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SEMI-MONTHLY.
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Those of the interested who, by reason of old age, or other infirmity
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the paper. We are not only willing, but anxious, that all such be on our
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PILGRIM VISITS ARE FREE OF ALL CHARGES.

We find that some of the friends have refrained from requesting
"Pilgrim" visits because they supposed they would be expected
to contribute for his railway fare and also for his support.

This is a mistake: the services of the preaching "Pilgrims"
laboring under the auspices of the Watch Tower Bible and

Tract Society are absolutely without charge;--nor do they take up any collections. The Society pays their railway and all other expenses out of its funds, which are all voluntary donations, from such as are able and anxious to serve in this manner.

All we ask of the friends visited is that they provide a parlor, hall, school-house or church building for the meetings and that they board and lodge the "Pilgrim" during the two or three days of his visit. We attend to all else.

ONE-DAY CONVENTIONS AND ALLEGHENY MEETINGS.

The Editor has accepted quite a number of invitations for one-day (Sunday) Conventions of late--at points which can be reached by railroad in one night's travel, permitting him to leave Allegheny Saturday night and to get back to his Editorial duties on Monday morning. One of these (D.V.) will be held at Baltimore, Md., on Mar. 10. Another at Wheeling, W.Va., Mar. 24. These are only local conventions usually attended by friends living within a radius of 50 miles.

But some dear friends from neighboring towns who have come to Allegheny at such times have felt a little disappointment at not seeing "Brother Russell" as they expected. We therefore announce, that hereafter such one-day conventions will be arranged for on only the second and fourth Sundays of each month. Brother Russell may be expected to be at Allegheny on the first and third Sundays of each month.

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VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER.

CORROBORATIONS OF SCRIPTURE TESTIMONY.

GRADUALLY, but surely and relatively swiftly, we see unfolding the various features of the divine plan which the Scriptures have taught us to expect--pointing them out in a general way in advance --namely, preparations for the Millennium of blessing and preparations also for the great time of trouble with which it will be introduced. The testimonies following are all the more forceful because they come from men who, so far as we are aware, have no such expectations as we hold--no such light as we enjoy, relative to the teachings of the Scriptures on these matters.

For instance, many have opposed our presentation of the Bible's teachings on restitution (Acts 3:19-21), claiming--

(1) That there would not be standing-room for so many as probably have been born, reasonably estimated

at about fifty thousand millions. We answered this by a mathematical demonstration that twice this number could find standing room in either Texas or France, and that the whole earth under good climatic conditions will be ample for all. They then objected--

(2) That the earth can scarcely feed its present population, as attested by the famines in India and southern Russia. We replied to this, that God is able to provide for the fulfilment of all his promises; and pointed out the declarations of the holy prophets respecting these "times of restitution," that then "the earth shall yield her increase" and the "wilderness shall blossom as the rose."--Isa. 35:1; Psa. 67:9.

Note now how science comes forward to corroborate the Bible's testimony; and let us remember that now is just the time for these things to begin to appear.

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We quote the following from The Saturday Evening Post:--

"THE CHEMISTRY OF SOIL."

"Undoubtedly, one of the most wonderful discoveries of modern chemistry has to do with the soil. It has been ascertained that the most barren land can be made rich simply by adding to it certain mineral elements which cost but little. On this basis it is estimated that the United States will be able eventually to maintain 500,000,000 people--more than one-third of the present population of the world. It is merely a question of supplying the requisite quantities of nitrogen, phosphoric acid and potash. The last two are readily obtainable at small expense, whereas the first may be supplied either by furnishing to the soil condensed nitrogen in the shape of slaughter-waste or nitrate of soda, or by planting clover, beans, or peas, which have an affinity for nitrogen and absorb it from the atmosphere.

It is now known that nitrogen is the most important plant food, and inasmuch as this element composes four-fifths of the atmosphere the question is merely to absorb it into the soil. It has also come to be understood that only two per cent. of the material of plants is derived from the soil, the remaining ninety-eight per cent. being drawn from the air and from water. It has been learned that certain species of bacteria absorb nitrogen, and these may be propagated in moist earth, and the earth thus treated sprinkled over the land."

"IN THE WILDERNESS WATERS SHALL BREAK OUT AND STREAMS IN THE DESERT."--ISA. 35:6.

This prophecy bids fair to have a literal as well as a spiritual fulfilment. Already the drilling of artesian wells has reclaimed thousands of acres of arid land in the "American Desert" of the West; but the cost was too great when many of the holes were dry. Now, on seemingly reliable authority, relief has come to Texas along that line. A boy of fourteen years is found to possess what is styled "X-ray sight," so that in the dark he can see beneath the surface of the

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ground; just as the "X-ray" proved to science that certain rays of light can penetrate what we call solid substances; and just as Marconi, in connection with wireless telegraphy, has demonstrated that certain waves of ether pass through solid substances unhindered. This boy can see the subterranean creeks and rivers, and can designate just where the wells should be drilled to get the water so much needed on the surface. Whether this should be considered a lost sense of sight, lost through the fall, and which would return during the "times of restitution," or a special gift intended to help forward in the restitution, we are not yet prepared to give an opinion.

Of this boy's powers the Chicago Record gives quite a lengthy account, from which we quote the following, accredited to "Judge W. Van Sickle of Alpine, a member of the Texas Legislature:"--

"That Guy Fenley, this 14 year-old boy, is possessed of an 'X-ray' sight cannot be questioned. He has demonstrated his ability to see underground streams of water, no matter what their depth may be, on a number of occasions, and the stockmen of west Texas have ample proof of his power in this line. I engaged him to go to Brewster county and locate two wells on the ranch which is owned by D. J. Combs and myself. This ranch is situated in a very dry country, known as the Glass mountains. We had made a vain search for water on this ranch, having sunk a well to a depth of 607 feet at a cost of \$1,500 without striking water. This boy has already located two wells on the ranch, one at a depth of 250 feet and the other at a depth of 400 feet, both containing an abundant supply of pure water, and well-drilling outfits are now at work sinking other wells on the ranch with no doubt about securing water.

"There can be no longer any doubt about this boy's wonderful power of sight, because instances are numerous and notoriously known where his 'X-ray' gift, or whatever it may be called, has been proved beyond a doubt. He sees the veins or streams of water under the ground and can tell with absolute certainty

the different strata between the surface and the water. He has this 'X-ray' sight only at night, and it is much stronger in the dark of the moon. When he exercises this wonderful power for any length of time, he becomes exhausted and falls into a deep sleep, which restores him to his former self."

THE JEWS CLAIMING CHRIST.

"The oldest and the newest traditions of Israel look with favor upon the man of Galilee, who, as the prophets of old, was willing to give his soul unto death that his ideals might live after him. His noble and exalted aims have not been fulfilled. What ideals ever were? But we who are Jews today certainly have no cause to regret his coming into the world, and have every reason to look forward to the time when the message of this hour will find an echo in the heart and life of mankind. The gospel of Jesus was the glad tidings of Israel's own universal truth. The teacher of Nazareth was our kith and kin, both in the flesh and in the spirit. We revere his memory, claim him as our own, and gladly accord him that high rank which he deserves as one of the greatest benefactors of the human family.

"How absurd and silly it is to expect us, in this age of enlightenment and growing religious fellowship, to mourn on this day, to shut our eyes to the light like wilful, wanton children, and see only the shadows of our past. If we, who are children of the house to whom the prophets belong, and whose mission it is to proclaim peace to them that are far and near, strew the seed of discord and resentment among our own, wherein are we better than those who persecuted our ancestors for wrongs which they had not committed? Shall we hold him whom the millions of our fellowmen commemorate today, and through whom, according to the unanimous opinion of our best and profoundest scholars in ancient and modern times, Israel's divine truths were carried out to the nations, shall we hold him responsible for the crimes that were perpetrated in his name? Nay, we do not mourn, but we rejoice that Jesus was born, and through him, despite the shortcomings, despite the manifold prejudices that still darken human hearts, this world at large is infinitely better and brighter than it would have been without him. We would not conjure the dread spectres of the past; we thank God that we live in the present, with its wider liberty, its nobler humanity."
--RABBI SALEE in Jewish Voice.

PRESBYTERIAN CREED REVISION.

The Presbyterian General Assembly committee has agreed upon the following summary of returns made to them by various Presbyteries. They met in Washington City on Feb. 12 to prepare their statement for the next General Assembly in May.

First--The returns plainly indicate that the church desires some changes in its credal statement.

Second--These returns indicate plainly that no change is desired which would in any way impair the integrity of the system of doctrine contained in the Confession of Faith.

Third--These returns also indicate that a large plurality desire that the changes should be made by some new statement of present doctrines.

Fourth--The returns also indicate a desire upon the part of many presbyteries for some revision of the present confession.

Fifth--It was therefore unanimously agreed to recommend to the assembly that some revision or change be made in our confession statements.

This means that the creed is objectionable as it stands, but that it is desired that the changes shall be made in such a manner as to cast no discredit upon it in the eyes of their own people or other Christians. In a word, they want, if possible, to say, The creed is all right, none better, could not be better; but some

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people cannot understand it aright, and for their sakes only it was necessary to alter the language without changing the sense. And no doubt some will succeed in deluding themselves and others--who prefer to be deceived rather than to openly acknowledge the wrong, for fear of denominational injury.

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LONGING FOR HOME.

As pants the heart for water brooks,
So pants my soul for thee!
O, when shall I behold thy face,
When wilt thou call for me?

How oft at night I turn my eyes
Toward my heavenly home,
And long for that blest time when thou,
My Lord, shalt bid me, "Come!"

And yet I know that only those

Thy blessed face shall see,
Whose hearts from every stain of sin
Are purified and free.

And O, my Master and my Lord,
I know I'm far from meet
With all thy blessed saints in light
To hold communion sweet.

I know that those who share thy throne
Must in thy likeness be,
And all the Spirit's precious fruits
In them the Father see.

Lord, grant me grace more patiently
To strive with my poor heart,
And bide thy time to be with thee,
And see thee as thou art!

--G. W. SEIBERT.

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ACCEPTED AND REJECTED SACRIFICERS.

GREAT WERE the anticipations of mother Eve in connection with her first-born son, Cain. Keenly she recollected the blessings of Eden and their loss through disobedience, and her memory clung to the implied promise contained in Jehovah's words to the effect that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head--should crush the Evil One, and impliedly, in some sense of the word, thus accomplish a victory, and a release from some or all of the evils entailed through the divine sentence. It was in harmony with this that she named her first-born son Cain, which signifies, "acquired." In his birth she seemed to see a beginning of a fulfilment of the divine promise; this much of it had been acquired, for she said, "I have gotten a man from the Lord"--the Lord has given the promised man, the promised seed. But she was mistaken; the divine promise would be fulfilled in due time, but Cain was not the promised seed, nor even in the line of that promise. This was soon manifested.

In due time another son was born, who was called Abel--a feeder or nourisher--he being looked to, probably,

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not so much as the deliverer promised as a helper in the battle for bread with the thorns and thistles, etc. The two grew to manhood, the one becoming a

tiller of the soil, a farmer and gardener, and the other a herdsman or shepherd. In process of time it became apparent to both of these men that they should make acknowledgement to the Lord, their Creator, and that it would be but a reasonable service that they should present to him offerings expressive of their dependence on, and of their appreciation of his kindness; and naturally each one took as an offering that which was under his care.

Cain took of the fruits of his harvest, the results of his energy, as an offering to the Lord, and Abel took of his flocks as an offering. So far as the record goes, both were alike acceptable to the Lord up to this point; nor can we suppose that God would be displeased with Cain for bringing of the fruit of his labor as an offering. The fact that he had not respect to Cain's offering need not be understood to imply any prejudice on God's part against Cain, nor any intimation that he had sinned in bringing such an offering; neither did the Lord's acceptance of Abel's offering necessarily imply a prejudice in his favor, nor that he was the holier of the two. The acceptance of the one and the rejection of the other was merely designed to show the kind of sacrifice which the Lord was pleased to have offered and the kind which he was not pleased to accept. Cain should have learned the lesson quickly, and should have secured animal sacrifices and have presented his offering in this form to the Lord, and doubtless it would have been accepted as was Abel's.

Probably neither of the brothers knew at the time why the Lord accepted the animal sacrifices only, but later on no doubt they would have been instructed that this was typical, because the Lord intended ultimately to accept of a great antitypical sacrifice for sins which he himself would provide in the person of the man Christ Jesus, and that this sacrifice could best be represented and typified by the sacrifice of animals, and thus the presentation of the thought that

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without the shedding of blood there could be no remission of sins.--Heb. 9:22.

But Cain, as the first-born, had no doubt already been recognized by his parents as the chief of the two brothers, and no doubt knew of his parents' expectations respecting him, that ultimately he would be the instrument of Jehovah in the crushing of evil. And no doubt this thought had engendered a certain amount of pride in his heart. He felt himself to be the elect of God, the highly honored one of the family; and correspondingly sharp must have been his feeling of disappointment when his offering of the fruits of the field, chosen with great care, and offered no doubt with sincere reverence, met with no sign of

divine acceptance, while the offering of his younger brother, whom his parents had viewed as a mere assistant, was accepted of the Lord, probably by fire from heaven consuming the sacrifice. (1 Kings 18:38.) The chagrin of this one who considered himself the priest and mediator of the family, and God's specially chosen agent, may be imagined; and whatever of love and kindness and brotherly feeling had previously prevailed, fell before the combination of giant powers suddenly developed in his bosom--pride, chagrin, envy, --and in the heat of his passion and disappointment he smote his brother and slew him.

We are not to think of Cain's crime as a first-degree murder, deliberately plotted and executed; but rather as "manslaughter," a crime committed on the spur of the moment and under the influence of sharp disappointment. The inspired record tells us, "He was of [the spirit or disposition of] the wicked one, and slew his brother." (1 John 3:12.) He partook of the spirit of the wicked one, of Satan's evil spirit. Satan's spirit was one of ambition and pride. Already highly favored of God as one of the highest angels, he was not content with his great honors and blessings, but was ambitious, desirous of attaining still greater influence and power than God had been pleased to grant him; and this unlawful ambition obtaining control led him not only to rebel against the divine covenant, but led him also to become the "murderer" (John 8:44) of our first parents, that thus he might attain control over them,--the object of his ambition.

So, for aught we know, Cain may not only have felt the chagrin of seeing the younger brother's offering accepted, but may have felt that somehow or other this younger brother stood between him and the attaining of his ambitions, and that his removal would be a means for the maintenance of his own claims and position. How short-sighted was the Adversary, that he should think to out-general Jehovah, and to exalt himself and erect a rival Kingdom! Soon Satan's folly will be manifested, when the Lord's due time shall come, and the one who humbled himself in obedience to the Father's will shall be exalted to kingly power and authority, and to the position at the Father's right hand in the Kingdom of the universe; and when the one who attempted the usurpation shall be bound and utterly destroyed. And how foolish was Cain's supposition that fighting against God would avail him anything, or that the destruction of his brother would leave him the heir of the promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head! And how similarly foolish are all who foster ambition and pride --even in respect to the promises of God. How sure it is to lead to the murder-spirit of brother-hatred. (1 John 3:15.) And, on the contrary, how wise are those who follow the example of our dear Redeemer, quenching all ambition in devotion to God and burying

pride under love and humility. Let us, therefore, as the Apostle exhorts--humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt us in due time, even as he highly exalted our Lord Jesus.--1 Pet. 5:5,6; Phil. 2:5-12.

