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LETTERS FOR THE EDITOR SHOULD BE SENT TO ALLEGHENY, PA., U.S.A.
BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS AND REMITTANCES

--ADDRESS TO--

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

--OR TO--

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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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THE NEW VOLUNTEER METHOD.

Evidently it will not be wise to adopt the proposed
new method of house-to-house Volunteering in all cities.
The old method will evidently still be the best for such

cities as New York, where a number of families reside in one house, and for places where the population is not generally English-speaking and Protestant.

ZION'S GLAD SONGS.

We have this booklet of spiritual songs in large supply again, and orders can be filled promptly. While it is not expected that the "Songs" shall take the place of the noble hymns in the book POEMS AND HYMNS OF DAWN, they will be found appropriate for social meetings and praise services. The price is 5c each, postpaid; 60c per doz.

POEMS AND HYMNS OF DAWN.

This work contains a very choice selection of 160 poems and 333 hymns, purged, we trust, from much of the too common hymn-book theology. In cloth binding only, 50 cents. TOWER subscribers supplied at the wholesale rate, 25 cents. This price now includes postage.

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CONVENTIONS ACROSS THE SEA.

--COMPLETION OF THE EDITOR'S TOUR.--

DEAR WATCH TOWER READERS:--

At Edinburgh was our last stop in Scotland, our next Convention having been arranged for Liverpool, England. On our arrival we were met by six representatives of the local Church, who greeted us warmly in the name of our King, and made us comfortable. After a refreshing sleep, we were ready for the Convention sessions of Saturday and Sunday (May 16, 17)--five well-attended sessions, beginning with 300 and ending with 600, and averaging 400. Of these, probably 80 were friends from cities we did not have the time to visit--some of them coming considerable distances. Our topics were the same as at other points, except that on Sunday afternoon we had a Question and Answer meeting, lasting from 3 to 5. A free luncheon was served between the afternoon and evening sessions on both days, and was enjoyed by about 150. It is our hope that some good was accomplished by this Convention also; that some who came from curiosity were deeply interested; that some already established were encouraged to "press on"; that some partially convinced were helped to full conviction respecting the great divine plan and the grand

privilege of participating in it--now, in sufferings and reproaches, and hereafter in glorious services in the Kingdom; and that some of those already clear in the truth were encouraged and more firmly established, and incited more than ever to "lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us [in some, one weakness; and in others, another]," and to "run with patience the race that is set before us in the gospel." If kind words and fervent wishes and earnest hand-shakes speak of love and zeal, then surely we had abundant testimony of the devotion of the Liverpool Church. The next morning thirty gathered at the depot, leaving other concerns in order to bid us a final adieu and to urge that we come again before long. Again, as we parted, the song-prayer was lifted heavenward--"God be with you till we meet again!"

Our next appointment was Birmingham, where we arrived about noon, and were met and welcomed at the depot by representatives of the local Church. We could stay but the one day here; but had two sessions --3 to 5 and 7 to 9. At the afternoon session we spoke of the oneness of the Church, the body of Christ, and the terms of our relationship to our Head; and saw that in no sense are we gathered to men or organizations, but to the Lord himself. "Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice." "They shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels." About 20 WATCH TOWER readers from outside cities attended. After a free luncheon, in which 55 participated, came the evening session--more particularly for the public--the topic being, "The Oath-bound Covenant." Next morning we bade final farewells and resumed our journey.

Manchester was our next appointment. We reached there by noon and at 2.30 p.m. began another happy Convention, in the usual Salford meeting room. The attendance (about 125) represented the deeply interested of that vicinity and of neighboring towns. The closest attention was given us while we endeavored to stir up the pure minds of all, by pointing out the oneness of the Church as the members of Christ's body, and that we must all be "beheaded"--must all lose our own headship and self-will, in order that we may be acceptable as members of Christ's body, over which he is the only Lord and Head, and his will the only law or control. A free luncheon was then

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served--participated in most joyously by about 100. Then came our public meeting in the Town Hall, 6.30 to 8.45. Here a very intelligent audience of about 500 gave close attention for nearly three times as long as is their custom. We trust that some received the lesson of "The Oath-bound Covenant" into good and

honest hearts, and that thus started, they will begin to read and to study the literature, without which there is little hope for full development under the blessings and privileges of the Lord's people in this "harvest" time.

The next day we had three sessions. At 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. we addressed the Church on the necessity for putting on the whole armor of God, that we may be able to stand in this evil day. We pictured the race-course, called attention to its various degrees of progress in the fulfilling of the law of the New Creation --namely, Love. Our evening session at 6.30 was again a public one in the "Pendleton Town Hall." Again we had the intelligent audience of the previous night, and again they gave closest attention till 8.40, when we were obliged to close with prayer, without taking time for a closing hymn, and to hasten to our train, connecting with the steamer for Dublin, Ireland. But the audience was loth to leave even then, and, while we put on our wraps to leave, stood singing:

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"God be with you till we meet again!
By his counsels guide, uphold you;
With his sheep securely fold you;
God be with you till we meet again!

"God be with you till we meet again!
'Neath his wings protecting hide you;
Daily manna still provide you;
God be with you till we meet again!

"God be with you till we meet again!
When life's perils thick surround you
Put his arms unfailing round you;
God be with you till we meet again!"

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Before the train started, fully sixty of the friends had gathered around our "carriage" door. For the third and fourth (and, by some of them, for the sixth) time, our hand was clasped in a fervent good-bye, and the hymn-prayer went up from all our hearts, as with bared heads we unitedly sang:

"Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love."

Dublin was reached in due course--May 21st. Our first meeting was a public one the same evening, 8 to 9.40, in Rotunda Hall. Our audiences were very attentive, though less enthusiastic than those of England and Scotland--owing, no doubt, to the fact that "present truth" is newer there, has been less studied and is less clearly comprehended. Our first topic was "The Oath-bound Promise," and it is our hope that some of

the dear people who listened so intently may be awakened to the necessity of studying the divine plan as set forth in MILLENNIAL DAWN. Some so resolved, and made the start the same evening, as we happen to know.

Friday's meetings were held in the same place from 4 to 6 and 8 to 10. Some interest was awakened, but how much or how deep, who can say? We are hopeful, however, of the future work here--especially if the city can be systematically colporteurd. We hope that two or three of the brethren will see their privilege and undertake the work. We know of no service open to so many of the Lord's people and offering such abundant return of sheaves, as well as of joy to the reapers.

Saturday morning started us for Belfast, where an evening meeting with an interested group of fifteen was enjoyed. Our hearts burned with love for the Lord and for the brethren, as we called to mind that "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his Covenant." (Psa. 25:19.) We noted also the words, "None of the wicked shall understand," remarking the impossibility of interesting such in present truth; and that any once sanctified and blest are sure to lose their interest in the deep things of God if they "return to their wallowing in the mire" of sin. We called attention to the fact that murderers and criminals in general profess faith in the eternal torment doctrine, and have mostly been trained to it from infancy, while we who know the Lord and his plan of mercy and love are constrained, not to license sin, but, reversely, to copy the divine character.

Sunday's public meetings in Belfast were from 3 to 5 and from 7 to 9.15. The interest, indicated by the close attention given for lengthy sessions, was excellent. Here we parted company with Brothers Hemery (the London representative, who joined our party at Glasgow) and Henninges, who returned to London, via Liverpool, where the latter met Sister H. on her arrival from America. The Editor took ship next morning for Glasgow, bidding good-bye on the wharf to six very earnest brethren who assured us of their full consecration to the Lord and the truth, and their intention to serve it henceforth with renewed energy. They urged us to return, as the Lord's providence might lead, and wished us to remember them to those of like precious faith in America. Our duties required but a brief stay in Glasgow, and we took the night train for London, en route for Germany, etc.

At London we parted company with Brother Hemery and were joined by Sister Henninges from the U.S.A. She brought us the kind greetings of the Buffalo and the New York City Churches, which were greatly appreciated.

About 65 of the London friends had gathered at the railway station to bid us a final adieu--too many to gain admission to the train platform, so we bade them "Good-bye" in the station, where we joined them in the well-known verse:

"Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above!"

The scene was one long to be remembered, for our hearts felt the meaning of every word we uttered. In answer to queries we again promised to return whenever the Lord's providences seem so to direct.

A rail journey to the sea, a night on the boat and then seven hours by rail, brought us to Elberfeld, Germany --already decided upon as the most appropriate location for the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society's branch for Germany, France, Switzerland, Italy, Denmark, Sweden, etc. We made this selection because of the character of the population--religious and independent. Our contact with the people has seemed to confirm this.

Our first attention was given to searching for suitable apartments. We obtained from a renting agency the addresses of eight places, and on going to the first of these we felt that the Lord's providence had directed us to it; and after looking at the others we felt convinced of this, and rented it. It has a large room, suitable for meetings, with three smaller rooms connected, suitable for light housekeeping, one of which can be made into one with the large room (by opening four large doors) should this ever become necessary. It would thus accommodate 150 persons. There is also a basement for the storage of tons of tracts, DAWNS, etc. The location is fine--near the post-office and railway station, and with an electric car service to every part of the city. And, an important item, the rent is cheap.

The next day we met with the dear friends of Barmen-Elberfeld and vicinity. In the afternoon we had a social and question meeting with the deeply interested numbering about 35. In the evening we had a public meeting, attended by about 100, of whom probably one-half were in sympathy with present truth, and the remainder their friends who are inquiring. We spoke on "The Oath-bound Covenant," endeavoring to stimulate the faith of all in that promise, and urging all to lay firm hold of the great promise and to seek earnestly to make their calling and election sure to a membership in the Church, the Body of Christ--the Seed of Abraham that is so soon to engage in the grand work of blessing all the families of the earth, distributing the divine favors legally secured by the sacrifice of God's dear Son, our Lord.

After a night's rest we arose at 5 a.m. and took an early train for Mulhausen (in company with three brethren, also bound for Zurich). We arrived at 5 p.m. and received a hearty greeting at the station. Being thus refreshed in spirit, and subsequently with substantials, we were pleased to address 50 brethren and friends from 8.15 to 10.15--speaking, as at the previous place, on the Oath-bound Promise, which cannot fail, and which means so much to us, the Church, and also to the world.

