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LETTERS FOR THE EDITOR SHOULD BE SENT TO ALLEGHENY, PA., U.S.A.
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SILENT SERMONS TO VISITORS.

Notice the statement above--"To Us the Scriptures Clearly Teach." We have this printed on fine card board, rounded corners, size 11 x 14 inches, with silk cord. This should hang prominently in all of your homes. We have also imported a new silver text card with motto for 1901, and one of another style. We propose supplying the three securely packed in a tube, postpaid for 15 cents.

ONE DAY CONVENTIONS.

ON SUNDAY, APRIL 28, the Editor (D.V.) will address the friends at Indianapolis, Ind., at 10:30 A.M. and at 3 P.M., at Mansur Hall, N.E. corner of Alabama and Washington streets. Social meetings will precede the above addresses, and an evening program will be announced. We will make a day of it! Refreshments can be secured nearby the hall. A Cincinnati cheap excursion for the day is advertised.

ON SUNDAY, MAY 12, the Editor (D.V.) will address the friends at Altoona, Pa., at 3 P.M., at Opera House and at 7:30 P.M., as may then be announced.

These are merely local conventions, and friends from great distances are not expected, tho all coming in the name and spirit of our Lord will be heartily welcomed.

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"LOVEST THOU ME MORE THAN THESE?"

--JOHN 21:15-22.--MAY 5.--

WE NOW come to our Lord's fifth manifestation of himself after his resurrection--some would say the seventh, not counting, as we do, that our Lord's manifestation to Mary was the same referred to in Matthew as his appearance to "the women," and that his showing himself to Peter was in the walk to Emmaus. All of these manifestations, whether we count them four or six, occurred within the first eight days after our Lord's resurrection--on the two first-days or Sundays, and were in or near Jerusalem. What we designate the fifth appearance was in another part of the country altogether--in Galilee--and was probably at least two weeks later. No account is given of the doings of the apostles in the interim, but we can surmise them. They probably waited in expectation at Jerusalem over the third and possibly over the fourth Sunday after the resurrection, and were disappointed that our Lord made no further manifestation. They then remembered, perhaps, the message which Jesus had sent by Mary, that he would meet them in Galilee.

Having no business further at Jerusalem, and their Master and leader having thus disappeared, "changed," so that altho they believed him to be no longer dead he was invisible to them except as he would appear for

a few moments talking to them, and again disappear indefinitely, they were at a loss what to do, and decided to return to their home country on the Sea of Galilee. More than this, as active men in the prime of life, they must be doing. Several of them had been fishermen, and Jesus had called them from their nets to be "fishers of men," and they had left all to follow him; but now they could no longer follow him. Everything was changed when he was changed, so far as they could see. They could not carry on the work longer, for what could they preach? How could they tell others of their hopes in a King who had been crucified, and whom they, altho he was risen, could no longer see nor point out to others? They had not yet received their new commission; nor were they quite ready for it.

It is not surprising that under these circumstances seven of them with one consent, under the lead of Peter, determined to reengage in the fishing business. This was the one business in which they had experience, and that only three years before. They fished with nets, and the habit seems to have been to do the fishing at night. This was the very occasion Jesus was waiting for. He wished the disciples to reach the extremity of thinking and reasoning on the matter of his resurrection, and what they should now do, in order that they might be prepared to receive definitely and profitably the instructions he had to give respecting their future course. The reactionary tendency to turn from preaching to the fishing business would be sure to come; and he considered it expedient that it should come while he was with them, that they might be profited to the utmost in respect to it. Now that they had reembarked in the fishing business the time had come for our Lord to demonstrate to them two things: (1) That he had a mission for them to perform in connection with the fishing for men which they had not yet accomplished, and which his death and resurrection would not interfere with, but rather stimulate and make really effective. (2) It would enable him to demonstrate in a most practical manner that the divine power by which he had hitherto provided for their necessities, and had at times fed multitudes, was still his, and would be continually exercised in their interest if they would continue to obey him.

It is interesting for us to note thus that while our Lord was invisible to the disciples they were visible to

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him, and all of their plans, arrangements and doings were fully known to him; and he was ready to take advantage of every circumstance and to make all things work together for their good. Thus, by miraculous power exercised in some manner unknown to us, he hindered fish from going into their nets that night. They, not knowing the true situation, were no doubt

greatly disappointed, grieved, vexed, at their poor success, and perhaps classed it as a part of failure and tribulation which had in some respects followed them ever since they had espoused the cause of Jesus. And there is a lesson here for each and all of the Lord's people today: We know not what is for our highest welfare. Sometimes those things which we crave and desire to grasp, considering them to be good, might really be to our disadvantage. Blessed are they who are able by faith to pierce the gloom of every trial and difficulty and perplexity, and to realize that "The Lord knoweth them that are his," and that he is causing all things to work together for their good. So it was with the apostles: their disappointment became a channel of blessed instruction.

In the dawn of the morning Jesus appeared to them as a man, standing on the seashore. He called out to them to inquire if they had any fish, as tho he would purchase. They replied that they had toiled all night and caught nothing. The stranger then suggested that they cast the net on the other side of the ship, and so humbled were they by their disappointment that they did not stop to argue the question and to declare that they were old experienced fishermen, and that they did not know if he had any experience whatever; they merely concluded that as they had been lifting and casting the net all night they might just as well do it again, and thus demonstrate to the stranger that there were no fish in that vicinity. But behold! immediately the net filled with great fish, so that these seven strong men (Peter, Thomas, James, John, Nathanael, and two others whose names are not given) were unable to draw it, and were obliged to drag it ashore.

Immediately the disciples grasped the thought that the stranger on the shore was Jesus, and none of them more quickly than loving John. The devoted and impulsive Peter whose heart still burned as he remembered the Lord's words, and perhaps as he remembered also his own weaknesses in connection with our Lord's last night of earth-life, could not wait for the boat to take him to the shore, but swam,--apparently fearing lest the Master should disappear again before he would have another opportunity to see and converse with him. When the disciples got to shore with their netful of fish they found, not only Jesus, but a fire and fish thereon already cooked. Here they had the lesson that under the Lord's care and supervision they could either be successful or unsuccessful in the fish business, and that he had the power, not only to give them fish in the ordinary way, but to provide cooked fish by miraculous power if it better served his purpose so to do.

They breakfasted with Jesus, for they knew him --not by any marks of nails, but by the miracle which he had performed. We read rather peculiarly, "None

of them durst ask him, knowing it was the Lord;" they were so sure that it was he that they could not think of even seeming to question the fact by inquiry. The conversation while they breakfasted is not recorded, the Evangelist coming directly to the important words by our Lord addressed to Peter, the senior and leader of this new fish-business partnership. He addressed Peter, not as he had been accustomed, by his new name, Peter, but by his old name, Simon, possibly as an intimation to Peter that he had not manifested in the last few days the rock-like qualities implied in his surname, and was now inclined to leave the work for the Church for secular business. And the inquiry was most pointed, "Lovest thou me more than these?"--boats, nets, fishing tackle, etc.? You started out to be my disciple, and now I ask the question, In which place is your heart--with me in the service of the Kingdom, or in the fish business? Peter's answer was prompt, "Lord, thou knowest that

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I love thee." Jesus responded then, "Feed my lambs" --my little ones--instead of longer following the fish business. Then Jesus said the second time the same thing, and Peter made the same reply, and then our Lord answered, "Take care of my sheep"--give your thought, attention, care, to them, rather than to these fishing implements, boats, etc. Jesus asked him the third time the same question. Peter was grieved with this: it seemed to imply doubt on the Lord's part, and perhaps the third time reminded him that he had denied the Lord three times, and that now the Lord was requiring him three times to confess his love for him. It touched a very tender spot in Peter's heart and experiences, and we may be sure that it was not done by our Lord, even in this delicate manner, with a view merely to pain Peter, but with a view to his blessing, his profit. Peter's confession this time was still stronger: "Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep."

It is worthy of notice that our Lord's words on these three occasions were not exactly the same altho the Common Version so represents them. In the New Testament Greek two words are used for "love," agapee and phileo. When our Lord said "lovest" in the first two inquiries, he used the former word, agapas, which signifies kind love in its strongest, purest and most disinterested

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form; but in his third inquiry our Lord used the other form, phileis, which signifies attachment, duty-love, the obligatory love such as relatives bear toward each other, even when the other, deeper, love is lacking. Peter in all of his answers uses the latter form of

the word, thus asseverating his personal attachment and devotion to the Lord, but, in view of recent experiences, he refrained from claiming the highest love for which our Lord inquired. This humility was an excellent sign, as showing that Peter had learned a needed lesson and had ceased to boast, but rather to fear his own weakness. Our Lord's use the third time of the word indicating duty-love grieved Peter specially because by changing the word he implied--Are you sure that you have even the duty-love, Peter? This discrimination as between these two words is borne out by other uses of the same in the New Testament.

DUTY-LOVE (PHILEO) ILLUSTRATED.

"He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.--Matt. 10:37.

Duty-love to our family relatives is right, but it must not equal our duty-love toward the Lord, else we can never follow him as "overcomers."

"He that loveth his life shall lose it."--John 12:25.

It is our duty to love life, in the sense of appreciating it and being unwilling to destroy it or waste it foolishly; but he who has become Christ's disciple and who is pledged to walk in his footsteps even unto death is to remember that he has already surrendered his life as a man, exchanging it for the hope of life as a "new creature," a spiritual being. He is no longer to be controlled by phileo or duty-love toward earthly life, but, moved by agapee love, he is to willingly lay down his natural life in the service of God--"for the brethren."

"For the Father himself loveth you, BECAUSE ye have loved me."--John 16:27.

In both of these cases phileo signifies duty-love. This was the highest form of love the disciples as a whole could as yet appreciate, as Peter testified. And the Father's love for them was the same duty-love: the disciples had not yet received the holy spirit and its agapee or higher disinterested love and its character, and hence the Father could not love them for themselves but exercised a duty-love toward them merely because they had attained a duty-love toward Christ and had become his friends and disciples.

"If ye were of the world, the world would love his own."--John 15:19.

Phileo or duty-love is exercised by the worldly parent and child and neighbor on the selfish basis--"his own."

"If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ let him be Anathema Maranatha [--he shall be accursed or condemned to the Second Death when the Lord comes]."
--1 Cor. 16:22.

An appreciation of the work of Christ will be expected of all when brought to a knowledge of the salvation which God has provided in him: and whoever refuses to respond in phileo or duty-love will be cut off from life early in the Millennial reign. But those who exercise the phileo or duty-love will be expected to press forward and to attain the "mark" of agapee love, true, disinterested character love,--if they would attain life everlasting. Thank God that the present life does not close the door of opportunity to any that have never known phileo or duty-love, nor to many who have known this, but have not yet attained agapee.

"Love of money," "lovers of their own selves," "loveth to have preeminence," "lovers of pleasure," "lover of hospitality," and friend, are from phileo, duty-love or a love which has a cause or demand upon it. Peter exhorts that we add to brotherly kindness (phileo) the next and higher grade of disinterested love--agapee.-- 2 Pet. 1:7.

DISINTERESTED LOVE (AGAPEE) ILLUSTRATED.

"God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son."--John 3:16.

The love prompting man's redemption was not phileo or duty-love, for God had not wronged his creature in the sentence of death; nor had man ever done anything for his Creator which could put the latter under obligation or duty-love in return. God's love prompting to our redemption was agapee, or disinterested charity, benevolence, love.

"God commandeth his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for the ungodly."-- Rom. 5:8.

This love (agapee) which God exemplified is the kind he sets before us as the highest standard or "mark" toward which we must run if we would gain the prize; --a mark which is impossible to our fallen flesh, but which is attainable by our renewed minds, wills, hearts. This standard is expressed in the words:--

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul, mind, strength; and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."--Luke 10:27; Rom. 3:9.

"The end of the commandment is love."-- 1 Tim. 1:5.

That is to say, the object of all instruction and discipline on God's part is to bring us to this character likeness to himself represented in this word agapee-- love; for "God is love [agapee], and he that dwelleth in love [agapee] dwelleth in God and God in him."-- 1 John 4:16.

We are to recognize as "brethren" those who have only the phileo degree of duty-love, as Paul did when he wrote, "Greet [for me] all that love [phileo] us in the faith" (Titus 3:15); but we are to see to it that we "love the brotherhood" (1 Pet. 2:17) with agapee or higher love, which counts not present life precious and to be saved, but gladly lays down life for the brethren --in daily and hourly sacrifices of time and money and all earthly interests on their behalf.--1 John 3:16.

Peter contrasts the two loves in one verse, saying, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the spirit unto [the extent of] unfeigned love [phileo] of the brethren, see that ye [go on to] love [agapee] one another with a pure heart, fervently."-- 1 Pet. 1:22.

"Love [agapee] worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love [agapee] is the fulfilling of the Law."-- Rom. 13:10.

It is agapee that is mistranslated "charity" in 1 Cor. 8:1 --"Knowledge puffeth up, but agapee buildeth up."

It is agapee that is misrendered "charity" in the Apostle's great discourse on love in 1 Cor. 13:1,2,3,4,8,13; 14:1. Here he styles agapee love the principal thing of Christian character, the crown of all Christian graces, telling us that without it all sacrifices and self-denials would be valueless in God's esteem, while with it as the inspiring motive our feeblest efforts are acceptable through Christ.

PETER WISELY AND GENTLY REPROVED.

So far as the record shows these questions respecting his present love were the only reproof our Lord gave Peter on account of his temporary deflection and denial of his cause; and here we have a lesson which many of the Lord's people will do well to lay closely to heart. Many feel as tho they must exact from a brother or a sister a very decided apology for any act of discourtesy, even tho much less important than Peter's misdeed. Let us learn well this lesson of reproving others very gently, very considerately, kindly, by a hint rather than by a direct charge and detail of the wrong--by an enquiry respecting the present condition of their hearts, rather than respecting a former condition, in which we know that they have erred. We are to be less careful for the punishments that will follow wrongdoings than for the recovery of the erring one out of the error of his way. We are not to attempt to judge and to punish one another for misdeeds, but rather to remember that all this is in the hands of the Lord;--we are not in any sense of the word to avenge ourselves or to give a chastisement or recompense for evil. This is not to be understood as annulling parental obligation to judging

and chastening children; tho the principle of love is to have full control there also, to the extent of our judgment. We are to have kindness, love and benevolence toward all, especially toward those who are followers of Jesus. As for Peter and his denial of the Lord, and as

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to the offences which may come to us through brethren, we may know that under divine providence some corrective penalty or discipline, direct or indirect, always follows; but we are not to attempt to inflict those penalties, nor to impress a condemnation, upon those who are in error and who realize their error, but rather to sympathize with them wisely, by helping them to learn the good lessons.

On the other hand, however, we would all have considered it a noble act on Peter's part had he fallen at our Lord's feet at his first opportunity and entreated his forgiveness for the weaknesses of the past. We would have loved and honored him the more for so hearty a manifestation of his repentance: indeed, altho the account does not so state, he may have done this. And brethren who at any time trespass upon the rights, interests or feelings of others, however unintentionally, should be prompt and hearty in their apologies; even tho brethren filled with agapee would not demand this as a condition of fellowship.

