth. And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried."

It is not for us to prophesy, but to seek to interpret and apply prophecy: and even then we are to learn from the past that it is not the divine purpose that matters prophetically revealed shall be understood in detail until during or after fulfilment;--and then by those taught of God. We therefore merely suggest that, in harmony with the foregoing Scriptures, it will not surprise us if the Chinese are entering now their share of the great day of wrath upon all nations; --about to drink their share of the cup of divine wrath, which is to bring all nations low, as an experience preparatory to the great blessing of all the world under the Millennial Kingdom. And if it was appropriate that Israel, the natural seed of Abraham, upon rejection of Messiah should be punished and destroyed nationally, eighteen centuries ago, will it be strange if other nations also be compelled to drink of the same cup of wrath?--See verse 29.

India has already been severely scourged with famine and pestilence, yet these may be only the beginnings of her share in the cup of wrath, which we understand will be to every nation, as it drinks thereof, a time of trouble without precedent. Probably the trouble will extend from nation to nation during the next few years, until finally, despite every effort to avert it (verse 28), great Babylon's turn will come--probably within ten years from now, when she must drink the very dregs of the cup, suffering more severely than the heathen nations, even as she has enjoyed greater privileges and sinned against greater light. "Babylon--Sheshach--shall drink after them." --Verse 26.

As the "Gospel of the Kingdom" was circulated throughout Palestine before its trouble and overthrow, so we believe the same Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached for a witness to each nation before its trouble comes. China probably contains but few fully consecrated Christians, and these chiefly among the missionaries, and hence the "harvest" message might quickly reach them all. In this connection it will be interesting to note, (1) that under divine providence our dear Brother H. A. Randle sent a special personal appeal to each Christian missionary in China, and later many tracts and DAWNS, about a year before this trouble broke out; (2) the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society sent tracts and booklets extensively to the same missionaries last year. True, we cannot say

that many have received the truth; but we had no reason to expect that many would receive it. Yet the witness was given to all before their great time of trouble came. And who knows but what this interruption of mission work, backed by the truth, may set others to thinking in another direction--to looking and praying for God's Kingdom to come, as the only hope of the world.

#### THE SHEPHERDS DISAPPOINTED AND CHAGRINED.

-----

Reverses in the mission fields of the world, one after another, will be very discouraging to ministers who have been preaching to themselves and others that a peaceful conversion of the world to Christ is near at hand: that thus the Millennial Kingdom will be introduced. They will find that they have been

R2663 : page 213

uttering a false cry, saying, Peace, Peace, when there is no peace, and can be no peace satisfactory or lasting until the Prince of Peace, Immanuel, shall establish it through his Kingdom, by breaking in pieces the nations as a potter's vessel, and establishing his Kingdom on a different basis in their stead--on their ruins. Note now how the same prophecy refers to this despair of the pastors, etc., of nominal Christendom, at the spoilation of their pasture fields, as follows:--

"Howl, ye shepherds [pastors], and cry; and wallow yourselves in the ashes, ye principal of the flock: for the days of your slaughter and of your dispersion are come; and ye shall fall [and be ruined] like a delicate vessel. And the shepherds shall have no way to flee, nor the principal of the flock to escape. A voice of crying from the shepherds [pastors] and an howling from the principal of the flock shall be heard; for the Lord hath spoiled their pasture."--  
See Jer. 25:34-37.

\* \* \*

Lord Salisbury, the British Prime Minister, addressing The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, recently said:--

"Just look at this Chinese matter. You observe all the people who are slaughtered. Do you imagine that they are slaughtered simply because the Chinese dislike their religion? There is no nation in the world so indifferent on the subject of religion as the Chinese! It is because they and other nations have got the idea that missionary work is a mere instrument of the secular government to achieve the objects it has in view. In the East they have the proverb, 'First the

Missionary, then the Consul, then the General."

\* \* \*

The London Spectator, commenting on the general dislike of Europeans by Asiatics, now being exemplified in China, says:--

"There is in China no race hatred, or color hatred, or, as we believe, hatred of creed for Chinese Christians. They could be tolerated quite well as mere idiots, but that those who dislike their ideas fear them also, and believe that unless those who propagate them are extirpated the ideas will win. The Europeans, they say, are already convincing many; they have almost persuaded our Emperor; year by year their views are advancing among the people,--if they and their disciples are suffered to live, our religion, our civilization, our social system, all are lost together. As for our literati, they will be ruined first, for they are our officials. People wonder that the harmless missionaries should be the objects of such a passion, that they should be disemboweled instead of merely beheaded; but think of the treatment of the Christians by the Roman Judges and we shall begin to understand the Chinese movement. Add but a little fear to the feelings already generated, and who would answer for the lives of Jews in France, or Germany, or Russia, or for those of Anarchists in any part of Europe? Asiatics in all ages have believed the amalgam of beliefs and social ways which constitutes their civilization, to be divine and unimprovable, and regard those who despise it, and preach against it, and shake it, as the intrusive Europeans certainly do, with a horror which of itself extinguishes the feeling of a common humanity. They have no more sense that slaughtering such is wicked, than the Parisians had when they massacred the Huguenots, or than English sportsmen have when they organize a battue of birds."

\* \* \*

General Lord Wolsley, of the British War Department, takes a very pessimistic view of the outlook in China, which is corroborated by the accumulating evidences that since the China-Japan war China has been quietly drilling her troops and arming them with modern weapons, machine guns, etc. He said recently,--

"China possesses every requisite for overrunning the world. She has a population of 400,000,000, all speaking the same language, or dialect, readily understood from one end of the empire to the other. She has enormously developed wealth, and still enormous natural wealth awaiting development. Her men, if properly drilled and led, are admirable soldiers. They are plucky, and able to live on next to nothing. Moreover,

they are absolutely fearless of death. Begin with the foundation of millions upon millions of such soldiers as those men are capable of being made, and tell me, if you can, where the end will be."

A Chinese gentleman of education explains that the present trouble is occasioned by the Chinese lack of conscience: that well-meaning missionaries are duped

R2664 : page 213

by many of those professing conversion. He says for instance,--

A Chinaman, an executor of a relative's will, may decide to cheat the orphans under his care. He arranges the matter readily with the Mandarin ruler by promising him one-half the booty. Later he concludes to give him but one-eighth, and to pave the way attends mission meetings, etc. Then he represents himself as terribly persecuted because of his new religion, and through the missionary secures consular protection which hinders him from being tried in a Chinese court. This step is taken months in advance of his refusal to give the Mandarin the promised one-half of his booty.

The missionary, unused to such duplicity, labors, as he supposes, for justice for the oppressed, but the result of his efforts may be summed up thus,--

"Net result: A misled missionary confirmed in his wrong-headedness; a would-be dishonest mandarin baffled and infuriated; two orphans robbed of their inheritance; food for nine days' gossip, and stirring up of hatred of 'foreign devils'; the whole a piece of rank injustice.