Had Cain, on the contrary, yielded to an humble and loving spirit, he would have said to his brother Abel, "My brother, I congratulate you, that the Lord has so remarkably accepted your offering; I rejoice with you, and now that I have learned better what things the Lord is pleased to accept in sacrifice, I myself also will hasten to present an offering like yours, and I will gladly exchange with you some of the fruit of my labors for some suitable sacrifice from your flocks." And who can doubt that Cain's offering, if brought in this manner, would have been accepted of the Lord, as was Abel's? The thing lacking was the humble spirit, the spirit of love, without which he could not be acceptable with God, nor appreciate his privilege of offering the acceptable sacrifice.

This same lesson of the first-born occupying the position of favor and opportunity, yet being unworthy and unready to use it, is illustrated in Abraham's sons. First was Ishmael, who for years was looked upon as the heir of Abraham and the promises made to him, and who continued to so regard himself even after Isaac, the child of promise, was born,--mocking and persecuting him. Similarly again, Esau, as the first-born of Isaac, held the birth-right to the same promise, yet not appreciating it rightly, sold it to Jacob for a mess of pottage, and then strove to retain it unjustly to himself, and was angry with the one who did rightly value it.

The Apostle points out to us (Gal. 4:22-31) that these things were allegories or pictures, written aforetime for our admonition and instruction, that we through these illustrations might gather the thought that God foreknew and designed that in bringing in

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the true Seed (Christ Jesus, the Head, and the Church, his body) there should be just such an experience as was pictured in these three illustrations. The first seed of promise was Moses and his house, fleshly Israel. These were represented in Cain and Ishmael and Esau--not that there were no exceptions in the nation of fleshly Israel, but that the nation as a whole was thus typified.

Israel, like Cain, considered itself as the first-born and heir of the divine promise, and it brought to the Lord an offering of works under its Law Covenant, represented in Cain's offering of the fruits of the ground, the labor of his hands; but God did not accept the imperfect works of Israel as satisfying unto justification. Israel, like Ishmael, was for years recognized

as the heir to the Abrahamic promises, and felt arrogant in connection therewith; yet never was the real seed of Abraham meant by Jehovah when he made the promise that Abraham's seed should be great and should bless all the families of the earth. Nevertheless Israel, like Ishmael, mocked at the spiritual Israel, the true heir of the divine favors, and persecuted those that were born (begotten) after the spirit. Israel, like Esau, had indeed a title to the blessing, as being the first-born, and had they appreciated that blessing they might indeed have been the heirs of the promise; but failing rightly to appreciate it they had more respect and love for earthly comforts and advantages than for the spiritual, and sacrificed the latter for the former, even as Esau sold his birth-right for the mess of pottage. Nevertheless, while not highly esteeming the divine favors represented in the promise made to Abraham, the natural Israelite at the close of the Jewish age was disposed to claim that promise, and to resent the thought that it should pass by them and be given to Spiritual Israel, represented by Jacob, the second-born. And as Esau's anger was so fierce that Jacob was obliged to flee for his life, even so spiritual Israel was put in jeopardy of life by natural Israel. The Isaac-class was persecuted by the Ishmael class, and the Abel class was slain by the Cain class.

It at first seems strange that God's favored ones should thus appear to be worsted in every instance, and be obliged to flee from, or be killed by those whom God rejected. But herein is a great spiritual lesson, for we perceive that as the natural Israel was represented by Moses and his house, so the spiritual Israel

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is represented by Christ and his house; and we see that the very method by which Christ and his followers are to gain the victory in this present time is through obedience unto God "even unto death"--and that thus being obedient unto death, Christ and his Church, which is his body, and which the Apostle assures us is to fill up that which is behind of his afflictions (Col. 1:24), become the heirs of the world, the inheritors of the promises. Why? Because there can be no crushing of the Evil One and his power until first of all the sacrifice for sin, the ransom-price for the sinner, shall be paid; even as there can be no blessing of all the families of the earth through the seed of Abraham until, first of all, that Seed of Abraham shall have redeemed all the families of the earth by offering the sacrifice for sins which God has all along indicated must first be paid, and must include a sacrifice of life --for "without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins."

Here, then, we may see not only in the plain

declarations of the New Testament, but in all the shadowy pictures which prophesied the same in the Old Testament, that it must needs be that Christ (Head and body) shall suffer and be raised from the dead before these great and precious promises of the Almighty to mother Eve and to father Abraham can have their fulfilment.

The position we have here taken will not be disputed by any Christian well versed in the Word of God, except, perhaps, that some not having studied the subject from this standpoint, may at first be unable to see how the Church of Christ shares with him in all these pictures, and in the great sacrifice, as well as in the glorious work to follow. However, careful study of the Lord's Word from this standpoint will assuredly prove its correctness; and now we offer in further corroboration, the testimony of the Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians. In chapter 3:16 he points out Christ as the promised seed of Abraham, and in verses 27-29 he explains to us that all who come into Christ during this age and become members of his body, are thus members of the Seed of Abraham, and heirs with Christ of the promises of God made to Abraham.

Also in Galatians 4:22-31 the Apostle explains in detail how Ishmael represented Israel after the flesh, born of the Law Covenant, represented by Hagar, and how, as such, they could not be heirs of the Abrahamic Covenant. He then shows Christ, the son of the free woman, the Abrahamic Covenant, represented by Sarah, and he not only represents the Lord Jesus as being the Isaac seed of promise, but in so many words declares that the elect Church of Christ in this Gospel age is also of this Isaac seed, and heirs with Jesus, and, through his merit, to all the promises made to Abraham--that they should be God's agency in bringing blessing to all the families of the earth. The Apostle's words are, "So, then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman [the Law Covenant], but of the free [the Abrahamic covenant, typified by

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Sarah.]" "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free."

While these pictures and lessons relate chiefly to the Church as a whole, rather than to each member of it as an individual, nevertheless, individual lessons may be gleaned from them also, for altho Cain and Abel, Ishmael and Isaac, Esau and Jacob, represented particularly natural Israel and spiritual Israel, we may, nevertheless, find similar characters and similar individual conditions today, in the "tares" and "wheat" of the Gospel Church. The tares, like Cain, have the spirit of the wicked one, the spirit of ambition and of pride, and as a rule they occupy very leading positions

in nominal churchianity. They bring to the Lord offerings, and not without a certain form of godliness, yet their hearts are far from the attitude which would be pleasing to the Lord, for the offerings which they present are of their own works--they come not to the Lord solely in the name and merit of the great sacrifice for sins finished at Calvary, and God cannot accept their offerings.

The wheat class of this Gospel age, corresponding to Abel, come before the Lord in greater humility; not trusting in any righteousness or works of their own for their acceptance with him, they present to him, according to his own appointment, the sacrifice of blood--Christ's sacrifice, and these are accepted and God's favor is manifested to them; but so far from this awakening in the tare-class a spirit of contrition, and a desire to learn the way of the Lord more perfectly, it seems to awaken in them hatred, animosity, chagrin, that they, worldly-wise and of worldly influence and fame, should be rivalled and outdone in divine favor and acceptance by those that are nought in their estimation and from the worldly standpoint. And the wheat-class, represented in Abel, must be ready to lay down their lives as the price of their fidelity to the Lord. To these the Lord speaks individually, saying, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Rev. 2:10.) Their faithfulness is sure to lead to consecration to death, which ultimately finishes in literal death; for only by thus proving their faithfulness and following the footsteps of their Master to the end of the way can they be accepted of the Lord to joint-heirship with him.

The persecution of Isaac by Ishmael finds a parallel also in the opposition of the tares to the wheat; there is a rivalry between the Church nominal, which holds the place of influence and power, and which ridicules and mocks and persecutes the Isaac class. This persecution may not in every instance go so far as persecution to death, as in the case of our Lord and many of the apostles, and yet it will extend to every member of the Isaac class in some manner, even if it be not a more severe opposition than that of mocking and speaking evil of them. But all these things must be endured, and that with patience; yea, they may be endured with joy, if we can but have the spirit of our Head, and realize the meaning of these oppositions which come to us as they came to him, and of which he said, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. And again, as the Apostle declares, "The world knoweth us not, because it knew him not."--John 15:18,19; 1 John 3:1.

In all of these illustrations it is well that we note the differences of spirit or disposition, that the haughty,

the proud, the ambitious and self-confident spirit is the one which leads to disappointment, and is not of the Lord; and that the humble, teachable, obedient spirit or disposition is that which is recognized by the Lord; and in proportion as we are seeking, therefore, to make our calling and election sure to membership in this spiritual Seed of Abraham, represented in Isaac, represented in Jacob, and represented in Abel, let us seek to bring to the Lord such sacrifices as he is pleased to receive (Heb. 13:16), and to be exercised by such a spirit of faith, of trust and of obedience as was manifested by the Head of this body, the Lord Jesus. He is our perfect Pattern; he walked this way successfully, and has not only opened it for us through the merit of his sacrifice, and accepted us as his followers in it, but also he has promised us his grace and help through the Word and by his spirit and by his providence all the journey through; assuring us that having begun a good work in us he is both able and willing to complete it. Let us then, like him, bring unto the Father the acceptable sacrifices of our consecrated lives, made acceptable to the Lord's altar through the atonement sacrifice which our dear Redeemer gave on our behalf. Thus we shall at once and always be accepted in the Beloved.--Rom. 12:1; 5:1,2.

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JESUS BETRAYED AND FORSAKEN.

--JOHN 18:1-14.--MARCH 3.--

"The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"

NOTHING connected with the Gospel narrative appeals to human judgment more forcibly than does its simplicity. The fact that the weaknesses and failures and stumblings of the apostles themselves are faithfully narrated, and that without apologies or excuses or attempts to gloss over the defects, shows a sincerity, a truthfulness of intention, very rarely found in other writings. Nowhere is this more conspicuous than in the present lesson, which records the shameless perfidy of Judas, and the weakness of the remaining eleven, who, in our Lord's darkest hour, all forsook him, seeking personal safety,--one of them subsequently denying him. The writers of the Gospels would have been excusable had they interjected explanations and excuses for their course; but the narrative is really stronger as it stands, and we are, perhaps, inclined to furnish excuses for them which we might have been loath to receive had they offered them for themselves.

We note that two of them had swords, and that by

our Lord's permission, if not direction (Luke 22:35-38),

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that it might be manifest that he was not overpowered by the high priest's servants, but that he merely yielded himself to arrest. The Apostle Peter probably reasoned that if the Lord had directed the bringing of the swords they were for use and not for ornament, and with commendable courage he drew his sword in defence of his Lord against the first of the party who attempted to lay hold upon him. The blow was evidently intended for the head, but perhaps was providentially warded off so as to injure merely the ear. But what consternation it must have brought to Peter and to the others, when the Master objected to their using the swords, objected to their defending him, and even healed the servant who was smitten! Confronted with such conditions, we can readily see that the faithful eleven could do nothing but one of two things--either stay with the Master, and, like him, submit to arrest, or flee, and thus secure their personal liberty and safety, which the Master evidently did not wish to secure on his own behalf.

We can readily imagine that eleven strong men, as they were, in the prime of life, even if they had but two swords amongst them, could have done considerable damage to the band that came to arrest our Lord; but while the excitement and activities of a battle inspire courage, to be compelled to stand idle and not be permitted to lift a hand in self-defence in the presence of an armed enemy, is most discouraging to anyone. And the natural tendency of all under such circumstances, to flee, was in this instance assisted and accentuated by the Master's own suggestion, "Let these go their way." Under full consideration of the circumstances, therefore, we must acquit the apostles of anything like cowardice, and must say that under similar circumstances to theirs few of the Lord's people would know how to do otherwise than flee, as they did.

The band of men whom Judas led out for our Lord's arrest were not Roman soldiers, but merely under-officers and servants from the high priest's household, armed with such weapons as they could command, sticks and swords, etc. The Roman military authority, represented in Pilate, took no cognizance of Jesus and his work until the next day, when the priests, chief rulers, and a multitude of incited servants and people, brought him to the tribunal and demanded his execution.

St. John's account does not mention the miserable act of betrayal by which Judas indicated which one of the twelve was Jesus--the betraying kiss, nor our Lord's words of reproof: "Friend, wherefore art thou come? Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?" Judas evidently advanced beyond the band to give the

salutation, according to prearrangement, that he should thus indicate the one they sought.

It is difficult for any noble-minded person to read the account of Judas' course without feeling a deep sense of righteous indignation--a sense of the baseness of character which could thus betray, for thirty pieces of silver, the one whom he recognized as the noblest of men, whether or not he was sure that he was the Messiah. It may not be amiss that we notice here that Judas did not reach this depth of iniquity suddenly, but rather that the disposition had grown upon him during the three years of his intercourse with the Master, when the reverse disposition should have had control. At the time when he was chosen to be an apostle he evidently was a good man, so far as outward appearance at least was concerned; and his name, which signifies "Praise," would seem to indicate that his parents had been of a religious cast of mind, and had wished, and, so to speak, prophesied of him, that he would be a messenger of God to sound forth his praise. And what a privilege and opportunity he enjoyed in this direction!

From the meager mentionings of the Gospel records, we may reasonably infer that the beginning of his downfall was the harboring of a love of money. Instead of rebuking this wrong spirit, curbing it, and seeking, on the contrary, to cultivate generosity and love and benevolence, he permitted selfishness to have more or less control in his heart and life. We may surmise that he chose the office of treasurer for the little company; whereas, had he been sufficiently alive to his own condition his proper course would have been to have refused it, realizing that already he had too much love of money, and that the handling of the funds might prove a temptation to him. But, on the contrary, he sought the office, obtained it, carried the bag, and the money that was put therein, and the Apostle John tells us that he was a thief. (John 12:6.) This passion for money, like all others of the abnormal propensities of our fallen nature, grew stronger and stronger as it was encouraged and cultivated, until finally it knew no bounds, and he was ready to sell his loving Master, Messiah, for thirty pieces of silver.