In replying to Peter our Lord uses three different Greek words in his three different exhortations: the first time he exhorts him to feed the lambs; the second time to care for or tend the sheep; the third time to feed the weak or delicate sheep. This gives us three views of the Lord's flock. There are the young, the beginners, the lambs, the babes in Christ, undeveloped in Christian character, and who need special feeding with the truth,--"the milk of the Word." Secondly, there are the more matured sheep of the Lord's flock, of riper knowledge and character, who have learned to attend to their own feeding upon the precious truth, but who, nevertheless, need tending or guidance, direction, oversight. Thirdly, there are the weak sheep, who for the time ought to be strong, ought to be able to feed themselves upon the bounties which the Lord has graciously provided in his Word, but who, through weaknesses of the flesh, or besetments, or bad provender, or some reason, have not made progress, and are therefore weak in the faith. These are to be fed, cared for. And all of these matters are parts of a bishop's or overseer's duty in the Lord's flock.

While the Lord's words were addressed specially to Peter, as the leader of the group, undoubtedly the instructions were meant also for all of the "eleven," for the apostles were all bishops, all caretakers of the Lord's flock. And the same message is applicable, tho not in the same degree, to all ministers of the truth today;

whoever, by the grace of God, is placed in a position of opportunity to feed the Lord's flock should

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consider it one of the highest privileges of life, and should gladly lay aside every weight and hindrance, that he might thoroughly enjoy and perform this service. Thus the Apostle said to the elders at Ephesus, "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the holy spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God."--Acts 20:28.

These three classes of the Lord's flock are to be found today: the young, the advanced and strong, and the weak and delicate, who need special assistance. Of this latter class many today are in Babylon, and need the helping hand which the Lord's people are able to extend to them--they are weak, impoverished through lack of nourishment, through a famine, not of bread nor of water, but for hearing of the word of the Lord. (Amos 8:11.) They have been hearing the words of human theory and "tradition of the elders" for a long time, and have been starving upon its inconsistencies; and so, wherever found, they are hungering and thirsting for the truth, and need that Peter and all of the Lord's followers shall do with their might what they are able to do to deliver such from the chains of error and darkness by which they are held--to liberate them and bring them in contact with the spiritual food which the heavenly Father is now so abundantly supplying.

In view of Peter's prompt and unhesitating answers respecting his filial or duty-love, the Lord gave a prophecy indicating that he would indeed be faithful to the last; and implying that he would be a martyr by crucifixion, his hands being extended. And tradition tells us that Peter was faithful even unto death, and that being ordered to be put to death by crucifixion by Nero, at his own request he was executed head downward, as being unworthy, according to his own statement, to be crucified as was his Lord.

Our Lord's words, "Follow me," referred not merely to a spiritual following, but he walked along the shore of the sea, the disciples following. Peter having heard the Lord's prophetic declaration respecting himself, seeing John near, inquired respecting his future --What will he do? What will happen to him? Will he be faithful unto death, and will he also be a martyr? Our Lord's refusal to answer may be considered rather in the light of a reproof to Peter and a lesson to us all. We are not to question divine providence, but rather to submit ourselves thereto. It seems to be a trait of human nature to think of companionship even in trouble, persecution, etc., and many, like Peter, have wondered why they should have trials and difficulties different from those which came upon some others of the Lord's flock. The Master's answer to Peter

is his answer to all such: "What is that to thee? Follow thou me." Each of us should learn the lesson of reliance upon the Lord's wisdom in all of our affairs, whether he has particularly indicated them or left them still obscure. We may know of his love and wisdom and power, and may trust him where we cannot trace him, and be contented whatever lot we see, since we know it is his hand that it is leading.

"IF I WILL THAT HE TARRY TILL I COME."

These our Lord's words respecting John, seem to have raised the suggestion in the minds of the disciples that John would not die--that while the others would die he would remain alive until the second coming of Christ. But John himself tells us that Jesus said nothing of this kind; it was purely an inference on the part of the disciples. We may see in John a figure of some of the Church living in the end of the Gospel age--unto the second presence of the Lord. John is not alive, but a class whom he represented has continued and still remains and will then be "changed," etc. Let us who are privileged to remain to this time of favor and blessing and enlightenment give glory to the Lord, and see to it that the loving disposition of John is manifested in us, and also his energy, his zeal; for while he is called the loving disciple we are to remember also that he was, because of his impetuous zeal, styled, with his brother, Boanerges--sons of thunder. Let us be full of energy, full of sacrifices which love prompts, that we may glorify our Lord in our bodies and spirits which are his. To this end it will be well that we remember the Lord's words, which applied to the entire seven as well as to Peter, tho he was spokesman for the entire number: "Lovest thou me more than these?" The same question arises with all of the Lord's people today. It is necessary that we have more or less contact with the world, with business, with home duties, with social amenities, etc., and the question is, How shall we discharge our duties, balancing them with our duties toward the Lord, as "new creatures," his "royal priesthood"? Shall the Lord see that we love the earthly things better than him? If so, he declares that we are not worthy of him, and he will not recognize us as members of his Bride. He will have in that select little flock only such as love him supremely--more than they love houses or lands, husbands or wives, or children, or any earthly thing.--Matt. 10:37.

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--MATT. 28:16-28.--MAY 12.--

"Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world [age]."

OUR Lord's next manifestation to his disciples was near the close of the forty days of his invisible presence after his resurrection. It was, according to our reckoning, the sixth occasion of the kind, and much more marked in some respects than previous ones, for, in common with others, we believe that at this time our Lord manifested himself not only to the eleven apostles mentioned in our lesson, but also to the whole multitude of believers whom the Apostle Paul mentions as being "over five hundred brethren." (1 Cor. 15:6.) This meeting, we are informed, was by special appointment of time and place; hence there was an opportunity for all the deeply interested ones to be gathered together. Dr. Bordman suggests some of those composing

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this number to have been "the eleven apostles; the seventy evangelists; Mary of Nazareth; Mary of Magdala; Mary of Bethany; Mary the wife of Cleophas; Mary the mother of John Mark; Martha, and Joanna and Susanna, and the woman of Jacob's Well; Peter's wife's mother and the impotent man of Bethsaida; the centurion of Capernaum and the widow of Nain; the penitent woman of Simon's feast and the woman healed on the way; Jairus and his daughter and Bartimeus; the Syro-Phoenician woman, and the deaf mute of Decapolis; the grateful leper of Samaria and the woman bound with the spirit of infirmity; Zacchaeus and Lazarus, whom he raised from the dead; and the blind and deaf and mute and halt and palsied and lunatic whom he had healed; and Joseph and Nicodemus." We would certainly expect these to be amongst our Lord's friends who had great confidence in him, and who, after experiencing great disappointment respecting his death would have great hopes enkindled in their hearts through the reports of the apostles of his resurrection and his manifestations to them.

Wise was the plan which gave to his followers the "infallible proofs" of his resurrection, and the instructions necessary to appreciation of the same, in so gradual a manner as we have seen. Three manifestations on the day of our Lord's resurrection; one a week later, on the eighth day; the fifth probably two weeks later on the 22nd day after his resurrection, and now the sixth manifestation, probably ten days after that, about the thirty-second day. Thus gradually the two lessons necessary were taught: (1), the fact of our Lord's resurrection, that he was no longer dead but

alive; and (2) that he was "changed," that he was no longer "the man Christ Jesus," but that he was now "a quickening spirit," manifesting the powers and attributes which they knew belonged to spirit beings --invisibility and power to appear in various forms as a man--power to come and go as the wind, none knowing whence he came or whither he went.--John 3:8.

We note the wisdom manifested in the order of the appearances also: first to Mary, who seems to have been a woman full of faith as well as full of zeal, and one whose word would have influence with the apostles; next Peter, a leader amongst them, was convinced; then the remainder of the eleven, except Thomas, who doubted; then the eleven, Thomas included, and perhaps some of the women with them, not mentioned; then what would seem to them the long interim of non-appearance, in which some of them started back again to the fishing business; then the convincing of these that the risen Lord had all the power that he ever possessed, and was as able to be with them and to guide them and to provide for their necessities as when he was a man, and with them daily in the flesh; then the instruction of them that their mission should still be to feed his sheep and his lambs; and his appointment for this general meeting, which would be rendered doubly forceful by reason of its previous appointment.

The time had come; the friends of Jesus were gathered; for nearly five weeks they had been studying the great lessons of divine providence connected with the death and resurrection of the Lord, and how all these could happen to him and he still be the promised Messiah--yea, as he explained, how all these things were necessary to him in order that he might be the Messiah and accomplish all the great and wonderful work predicted in Holy Writ--how he must first suffer to redeem mankind, before, as the King of Glory, he should be fully authorized and empowered to bless them with eternal life and all the privileges and blessings proper to the redeemed and reconciled.

When they saw him they worshiped him, "but some doubted." The ones who doubted we cannot reasonably suppose to have been any of the eleven apostles, for they were fully satisfied, thoroughly convinced, and had so expressed themselves previously. Those who doubted must, we think, have been of the "five hundred brethren" present at this appointed meeting, who had had no previous intercourse with him since his resurrection, and some of whom, we may reasonably suppose, were much weaker in the faith than the apostles and the special friends already communed with. The statement that "some doubted" is an evidence of the candor of the Evangelist's record. It shows us, too, that the Lord's followers were not over credulous, but rather disposed to sift and weigh the evidences presented, and the subsequent

zeal, energy and self-sacrificing spirit of those who believed gives us abundant evidence of the sincerity of their convictions respecting our Lord's resurrection, which they as well as we recognize to be the very keystone of our faith in him. If Christ be not risen our faith is vain and we are yet in our sins.--

1 Cor. 15:17.

When our Lord appeared his message was the very one they needed to have impressed, and which he had been to some extent impressing at his previous appearances. It was that all power in heaven and in earth had been given unto him. We are not to understand by this that the Father had abdicated or surrendered any of his own power or authority, but rather are to remember that, as the Apostle Paul elsewhere states, in any such declaration the Father is always excepted. (1 Cor. 15:27.) Nor are we to understand that our Lord meant that power and authority were given him to set aside or overrule or violate any feature of the

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divine law and plan. We are rather to understand his words to mean this: I came into the world to do the Father's will, and by manifesting my obedience to that will, and fulfilling its demands, to not only redeem mankind from the sentence of death through Adam, but also to secure to myself the title and authority promised of the Father to belong to the Messiah. From the time I made my consecration I was reckoned to be the Messiah, but my Messiahship depended upon my faithfulness even unto death--even the death of the cross. I was faithful in this, and as a reward the Father has raised me up from the dead, a partaker of the divine nature, and the heir of all the gracious promises and blessings before mentioned as pertaining to Messiah. All this Messianic power and authority that was once mine reckonedly or prospectively is now mine actually; for I have finished the work which the Father gave me to do, and that acceptably; and its acceptance has been manifested in my resurrection to my present condition of spiritual glory and power.-- Acts 17:31.

"Therefore go ye, disciple all nations." Their commission to go and spread him as Messiah was based on the fact that the Father had accepted his work, finished at Calvary, and had recognized him with full authority as Messiah, by his resurrection from the dead: therefore we may preach Jesus, the power of God and the channel of all his promised mercies and blessings to all who have "an ear to hear," to all nations, and not, as previously, to the Jewish nation only.

Following the assurance of his authority as the Messiah, our Lord, addressing especially the eleven apostles, but indirectly, with and through them, addressing all his followers, gave them and us the great

commission under which we, his people, have since been operating. It might be termed the ordination of his apostles and all his followers as preachers, ambassadors, members of the royal priesthood, speaking and teaching in the name of the Master, the fully empowered Messiah. The commission divides itself into three parts: (1) "Make disciples of all nations;" (2) "baptizing them;" (3) "teaching them." The word teach, in the Common Version (vs. 19) is not from the same Greek word rendered "teach" in vs. 20. The word in vs. 19 signifies proselytizing or making disciples of. The word "teach" in vs. 20 signifies instruct.

A wrong thought is derived from this text by many students of the Scriptures, when they consider it to mean, Go and convert all nations. This is not the thought, but rather, Go ye and gather converts from all nations, and baptize them and teach them, etc. This view is in accord with our Master's declaration on other occasions, in which he testified that they would not be converted at his second coming, but quite the reverse: "When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" This interpretation is in harmony with our Lord's statement in Matt. 24:14, "This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all the nations; and then shall the end come." Whoever gets the wrong thought respecting the commission is apt to take the wrong action in his endeavor to comply with it. Those who have concluded that the Lord intended the conversion of the world are led to various subterfuges, both in mind and in conduct, in order to attempt to carry out the commission they misunderstand. This is leading some at the present time to ignore the Scriptural definition of the terms of membership in Christ's Kingdom --to lower the standard both of faith and of conduct, in order to admit a larger proportion of the human family and in order to, if possible, convince themselves and others that the world is growing better and being converted. Some have not only concluded that the preaching of the cross of Christ and faith in the redemption is unnecessary but have even gone further than this, and have claimed that even a historical knowledge of Christ is unnecessary, and that heathen religions are to be esteemed as part of the preaching of the Gospel, and that the heathen obedience to their religious customs is to be esteemed as obedience to the Gospel. Thus more or less false views of the commission are leading astray many who see no hope in any other way of ever attaining to that which our Lord commissioned nearly nineteen centuries ago, and which otherwise they would feel has thus far failed most miserably, and has no hope of ever being accomplished.

On the other hand we hold that the commission rightly read and understood has been fulfilled; that the message of Christ and the Kingdom has been proclaimed, directly or indirectly, with more or with less force and energy, in every nation under heaven, and that as a result some from every nation have been made disciples; and that incidentally a "witness" has been given to all the peoples of the earth respecting the redemption and the divine provision for salvation through the Redeemer. Of these disciples gathered out of all nations by the message of the Lord a "little flock" will be found to whom it will be the Father's good pleasure to give the Kingdom, in joint-heirship with Jesus in glory as the Seed of Abraham, through whom, in the Millennial age to follow this, all the families of the earth shall be blessed. From this standpoint only can our Lord's commission be properly appreciated and its fulfilment recognized.

DISCIPLING THE WORLD.

The work of the Evangelist comes first--
Go, make disciples of as many as will hear
your message. The word "disciple" signifies pupil,

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and those interested through the evangelist are only supposed to be pupils in the school of Christ, in the primary department. As they become instructed in righteousness their full consecration is in order, as represented in baptism--death to self and to the world--buried with Christ by baptism into his death. (Rom. 6:3-5.) Then comes the third step, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever Christ commanded. Any neglect of this commission and its order of procedure means comparative failure; and yet on every hand we see that its specific features are neglected. We find the majority of professed Christians giving the baptism first, in a wrong order as well as of a wrong kind. Secondly, they disciple them into sectarian denominations and make them members of these, and get them to consecrate their money and energies to these rather than to the Lord. Thirdly, having thus gotten them into sectarian bondage they neglect them, and go out after others, failing entirely to give them the "teaching" which the Lord indicates is necessary as a preparation for joint-heirship in his Kingdom--teaching respecting the divine character and plan, and the graces of the holy spirit and the necessity for rooting out the spirit of worldliness and selfishness, and developing the spirit of the Lord,--meekness, gentleness, patience, brotherly kindness, love.