"Let me deliberately state that I am quite certain there is not one town in the whole length and breadth of China that has been visited by missionaries, in which you could not at this moment find indisputable evidence

R2664 : page 214

of a case similar in all essentials to the example I have given you."

We wonder how long it will require our dear friends interested in missions to learn that God is seeking as his "elect" not the lowest, but the highest types of man;--that now is not the Lord's time for judging the heathen--that as the Apostle declares, "God hath appointed a day [the Millennial day--2 Pet. 3:8] in the which he will judge the world in righteousness." (Acts 17:31.) When they learn this they will see the un-wisdom of attempting to forestall Jehovah's plan, and will cooperate rather in his great and gracious arrangement of first calling and preparing an "elect" Church, which by and by shall, as God's "royal priesthood," with their glorious Lord, Jesus, as fully competent missionaries, bless the heathen

with the gracious opportunity of salvation promised. Perhaps a signal failure of present missions, and spoiling of pastures, may be God's method for awakening his true servants now deluded and blinded by false doctrines contrary to the Word.

=====

R2664 : page 214

#### THE MINISTRY OF COMFORT.

-----

"The Lord hath anointed me...to comfort all that mourn; to appoint [promise] unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified." --Isaiah 61:1-3.--

OUR TEXT is surely good tidings in a very broad and a very deep sense. Its message is one of "comfort," not only to Zion, the consecrated Church, but to all who mourn; and as mentally we cast our eyes over the world we are deeply impressed with the thought that the vast majority of mankind are in mourning; as the Apostle expresses it, "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together." There are undoubtedly a few who are full, satisfied, and who mourn for nothing, and who, therefore, under these conditions, are excluded from any share in this promised blessing; but they are exceptions to the rule. Some of them are wealthy in this world's goods, and feel that they have need of nothing, and are kept busy with their efforts to enjoy themselves. There are others of the same full class who, tho not wealthy, have a very self-satisfied feeling as respects their moral status: they do not realize themselves as sinners; they do not realize their daily imperfections nor their need of a Savior; and are not mourning for anything, and not therefore in the way to be comforted with any of the comforting assurances and promises and provision which the Lord has made for those who mourn.

So far as the world is concerned, our Lord's ministry of comfort to them is chiefly a future work. We rejoice, however, that the time is sure to come when all that mourn, all the "groaning creation," shall be brought under the blessed influences and provisions of the Millennial Kingdom, and shall there come to know the consolations which God has provided in Christ:--the balm for every trouble, every wound; the cure for every blight, every sin and every imperfection; and their privilege of profiting by these to the fullest measure by giving themselves unreservedly

into the care of the Good Physician. But the poor world, blinded and deceived by the god of this world as respects the character and plan of Jehovah, can neither see, hear, nor appreciate now the wonderful provisions made for them, and hence they cannot receive the blessing, the consolation, the "comfort" now, but must wait for it until the establishment of the Lord's Kingdom, the binding of Satan, and the opening of their understanding with the eye-salve of the truth.

But as respects Zion, the consecrated Church, this comfort is now her privilege, and all children of Zion need to be comforted. First of all, they need the comforting knowledge that their sins are forgiven, and that they are no longer strangers and aliens and foreigners, but children of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ their Lord, if so be that they suffer with him. They need to be comforted, too, with the assurances of the Lord's Word that our God is very sympathetic, "very pitiful," and that if anyone be overtaken in a fault he may be restored, and "not be utterly cast down." If the children of Zion had no such consolations as these they surely would be utterly discouraged, disheartened, and faint by the way; hence the Lord has provided these comforting assurances, pointing out to them that having begun a good work in them he is desirous of completing it, if they will permit him to do so, and that to this end they must abide in Christ by faith, coupled with obedience to the extent of their ability. What Christian is there who has not shared these consolations, these comforts; and what Christian has not needed them, and realized that without them he would long since have been undone?

The Scriptures point out to us that our comfort comes through fellowship with the heavenly Father and with our Lord Jesus: we are comforted, not by believing that they are ignorant of our weaknesses and shortcomings, nor that they have a low standard of righteousness and a sinful basis of fellowship, but quite to the contrary of all this, they comfort us with the assurance that altho our every imperfection is

R2665 : page 215

known to the Lord he is yet very sympathetic, very merciful; and that having provided, in the great sacrifice at Calvary, a full propitiation (satisfaction) for all sins, the Lord is very pleased to apply, on behalf of each of his adopted children, in full measure, the riches of grace necessary to the covering and offsetting of every unintentional, unapproved error and failure. What comfort is here! What consolation! What privileges of fellowship with the Father and with the Son!

And this comfort, the Scriptures assure us, comes to us through the holy spirit--it is the channel, and, hence indeed, called the Comforter. (John 14:26.)



Those who have the holy spirit may have the comfort; those who do not have the holy spirit may not have this comfort, this consolation. It is only as we receive of the spirit of the Lord, the mind of the Lord, his disposition, that we are able to understand and appreciate the lengths and breadths, the heights and depths of his love and compassion and provision for us, and to be comforted thereby.

Nevertheless, this comfort of the holy spirit (the channel of divine favor), reaches us through the Scriptures, for the Scriptures are the medium, or sub-channel through which the knowledge of God's grace and the comfort of all knowledge reach us; in the Apostle's language, "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."-- Rom. 15:4.

Yet while this comfort is of the Father, through the Son, by the holy spirit, communicated through the Scriptures, we are informed that in great measure it is communicated by the members of the body of Christ one to another, as the Apostle, for instance, after relating certain features of the divine plan respecting the deliverance of the Church, says, "Wherefore, comfort one another with these words." (1 Thess. 4:18.) Similarly, the Apostle declares that he sent Timothy to the Church at Ephesus, and again to the Church at Colosse, that he might comfort their hearts. This, of course, signifies that he was to draw their attention to the exceeding great and precious promises of the Lord's Word, and that thus they might drink in the holy spirit of all the promises, and that thus they might be comforted, not only with respect to the things promised, but with respect to the loving compassion and sympathy of him who promises them.

Writing to the Thessalonians, the Apostle says that he sent Timothy--"to establish you and to comfort you concerning your faith, that no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto: for verily, when we were with you we told you we should suffer tribulation, even as it came to pass and ye know. For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you." (1 Thess. 3:2-5.) Here again it is evident that the comforting signifies and implies establishment in the faith once delivered to the saints, that all the terms and conditions of our covenant should be clearly held in mind, and that the promises of reward at the end of the journey might serve to comfort, strengthen and establish the children of Zion in their endurance of the tribulations as good soldiers. This comfort, again, was of the Lord, through the holy spirit, through the agency of Paul and Timothy. Again, the same Apostle, speaking in the same strain, says, "Wherefore, comfort yourselves together, and edify one another,

even as also ye do."--1 Thess. 5:11.