But while hating such a character, loathing it, despising it, and seeking to go as far as possible in an opposite direction in our own characters, we are not to overlook the fact that there are many amongst the Lord's disciples who, in a less degree, commit a crime very similar to that of Judas--they sell the Lord, they betray him, while professing to love him. True, this cannot be done in the same personal and literal way today; but the spirit of it may be seen occasionally, we regret to say; we find some who really believe in Jesus, some who have consecrated their lives to be his followers, some who have been engaged in the ministry of his truth, as Judas was there, who are willing to sell the

Lord for a mess of pottage--for good things of this present life--for a salary, for social position, for honor amongst men, for popularity, and titles--who are willing to sell even their lips, as Judas did, so that, while professing to honor and to serve the Lord, they are willing to join with those who misrepresent his character, his plan, his Word--willing to rejoice with those who seek to assassinate the Lord. Ah, how well it is that each one ask himself the question raised upon the night of the Supper, "Lord, is it I?" and let none be too ready to excuse himself, but let each search earnestly his own heart and life and conduct, to see that he is not sacrificing in any way the truth and the life for any consideration whatsoever.

OUR WARFARE NOT WITH CARNAL WEAPONS.

In telling Peter to put up his sword our Lord inculcates a lesson which many of his well-meaning followers since have utterly failed to learn. On the contrary, all through the dark ages the sword--military power--was invoked and used on behalf of one party and then another of professed followers of Christ; sometimes against unbelievers, but very frequently against fellow-professors. The sword has left a bloody mark in the church nominal, and has become a cause of offence even to some in the world who see how different is such a course from that which our dear Redeemer prescribed for his followers. Never was this lesson more needed by nominal Christendom than today, when a militant spirit seems to pervade all parties and denominations. It is the soldiers of professedly Christian nations that today are amongst the poor heathen of China, "avenging" the death of Christian missionaries and others. It is these same representatives of these so-called Christian nations that are setting such immoral examples before the heathen people that by their evil conduct they glorify the soldiers of heathen Japan, whose mercy and moderation and self-control are universally admitted.

True, blame for what these soldiers may do cannot be properly charged upon the cause of Christ. We deny that they are Christian nations, and we deny that they are Christian soldiers. We claim that the soldiers are "children of this world," and that they are fighting as representatives of the "kingdoms of this world," under the "prince of this world." Nevertheless, as we come still closer to the question we find, upon apparently good authority, that the government of the United States has been appealed to by Christian ministers and missionaries to take vengeance upon the Chinese. From

the accounts in the public press we may infer that the majority of the appeals for mercy and moderation have come from nominally worldly people, and that a majority of the appeals for vigorous measures have come from those who nominally are ministers, servants, representatives of Jesus, who said to Peter, "Put up thy sword into its sheath."

But here again we must draw the line, and surmise that as in olden times the Apostle said, "They are not all Israel who are of Israel," so now they are not all true Christians who are of Christendom. We must suppose that the Apostle's words are still true, "If any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his." We must suppose that in proportion as the spirit of love and gentleness and meekness is lacking it is a good evidence that the person, whatever may be his professions, is not a minister of Christ, not a minister of the true gospel, but merely a minister of some human denomination and some false gospel, which contradicts the truth.

It may not be inappropriate here to notice the general spread of a fiery spirit, bitter, vindictive, merciless, amongst people professing godliness, and of whom we might reasonably expect better things. An evidence of this bitter and fiery spirit is seen in the greater prevalence of lynch law in this enlightened country, where all the laws are in the hands of the majority, and where, therefore, there is no excuse. Accounts of these lynchings seem to indicate that there is, deep down in the hearts of many people who are apparently moderate and well intentioned, a fierce, brutal, savage instinct, which has never been transformed by the renewing of their minds by the power of the holy spirit. Just what this may lead to in the future, it is difficult to say; but it is part of the spirit of anarchy, which the Scriptures assure us will before long spread throughout all Christendom, and result in the great time of trouble, so long foretold, in which everything of law and order will go down before the angry passions of humanity.

The same intemperance as to thought and feeling is manifest sometimes merely in words, but it is, nevertheless, a piece of the same article, and reprehensible. As an illustration of this tendency toward immoderate thought and expression, we call attention to the extreme and unjustifiable utterance of a Methodist bishop, quoted from the New York Sun as follows:--

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"Shall we have Bryan elected? No; a thousand times no! I'd rather go to sea with a boat of stone, with sails of lead, with oars of iron, with the wrath of God as a gale, and hell as a port."

We should not forget, in defence of the bishop, that this language was used during the heat of a political campaign; and yet the palliating circumstances

are quite insufficient. No circumstance, no condition imaginable, should lead any minister of the Gospel of Christ to use any such language; and we point it out now merely as an indication of the trend of our times, as being of a piece with the lynching and torturing of fellow-creatures,

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as an indication of the wild ferocity of thought which is leading on rapidly and preparing Christendom for anarchy, lawlessness, immoderation in all things. Let all of Christ's true disciples more and more remember the command of the Master, "Put up thy sword!" "Love your enemies." "Do good unto those who despitefully use you and persecute you."

THE CUP WHICH THE FATHER POURS.

Our Golden Text is the cream of this whole lesson. It expresses most beautifully, most concisely, most forcefully, the principles which underlay our Master's obedience to the Heavenly Father, and which enabled him in all things to come off conqueror and "overcomer;" and all who are seeking to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, to be his disciples indeed, will do well to ponder the thought expressed in these words: "The cup which my father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" The thought is clear: It is that he recognized the circumstances and conditions in which he found himself, as being not of those of his own making, nor yet those made for him by his enemies. He recognized the divine supervision of all of his affairs, and knew that nothing could possibly come upon him except as the Father would permit; and because the Father had so arranged it, had poured out this cup for him, therefore it was duty on his part to drink it.

We would not undertake to say that the Lord's people should never look for ways of escape from impending trials and difficulties; for we have the Lord's promise to this effect, that he will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able to endure, but will with the temptation provide a way of escape from those features of it which would be beyond the possibility of endurance. When, therefore, we feel that our submission to evil has about reached its climax, where succor must come or we must utterly fall, that is the time for us to look about us to see what way of escape the Lord is opening for us. But we are to be sure that the way of escape which we take is not of our own, but of the Lord's provision; for if we should run away from duty and trial and testing in one place, it would merely be to fall into other trials and testings, perhaps severer, in another quarter. We are to know in advance that trials, difficulties, persecutions, slanders, are all a part

of the portion which the Father has poured out, not only for the Head of the body, but also for all the members. We are therefore to be prepared to endure hardness as good soldiers; not fleeing, but courageously accepting as of the Lord's providence whatever he may permit to come to us, unless we shall see a reasonable, proper, honorable way of escaping from it, which will not be in violation of our covenant, nor in violation of any law of righteousness.

No other lesson, perhaps, is more needed by the Lord's followers than the one of willingness to drink the cup which the Father pours--a recognition that the Father is guiding and directing in our affairs because we are his, as members of the body of the Anointed One. In these respects the consecrated children of God occupy a very different position from the world, with whom the Father is not dealing as sons, who are not on trial for glory, honor and immortality, and for whom, consequently, he is not now pouring cups of trial, testing, endurance, etc. "The cup which we drink, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?" --a share in his sufferings? "If we suffer with him we shall also reign with him; if we be dead with him we believe that we shall also live with him."

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"YE HAVE CONDEMNED THE JUST ONE."

--MATT. 26:57-68.--MARCH 10.--

"Thou art the Christ, the Son of
the living God."--Matt. 16:16.

CAIAPHAS filled the office of high priest at the time of our Lord's condemnation. It was he who had already expressed himself to the effect that it was "expedient that one man should die for the nation, that the whole people should not perish" (John 11:50; 18:14), thus illustrating how God may at times use the thoughts and intentions of wicked men to express prophetically profound truths. It was indeed expedient, not only for the Jews, but also for the whole world, that a ransom should be given for Adam and his race, to the intent that they might be released from divine condemnation and ultimately be granted an opportunity for return to divine favor and life everlasting.

But so far as Caiaphas was concerned, he was probably thinking only of human expediency. He perceived the growing interest of the multitudes in Jesus of Nazareth. He realized that even the most learned of the scribes and Pharisees were no match for Jesus in doctrine and logic, and that the teachings of Jesus were so opposed to his own and the general traditions of Judaism

that their acceptance must mean a religious revolution. This, he reasoned, would mean the loss of the prestige of the nation with the Romans, and the abrogation of all the rights and privileges accorded to them. So far as Caiaphas was concerned, his mind, his judgment, was already made up in respect to Jesus, and he merely sought opportunity to carry it into effect--to kill him. But being outwardly and nominally a religious

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man and a representative of justice, he felt constrained, so far as possible, to put the murder of Jesus, which he felt to be a necessity for the public good, in the light of an act of justice.

Caiaphas evidently was the ringleader in the conspiracy against Jesus. It was he and his associates who bargained with Judas; it was the under-priests and under-officers of his court and household and his servants who had been sent with Judas to arrest our Lord in the night, when he would be away from the multitudes; and we may presume that it was by his orders that our Lord was taken first to Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, a man of great influence amongst the Jews, who had previously been high priest, and whose term of office had not yet expired, according to Jewish custom, altho their conquerors had forced a change in this respect, and had appointed Caiaphas chief priest instead of Annas. The sending of Jesus to Annas was evidently intended to secure his sanction to his arrest and trial, and the influence which that would imply.

When the band appeared before Annas he questioned Jesus respecting his teachings, etc., but he did not attempt a trial of the case, not having the authority. When our Lord refused to answer the questions, and referred Annas to those that had heard him, he was merely following the judicial course, and suggesting to Annas the propriety of not departing from the law in the examination of a prisoner. Annas signified his assent to the arrest by not reproving it or demanding

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his release, but sending the prisoner bound to Caiaphas, --thus saying by implication, I agree in your course that this man should be arrested and should be tried as a dangerous character,--dangerous to our theories and institutions.

Caiaphas had already the sympathetic cooperation of many of the leading Jews, especially of the priests, some of whom were in the "band." We may presume that the time during which the prisoner was taken to the house of Annas was occupied in despatching other messengers in various directions, to notify the members of the Council--the Sanhedrin--that the disturber of their peace had been arrested, and to assemble for his

trial. It was probably about two o'clock in the morning that Jesus was brought before Caiaphas. The Jewish law forbids the trial of a prisoner between sunset and sunrise, and any verdict secured during the unlawful hours would have been invalid, illegal. Nevertheless, the chief priest was anxious to have his case well in hand by sunrise, and to hasten as much as possible the death of the prisoner, which he had already determined upon. The matter of the trial was a mere farce anyway, but he would see what evidence he could lay before the Sanhedrin at sunrise, and hence he immediately and illegally began the examination of Jesus, calling for witnesses.

No doubt it had been freely stated that Jesus had announced his Messiahship, altho we know that this was not the case so far as the gospel narratives show. He had been very guarded in his remarks in public, and even amongst his chosen twelve disciples he had not announced himself freely, but had first drawn from Peter the declaration of our Golden Text, "Thou art the Christ [Messiah], the Son of the living God." Jesus merely acknowledged that Peter had stated the truth, and that he had been guided in the statement by the holy spirit. When, therefore, Caiaphas sought witnesses even on this point he found none capable of giving satisfactory testimony. One witness who thought he had something of importance gave a somewhat garbled account of our Lord's words respecting the Temple; but when they sought a second witness to corroborate this they could not find one who would testify exactly the same, and the Jewish Law required at least two witnesses in any such trial.

Exasperated at his poor success in securing testimony, Caiaphas determined to try a different plan, and an illegal one--to excite his prisoner so that he would make some incriminating confession. Therefore he rose up, and with a manifestation of indignation, and to give the effect that very damaging testimony had been given, he asked the prisoner if he had not heard the testimony against him, and if he had nothing to say in self-defence. Our Lord made no response; he was not there to defend himself, and if he had been there was no need of defence. There was nothing criminal in what he had said respecting the Temple, even if it had been testified by a dozen witnesses. Caiaphas was foiled, but being a shrewd man he quickly changed his tactics, and affecting to wonder if indeed the claims of Messiah might be true he put Jesus under oath, saying, "I adjure thee [I put thee under oath] in the name of the living God; tell us whether thou be the Messiah, the Son of God."

Our Lord was not bound to answer this question, which he well knew would be used to incriminate him as a blasphemer. Nevertheless, he was not seeking to avoid death, but had already determined that the cup which the Father had given him was to be drunk, and

hence he answered saying, according to John, "Thou hast said"--you have stated the truth; or, according to Mark, "Jesus said, I am"--the Messiah, the Son of God. He followed this with a declaration that those who there witnessed his humiliation and mock trial should in due time recognize him as the honored of God, sitting down at the right hand of the majesty on high, and to be revealed in the clouds of heaven as the great Judge, the Messiah.

Caiaphas could not hope to have a clearer expression, nor anything that would come nearer justifying

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his predetermined verdict of guilty of blasphemy, and hence with a mock expression of righteous indignation he tore his "simla" or upper garment, exclaiming, Blasphemy! We have heard blasphemy! Then, appealing to the members of the Council present, who were already in sympathy with the murderous procedure, he enquired whether or not they were satisfied with the evidence, and, as pre-arranged, they agreed that this was a clear case of blasphemy, and that Jesus was worthy of death.

Dr. C. H. Plumptre has well said: "No other words in the whole Gospel records are more decisive against the views of those who would fain see in our Lord only a great moral teacher, like Socrates or Sakya Mouni. At the very crisis of his history, when denial would have saved his life, he asserts his claim to be more than this, to be all that the most devout Christians have ever believed him to be." The most devout Christians are those who believe our Lord's own words without distorting them,--that he was with the Father before the world was; that the Father had sent him into the world to be its Redeemer; that "never man spake like this man;" and that he was different from all other men, in that "he was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners"--that the life of the man Christ Jesus was unblemished and from above. But the most devout Christians in all ages have avoided claiming for Jesus what some of the less devout Christians have claimed for him, but what he never claimed for himself; viz., that he was his own Father, Jehovah.

The most devout Christians have believed the words of Jesus, when he said, "The Father is greater than I;" and, "As the Father hath sent me, so send I you." They recognize the oneness between the Father and the Son as being, not a oneness of person, but a oneness of heart, of mind, of purpose, according to our Lord's own declaration in his prayer for his people, when he said, "I pray for them...that they may be one, as we are [one]." (John 17:11.) The most devout Christians acknowledge that the only one, "the man Christ Jesus," was the perfect representation of the Heavenly Father, so that he who saw the Son (who

was the express image of the Father's person) saw the Father also,--in the only way in which it would be possible for mankind to see "the invisible God," "whom no man hath seen nor can see," but whom the Only Begotten of the Father hath revealed to men perfectly. --John 1:18.