At noon on the next day (May 30) we left for Basle, Switzerland, where during three hours between trains we made the personal acquaintance of the brethren there, and sought to encourage them to run the heavenly race with patience. Our arrival at Zurich was late at night, but a dozen of the brethren awaited us at the depot and gave us hearty greetings, which we as heartily reciprocated. Our stay of two days at Zurich was interesting and, we trust, not without profit. We got personally acquainted with 170, previously known only through correspondence, mostly Swiss, but a goodly number from France and Germany, besides two from Hungary and two from Italy.

Our stop at Thun was only a short one, but gave us the acquaintance of still others of the household of faith. Here we parted company with Brother and Sister Henniges, who returned to Elberfeld and the new work there, while we hastened on--stopping at Neuchatel, Switzerland between trains. Here the friends, as per previous arrangement, met us at the depot and escorted us to a nearby park, where we had a twenty-five minutes talk, through two interpreters, on the things pertaining to the Kingdom. Two of the fourteen present were Germans.

By appointment with Bro. Hemery, the Society's British representative, we stopped two days in London--not to meet the Church, but to seek a new location for the Society's London office. The matter is not yet settled, but the splendid prospects for the work in Great Britain appeal to us strongly for a more central location than the one which has served us so well for the past three years. We are looking for the leadings of divine providence in this matter and will report on it later.

Our return journey was by the same splendid steamer in which we went away--the "New York." The Lord furnished an opportunity for the distribution of tracts and also for a Sunday afternoon service (in the second cabin)--as a result of which we hope for the garnering of at least two grains of "wheat." On board was a polite minister of the Episcopal church, but conversation revealed the fact that, like the one we met when outward bound, he is not a Christian--not a believer

in the fall and, consequently, not a believer in the redemption from the "curse," or condemnation, of the fall--not a believer in the atonement. The evidences multiply that the falling mentioned by the prophet is well advanced: "A thousand shall fall at thy side." Evidently the leaders of Christian sentiment and ceremony have already fallen from the faith.

We were amazed at the lack of interest in religious themes amongst the passengers. An extensive library on board was well patronized for works of fiction, but no one seemed to care for religious matters--especially amongst the upper class. They have lost their fear of eternal torment, and neither have, nor seek, anything to take its place. The rejection of "hell" means to them a rejection of absolute faith in the Bible as God's inspired Word. (What a great injury that unscriptural theory has worked!) They satisfy the cravings of their minds with morality and forms of godliness. We are glad that it is so, rather than the reverse,--that they should be steeped in immorality and ungodly practises. But how we long for ability to open the eyes of their understanding that they might rejoice with us in the divine "plan of the ages" and in the love toward God which it inspires! Thank God the powers of darkness will soon be scattered by the glories of the Millennial morning, when many of these fine, noble people will see out of obscurity, and rejoice to avail themselves of the restitution privileges then prevailing!

As our vessel reached its dock we were greeted by thirteen of the dear friends of the New York Church--first with waving handkerchiefs and hats, and later with fervent hand-clasps. The busiest afternoon of the week was sacrificed to do honor to the cause we represent. The Lord, we are sure, will reward their love. (Heb. 6:10.) One dear brother remarked, "Brother Russell, we remembered you in prayer every day; and I believe it was so with the dear friends everywhere. I am confident that no pilgrimage ever made was accompanied by so many prayers." We answered that we had greatly enjoyed and been encouraged by the thought that at least 20,000 of God's people were thus remembering us almost daily.

As we neared Pittsburg on Sunday morning, two of the brethren boarded our train at an outer station to be first to welcome us home, and later at the depot we were cordially welcomed by a delegation from the Allegheny Church. One of these dear brethren had come all the way from Canada to participate in this greeting. We were escorted to the large sitting-room of the Bible House (Allegheny). Entering, we found the office-workers gathered--each with a red rose on his bosom, emblematic of Christian love. After greetings, a rose was pinned to our coat lapel,

too, and then the entire company joined in a hymn of welcome composed for the occasion, after which one of our number rendered our united acknowledgments and thanks to God. The hymn follows--the first verse

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representing the sentiments of the returning one:--

"Home again! Home again!
From a foreign shore,
And oh! it fills my soul with joy
To meet you all once more.
Here I left the friends so dear,
To cross the ocean's foam;
But now I'm once again with those
Who kindly greet me home."

Welcome home! Welcome home!
This our happy strain;
For God in love has overruled,
And brought thee home again.
Day by day our earnest prayers
Were with thee o'er the sea,
That God would bless his work abroad,
And gently care for thee.

Happy hearts, happy hearts,
Join in grateful praise
To him who guides and guards his own
Throughout their earthly days.
Cords of love our hearts entwine,
Sweet love that shall not fail;
'Twill firmly bind us while on earth,
And reach beyond the vail.

Happy hearts, happy hearts,
Join in grateful praise
To him who leads the happy throng
To everlasting days.

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Notwithstanding the fact that it rained, and that it was generally expected that we would not arrive until Monday, and a reception had been arranged for Monday night, the Bible House Chapel was full (about 300) for our usual Sunday afternoon service. For this occasion, and for the Monday night reception, many of the dear friends had sent in floral offerings, and the Chapel platform was resplendent as never before with roses and lilies and ferns. At first our "bump" of economy was disposed to chide our dear friends for their generosity, and to say, "Wherefore this waste! The money represented in these flowers might have been better spent in publishing tracts, etc.,

to assist our poor blinded brethren." But we remembered that it was Judas, and not our Lord, who voiced those sentiments. So we accepted all as done unto him who loved us and bought us with his own precious blood (Eph. 4:2), and said not one word to mar the joy of the dear company, who, after our discourse on Isaiah 55:8-11, pressed our hand, assuring us of their joy in welcoming us home. We assured them that, although we had met and become personally interested in many dear brethren and sisters on foreign shores, our heart was proportionately enlarged, so that it meant

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no diminution of our love for the dear saints in America, and, in an especial sense, the Church at Allegheny.

Monday night's reception brought together a splendid company of the Lord's consecrated children--adorned with the fruits and graces of the holy spirit, "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great value." (1 Pet. 3:4.) Quite a number came from surrounding cities and towns--and more flowers came, too; "alabaster boxes" of sweet odor to the Lord, because really rendered unto him, and to us merely because he had been pleased to use us as his mouthpiece in proclaiming his great plan of the ages in this his due time for revealing it. It is not possible to describe the pleasures of our fellowship in Christ that evening, and we will not try. But it is safe to say that with all the secret of joy was in the Lord's great plan and in what we can see of its prosperity.

Faithfully, your brother and servant in the Lord,
CHARLES T. RUSSELL.

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"GROW IN GRACE."

"Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever. Amen."--2 Pet. 3:17,18.

THERE is a touching tenderness in the epistles of the aged Apostle Peter to the household of faith, showing that, while he realized that the time of his departure was drawing nigh (2 Pet. 1:14; John 21:18,19), his solicitude for the growth and development of the Church was increasing. Accordingly, he writes two general epistles, not so much to advance new truth, as to call to remembrance truths already learned and fully received (2 Pet. 1:12-15),

and to counsel all to faithfulness and to growth in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

In the preceding verses he has been calling to mind some of these truths, and he recognizes the fact that those addressed are already established in them; but, in view of his knowledge that false teachers would arise to pervert the truth, he counsels special watchfulness against being led away from their present steadfastness by the error of the wicked. That this counsel of the Apostle has a special fitness to the Church in the last days, our days, and was evidently so designed by the Spirit of God, is clear from verse 3--"There shall come in the last days scoffers," etc.

Let us observe the manner in which the Apostle would have us guard against being led away by the error of the wicked. Is it by a careful investigation of all the claims which every new false prophet that arises may intrude upon our attention, thus giving heed to every seducing spirit (1 Tim. 4:1)? No: that would be quite contrary to the teaching of "our beloved brother Paul," to whom Peter so affectionately refers, and whom he so fully endorses; for Paul had given no uncertain counsel on this subject; saying, "Shun profane and vain babblings; for they will increase unto more ungodliness, and their word will eat as doth a canker;" and "I entreat you, brethren, to mark those who are making factions and laying snares contrary to the teaching which you have learned, and turn away from them; for they that are such are not in subjection to our anointed Lord, but to their own appetite [for honor and praise among men, as great teachers--1 Tim. 1:6,7]; and by kind and complimentary words they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting. ...I wish you to be wise with respect to that which is good, and harmless with respect to that which is evil."--2 Tim. 2:16,17; Rom. 16:17-19.

Peter felt the force of Paul's wise and earnest counsel, and with emphasis re-echoed the same sentiments. To give heed to such seducing doctrines, contrary to the doctrine which we have already received from the Lord and the apostles, argues a lack of faith in those doctrines. Such a one is not established in the faith. And indeed there are those--and such is the general sentiment among the teachers of false doctrine--who think that it is not either necessary or advisable to be established in the faith. To be established is to be a bigot, is the idea they advance. And so it is, if one is so unfair in mind as to accept and tenaciously hold that which he has never proved either by sound logic or Bible authority. But he is not an unreasoning bigot who, in simple faith, on the authority of God, accepts the Word of God. And such, and only such, as do so are established in the truth. The difference between the strong and steadfast Christian and a bigot is that the one is established in the truth,

while the other is established in error. The former knows the truth, and the truth has made him free from all doubts and misgivings, and from all desire to delve into the muddy pool of human speculations. To all such Paul says, "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him, rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught [by us, the apostles], abounding therein with thanksgiving."--But, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."--Col. 2:6-8.

With these sentiments of "our beloved brother

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Paul," Peter's counsel is in fullest harmony, his advice being, not to waste valuable time in investigating "the errors of the wicked;" but, on the contrary, to endeavor the more earnestly to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ," who is the way, the truth and the life. The more thorough our knowledge of the Lord and the more intimate our acquaintance with him, the more secure we are in our own steadfastness.