All of the Lord's people need to remember that in proportion as they are ambassadors of the Lord, and his representatives, it will be their privilege not only by and by in the Kingdom to "comfort all that mourn," and to be the trees of righteousness, whose leaves will be for the healing of the nations (Rev. 22:2), but they should remember that in the present life they have a ministry of comfort to perform also, toward all who mourn in Zion--toward all of the Lord's people who are in any tribulation, physical or mental disquiet, dis-ease; and they should remember, too, that just in proportion as they are filled with this spirit now, it is their privilege to bind up the broken-hearted, and comfort the mourning ones. No one can have this spirit of helpfulness, this disposition to comfort and to strengthen, and to edify, and to upbuild the household of faith, except he have in considerable measure the spirit of the truth, the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of love: and in proportion as each seeks to cultivate this privilege of brotherly helpfulness, in comforting and upbuilding and strengthening, in that same proportion he will find the spirit of love developing and abounding in his own heart, and that his likeness to the Lord Jesus, the Head of the body, is becoming more pronounced from day to day and from year to year.

Finally, in view of what we have seen respecting the Lord's goodness toward his people, and the methods by which he comforts them through the holy spirit, the Scriptures and the brethren, let us note one of the Apostle's expressions respecting the great comfort and consolation which God has provided for his consecrated, faithful people, saying--

"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."--2 Cor. 1:3,4.

R2665 : page 216

So then, all of our lessons and experiences in life in connection with trials and difficulties and tribulations, if we are rightly exercised by them, should bring us larger experiences in the Lord's comfort, through the gracious promises of his Word and the spirit of the same; and should make us the more capable and efficient agents and representatives of the Lord, his Word and his spirit, in communicating comfort to others about us in their trials and difficulties.

=====

"FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS."

--MATT. 18:21-35.--AUGUST 12.--

APPARENTLY this lesson grew out of the preceding one on the necessity for guarding against stumbling the least of the Lord's little ones. It would appear that Peter had immediately attempted to put into practice the instructions of the previous lesson, and it was his inquiry as to how often it would be his duty to exercise forgiveness toward a repentant brother, that gave our Lord the opportunity to inculcate a lesson upon the subject of forgiveness.

The teaching of the Jewish rabbis on the subject of forgiveness was, that if the wrong-doer repented of his evil words or actions and came to the aggrieved person, acknowledging his wrong and asking forgiveness, he should be granted forgiveness as often as three times. They based their teaching on this subject on the statements of Job 33:29--margin, and Amos 2:4. Our Lord's teaching on the subject was, in many respects, the reverse of this, and required the offended one to go to the offender to make inquiry respecting the matter, and to show him his fault. This would require great humility on the part of the one who felt himself aggrieved, for it is much easier to resent and avoid the injurer, than to go to him according to the rule which our Lord has laid down. Peter seems to have gotten the impression that the Lord's rule, being different from that of the rabbis in this respect, would also probably be more generous and require that forgiveness be granted a larger number of times; hence Peter adds together the three and the four times mentioned by Amos, making seven in all, and inquires whether the Lord would have his followers be generous and forgiving to those who trespassed against them to that extent--seven times. What must have been his astonishment, and that of all the apostles, to hear the Lord say that forgiveness should be accorded, practically, times without number--seventy times seven.

The thought would seem to be that those who become the Lord's people, partakers of his spirit, the spirit of love, will, in proportion as they are filled with that spirit and led by that spirit, be so generous, so magnanimous, so loving, that they would not only be willing but glad to forgive a repentant brother;--glad to be first to extend the olive branch and to make his way back to reconciliation and harmony as smooth as possible. From hearts full of pride, envy, malice and other elements of the spirit of selfishness and sin, and merely topped off with a coat of benevolence and generosity, it will be impossible to dip out very much of the spirit of forgiveness, without dipping out with it some of the bitterness and hatred; and even with this mixture forgiveness

could not be granted very freely by an unregenerated heart. But with a heart emptied of malice, and hatred and envy, and filled with brotherly kindness, meekness, patience, gentleness, forbearance, love, we may dip a cup of forgiveness on every occasion and as oft as it may be applied for, and it will be without a mixture of evil, bitterness, sarcasm, etc., but pure and unadulterated, generous, loving forgiveness.

We are to remember, however, that this holy spirit which we have in our earthen vessels did not abound there at first, but with all was merely a surface coating, as it were, to begin with. Gradually, as the holy

R2666 : page 216

spirit increased in our hearts and abounded, it displaced the wrong spirit; hence those who are able from their hearts to dip the cup of forgiveness repeatedly and without a mixture of evil thereby give evidence that they have been with Jesus and have learned of him, and that they have drunk deeply of his spirit, and that they have been purging out the old leaven of malice, and are being sanctified by the truth, being made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. We are to remember that this growth in grace, while it has a positive time of beginning, in our consecration vow, is nevertheless a gradual work, requiring patient perseverance in well-doing, requiring also that the old nature, with its evil disposition, be mortified continually--deadened --so that our minds may be renewed under the transforming influence of the spirit of the truth, in which we are to grow daily.

The "seventy times seven," mentioned by our Lord, we would not understand to signify a limited number of times, but rather an unlimited number--that whoever has the Lord's spirit will be glad at any time to witness a repentance of evil-doers and to accord them forgiveness. This does not imply, however, that there may be no penalties attached with the forgiveness; as, for instance, in the dealing of a parent with a child, the moral obliquity of the misconduct may be forgiven,

R2666 : page 217

and the parent's indignation against the disobedience or misbehavior pass away immediately, and yet it may be proper at times to impose some penalty on the trespassing child. In every such case, however, it should be clearly understood by the child that this is not because of the parent's disfavor, which has ceased in the forgiveness, but that his peculiar parental duty requires that a lesson shall be taught which will be helpful to the child in the formation of character. In such a case the love of the parent will of necessity be generous, sympathetic, and careful that the punishment shall be only such as might properly be of benefit to the child--

correction in righteousness, not in wrath. However, such corrections as this belong only to parents and guardians, and do not properly extend to brethren in the Lord's family, who are not commissioned to judge and to punish one another, but to assist one another,--the Master's words to such being most positive and emphatic, "Judge nothing before the time." "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath." "Remember him who hath said, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord."

"Heir of the same inheritance,  
Child of the self-same God,  
He hath but stumbled in the path  
We have in weakness trod."

In the family of God, the saints, begotten of the holy spirit, are all to be recognized as brethren, and to be dealt with accordingly. It is the new creature, and not the old creature, that is the brother in Christ; hence we may love the new creature, and in some respects have very little love for the old, just as all have disrespect for certain blemishes in their own mortal flesh, as they realize its weakness and imperfection,--and the more so in proportion as they grow in the divine likeness as new creatures. If, therefore, a brother should trespass against us it should be our first thought that this wrong done us is not by the brother, the new creature in Christ, but by his mortal flesh, which for the moment has gotten the upper hand with him or to some extent blinded him. Accordingly, instead of feeling angry with the brother, we should feel sympathetic, and our hearts should go out to him, and our desire be strong to do him good and to help him to overcome the weaknesses of his earthen vessel.