Thoughtful and intelligently devout Christians, when they examine the words of our Lord in this connection, can see nothing in them whatever to the effect that our Lord Jesus here contradicted the other plain statements of his testimony, but rather they find it in full conformity. Nor did the Jews for one moment think that our Lord meant that he was the Heavenly Father. This was not the question asked: they had no expectation that Messiah would be Jehovah, but Jehovah's representative, and agent, the Son of God, "The Messenger [servant] of the Covenant, whom ye delight in." (Mal. 3:1.) The charge of blasphemy against our Lord was based upon his claim of being a Son of God--not the Father himself. The charge was made on a previous occasion (John 10:29-36), when the accusers expressly declared his crime was that of calling himself a son of God;--that thus he was placing himself on a parity with God, as being of the same kind or nature. On that occasion Jesus answered their quibble by quoting them from the Psalms, where all of the Lord's consecrated people, the Gospel Church, are called "sons of God," and he pointed out to them that he merely claimed the same title that was there freely given to those who would come into that relationship, through justification of faith, whereas he himself had always been a Son of God in full harmony with the Father.*

When this session of the Sanhedrin, or court, broke up it was to wait until sunrise, when the formal meeting took place, and the verdict of blasphemy would be reaffirmed, and thus have the semblance of legality. (Matt. 27:1.) Meantime our Lord stood bound in the high priest's palace court for probably three hours, and it was during this interim that the high priest's servants, etc., took occasion to show their sympathy with the great ones by abusing the prisoner. Some spat upon him; others smote him with their hands and with sticks, and in general displayed their littleness and meanness. A favorite diversion with them seems to have been, after blindfolding him, to smite him and enquire whether or not he were prophet enough to name his tormentor. All these things our Lord endured, so far as the record shows, without a murmur. He accepted this all as a part of the cup which the Father had prepared for him; and the Apostle, evidently referring partly to these experiences, says, "Consider him who endured such contradictions of sinners against himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood." (Heb. 12:3,4.) If we refuse the cup the Father prepares for us it will only return to us later perhaps with a more bitter draught: and if avoided

entirely we cannot have share with our Lord in the glory, honor and immortality for which the trying experiences now permitted are our preparation.

The servant is not above his Lord, and if they have smitten and spit upon and buffeted the Master, none of the servants should be surprised or complain if they should have somewhat similar experiences. And when such things come to them while in the line

*For a treatise of this subject, and of the expression, "Son of Man," see MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. V., Chap. 6.

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of duty they are to esteem them as our Lord did, part of the cup which the Father has prepared, and they are to endure them without murmuring; on the contrary, as the Apostle suggests, they may give thanks that they are counted worthy to suffer some of the reproaches of Christ.--Col. 1:24; 2 Tim. 1:18; 2:3; Jas. 5:11.

But the Apostle urges, "Let none of you suffer as an evil-doer nor as a busybody in other men's matters." If suffering should come upon us justly for our faults, we could not glory in it, but rather be ashamed; but if any man suffer as a Christian let him not be ashamed--if he suffer for the truth's sake, for righteousness' sake. It may be urged by some that sufferings cannot come now, in our enlightened day, and when the name of Jesus is popular; but, we answer: Yes; it is still true, as the Apostle said, "Whosoever will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." Many now claim the name of Jesus who know not Jesus nor the Father, and who have not his spirit, just as many at that time delighted in the name of Moses, and sat in his seat as Doctors of the Law, yet knew not, appreciated not, the law of Moses and the law of God. --1 Pet. 4:15,16; 2 Tim. 3:12.

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INTERESTING QUESTIONS ANSWERED.

Question.--I see it is your view that the 144,000 sealed (Rev. 7) are Spiritual Israel, "the true Israel of God," foreknown to him from the beginning, the predestinated "Abraham's Seed" which shall in due time bless the world. (Gal. 3:29.) I see too that you view it as a literal number, claiming that all the numbers of Revelation are literal. But let me inquire, Would not such a view overthrow the hopes of those

who live today? Could we suppose that the entire Gospel age, with its reputed millions of martyrs, has not secured the 144,000 long ago?

Answer.--It would be a great mistake to suppose that the millions of martyrs, Catholic and Protestant, were all "overcomers,"--"saints" in the Scriptural sense. In a vast majority of cases the principle fought for, and suffered for, was chiefly liberty. Politics, too, lay at the foundation of much of the butchery. Note in another column how a bishop became so excited in our own day as to declare himself willing rather to go to hell than see a political opponent elected. Many, too, would go to death from pride;--rather than yield after having taken their stand.

When we think of the fact that a membership in this "royal priesthood" implies a full, living self-sacrifice to the Lord and his cause, and the attainment, while sacrificing, of the fruits of the spirit--meekness, gentleness, long-suffering, brotherly kindness,--Love, we rather wonder that so many as 144,000 could be found in the past nearly nineteen centuries. And it is of those who cultivate these graces, and attain them in their hearts (even if they cannot always exercise them as fully as they could desire in their flesh) that the Apostle declares: "If ye do these things ye shall never fall, but so [doing] an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."--2 Pet. 1:5-11.

Our confidence is in God,--that he knew exactly how long this Gospel age should be to gather the "elect" class; and that he will get the exact number of "jewels," the "little flock," within the appointed time, before "the times of the Gentiles" run out.--See also our issue of April 1, 1899, page 67.

Question.--We are all making considerable effort, through the Volunteer work and otherwise, to present the truth to others, and through the WATCH TOWER we learn that the numbers of interested ones are continually increasing, and the intimation is that still further increase may be expected. Now, the question is, How does this harmonize with the presentations of MILLENNIAL DAWN to the effect that the general call has ceased since 1881, and that altho the door to the high calling is not yet closed, it could not be entered except by those whom the Lord will admit to take the place of some who have failed to comply with the terms of their covenant--to make their calling and election sure.

Answer.--We understand that in 1881 a considerable number of justified persons had made a consecration to the Lord, but had not yet been proven--how many, of course, we cannot judge. Suppose, for instance, that the number were 50,000, and suppose that only one-half of that number would eventually be of the overcoming class: it would mean that gradually 25,000 would have their names blotted out of

the Lamb's Book of Life, and the crowns once apportioned to them no longer counted as theirs. In order to give all of these consecrated ones a full opportunity it might be a number of years before any considerable number of them would be thus rejected, and the admission of others to take their places would be correspondingly gradual. We are to remember, too, that of those who enter to take their places probably not more than one-half would be overcomers--which would make 12,500 more to be admitted, and of these probably not more than one-half would be overcomers, which would mean that more than 6000 additional ones must be brought in; and so on. We think it not unreasonable that a considerable time has been left for many of the consecrated ones to note the tendency of the nominal church and her fallen condition spiritually,

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and to be tested thereby as respects their love for righteousness and their hatred of iniquity--their devotion to the Lord and to the principles of his Word, and their opposition to injustice, untruth, unrighteousness. Meantime, the truth, under the Lord's providence, has been going hither and thither throughout the civilized world, coming in contact with nearly all the consecrated, we may presume, and becoming more or less of a test to them. Some have gradually accepted it; others consecrated are, no doubt, still weighing the matter. Still others have probably sided against what they know to be the truth, because of love for the world or popularity or other selfish considerations. The testing of these cannot be expected to continue long. The light is growing so strong on the one side, and the darkness so strong on the other, that any who are unable to make up their minds respecting their proper position would thereby be showing themselves to be unworthy to be classed as "overcomers" and joint-heirs with Christ in the Kingdom. We may reasonably expect, therefore, that quite a good many places in the Lamb's book of Life will be declared vacant and new names be written therein to complete the elect number. To our understanding the ones thus favored of the Lord will be persons fully consecrated to him, and we would esteem it probable that such would early be brought in contact with present truth for their ripening as wheat for the garner, and the hearty acceptance of present truth by such as are fully consecrated to the Lord and to lay down their lives in his service would, we esteem, be in the nature of an evidence of their acceptance to the high calling. We would not understand that a knowledge of the truth without consecration would be an evidence in this direction, believing that many can see much that is reasonable in restitution, etc., who have never made a covenant with the Lord. We

would believe, however, that none can appreciate deep things of God except by the holy spirit.--
1 Cor. 2:9,10,14.

Question.--What is the Christian's robe, of which the Apostle says that it should be kept "without blemish."--Eph. 5:27?

Answer.--We understand it to be the wedding garment mentioned by our Lord in one of his parables. It represents the righteousness of Christ imputed to his consecrated followers who are invited to suffer with him, and also to reign with him. Otherwise it is called justification by faith--our imputed or reckoned righteousness in Christ, through which we have a standing and acceptance with the Father, and are permitted to enter into covenant relationship with him and thus to become "heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, our Lord, if so be that we suffer with him."--Rom. 8:17.

In the representation of the Bride-class in Psalm 45, the Church, as the King's daughter, is represented as presented at the marriage in this clean linen robe, richly embroidered--the embroidery, we believe, representing the development of character on the part of all the faithful. The robe is the basis of any good works that we can perform, and even then before we can accomplish anything we must have and must follow the Pattern given us by our Lord.

This garment, if it would be a wedding garment, must be spotless, clean and white--"without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." (Eph. 5:27.) In James 1:27, the Apostle urges us to keep ourselves unspotted from the world, which implies a possibility of having our robe of Christ's righteousness spotted. This does not signify that anything we could do could destroy the work of Christ, or make of none effect his sacrifice for sins, nor blemish it. The robe signifies that share of Christ's merit which has been freely appropriated to us by him with the Father's consent. If, through receiving of the spirit of the world, we blemish or sully this wedding garment we shall be unfit to be of the Bride class, and be rejected; and yet we might say that in our present imperfect condition and many unfavorable surroundings and besetments it would be a miracle if we should never come so closely in contact with evil as to spot our garment or wrinkle it.--Compare Jude 23; Rev. 3:4; 16:15.

However, we find that God's gracious provision in Christ is not only that our Lord Jesus' sacrifice was a sufficient one for all of our imperfections of the past, prior to our acceptance with the Lord, but that

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it is a sufficient one also for any unintentional blemish or weakness or misstep that may come to us through our own imperfections or the weaknesses of others, after we

become the Lord's children. In other words, we are not only provided with the robe covering all the past, but provided also in the same sacrifice of Christ with a spot-remover, and any who through weakness or temptation stumble by the way and soil their garments are to be restored by the brethren "in a spirit of meekness, remembering themselves also, lest they should be tempted." To restore means to help them to see the spot, and by faith to apply the provided cleansing, through penitence and prayer. All who are in the right attitude of heart, appreciating the purity of the robe, appreciating the Bridegroom and his favor, appreciating the great King and appreciating the honor of being called to the marriage, will be very careful indeed to guard against spots and wrinkles, and very careful also that if any should get upon their robes they should be as quickly as possible removed. This work of mutual helpfulness on the part of the Lord's consecrated people is represented as "the bride making herself ready."

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Those not thus faithful are in a wrong condition, and spot after spot, wrinkle after wrinkle, coming to their robes, they become more or less careless, and especially as they see so many others in a similar condition. These are brought to our attention in Rev. 7:13-16. We are there shown that they will not come to the position of being members of spiritual Israel, the 144,000, filling up the elect number named after the twelve tribes. We are shown, however, that their unreadiness to be of the elect class was because of the spots upon their robes and the carelessness which this manifested. But the Lord does not reject them because, passing through manifold temptations, they have not been properly careful, for in wearing the robe they are still confessing their trust in him, in the merit of his sacrifice. He therefore provides for them an experience which will demonstrate to which party they really belong. He causes them to go through a great time of trouble in which, if they love sin and unrighteousness, they will succumb; but if they love the Lord and love righteousness they will come off victors eventually through the Lord's grace, and be permitted to cleanse their robes with tears and efforts, etc., as they should have done voluntarily before, spot by spot, as any blemish was noticed. They do not become members of the Bride class, even when cleansed; they do not sit with Christ in his throne as will the Bride; they do not constitute the Temple, but, on the contrary, they will serve God in his temple (the Church). They will serve before the throne; they will have palm branches, indicating final victory; but they will not have crowns, because they were not overcomers, in the sense demanded of all who will be

joint-heirs with Christ.

Question.--I read in the TOWER of March 1, 1900, under the caption, "The Consecrated Home Honored," your suggestion respecting responsibilities of a husband and father as the head of his household. In that article you intimate that those who do not exercise the office of head of their families have reason to question whether or not they are overcomers, etc. The question seems to me a very important one, in view of the fact that I know a great many of the brethren who seem to have comparatively little influence or control in their own homes. I therefore inquire to what extent is it reasonable for us to expect our households to be all consecrated?

Answer.--You have only partly grasped our thought, which is not that all the members of the family should be consecrated to the Lord, but that the home and its conditions should be of the consecrated kind, if the head of that home is consecrated, and is exercising the duties and prerogatives of the head of the house. Even if every member of the family were out of Christ, and out of sympathy with the religious views of the husband and father of the family, his kind and loving, but positive conduct of his house along Scriptural lines should secure to him such respect from every member of his family that they would not only not oppose his wishes, but, on the contrary would take pleasure in cooperating with them. Thus, if the Lord himself or one of the brethren, his representatives, were to pass that way, and the husband and father of the family thought to entertain him, the properly ordered household, being under the control of his consecrated mind, would be one in which all whom he chose to invite would be made most welcome and heartily entertained. And even if some dissatisfaction were felt, it would be a crime against the divine institution of the family to manifest opposition, for the husband and father is the head of the family, as Christ to the Church, says the Apostle. --Eph. 5:23,24,29,33.

Nothing in this would mean arbitrariness on the part of the husband and father, but rather that he would wish to consider, as far as possible, the interests of his home, and to contribute to the happiness of each member of it. But it would be his duty, as a child of God, to place the wishes of the Lord paramount to those of his family, so that he would be prompt to invite the Lord or his brethren into his home, as a tribute of his respect and love for the Lord. And in requesting his family's cooperation in this matter, he would know that he was bringing a blessing to them, whether they appreciated it or not; and that any failure to follow this course would be giving his family and their wishes precedence to the Lord and his wishes, a matter not to be considered for a moment by any "overcomer." Nevertheless,

everything should be done, not from the standpoint of force and demand, etc., if possible, but rather from the standpoint of love. Let the family see your love manifested in all ways, and also know your firmness in character on every point where principle or loyalty to the Lord are involved.

Nor do we mean that the wife and family should be imposed upon and overworked for the sake of visitors; on the contrary, their care and comfort are the first care of the husband. The head of the family must be watchful of the interests of all under his care to such an extent that he should sacrifice himself, his own comfort and convenience, for their proper care. But to purchase peace in the home at the expense of his own manhood would be wrong, and would encourage a wrong spirit in those he seeks to guide in the right way.

However, where the right way has not been seen and the wrong way has become habitual, it would be the part of wisdom not to approach the right too ruthlessly, but very gently;--praying for and seeking to exercise humility, patience, gentleness;--to let love, and love only, hold the reins of control.

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We have just received from London a fresh invoice of wall
texts, illuminated motto-cards, etc., suitable for the walls of
your parlors, dining-rooms, and bed-rooms. Our previous announcement
of these embellishments brought so many orders
that what we considered a good supply was quickly exhausted.