To follow the Lord's instruction the Royal Priesthood

should first, when discipling, inform those who have ears to hear that they are sinners through the fall;--imperfect in thought, in word and in act; and consequently unacceptable to God and under sentence of death, extinction; but that God has made a provision for their rescue, and their return to harmony with him and to life everlasting: that Christ Jesus, in harmony with the Father's plan, paid the penalty of Adamic sin and condemnation, and thus purchased the whole race of Adam, and proposes to set at liberty all who obey him. That now he is offering release by faith to as many as have the hearing ear--"even as many as the Lord your God shall call," and that such as hear and accept the call may reckon themselves as "justified by faith," as having their sins covered, and as being thus reconciled to the Father through faith in Christ; and that now, if they become followers or disciples of Christ they may become joint-sacrificers with him, and by and by be made joint-heirs in his Kingdom, and its great work of blessing the world.

So many as are interested in the message will inquire the way by which they can attain this, and the answer must be that the full acceptance of discipleship must be indicated by a full consecration, heart, mind and body, to the Lord--even unto death; and that this submission of the will to the Lord is counted as a baptism, a burial, an immersion with him into death; and that as soon as they have performed this real baptism or immersion of the will they should submit themselves to an outward immersion in water, which would symbolize this, portraying their death and burial to self, to sin and to the world, and their resurrection to newness of life and conduct as members of the body of Christ.

They are to be urged to take this step of consecration unto death, not in their own strength or name, nor in the name of their instructor; but are to be pointed to the fact that this course is authorized by the Father, by the Son and by the Holy Spirit. It is thus to be done "in the name of" or by the authority of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and not in the name of a sect or denomination or any human teacher. It is a mistake on the part of some to consider this text to mean that converts are to be baptized into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. On the contrary the Apostle distinctly declares, that we are baptized into Christ as members of his body.--Rom. 6:3-5.*

Those who go thus far, who respond to the preaching of the Gospel, and inquire concerning the way, the truth and the life, and who, with true repentance from sin and contrition of heart, desire to become disciples of Christ, and who then take this step of consecration, are baptized thereby into the Church, "the body of Christ"--not the Baptist Church nor any other human institution, but the one true Church, the Church of the living God, whose names are written in heaven. (Heb. 12:23.)

They need not that their names should be written in any earthly roll or register. The names of such, we are told, are written in the Lamb's book of life, and if they are faithful to their covenant he will not blot out their names, he assures us. The seal of their acceptance is the holy spirit, whose leadings and instructions and marks of character become more and more discernible to them and to others daily, as they thereafter seek to walk in the footsteps of Jesus.

But still they will need instruction: in fact, all that has gone before in their Christian experience has merely prepared them to receive instruction; and when they have reached the condition of justification by faith, and then of sanctification (consecration to the Lord, baptism), they have merely become "babes in Christ." As such they are ready for spiritual food, and should first be fed with the sincere milk of the Word, that they may grow thereby, and as they make progress the Lord himself stands pledged to it that they shall have "meat in due season," and as they are able to bear it the "strong meat" which belongs to them that are developed, strong in the Lord and in

*See our issue of June 15, 1893, "Baptism and Its Import," a sample copy of which will be loaned free upon request with promise to return it.

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the power of his might, "overcomers," soldiers of Christ, having on his armor and fighting a good fight, lifting high the royal banner, and active in helping others to attain the same conditions.

To Satan, our wily foe, we must credit the perversion of this great commission, so explicitly stated; making it meaningless as we have seen: first by making it mean the conversion of the world; second, by destroying the real idea of baptism; third, by confusing the Lord's people as to the matter of discipling, and to make them think that it is gathering membership into sectarian bundles; fourth, to make them think that this is all that is necessary, and that teaching in the Church is a waste of time, which should be devoted to what the Adversary calls "saving souls," but what in reality is an endeavor to gather unregenerate people into sectarian systems and to delude them into thinking that they are in any sense of the word members of the true Church of Christ, and saved; fifth, by misleading those whom he cannot thus delude, but who realize that there is to be a growth in grace and in knowledge, into a misunderstanding of the Apostle's statement (mistranslated in our Common Version), "The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man

teach you."--1 John 2:20,27.

Under this last delusion many are turned aside from the instruction which the Lord designs should be given through teachers whom he would raise up--turned aside to vagaries, to dreams and imaginations and misinterpretations of Scripture which they fancy are whispered to them by the holy spirit, but which frequently give evidence of being the suggestions either of their own minds or of the fallen angels.

Let us, as the Lord's people, seeking for the old paths, note well the Master's instruction in this connection, and let each one of us who seeks to serve his cause labor exactly along the lines here marked out--not thinking that his own imperfect judgment or that of fellow-mortals is superior to the Lord's, but to the contrary, that the Lord, the Head of the Church, alone was competent to give the proper commission which must be followed implicitly.

That our Lord gave this commission, not merely to the apostles but to all who should believe on him through their word, is clearly shown by the words with which he closed the commission,--"Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age." The apostles did not live to the end of the age, and hence the Lord's words signify that he will be with all of his followers who avail themselves of his commission, and who endeavor to present his message to those who have ears to hear out of all nations. He of course did not mean that he would be personally present with them, for he had already told them that personally he would go away, and that personally he would come again at the end of the age (John 14:2), and his words are not to be understood as contradictory. His meaning in

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the present instance evidently was that he would supervise their work, he would be the real head of the Church, he would oversee all of their affairs, he would be with them in the sense of supporting and guiding and counselling those who would walk in his way and proclaim his message--and in proportion as they were faithful to the charge. This assurance of the Lord's presence was intended to give the apostles courage for the work he was committing to them. While he was with them in the flesh they merely followed his direction, and as soon as he was smitten they felt as sheep having no shepherd, and now he was going away, but he wished them to realize that his power would be with them and his supervising guidance of their affairs would be granted them, as surely as while he was with them in the flesh--tho apparent only to the eye of faith. According to their faith it should be unto them a strength, a power.

And all the way down through the age the Lord's people have similarly been required to walk by faith

and not by sight, and the lesson no doubt has been valuable to them in spiritual upbuilding, much more so than had he remained in the flesh with us. And if the thought of the Lord's spiritual supervision of his work was to be a source of encouragement and strength to those who would attempt to teach in his name all through the age, much more may we of the present time realize his actual presence in the harvest of this Gospel age, altho we see him with no other than the eye of faith, yet, believing, we have joy unspeakable and strength and courage for the work. He is with us in the harvest work as he was with the apostles in the sowing of the seed.

Surely he who was careful to supervise the sowing work is not less interested and careful in respect to the reaping. Let us then thrust in the sickle of truth with energy and courage, remembering that we serve the Lord Christ, remembering that we are not responsible for the harvest but merely for our energy in gathering what ripe "wheat" we can find. If the labor be great for the finding of few grains of ripe wheat we are to rejoice the more in those we do find, and learn to love and appreciate the more that which is scarce and precious. Let us remember, too, while using all the wisdom we can in this service, that the Lord's object in giving us a share in his work is not so much what we can accomplish as in the blessing that the labor will bring upon us. This will be an encouraging thought to the dear ones who are engaged in the "Volunteer" work; and if they find many discouragements and but

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small results the reflection that the Master knoweth them that are his, and that he appreciates every sincere effort made to serve his cause and to lay down our lives on behalf of the brethren, will give courage and strength to those who otherwise might faint by the way.

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INTERESTING QUERIES ANSWERED.

IS FAITH THE GIFT OF GOD?

Question.--I have always considered that faith is what each individual must personally exercise and develop, but according to Romans 12:3 it would seem that this is something we get in a measure at least from God. Can God impart what he himself does not possess? In what way, then, does God give us a measure of

faith? God having told us a truth in his Word, is it not entirely a matter resting with us as to whether or not we have confidence in it--have faith in it? "Faith cometh by hearing of the Word."

Answer.--The word here rendered "faith" (Rom. 12:3) is from the Greek *pistis*, otherwise translated fidelity, assurance. As you say, we have much to do with our own faith and assurance and exercise a certain amount of it before we are begotten of the spirit at all, else we could not be justified by faith, for justification precedes our presenting of ourselves living sacrifices and our acceptance and begetting of the holy spirit. This much of faith is our own evidently, but after we have received of the Lord's spirit our faith may grow exceedingly, so that we will be able to walk by faith and not by sight--to accept the things that are not seen, and to sacrifice for them things that are seen and temporal. It may be said with propriety that the attitude which permits us to receive God's message of grace unto justification is all of God, in the sense that all of our blessings are from above--"every good and perfect gift." But it is especially true that faith in spiritual things which we develop after we are begotten of the holy spirit is the result of divine instruction; as it is written, "They shall be all taught of God," and the faith which will enable the consecrated ones to come off victors is not merely the natural faith with which they started, and with which they laid hold upon the Lord and justification, but a higher attainment of faith, the result of being taught of God through his Word and by his providence.

In the text under consideration our sober thinking must depend upon the time we have been under the Lord's instruction, and the degree of attention we have given to learning the lessons intended for the increase of our faith. This development is in the Scriptures spoken of as a "gift," also as a "fruit" of the spirit of God in us, and again as God's "workmanship," for by his truth and by his providences he is working in his children, not only to will but also to do his good pleasure--he is working in us faith, hope, joy, peace, love and all the graces which he approves; and if we will be obedient to his teaching and leading he will complete the work eventually and we shall be copies of his dear Son our Lord, and joint-inheritors with him.

WHO WERE THOSE SAINTS?

Question.--Who were those "saints," mentioned in Matt. 27:52,53, who arose and came into the holy city after the Lord's resurrection?

Answer.--(1) The persons mentioned could not have been the ancient worthies, perfected; because of

those the Apostle declares that "they without us [the Gospel Church] shall not be made perfect." In other words, their resurrection will not be due to take place until after the first resurrection of the Church has been completed.--Heb. 11:39,40.

(2) The class mentioned cannot have been saints of the Gospel Church, because the Church had not been selected--even the beginning of its acceptance with God had not yet taken place, and did not occur until the day of Pentecost, nearly fifty days later.

(3) The record seems to imply that the earthquake which occurred at the time of our Lord's death opened these graves--produced the awakening mentioned; but that the awakened ones tarried and did not manifest themselves in the city of Jerusalem until after our Lord's resurrection.

At very most it was an awakening similar to that which Lazarus experienced, and the daughter of Jairus, and the son of the widow of Nain, to die again, later on. We may be sure of this because the express declaration of 1 Cor. 15:20 is: "Christ is the first-fruits of them that slept"--the first one resurrected to perfection of being--the first one lifted completely out of death to perfection of life. The persons mentioned could have been no more than merely aroused from the slumber of death temporarily, and for some purpose of which we have no knowledge. We were at first inclined to doubt the genuineness of the passage, but find that a portion of it at least appears in the oldest Greek MSS. yet discovered.

SEVEN, SIXTY-TWO AND ONE EQUAL SEVENTY.

Question.--In Dan. 9:25,26 we have different periods given--seven weeks, and sixty-two weeks: some things are said to happen after the sixty-two

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weeks, and again something is said about one week, and altogether the matter seems to be confused. Please give us the harmonizing view.

Answer.--We must take into consideration the statement of vs. 24; viz., that the entire period under discussion is seventy weeks (symbolical). This is divided into three parts; viz., seven weeks, sixty-two weeks and one week--total, seventy. The first seven weeks marked specially events connected with the Temple; the end of the sixty-two weeks were to mark Messiah's appearance. But we are to remember that the sixty-two followed the seven, hence the end of the sixty-two weeks would be the end of the sixty-nine weeks as respects the whole, and the one week following would be the seventieth week. It was this

last, or seventieth week of years, that constituted the Jewish time of favor. It (seven years) began with our Lord's baptism, was marked in its middle with our Lord's crucifixion, and ended three and a half years later, after the ripe "wheat" of the Jewish age had been gathered into the Gospel age; and immediately at its close the Gospel message began to be sent to the Gentiles upon equal terms with the Jews,-- Cornelius being the first Gentile convert.

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MEMORIAL CELEBRATION REPORTS.

FROM every direction come reports of interesting and profitable commemorations of our dear Redeemer's death, on the anniversary of his "Last Supper," April 2nd. Our hearts have been greatly refreshed by these letters, and we doubt if the space of our columns could be better used than in holding of a "testimony meeting" and hearing from representatives of all classes of "brethren." We can, of course, only publish a small sample lot of letters--being forced to omit some of the very choicest. Up to time of going to press we have received 171 reports of meetings, the average attendance being twelve. Last year the average reported was ten.

Beginning at home: the Church at Allegheny (Pittsburg, across the river, included) had a most delightful season of fellowship and communion with the Lord and each other. The attendance was about 325, of whom about 310 partook of the elements representing our Lord's broken body and shed blood. The meeting opened at 7:30 p.m., with appropriate hymns, and prayers by various brethren, after which a short discourse was preached, setting forth prominent features of Israel's passover and showing that these were typical of Christ our Passover, slain for "the Church of the first-born whose names are written in heaven;" whose deliverance now means ultimately the deliverance of all who, when brought to a knowledge of the truth, shall demonstrate that they are God's people, "Israelites indeed," glad to escape the bondage of sin and Satan, typified by the Pharaoh of Egyptian taskmasters, etc.

We rejoiced together in the death of Jesus, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world, while deeply sympathizing with his sufferings on our behalf. We discussed the necessity of the "blood of sprinkling" upon the door-posts of our faith structure, and that none of the "first-born" could be safe from the "destroying angel"--the Second Death--except as

the saving blood was thus publicly confessed. We saw, too, that only by eating the lamb--appropriating the merits of Christ, feeding upon him in their hearts, can any have the strength needful for the journey out of Egypt, the world.

Then followed a reminder of how our Lord instituted the memorial of unleavened bread and fruit of the vine, to take the place of the literal lamb and to represent the antitype; and that only those who partake of the realities which these symbolize have part or lot with the Lord in the elect first-born class, now being sought. The secondary feature was also set forth;--that, as the Apostle explains, the one loaf represents the complete Church which must be broken, and the cup symbolizes the covenant of the Lord's people to share his sorrows and sufferings--death--with their Lord.--1 Cor. 10:15-17.

Then asking blessings of God upon the bread and the cup, as did our Lord, we partook of the emblems with reverent and grateful hearts and sang a hymn and went out--avoiding unnecessary conversation, and seeking to meditate upon the incidents connected with our Lord's betrayal and death; remembering his words to his faithful eleven, "Watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation," and applying the lesson to ourselves, remembering that this is always a time of special temptation and testing and for remembering our Lord's words to Peter: "Satan hath desired to have thee that he might sift thee as wheat;--but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." The same Lord is interested in each of us, and we, as members of his body, also pray one for another, and seek to assist one another in the narrow way. The Lord's scattered sheep everywhere were remembered in our petitions to the throne of grace, as we are sure we at Allegheny were remembered by you all.