It is in line with this thought that our Lord suggests that the proper course is for the aggrieved one to go quietly, without saying a word to anyone else, and have a kindly conference with the one who is doing him wrong, seeking to point out the merits and demerits of the question at issue, and if possible to gain the brother back to fellowship, righteousness, harmony with the Lord. If this shall be unavailing, the next step shall be still a secret one--the taking of two or three brethren of supposedly good heart and large experience, and that without attempting to prejudice their minds, and to ask these to hear the cause and to give counsel as to which one is in error. Whichever of the brethren is in error should be convinced by his fellow-pilgrims, whose arguments with him should be based upon the Scriptures and the spirit of love; but if differences still exist between them, and cannot be harmonized, then, as a court of last resort, the matter should be taken before the Church--the consecrated--and after being heard by the Church, its decision should be considered final, and be accepted by all. If either of the brethren still have doubts as to his receiving justice in the matter he may console himself with the thought that he will surely obtain

a blessing by giving full and hearty assent to the Lord's arrangements, even if he have so large a measure of self-conceit that he still believes his side of the question to be right, notwithstanding the judgment of all the brethren to the contrary.

Whoever will thus humble himself in obedience to the voice of the Church will have a blessing, and as we understand the Lord, it will be reasonable for him to expect that the voice of the Church in such a matter will be supernaturally guided, that truth and righteousness may triumph. But amongst the Lord's people, let us not forget that this is the highest tribunal, and that brother should not go to law with brother in the worldly courts, however much he may feel himself aggrieved: if he have the forgiving spirit he certainly will rest the matter where the Lord directs, and that too without harboring any unkind or ungenerous sentiments. This will be the certain effect of the indwelling of the spirit of holiness, the spirit of love.

In respect to dealings with those who are without, in the matter of forgiveness, believing husbands dealing with unbelieving wives, or believing wives dealing with unbelieving husbands, or believing persons in business relationship with unbelievers: the same spirit of love and generosity and forgiveness will apply in every case, but not exactly the same way. The believer should be generous toward the unbeliever--he should expect in himself a larger measure of generosity than he would expect from the unbeliever, because he has had lessons and experiences in the school of Christ which the unbeliever never had; he has received the new mind, which the unbeliever knows not of. He should not only, therefore, be just in his dealings, but additionally, in proportion as he may be able, he should be generous, forgiving, not too exacting.

However, if an unbelieving partner have attempted a fraud, the believing partner, while exercising a spirit of generosity toward him, if the matter appears to have been wilful, should deliver the offender to the world's courts, which he acknowledges, not prosecuting in a

R2666 : page 218

spirit of anger or malice or hatred, but as doing his duty toward society for the suppression of evil-doers in proportion as the laws and arrangements of the world are reasonable from a Christian standpoint. And even if he should fully forgive, concluding that there were extenuating circumstances which would not require that he should deliver the guilty one to the judges of earthly courts, he might properly enough esteem it to be his duty to have no further dealings with such a person, whom he could not trust. This would not imply any lack of forgiveness, but merely a reasonable and commendable prudence.

Indeed, the consecrated people of God are admonished

by the Apostle not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers, and this might not unreasonably be applied, not only to marriage, but also to business engagements and alliances. Similarly, the Apostle informs us that if the unbelieving husband or wife choose to depart from the believer, the latter may conclude that it is providential and for his deliverance from an unequal yoke, as the Apostle says, "Let the unbeliever depart"--permit him to cancel the marriage contract if he will.

#### THE PARABLE OF THE TWO DEBTORS.

-----

As was his custom, our Lord illustrated his teaching on this subject with a parable: the king, in the parable, first forgives one of his servants a very large indebtedness--that is, he permits him to go free, as though he had no such indebtedness against him, that he might do what he could toward the payment of the debt. This servant in turn finds a fellow-servant who owes him a trifling sum, and who likewise promises its payment: but the unmerciful servant, not having the spirit of the king, is ungenerous and exacting, and refusing forgiveness attempts to exact it through force. The matter reaching the ears of the king, he is justly incensed at such conduct on the part of one who has himself been so generously treated, and, in consequence, he puts in operation the machinery of justice which will punish the unmerciful servant by now requesting of him the payment of his full debt; and our Lord followed the parable with the statement, "So likewise shall the heavenly Father do to you if ye from your hearts forgive not everyone his brother their trespasses."

Not only did our Lord address these words to the disciples and not to the multitude, but additionally he declared that the illustration was applicable to those reckoned members of his Kingdom, saying, "The Kingdom of heaven is likened unto" this parable. The parable, therefore, is not an illustration of the Lord's

R2667 : page 218

dealings with the world of mankind, but rather an illustration of his dealings with those who have become separated from the world through the forgiveness of their sins, and who additionally have become heirs of the Kingdom through consecration of themselves to the Lord Jesus, to suffer with him, if so be that they may also reign with him. The parable, therefore, is to the Church, and suggests to us that our original sin was not blotted out, not forgiven in the absolute sense of the word forgiven, but in the language of the Scriptures, "covered." "Blessed is the man whose sin is covered, to whom the Lord doth not impute iniquity."--Psalm 32:1,2;

Acts 3:19.

Our sins were covered from the Lord's sight, and we were treated as tho we owed him nothing, by his grace, exercised toward us through Christ Jesus and his atoning sacrifice; and this reckoned forgiveness will be made actual by and by, and the debt entirely canceled, if, according to the New Covenant we have made with the Lord, we shall prove faithful in cultivating his spirit of love and in becoming copies of his dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,--forgiving others as we would be forgiven by the Lord, loving, sympathizing with and helping others as we have been treated by the Lord, etc.

The parable is but an illustration of the Golden Text of our lesson, taken from the Lord's prayer: it is only so long as we are willing to forgive our debtors that we may pray with confidence to our heavenly Father and hope for his forgiveness of our trespasses. If we forgive not our fellow-creatures, and that not merely in word, but in deed and from the heart, neither will our heavenly Father forgive our trespasses, and altho he has generously covered them from his sight, and treated us as justified by faith, he would immediately remember our trespasses against us, and thus our justification would lapse or be abrogated, by a failure on our part to exercise the holy spirit toward the brethren and toward all men as we have opportunity.

From this standpoint the question of forgiveness of the brethren and forgiveness of all others is a very serious one to the Lord's people. It means that if they do not in a reasonable time develop this spirit of forgiveness, the spirit of love, the spirit of God, the holy spirit, they cannot continue to be recognized as Christ's disciples, they cannot continue to be recognized as children of God, they cannot be recognized as having their sins covered, but, on the contrary, will be treated as even more responsible than the world of mankind in general, and have executed upon them severer punishments than will be exacted from others who knew not the Master's will, and who have never tasted of his grace, and who therefore would be less culpable in the exercise of a selfish, uncharitable, ungenerous, unforgiving spirit.