The new lot is the choicest we have ever had--about one-half
the same that we had before and one-half new designs.
Hence those who got of the previous lot, and want all new patterns
should say so. Or if they want any of the older patterns
duplicated, mention which, and if possible, we will accommodate
you. They are all choice, however, and if you had two
of the same text, in different rooms, it would not matter.
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We have concluded to assort these in One Dollar parcels as
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the other. The prices, including postage, are about one-half
what such goods are usually sold for in this country--though
not as cheap as the British prices; because ocean freights and
custom house duties are considerable. British friends will,
therefore, receive still better parcels for the money from our
London branch. We are not supplying these for filthy lucre's
sake; but for the blessings that may result to you and yours
through frequent suggestions in every part of your home of
some of the choicest precepts and promises of the Scriptures.

ONE DAY LOCAL CONVENTIONS.

Baltimore, Md., Sunday, March 10th, at Dushane Hall (3d
floor) cor. Baltimore street and Post Office avenue; at 10:30
A.M., a Praise and Testimony Meeting. At 2:30 P.M., discourse
by Editor of this journal. At 7:30 P.M., a Question Meeting.

Wheeling, W.Va., Sunday, March 24th, at 10 A.M., Praise
Meeting; 11 A.M. and 3 P.M., discourses by Editor of this
journal; at 7:30 P.M., Testimony Meeting.

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER.

NATIONAL PREPARATIONS FOR WAR.

WE CLIP the following from a Pittsburg daily, which shows that the Hague Peace Conference of 1899 is not taken very seriously by any of the nations:--

"To carry out the various programmes of naval construction, as framed by the nations of the world, will require an outlay of five billion dollars. England set the pace several years ago, and now many of her great ships are out of date and out-classed.

"The United States government arranged to spend \$60,000,000, of which \$20,000,000 will be expended in 1901. The cost of the tools and places to repair ships, is almost as expensive as the ships themselves. The value of ships is ephemeral, owing to the constant changes in types.

"England has under construction 17 battleships, 24 cruisers, 8 sloops of war and 25 torpedo destroyers, at a total cost of \$133,000,000. This will not complete the fleet but moves them forward and completes those ordered, under a former appropriation.

"France has provided for a naval construction reaching to 1907, in which a total of 220 vessels are to be built, the outlay of 1901 being figured at \$124,000,000.

"The plans of Germany cover 34 battleships, 32 cruisers and 80 torpedo boats. The appropriation for 1901 is \$100,000,000. Russia's expenditures in 1901 is placed at \$46,000,000 for the beginning of the work on new ships and completing those under way.

"Poverty-stricken Italy will expend \$30,000,000 on her navy in 1901. Japan's budget for naval equipment in 1901 is \$23,000,000. Austria, Sweden, Holland and Denmark are preparing to double their naval expenditures. Verily, the wings of the angel of peace are not to be spread over the ocean during the early years of the new century."

CHRISTENDOM'S FINANCIAL OUTLOOK.

Because the great time of anarchistic trouble for which the Scriptures teach us to look in the near future is to be the agency through which the "present evil world [age]" will collapse, and prepare the

way for the Millennial Kingdom, therefore our interest in the financial situation as related to prophetic fulfilment.

"Money-making," the accumulation of vast wealth, cannot under present conditions come from day-labor in cultivating the soil or otherwise. It comes from the use of machinery, which today is so complete and abundant in civilized lands that each nation

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is able to much more than supply its own demands and must compete for outside business. This is the meaning of the Chinese trouble--she has hundreds of millions of people, and Christendom wants their patronage and in the name of Civilization will insist on having it;--even tho it costs blood and treasure it must be had for the future still more than for the present.

Truth to tell, the present era of prosperity would have collapsed a year ago had it not been for the wars which came just in time to prolong the momentum. The Spanish, Philippine, Boer and Chinese wars have taken men from the ranks of labor and helped in that way; and have drawn money from the treasuries of the nations and put it into circulation among the people as the price of services, provisions, armaments, etc., etc.,--bonds taking the place of money as "collateral." Note the above naval expenditures alone, and consider how the \$500,000,000 to be spent this year is already giving employment to miners, coke-workers, steel-workers, railroad employees, ship-builders, boiler and engine-builders and gun-makers.

And this is but one item of the world's war expense. For instance, in the United States Senate one of its most careful and responsible members declared, "The military budget of this Republic for the

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coming year will be nearly \$400,000,000. It will be nearly twice what any European power is spending." Of this amount, only one twentieth is for the navy as shown above.

If present wars continue, or others break out and necessitate further expenditures and more bonds, the "good times" will last a while longer, until something occurs to cause distrust; then a panic will ensue, which, because of present conditions, will grind the masses as none other ever did;--and then will come the collapse which we expect will spread to everybody and everything in "Christendom." Money is now pushing the lever forward and keeping the people busy, because it is more than proportionately profited; and when the time comes, as it must come, when national bonds will no longer be in demand, it will be the Money-power that

will take fright and reverse the lever and arrest the world's machinery with a jolt that will shake the social structure.

Already both Great Britain and Germany have found it expedient to place their bonds in the United States rather than at home. Already there are premonitory signs of financial trouble in Germany--as the result of "over-production," competition, inability to find a market for her products. Already British manufacturers are suffering from competition; and the manufacturers of the United States could do nearly double their present business if they had the demand for their goods.

We clip the following from the Boston Herald:--

"Germany is feeling sharply similar conditions.

The Berlin correspondent of a London newspaper says the German mortgage banks are in a bad way, which, indeed, is not news, since it has been known for some time. The important point is that the situation does not improve. The electrical industries, the iron trade and the wool-spinning industry are extremely dull, the latter being reported almost ruined. The cities are full of unemployed people, and the paternal government is busily devising public works and charitable arrangements for their relief. There has been in late years an enormous industrial development in Germany, bolstered up, to some extent, by artificial means. Naturally this has been accompanied by an enormous speculative movement. Should it collapse, the consequence would be a period of hard times, the duration of which cannot be predicted with any confidence. Germany has been, as it were, intoxicated by glory and hope. All classes of the population are puffed up with a sense of national destiny. They have appeared to think that nothing could withstand their progress to the supremacy of the world. Any rude shattering of their dreams would result in corresponding dejection when its significance was fully realized. According to all accounts having semblance of truthfulness, the present prospect is dark and threatening."

Concerning the condition of things in Russia, the Industrial World, Odessa, says:--

"It is no ordinary, temporary, fleeting or passing financial and industrial crisis which Russia faces. Her staple industries for some time have steadily languished, from causes various and deep-rooted, which it is the government's duty to investigate. Money is daily becoming scarcer. No year in forty has opened under blacker auspices. The country is within measurable distance, all around, of an economic collapse."

If it is thus in the face of such immense national expenditures, how will it be when these and other great enterprises are forced to stop by a great panic? When it will come, no one can tell; but the Lord's people who order their affairs more for the accumulation of

heavenly than of earthly wealth will be in the more favorable condition (both of head and heart) to take their share of whatever may be permitted of their Heavenly Father, and to profit by it. In view of the foregoing, we would not be surprised if wars would continue or increase, and thus prolong the present "good times" for a while, and thus financially weaken the nations for their fall. But we make no predictions. The Master's advice is always in order, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."

THE SPIRIT OF LAWLESSNESS PREVALENT.

The tendency away from peace toward lawlessness and war continues to be evidenced on every hand. The passion for blood and destruction still strives, however, to justify itself in some "righteous cause;" but the appetite, once whetted, will some day be careless respecting any claims of justification; and then some "good people" will be sorry that they did not balance their justice more evenly; that they helped unchain the tiger, that lies dormant, but not dead, in every fallen human being.

The war against the Boers--to compel them to give the elective franchise to a few hundred foreigners, "uitlanders," has not only cost thousands of lives and millions of money, but has given thousands a taste of blood and fire, of recklessness of life and property which will prepare them for the coming scenes of anarchy at home. The same is true of the American soldiers in the Philippines, and the soldiers of all "Christendom" in China.

The same spirit has manifested itself in nearly every nation of Europe against the Jews, and in Turkey against Christians. And it is a part of the spirit that has made possible horrible lynchings in this country; and which backs the present saloon-smashing now in vogue in Kansas. In all these cases those taking law into their own hands and practicing violence, would urge that right was on their side. Doubtless to some extent this is often true; what we point out is the spirit of lawlessness, anarchy which is

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growing, and which will bear a "whirlwind" harvest ere long.

TRUSTS AS VIEWED BY JUSTICE BROWN.

"Justice Brown, one of the ablest members of the Supreme Court of the United States, in his John

Marshall address at Parkersburg, W.Va., made some remarks pertinent to the trust question in speaking of the future of the judiciary of this country. "The problems to be solved in the future," he said, "were those of combinations of capital and monopoly.... Society must adapt itself to the new conditions and do all it can to minimize the evils. It will not be the judges and the lawyers of the twentieth century who will have to face these problems, but the statesmen. There will be a struggle fought out with the desperation of hunger and possibly with bloodshed, but society will have to readjust itself on the basis of justice and equity."--Pittsburg Post.

* * *

We endorse the above. We do not say that Trusts and combinations are unmitigated evils--that serve no good purpose; but admitting that such great combinations of capital serve a great purpose in economy of management and cheapening the cost of life's necessities--just as socialism would propose--we see nevertheless the impossibility of this reduced cost reaching and benefiting the public. We see that selfishness will maintain or raise prices and perhaps reduce wages to increase the stock dividends, even tho the process grind the masses into the dust. Those who forget that selfishness is the motive power of "the present evil world," will err in all their calculations.

Socialists err on the other side of the question;-- in supposing that people in general would work either their hands or their brains vigorously, if the incentives of gain, selfishness, wealth, were removed by legislation or otherwise. Not until the strong hand of the Kingdom of God, backed by the strong love of the glorified Christ (head and body--Rom. 8:17) takes control of earth's affairs can socialistic programs hope for success.

THE POPE CRAVES POWER TO SUPPRESS PROTESTANTISM.

The pope gave a hint respecting one cause of his anxiety to recover temporal power in Rome, when, addressing the Duke of Norfolk and accompanying English Catholics, recently, he said:--

"Under our eyes, in this holy city, which should be the inviolate center of Catholicism, it is permitted to associations for religious propagation to take advantage of the sad economic conditions of the country to corrupt the faith of our children in the name of the specious doctrine of judgment, which pretends to leave each the right of interpreting in his own fashion the doctrine of Christ. You are right in protesting against

this state of things, which enables you better to understand the grievous circumstances in which we have lived during the twenty-five years of our Pontificate."

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Commenting on this the London Spectator truly remarks:--

"In other words, temporal power is needed to prevent liberty of worship and of conscience in Rome, and to cleanse Rome from the defilements of Protestant teaching. Yet the Pope praises the British nation because it allows full liberty of conscience. Fortunately there is little fear of Papacy recovering the temporal power. And, in truth, all good Roman Catholics should rejoice that this is so. Nothing could result therefrom but spiritual injury."

IMPORTANT CONCESSIONS BY THE PORTE.

"We are enabled to announce an important concession respecting the right of Jews to hold property in Palestine, which has been obtained from the Porte by M. Isaac Fernandez, President of the Comite Regional of the Alliance Israelite in Constantinople. For several years past, Jews of all nationalities, even Ottoman subjects born in Palestine, have been forbidden to buy landed property in Palestine. M. Fernandez has now secured for Jews who have been settled in the Holy Land for a considerable time, whether subjects of Turkey or of foreign powers, the right to buy "Miri" (agricultural land) and to have the property inscribed in their own names. The special importance of this concession lies in the fact that while "Mulk" (town land) is owned by private individuals, "Miri" is the property of the Sultan.

"M. Fernandez has rendered an immense service not only to his co-religionists, but to the entire population of Palestine. The Imperial Treasury will be among the first to derive material benefit from the measure mentioned above. The government of the Sultan has thereby given a fresh proof of the religious toleration which is a tradition in its annals."--Jewish Chronicle.

* * *

"We are in a position to state that according to our latest information from Constantinople the views expressed in authoritative Turkish circles are favorable towards political Zionism, and the advantages the Ottoman Empire will derive from it. We can further state that we are now in the midst of negotiations

of far greater importance than the mere annulling of the prohibition of immigration would signify."
--Report of Zionist Committee in Die Welt.

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"I FIND NO FAULT IN THIS MAN."

LUKE 23:13-26.--MARCH 17.

HAVING gone through the form of a trial, a mockery of justice--the chief priests and scribes and Pharisees, with a multitude of their retainers and servants, a clamoring mob, led Jesus to Pilate, while it was still early in the morning. (John 18:28.) But they remained in the court-yard while Jesus was led alone to the judgment hall, probably by a court attendant or a sentry, the Jews declining to enter because so doing would make them ceremonially unclean, and hinder their observance of the Passover feast which would begin that same night. What a curious blending this shows us of cleanness and uncleanness! How exact they were to a jot and tittle about matters of minor importance, and how utterly lost to all sense of heart-purity and love, the real essence of the divine law! We who are of spiritual Israel need to be on guard against such a development of outward religious ceremony and formalism, carefulness and purity, which might be accompanied by a blackness of heart and utter absence of holiness and love for righteousness. As a matter of fact, these chief religionists among the Jews were murderers at heart, from the divine standpoint, while careful of the outward ceremonies of their religion. Let us not be like unto them.

It was an unusual thing to accuse one of their countrymen before a Roman governor. It was customary, on the contrary, from them to seek to hide their faults and to secure acquittal, or at least as much leniency as possible. Therefore, these prominent men of the nation had no question but what Pilate would immediately assent to their demand, and crucify Jesus. They seem to have been surprised that he should inquire respecting the facts of the case, or show an interest in giving justice--especially in protecting a Jew from the wrath of his countrymen, particularly the leaders of his nation. When, therefore, Pilate inquired, "What accusation bring ye against this man?" they answered him, "If he were not a malefactor we would not have delivered him up unto thee." Pilate then dismissed the matter as one of Jew against Jew, and not of Jew against Caesar, saying, "Take ye him, and judge him according to your law." (John 18:29,31.) But the Jews replied, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." The Roman government had taken away

from the Jewish Sanhedrin the power of capital punishment, and nothing short of Jesus' death was in their minds.

They had failed to have Pilate's speedy endorsement of their condemnation, regardless of justice, and now they must put their plea upon another ground-- they must formulate a charge, and it must be such a charge as would appeal to the Roman governor. They well knew that their condemnation of Jesus for having said that he was a Son of God would be nothing in the estimation of Pilate; hence, after condemning Jesus unjustly for blasphemy, they made before Pilate a new charge, of three counts: (1) Seditious--disturbing the peace; (2) that he interfered with the collection of the Roman taxes; (3) that he himself claimed to be a king, and was thus an antagonist of Caesar.