The emblems were sent to 21 who were unable to be with us.

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"THIS DO IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME."

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DEAR BROTHER:--The Memorial supper was partaken of by 18 of the Wheeling Church. It was a very solemn occasion to each one, as we all realized its import. Yours in Christian love,

C. H. MURRIN,--West Virginia.

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DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--About fourteen of the friends met at my house last night to celebrate the Memorial Supper. We felt our Lord's presence and received a great spiritual uplifting. Brother Smith, formerly a Baptist clergyman, was with us, as was also his wife, two daughters and one son. They were very much impressed and said they had never understood it in the light in which it was presented to them last night. This same brother with his wife and two sons symbolized their consecration last Sunday, in Boston, by immersion. Altogether, from Lynn we had six immersed. The Church at Lynn is prospering wonderfully, and never since I have been here has the spiritual condition seemed so good. Tho in time past our work did not seem to bear much fruit, we have kept on, and now we can see the results. I had the pleasure of meeting a sister who came out of Babylon into the truth through a WATCH TOWER that I gave her while serving one of the out-of-town churches in the Volunteer service. The interest here seems to be increased and we have a good attendance at our services.

We received a great spiritual blessing during and since our dear Brother Samson's visit. I praise God for such men as he. Oh! it is blessed this fellowship with the saints and I can never thank our Father enough for it and for his wonderful goodness in bringing me into the light. I am enjoying the walk with my blessed Savior each day, and tho some times I pass through shadows I am striving to say "Thy will be done." We desire your prayers, dear Brother, that we may learn more perfectly the lesson our Heavenly Father would teach us.

The article in April 1. TOWER on "Patience" was just what I needed. May God bless and keep you in his love is the prayer of your brother in Christ,

C. P. BRIDGES,--Massachusetts.

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DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--The friends of Truth here observed the Lord's Memorial supper. We were blessed spiritually; and I think all felt the importance of the occasion, and that it was good to be there. There should have been 20 there, but on account of bad weather only 14 were present, 12 of them partaking of the supper.

Yours in the cause of our Master,

L. B. PETTIBONE,--Michigan.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--On Tuesday night

twenty-six of the brothers and sisters here met and commemorated the Last Supper of our Lord Jesus. All present seemed to realize more clearly than ever before the significance of this supper. We praise our dear Redeemer with all our hearts. First, for what that drinking of the cup (death) by our Lord accomplished for fallen man; and second, for his wondrous condescension in inviting those who believe on him unto justification of life, to partake with him in his sufferings. We look forward to the time when the loaf shall have been entirely broken, and when, if faithful, we shall have the great joy promised with our Lord in our Father's Kingdom. We praise our Heavenly Father for his guidance and grace during the past year, and with our sacrifices bound afresh to the altar we shall, by his grace, make greater efforts than ever before to serve him during the present year.

With much Christian love, yours in the Anointed,
ASA WALMSLEY,--Ontario.

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DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--The Churches of Bethlehem and Allentown, Pa., joined in "remembrance" of Him last evening (12 being present), and renewed their consecration to our blessed Lord. It was a profitable occasion to us all.

Your Brother in the glorious hope,
E. C. REMMELL,--Pennsylvania.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--I wish to inform you that the memorial last evening was a very impressive one, and one long to be remembered. There were 25 present, willing to accept and share our Redeemer's death and sufferings. With love in Christ,

S. J. ARNOLD,--Ohio.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--I just wanted to write you a few lines concerning the good meeting we had on the evening of April 2nd. We surely enjoyed a blessed season of commemoration of our Dear Savior's suffering and death. There were eleven present this year, about double what we have ever had before. We opened our meeting with hymns 23 and 13. Then we all knelt in prayer led by Bro. Towne. And tho we were saddened in recalling the scenes of Gethsemane, were rejoiced that we were ransomed and that Jesus was exalted to such a glorious position, "with all power in heaven and in earth." As some were present who had not met with us before on a like

occasion, a few words were said in explanation of the occasion of our meeting, why meet tonight, and what it takes the place of. Then concerning the emblematical bread and juice of the vine, and the real, we read from pages 69, 70 and 71, TOWER 1898. Then followed testimonies in which all took part, expressing our deep appreciation of what our dear Savior accomplished for us. After offering prayer for the blessed "bread from heaven" that was broken for us, the emblem was served. And after a few moments meditation and communion with the Master, and prayer for the precious blood represented by the cup, it was passed. In closing we sang hymn 276.

We seemed to realize more than ever what a great work the Lord did for us, our unworthiness without His merits, and the opportunity of ourselves now becoming a part of the great Sin-offering, laying down our lives jointly with Him, being broken with Him, that we might also have a part in His resurrection, and jointly reign with Him, in blessing all the families of the earth. We remembered you all at Allegheny and were very thankful for the "meat in due season" which the Lord has so graciously provided through you. We prayed the Lord's blessing might be with all the little companies through-out

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the world, met in memory of His broken body and spilt blood.

Praying the Lord's choicest blessing upon you and His harvest work, in which all the brethren and sisters here join.

Yours in His service, JOHN HOSKINS,--Illinois.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--We met last night to memorialize the sacrifice of our dear Redeemer. Six of the dear friends partook of the emblems. (Sister Herr met with the friends at Scranton.) It was a blessed meeting and a season of great refreshment to all. Yours in His love and service.

M. L. HERR,--Pennsylvania.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--On Tuesday evening of this week the Church at Buffalo celebrated the Lord's Supper at the home of Sister Eckhardt. The participants were only twelve, but, counting Christ's presence with us, of which we all felt assured, it made up the same number comprised in the little company

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who were present on that memorable occasion centuries ago, when our Saviour as a man celebrated the Passover with his disciples. We trust, however, that Judas was not represented.

Although few in number, each one seemed animated by the same Spirit, and I think all felt like saying with Paul,--"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world." I believe each one present was strengthened by that true Bread from Heaven, and that all departed with a stronger determination, if possible, to "run with patience the race which is set before us," and to "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling."

The Church here unite in expressing their Christian love to you. We all pray that the Father may strengthen and keep you, enabling you to give to his loved ones the "meat in due season."

With best wishes, I am your brother in Christ,
E. F. CRIST,--New York.

DEAR BROTHER:--Sister Black and I partook of the emblems with Sister Hasson, at her home. We had a blessed season, entering into fellowship, in our thoughts and prayers, with the different groups and single celebrants all over the field. As a result we hope to take up our work with added zeal and courage.

Your brother in the blessed hope,
W. W. BLACK,--Massachusetts.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--Have just concluded Memorial service this evening. Myself and wife only. We have had a profitable hour and have been greatly blessed, as I hope many of the little circles of the household have been this evening. We purposed going to Clifton to meet the friends there for this occasion, but snow storm and muddy roads rendered it out of the question. Please accept our very kind regards and believe us to be yours in Christ,

F. J. & E. CHAPMAN,--Kansas.

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DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--Our celebration of the Memorial in Adrian, Mich., was an occasion of much, and we think, deep and lasting blessing. As we strove to appreciate more fully the significance of the celebration, the depth and breadth of the great At-one-ment sacrifice by our dear Redeemer, and the

fulness of the "common union" of the saints in "his sacrifice," we felt that the participation in "this" needed nothing short of self surrender, self abnegation, that our "heads" may be completely cut off,--"Beheaded! Beheaded! no will of my own." There were eight of us who thus participated. The dear brethren send their sincerest regards, and wish to express their deep interest in "the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ," and their earnest desires to serve the truth under all circumstances and at every opportunity.

Your brother in the love and service of our dear Redeemer,
J. W. WATTS,--Michigan.

DEAR BRETHREN:--The Memorial of our dear Redeemer's death was observed in this city last evening. Seventeen were present and partook of the emblems. It was a simple and impressive service, and the brethren and sisters present seemed to well appreciate the import of the emblems. A beautiful spirit of joy and thankfulness was shown, and the value of the precious blood and broken body of our Lord, and what these make possible for us, was gladly confessed. Our Father is indeed kind to his children.

Truly yours,
C. E. SCHILLER,--Iowa.

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DEAR BROTHER:--The Church at Portsmouth celebrated the Memorial supper last night. There were present 8 brethren and 1 sister, besides another lady who does not hold with us. Great solemnity and profound joy pervaded every heart. All agreed in saying it was "good to be there." Yours in Him,

WM. W. MURRAY,--Virginia.

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DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--I just want to say a word about our meeting last night. There were present 16 persons. The meeting was lead by Brother Pritchett; he gave us a very good discourse on the Memorial Supper; one point that he made prominent was "Love," the bond of perfectness, which should bind the members of the body of Christ together.

We think that this anniversary of our Lord's death has been the most precious of any that we have yet observed, because the spirit of Love has been growing among us this last year. It seems that all of the little company here have been drawn closer together

lately than ever before. One matter that rejoices my own heart is, after so long a time (nearly 10 years) my dear wife is taking a lively interest in our meetings. I wish to thank you at this time, for the TOWER of '95 which you sent me in answer to my question about the "Resurrection." It was very satisfactory.

With love to all the Church at Allegheny,
G. SMITH,--Indiana.

DEAR FRIENDS:--Memorial service was held last evening at 7:30. Brothers Barton and Walker were in charge, with 72 present. Eight were immersed, and quite a number of friends from outside of the city were with us. We had an unusually precious and

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profitable season, the Lord being with us in the power of his spirit, and blessing us. With love to all,
HOMER J. PATTERSON,--Philadelphia.

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DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--I write also to tell you of the great blessing which all received in the celebration of the Lord's Memorial Supper last night. We met in a parlor and had the comfort of having with us many who live too far to attend our regular meetings. There were probably twenty-five in all present. All seemed fully consecrated to the Lord, and many were the moistened eyes as all whom the time would permit gave testimony of their gratitude to the Master for his great gift of himself for us. Our thoughts were especially prepared for the Memorial by a good sized meeting Sunday morning, when Brother Wyndeltz, in a marvelously clear manner, brought out the subject of the ransom, the Passover; and how it is our blessed privilege to be joint participators in that one Loaf. We had you and the Allegheny work in memory to the Lord in prayer that he may graciously guide and preserve you, and continue the blessings you have heretofore bestowed.

All join me in love to you and the dear brethren at Allegheny. Yours in our dear Redeemer,
S. H. HUSTON,--Texas.

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DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--There were 26 of us assembled to partake of the emblems of sacrifice, and the occasion was one of solemnity and blessedness. Brother Thompson gave us a very good talk and we feel strengthened to run the race more zealously and gain the promised possessions of the faithful few.

With love and prayers, I remain yours in Christ,
J. A. BOHNET,--Washington, D.C.

DEAR BRETHREN:--Am pleased to be able to say that at the Memorial services 29 partook of the emblems. A deep interest was manifested, and our leader spoke quite pointedly, emphasizing self-examination and discerning the body of Christ. The sacredness of the occasion also was commendably observable; would that such sacredness could at all times be realized.

Yours in the service of our High Priest,
T. B. HEWITT,--Ohio.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--In behalf of the Church in and near Boston, Greetings!

Our eyes have beheld with wonder marvelous doings of the Father in the past few days; our ears have listened with rapture to the new song, and this evening our hearts have swelled with gratitude and emotion, as we have commemorated the death of his dear Son, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Have we not just witnessed flocking to the baptismal waters twenty-eight dear brothers and sisters upon whom God has poured out his Holy Spirit, seeking to symbolize their real baptism by immersion in water? Have we not heard for the past two weeks the dear Pilgrim, our brother sent out from your office, as he has sweetly and harmoniously sung for us the new song, which at present not many know, and so few can sing? And, beside two smaller companies of four or five each, led by brethren who generously absented themselves from the main gathering in order that aged and infirm ones, living at a distance, might not be deprived of the same blessed privilege,--has not a company of ninety-six (the largest number we have ever had) partaken of the bread and the wine, during what was perhaps the most impressive Memorial service we have ever had? Our dear brother, the leader, pictured to us, as he read from the Scriptures, the events leading up to that hour; and called our attention to the appropriateness of the symbols of unleavened bread and wine, to represent the body and blood of the sinless, undefiled One, and the inappropriateness of using leavened bread for the purpose,--leaven being the type of sin. And after our leader had inquired if we should not remember the drops of blood, the cruel thorns, the

taunts and insults, His sinking under the cross and His suffering and death for us, we, like the disciples, sang a hymn and went out, to follow in our thoughts the events that followed the departure of the disciples from the upper room on that night.

And how they have followed in my own case! After going six miles out of the city to my own home, the chill in the air makes me think of the cold chill of that night in Jerusalem, as some of them were gathered about a fire warming themselves; but stranger and more worthy of mention than the chill air is the fact that, while writing the foregoing thoughts between midnight and one A.M., I have been permitted to hear (12:40 A.M.), four or five times, the distinct crowing of a cock in the neighborhood! Thinking that sleep, which seemed far from me at midnight, may more readily come now, I will close. With much Christian love,

H. L. ALBEE,--Massachusetts.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--Here at St. Paul twenty-seven partook of the symbols, the meeting being conducted as nearly in the prescribed order as we were able. May God so bless this feast for us that we may be strengthened in the great race. I feel special need, having a hand to hand conflict with the Adversary, especially the last few days; but I trust that he shall be crushed under our feet shortly. Pray for me and us all that we may be able to overcome by the blood of his cross and the Word of his testimony.

Yours in the Redeemer,

M. P. THORI,--Minnesota.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--I have the pleasure to inform you that 63 souls met in E. London, to memorialize with bread and wine our Lord's death for us, and our death with him. According to his promise we had a blessing. In our prayers we counted it a privilege to remember the joint-sacrificers scattered abroad who were participating in the same service.

Besides the above number, six solitary ones, who would have been glad to meet with us, had they been able to do so, were supplied from our portions of bread and wine. At the same time with us, the brethren in North London were having their meeting for this purpose, and will doubtless report in due course. With love to all, yours faithfully, in Christ,

E. C. HENNINGES,--England.

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SEMI-MONTHLY.
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LETTERS FOR THE EDITOR SHOULD BE SENT TO ALLEGHENY, PA., U.S.A.
SUBSCRIPTIONS AND BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS

--ADDRESS TO--

WATCH TOWER BIBLE & TRACT SOCIETY,
"BIBLE HOUSE," 610, 612, 614 ARCH ST., ALLEGHENY, PA., U.S.A.

--OR TO--

BRITISH BRANCH, 131 GIPSY LANE, FOREST GATE, LONDON E. ENGLAND.

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TERMS TO THE LORD'S POOR, AS FOLLOWS:--

Those of the interested who, by reason of old age, or other infirmity
or adversity, are unable to pay for the TOWER will be supplied FREE, if
they send a Postal Card each December, stating their case and requesting
the paper. We are not only willing, but anxious, that all such be on our
list continually.

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ENTERED AS SECOND CLASS MAIL MATTER AT ALLEGHENY, PA., POST OFFICE.

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WE HAVE plenty of the \$1.00 packages of mottoes now.

LEATHER BOUND DAWNS will not be ready for some weeks.