We cannot suppose, however, that the Lord would

R2667 : page 219

expect perfection in this matter at once, from those who are still but "babes" in Christ. But his expectations are reasonable, that we should grow in grace as we grow in knowledge of him, and as expressed in the lesson of the Vine and the Branches; every branch which in due time, after due opportunity, does not bring forth the fruitage of the vine, the grapes of love (including forgiveness), will be cut off by the great Husbandman,-- no longer recognized as a branch. So in this parable,



the one who had experienced such great blessing from the king, and who had been reckoned for the time an honored member of his kingdom-class, ceased to be so regarded and so treated, and, on the contrary, was treated by the king without favor.

The statement that the unmerciful servant would be delivered to the tormentors, until he should pay the uttermost farthing of his debt, might be understood in either of two ways. First, we might understand it to represent the original debt resting against every member of the human family--the penalty of death--a penalty from which our Lord Jesus redeemed all, and from which he proposes to set free all who will obey him. In this view of the matter the unmerciful servant's penalty would signify a delivery to the Second Death. Or if the debt be understood as representing, in whole or in part, the obligations of his covenant as a new creature, then the penalty upon him for failure to develop and manifest the characteristics of the new creature during the trial-time might be understood to signify that such an one, tho an accepted servant of the Lord, would be required to comply with the full details of his consecration vow, by going into the great time of trouble, and there meeting to the full the demands of his covenant, and learning effectually the lesson of love and sympathy, and to appreciate the grace of God in the forgiveness of sins, as he never before appreciated it. However, we are inclined to think of this matter from the first of these standpoints, that the exaction of the uttermost farthing would signify a hopeless case, in any of the Lord's people who, after experiencing divine favor in forgiveness of their own sins, should fail within a reasonable time to learn to exercise mercy and forgiveness toward the brethren,--that such would, as a result, suffer the Second Death.

The Lord's people very generally find themselves in considerable trouble along the line of justice. We all recognize justice as the very foundation of all order and righteousness, and when we feel that justice is on our side it is proportionately the more difficult to freely forgive the person whom we believe to have been acting from the standpoint of injustice. There is a general tendency to require others to measure up to our standard of justice, by some sort of penance, before we forgive them. It is against this very spirit that our Lord was teaching, and to counteract which he gave this parable. We are to remember that the Lord will require us to live up to the standards we set for others. If our standard in dealing with others be one of exact justice, we may expect no mercy at the Lord's hands. (See James 2:13.) And what would this mean as respects the sins that are past through the forbearance of God, and what would it mean as respects the obligations upon us every day and every hour, to whose full requirements we are unable to measure? As we cannot come to the Lord ourselves on the score of justice, so we are not to deal with

others upon that standard. As we must ask of the Lord mercy, grace, forgiveness, so we must be willing to extend to others mercy, grace, forgiveness, when they trespass against us; and as heartily, quickly and freely as we ourselves hope for.

The Lord has not laid down this rule in an arbitrary fashion, as simply saying, If you do not forgive others I will not forgive you. There is a deeper reason for it than this. He wishes to develop in us his own spirit, his own character, a likeness or copy of which was exhibited to us in the person and life of his dear Son, our Lord Jesus. It is absolutely essential, therefore, that we shall have the character he desires, or else we can never attain to the joint-heirship in the Kingdom which he is pleased to extend. Hence we are to understand that this requirement or command of forgiveness, etc., is with a view to develop us as copies of his dear Son, in order that he may bestow upon us, in due time, all the riches of his grace, contained in the exceeding great and precious promises of his Word.

=====

R2667 : page 219

"WHO DID SIN, THIS MAN OR HIS PARENTS?"

--AUGUST 19.--JOHN 9:1-17.--

EVERY traveler in eastern countries is sure to be impressed by the fact that blindness is much more common there than in Europe and America. Tabulated information on this subject, in Encyclopedia Americana, shows that in 1870 the proportion of blind in America was one in 1900 population; in Europe the proportion was larger; viz., 1 in 1094; while in China the average was 1 in 400 population. According to no less an authority than Dr. Geikie, Egypt has one blind person to every 100 of population. Palestine lying near to Egypt, and having conditions very similar, especially amongst the lower classes, may be supposed to have had at least half as many; viz., the terribly large proportion of 1 in every 200 of population.

R2667 : page 220

Canon Tristan, writing on the subject, says:--

"Blindness is common in Palestine to a degree which we in western lands can scarcely realize. There is probably no country in the world, except Egypt, where this affliction is so prevalent. At Gaza, for instance, it is said that one-third of the population have lost one or both eyes; and from my own observation in that city I should unhesitatingly say that the statement is not exaggerated. But amongst these cases it is difficult to find any born blind."

This blindness is in great measure the result of the scarcity of water and the neglect of children, whose eyes are in consequence attacked by the flies. The miracle brought to our attention in this lesson differs from the five other instances of the healing of the blind by our Lord, mentioned in the Scriptures, in that this man was born blind. In our Lord's time the science of surgery had not advanced so far as at present, and consequently, as herein stated by the one healed, the cure

R2668 : page 220

was a marvel, the like of which had never been heard of. Even yet we believe that there are only five cases on record of successful operations upon those born blind. Our Lord's cure of such blindness, with the simple prescription used, would therefore be a remarkable miracle to-day, and much more so was it in that day.

#### ORIENTALISM, MORMONISM, THEOSOPHY.

-----

The question of the disciples, whether it was this man's sin or the sin of his parents that caused him to be born blind, implies either an extreme simplicity on their part, not to see that the man could not have sinned before his birth, or quite possibly it implied that some of the absurd notions of the far East--of India--had reached the Jews: one of these was and still is that each child born into the world had a previous existence, in which it had done either good or evil, the rewards or punishments of which were represented in the conditions of the present life. This absurdity is being revived, even in Christian lands, by so-called Theosophists, and by two bodies of people known as "Mormons," in the United States. It is scarcely necessary to point out that such a theory finds no support whatever in any statement of the Scriptures. Quite to the contrary, it is most emphatically contradicted by the Scriptures, which declare man's creation to have been a direct creation from God--not a reincarnation of some being which had previously existed. This thought is consistently maintained throughout the Bible, in that we are distinctly told that the child receives its life from its father, and inherits good or evil according to his course of life, and not according to any course of life of its own in a previous condition or in another world. Thus the Lord declares that he visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation, and shows mercy unto thousands of them that love him and keep his commandments.--Exod. 20:5; Deut. 5:9,10.

This heredity, we see, comes in the natural order of things. The tendency of sin is not only to break down the moral character, but also to vitiate and impair

the physical system, while godliness, altho it cannot repair and make good the impairments of sin, can check these, and hold them measurably in restraint. The Scriptures again contradict this thought, in the declaration, "By one man's disobedience sin entered into the world, and death as a result of sin, and thus death passed upon all men because [thus] all men became sinners"--by heredity. And if by heredity then not as Theosophy, Mormonism and Orientalism declare;-- not in consequence of some previous existence and sin on the part of the child.