But what is it to grow in grace? It is to grow in favor with the Lord through an intimate personal acquaintance and fellowship of spirit with him. It implies, first, a knowledge and recognition on our part of our redemption through his precious blood and a personal faith in and dependence upon all the promises of the Father made to us through him, and then an intimate communion with him in our daily life of prayer, and of observation of his will and obedience to it. If such be our constant attitude of mind and heart, there must be a constant ripening of the fruits of the spirit, rendering us more and more pleasing and acceptable to our Lord. A sense of the divine acceptance and favor is given to us from day to day in increasing measure, in fulfilment of that blessed promise of our Lord, "If a man love me he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."--John 14:23.

This, as nearly as words can express it, is what it is to grow in grace; but the full and blessed understanding of it is best appreciated by those who from day to day walk with God in faith and obedience and love.

To grow thus in grace and not grow in knowledge is impossible; for the very object of such communion is to build us up in a more perfect knowledge and acquaintance with the Lord--to bring us into closer fellowship with the divine plan, and to give us the privilege of being "workers together with him" in executing that plan. If, therefore, we love and obey

the Lord and desire to grow in his favor, his written Word is our daily meditation and study; and thus we grow in knowledge: not, however, by finding out each year that what we learned last year was false, but by adding to what we learned last year, by putting on more and more of the armor of God until we realize its glorious completeness in the full discernment of the divine plan of the ages. We are then ready to do valiant service for the cause of truth in withstanding the encroachment of error (Eph. 6:10-13), being established, strengthened and settled in the faith (1 Pet. 5:10.) But even to those thus established in the faith there is abundant opportunity to grow in knowledge; for while they will see nothing new or different in outline or design, they will be continually charmed and cheered with newly discovered lines of harmony and beauty in the divine drawings of the wonderful plan of the ages. As pupils we may ever study the master workmanship of the Divine Architect,

"And still new beauties shall we see,
And still increasing light."

Our beloved brother Peter, zealous for our growth in knowledge, endeavors to inspire us thereto, by calling our attention to the wonderful events and the close proximity of the day of the Lord; saying,--

"The day of the Lord will come as a thief [unobserved by the world], in the which the heavens [present ecclesiastical powers] shall pass away with a great noise [tumult and confusion], and the elements [the various parties and sects composing it, split and torn by discordant views] shall melt with fervent heat [the heat of public discussion and investigation]: the earth also [society as at present organized under civil and ecclesiastical authority] and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (destroyed, in the strife and friction caused by increasing knowledge combined with selfishness. This will not be a literal fire, but, as described by the prophets, the fire of divine jealousy--Zeph. 1:18; 3:8). (2 Pet. 3:10.) Already the noise and tumult, which shall thus eventuate in world-wide anarchy, are distinctly heard in every nation: for the day of the Lord has indeed begun, and the heat of human passion is growing more and more intense daily, and the great time of trouble is very near.

"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved [seeing that present arrangements and institutions shall all go down], what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens [the present ruling powers] shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?" Let us indeed lay to heart this solemn question, for we stand in the very presence of the Judge of all the earth. These words, while addressed to God's people eighteen centuries ago, and serving a

purpose for good all along down this Gospel age, are specially meant by the spirit for us, who are living in this very Day of God.

"Nevertheless, we [we who have come into covenant relationship with the Lord--we, unlike the rest of the world, know of the divine plan and], according to his promise, look for new heavens [the Kingdom of God--to be established in power and great glory] and a new earth [a new organization of society under the rulership of Christ and his glorified bride, the Church] wherein dwelleth righteousness." Blessed assurance! how favored are we above the

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people of the world who have not this knowledge!

"Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." (2 Pet. 3:11-14.) And Jude (24) reminds us that the Lord, in whose grace and knowledge Peter desires us to grow, "is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." Amen.

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UNFAVORABLE ANSWERS TO PRAYER.

--1 SAM. 8:1-10.--JULY 5.--

Golden Text:--"Prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only."--1 Sam. 7:3.

THE International Lesson course now turns again to the Old Testament. Six months ago we considered the child Samuel, his parentage, training, acceptance with God, etc. The present lesson takes up the thread of history in Samuel's old age. There is not a suggestion anywhere of disloyalty to the Lord or to the people of Israel on the part of this great prophet Samuel; the Lord's love and favor continued with him to the very close of his life and made it useful to the very end. As he advanced in years, and as the nation of Israel advanced in numbers, it seemed a proper thing that, in addition to the court of justice presided over by the prophet, there should be another court, especially on the southern boundary of Palestine, at Beersheba; and having sons, it was but natural that the prophet should expect of them considerable ability, discretion, wisdom and integrity in serving the Lord and his people according to the example which he had set them. Where could he expect to find more competent

assistant judges for service in Beersheba than his own sons?

We perceive that integrity of character, although transmissible to a certain degree, cannot be fully relied upon in the children, however noble and God-fearing the parent. The heart, the will, of each individual, is independent; training may indicate to it the proper course, but full consecration to the Lord is essential to the full, ripe development of character. Samuel's integrity is shown by the fact that when it was proven to him that his sons were guilty of accepting bribes to pervert justice, he promptly removed them from their positions of influence. Doubtless he had in mind the course of his predecessor, Eli, who was too lax in his dealings with his own sons, and thus permitted great calamities to come upon them and upon the people. The nobility and integrity of Samuel's course, which so commends itself to all lovers of righteousness, was no doubt to some extent guided by the lessons of the Lord exemplified in Eli's case. Certain it is that Samuel continued in the divine favor to the end of his course.

As we have already seen, there were elders, or judges, in all the tribes, whose business it was to conduct and adjudicate the smaller matters of the people of their own tribe. It was probable, therefore, that only the larger questions were brought before Samuel and his sons, who constituted, we might say, a kind of superior court--Samuel, as a prophet and judge of divine appointment, representing the Lord. The government of Israel was different from that of every other government in the world. God was their real King, and in his providences, according to the covenant he had made with them, he supervised their affairs--whether by permitting them to go into temporary captivity to their enemies, because of sins and unfaithfulness to him, or by prospering the nation and delivering them and guiding their efforts favorably when living in obedience to him. Under the judgeship of Samuel they had no king, no emperor, no one except the Lord, to hold an autocratic position, and whose word would be law--the judges raised up for them from time to time being providentially guided by the Lord. The government was not a republic in the present day understanding of that term. The people did not choose their own head, or president, or judge; they merely looked for the leadings of divine providence and accepted such judges as the Lord raised up for them. Their condition was a most happy one in many respects: how much better to have the Lord's providential guidance in all our affairs than to trust in our own wisdom or in the wisdom of some other man or some royal family!

As the Elders of Israel perceived that the sons of Samuel were not to be relied upon to follow in the steps of their father, and to be faithful and impartial judges,

seeking to know and to judge amongst the people according to the divine will, they became fearful; they forgot--or perhaps never fully recognized--that God was their real Judge, their King, and that Samuel was only his representative and mouthpiece. They forgot that although Samuel was growing old, the Lord was "the same yesterday, today and forever," unchangeable, and able to raise up for them, in his own due time, a judge of the kind best suited to their necessities. The anxious Elders of Israel consulted together and concluded that they would feel better satisfied if they were permanently tied up to some autocratic ruler--if they became the servants of some one of their number, and permitted his family in a line of succession to be their masters, their kings. Doubtless, too, they did not

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realize that, personally and nationally, they were on a higher plane than the nations around them that had kings; they felt, on the contrary, that they were "out of style"; and, as people are very apt to do, they concluded that the majority must be right, and probably felt somewhat ashamed to speak of their tribes as a nation without a king, without a master, without a visible lord, claiming allegiance merely to the invisible Jehovah. Kitto tells us of a somewhat similar sentiment springing up amongst the Dutch when the latter had a republican form of government:

"When the English and Dutch were plotting for power and influence in the East, the English, in order to damage their rivals, industriously circulated the dangerous secret that the Dutch had no king. The oriental mind was puzzled and perplexed by the indication of a condition so utterly beyond the scope of its experience and comprehension. The Dutch, alarmed for the effect of this slur upon their respectability, stoutly repelled the charge as an infamous calumny,--affirming that they had a very great king, and exalted, for the nonce, their Stadtt to the higher rank."

Influenced by this servility to custom, the Elders of Israel brought their petition, or prayer, to Samuel that he, as God's representative, would anoint for them a king--a special ruler over them, and make them as a whole a nation of servants to one of their own nation. It is hard for us to sympathize with such ignoble sentiments, such prayers for their own degradation. Samuel seems to have viewed the matter from this standpoint, and, perhaps, also regarded it as a personal slight to himself. However, he very properly took the matter to the Lord in prayer. It was not for him to decide what and how--he was merely the Lord's mouthpiece and representative to speak to the Israelites in the name of the Lord whatever message he should receive. Ah, how grand it would be if the whole world could be under such a rule,--heavenly wisdom directing, and

incorruptible earthly judges communicating and enforcing the divine message and law! And this, the Scriptures inform us, is what will come to pass eventually, the Lord's declaration being, "I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning." (Isa. 1:26.) However, before that grand condition--of which the Jewish law-givers and judges were merely the crudest types--can be realized, it will be necessary for the great King Immanuel to take his great power and reign and subdue all things unto himself. Then, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power"--they will be ready to hearken to the voice of the Lord through those whom he will eventually appoint and recognize as his mouthpieces.

The Lord's answer to Samuel was that the prayer or petition of the people through their elders would be granted; but directed that he should, nevertheless, explain to them what this answer to their prayers, this fulfilment of their desires, would mean--that it would mean the surrender of their liberties and rights; that the rule of a king would be more or less despotic, tyrannical and selfish; that their sons and daughters would be taken to be servants in various capacities; that a large portion of their substance would be taken as taxes for the support of royalty, and that they would be subject to the whims of these masters whom they were desiring, whose pride and ambition would some time lead to rivalries and warfare, in which the whole people, as their servants, would suffer with them.