OUR READERS SHOULD KNOW that we publish a number of
German, Swedish, Dano-Norwegian and French tracts; and
that the WATCH TOWER in German is issued quarterly. Samples
free.

WE GIVE GENEROUS CREDITS on our own publications, but on

no others. We must pay cash to secure the low rates we give you, and must ask that cash accompany your orders.

YES! THE OFFER of four six-months WATCH TOWER subscriptions for \$1.00 is still open. When you thus send to your friends, write them in explanation and commendation.

WE HAVE the "Marked New Testament" in good supply again. Two copies for 25 cents, post-paid.

SWEDISH TEACHERS' BIBLES.

In response to inquiries would say that we can supply the Bible in Swedish, with Concordance and valuable helps. Divinity circuit, post-paid, \$2.00, regular price, \$5.00.

ONE DAY CONVENTION.

ON SUNDAY, MAY 12, the Editor (D.V.) will address the friends at Altoona, Pa., at 3 P.M., at Opera House and at 7:30 P.M., as may then be announced.

This is merely a local convention, and friends from great distances are not expected, tho all coming in the name and spirit of our Lord will be heartily welcomed.

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FRESH ATTACKS UPON THE BIBLE.

"WOUNDED in the house of its friends," is certainly true of the Bible today; for it has no outside foes one-half so antagonistic, so injurious. But it is not the Bible's friends who thus attack it--but enemies, who under guise of being its friends have received honored positions in the household of faith,--who, from the vantage point of its pulpits and colleges and editorial chairs, insidiously stab the Bible, while professing to love and reverence it.

Three volumes have just issued from the press, each one calculated to undermine, shake and overthrow the faith of many of God's people, who could not be reached or shaken by the same testimony if it reached them from disreputable or infidel sources. The first of these is volume III. of the series being published by the higher critics. The second is by Rev. Lyman Abbott, D.D., successor to Henry Ward Beecher in Plymouth pulpit, but now editor of the Outlook. The third is by Judge Charles B. Waite. It is not for us to judge that these essayists are dishonest; nor that they are seeking rewards of fame as leaders of thought, in a direction toward which all but the very few will shortly follow them, "as sheep

having no shepherd." Rather, we will suppose these writers to be thoroughly honest--intent upon telling the truth as it appears to them. Indeed, we see in this movement a fulfilment of the Bible's predictions respecting our day, the ending of the present age.

We may not state the matter too strongly, when we declare that God is back of the many present-day movements which are ensnaring many and making shipwreck of their faith, in the sense that he designedly does not hinder such erroneous presentations, but, on the contrary, permits circumstances to foster and prosper them. Thus the Lord declares through the Apostle, "God shall send them strong delusions that they may believe a lie: that they all might be damned [condemned, as unworthy a place in the Bride of Christ] who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness;--because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved."-- 2 Thes. 2:10-12.

The very men who are thus becoming blind leaders of the blind into the ditch of unbelief are men who have had first-class opportunities as respects education and opportunities for Bible study; men who, had they loved the truth and sought it, would have found it clear, convincing, precious; but who, rejecting the Lord's leading, and leaning to their own understandings, have become vain in their imaginations; have cut loose from their faith-anchorage, and are helplessly drifting--they know not whither.

Does some one say,--It is strange that God should prosper rather than oppose these strong delusions! Yes, and the Lord himself calls it "his strange work," "his strange act." (Isa. 28:21.) Describing this "strange" prospering of error and unbelief the Lord says:--

"Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lip do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men: therefore behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder [miracle]: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid."--Isa. 29:13,14.

This language was applicable to typical Israel at the first advent, and consequently is applicable to nominal, spiritual Israel in the present "harvest" time of this Gospel age. The above is merely a rehearsal

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of what the Prophet explains more in detail in the previous chapter. (Isa. 28.) In verses 9 to 12 the Lord explains the preaching of his message through imperfect human lips, and that this message, rightly received, should have brought rest and refreshment

for the weary and heavy laden: yet to the majority its blessed influences were lost, so that as a whole Christendom or churchianity is about to go backward and fall and be broken and snared and taken in the general unbelief that is even now sweeping over the civilized world.--Verse 13.

The secret strength of this delusion, which has made the Word of God of no effect through human tradition, and prepares the way for this great falling away, is mentioned in verses 15 and 18. It is the covenant made by the great teachers with death, and their agreement with hell (sheol--the grave, the state of death). Under this agreement or covenant, which all the creeds of Christendom endorse, death, which God's Word styles an "enemy," is accepted as a friend; while the grave, the Bible teaches us, is the great prison-house of mankind, from which in due time the glorified Christ will deliver all of the prisoners who will accept his righteous terms--by restitution processes. --Luke 4:18-21; John 5:28,29; Acts 3:19-21.

"Hear the word of the Lord, ye scornful men [disdaining teachers] that rule this people." You have thought it wise to teach the people that death and the tomb are not enemies--that the dead are more alive than ever they were, either in a place of bliss or of torment. You feared to tell the people the truth, that the dead are dead, lest this should decrease your superstitious hold over the minds of the people. You said: The people will prefer to think of their friends going at once to glory, without waiting for the second coming of Christ, and a resurrection of the dead, and

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it will heighten our influence over sinners to tell them an untruth--to misrepresent to them the words sheol and hades and to make them believe that these words represent a flaming torture-chamber, presided over by legions of furious demons, and that at any moment they may by accident be dropped into that eternal torment if they are not members of some of the sectarian systems, which we have organized, but none of which were or will ever be recognized by Jesus or his apostles. You have thus practically in effect said, "We have made lies our refuge and under falsehood have we hid ourselves," and are safe--no matter how great a storm may arise;--even tho an overflowing scourge of infidelity come, we are safe in the ignorance of our people, and in their dependence upon our dictum for their faith and hopes of the future: as we have succeeded in "bamboozling" them in the past, we shall continue to do in the future.--Isa. 28:15.

But the Lord's answer is No! This very error shall work your ruin, and the overthrow of your system, and all identified therewith shall suffer loss. (Vs. 18; 1 Cor. 3:15.) I have laid the only sure foundation,

Christ Jesus, and he that trusteth him, and he alone, shall not fall, but "be able to stand" in the great time of testing, near at hand. For "judgment also will I lay to the line and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail [hard, cutting truth] shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters [truth] shall overflow the hiding place," and force you to show your subterfuges. (Verse 17.) The falsehood respecting death and the death-condition will fall with all that you so carefully built with this hay, wood and stubble of falsehood. The fire of that day shall test it and destroy it; and when it goes down you will go down with it, and will no longer have influence and preferment with the people.--Verse 18.

This falsehood has been at the bottom of the various errors which have confused you; and because you had wilfulness of heart and drew near me with lip-service, rather than a full consecration of heart, ye deluded and blinded yourselves (as teachers) as well as those whom you "rule," so that to all of you my Word has become as a sealed book--understood and appreciated neither by the learned nor by the unlearned. (Isa. 29:10-12.) Hence the fall of both leaders and followers into the ditch of unbelief--infidelity. This calamity will pursue you continually until you come to "understand the report [doctrine, truth]."--Isa. 28:19.

Why so? Because the creed-beds you have made for yourselves are too short for men to rest upon. They would serve the purposes of infants in thought and reason; but as knowledge, growth, comes, the bed is found too short, too uncomfortable. The covering, too, is insufficient for the developed mind, tho sufficient for the infantile. No thinking person can wrap himself securely in the narrow hopes of any "orthodox" creed: if he gets under the covers of the Calvinistic creed-bed and endeavors to consider himself one of the elect, as therein taught, he is harassed by the chilling air of doubt, and cries:--

"'Tis a point I long to know,
Am I his or am I not."

If he removes to the trundle-bed creed of Arminianism, and seeks to cover himself with the hope that there is no election--that the door is open and that "whosoever will" surely includes himself, he cannot get warm because the chilly doubt comes to him again with the suggestion that the Scriptures certainly do mention a "little flock" and an "elect" class and a "narrow way." And he reasons that if God deliberately planned and prepared an eternity of torture for

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the vast majority of his creatures, he must be a loveless if not a conscienceless being--on whose mercy no reliance is to be placed. The larger he grows mentally

the more uncomfortable the short beds and narrow creeds, until he resolves to get out of them in disgust. The difficulty is that it is not merely respecting human creeds that he loses faith; but believing that they represent God's Word, the thinker becomes a general skeptic, and viewing the Bible from the outside only, and in the light of the traditions of the elders, he is deaf to every influence and appeal for the truth during the present age, and until in the new dispensation the voice of the Son of Man shall declare the truth with no uncertainty--when all the deaf and dead shall hear and, obeying, may have "life more abundant."

The theory, that the dead are not dead, is the basis for the false doctrines of Hell and Purgatory, and these monstrous absurdities are the rocks upon which the entire system of Babylon is being wrecked; and only those who learn in time that these are unscriptural, and who learn the true gospel as illustrated in the divine plan of the ages, will be able to stand the shock of skepticism, higher criticism, evolution theory, etc., now sweeping down upon churchianity.

Rev. Heber Newton, D.D., of New York City, a leading man in "Orthodoxy," more courageous than some of his associates, boldly states his agreement with death and sheol, over his own signature, as follows:--

"Death is the true resurrection. No other resurrection is conceivable.

"He who dies awakens into consciousness the same being as of old.

"The threads of the old existence are not cut at the touch of death.

"Death ushers us into no foreign world. All that is essential to human life here will be found there."

REVIEWS OF THE BOOKS MENTIONED.

The fact that the first named is gotten out by the higher critics, tells in a word of its antagonism to the Bible as a divine revelation, and it will probably circulate chiefly among theologians already well saturated with doubts, and too conservative to circulate such books among their people to arouse doubts and questions they could never hope to answer. But the other two books are of a different caste--intended for the people, and likely to be well advertised, and "pushed" upon public attention by their publishers, and will work havoc among those resting their faith upon sects and creeds. We must notice these, to guard our readers against them. Remember, however, that we do not expect to be able to help any to "stand" except "the very elect," and them not so much by outward as by inward evidences of the Bible's divine authorship. Remember that it is our understanding, as outlined in

these pages for the past twenty-two years, that Babylon's sudden fall, as a great millstone, is to result from such influences.

Dr. Abbott's work is styled, *The Life and Literature of the Ancient Hebrews*; and we have come across what we consider an excellent and very moderate review of it in *The North American*, from which we make extracts, which we believe will interest our readers, as follows:--

BOOK SHOULD HAVE GREAT INFLUENCE.

"Coming at this particular point of human mental history, when so many of us are religiously unsettled, unwilling either to accept materialism, or to believe what never can be proved, the book may be expected to exercise no little influence upon our decision....If Dr. Abbott's book be the last and authoritative word of the Higher Criticism, then its opponents at least know where they stand, and where issue should be joined.

"The present reviewer is bound to mention his profound dissent from the position which Dr. Abbott has taken. If what the reverend essayist pronounces to be the final truth about religion be so indeed, then it seems to me that religion is not worth attending to. We have practically not advanced beyond the religious state of the ancient Egyptians, or of classic paganism. Religion is morality softened a little by an illogical suspension of judgment regarding some so-called religious mysteries. Dr. Abbott does not state his opinion in these words; but after examining his argument I cannot see what else to make of it. He does not believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God; he does not believe that Christ is God made flesh.

NO SUBLIME PASSION IN IT.

"What he does believe on these points is common-sensible, plausible and ingeniously argued; but it is poignantly disappointing to those who look for the glow of supersensual faith; there is in it no lift, no sky, no sublime passion. I do not see how such a creed can hold and combine men; how it can do anything but loose and disperse them. It makes no demand upon us, except to be amiable and keep the commandments. It makes the straight and narrow path only too smooth and facile. It engenders no misgivings as to the competence of human intellect to solve all important religious problems. It ventures to call Herbert Spencer's Unknown Energy at the background of phenomena by the name of Deity; but it supplies us with no adequate reason for loving him, or for a conviction that he, in any comprehensible, vital way, loves us. It denies that he has ever

vouchsafed us any first-hand, incontestable revelation of himself.

"According to Dr. Abbott, he (God) always permits himself to be colored, modified, and arranged, as it were, according to the limitations and bias of his human prophets; and we have nothing for it but their own personal persuasion that they were not woefully deceived in their assumed function. In

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short, the Bible is a remarkable and superior kind of literature; and God is an august and lovely possibility. Christ is, or was, a man in whom the divine Spirit was powerfully and perhaps uniquely manifested. But nothing has really happened in religious history which could not be paralleled in kind, if not in degree, with what happens in the experience of any one of us. And yet Dr. Abbott states everything so softly and sweetly that we hardly feel, at the time we read him, that he is depriving us of religious essentials. It is only when we think him over afterwards that we perceive that we have nothing but husks to eat, and that the immortal springs have run dry.

HERE IS THE KEYNOTE OF IT.

"The keynote of his attitude is in a chance sentence in the preface: 'What will the New Criticism do with the Bible?' Why shall we not rather ask, What will the Bible do with the New Criticism? As a matter of fact, it turns out that the New Criticism does not and cannot touch the Bible, in its Divine essence, at all. It is occupied entirely with a minute and learned examination of the outside or shell of the Bible--with its letter, as we say. It makes certain discoveries, or arrives at certain theories, with regard to this letter; and then proceeds to judge of the Word of God upon the basis of these external discoveries and deductions.

"The conclusion reached is that the Bible is not divinely--that is, directly--inspired; is not the authentic and eternal Word of God; and, since no other book claims to be that, it follows that there is no such thing extant as a full divine revelation. Now, obviously, God can never be found out by man, working with his finite human faculties; if he do not reveal himself, he will never be revealed, and must always remain a mere surmise or plausible deduction from facts which man is capable of discerning. There is nothing--absolutely nothing--divinely authoritative upon which we can take our stand.

AUTHORSHIP OF THE BIBLE DISCUSSED.

"The Bible is nothing more than an adventitious

collocation of writings, composed by Hebrews of salient intellectual, moral and emotional gifts, who lived some thousands of years ago. We are to take it for what it seems to us to be worth, and for nothing more. It is full of errors, chronological, geographical, scientific; it is full of fairy tales, lyrics, imaginative stuff of all kinds, which, however, possess the common peculiarity that they do contain constant references to the Hebrew Jehovah. If there do not live among us today poets, story-writers and 'prophets' just as remarkable as these old Hebrew ones, that is only because it happens so; and on the other hand, our historians and scientific writers are far more trustworthy.

"As regards the prophets, we are to understand that they were not prophets in the sense that they foretold things to come; if Isaiah or somebody else used a form of words which might be regarded as a foretelling of the coming of Christ, that is a mere coincidence, nothing of the kind was in the prophet's thoughts. Upon the whole, were a number of devout, pure-minded, highly gifted men to get together today, they might turn out a very respectable Bible of their own, entitled to just as much respect as this ancient volume or library, which has been so painfully handed down to us from antiquity.

"I say, they might; no doubt, on the other hand, they might not; but at any rate, there is no apparent reason in the nature of things why they should not.