The whole matter is squared by the doctrine of the ransom, as all may readily see: for if our present blemishes, with which we are born into this world, were the results of sins committed in some previous condition of existence, the death of our Lord Jesus could not cancel them, and the doctrine of a ransom would be disproved. The doctrine of the ransom is unchangeably linked to the doctrine that Adam was a perfect human being in his creation, and that it was his sin and condemnation that passed to all of his posterity, through the channel of natural birth. The ransom ("corresponding price") given by our Lord Jesus, was a man's life for a man's life: that, "as by a man came death, by a man also should come the resurrection of the dead." Our Lord's ransom sacrifice, being the complete and corresponding price and offset to father Adam's sin, was constituted thereby an offset to all the results of his sin as they appear in his posterity--and thus we all were redeemed by the one sacrifice of Christ, the just for the unjust.

#### IS ALL SICKNESS OF THE DEVIL?

-----

An increasingly large number of Christian people--including those who refuse medicines--are reaching the conclusion that all sickness is the direct result of sin and the work of the devil; and therefore that godly living will prevent sickness: and that in the event of sickness, if it be punishment for sin, medicines should not be used, but, on the contrary, prayer should be made to God for the forgiveness of sin for which sickness is a punishment, and that the cure of the disease should be expected as a reward of repentance and faith exercised.

We wonder how these Christian friends view this lesson. Like the disciples, they evidently would conclude

R2668 : page 221

that a man born blind must have been so born on account of sin--if not his own sin, the sins of his parents--for they account for all disease from this standpoint. Unfortunately they feel so satisfied with their

conclusions on the subject that they do not inquire of the Lord, as did the apostles. And they do not hear his answer here given--that it was neither sin on the part of the man, nor on the part of his parents, which occasioned his blindness.

If they were students of the Word they would note also the numerous statements of Scripture which clearly point out that calamities are not always punishments for sins: for instance, our Lord's declaration respecting the Galileans whose blood was mingled with the sacrifices, and those upon whom the tower of Siloam fell and slew them. (Luke 13:1-5.) Our Lord distinctly declares that these calamities did not indicate that the sufferers were sinners above other men. Likewise, in the case of the sickness and death of Lazarus. Our Lord declares, not that it was because of sin on the part of Lazarus, but that it was permitted in order to be for the glory of God. So in this lesson he declares that the fact that the man was born blind was not on account of sin, but on the contrary, "that the works of God should be made manifest in him."

We are not denying that sin frequently brings sickness; on the contrary, we affirm this, and confirm this view with our Lord's words to some of those whom he healed, "Go, sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon thee." There is a great difference, however, between claiming that all sickness is of sin and the devil, and admitting that much of it is produced or intensified by sin. We go even further than this, and admit that in a general way all the blemishes of the present time may be indirectly traced to our great Adversary, Satan. For had it not been for his fall, and for the temptations which he presented to our first parents, we may suppose that there would have been no sin in the world; consequently no imperfection, no sighing, no crying, no dying. But it is thoroughly wrong to credit to Satan's power all the difficulties which we experience. We are glad indeed that he is limited and restrained; because under the weaknesses with which we are born we find quite sufficient of evil disposition and weakness received by heredity, and operating, not only between parent and child, but between neighbor and neighbor. We may be glad indeed that Satan's power to deceive is not permitted to vitiate our minds contrary to our wills, and not permitted to break down our wills, except as we give them over to sympathy and contact with evil things. We may be glad also that sickness and death working in man are not wholly subject to the prince of darkness, for altho the Scriptures declare that Satan's power is deathward, they also show us that he does not have this power unlimitedly, but can exercise it only under restraints and restrictions. This is most clearly indicated to us in the case of Job and his family. Rather, the Scriptures teach that Satan's power or influence is the result of the Adamic death operating in mankind and rendering all amenable to Satan's devices

and deceptions.--Heb. 2:14.

And, by the way, Job's case is another illustration of sickness and calamities of various kinds which were not the punishments of sin; for have we not Job's own testimony of his love for God, his confidence in him, and his faithful reliance upon him? "Tho he slay me, yet will I trust in him!" And more, we have the Lord's testimony to the same effect, in favor of his servant Job, and in reproof of his friends who wrongly represented that his sickness and calamities were punishments for sin.

We conclude, then, upon Scriptural grounds, that not all sickness is in the nature of sin penalties, but that some sicknesses are as penalties. Hence, when the Christian shall find himself overtaken with sickness or other disasters, he should first of all inquire of himself, before the Lord, whether or not his difficulties are the result of--

(1) A direct violation of the laws of his reason, as, for instance, indiscretion in eating, gratification of the appetite in respect to food which he knows is not suited to his physical conditions: or violation of recognized principles of conduct, as, for instance, the endorsing of a note, contrary to the instructions of the Lord's Word (Prov. 6:1,2), which has brought disaster to many. If he does not find his troubles to be the result of personal indiscretion he should look--

(2) To see whether or not sin lies at his door; whether or not he has been living inconsistently, and might properly recognize his sickness or trouble as a punishment for his sin, his inconsistency. If he finds it to be so, he should of course immediately rectify the wrong to the extent of his ability, and seek forgiveness, mercy, at the throne of the heavenly grace, and expect that after suffering some chastisements he will be released.

(3) Should he fail to find a cause for his difficulties in either of the foregoing, he should consider that quite possibly his difficulty, whatever its nature, was one of the ordinary casualties of life from which God does not wholly forbid his children--desiring them to walk by faith and not by sight: such casualties are necessary, that we may be very sympathetic with the world's troubles.

(4) In some instances, as in Job's case and the case before us in this lesson, troubles may ultimately be found to have been permitted by the Lord, to be

R2669 : page 222

channels of mercy and blessing, if rightly received, as in these cases.

(5) In all troubles, whether for discipline or for instruction in righteousness and the development of character, the children of God (and we are not considering others now) should forthwith begin to seek the

blessing which they may be sure God has in store for them when he permits adversities. And this should not hinder their use of any means for relief upon which they can conscientiously ask the divine blessing: on the same principle that we labor for and eat the daily bread for which we pray, and which is none the less of divine provision.

The work of God made manifest in this blind man was not merely in the miracle performed upon his natural eyes. It extended beyond this, and testified to the beholders the power of God, operating in Messiah. And it extended still further, in the case of the man who was healed: leading to the opening of the eyes of his understanding, it inducted him into discipleship to Christ. Had he not been born blind, had he not passed through just the experiences through which he did pass, how can we judge that he would have been in a better condition of heart to receive the Messiah than the educated Pharisees, who, with good natural sight, were thoroughly blinded respecting Messiah, his teachings and his work, so that they crucified him?