The elders heard all this delineation of the unwisdom of their course, but were, nevertheless, well satisfied to make the experiment--they wanted to be like the nations around them. How strong is the influence of imitation in all mankind! how necessary that all should have before their minds true standards, true ideals of greatness of liberty or of righteousness--of

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that which is really advantageous! Herein the Lord's people have his wisdom, his spirit--have a standpoint of observation superior to that of others, and possess the spirit of a sound mind proportionate to their education in the school of Christ. He has an education in the school of the Lord which gives him a finer acumen in respect to all the things of this present time, which seem comparatively insignificant to him in comparison with the things of the future--the eternal things. As the Apostle says, "He that is spiritual judgeth [understandeth] all things, yet he himself is judged [understood] of no man."--1 Cor. 2:15.

The Lord pointed out that the people were not rejecting Samuel, but were rejecting him. Indeed, that they had not rejected Samuel was evident from the fact that they came to him with the request. It was their lack of faith in the Lord that led them to fear

what would happen after Samuel should die, or when his usefulness should become impaired through old age. The Lord points out that this had been the attitude of Israel from the first--"all the works that they have done since I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherein they have forsaken me and served other gods,--so do they also unto thee." They, of course, forsook Samuel as their judge; for the king whom he would anoint would be the judge instead. But the discredit to Samuel was nothing in comparison to their discrediting and rejecting the One whom he represented.

The Lord's people of today may draw from these incidents a valuable lesson in connection with the divine supervision of spiritual Israel. The Lord organized the Church very much along the same lines as he organized natural Israel. He is the Head of the Church--the guide and director and instructor of the Church. He guarantees that all things shall work together for good

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to those who love him and follow his guidance. For a time the Lord's people were content with such leadership as he raised up for them in his own way, content that the Lord should direct through the leaders of Zion and that no man should be called lord, or master, or king. For a time spiritual Israel looked only for such instructors, lawgivers, judges, teachers and assistants in the spiritual way as the Lord in his providences raised up for them. But, by and by, there came a time when they said, Let us make us a king--let us have a head in the Christian Church such as there is in all the heathen religions around us. The Lord had already pointed out to his people a great Leader by whom he had made them free; that they all were brethren, and that only one was Lord and Master; that they should recognize no man as lord, and should recognize each other only as servants; and that the one who served most thoroughly--through the Lord's supervision--was to be esteemed as raised up and provided by divine providence for the service, and to be esteemed in proportion to his humility and loyalty to the Lord and his Word.

The spirit of subserviency and the desire to have a head led, first, to a division amongst the Lord's people into two classes called clergy and laity, a division not recognized nor sanctioned in the Word of the Lord; and, secondly, amongst the clergy it led to the exaltation of some, called archbishops, to the position of lordship over districts; and, thirdly, it led to the choice amongst the archbishops of one to be a chief, or pope; and ultimately it led to this chief being considered infallible and a divinely appointed king over spiritual Israel. As there were some better and some worse amongst the kings of natural Israel, so there were some better and

some worse amongst the popes who ruled in spiritual Israel for centuries. Finally, as there was a split in the kingdom of Israel between the ten tribes and the two tribes, so there came in time a split in spiritual Israel nominal, and Protestantism arose, no longer recognizing the popes as kings in spiritual Israel. However, the spirit of subserviency being still present, and the spirit of liberty wherewith Christ had made his people free being still lacking, the Reformation movement led to the appointment and recognition of numerous petty kingdoms in spiritual Israel--the Lutheran house and the Episcopal house and the Presbyterian house and the Methodist house, etc., etc., with their various ecclesiastical princes and potentates, doctors of divinity, etc.--lording it over God's heritage.--1 Pet. 5:3.

It is time for the establishment of the true kingdom --it is just at hand. It is time for the gathering of the elect out of every quarter, every district of this figurative Babylon in which the Lord's people are captives to these devices of Satan; it is time for a reassertion of the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free; it is time that the Lord's people should recognize him as their only King and Director; it is time for them to hear the words, "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of?" (Isa. 2:22); it is time for the Lord's people to realize that the Lord is entirely competent to conduct his own work in the way most pleasing to himself, and most advantageous to those who are truly his; it is time for them to look to the Lord to see what agents, what channels of truth, what ministries of service in spiritual Israel he has provided or is providing. When we come to realize the situation, we find that all this matter of recognizing popes, cardinals, bishops, doctors of divinity, etc., is contrary to the divine arrangement--in direct antagonism to the same; but that, nevertheless, it has not hindered, and will not be permitted to hinder, the accomplishment of the Lord's work and the gathering of the true Israelites, the elect, the precious, the Lord's jewels, out of nominal Israel. This work of the Lord is going gradually on, regardless of what the people in general may do.

We have considered this lesson under the head of "Unfavorable Answers to Prayer," because it furnishes an excellent illustration along this line. What might have been the condition of Israel had they not prayed for a king, we cannot know particularly; but we can know, on the strength of the Lord's Word, that it would have been more favorable to them if they had been in a condition of heart which would have led them to thank God for his care, and to rejoice in him as their King, and to have made no such petition for an earthly monarch as is here recorded. The Lord through the Prophet Hosea (13:9-11) intimates that the answer of this prayer for a king was disadvantageous to the nation; saying, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself;

but in me is thine help. I will be thy king; where is any other that may save thee in all thy cities? and thy judges of whom thou saidst, Give me a king and princes? I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath." The king whom the Lord intends to give to Israel and to the world is Messiah. In due time the Lord will set his king upon his holy hill Zion; the law shall go forth from Mount Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem; in his day the righteous shall flourish and evil doers shall be cut off. The Lord took away the kings of Israel when the people went into captivity to Babylon; there have been no independent kings of their nation since. Today, after centuries of experience without a king of their own, and under various kings of various nations, they are probably in a better condition of heart than ever before to receive the great blessing which God intends to bring to them first amongst the nations of the

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world. The prophet declares of them respecting Messiah's Kingdom, that they shall be ready to hail it and shall say, "This is our God, we have waited for him and he will save us." They certainly had serious experiences, not only under their own kings, but under all the kings of the earth; they certainly should be glad that the time shall again come when the Lord will be King over them--and over all the earth; when he shall restore to them a system of lawgivers and judges, and bless all the families of the earth through the seed of Abraham,--Messiah and his bride, the overcomers of spiritual Israel.--Gal. 3:16,29.

What we thus see exemplified on a large and national scale we may see exemplified in a small way closer to us. How many of us in our ignorance and blindness have at some time in life prayed for the various systems of bondage, for the various sects of Christendom, and labored, too, for their upbuilding, only to find ourselves injured spiritually by that which we prayed for and labored for. We asked amiss, as did the Elders of Israel, while, instead, our hearts as well as theirs should have inquired continually for the ways of the Lord, for his leadings, not asking to have him favor and bless that which we ignorantly and mistakenly supposed to be for his glory and our own good. Let us learn to pray aright, as well as to labor and to hope aright; and in order so to do let us be swift to hear, slow to speak, swift to hearken to the Word of the Lord and to the lesson which he has already given us, and to his method of instructing us and guiding us and blessing us. Let us be slow to tell him what our preferences are; indeed, let us seek to attain that development of Christian character which will permit us always not to seek our own wills, but the will and way of our Father in heaven.

The same principle will apply in the more private affairs of our daily lives. Several parents have told us, with aching hearts, of prayers answered which subsequently they could have wished never answered; they have told us of companions and children on their deathbeds for whose lives they had prayed with importunity and without either the words or the sentiment, Thy will be done, and how the Lord answered those prayers, and what terrible evils had come to them through the answers. All cases may not be alike, but the properly exercised and heart-developed children of God should expect to attain to the place where all of their prayers are answered, and answered in the best possible way, and most satisfactorily, because the Lord's Word dwells in them richly. They would not ask amiss-- would not ask anything contrary to the divine will and providences; but rather, trusting to the divine wisdom, their prayer would be, "Lord, thy will, not mine, be done."

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CHOOSING A KING.

--1 SAM. 10:17-27.--JULY 12.--

Golden Text:--"The Lord is our king;
he will save us."--Isa. 33:22.

ALTHOUGH the people of Israel were self-willed in the matter of desiring a king like the nations about them, it is to their credit that they desired the Lord, through his prophet Samuel, to make the selection of the one who should fill the office. Undoubtedly, however, men of the various tribes were ambitious for the office. To suppose otherwise would be to disregard our knowledge of and experience with human nature. If the petty offices of ward and town politics are eagerly sought and almost fought for at the primaries and polls today, what wire pulling might we not expect if it were determined that a king should be chosen? We fear that a contrast between the people of Christendom and the Israelites on this subject would result unfavorably to the former. In all the countries constituting "Christendom" how few there are who, when choosing their officers, give any consideration whatever to the Lord's choice for the position! Even when we think of the choice of ministers in the denominations of the Church nominal, we find the contrast rather unfavorable; for the choice of a bishop or minister is indeed, apparently, very rarely referred to the Lord exclusively, with the desire to have his will and his choice, and none other, selected.

Guided by the Lord, Saul, a young man from

an influential family, of the tribe of Benjamin, was anointed to be king. He was brought to the prophet for the anointing by a peculiar train of circumstances. His father owned a valuable herd of asses which strayed away, and Saul, after seeking them in vain, appealed to the prophet for assistance in locating them, and thus he showed his confidence in God, and in Samuel as his prophet. Nothing is recorded respecting the young man's interest in religious matters up to this time; but he is mentioned favorably as a "goodly" young man. After his anointing he kept the matter secret with becoming modesty, waiting for the Lord's plan to develop more fully and to bring him ultimately into prominence before the nation. It is quite probable that this secretiveness was at the instigation of Samuel.