Pilate quickly saw the true state of the case; viz., that "through envy the chief priests had delivered Jesus" and condemned him, and not through any new-found love for Caesar and his government; and leaving the multitude of accusers in the court Pilate went into the judgment hall, where Jesus stood, and questioned him, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" (John 18:33.) The whole matter must have seemed very ridiculous to Pilate, who, we must remember, was neither Christian nor Jew, but a heathen man, in whose judgment all the hopes of Israel respecting Messiah would be absurdities on a plane with the chimerical hopes of the various nations the world over. He perceived that the person before him was a remarkable one, and the answer of Jesus led only to greater perplexity, for he told him that his Kingdom was not of the present time and order, but a future one, and that he had come to bear witness to this truth. Pilate found himself getting only deeper into problems which he could not comprehend, and suddenly broke off the conversation with the question: "What is truth?"--without waiting for or expecting an answer, as tho he would say, Yes, yes; we hear of truth, justice and equity, but what is it, and where is it to be found? Who shall determine what is the right? Are you right, or am I, here the representative of Rome, in the right, and authority, or are those Jews who are clamoring for your death in the right? What is truth? It is too perplexing a question for us to discuss further.

Pilate, however, had made up his mind definitely that there was no danger whatever to the Roman Empire from the meek and lowly person whom he had interviewed --he was surely not an anarchist, not an insurrectionist of any kind. He could do no harm in the world, and even if his teachings respecting his own heavenly origin and kingship were baseless and the product of an unbalanced mind, nevertheless the individual himself was no menace to Rome. And thus he expressed himself in the words of our Golden Text: "I find no fault in this man." (Luke 23:4.) And

Pilate's decision has been the decision of all honorable, fair-minded people throughout the world from his day

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to the present, irrespective of religious prejudices. Whatever fault has been found has been against those professed followers who have taken his name--in vain: those who have claimed to be his followers, but who have not followed him, but have rather gone contrary to his teachings in many ways. These have brought dishonor often upon the sacred name, but as for Jesus, the world today declares with Pilate, "We find no fault in this man." Yea, the world loves to quote many of his blessed sayings, and many wish for a government built upon the principles of righteousness which he enunciated, even tho many who thus proclaim are unwilling to be guided by his precepts.

The Jewish leaders were chagrined with Pilate's decision, and began to argue the points and to attempt to prove that the teachings of Jesus were calculated to arouse a revolution amongst the people; that already in Galilee it had great influence, and now he was coming to Jerusalem, etc. True, the Lord's teachings were revolutionary as respected religious matters; but the charge was not true in the sense they wished Pilate to understand, that he was a breeder of a political revolution. And this is a good point for all of the Lord's followers to note: we, like our Lord, stand committed to a revolution amongst God's people on the lines of true religious worship, heart-obedience to the Lord, etc., but we, like our Lord, have nothing whatever to do with political revolutions. We know that such are coming in the Lord's own time and way, but we battle not with carnal weapons, as he did not; but as he did, so do we, wait for the Kingdom which God will establish in his own time and way--we wait for the expiration of "the times of the Gentiles," when, as God has foreordained and forearranged, the Kingdoms of this

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world will give place to, and be superseded by the Kingdom of God, in which, by the Lord's grace, we trust to have a part.

The mention of Galilee suggested to Pilate's mind a way of escape from his dilemma, without either doing an injustice toward Jesus or unduly arousing the enmity of the Jewish leaders; he would solve the difficulty by referring the case to Herod, who was then in Jerusalem. This was the same Herod who beheaded John the Baptist (the son of Herod the great who slew the infants at the time of our Lord's birth), the same one who, hearing of Jesus, speculated that possibly he was John the Baptist risen from the dead. We read that "When Herod saw Jesus he was exceeding

glad, for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him." (Luke 23:8.) Herod questioned Jesus with many words, but got no reply. Our Lord was not there in self-defence, nor to plead his cause, nor to seek to escape the penalty for our sins, but the reverse. His silence under all the circumstances was the wisest and most dignified course. Herod sought for amusement as from a sleight-of-hand performer, and was undoubtedly surprised and disappointed that his kingly curiosity and questions were ignored. However, he and his court would have some amusement, so the soldiers were given the opportunity to mock the kingly aspirations of Jesus, doing mock homage, and then insulting him. Herod returned Jesus to Pilate for judgment.

The Jewish notables and the rabble, clamoring for justice and the vindication of Roman law in the death of Jesus, again filled the court of Pilate's palace, and Pilate came forth and addressed them in the words of our lesson, declaring Jesus innocent of any criminal conduct, but announcing that in view of the commotion and clamor raised against him he would cause him to be scourged and that this should be considered a settlement of his case. Evidently the scourging of Jesus was an act of mercy on Pilate's part, by which he hoped to satisfy the bloodthirsty clamor of the accusers, yet it was unavailing, and merely caused our Lord additional suffering. The multitude cried out the more, "Crucify him!" Pilate's next subterfuge was to propose that since it was his custom to release one prisoner at this season of the year he would release Jesus at this time, and thus satisfy them in a double sense of the word; first, by considering him guilty, and secondly, by his release. But murder was in the hearts of those professedly religious people. They were blinded to justice as well as to mercy by the selfishness of their own hearts, for their enmity to Jesus was based simply and purely upon the fact that he and his teachings were discounting them and their teachings before the people.

It is well that we should note that selfishness lies at the foundation of almost every sin and every crime, that is and ever has been committed. Let us, as the Lord's people, be specially on guard against this insidious evil, which is ours by heredity, and which needs to be destroyed, eradicated, and to be supplanted with love, as the governing impulse of our hearts and lives--love, which thinketh no evil, which is not puffed up, which seeketh not her own advantage at the expense of justice to the interest of others. We are not, however, to think of these Pharisees, scribes and priests as wilfully, knowingly, intentionally, crucifying the Son of God. They would not have been so bold! On the contrary, the Apostle assures us that it was in ignorance that they did it. (Acts 3:17; 1 Cor. 2:8.)

an inexcusable ignorance, we may say, or at least, an only partly excusable ignorance, because it was the result of prejudice, which in turn was the fruit of selfishness.

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The priests, etc., felt that matters were getting desperate, and they must bring to bear upon Pilate every influence they could; hence their intimation that if he would not crucify Jesus they would report him to Caesar at Rome as being a friend of traitors against Roman authority--an enemy of the Emperor. This was a forceful argument, and Pilate realized it. Were such a report to be sent to Rome, signed by the leading officials of the Jewish nation, it would not be without weight, and the authorities there would wonder, at least, why the life of any poor, obscure individual would be spared to the alienation of the leading men of the nation and at the risk of an insurrection. Pilate decided that the only reasonable and proper course for him to pursue would be to let the Jews have their way; and taking a pitcher of water he washed his hands in their sight, as a symbol of his own disagreement with the death-decree which they were compelling him to render. His words were, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be upon us and upon our children."--Matt. 27:24.

Remembering that Pilate was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but a heathen man, we cannot condemn him as others have done. Rather, indeed, we must commend him as being a man who loved justice and sought to mete it out, and who yielded to injustice only after he had made every effort to stem the tide of contrary influences when it would have been easy for him to have curried favor with the officials by quickly assenting to the death of a person of no political influence. It is to be noticed, too, that the apostles do not implicate either Pilate or the civil authorities, but held responsible the Jews and their leaders (Acts 2:23), and that God has held that people responsible is evident from the history of the past eighteen centuries, in which their prayer has been answered: his blood has been upon them and their children. Thank God, his Word does not imply that divine wrath, even against these guilty persons, will be manifested and exercised through an eternity of torture by devils, but rather, as the Apostle intimates, God's wrath came upon them to the uttermost in the troubles which befell them as a nation and people. (1 Thess. 2:16.) Soon the wrath is to be turned away and the commission of the Prophet already is due to begin, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people: speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem. Cry unto her that her appointed time is accomplished, for she hath received at the Lord's hands double for all

her sins."--Isa. 40:1,2, margin.

Jesus was now delivered over to Pilate's soldiers, to be made ready for crucifixion, and they, heartless and brutal, as we might expect, made sport of the Master's adversities. Putting upon him a cast-off royal robe and a crown of thorns, they jeered him upon his claim to kingship, without a surmise, of course, of who he really was, and how he is yet to be a King upon the holy hill Zion, to whose sceptre every knee shall bow and to whom every tongue must confess. It will be a surprised awakening to them some day, when they amongst others shall come forth from the dead to find Messiah's Kingdom established, and to realize that he exercised mercy toward his enemies, and that his death prepared the way for the blessing of themselves and all the families of the earth with an opportunity to come to a knowledge of God and of his righteous requirements, and thus, if obedient, unto life everlasting.

It was probably about this time that Pilate's wife sent word to him respecting the dream she had, about Jesus, and admonishing him to have nothing to do with his condemnation. And so Pilate, as a last resort, brought Jesus forth, clothed in the purple robe of mock royalty, and with the crown of thorns, and presented him to the people with the words, "Behold the Man!" As tho he would say: Is it possible that you Jews are seeking the death of this innocent man, the noblest and best specimen of your race, indeed of the entire human race? Would not a final look at him appeal to your hearts and melt them? If I, a Roman, ignorant of your religion and regardless in general of all religion, have a pity and a sympathy and a sense of justice, is it possible that you are so unmerciful, while claiming to be the most religious people on earth? Behold the Man! Do you still insist that he be crucified? Then the priests cried out, not only that he ought to die because of being an enemy to the Roman Empire, but because he had taught that he was the Son of God,-- thus appealing to the Jews that he was a blasphemer, one whom God commanded them in the Law to destroy.

Pilate was the more afraid when he heard that Jesus claimed to be the Son of God, and again sought an interview with him; but Jesus' answer was, "Thou couldst have no power at all against me except it were given thee from above"--permitted of the Father. Pilate could do no more; even Jesus himself assented, and claimed that it was in the divine order that he should die. Pilate signed the death sentence.-- John 19:4-11.

There is a lesson for us in these words of our Lord, respecting the Father's permission of all that happened to him. We who are members of his body are counted in with him as under divine supervision, so that in all of our affairs all things are guaranteed to work together for our good while walking in his footsteps. This is

the ground of our confidence in all the various trying circumstances of life. This it is that gives the peace of God which passeth all understanding, ruling in our

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hearts, not only subduing self and enabling us to submit ourselves to the will of God, but permitting us even to rejoice in tribulation, knowing that under divine providence, and that rightly received, it will work out for us a far more exceeding and an eternal weight of glory.--2 Cor. 4:17.

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THE ATONING SACRIFICE COMPLETED.

--LUKE 23:35-53.--MARCH 24.--

"Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures."--1 Cor. 15:3.

"AND when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him." (Mark 15:20.) Jesus was now in charge of the centurion, and with the two bandits or highwaymen who were to be executed that day, was led to execution, each of the three prisoners being under the guard of four Roman soldiers, with a centurion in command, sixteen persons in all. It was about nine o'clock in the morning, and our Lord having been incessantly harassed by his enemies from the midnight previous, without food or rest, buffeted, scourged, tormented, was, according to tradition, weak and faint under the heavy load of his own cross, which, according to custom, he bore. The Gospel narrative seems to confirm this incidentally, by telling us that Simon, a Cyrenian, was compelled by the soldiers to bear the cross for Jesus. Some, however, claim that Luke's reading respecting this matter, that he "bore the cross after Jesus," signifies that he walked behind Jesus and merely assisted in the bearing of the cross.

Whichever way it was, Simon had a most enviable opportunity of serving the Master--an opportunity which would be eagerly seized by some of the Lord's people today, who would be glad to share, not only the Master's burden, but his ignominy. And, strange to say, the opportunity is with us now, and whosoever will of the Lord's disciples is privileged to take up the cross and follow after him; for the offense of the cross has not ceased. True, the cross has become fashionable, and is worn by many as an ornament with little thought of the original cross and what it signified, and

with little desire to bear any of its shame or ignominy or weight. But there are still some who have the Master's spirit, to whom the Apostle appeals, saying, "If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him;" for "we ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren," and to "fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ for his body's sake which is the Church." --Rom. 8:17; 2 Tim. 2:12; 1 John 3:16; Col. 1:24.

Altho the man Christ Jesus was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners--perfect--nevertheless he was neither a giant in stature nor in physical strength. This indicates to us that the perfect man was not a giant physically, nor in brute force preeminent; for all that the perfect man was, our Lord Jesus must have been, in order to be his ransom price, his substitute. The coarseness and brute strength which we find in many men is to be esteemed a degeneration, as truly as is the weakness and effeminacy of others--only that the degeneracy has manifested itself in another form. Great brute force and coarseness of organism is rarely accompanied by a proportionate strength and efficiency of brain power, and of the finer sentiments of the mind. The completion of the restitution work, therefore, must not be expected to bring coarseness and giant strength; but fineness and symmetry, physical as well as mental. Additionally, we are not to forget that for three and a half years our Lord's ministry had been a constant drain upon his vital forces, not merely in connection with his public preaching, but specially in connection with the miracles which he wrought at the expense of his own vitality; as it is written, "Virtue [vitality] went out of him and healed them all."--Luke 6:19.

The journey to Calvary was a sorrowful spectacle. It is to their credit that some of those who followed in the procession were weeping, and this credit for tenderness and sympathy falls to the women, to whom Jesus turning said, "Weep not for me, but for yourselves and for your children." Apparently the Savior's thought was not centered wholly upon himself: he was thinking rather how this injustice would shortly react upon this nation, whose representatives had said before God and men, "His blood be upon us and upon our children." No doubt our Lord had in mind the descriptions of the trouble that would come upon Jerusalem, as given particularly in the prophecies of Daniel and Jeremiah. (Daniel 9:24-27; Jer. 6.) We realize how literally our Lord's suggestion was fulfilled when we remember the story of the siege of Jerusalem, and how the women and children especially suffered in the horrors of that time. It is a sign of greatness of mind when one is able under such trying circumstances to think less of himself and more of others.

Arrived at Calvary the crucifixion took place. It is probable that the victim was nailed to the cross while it was lying on the ground, and that then the four sturdy soldiers lifted it and set it into a socket in the

earth, the pain from the wound being intensified by the jolting of putting the cross into an upright position,

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and then terribly augmented by the hanging weight of the body. Crucifixion is probably the most cruel form of death, and even by the Romans, as we understand it, was practiced only upon culprits--usually outlaws, brigands and seditionists. Thus our Lord was, in harmony with the statement of the prophet, "numbered with the transgressors."--Isa. 53:12.

On our Lord's cross, above his head, written in three languages, was a statement of his crime--the charge upon which he was convicted and sentenced, in the words, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." It was written in Latin, the language of the Romans, representative of authority and power; in Greek, the language of culture and learning; and in Hebrew, the language of the professedly God-fearing people. It was a title of shame and contempt, a brand of blasphemy to those who read it; and the multitude, going and coming to and from the city jested him upon his title, and the miserable failure of the fraud he had attempted to perpetrate in claiming for himself such high honors and dignities. The priests and rulers, of course, followed to see their victim surely dead; and any qualms of conscience they may have had respecting the injustice of their course seem to have been stifled by the apparent confirmation of their verdict in their success in accomplishing his death, and in his apparent powerlessness to save himself from his calamity. The soldiers too, especially those who had him in charge, seem to have felt that this was an exposure of another fraud, the ignominious termination of another one who had asserted himself against the power of Caesar.