And so it is in many instances with many who become the Lord's people. Looking back they can clearly see that things which at the time seemed to be adversities, disappointments, troubles, disadvantages, hardships, were really great blessings, in that they led to the opening of the eyes of their understanding,-- were really providences and blessings in disguise. Those who do so realize the divine care, looking back can praise the way God has led them day by day.

#### CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MISBELIEFS.

-----

Amongst the various false doctrines of to-day none appears more inconsistent from the standpoint of science and Christianity, than the system which brazenly and defiantly, and in perversion of truth and conscience unites these two words as its name. It would be amusing, we may be sure, to hear one of the devotees of this theory explain this Scripture. For, notwithstanding the fact that their entire system is in opposition to the Scriptures, they make a cloak, a pretense, of believing the Scriptures, and of using them in support of their theory--chiefly with novices. We may be sure that they would attempt to twist and juggle it in some manner, and get it so far away from the truth and the subject as at least to confuse many people, who have very little knowledge of the Bible and shallow powers of reasoning, especially those "who have not their senses exercised by reason of use," in connection with Scriptural subjects.--Heb. 5:14.

Their theory is that there is no such thing as blindness, that it is simply a mistaken thought, a misbelief: since the parents of the blind man could not have misbelieved

that their child would be born blind, the child itself, we presume they would say, got this misimpression before its birth. And then we have the inconsistency increased, for every one of intelligence knows that the infant at birth has no thought, correct or incorrect, on any subject. The fallacy of this theory is likewise proven, in the case of those born deaf and dumb. But argument and reason have no more force with "Christian Scientists" than have the Scriptures. Their infatuation with their delusion is so great that they are fully prepared to wrest facts, reason, and Scripture--and then, in perversion of all truth and consistency, they call this "Christian Science."

We are not contending with them respecting their use of the word "Science," for the most stupid should be able to see that there is nothing scientific in connection with their theory: but we do contend respecting their use of the word "Christian," because many do not recognize that they have not the slightest right to the use of this term. Our contention is that a Christian Scientist of full development, cannot be a Christian in any Scriptural sense of the word.

(1) A Christian is one who believes in God the Father, and in our Lord Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent to be a propitiation for our sins, our Redeemer, and, ultimately the Deliverer of all these who obey him. But Christian Science denies the very existence of God, claiming to believe merely in a principle of Good. To whatever extent a man has a good principle, the God-quality is in him, say they; and to whatever extent a horse or a dog may have the good principles, to that extent these are Gods, and to be loved, etc., accordingly. Denying the Father, they of course deny also the Son whom he sent: and altho they acknowledge Jesus, it is not with a Christian acknowledgement. On the contrary, they hold that he was merely a member of the Adamic family, and that his preeminence above others was in respect to his character and teachings. And they claim that while, in these respects, he stood higher than other men of his day, yet he but feebly grasped at certain principles or truths which are to-day brought to the world by her distinguished highness, "Mrs. Dr. Eddy," who thus poses as being greater than Jesus, as an elephant is greater than a mouse; tho there be certain resemblances.

(2) A Christian is one who believes in Christ as a Savior from sin as well as from its consequences;--death and its concomitants of pain, etc. But Christian Scientists deny that there is any sin, and deny also, that there are any consequences of sin; hence, logically, they deny the ransom, for how could there be a ransom for sinners, if none are sinners? Thus do they deny and ignore the very foundation of Christian faith, without which no one is a Christian--Scripturally.

The absurdities of Christian Science commend themselves only to those who are either Scripturally



ignorant, or mentally weak; and their chief attractions are therefore--

(1) The fact that they put on, as a garment of light, gentleness and kindness of word and manner. That these do not grow out of hearts thoroughly converted to the Lord, and begotten of his spirit of love,

R2669 : page 223

is manifest: for altho kindness and patience and gentleness are manifested, the true essence of these is lacking, namely, love. Instead of manifesting love to be the mainspring of their meekness, patience, gentleness, they manifest ambition and money-love as their inspiring motives--so far as we are able to judge the tree by its fruits. So far as we are able to learn, their efforts to promulgate their views are confined to those who are able and willing to pay for the instruction good round prices; and so far as we are able to discern, their care of the sick shows a love of money, and love of fame; and hence very few of the poor of this world have been injured by the doctrines of Christian Science, or cured of disease by its treatment.

(2) The cure of disease without medicine, and sometimes almost miraculously, is in the nature of things calculated to attract and interest the "groaning creation"--just as the advertisements of patent medicines attract them. We unhesitatingly assert our conviction, that this power, manifested through Christian Scientists, is not of God, but of the Adversary, directly, or indirectly. He no doubt directs his servants into the use of channels and means of which humanity in general, and even many learned physicians, are comparatively ignorant--channels of human nature which, possibly, in the future may be used by the Lord during the times of restitution of all things. Our justification in ascribing their cures to an evil source, instead of to a good source, lies in the fact that they utterly repudiate the principles of Christianity, and we may be sure God would not cooperate to assist with his power those who deny his very existence, and who make void the gospel of the redemption through the blood of Christ. The miracle-working power in them we believe to be the same as the miracle-working power in Spiritism and in Orientalism, and in the charms of other Occultists --namely, Satanic power.

If it be asked, How could Satan be interested in doing a good work? we answer: He does no such work amongst those who are thoroughly and stupidly ignorant: he is doing these works merely in the most civilized lands, and especially amongst the most enlightened of the people in the various denominations of Christendom. The Adversary thus assumes the garment of an angel of light and mercy, not to lead to the Light of the world--not to lead to the cross of Christ--not to lead to the Bible--but to lead away from

these, to another hope of salvation, and to another teacher: to deceive, if it were possible, the very elect. And be it remembered that our Lord's words indicate that when matters come to this condition, where Satan will cast out Satan and heal disease, it is a marked evidence that his throne is tottering to its fall--that, so to speak, this is the last extremity of the Adversary's efforts to deceive.

\* \* \*

The Lord's method of giving sight to the blind man, we may reasonably suppose, was parabolic--that is to say, it contains a lesson under a figure. Since our Lord did not explain the significance of his action

R2670 : page 223

in making a clay ointment out of dust with his spittle, and anointing the man's eyes with this, and sending him to wash them and receive sight at the Pool of Siloam, we may exercise our mental powers in thinking of what these different things would signify. But we are limited in our speculations, nevertheless, and may not run wild, but must restrain ourselves within the limits of plain statements of the Word of God respecting his plan of salvation.