In due time Samuel sent word to the Elders of Israel to meet him at Mizpeh (watch-tower), and upon their arrival the matters of this lesson followed. Samuel rehearsed to them the Lord's favor as it had been

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with them during the previous centuries, beginning with their miraculous deliverance from Egypt. He impressed upon them the fact that all of the Lord's care over them had been for their good; that no king could have done them better service than their great King; and that no government could have been more to their happiness than that they had enjoyed and which they were now rejecting in their request for a king, which petition the Lord had determined to grant. In harmony with this they had assembled--not all the people, but representatives from all the tribes and from the various families of each tribe. Ignoring the anointing of Saul already accomplished, Samuel proceeded to cast lots, that the people might thus know that the choice to be made was the Lord's choice and not Samuel's. It was the custom at that time to have the High Priest's ephod in use on such occasions, and a pocket in the ephod was made the receptacle for slips of paper, or sometimes for the precious stones representing the different tribes and families. First, a choice was made amongst the tribes to determine in which one would be found the man whom the Lord had chosen to become their king. Doubtless the princes of the tribe of Ephraim remembered the good promises prophetically given by Jacob respecting them, and probably thought that the Lord's choice would fall upon their tribe. The princes of Manasseh may also have remembered the good promises respecting their tribe, and may not have been without hope respecting the lot. The men of Judah, unquestionably, would call to mind the promise that a lawgiver should come from Judah, and would have strong hopes respecting the result of the lot. But when the lot was cast, when the hand pulled forth from the ephod pocket the stone representing

the tribe of Benjamin, the matter was decided, and in general the people bowed to the Lord's decision. Next, the leading families, or clans, of the tribe of Benjamin were representatively placed in the ephod, and the hand drew forth as the Lord's choice the name representing the family of Matri; and again, the various members of the family of Matri were representatively placed in the ephod bag, and the hand drew forth the name of Saul, the son of Kish. Thus was publicly demonstrated the Lord's choice, which the prophet and Saul himself already knew. We can imagine the stir and commotion to find the man thus chosen to be the king, respecting whom but few of the people seemed to have the slightest knowledge. They sought him everywhere, but could not find him, and again the inspired oracle was sought to indicate whether he would be found, and where. The Lord's answer was that he had hidden himself amongst the stuff--the baggage which, as was the custom, was probably piled up, surrounding the camp as a barricade. Saul evidently had full confidence in the Lord's foreknowledge and that the lots drawn would confirm the prophet's declaration to him and his anointing. The modesty which led him to hide and, to some extent, to shrink from the honor to be conferred, is very gratifying to all right-minded people. Would that we could see more of this modesty amongst the chief ones of this world and also amongst the chief ones of nominal spiritual Israel! We should each mark the beauty of such humble-mindedness, and seek to cultivate the same quality in our own hearts and lives--however different this may make us from the majority of the world.

When Saul stood amongst the people he was head and shoulders above them, probably seven feet tall. His natural qualities would thus appeal strongly to the people of his time, who even in picturing their rulers represented them as many times larger than the average man. Then Samuel introduced him, saying, "See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people?" and the responsive shout of the people was, "God save the king!" or literally, Lord, let the king live--the usual greeting to their kings.

We are reminded of the fact that God is now about to establish a Kingdom in the world and is choosing a King. The Millennial kingdom might not be necessary in the form in which it will be introduced, were the people in the right attitude of heart to desire and to obey the divine will; but they prefer to have the laws of righteousness enforced rather than voluntarily to submit themselves to the Lord. In due time they shall have a king, Immanuel--like Saul in some respects, but very unlike him in others. The Lord is now selecting this King Immanuel. He is passing by the great tribes, the prominent people, and choosing the little and the humble--not many great, not many wise, not many

learned has God chosen, but the poor of this world, rich in faith, to be heirs of the Kingdom. (1 Cor. 1:26-28.) The selection is going on in the sight of all the people. They will be witnesses, when all the steps of the election of God have been taken, that the choice is the Lord's without peradventure; and yet the Lord foreknew his choice in advance of this public selection. He foreknew Jesus as the Head of the Church, the Head of the great King; he anointed him in advance "with the oil of gladness above his fellows," to be King; yet, so far as the people in general are concerned, they know not the Lord's anointed--the matter is kept secret for a time. The members of the body of Christ must all be like the Head. As the Apostle declares, God has predestinated that every one who shall become a member of that body shall be "conformed to the image of his Son." (Rom. 8:29.) By and by, when the outward election is complete, when

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the world shall come properly to feel its need for a great King, search will be made to find the Lord's Anointed, and he will be found at his second advent. "The desire of all nations shall come"; the Christ of God will be the desired one of all nations. (The name Saul, singularly enough, signifies Desired.) As the men of Israel gave a shout when they recognized Saul's stateliness, so the world of mankind will shout for joy when they shall realize the presence of the Christ of God, the great King, their deliverer from Satan, from misrule, from every enemy--the Lord who "must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet--the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." Not only shall it be true that the Lord's Anointed One shall be head and shoulders above all others, "the chiefest amongst ten thousand, the one altogether lovely," but it should also be true to a considerable extent that all those who are intimately associated with the members of the body of Christ in the present life--before he is proclaimed King of the whole world--should be able to recognize the largeness and grandeur of character in those whom the Lord is choosing for this place of honor in the affairs of men. They should be able to take knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus, should see their largeness of heart, their moral heights--should discern in them the spirit of a sound mind.

The record is that a band of Israelites, a bodyguard, at once attached themselves to Saul--men "whose hearts God had touched." They were touched with the realization that the Lord had made this choice, and with the desire to be in accord with the Lord and to support the divine will as it concerned the chosen one, and to cooperate therewith. This is a proper lesson to all of the Lord's people now. It is because we see Jesus to be the Father's

choice that we unite ourselves to him; because we see the Father's character manifested in him that we leave all to follow him. Similarly, if we lend our aid, our support to any human being in connection with the divine plan and service, it should be simply upon

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this ground--not merely a personal magnetism or favoritism, but because our hearts are touched by the Lord with a realization of the leader being of his appointment. Thus our loyalty will always be to God and not to men. Nevertheless, we shall find ourselves co-laboring in a manner most useful and most helpful in the Lord's service; coworkers with God and coworkers with all who are his servants under his appointments. So, doubtless, it will be in the future when the great King complete has taken the reins of government; the best of mankind will flock to him, anxious to know and to do his will and to be in full accord with him as the representative of the heavenly Father and his Kingdom.

The expression "Sons of Belial" signifies children of the Devil, or wicked persons--persons out of harmony with God and not submissive to his arrangements and selections. There are also such in the present time, who are speaking evil directly or indirectly of such members of the body of Christ as they have contact with; being out of sympathy with the Lord they are out of sympathy with all of his arrangements. Their influence either in the nominal church or out of it is, therefore, against the true interests of the Lord's cause. There will be such in the Millennial age when the Kingdom shall have been established, and of these the Lord speaks in the parable, "Those who would not have me to reign over them." Again they are mentioned by the Apostle (Acts 3:23) saying, "It shall come to pass that the soul who will not obey that prophet shall be cut off from amongst the people." However, we may be sure that they will not be cut off until they have had a full exhibition of the divine power and mercy;--only such as resist after all these opportunities and privileges will be counted worthy of the Second Death.

Very shortly after Saul's appointment to the kingdom he had opportunity to show his ability in delivering the people, for a neighboring king advanced upon Israel with a considerable army. Saul gathered his troops from the various tribes, to the number of 330,000 men, and totally routed Nahash and his army of the Ammonites. This victory cemented the hearts of the people of Israel to their king, and they in their loyalty demanded the execution of the sons of Belial who had spoken against him; but the nobility of King Saul is shown in his refusal to accede to this suggestion, and his saying, "There shall not a man be put to

death today." So when the power of the glorious King of the Millennial age shall be manifested in the routing of the enemies of righteousness, the general sentiment of the world toward him will be loyalty, and then he will have an opportunity of showing his mercy and forbearance toward those who during the darkness of the present time have spoken evil of him and sought to oppose his Kingdom. The declaration shall then go forth that none shall die the Second Death on account of Adamic weaknesses, blindness and insubordination; --that none shall die the Second Death except as the result of personal and wilful sin after having been brought to a knowledge of the truth.

Our Golden Text is one the sentiments of which should be deeply impressed upon the hearts of all the Lord's people. The world may cry out, saying, "We have no king but Caesar," but the Lord's people, the Israelites indeed, will feel the reverse of this,--that "the Lord is our king." In harmony with his command, we will honor earthly kings and obey earthly

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laws in every particular in which they do not conflict with the divine law; but, nevertheless, above earthly kings, our esteem, homage and obedience must be to him whom the Lord hath appointed, King Immanuel. If he be enthroned in our hearts it will be comparatively easy for us to be loyal to him in our conduct and in our words, wherever we may be. If we deny him, he will also deny us; but if we confess him he will also confess us before the Father and the holy angels--he will save us and ultimately through us as his Church, his body, he will, according to the original promise, bless all the families of the earth which we, with him, will then inherit.-- Gal. 3:29.

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INTERESTING QUESTIONS ANSWERED.

GOD'S PROVIDENCE OVER THE WORLD.

Question.--I have recently lost a friend by death, and notice that your teaching seems to be that the Lord's providential care is over the consecrated ones. Am I to get the thought that God had no providential care over the interests of my friend?

Answer.--"His tender mercies are over all his works." (Psa. 145:9.) Hence, in a certain sense, God's providential care attaches to every creature.

"The whole creation is his charge,
But saints are his peculiar care."

When thinking of your friend, consider him as one of the many children of Adam whom God so loved as to give for them his only begotten Son. The redemption price has been paid by our Lord, and the time of deliverance draws near. When it shall have arrived, all the families of the earth will receive a blessing at the hands of him who loved us and bought us with his precious blood. Viewing the matter from this standpoint, there is no human creature that is not a subject of divine providence and care. In speaking of God's providences being over only the consecrated, we referred to his special providences of this Gospel age in respect to the calling and election of the Church, the body of Christ. Divine providence deals with this class alone in this Gospel age, favoring them by the call and by the adversities which will polish and fit them as jewels for the Kingdom. For these, all things shall work together for good, because they love God in an especial sense--better than they love self or family or houses or lands --yea, better than their own lives.