WONDERS AT DR. ABBOTT'S CONCLUSIONS.

"Now, I do not suppose there are many to question that the Bible has all the imperfections that Dr. Abbott finds in it. But many must be at a loss to discover why, admitting the imperfections, and conceding that the Bible is nothing else at most than an attempt to show that God is reckoned with in human history, Dr. Abbott should regard the Bible as in any sense a divine book.

"If the Bible be not something infinitely deeper and more vital to mankind than this, it is practically nothing; and that it should have survived all these years, and have so powerfully influenced mankind, is extraordinary, to say the best of it. It leaves us destitute of any certain knowledge of God, and entirely free to deny that any Supreme Being exists.

"In truth, unless we are prepared to make assumptions, at the outset, far outstripping any possible conclusions or discoveries of human knowledge or science, we cannot hope to have any God or Bible whatever. If we are to credit a divine Providence at all, we must credit it without any reservations whatever.

"If I could prove my belief in God by any process of logical demonstration, I should cease to believe in him. It is a certainty miraculously implanted in

the soul, or it is nothing.

"I believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. I do so in virtue of reading the Bible, and being convinced by a spiritual and mystical process that it is the divine revelation. I then perceive that the trivial and often revolting historical details of a depraved and infidel people which it recounts; the songs which it sings, the apostrophes which it records, the allegories, the stories which it narrates, have not, in their literal significance, any divine or external meaning whatever.

"But all these are a mask, cover or body, under or within which is a soul or spirit, answering part to part to its material envelope or instrument, and conveying the spiritual truths concerning the Creator and the human being which he has created, which are essential to that creature's integrity and salvation.

"Though its compilation seems to have been governed by chance, it was not so, but it was divinely ordained from the beginning. And whether or not the writers thought they were inspired, every word which they set down had already existed in the divine mind, and their hands were divinely guided so to write it and not otherwise.

"The true alternatives between which we must make our choice are the view stated by Dr. Abbott, which gives up religion; and this, which demands the surrender of the judgment of the human senses. His book may precipitate this choice, and thus do a good beyond what he had himself foreseen."

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JUDGE WAITE'S CRITICISM OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

This book is ably reviewed by the New York Tribune, from which we give the following extracts:

"Of the numerous gospels in use in the church in the second century, the author says that only three were probably apostolic, namely, the gospel of St. Paul, the Gospel or Recollections of Peter, and the Oracles or Sayings of Christ, attributed to Matthew. These, as well as numerous other sacred writings now unknown, were reserved as sacred scriptures in the early church, until they were suppressed in the interest of the present four gospels. 'I found myself,' says Theodoret (A.D. 430), 'upward of two hundred such books held in honor among your churches, and, collecting them all together, I had them put aside and instead introduced the gospels of the four Evangelists.' Many of the early Fathers refer plainly to these suppressed writings, and some of these references indicate that writings now unknown to the church were regarded as authoritative. The

three writings mentioned above probably did not teach the miraculous conception of Jesus or his physical resurrection. But it is the contention of the author that these and other beliefs gradually grew into shape in the church, and that then the present gospels were written, many of the materials in the older writings being used, the Gospel of Paul was thus the germ of the Gospel of Luke; the Gospel of Peter of the Gospel of Mark, and the Oracles of the Gospel of Matthew.

"Holding thus as to their origin, the author naturally rejects the gospels as unhistorical. Undoubtedly, he says, there was a moral and religious teacher that came to be known as Christ. This teacher, who had devoted followers and disciples, was put to death in the reign of Tiberius, and after his death Paul, the chief of his disciples, founded a new religion on his doctrines and precepts and on the belief in his resurrection. Both Peter and Paul, in the opinion of the author, were responsible for much of the cruelty, bigotry and fanaticism which came later to characterize Christianity. The apostolic fathers emphasized most the supernatural elements in Christianity, and in a credulous age new supernatural additions could easily be made without exciting any protest."

THE FOUNDATION OF GOD STANDETH SURE.

Replying to the Judge's arguments, we notice first, that their weight depends greatly upon the attitude of the mind receiving them. If we will imagine a mind (and they are legion) already disgusted with the din of the jarring and contradictory creeds of Christendom's sects, numbering more than a hundred; and if, additionally, we will imagine that mind awakened, in part at least, to a realization of the injustice, unmercifulness, lovelessness, pitilessness, heartlessness, of the doctrine of eternal torment of all except a "little flock" of "saved" ones; and if we will remember that this awakened and disgusted mind has from infancy been taught that the Bible is the foundation for that slander upon the divine Creator, then we can easily see that to such a mind the weight of Judge Waite's book would be immense. Such an one is prepared and waiting for an excuse for utterly repudiating the Bible, and getting rid once and forever of harassing fears respecting the future of himself and millions of others, which as a nightmare had haunted his soul since infancy.

To the mind thus prepared and fertilized with the rich compost of the errors of centuries, including the "dark ages," every argument of this book will doubtless

bring conviction and seem utterly unanswerable. The seeds of doubt, once sprouted, will make reverence give place to contempt, and every item that is obscure is classed as an inconsistency and contradiction, and speedily faith's anchorage is wholly lost. And in the case of the majority there is no real faith, but merely credulity, which vanishes still more rapidly.

But, on the other hand, note the position of those who approach these questions and suggestions of doubt from the opposite standpoint;--like those mentioned by the Prophet, saying, "The people that do know their God shall be strong and succeed." Suppose this one to have "tasted that the Lord is gracious," in realizing the forgiveness of his sins, and that being thus justified he has made a full consecration of himself to the Lord--even unto death; and that thus he was begotten of the holy spirit and realized the new life begun in his heart, and making progress in all the fruits of the spirit;--one in whom old things had passed away and all things become new.

Suppose, additionally, that this one was living today, and consequently privileged to partake of the "meat in due season" provided for those of the household of faith who are Israelites indeed, and in a proper attitude of heart to receive it. Suppose that he had been a faithful student in the School of Christ and learned of him, being "taught of God." Suppose that now he saw clearly the divine plan of the ages; --the fall of our first parents, the promises through the patriarchs and the prophets of a great Redeemer out of Israel, who, dying, should thus redeem or purchase all men, not from torment, but from death, and who, since his resurrection, has waited with the work of restitution (resurrection) for the world until, as appointed by the Father, he shall have first selected his "elect" Church, his Bride and joint-heir in the Kingdom, which is to bless and restore all the willing of the purchased race.

Suppose this one, who has seen with the eyes of his understanding, the Wisdom, Justice, Love and Power of God portrayed in God's Word in respect to the divine plan, as it shall ultimately shine forth as the sun,--would it be easy to convince such an one

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that he had followed cunningly devised fables? Nay, verily; he would say with one of old, "I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him." --2 Tim. 1:12.

Ask such an one what he thinks of the fact that the New Testament was not handed down from heaven in book form, but grew, as one after another added his testimony, and he would answer, Why yes! How

else could it come to us and yet have us "walk by faith and not by sight"? Inquire what he thinks of the fact cited above, that Theodoret declared that in the churches of one province he found over a hundred different manuscripts, by various authors, dealing with the events of our Lord's ministry; and that he, Theodoret, persuaded them to accept as authoritative the four gospels we now use,--relegating the remainder to less prominence, as unauthoritative. Ask if this would shake his faith in the narratives of the four gospels, accepted now as well as then?

His answer would be, No; this does not shake my faith. I know very well that none of the Gospels were written until after Pentecost; and that later on there were numerous presentations of the matter by more and less competent writers. I know that of the four accounts so long canonically recognized by the Lord's people two (Mark and Luke) make no claim to having been written by apostles. I can well surmise that all accounts in that day of scarcity of books would be costly, as to time of preparation; and on this account, as well because of their sacred theme, all such would be kept in more or less honor, by the Lord's people. I can readily see the wisdom of deciding which of these versions were the more accurate in detail and desirable in style of diction: and I agree that a council of believers would be a desirable way of reaching a conclusion on this subject that would be beneficial to all. And I fully endorse the selection made, and conclude that in this, as in all of his people's affairs, our Lord supervised. Furthermore I am the more convinced of the honesty of the records, as well as of those who decided upon them, by the fact that two of them do not claim to have been made by eye witnesses, nor by apostolic writing, but were by St. Paul's contemporaries and assistants; and one of those says most modestly:--

"Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us [primitive Christians], even as they [apostles, etc.] delivered them unto us --[they] who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word; it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of these things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus."--Luke 1:1-3.

Could there be anything less like deception than this? Would it not have been easy for dishonest men to have omitted the introductory words of Luke's Gospel, and to have given it the name of James, or Paul, or Andrew, or Peter, or Nathaniel? And could they not have done similarly with the Gospel by Mark? Moreover it is evident from the above words of Theodoret, as well as from other records, that the general recognition of the four Gospels we now recognize took place long before Theodoret's

writings. He mentions the matter in a manner that implies that the province thus instructed and advised was an exception to the rule--different from the churches of other provinces. And this, and the evidences against the rejected ("apocryphal") books, and the evidences in favor of the four Gospels we still recognize, were so weighty with the churches that Theodoret evidently had no difficulty in convincing them of the propriety of the course he advised.

No secret has been made of the fact that certain records respecting that time were rejected, and some Bibles, especially old Family Bibles, contained numerous of those rejected books, separated from the accepted ones, and styled as a whole The Apocrypha. And we have no hesitation in saying that the difference between these rejected records and those accepted and kept are so great that not one of our readers would be unable to quickly detect the wide differences between the style and general presentations of these and the simple, grand, unostentatious presentations of our four Gospels.

But, some one may ask, If these Gospels were not selected in the apostle's day, but long afterward, how do we know that they were inspired? We answer, that in the apostles' days most of the evangelizing was done by word of mouth, few people knew how to read, even if they had books; and the Lord evidently did not intend to fix matters so that there should be no room for doubts and doubters, and no room for exercise of faith in his supervision of his own cause. He undoubtedly did supervise the matter, so that we have in the four Gospels a very full record of the facts. Nor are we to think that inspiration is requisite to the telling of the truth; and these Gospels make no claim to having been inspired or needing inspiration; --they are histories. We read Macaulay's history of England and believe its records without thinking of asking whether Macaulay was inspired to write it. We trust it even tho we have no reason to assume that God supervised its statements, as we have good reason to expect he did with the Gospel records.

As for the Epistles, their case is different,--they are not merely historical records; they are doctrinal

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treatises; respecting the authority, the inspiration, of their writers we have good reason to inquire. And whoever will examine the rejected or Apocryphal epistles will find that they are wholly inferior to those retained, and in addition, that no apostolic epistle was rejected and no unapostolic epistle retained. The conclusion of the early Church was the same that ours now would be. (1) That Paul was the Apostle chosen of God to fill Judas' place (the uninspired and undirected

action of the eleven in choosing Matthias, previous to Pentecost, being entirely ignored by the Lord). (2) That all of the apostles were specially selected and specially inspired and directed of the Lord for the work given them to do; and that they have no successors in office and authority;--even tho Papacy has since claimed, to the contrary, the same inspiration and authority for its popes. The last book of the Bible sets its seal to the thought that the twelve were special representatives of God, and that the number could not be added to,--by showing the glorified Church of the future, under the symbol of a city-- whose twelve foundations had in them written the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

It is objected further, that some of the books now recognized as parts of the New Testament were regarded with suspicion by some of the churches for quite a while, and openly rejected by some for a season;-- among others the Second Epistle of Peter, and Revelation. We answer, that this is not surprising; and so far from being an unfavorable item it is favorable; --showing clearly that whatever indifference might have been manifest in some congregations at first, some were very critical, very exacting as to the proofs of genuineness of what they received. And as for the Book of Revelation, it belonged less to that day, anyway. It is specially ours of to-day, and contains abundant internal evidence of its one-ness with the remainder of God's Book.

However, as at first stated, all these things, while clear as crystal to those possessed of and taught by God's spirit, are obscure to all others who will find abundant opportunity for "stumbling at the Word, being disobedient." It is still as true as when our Master

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said it, that--"If any man will do my Father's will, he shall know of my doctrine." Whoever will not do this, whatever else that is good he may do, will not know,--not being of the kind "to whom it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom." (Matt. 13:11.) To all others the matter may be foggy, at best; even as the Prophet declared, "None of the wicked [unfaithful to their covenant] shall understand." The Scriptures are for and addressed to the Church--the saints and the household of faith; and their evidences are internal, not external; just as the symbolic vessels and furniture, etc., of the Tabernacle and of the Temple were completely hidden from outsiders, and could be fully seen only by the typical priesthood, in the light of the typical oil and lamp.

Does some one ask, What can we do for friends whom we may expect more and more to see drifting off into skepticism? Must we let them go without endeavoring to help them?

We answer, No; we should do all we can for each one, even tho we know that it will avail nothing for the vast majority. Give them the following treatment, asking divine wisdom to know how to approach them wisely. (1) Let them read this paper, and (2) loan them MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. I., the first four chapters of which were specially written for the assistance of truth-seekers, who need first of all to have faith established in the Bible as a whole. If they are in the proper condition of heart, that is to say, if they have the "hearing ear," they will get a start at least in that volume, which perhaps has converted more infidels than any other book in print today. If they love the truth and appreciate the divine character as set forth in the Plan of the Ages, they will want to go on and on in the green pastures of truth, and by the still waters they will be refreshed, and doubtless the great Shepherd will by his rod and staff guide them to the Kingdom. But the record is that a thousand to one shall fall.--Psa. 91:7.

WHENCE THE PRESENT GENERAL BLINDNESS?

Prevalent blindness and loss of faith in the Bible are attributable to the various so-called Orthodox creeds of Christendom; formed during the "dark ages," these are full of superstitions and falsehoods, and vain attempts to reconcile these with the holy Scriptures. Now that reason is awakened it does not occur to the devoted sectarian that the fault is wholly with his creed, and that it really is in violent conflict with God's Word as reverently and reasonably interpreted. On the contrary, he loses faith in his Bible in proportion as he loses faith in his creed; because he considers them to be in harmony--identical in their teachings.

He has a reverence for his Bible as an antique, as a remembrancer of the past,--intimately associated with his earliest experience at a pious parent's knee; and he has a similar reverence for the creed and denomination to which his parents and himself have long been attached. But he has lost faith in both. He can see at a glance the inconsistency of the teachings of the various creeds, that God is either incapable of extending the knowledge of Christ to all mankind, and giving all a fair opportunity for believing and obeying the gospel, or else that he is unwilling to do

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so to any but an elect few; and that the vast remainder are to be tormented to all eternity;--which, if God knew the end from the beginning, implies that he provided them with eternal life with the foreknowledge

and intention that they should thus suffer.

Men could stifle reason in this manner once, but they can do so no longer. It is to their credit as reasoners, and to their credit as men and women of heart and sympathy, that they reject such theories as impossible of belief, and declare that such testimony bears on its face the evidence that it is untrue; that it is a blasphemy against the true God and a dishonor to the conscience and reasoning powers of every one who so professes; and that they had rather trust to a theory of their own construction, built on love and reason, than stultify themselves longer by such professions.