In harmony with these plain statements we may interpret our Lord's symbolical act thus: The blind man would fitly represent the world of mankind in general, who during the present life are mentally blind --who cannot now see the goodness, mercy, and love of God as these may be recognized by others who are now able to see them. His being born blind would harmonize with this thought, for the blindness that is upon the world is, to a large extent at least, a matter of heredity. His blindness does not represent a blindness on the part of those who have once seen God's grace, represented in his Word and plan, and who have then become blind thereto, and who would represent the class mentioned by the Apostle as having once been enlightened, and who subsequently lose that enlightenment. (Heb. 6:4-6.) If then the blind man represents the blind world (who do not see, in the sense that the Church sees, of whom the Lord said, "Blessed are your eyes for they see"), the time of the healing of such blindness is in the Millennial age, as Scripturally pointed out, when "All the blind eyes shall be opened, and the deaf ears unstopped." (Isa. 35:5.) And this agrees with the conditions of our Lord's miracle, because we are informed that this miracle took place on the Sabbath, or seventh day, which corresponds to, and typifies the Millennial day, the seventh-thousand year period.

Our Lord's words, nevertheless, seem to indicate that some part of this symbolical picture relates to the

present age, for he said, "I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day: the night cometh wherein no man can work." In this statement the word "day" would seem to belong to the present time, and to be illustrated in the making of clay with our Lord's spittle, and the anointing of the blind man's eyes. The washing of his eyes and the cure would seem to belong to the next age, the Millennial age. The Lord's spittle, the secretions of his mouth, might represent the truth as fitly as would the words of his mouth--it is another figure, but seemingly of the same force and meaning. He uttered the truth, brought it in contact with the dust of the earth--not in contact with all the dust of the earth, but with a limited portion, an elect or select portion, --and of this he made the anointing clay. The Scriptures do inform us, in harmony with this, that the Word of God's grace, delivered through and by our Lord Jesus, is designed in the present age to act upon a small fragment of humanity, and to consecrate them and make them meet for the Master's use in the blessing of the world, in the anointing of the eyes of the blind. From this standpoint of view, the making of the clay would represent the formation of the elect Church for the blessing of the poor, blind world. And, quite possibly, not only in this work of making the clay now in progress, but perhaps some portion of the anointing work is now being done, as is intimated by the Scripture which declares that the Gospel must first be preached for a witness in all the world, before the end of this age. The world must be witnessed to during this age, but the world will not have the eyes of its understanding opened during this age: it must wait until the

R2670 : page 224

great washing time of the Millennial age, of which the Scriptures declare, "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David for sin and for uncleanness." (Zech. 13:1.) In full agreement with this is the significance of the word Siloam. It signifies "The sending forth," or "The fountain."

The Pharisee objected to the Lord's goodness, because, forsooth, it infringed some of their hypercritical dogmas and traditions. This is interesting, as showing to what extent religious forms and ceremonies may bind and blind intelligent and reverential people. And this should be a lesson to all the intelligent and reverent, leading them to great care in judging righteous judgment, according to the standard of the divine Word, and not according to their prejudices and revered creeds, and the traditions of the fathers.

Still another lesson may be found in the fact that the man who confessed our Lord Jesus, and who stood up in bold defence of righteousness, was greatly blessed, in that after he had thus demonstrated his loyalty to principle, and had suffered as a result excommunication

from the Church--then the Lord found him. Thus his faithfulness under trials and difficulties, and his willingness to suffer the loss of earthly fellowship and honor amongst men, led directly to a still greater blessing, even direct fellowship and communion with the Lord himself. How many are there whose mental eyes have been opened to the truth, who have been so loyal to the Lord and so appreciative of his goodness as to be faithful in declaring the facts? How many of these have found that such faithfulness means separation from the synagogue, from the church nominal? How many of these have feared to lose prestige and influence, through confessing the light of present truth? But all who have followed the noble course of thankfulness, loyalty, and obedience to God, have found that such obedience, while it led to a loss of fellowship in the nominal church, led also to a greater fellowship and communion, and a more intimate acquaintance with the Lord himself.

=====

page 224

"OUT OF DARKNESS INTO HIS MARVELOUS LIGHT."

-----

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--I find DAWN VOL. V. a grand spiritual feast. I have read it and studied it and sent it away to a friend, and oh, how many good things we get from the TOWER office! I had thought, years ago, that we had all we needed to help us on to God, but it keeps coming, more and better. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, for his goodness and his wonderful works to the children of men." And bless his holy name that he ever stooped to the low estate of his handmaid, to give insignificant me the privilege of reading the MILLENNIAL DAWN publications and learning the plan of the ages and of his will concerning us! "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints." And you, dear Brother Russell, the Lord has made you a dispenser of his present truth. May his grace continue with you as it ever has done!

How many times I have had a vague idea of something and could not form it into words or thoughts intelligently, and the next WATCH TOWER would explain that very thing so nicely, that, even tho unlearned, I could understand it. Last fall I was thinking, Well, I believe Brother Russell is inspired, and his writings are equal to the Bible; but the next paper we got said that all matter, whether oral or printed, from any quarter, should be considered quite secondary to the Bible. Oh Lord, help us to resist the devil successfully and pity our helplessness!

You remark that we should not judge too harshly those who make us trouble, because Peter, even after denying the Lord, became one of his most ardent followers. What courage and patience this thought gives us. Such words are as Solomon says, "Like apples of gold in pictures of silver." Bless the Lord! Oh, my dear brother, how much comfort I get from your counsel.

The Scripture Index for the WATCH TOWER, prepared by the dear sisters, has done me a world of good. Lord bless them, indeed. Surely if prayers will bring blessings we shall all live in a rainshower of blessings night and day, for we are all praying for each other.

I get great encouragement from some of the letters you print in your papers, especially Sister Sencerbeaux's, for I too had been feeling much discouraged on the account of my failings and blunders. Oh, the richness of the spiritual food we get from God through the TOWER! Can the Marriage Supper be much better? Yours in the love of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,  
MRS. H. K. TOWNSEND,--Wisconsin.

R2678 : page 224

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--About one year ago your book, called THE PLAN OF THE AGES, fell into my hands. It came like the day-star arising in my soul, flooding my mind with new thoughts and conceptions as to the great plan of redeeming this old, lost world. Since 1897 I have been out evangelizing, preaching "Christ and Him crucified," to men throughout the States, but my "advanced" views soon gave dissatisfaction among the orthodox preachers, especially among the set to whom I belonged, the Methodist Episcopal Church Society. It was then that I began to read in earnest every thing I could find along the line of prophetic truth. I have read and re-read with great pleasure and profit the first five volumes of MILLENNIAL DAWN, and am only awaiting now further issue of Volume VI. I can not express to you my indebtedness to you for the light I have received from the perusal of the WATCH TOWER publications.

May God continue to bless you with light, that you may be the means in his hands of leading many more pilgrims into the glorious light of the liberty of the gospel of Christ. Since seeing the fulness of God's truth, I have withdrawn from the M.E. Church and ministry. Pray for me that I may continue "to walk in the light as he is in the light."

Yours in the Light, R. K. RICHARDSON,--Alabama.

[To the Lord be all the praise for the light now "in due time" shining upon his Word and revealing to us his gracious character. I am glad to hope that withdrawal from human institutions and their service means a fuller appreciation and closer membership in "the Church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven" and a more zealous and more wise participation

in its ministry of the truth.--EDITOR.]

=====