WHO ARE OUR BRETHREN?

Question.--What should be our attitude toward professing Christians of the various denominations who give evidence of but slight knowledge of the truth, and but slight appreciation of the ransom? Should we consider them brethren in Christ? and should we fellowship them as such? or should we treat them as heathen men and publicans?

Answer.--All who profess love to the Lord Jesus Christ and have faith in him as their Savior--even though their knowledge of his redemptive work be but limited and vague--and whose general conduct is noted as indicating their desire to walk after the spirit and not after the flesh, should be considered and treated as brethren. But when we use the word "brother" we are to remember that amongst believers there are two classes of brethren: (1) Those who have merely pledged themselves to the Lord for a reformation of life, and who are to some extent trusting in the Savior; and (2) those who have gone on and who have consecrated their lives even unto death, and have been begotten as new creatures by the holy spirit. These are brethren of a different order; the first were typified in the Levites, the last in the priests. Both are our brethren, and both should be treated courteously, kindly, helpfully; but it would be impossible to fellowship the first class in the same manner or degree that we would fellowship the second class. In considering the Church, only the latter

should be counted, because the Church is the body of Christ, the Royal Priesthood. Only the latter, therefore, should be expected to participate in the Memorials of the Lord's death, and the pledge of consecration to be dead with him. It is to the first of these classes of brethren (typified by the Levites) that the Apostle addressed the exhortation, "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies living sacrifices," etc. (Rom. 12:1.) Those who follow this exhortation and make the sacrificial consecration, thereby become brethren on the highest plane of the spirit, and thus become members of the highest degree of fellowship as members of the body of the Anointed One.

Knowledge is to be highly esteemed in the Church, and to be regarded as an evidence of progress, of growth; for none can grow strong in the Lord and in the power of his might--in grace--unless he grows also in knowledge. We properly esteem most highly those whose love for the Lord and for his truth are evidenced by zeal in the study of his Word, and whose favor with God is evidenced by their being guided more and more into the deep things of God. Nevertheless, as in the earthly family we love and care for the babes and immature, so also in the household of faith the little ones and the dwarfs are to be cared for and loved and helped that they may grow strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.

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VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER.

VARYING DEGREES OF UNBELIEF.

THE "higher critics" differ considerably. It would be amusing, were it not so serious a subject, to note how the one class upbraids the other for "destructive criticism of the Word of God," and then in the same article proceeds along the same lines,-- only a little less destructive of the faith. For instance, note the following from the Presbyterian Standard:--

"On Sunday last Dr. Josiah Penniman, dean of the University of Pennsylvania, delivered an exceedingly interesting address or lay sermon from the pulpit of the Asheville Presbyterian Church at the morning hour, in which he told of the remarkable revelations made by pick and shovel in excavating the site of the ancient city of Chalneh in the valley of the Euphrates. This city is mentioned in Gen. 10:10, and the work of digging it out has been done by the University of Pennsylvania during the last thirteen years. The destructive critics say that the art of writing was not known at the time of Abraham. But the University of Pennsylvania has exhumed more than forty thousand burnt clay tablets full of written records dating back 4,000 years before the Christian era, and so 2,000 years before the time of Abraham. The destructive critics say that the war of the kings as recorded in Gen. 14 is all a myth, as at that early age of the world such armies could not have been collected. But on some of the 40,000 tablets in the possession of the University of Pennsylvania taken from the site of this ancient city, the names of the very kings who carried on this war are given just as they are recorded in Gen. 14, and some of the spoils which they carried off from Chalneh have been found in excavating the ancient city of Susa.

"These excavations have upset the already tottering chronology of Usher and have put the existence of man on the earth back some 10,000 years before the Christian era, and they show the existence of a high civilization at that early period. The work of exhuming Chalneh began on what seemed to be merely a mound of

sand in a desert of drifting sand. The dome of a building was soon reached, which proved to be a magnificent temple of Baal, of whose worship this city was the center. The temple had been covered to the depth of more than forty feet from its base by the drifting sands. Among other curiosities found in adjacent buildings was the strong room of a real estate and banking house, containing certificates of deposit, title deeds, tax receipts and the like, all on baked clay tablets and beautifully written in cuneiform characters, and they read very much like similar 'papers' in a modern real estate dealer's office.

"Dr. Penniman had beautiful photographs of the buildings in the city, which were strong, massive and imposing, and very much like the best buildings in our modern cities. The names of the various kings and dynasties are given, with the dates of each, which extend back to a period 2,000 years before Abraham, or to the time of Adam, according to our common chronology.

"But the pick and the shovel went deeper, and the very surprising discovery was made that this ancient city of Chalneh was built on the site of a still more ancient city beneath it, of which there seems to have been no memory or tradition at the founding of the city of Chalneh. This city dated back at least 4,000 years more, or to a period 8,000 years before the Christian era. Its inhabitants, whoever they were, were very skilled builders, and had massive stone houses and temples several stories high, in which the arch is freely used. The arch was unknown to the Egyptians or to the Greeks or to any of the peoples whom we call 'the ancients,' and is considered a Roman invention. But the modern pick and shovel unearths it where the sands of the desert had buried it so deep that all memory and tradition of the mighty builders who invented it and used it some 8,000 to 10,000 years before Christ had passed away from among men; and what has been considered an invention of the Romans was really one of the 'lost arts' of a highly civilized people who lived and built and wrote and thought and perished, and the record of them and of their doings has lain for probably a hundred centuries so deep beneath the sands that their burial place was used by other men as a place

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for their building; and these in turn were buried in the sand, the removal of which shows that the Bible record is accurately true in its minute details, for while man must come and man must go, the Word of God abideth forever."

* * *

All should recognize clearly and distinctly what

is implied by the foregoing. It means that the lecturer wholly disagrees with that open form of infidelity which denies the Bible in toto, claiming that the books of Moses, as well as the books of the prophets of the Old Testament, were written only a short time before Christ--after the return of the Israelites from the Babylonian captivity. The claim is that these books are pious frauds, having little, if any, foundation in truth. Dr. Penniman, the lecturer, was not in sympathy with such open infidelity. He was glad, therefore, when the excavations he mentioned disclosed certain outside information, corroborative of some of the statements of Genesis. We are glad that the Doctor is with us thus far; but we regret to note that he is so tinctured with the spirit of higher criticism that the researches which he mentions have not convinced him that the Bible is of divine origin, and, therefore, unqualifiedly true. He merely admits that it is not unqualifiedly false--that these findings prove that there is some reliability in the Scriptural account;--but he evidently is as far from accepting the Bible narrative as it stands, as are the most destructive of the higher critics.

The chronology of the Bible is so thoroughly interwoven with its narrative that the two are bound up together as web and woof: to destroy the one destroys the other; to invalidate the one invalidates the other; to corroborate the one corroborates the other.

There is no question whatever that the Bible contains a chronological chain down to the Babylonian captivity--even the captious find it impossible to disagree more than 128 years with what we have presented as the chronology of the Bible;--and then they must make that period shorter than we do instead of longer. No kind of reasoning or figuring based on the Bible statements of chronology can extend the period from the creation to the birth of our Lord beyond 4128 years which we have assigned to the period. Dr. Penniman, as the Dean of a University, and a lecturer upon this subject, is, of course, thoroughly aware of these facts. Yet how strange it is that he should address an audience as a champion of the Bible, and at the same time discredit the Bible by asserting, as he does, that man had been on the earth some ten thousand years prior to the Christian era! If this gentleman is a friend of the Bible, the latter has good reason to cry out, "Save me from my friends!"

If the Doctor is a disbeliever in the Bible, and is posing as its friend and champion, he is occupying a dishonest and dishonorable position. In any event, the Bible is far better off without such friends and such champions. Whether intentionally or unintentionally, they are serving the cause of infidelity--they are overthrowing faith in the Word of God. True, we are to expect just such things at this particular time, for the Apostle assures us that every man's faith-

structure shall be tried so as by fire; and that all the wood, hay and stubble shall be destroyed. We are, of course, sure that those who have built their faith according to the direction of the Lord's Word, upon the proper foundation, and with the proper materials, the gold, silver, precious stones of divine truth, the Word of God,--these will never fail, will never be stumbled, but will come off conquerors. But we also know that this class is a remarkably small one, out of the millions of Christendom. Let us not be surprised, then, that the "fire of this day shall try every man's work, of what sort it is." Let us, on the contrary, take the more earnest heed and the more firmly hold on to the things which we have received of the Lord, which in the end will shine forth gloriously bright and convincing to the whole world of mankind.

HOW SHALL WE UNDERSTAND THEM?

The question naturally arises, if honorable men, students "learned in all the learning of the Egyptians," find in the ruins of ancient civilization evidences satisfactory to them that man has been on the earth at least six thousand years longer than the Bible records teach, how shall the average person of medium ability and intelligence and opportunities determine what is the truth on this subject? If he cannot rely upon the savants, upon whom or upon what can he rely?

We answer, that the savants base their estimates on their guesses,--and their guesses vary according to their mental makeup. Many of them guess that man has been on the earth for millions of years; others, like Dr. Penniman, congratulate themselves upon getting their faith down to a difference of only six thousand years from the Bible standpoint; but the humble child of God, who has made a proper use of the opportunities now within his reach, has learned to have little confidence in the guesses of the savants and higher critics, in proportion as he has learned to have great confidence in the Bible as a divine revelation. Those who will be easily moved to doubt the reliability of the Scriptures, under the instructions of its injurious friends (?), will, generally, be those who have never come to a clear appreciation of the divine plan of the ages, revealed in that wonderful Book and in it alone. Those who have been for any considerable

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time in the school of Christ, and have been faithful to the instructions there received, have learned that the Bible contains a plan so wonderful that it is not possible that man could have conceived or originated it;--a plan which fits into all the features of past history, and is as fully in accord with the declarations

of the Old Testament as with those of the New Testament, --though in many things out of accord with the teachings of Churchianity.