And not seeing that their creeds malign the Bible as much as they do the Creator, they reverently lay aside Bible and catechism as relics of their thought-infancy. Nominally they still adhere to their denomination as being "as good as any, and as correct as any;" and the denomination still adheres, nominally, to the creed and the Bible and the accustomed forms and ceremonies: believing them to have a salutary effect upon the young and a restraining influence upon the immorally inclined.

However it may be kept secret, the "broad-minded" and "intelligent," "up-to-date" ministers and members of the various denominations have taken, or are rapidly taking, the view advanced by Dr. Abbott, set forth foregoing: that morality, and not faith in Christ, is the divine test. The tendency of many is to universalism; but the majority, having lost faith in the Bible, have no guide whatever except their own or other men's reasons, and are full of doubts. They have lost their anchor and are being driven to shipwreck on the rocks of infidelity by the increasing winds of reason.

These all need help; but there are none who can render aid except such as by the grace of God have gotten their own eyes open to see that the Bible has been unintentionally traduced in the house of its friends--that it is loyal to God, and most beautifully grand and self-consistent to the sanctified reason, and able to stand the test today and to come off victor, as much as in the past; while, on the contrary, the sectarian creeds can find no defenders among reasonable men.

The bolder infidels tell us that the Bible was made up by priests and knaves. We inquire, which priests and knaves?--of which denomination?

Was it made by Methodist priests and knaves?

If so, why did they not add a dozen or so more texts to support their special tenet--that divine grace is free during this Gospel age? And why did they not omit those texts which mention "election" and the "elect"?

Was it the Presbyterians who made the Bible?

If so, why did they not add more texts on election,

and omit the three or four which appear to be contrary to the doctrine of election, and which they cannot explain away?

Was it Lutheran priests, Episcopal priests, or Baptists? No! for similar reasons.

Oh! Finally they conclude that it must have been made by the priests and knaves of the church of Rome! Well, let us see whether its internal evidences favor that view. What object did they serve by such a fraud?

If the Roman Catholics made the New Testament, and pretended that they gave the words of Jesus and the apostles, so as to furnish a foundation for their teachings, how comes it that they are and have long been the bitter foes of the Bible--Bible readings, Bible Societies, etc? And how comes it that they did not make a Bible which would support their theories? Why did they not put into it clear statements to the effect that Peter was the first pope; that our Lord's mother was the "Mother of God," and that she should be prayed to; that saints are to be prayed to; that images, crucifixes and pictures are to be adored? Why did they omit mention of "holy water," "holy candles," "extreme unction," consecrated cemeteries, and the invalidity of any but priestly marriages? Why did they not insert commands respecting the wearing of "scalpels," the necessity of masses for the dead, to get them out of purgatory? Why did they not insert instructions to all to apply to the priests for indulgences, and fix liberal prices at which they should be supplied? Why was Purgatory left unmentioned when it is the mainstay of their church treasury? Why did they not throw in at least a dozen or so texts amongst the epistles of Paul, Peter, James and John describing hell and purgatory in vivid colors, instead of omitting a single mention of either? Why did they not insert a dozen texts or so on the doctrine of Trinity, instead of leaving the entire Bible without such a text, until the seventh century, when one text was corrupted, so as to indirectly imply something of the kind? (1 John 5:7--admitted by all trinitarians to be corrupted, and omitted from the Revised Version). Why did they not insert a passage to show that the "clergy" are separate and distinct from the "laity"?

Why, on the contrary, did they insert passages which say that there is no such class distinction as "clergy" or "laity" in God's Church, but that--"Ye are all one in Christ Jesus"? Why did they permit

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that their favorite, the Apostle Peter, should be made to contradict their theory and practice, by saying, not of the "clergy," but of the whole Church, "Ye are a royal priesthood"? (1 Pet. 2:9.) Why did they permit the oft repeated statements that the end of the

wicked would be "destruction"--"second death," etc., which would be wholly contradictory to their theory of "eternal torment"?

We answer, that the evidence is conclusive that the Bible was not made by any of the sects, and is in antagonism to them all, and that in justice it should be judged by itself--by its own internal evidences. And all who have seen its beauty from this standpoint, praise God for the light--for his wonderful plan of the ages, of which the ransom at Calvary, once for all, is the center, the election of the Gospel Church a grand incidental, and the blessings of the Millennial age, bringing opportunities for obedience unto eternal life to all the redeemed, is the grand outcome.

Whoever knows this gospel and does not desire and endeavor to spread it to others about him who are blind to it, but hungry for it, surely lacks the spirit of Christ, whatever may be his profession. How dwelleth the love of God in him?

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"HE ASCENDED UP ON HIGH."

--ACTS 1:1-11.--MAY 19.--

"While he blessed them he was parted from them and carried up into heaven."--Luke 24:51.

LUKE, the writer of the Acts of the Apostles, in its introduction refers to his Gospel narrative of the life of Jesus--respecting "all that Jesus began both to do and to teach until the day in which he was taken up." It was no doubt of divine intention that he should express this matter in this particular form, and refer to the personal work of Jesus as merely the beginning of his work. Only those who grasp this thought; viz., that the body of the Church, "the body of Christ," in the flesh, is a continuation of the work of Jesus, the Head of that body, in the flesh--only such can grasp with clearness the divine plan. We are to consider the name, Jesus, as the personal name of our Lord and Head, and the name Christ, or Anointed, as the official name, applicable to him as the head, and to the whole Church as his body. From this statement the two advents of Christ are brought close together, for the work of the first advent, the sacrifice of Christ in the flesh, will be little more than completed, until the work of the second advent begins, the blessing of all the families of the earth with restitution privileges and mercies, at the hands of the glorified Christ, Head and body. Indeed the preparation for the new age and its work laps upon this Gospel age and its work.

It was in harmony with this thought (that the work which he had begun his apostles, and all his footstep-followers, were to carry on) that the Master so particularly instructed them during the forty days after his resurrection. We have already noticed that he appeared to them in all some six or eight times, and now in the present lesson we have an account of his seventh (or ninth) appearance, at the end of the forty days. It was probably at least a week after he had seen seven brethren in Galilee that he appeared to them again at Jerusalem, where he evidently had appointed the apostles to assemble. Here he met with them and gave them his final parting instructions, which were perfectly in harmony with his previous teachings, that their mission was to continue to be a spiritual one, to feed his sheep and to feed his lambs --to continue the work which he had begun, and to follow in his footsteps. But he impresses upon their minds the fact that they are incompetent for this work until first they shall have received of the Father through him a special power from on high, for which he bade them wait at Jerusalem. He reminded them that this blessing for which they were to wait was the same that he already had mentioned before his crucifixion, --telling them that the Father would send the holy spirit in his name, that it would bring to their remembrance all things that he had spoken unto them, and guide them into all truth, etc.--John 14:16,26; 15:26.

He would impress his disciples with the importance of the blessing for which they were to wait, and with the fact that it meant to them a new era, a new dispensation: as they knew of the reformation movement instituted by John the Baptizer, and that the repentant sinners were immersed in water, he would have them know that now he was instituting a Church on a much higher plane, and that all who would be received into it would be immersed in holy spirit,* holy power--come under an influence of power from on high. His declaration that this would be not many days hence, was indefinite purposely; first, that they should expect it soon, and not be disheartened or discouraged, and yet he left the exact number of days

*"Ghost" is old English for "spirit"--the word is really obsolete, and had the American Revision Committee had its way it would never have appeared in the Revised Version, we are told. It is not used in the American Committee's Version; it is misleading.

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unstated, so that they might be continually watching for it. This left the apostles in a waiting attitude,

and, as Luke informs us, in an attitude of prayer and expectancy, very profitable to them at this juncture.

Slowly, during the forty days, the disciples were learning to expect very different things from what they had in mind at the beginning and throughout the Lord's ministry: they were learning that the Kingdom glories and honors were not to be distributed immediately; but that a new dispensation, and a new kind of work in harmony with it, was set before them to be done; and gradually their minds reverted to the prophecies in which the blessings of the Lord upon the nation of Israel are set forth, and the intimation given that the blessings upon the whole world are to flow through the children of Abraham in some national capacity. They had confidence in these prophecies, and now they would ask the Lord respecting them. How could these prophecies be fulfilled under the new arrangement, which seemed to ignore the nation and to merely use themselves, the Lord's followers, a mere fragment of the nation. Hence their inquiry of the Master whether now or soon or when the prophecies would be fulfilled, which promised the restoration of Israel to divine favor as God's Kingdom, thus implying its release from the power of Rome and all other dominions.

Our Lord's answer was not to the effect that they had misunderstood these prophecies, and that they would all have some kind of spiritual fulfilment; on the contrary, by his answer he implied that their conception of the prophecies was quite proper, but that the time for their fulfilment had not yet come, and that they must not press the question as to the times and seasons; they must trust to God, who has these in his own keeping, and who will abundantly fulfil every promise he had ever made in its due time.

Our Lord, then, drew the minds of his disciples back to their own work, to which he had called them --to the work which they were to accomplish as members of his body in the flesh. He informs them that they shall be specially empowered through the holy spirit, which the Father would send in his name; and that using this power, this influence, they would be privileged to be his witnesses--his representatives--representatives of his character, his teachings and his work, not only in Jerusalem and throughout Judea and Samaria, but also eventually to the utmost parts of the earth. He would have them see that a great work was being committed to their care. God would attend to all of his promises in due time; now they, to be his co-laborers and witnesses, must be attentive to the work to which they had consecrated themselves, and for which they now were to be thoroughly empowered and quickened through the holy spirit. With this parting lesson, while he was walking with them and talking to them on the Mount of Olives, going in the direction of Bethany, he began gradually

to ascend from them, a cloud receiving him out of their sight.

One error leads to another; and the failure to note that our Lord's change of nature from human to spiritual took place in his resurrection, and that his presence during the forty days was that of a spirit being, unseen except when he for a few times very briefly appeared to his disciples for the purpose of instructing them, and these different appearances in different forms, in different kind of clothing, etc.-- has led some to very peculiar ideas respecting our Lord's ascension. Thus we find one Doctor of Divinity saying on the subject: "The ascension was a noble and fitting close of the earthly career of Jesus; far better than to die again, as Lazarus died, or to remain always on earth in his body--the only alternatives!" Poor man! How tightly error has blindfolded the eyes of his understanding, that he should think thus.

From the Scriptural standpoint, that our Lord was raised "a quickening spirit," invisible to mankind, and that he merely "appeared" in forms of flesh, the matter has an entirely different aspect. From this standpoint we see that this last appearance of our Lord to the disciples, like the other appearances, was intended for their instruction, and to help natural men, not yet begotten of the holy spirit, to understand deep things, which otherwise they could not so well have comprehended. Our Lord's ascension was simply another way of disappearing. When he appeared to them in the upper room, the door being shut, and talked to them and convinced them, having finished his lesson he "vanished" as suddenly as he had "appeared." The body of flesh and its clothing, which, by miraculous power, he had organized within the room, he could and did disorganize again by a power beyond our comprehension--the same power which turned the water at Cana into wine; by the same power by which angels had frequently appeared as men for a purpose,--disappearing when the purpose had been accomplished. Indeed, in one of these instances narrated in the Scriptures, an angel accomplished his disappearance in very much the same manner in which our Lord disappeared on this last occasion of his ascension.--Judges 13:19-21.

The propriety of thus terminating his intercourse with the disciples is evident: they would have no further expectation of his appearing to them again as a man, in different forms, after such a farewell: they would understand that he was gone from them now as

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a spirit being, as he had previously said: "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away the Comforter will not come." The confusion of the D.D.

from whom we quote foregoing, is the more manifest from the fact that in further writing upon this subject he recognized the "two men" of vs. 10 as being angels who, for the time being, had assumed human form for the purpose of communicating with the disciples, and impressing upon them a certain valuable lesson. Why could not the gentleman see that our Lord, having finished the work which the Father had given him to do (viz., the laying down of his life as the man Christ Jesus) was no longer a little lower than the angels, a fleshly being, but was now "changed," and as he was, previous to coming into the world, a spirit being of the highest order, so now, as the Apostle declares in his resurrection, he was a life-giving spirit? (1 Cor. 15:45.) And if the angels had power to appear as men, and did so appear, why should not their chief and Lord have power so to appear to his disciples in various forms, for the purpose of convincing them that he was no longer dead, but risen,-no longer a man, but "changed"?

Our Lord's words, "It is expedient for you that I go away," lead us to inquire, Why was his ascension expedient? Let us consider the matter. Had he remained with the disciples, present but invisible, and appearing to them and to all of his followers occasionally throughout this Gospel age, of what special advantage would it have been? What could he do for us in this manner that could not as well be done for us from his high station in the heavens with the Father? And again, had he remained with the Church it would have seemed all the more inexplicable that he should have permitted his representatives to be misused, slandered, abused in various ways, and that he should seem to take no part in the management of the affairs of the world, while claiming the legal right through purchase, by his own blood, to be its prince and Savior from the power of sin and Satan. For all these reasons it was appropriate that he should not be with us, but that we should know that he was with the Father, and should wait for him until the time appointed of the Father--until all of his faithful disciples had been called and proven acceptable, and the foreordained number of the elect fulfilled;--and that he should then come to receive them to himself, and to establish them as his joint-heirs in the Kingdom; and to assume the rulership of the world, to bind the Adversary, to overthrow his dominion, and to establish truth and righteousness on a permanent basis by the divine authority and power which he possesses.

But there was another and all-important reason why he should ascend to the Father, and it is that which our Lord mentions, "Except I go away the Comforter will not come." (John 16:7.) Why not? We answer, that the whole world being under divine condemnation, none could be recognized by the Father and adopted into his family, begotten of the holy

spirit as his sons, so long as they were sinners. And the death of our Lord Jesus, while it was the ransom-price, had not as yet affected any of those for whom it was intended. Before it could benefit them he must ascend to the Father and must present that sacrifice or price as on behalf of those to whom it would be applicable: that they, being justified by faith and sanctification or setting apart to holiness and divine service, even unto death, might receive the spirit of adoption into the family of God's spiritual sons.

This was the reason, and it is in full harmony with the Apostle John's statement: "The holy spirit was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified." (John 7:30.) He had received his glorious body in the resurrection, as the Apostle shows us in 1 Cor. 15:43,44; but it remained for him to be glorified (honored) after he would appear in the presence of the Father and present before him his complete work, and officially receive divine approval; then he was honored, glorified, with a name that is above every name, "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess, to the glory of God the Father."--Phil. 2:10.

We can imagine the eleven apostles (all Galileans) standing looking after the disappearing Master, and endeavoring to peer into the cloud that had received him from their sight, and endeavoring to comprehend the meaning of the various lessons of experience through which they had recently passed; and their perplexed thoughts respecting the promised coming of Christ again, and the interim of loneliness which he had promised should be compensated for by the promised holy spirit which should comfort them. Then appropriately, at the needed moment, under the divine providence, two beings stood by them, "men" in appearance, but in garments which indicated that they had only assumed the form of men for the occasion, and which told the apostles that these were really angels. These in cheerful tone and impressive manner assured them that they need not continue to look into the sky, but to remember that he would so come again in like manner as they had seen him go.