The records show that Jesus' mother was there, and her sister, and John the disciple, and his mother, and Mary Magdalene and Mary the wife of Cleophas. (John 19:25; Matt. 27:56.) They were all sorrowful; many of them weeping. They could not deny the assertion of the rulers and the multitude, that apparently the claims of our Lord had been fraudulent; they could not understand how he who had such power, and in whom they had such confidence, could be so helpless in the hands of his enemies. It was incomprehensible when they remembered how even the winds and the waves of Galilee obeyed him, and how many unclean spirits, being unable to resist the command of his word, had been cast out of the afflicted. But altho they could not make any reply, under the circumstances, to the jibes of those who railed at the Lord, they nevertheless loved him; for they knew, that regardless of his power and his titles, and whether or not he had overstated his relationship to the Heavenly Father, nevertheless,

"never man spake like this man," and never had they known any who could compare with him amongst the sons of men for purity and nobility of soul. They could do naught else but love him and trust him, and wait for some indication of the seeming inconsistencies which they then beheld. And so it is at times with the Lord's followers since. Occasionally things occur in respect to the Lord's Word and what he permits his people to suffer, and the power he permits their adversaries to exercise, which are incomprehensible, and his followers may at such times be obliged simply to hold their peace; but those who know the Lord through intimate communion and fellowship of heart, who have fed upon "the deep things of God," who have drunk of his spirit--altho unable to explain the difficulties, are fully able to trust in him and to hope and to wait for such expressions as are sure to come, in vindication of his every act and word and providence, in due time.

Whilst the others were reviling our Lord and calling upon him to manifest his Messiahship and to come down from the cross, one of the thieves joined in the ribald assault; but the other, realizing that death was near, and admitting his own guilt, seemed to recognize in Jesus a person of an entirely different order and character from that of himself. He alone, so far as we are informed, raised his voice in protest against the slurs, and in defense of the meek and lowly one, who said nothing in his own defense, and who thus set us a most wonderful example in patient endurance and suffering for well-doing. Had he demonstrated his power, as they "dared" him to do, he would have been wrecking the hopes, not only of those who maligned him, crucified him, but also the hopes of the whole world of mankind. O, how we rejoice in his faithfulness unto death--even the death of the cross! How we praise him that he did not exercise his power, and "call for more than twelve legions of angels" to deliver him, but on the contrary sacrificed himself, laying down his own life as a ransom for Adam and his race!

The contrite thief knew little respecting Jesus, except what he saw before him of his patient endurance, suffering for righteousness' sake; but this "living epistle" made a marked impression upon him, just as sometimes the conduct of the Lord's followers, patient in tribulation, is the strongest and best lesson that can be given to some, "without God and having no hope in the world." There is nothing to indicate that this thief became a saint in the few moments of his acquaintance with the Lord; there is nothing to indicate that he had or could develop a character in that time which would constitute him an overcomer, a joint-heir with Christ in the Kingdom. Everything is to the contrary of such thoughts. He merely realized that he himself was guilty and worthy of death, according to the law, that Jesus was innocent, and that there was a bare possibility of there being something in the claims of

this wonderful man in respect to a future Kingdom.

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He would at least speak a word in his defense, and then he would appeal to Jesus, that if he had a Kingdom, as had been intimated, he would graciously remember his words of defense and do a kind deed for him when his Kingdom should come.

PARADISE PROMISED.

Jesus replied, "Verily, verily [so be it, so be it], I say unto thee this day, Thou shalt be with me in Paradise." It should be as the thief had requested, not otherwise. When Jesus' Kingdom should come the effect or result of that Kingdom would be the restoration of the Paradise lost when sin entered into the world as a part of its penalty,--redeemed by the sacrifice which he was then finishing at Calvary. When he should come into his Kingdom at his second advent he would, as the thief requested, remember him there and then, and undoubtedly the thief will have an abundant reward for the words of comfort spoken to our dear Redeemer in his hour of trial; but that reward will surely not be a place in the throne, in the Kingdom, as a member of the body of Christ; for this position amongst the elect is to be given only to those who shall attain the character-likeness to God's dear Son. (Rom. 8:29.) Besides, none can attain this position without being begotten of the holy spirit, and the holy spirit, the begetting power of the new nature, was not yet given, until after Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension, when at Pentecost it came upon those who waited to be adopted from the house of servants into the house of sons.--John 1:12; 7:39.

The thief died too soon to have any part in this Kingdom, had he been ever so well developed in character, --even as John the Baptist died too soon. Of the latter our Lord said, that altho there was not a greater prophet than he, "the least one in the Kingdom of heaven [the spirit-begotten Church, joint-heirs with Christ in the Kingdom] is greater than he." (Matt. 11:11.) When the Kingdom shall come, and Paradise shall be restored, not only the penitent thief will be there, but also the impenitent one, and those Roman soldiers, and those bloodthirsty scribes and Pharisees and priests--all will be in Paradise,--not for any worthiness of their own, but by reason of the merit of Christ's sacrifice, which paid their penalty and insures their having a full opportunity in the Millennial Paradise to come to a knowledge of God and through obedience then to life everlasting, if they will.

How forceful the expression, "I say unto thee today,"

--notwithstanding all this seeming weakness on my part and seeming triumph of my enemies--I tell thee today, that thy prayer shall be answered; and that when I come into my Kingdom, Paradise shall be restored and thou shalt be there to be blessed, as I shall be there to be the King and Priest to give the blessings promised in the divine plan.* The garden of Eden was the Paradise lost, and on a larger and grander scale it shall in due time be restored by him whose sacrifice purchased it as well as mankind.--Eph. 1:14; Rev. 2:7.

It was probably during the early part of the crucifixion, that the four soldiers who had Jesus in charge divided his clothing amongst them; but the seamless robe which he wore, a fine and expensive garment, being desired by them all, for it they cast lots. That robe properly and beautifully represents Christ's righteousness, the wedding garment, which is of great value, and which, during this present age, is granted to the most favored ones as furnishing the opportunity for their attainment with Christ of joint-heirship in the Kingdom, if they will suffer with him. The lot or privilege to have this garment of Christ's imputed righteousness has fallen chiefly to us of civilized lands, to whom the light of the knowledge of God's gracious plan in Christ has been granted. How thankful we are that the lot or privilege of possessing the favors represented by this robe is ours. Those who appreciate it will show their appreciation in the affairs of their daily lives, seeking to keep their garment unspotted from the world, and that it may be without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, and that it may be embroidered with all the graces of the Lord's character; that under the grace which it implies they may be accepted in the Beloved One.--Psa. 45:14; Jas. 1:27.

The darkness which came over the scene of the crucifixion at noon, and lasted until three o'clock, after our Lord's death, was evidently a very remarkable one, and made a deep impression. A newly found version of the Gospel, known as "The Gospel by Peter," is represented to say of this darkness, "Many went about with lamps, supposing it was night," and that the darkness lasted until Jesus was taken from the cross, when the earthquake took place. "Then the sun shone out, and it was found to be the ninth hour."

The rending of the Temple vail apparently took place at the same time as this earthquake--the moment of our Lord's death. This was not the trifling matter it might appear from the word "vail," for this vail was an extremely large and extremely heavy curtain, the tearing of which would be no small matter, but would have required superhuman strength. Edersheim describes this curtain as being sixty feet long and thirty

*The comma should be after and not before "today" in order to permit harmony with the facts here before us, and agreement with other Scriptures. The original Scriptures are not punctuated --punctuation being a comparatively modern invention.

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feet wide, and five inches thick; made of seventy-two squares joined together. We have seen (Tabernacle Shadows) that this veil was symbolical;--that it represented the completion of our Lord's sacrifice by which he opened up for us a new way of life beyond the veil, through the sacrifice of his flesh. In a figure, therefore, the Lord God, by the rending of the veil, declared that the death of Jesus made possible the way into the Most Holy, even heaven itself, and the fact that the veil was rent from the top to the bottom implied that the work was God's and not one having its start and accomplishment in human design and effort.

"FATHER, INTO THY HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT."

Our Lord's words commending his spirit, his life, to the Father, reminds us of the words of Stephen. (Acts 7:59.) Stephen, however, had little to surrender, like us all; his Adamic life, the spirit of life, received from Adam, was already forfeited, and the only life which Stephen, therefore, could commend to God was the reckoned life received by faith through Jesus, the Life-giver. In the case of our Lord the matter was different. He had life rights which had never been forfeited through sin, and was committing these to the Father as the ransom price for Adam and his forfeited spirit of life: nevertheless, our Lord was firmly trusting in the Father's promise to raise him up from the dead by his own power, and his trust was in God that the restoration of life which he had promised he was abundantly able and willing to perform, and raise him from the state of death perfect, in the divine nature, with its glory, honor and immortality. Thus our Lord gave up the "ghost" (an old English term)--gave up his spirit of life--he died, and remained dead until the Father raised him from the dead on the third day by his own power.*

The closing scenes of the drama evidently were very awe-inspiring, not only to our Lord's friends, but also to his enemies, and a general hush and feeling of grief spread about. The taunts of his enemies ceased as the darkness came down, and many were willing at the last to admit that the occurrences were remarkable, and corroborated to some extent the Master's claims, saying, "Truly, this man was the Son of God."--Mark 15:39.

The solemnity of our Lord's dying moments seems

to have given greater courage to some of his friends, two of whom, Joseph and Nicodemus, were members of the Sanhedrin, which had condemned him, these two being either absent or voting against the condemnation. They had been too careful of their reputations to avow their interest in Jesus previously, "for fear of the Jews," but now they had the courage to own the Lord as their friend, and to arrange the details of his burial. (John 19:39.) The dilatory acknowledgment of Jesus on the part of these wealthy and influential men reminds us of the peculiar difficulties which hinder all persons of wealth and influence in connection with a proper acknowledgment of the way, the truth and the life. True, there are many rich men today, and many of influence, who, because of popularity of churchianity, take a prominent part in its service; but churchianity must not be confounded with "the body of Christ," the true Church, which, like the Lord, is comparatively without influence, power or wealth, as viewed from a worldly standpoint. When the great drama of this atonement day is completed, the last member of the body of Christ has finished his sacrifice, there will doubtless be many of the rich and

*See tract, What is the Soul? Sample copy free.

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influential to come forward then, to honor the humble ones and to garnish their sepulchres. Much more to their credit and to their advantage and assistance in making their own calling and election sure would it be for these to come boldly forward in the time of sacrifice and bind their own sacrifices to the horns of the altar.--Psa. 118:27.

THE ATONEMENT.

Various are the theories advanced in the name of Christianity and the Scriptures, respecting the at-one-ment between God and man; some acknowledging that the work which our Lord "finished" in his death on Calvary is the basis of all human hopes respecting the life everlasting, and at-one-ment with the heavenly Father; others persistently seeking to deny this, advancing theories to the effect that the at-one-ment between God and man never was broken off, that no ransom sacrifice was necessary to a reconciliation, that no fall took place, and that hence no restitution back to primary conditions is necessary or desirable or was secured by the Lord Jesus' death. Many of these theories which deny the redemptive value of our Lord's death

affect to do him greater honor by claiming that his work for humanity was solely that of a great teacher, and in no sense that of a Redeemer or purchaser. These false theories which ignore the ransom are becoming more numerous, more persistent and more seductive day by day to those who are not well rooted and grounded in the divine Word and plan of the ages. It is appropriate, therefore, that we here call special attention to the fact that according to the Scriptures the entire plan of salvation is pivoted upon the great transaction of our Lord's sacrifice, which, beginning with his consecration at Jordan, was finished with his expiring breath at Calvary. Whoever believes this and accepts

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it is justified thereby, obtaining his share in the merit of that sacrifice. Whoever rejects it rejects the only name and the only faith by which he can ever be reconciled to God and attain to life everlasting.

We are not in this suggesting that men are saved by a theory, but we are suggesting that since all who come into harmony with God during this Gospel age must come to him through faith in the precious blood of Christ, it follows that he cannot have a reasonable faith without a more or less clear theory; and that any theory which ignores the death of Christ as the basis of justification and reconciliation is an unscriptural one, and hence of no value whatever. Hence all who claim relationship with God upon any other basis of faith, any other theory, are deluding themselves--they are neither reconciled to the Father nor to the Son, nor justified from their sin, nor members of the Church which is the body of Christ.

We do not mean by this to say that only such as have a clear conception of the philosophy of the atonement are justified; on the contrary, it is our belief that many of God's dear people during the dark ages, and since, have lived and died without a clear conception of the philosophy of this subject as it is now possible for it to be seen and appreciated. But while failing to see the philosophy, all of God's true people have recognized the fact that it was the death of Christ which effected our reconciliation to the Father, and upon which all hopes of life eternal are based. See MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. V., The At-one-ment.

To those who prefer the inspired words of an Apostle to the uninspired conjectures of their own and other minds, the Golden Text is an all-sufficient answer to all no-ransom theories. One of these, Christian Science, declares: "There is no sin,"--hence nothing to deserve punishment; and "There is no death,"--hence Christ did not die. But the Apostle affirms, in harmony with both reason and Scripture, that both were facts, and that Christ's death was for (as a means to our recovery from) our sins. Let us stand firmly

in the inspired "faith once delivered to the saints."--
Jude 3.

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"DESPISED AND REJECTED OF MEN."

ISA. 52:13; 53:3,12.--MARCH 31.

THIS is the Review lesson and requires little comment. The Golden Text serves us as a caption, and is itself a summary of the quarter's lessons. Evidently to be despised and rejected of men did not signify that our Lord was worthy of such treatment, but rather that those to whom he offered himself were so degraded and blinded by sin as to be unable to appreciate the glorious qualities of his character. Nevertheless, as the Apostle declares, "To us who believe he is precious;" and again, "To as many as received him to them gave he privilege to become sons of God." How thankful we are, and deserve to be, that the eyes of our understanding were permitted to see our dear Redeemer in somewhat of his true light of grandeur and holiness; and we rejoice also that seeing his glory we have been led step by step to transformation and renewing of our minds, and that we are being changed from glory to glory by the spirit of the Lord even now in our hearts. "We have the mind of Christ." Moreover, we have the good hope, built upon the divine promises, that if we follow on in his footsteps in the narrow way we shall ere long be with him and like him and share his Kingdom and glory.

"As he was so are we in the world."--1 John 4:17.

If the Master of the house was called Beelzebub and seditious and an enemy of law and order, against Caesar's government, etc., etc., by the false religionists of his day, so it should not surprise us, but should rather be expected, that all the way down through this Gospel age his followers, the members of his body, would be similarly misrepresented, slandered, maligned, despised and rejected by the popular religionists of Christendom. As a matter of fact, this is what the Scriptures teach us is to be expected; what history tells us has thus far been true; and what we are convinced from the Word of God will continue to be true until the last member of the body of Christ has finished his course. These oppositions from the world, the flesh and the devil (generally operating through some nominally Christian channel), are a part of the chiseling and polishing, a part of the testing and proving of the Lord's people which must determine whether or not they are worthy a share in the Kingdom--whether or not they esteem most the approval of men or the praise of God,--the honors and emoluments of this present

life or the glorious but unseen things which God hath in reservation for them that love him. We cannot pass these tests in companies or groups, however small and select,--each must be tried, tested, individually, in order to prove him an overcomer, and before he can attain the promised prize. Each should remember the necessity for faith in what God has promised his people or he will be overwhelmed and defeated, and miss both the mark and the prize. "This is the victory that overcometh the world--even your faith." "Greater is he that is on our part than all they that are against us."