As we open the old Book, which some one has said is an anvil upon which numerous hammers of infidelity have worn themselves out, we find its declaration respecting our day,--"The wisdom of their wise men shall perish; the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid." (Isa. 29:14.) Dr. Penniman and other D.Ds. and LL.Ds. and Professors corroborate and fulfil this divine testimony today. Their difficulty is not so much a dishonesty of mind which hinders them from receiving the truth, but rather that they approach the subject from the wrong standpoint. Instead of approaching geology and scientific research from the standpoint of faith in the Bible, and a desire to find and prove it correct, they approach these from the reverse standpoint, with a conviction that the Bible is certainly wrong in some measure, great or small. Imbued considerably with the spirit of higher criticism, even when resisting its conclusions, they approach their investigations with a view merely to reduce the discrepancy between the Bible statements and the extreme position of infidelity. And it is needless to say that in such matters, where it is the mind that is concerned, and opinions that are to be formed, one usually finds corroboration in line with the sentiment of his search.

"Common people," in reading such statements as the foregoing by the Doctor, should not forget to take them with the proverbial "grain of salt." It is natural that the Dean of a college which has spent several thousand dollars in scientific research--partly with the laudable object of securing information, and partly with another laudable object of advertising itself --should feel disposed to inflate the results of these investigations and expenditures, and to parade them just a little.

Surely it is neither ungenerous nor unwise to conclude that Dr. Penniman's statements magnify considerably the service accomplished for the world by his college. The evidences of this, in the foregoing account, are numerous. For instance, it is not beyond the province of reasonable judgment to believe that the exploration committee found something of the ancient city of Chalneh. It is not beyond conception that this was buried as much as forty feet below the surface. It is quite believable that a palace and a temple were found, and that under the temple was found the ruins of a structure somewhat older still. But this is as far as reasonable judgment can follow the Doctor's narrative. We cannot take as literally true the statement that a whole city has been unearthed, or even any considerable portion of it, nor that another whole city under it was found--built, buried and forgotten thousands of years before the upper one was built, and yet

the upper one accidentally built exactly on top of it--one temple over the other, etc. Neither can we take literally the statement that the buildings in these cities were "strong, massive and imposing, and very much like the best buildings in our modern cities." There are numerous reasons why we should not take these statements literally;--unless prepared to write ourselves down as credulous simpletons;--"common people" of the dark ages. The most forceful of these objections is the financial one. Any one of experience in the cost of grading, excavating, etc., can see at a glance that the few thousand dollars and the few representatives of the Pennsylvania University could accomplish practically nothing under such conditions as are implied. It would require millions of dollars to accomplish anything like what may be understood from taking the foregoing too literally.

If we analyze the above report, on this literal basis, we find that it contradicts itself. It declares that the principal building was the temple, whose dome, covered by sand, evidently constituted the chief eminence of the sand-hill excavated. How deep the sand may have been on the top of this dome, completely obscuring it, we can only surmise. We will suppose it to have been covered to a depth of five feet only, for the report declares that it was "soon reached." When, then, we read that the top of this sand mound was "more than forty feet" above the foundation of the temple, we will allow an extra foot, and say forty-one feet, and then deducting the five feet above the dome we find that the entire height of the temple, dome and all, was about thirty-six feet. And this was the principal edifice in the city--far out-topping the other buildings, evidently, according to the description given. How, now, does the statement appear, that the buildings were "massive and imposing, and very much like the best buildings of our modern cities"? The best buildings in our modern cities range in height from fifty to four hundred feet or more, while in this city the chief building, dome and all, was about thirty-six feet high. We have need to keep well before our minds such evidences as these that the language is not literal, but highly figurative, hyperbolic, and then we need to flavor the remainder of the Doctor's statements with the same kind of salt of reason and cool judgment if we would not allow them to interfere

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with the process of our mental digestion, when studying God's Word. "Salt is good!"

When we come to examine the findings in the libraries of these buildings, we are to appreciate them for what they are worth. We do appreciate them highly. They give evidence most conclusively that evolutionists are entirely wrong in their theory that

man evolved from a monkey, and that present-day civilization is proof of this. These findings corroborate the Scriptural statement that there was a civilization in the past, though of a somewhat different kind from that of the present--that there were wise men in the past without present-day advantages, which belong to the period called "the time of the end," which we hold are incidentals of this day of preparation for the Millennium. That those people had some knowledge of justice, equity, business regulations, etc., is evident from the records found in these rooms. But nothing has been found in conflict with the Bible, nor in conflict with the chronology of the Bible. The conflict is wholly in the minds of the learned gentlemen whose wisdom in such matters has perished, as the Scriptures declare--because they have abandoned the true foundation, and are no longer seeking to harmonize archaeological findings with the declarations of the Bible--especially as respects chronology.

MISLED BY THEIR EVOLUTION THEORIES.

They predetermine that because there are these good evidences of so pronounced a civilization in Abraham's time, there must have been long, long periods preceding that for the development of man from a monkey condition up to that degree of intelligence. Thus, in supporting their theories respecting evolution, they have an incentive to make the records as favorable as possible to a long period prior to Abraham. They find names of kings and dynasties, and attempt to separate them out in chronological sequence, but seem entirely to overlook the fact that conditions which prevail today in Europe may also have prevailed to some extent in Egypt, and in Babylonian times. For instance, suppose that some city in Bavaria, Germany, had been buried today from the world, and that the civilization of the present time in all other cities of Europe were completely blotted out. Suppose, too, that general world histories of the present time were not kept, but that, as in ancient times, every nation and city kept records and a chronology of its own, paying no attention to the year of the world, A.M., B.C. or A.D., or any other arrangement but simply reckoning by its own dynasties. Suppose also that some one should uncover the Bavarian city mentioned, and should there find records of the Bavarian line of kings, and in connection with it a record of the German emperors, and references to the many other lines of German kings and princes. He would there find records of the Napoleonic dynasty, and of the present Bavarian dynasty, and of the present imperial dynasty. How much likelihood there would be that, with nothing to guide him except Frederick I., William I., William II., William III., he would become all confused, and fail to realize that there are kings in Bavaria

at the same time that others reign as emperors of the whole German empire. Thus he might allow so many years for the emperors, and so many years for the kings, and be doubling his count every time. Our savants look over a pile of ancient clay tablets, written in a language they do not fully comprehend; they see in them names of hundreds of kings, princes, etc., and string them out to support their theory of a long and slow development from monkey-man to the degree of intelligence witnessed in our day.

This seems to fairly represent the tangled and unsatisfactory records of these ancient civilizations unearthed by explorers. They give some evidence, but nothing in a chronological order that will in any sense of the word compare with the Bible record. The Bible gives us the only chronological record from Adam down to the Babylonian captivity that is worthy of calling history or chronology. Our wise men in universities, colleges, theological seminaries, etc., in passing by this only reliable record, and attempting to construct chronology from other sources, are doing the impossible thing, as well as the unwise thing. The Christian who recognizes the Bible as the Word of God, because of its internal evidences, and who harmonizes its statements with themselves, accepting the conclusions with implicit faith, is the only one who will stand the shakings and siftings of this present time. Such will be found to be right when that which

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is perfect is come, and when all matters will be fully revealed.

"How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in his excellent Word!"

* * *

The South-Western Presbyterian of March 27 quotes Rev. J. P. Peters, director of the Nippur Expedition, as follows:--

"An immense mass of inscribed material has been secured from Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria and Persia. We have a very fair picture of the advanced civilization prevailing in the ancient civilized world in and from the latter half of the third millennium B.C.

"These records discredit the extravagant claims of China and India in regard to the antiquity of the civilization claimed by them. It was only in the latter half of the third millennium B.C. that civilization spread to China, and shortly after this India was occupied by a civilized race.

"These records, so far discovered, confirm the

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statements and the historical representations of Samuel, Kings and the Prophets. Hebrew history, as recorded in these books, is proved by the comparison to be honest and trustworthy.

"The statements of the earlier books of the Old Testament in regard to a high civilization, advanced religious development, and literary activities, which but a little while ago were held up as a proof of the inaccuracy and untruthfulness of the Bible record, are now proved to be literally true."

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"LORD, WHAT WILT THOU HAVE ME TO DO?"

--ACTS 9:6.--

Anxious soul, dost thou inquire
How thou mayst thy fealty prove?
In this day of "thine espousal,"
In the dawn of thy "first love,"
While thy heart is now o'erflowing
With a new-found peace and joy;
Where wilt thou, a willing servant,
In his service find employ?

Listen! Wouldst thou tell the story
Of the Father's wondrous plan,
And its consummation-glory
Now appearing unto man?
Wouldst thou be a faithful witness
To the truth thou hast received?
Seek "his fulness" for thy portion;
Empty souls have naught to give.

Hear the Master's voice directing,
As to him thou drawest nigh,
"Tarry till endued with power
Of the Spirit from on high."
Learning first, thyself, the lesson
Which thou wouldst have others know;
Eating daily at his table,
Thus in "grace and knowledge grow."

Following close in Jesus' footsteps,
That whate'er you say or do,
It shall be "your Father's spirit"
That shall speak and act through you.
Seeking the divine direction,
Blessings rich thou mayst expect;
As thou dost his ways acknowledge,
He thy pathway shall direct.

Thus in trials that await thee,

In the way, so rugged, steep,
God's own peace which passeth knowledge
Shall thy heart through Jesus keep.
Then thou mayst go forth and comfort
Those beneath affliction's rod,
With the comfort wherewith thyself
Hast been comforted of God.
--John La Dow.

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SAMUEL'S FAREWELL ADDRESS.

--1 SAM. 12:13-25.--JULY 19.--

Golden Text:--"Only fear the Lord and
serve him in truth with all your hearts."