How strange that so many of the Lord's people, even amongst those who fully believe in, and with deep interest long for his second coming, should overlook the particular features of this angelic testimony! First, that it was the same Jesus that should come again--not the former Jesus, whom they knew in the flesh, but the same Jesus, who was taken up from them, and whom they recognized as so thoroughly "changed" from the time of his resurrection --the spirit Jesus, "a quickening spirit." This is the one promised to come again, not in weakness, as "in the days of his flesh," but a spirit being, clothed with full plenitude of divine power to establish them as his Kingdom, and through them to bless all

the families of the earth.

How strange, too, that the other important fact

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which the angel noted, viz., the "manner," is so often overlooked by the same class! What was the manner of our Lord's going? Was it with great ostentation, with the sound of a literal trumpet calling the attention of the whole world? Was it in a manner known to the whole world? Or was the manner of his going an extremely quiet one, known only to his most faithful followers? His second coming is to be "in like manner!" Those who give to the words of the angels their true weight and force, laying the emphasis upon the right words, will receive a blessing in so doing, and be the better prepared to understand the character of our Lord's parousia. They will be less surprised to know that it fulfils all these conditions; that he is now seen only with the eye of faith, and only by the most consecrated of his people. It will be after his second coming, that he (unknown to the world) will reckon with his own servants, his saints, exalting the worthy, faithful over a few things, to be rulers over many things. (Matt. 25:14-30.) It will be still later on that he will restore the Kingdom again to Israel--to the worthy ones of that people, through whom, as the earthly agents of the spiritual Kingdom, the blessing of divine grace and truth shall flow to all the families of the earth. And in connection with the giving of the Kingdom to the elect the great time of trouble will reveal the new ruler to all the families of the earth in the fiery judgments upon all iniquity, until every eye (of understanding) shall see him--revealed as King of kings and Lord of lords.

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PENTECOST--THE DAY OF JUBILEE.

--ACTS 2:1-11.--MAY 26.--

"When he, the spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth."--John 16:13.

PENTECOST signifies fiftieth, and was used amongst the Jews as the name of one of their most important feasts or religious celebrations. As their fiftieth "Jubilee" year followed a cycle of seven times seven years, so Pentecost, as a jubilee day, followed a cycle of seven times seven days, from the time of the gathering of the sheaf of first-fruits, which was presented before the Lord as a "wave-offering." This sheaf of the first-fruits evidently

typified our Lord in his resurrection on the sixteenth of Nisan--he having been slain as the Passover Lamb on the fourteenth of Nisan.--
Lev. 33:5,6,15,16.

In our last lesson we noted the fact that it was the eleven apostles that were witnesses of our Lord's ascension, "men of Galilee;" and it was these, who were to be his special representatives, and through whose word others were to believe, that he instructed to tarry at Jerusalem until endued with power from on high. The present lesson shows us the same eleven apostles in the upper room complying with our Lord's injunction, waiting in an attitude of prayer and expectancy, and in readiness to begin their mission of feeding his sheep and lambs. In harmony with this view is the statement, a little later on, when the preaching began, that "all these are Galileans." And again, "Peter standing up with the eleven." (Acts 2:7,14.) We are not positively informed that any others were present at this time, but from previous statements, to the effect that others (to a total of one hundred and twenty) met with the apostles, "continuing with one accord in prayer and supplication," we may reasonably infer that they were present at the time of the pentecostal outpouring of the holy spirit, and that the whole company was thus baptized, immersed in the holy spirit, which filled the place where they were assembled. There is no good reason, however, for questioning respecting the cloven tongues of fire--that these sat upon any but the apostles. The statement is that "It sat upon each of them, and they were all filled with the holy spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the spirit gave them utterance." The subsequent statement is that all those who spoke, all to whom the spirit gave utterance or tongues, were Galileans; but whether or not the apostles were thus specially recognized at this time, we are assured, not only from our Lord's words, but also from his subsequent revelation, that the apostles occupied a special place in

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connection with his Kingdom, his Church, assigned to no others.--John 6:70; Rev. 21:14.

The Pentecostal blessing signified divine acceptance of the sin-offering which, finished at Calvary, our Lord at this time had presented before the Father. The outpouring of the holy spirit upon the consecrated believers constituted their begetting of the spirit to the new nature, and implied thus, that the condemnation upon them as the children of Adam and under the Law Covenant was cancelled, and that now they were accepted in the Beloved, counted as children of God, and if children then heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ their Lord, if so be that

they would suffer with him, that they might also be glorified together--Rom. 8:16,17.

As is implied in our Lord's statement and in his promise, this was a new thing. No such outpouring of the divine spirit had ever occurred before as respected the children of Adam. Indeed, no such acceptance and new begetting on God's part was possible until first the sin-offering had been made and accepted. The only thing corresponding to it was the descent of the holy spirit upon our Lord at the time of his consecration at baptism in Jordan. He there received the holy spirit of adoption in the same sense, but "without measure," he being perfect; those who received this holy spirit at Pentecost received it by measure, that is, in limited degree. (John 3:34.) Altho they were all "filled" with the spirit, yet, because of weakness and imperfections of their organisms, they could only receive limited measures, --these differing one from the other according to natural temperaments, etc.

God's holy spirit had indeed been manifested in various ways previously, but all of them differed from this manifestation. For instance, it was the holy power of God which moved upon the waters in connection with the world's creation. (Gen. 1:2.)

Again, as the Apostle Peter declares, "Holy men of

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old spake and wrote as they were moved by the holy spirit"--mechanically. (2 Pet. 1:21.) He further explains that what they spake and wrote they did not comprehend; because their utterances and writings were not for themselves, but for us of the Gospel age. We are, therefore, to recognize the fact that the spirit dispensation had its beginning in Jesus, when he was thirty years of age; but so far as others were concerned its beginning was in the sanctified ones at Pentecost, as recorded in this lesson. Neither are we to think that these Pentecostal outpourings and baptisms require a repetition, for the holy spirit thus once poured upon the Church was to abide, to continue, with the Church, not to be withdrawn and poured out afresh repeatedly. Some have concluded that there were times when the holy spirit was not in the world at all; but this was because they were looking for it in a wrong direction or under wrong conditions. At times the nominal church of outward professors has been so overgrown with the "tare" element that the true "wheat" could not so readily be discerned, yet we are confident that the Lord never left himself without a witness, and that even in the darkest hour of the dark ages there were some of God's true people in the world; some representatives of the body of Christ; some, therefore, possessing the holy spirit; some who therefore constituted the salt of the earth and the

lights of the world, even tho the darkness was great around them and its influence so powerful that no record of the true Church is to be found, but only the records of the apostacy.

The holy spirit, in harmony with our Lord's promise, was sent only to the consecrated class, and was to abide in the true Church class, "the body of Christ;" and we, and all others who since have come into fellowship and union with our Lord, "the head of the body which is his Church," have thus come into and under the influence of the holy spirit, our rightful portion and privilege. By this spirit we were begotten to the spiritual nature, and became heirs of all the exceeding great and precious promises which belong to "the body of Christ."

It was appropriate that the giving of the holy spirit should be with certain outward demonstration and manifestation; not merely to impress and convince the apostles and the early Church, but also for the benefit of those who should subsequently come into relationship with the Church. Faith must have a ground to rest upon; an assurance that there was at the beginning such a direct recognition of the Savior's sacrifice and of the divine acceptance of the consecrated ones who trusted in him. The rushing wind fitly represented this holy spirit; indeed the words "spirit" and "wind" are both from the same Greek word; a wind is the best illustration of God's spirit, because it is powerful, and yet it is invisible. The cloven or split tongues "like as of fire" or light, was also fit symbols by which to teach the Church something respecting the divine power that had come upon her.

As a tongue it represented the influence which God would use during this Gospel age as the agency of his spirit in accomplishing the work he now designs to do; for "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." (1 Cor. 1:21.) This way of preaching is not a foolish way, since it is God's way; but it is so different a way of effecting a work from what the natural man would have chosen that it seems to him to be an unwise way. True, at the beginning of this age the tongues, the preaching, was supplemented by miraculous "gifts" among the Lord's people, but these were not designed to be permanent, as the Apostle explains (1 Cor. 13:8); and after the apostles who alone had the power to confer these gifts had died, the gifts themselves of necessity gradually vanished; since which time the preaching tongue has been practically the only instrument which the Lord has used in connection with his great work of calling out and sanctifying the peculiar people to be the Bride, the Royal Priesthood, the Body of Christ.

Some have incorrectly identified the fire-likeness of these tongues with the prophecy of John the

Baptist, respecting Christ, saying, "He shall baptize you with holy spirit and with fire." (Matt. 3:11,12.) John's words were not addressed to the disciples, but to the promiscuous company of his hearers, some of whom were Israelites indeed, and some, as he declared, a generation of vipers. The Pentecostal blessing was indeed the fulfilment of a part of John's prediction; viz., the baptism of the holy spirit (Acts 1:5); but this was not the fulfilment of the latter part of John's prophecy respecting the baptism of fire. The room wherein the disciples were assembled was not filled with fire, and they were not immersed in it, either literally or figuratively. The cloven tongues which appeared upon their heads were not fire, but light, a fitting symbol of the holy spirit, and the message of light and truth and blessing which the apostles were proclaiming. The baptism of fire, which John predicted, came later, not upon the faithful of Israel, but upon the class whom John designated, a "generation of vipers"--upon the class of whom the Apostle Paul says, "Wrath is come upon this people to the uttermost." The trouble, the destructive trouble, the fiery trouble, in which that whole nation was figuratively engulfed and baptized, and which ended in A.D. 70, after witnessing the destruction of millions of lives, millions of property, and the complete overthrow of Israel's national polity, was the worthy fulfilment of John's prediction of a baptism of fire.

The fact that the holy spirit upon the apostles was accompanied by miraculous manifestations or gifts, tongues, etc., does not imply any greater favor of God toward the primitive Church, which had those gifts, than toward the Lord's people of a later day, after those gifts had ceased; for, as the Apostle points out, it was possible for some to have those gifts without having much of the real spirit of the Lord. He says, "Tho I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. Tho I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and tho I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing." (1 Cor. 13:1,2.) We are, therefore, to esteem love for the Lord and for the brethren and for the neighbor--active love, which does as well as wishes and says--to be the best evidence of an acceptable condition

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with the Lord, the best evidence of a filling with his holy spirit--a far better evidence than the possession of the "gifts" described. Far greater, far more precious gifts of the spirit, then, are the gifts which the spirit develops in us--the fruits of the spirit--joy, peace, faith, love, etc.

The news respecting the miraculous manifestation of divine power spread rapidly through the city of Jerusalem, which, in addition to its general population, had at this season of the year visitors from all the neighboring countries, speaking various languages and dialects. And this furnished the opportunity for the Lord's humble disciples, "unlearned men," to begin their great work for which now they were fully commissioned and empowered. Quite possibly by this gift of tongues the Lord made up to his disciples the lack of larger education and fitted them for the work; at all events, not only on this occasion do we find that they were able to discourse in all the various languages, but subsequently, when traveling in various quarters, we have no mention of any difficulty encountered in respect to the languages or dialects, tho these were many amongst the different classes and nationalities.

The concourse of the people at Jerusalem attending this feast was of a religious kind--the most religious Jews from all the surrounding countries and nations (where more Jews resided than in Palestine), gathered on such occasions to do homage to the Lord, to render thanks and to pray for the promised blessings

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and Kingdom. In addition to this it was the custom for many of the most religious to permanently remove to Jerusalem in their old age, that they might die there; and thus we see that the Lord's arrangements, and the human arrangements which his providence had favored, all cooperated at this time for the favorable presentation of the good tidings that Messiah had come, and that he had redeemed Israel and the world, according to the prophets and the types; that he had ascended to the Father as the great High Priest for his people; and that this Pentecostal blessing represented the divine favor bestowed through him, and open to as many as would really receive him and become his followers--disciples. When we consider the class of hearers, and the miraculous power resting upon the speakers, it need not surprise us that so many were converted in so short a time--three thousand.--Acts 2:41.

We are given but a meagre account of the preaching; viz., an extract from Peter's discourse; but from the number of converts it is evident that all of the apostles engaged in the service. A summary of their preaching is given in vs. 11, where the hearers are represented as saying, "We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God." These wonderful works we have already referred to as relating to our Lord's death and resurrection, and his commission to his apostles, which they were now carrying out. True, it is said that the apostles used

other words, amongst them, "Save yourselves from this untoward generation"--thus intimating the condemnation of the Jewish Church and polity, and the fire of divine wrath, the trouble, shortly to come upon them.

But the main part of their discourses was not a tirade against the Jews, but rather a showing forth of the wonderful features of the divine plan; and even in the charge against the rulers and the people for the great crime they had committed in crucifying Jesus, the Apostle puts the matter as kindly as possible, saying, "I wot that in ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." Herein we have a valuable lesson for all the followers of Christ who preach in his name and who would win souls from the darkness of error to harmony with God. The proper, the effective preaching, today and then, is that which tells of the wonderful works of God in man's redemption, and not that which tirades against the nominal church--even tho it be necessary occasionally to point out the errors of Babylon, as the apostles pointed out the errors of Judaism. Our course, like theirs, should be one of great moderation and kindness, as well as plainness of speech, "speaking the truth in love."

The harvest work of the present time reminds us much of this gathering of the harvest in Israel. Now, as then, those who are addressed by the holy spirit are the Israelites indeed--"devout men out of every nation under heaven." And so prominently is this the direction in which the holy spirit is guiding in this harvest work that one of the charges against the work is, that we are not going after the drunkards and harlots and gamblers and thieves and vagabonds, but are seeking to feed the Lord's sheep and lambs,--seeking to present present truth, meat in due season, to the devout of every nation. And such, we believe, is the will of God concerning us; and so we advise that all of the Lord's people, as they seek to proclaim the grace of God, remember the words of the Lord, that we are to feed his sheep and his lambs, and not spend unnecessary time with the goats and the wolves, as soon as we recognize their kind, except it be to drive them off or to expose their true character to the sheep.

Our commission is to "preach the Gospel to the meek," not to the froward and the vile; to bind up the broken-hearted, not to seek to break the hard hearts. The Lord has his own plan for dealing with the stony hearts in the time of trouble which is near, and during the Millennial age, in which the necessary force will be used to restrain the evil and to open their eyes and ears of understanding. Now our commission is to go to those who have an ear. "He that hath an ear let him hear." Those who have not the ears to hear the message, and who have not the hearts to appreciate its beauty, should not be argued

with or wrangled with, but wisely left as quietly as possible in their ignorance and blindness until the Lord's due time for scattering the pall of darkness, the gross darkness which Satan has brought upon the people. We had rather leave in ignorance and under the bonds of superstition those who manifest no appreciation of the grace of God; for doubtless, if their superstitions were loosed in the present time, it would be nothing to their advantage; perhaps to the disadvantage of others. Let us remember that the Gospel message is to gather out the Lord's peculiar people, a little flock, and that so far as the world is concerned the Gospel is only a "witness" now.

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