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"THEY THAT REVERENCED THE LORD SPAKE OFTEN TOGETHER."

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--I have just finished reading three volumes of MILLENNIAL DAWN, and to say I am much pleased and interested only feebly expresses my feelings. The Bible has been a sealed, and to a very great extent, a meaningless book. This is the first eye-opener I have ever come across. The more preaching of the "orthodox" sort I listened to, the denser was my ignorance, and the graver my doubts. In fact, I had arrived at the conclusion that no one knew anything positive about it; it was all conjecture, and that of a very flimsy character. I thought if men of intelligence and education, who had made these subjects a life-study, disagreed so radically, plain men like myself have no business to have any theories at all; and have for some time ignored the whole subject.

But now, I can begin to see the light. Bible-reading has become more interesting to me. Things that were before as dark as Pagan theology, now have a meaning, and to me, a very pleasing one. Should like a copy of the WATCH TOWER.

Yours, for the truth, A. C. HOWLAND,--Del.

MR. CHARLES T. RUSSELL,

DEAR BROTHER:--Having just read the fifth volume of MILLENNIAL DAWN with great interest and edification, I am very desirous of knowing when the next volume will be ready. I have been in the Congregational ministry for twenty-five years and have been teaching the popular view of eternal torment, but with the light on the Word that I have now received, I can no longer teach such God-dishonoring doctrine. I must believe that your view is the Scriptural one. My heart is exceedingly grateful to God

that your book was placed in my hands. It is indeed "meat in due season." Please send further reading matter as per enclosed memorandum.

Your Brother in Christ, I. F. TOBEY,--Oregon.

MY DEAR BROTHER:--Your letters have given me much cheer during my protracted sickness, and I can but rejoice with you that the Lord's mercy has been over me in a very large measure; and, we trust, for wise and gracious designs, which he is abundantly able to work out in his own time and way. I wish to be entirely submissive to his just and holy will. I hope to be able to learn the great lesson he would teach me, that, ultimately, as well as now, shall work out to his glory and my own eternal good.

The TOWERS have been a source of great pleasure and benefit. I read and re-read them with continued profit and delight. Of course, I wish them continued to be sent to my address, and will remit later, if not able to continue in the "Pilgrim" work.

Last year's Report in December 15 TOWER is full of blessed promise, and a token of better and bigger things to come. I am very anxious to get into the field again; and the days of waiting seem very long--but, my Brother, I cannot give you much hope of doing anything under five or six months. I am very weak, and any extra exertion sends me to my bed again, as was the case last week, and I was obliged to send for a physician. The cause was improper circulation in an afflicted leg, brought on by trying to do a little work for my son--office work. I am better to-day, and as soon as possible will try to dispose of DAWNS and other literature in this town.

My wife is very hopeful that everything will turn out for the best, according to the promise, if we will only do the best we know how, trusting every promise sure.

May our dear Lord and Master greatly bless and strengthen you in the onerous and responsible duties to which you have given your life in the spread of the truth. For such we shall always pray.

With best wishes and regards, in which Sister Ransom joins, I remain as ever your devoted friend and co-worker in the present harvest.

Very truly, Z. A. RANSOM,--South Dakota.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--I enclose order for one dollar for which you will please send Vol. I. of MILLENNIAL DAWN, "The Plan of the Ages," in cloth binding. The remaining 65 cents you will please accept as a contribution to the Tract Fund.

I have read "The Plan of the Ages" twice (I have

it in paper binding--loaned out) and am now reading "The Time is at Hand," and am well pleased with them. It has changed me from skepticism to a strong belief in and love for the Bible. I am now making it my constant study, and with DAWN as a help it seems plain and is truly interesting. It has caused me to see God in a different light, and I do indeed love and worship him. I can never thank you enough for being the instrument, through your writings, in bringing about this change. I am a poor man, a farmer, working all day, and studying nights and Sundays. While I am being thus benefited I wish that others may have the same opportunity, therefore I offer myself as a member of the Volunteer service. I distributed the tracts you sent me and some have manifested some interest from reading them. I think you are truly "a good steward giving meat in due season." I will help in a financial way as much as I am able.

Respectfully, W. A. STANLEY,--Texas.

ELDER C. T. RUSSELL,

Dear Brother in Christ Jesus our Lord: It has been some time since I wrote you, altho I receive communications from you every two weeks in the WATCH TOWER; and how I in my old days appreciate it as meat in due season! Since we began reading it my good wife won't go to hear any of the clergy of our town, as she can learn more of God's plan in reading one number than she could from hearing all the preachers in our town. We read them till we can digest them, then send them out to such as we think truth-hungry. I sent one to the country some weeks ago. The lady sent me word that she would have the paper if she had to sell every chicken to pay for it. She is very poor in this world's goods, but too proud to ask for it gratuitously.

Oh! I am so thankful for the help drawn from the TOWER and DAWNS, otherwise perhaps I should have plodded on in the old rut as others are doing who have many advantages over myself by way of education and present environments.

Believe me, I am truly yours, in the fullest meaning of the term, with hope of meeting you in the first resurrection. N. M. THOMPSON,--Missouri.

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DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--I wrote you today a "business" letter; now I want to send you a few lines of a more personal character from myself and wife.

We wish to express to you our love and gratitude for the way in which you have continued to serve us during the past year. The January 1 TOWER came full of just what we wanted, a clear definition of the

"mark" towards which we are pressing, and we thank God that we can "realize" fully what is the mark, and can see we have gained ground in this direction during the past year.

I must tell you of our New Year's eve meeting. Twenty-seven of us met together to see the old century out and the new one in, and as we could not have you with us personally, you were represented by a large photo hanging on the wall, and by the reading of the TOWER for September 1, defining the law of "love." Personally, I am deeply grateful to you for that article, and for the corresponding one of January 1, on the "Mark." I had begun to see that the law of "Do to all as you would have them do to you" meant so much more than I had thought, and now these two articles have made it clearer still.

At our Sunday evening meetings I have been making these my theme, more than anything else, and you will be rejoiced to hear that in every member of the Church in these Twin Cities there is a noticeable improvement along the lines of love.

You may be sure you were remembered by everybody present, and we prayed the dear Lord that you might be given continued wisdom to use aright the great favor conferred on you by the stewardship over the household of faith to give out to them the meat in "due season." And we also recognized and deeply appreciated the love you must have had to each of us, even when unknown to you in the flesh, or else the dear Lord would never have placed you in this position.

I thank God that I am permitted to give out to others the meat which I have received of God through you; and I know that you will pray for me that I may have for my aim and ambition during the year begun a stronger desire to "serve" the brethren.

Your brother in the Lord Jesus,
W. HOPE HAY,--Minnesota.

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DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--I am glad to be able to write and tell you that I have about recovered from my illness. I am not quite as strong as I should like to be, but have no doubt I shall fully regain my strength in a little while. I went to Scotland last Friday for Brother Burkholder's funeral and was entertained by Brother Lehman. Altho the funeral was not until Saturday morning, by request I went over to see Brother Burkholder's family on Friday evening. There were several friends of the family present, and as the conversation turned upon Biblical matters we had a splendid opportunity for serving present truth, and they all showed much interest, and many good

questions were asked. On account of the family's sympathy with the truth, the trustees of the church building refused to allow the funeral services to be held in that place. This action is significant, from the fact that it is a "union church," or rather (supposed to be) non-sectarian, and was built by the people of the neighborhood, with the understanding that it was for the use of any Christians.

However, a large number of people assembled at the house for the service. Therefore, there was a good opportunity to witness for the truth. The greater part of the people who attended the funeral were "Mennonites" (that being a Mennonite settlement), so in accordance with the custom of that people, most of them returned to the house of mourning and spent several hours there. Of course there was a good deal of comment on the address, so the whole afternoon was occupied in discussing Bible questions, and the

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truth as usual proved itself powerful, and we hope that many were impressed by its beauty and simplicity. Brother Herr, from Pottsville, was present and assisted in the service, and also in upholding the truth afterwards.

Brother Faunce wrote you of the experience we had at the United Brethren church here, a week ago last Sunday. Well, as a sequel, last Sunday evening the pastor undertook to show the unscripturalness of MILLENNIAL DAWN, and by invitation several of the friends, including myself, were present to hear what this very blind shepherd had to say. Needless to say he had a very thin argument, and succeeded in making himself ridiculous.

His ignorance of God's word was simply amazing, and must have been apparent to every thinking person present. On the whole, I think he (unwittingly) helped the truth rather than hindered it, for he read some excellent extracts from the DAWN. Some of them I should have chosen myself had I been debating the points with him. He also read the extract from Atlanta Constitution from the back of a missionary envelope which he had. Whilst he had to admit that hades meant the grave, he also said that it meant more than that; to use his own words--"Hades is a place divided into two compartments, one where the bad spirits go to, and the other Paradise, where Jesus went." All of his "scriptural" proofs were "home spun," and unfortunately (for him) could not be warranted not to shrink. Of course, the Morehead tract was in evidence, and so were about 200 of No. 41, Old Theology tracts. All that was done by the friends to uphold the truth was done in the spirit of love and with becoming dignity.

I'm sure you will be pleased to know that the

friends here show much zeal for the truth, and are growing apace. We have now started a mid-week meeting, which promises to be a success.

The Volunteer work will also be taken up; the arrangements for it are to be made next Sunday.

I am hardly able to go fully into my colporteur work yet, but hope to do so soon; in the meantime, shall endeavor to do a little canvassing here, and altho this place was worked last year I hope to be able to reach some and dispose of some DAWNS.

Please pray for me that I may have strength and courage to walk the narrow way.

With Christian love to yourself and the Bible House family, I remain your brother in Christ,
ERNEST D. SEXTON,--Pennsylvania.

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PASTOR C. T. RUSSELL,

MY DEAR SIR:--After services on the first Lord's Day of this year, I found in my study a parcel of books with no name. I was leaving the next day for a 400-mile voyage, and took with me 3 vols. of MILLENNIAL DAWN, which I perused with growing interest in the intervals of services as we sailed from island to island. I wish to subscribe to the WATCH TOWER, and to have tracts sent me (as per list); for this I enclose \$2.50, which I hope will cover expenses of postage, etc. I am yours faithfully,

DANIEL WILSHERE,--West Indies,
Bahama Baptist Union--Supt. of Missions.

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MR. EDITOR:--I cannot tell how thankful I am to you for sending us a sample copy of your paper. Oh, the good, glad tidings! How many wretched, awful days it would have saved me had I known it long ago. I believe you implicitly in all you say. It seems so much more like God ought to be. Oh, my words are too crude and I am too ignorant to express what I feel, but I am so glad, so glad. For years I have been a Presbyterian, and a doubter all the time, and only those who have gone through it know what that means. I will distribute any tracts you may send me, and be glad to do so.

MRS. FRANK CAREY,--Pennsylvania.

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DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--I must renew my TOWER, as I could not get along without it. I have

been wonderfully helped through it and the DAWNS into present light and truth, and so am using every means and agency through the influence and aid of God's Holy Spirit to make my calling and election sure. And oh! what a new book my Bible is now. How it unfolds to me, and so my pathway is getting brighter and brighter. Praise God. I can do nothing in the way of money for Good Hopes, but am devoting all my spare time and more to the spread of truth. I have a large Chart of the Ages in my office, and have many callers.

I am availing myself of every opportunity to let my light shine, and correcting my old errors of Theology, which I have testified for years. And how God blesses me. As I give out he pours in. My will is only to do God's will. What an anchorage the truth is to the soul, when we see how rightly to divide it. Truly, you have been a great help to me through the WATCH TOWER literature, to God be all the glory.

Your brother in a living faith,
DR. JOHN STRUBLE,--Illinois.

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DEAR BROTHER C. T. RUSSELL:--Grace and peace! Your very kind favor of the 4th inst. to hand. Had an injury received to my right hand about a week ago. Am getting out on the road now in my business as an architect, and the Lord is blessing the efforts put forth in spreading the truth. Had another experience of his wonderful grace tonight here in town. I was planning and thinking how I could take along a lot of DAWNS, that I could sell in large numbers in single vols. After having depleted my stock in the grip to two vols., and taking orders for three sets, and coming here after 6 p.m., I went out to inquire about business. Finding a hardware store (where I usually inquire in every town) and finding no news, I showed the DAWN, but being a perfect stranger, I did not for a moment think they would part with the cash simply on my face and the name in my order book, etc. I sold five sets in that store, and two in another, spot cash, making 51 vols. for today. To God be all the glory. To say I was astonished is putting it lightly. I cannot get out of here until tomorrow 3 p.m., so can possibly sell some more in the same way. Glad to see names on the lists where the Lord used me to hand them the truth. These blessings should make me run the race with much joy. Enclosed please find P.O. order for money, and order for books to be sent to various parties. Pray that I may be kept humble, as I desire and require much more humility and love for the sacrifice than I possess, so it will not be a duty love to

feed the little ones and spread the truth, but so the zeal of the Lord may burn me up. Hope to see more names on the TOWER lists some day in the paths of our DAWN work.

I feel very happy over this new phase of the work, as it seems it ought to be very fruitful.

February 17th.--Grace and peace! Just home from a week's trip on business in the country, and the most blessed of trips so far as DAWN sales are concerned that I know of. Sold 239 vols. in a week. Just returned from Jackson, Minn. Knew of a TOWER reader there and looked for him. I found the restaurant where he takes meals, and supposed he had sold DAWNS there, but when I found he had not I tried, and sold a set. This started the ball rolling in Jackson, where I am quite well acquainted, and received orders for 75 vols. before leaving. Then I had to be careful not to sell to the Presbyterians, as I was after their church. Hope to sell a volley to them later.

If I had used my opportunities the last two years on the road with the success I now receive, it's hard to estimate how many DAWNS could have been sold. This is a new venture to get cash in advance for books. To the Lord be all the glory. May we do continually with our might what our hands find to do. Praying God's richest blessing and love to you and all the dear ones in the Bible House, I remain your fellow-soldier of the cross,

M. P. THORI,--Minnesota.

[Our dear Brother Thori is one of the leading architects of Minnesota, and in going about attending to this business he takes the DAWNS along, and is daily becoming more expert in reaching hearing ears. He usually sells five volumes at a time, and collects in advance, the books being delivered by mail. He has a letter from us showing his authority to do this. His success of late is phenomenal. He has sold over 4,400 volumes in the past five years. The Lord is blessing his zeal with both still increasing wisdom and grace.]

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