SAMUEL the Prophet stands out on the pages of sacred history a very noble character--very similar in many respects to Moses. He had served the Lord and the people faithfully for a long period, and then, at the urgent request of the people and with God's assent, he had anointed Saul their king. The latter had been received rather half-heartedly, but the battle with the Ammonites and the great victory which the Lord granted to his people on that occasion united their hearts to him who had been the visible leader in that victory, and Samuel perceived that the right time had come for a public coronation of the king, and the formal transfer of allegiance to him as the Lord's representative in the temporal affairs of the nation. Accordingly, a general convocation of the people was called to meet at Gilgal--one of the several prominent places for public gatherings--one of the places at which Samuel was in the habit of holding court when, as a kind of supreme judge, he went at different seasons of the year to various parts of the territory of Israel to hear and to decide causes and differences which the elders of the tribes could not adjudicate satisfactorily.

Upon the assembling of the people, the prophet Samuel opened his address (vss. 1-5) by calling upon God and the people to witness to his own rectitude of character in all of his dealings with them for the many years in which he had served them; to his justice in seeking to decide their various questions righteously; to his honesty, in that he never received even the smallest bribe, nor permitted anything to vitiate his judgment; neither had he been an oppressor of his people, but had always sought their good. With united voice the people concurred in the excellence and purity of his administration--a wonderful tribute, one which would be almost inconceivable in our day, in which we find

that even the best and noblest officials are sure to have enemies, traducers, backbiters, slanderers. We are not to suppose that Samuel was merely eulogizing his own administration, but are, rather, to attribute to such a noble character a nobler object. He wished to make a lasting impression with this address and this transfer of authority to King Saul; and, to make his words more impressive and more effective in the interests of his successor and in the interests of the Lord's people, he impressed upon his hearers the fact that his

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entire life had been one of devotion, and that they might well understand that his words now were in full accord with all the course of his previous life. They would thus realize that he had their best interests at heart, that he was thoroughly loyal to the Lord, and that his example, as well as his advice, would be beneficial to them. Perhaps, too, he would thus set before the people a standard of what they might look for and hope for from their new king, and before the king a standard of the ideal after which he should pattern his rule.

Next, he called attention to God's faithfulness to them in the centuries past, from the time that he adopted them as his people and made a covenant with them through Moses and became their heavenly King. He recounted to the people the many deliverances which the Lord had wrought for them through various agents whom he had raised up. He would not wish them to think of the recent victory over the Ammonites as being the only one; but he desired that they recognize it, in common with all previous victories, as from the Lord, by whatsoever hand they were effected. He would have them discern that they exercised great ingratitude in forgetting that the Lord had all this time been their King, and in preferring an earthly king to the government he had established. Nevertheless, now that God had granted their request and given them an earthly king, they must not fail to recognize that he was only the representative of their real King, the heavenly One. Otherwise, their condition would be deplorable in every way. They had the king of their choice and God had set him over them: let the matter thus stand, and from this new standpoint they should go on to make the best of their condition; and to do this, would

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be to give close attention to the commandments of the Lord.

Obedience to the Lord would bring blessings both to the people and their king, and disobedience and rebellion or any measure of irreverence toward the Lord and his commandments would bring upon them

divine disfavor and injury. Not that the Lord would vindictively render evil for evil, but the hand of the Lord would be against them in the same sense that the current of the river is against the persons who attempt to go contrary to it. Divine justice has its steady flow. It is irrepressible; it opposes anything that comes against it, and favors anything that goes in harmony with it. We can recognize something of this principle in various laws of nature; as, for instance, gravitation. Let us also recognize that the principles of divine government operate in a very similar manner. As fire burns the evil or the good when they come in contact with it, and as the law of gravitation operates in respect to all, whether good or bad, who come into the line of its influence, so the principles of divine justice operate automatically.

The correctness of the foregoing statement may be questioned by some, who may say that in the majority of cases justice does not seem to operate; that those who tempt God are set up, and those who work wickedness and deceit often prosper. We reply that in order to understand our position it must be remembered that God's government has never been established in the world except over the one nation of Israel; and, hence, only in that one nation should we expect to find the laws of retribution operating automatically. The Lord said of Israel, "You only have I known [recognized] of all the families of the earth." (Amos 3:2.) Again, the Apostle asks, "What advantage hath the Jew?" and, answering, declares, "Much every way; chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God." God entered into obligations with Israel that if they, as a people, would obey his laws and keep his statutes, they would be blessed in proportion to their faithfulness and obedience; and if they should fail of obedience, they would be correspondingly punished; that he would permit to come upon them various chastisements--diseases, etc.--as the natural results of the violations of the principles of his government. But such an arrangement has not been made with other nations at any time in the world's history. With spiritual Israel God's blessings and chastisements are spiritual, and do not extend to temporal affairs. In proportion to their faithfulness they grow spiritually strong and beautiful; and in proportion to their unfaithfulness they grow spiritually weak and receive chastisements and lose divine favor. It is not true with the spiritual Israelite as it was with the natural Israelite, that by obeying the Lord he would be blessed temporally in all his undertakings. On the contrary, to the spiritual Israelite the Lord gives the express declaration and encouragement: "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall [in this life] suffer persecution"; "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you"; "Ye know that it hated me before it hated you"; "Blessed are ye when men shall say all manner

of evil against you for my sake: rejoice and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven" --in spiritual things, not in temporal matters.--2 Tim. 3:12; 1 Jno. 3:13; John 15:18; Matt. 5:11,12.

When the Millennial Kingdom shall be established, and, in harmony with the petition of our Lord's prayer, God's Kingdom shall come, and his will be done on earth as in heaven--then the laws of righteousness will work automatically again, and "every transgression shall receive its just recompense of reward," and every proper endeavor will bring its meed of blessing and uplifting influence--restitution. The divine

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regulations operating toward fleshly Israel in the days of Samuel differ from those to operate toward the whole world in the Millennial age, in that the latter will have a greater prophet than Moses, a greater priest than Aaron, a greater king than Saul. The Lord's Anointed will include all the graces, powers and qualities represented in these types, but on a perfect scale and backed by divine wisdom, justice, love and power, and will put down all insubordination and permanently establish righteousness upon a proper basis throughout the world, eventually destroying all who will not come into accord with its principles.

Samuel proceeded to do a miracle before the people --to cause a thunder shower in the middle of harvest. In Palestine they have the early and the latter rains. The spring rains usually end in April, and the fall rains begin in October or November. A writer on the subject says, "In ordinary seasons, from the cessation of the showers in spring until their commencement in October or November, rain never falls, and the sky is usually serene." The wheat harvest which the prophet pointed out to them as just in order, must have been the first of June and, hence, nothing could have been further from the expectation of the people than a thunder-shower at that time. The bringing of it at the prophet's announcement, was to remind the people how completely their affairs and interests were in divine power. They were to discern that the recent victory need not have been theirs except as the Lord had been pleased to favor them and grant them the victory; and that simply by bringing unfavorable showers upon their harvest the entire fruitage of their labors of many months might be quickly spoiled and they be reduced to starvation, and in that way become more thoroughly subdued than by any foreign invasion. The prophet calls their attention to the wickedness of their course in the rejection of God as their King, and to this power of God, which could easily be exercised did he wish to requite them according to their dealings with him.

The people saw the point. They discerned that if

it were to rain a few days they would lose their all; they recognized that they were wholly in the power of God, and entreated Samuel to pray for them, confessing not only the wrongs they had done in seeking a king, but also their sins; "We have added unto our sins."

As the Lord's mouthpiece, the prophet assured the people that they need not fear God's taking vengeance upon them, notwithstanding their wrong course. On the contrary, they should more fully than ever determine to turn to the Lord whole-heartedly, and let their mistake and the trials and difficulties that would come to them as a result of it prove a blessing to them in drawing their hearts nearer and nearer to the Lord, their true King, who never sought anything but their highest welfare. So it should be with us. If at any time we find that we have taken a wrong course which is irretrievable, we may expect it to bring the disappointments as the Lord foretold; but he may permit it to bring, as well, some blessings in the way of contrition of heart, and humility toward the Lord, and greater zeal, watchfulness and faithfulness for the future. Thus, even some of the blunders of life may become stepping-stones to higher planes of grace and truth.

The sentiment of verse 22 is very beautiful, and, doubtless, was very encouraging to the Israelites in assuring them of God's continued love and favor toward them because of his having adopted them as his people. Applying this verse to spiritual Israel, we may take great comfort from it, too. If it was a favor to natural Israel to be adopted as the Lord's peculiar people, as the house of servants, how much greater is the blessing to spiritual Israel, adopted of the Lord as the house of sons under the chief Son, Jesus; "whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end!" (Heb. 3:6.) It is well that the Lord's people be called upon to fear, to reverence, the Lord; but if the Scriptures were entirely made up of commands and reproofs, the Lord's people would all surely have been discouraged long ago. On the contrary, with the reproofs and corrections, the Lord gives us very precious testimonies respecting his love and mercy, his goodness and long-suffering kindness, to encourage us. All the members of the body of Christ laboring against the course of this world and against public opinion and against the weaknesses of their own flesh and against the great adversary Satan, need spiritual encouragement--assurances that the Lord is for them. The Apostle points this out, saying, "If God be for us who can be against us?" --what will all the opposition against us amount to if God be on our side? He again encourages us with precious words, reminding us of the unchangeableness of God and of the fact that he has already done great things for us and is preparing to do still greater things. If while we were yet sinners Christ died for the ungodly,

much more shall his favor be with us now that we are adopted into his family and are seeking to walk in his ways as members of the body of Christ.

The grandeur of the Prophet's character shines out in the twenty-third verse again: he seems to have none of the petty animosities which some smaller creatures might have under the circumstances, and was a patriot to the core of his heart, as well as a faithful representative and ambassador of the Lord and mediator of his people. He says, practically: "Nothing that you have done toward me--rejecting me in choosing King

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Saul--shall in any manner or degree hinder my love for you and my prayers on your behalf. God forbid that it should! I should consider this a sin against the Lord who has placed me as a kind of representative of him to you, and of you to him; and I certainly would be failing of my duty and privilege did I neglect this important office of mediator. You may rely upon it that I not only will refrain from pleading against you with the Lord, but that I will petition him on your behalf."

The nobility of Samuel's course may well be copied by the Lord's people under various circumstances in life. When those who are near and dear to us flag in their love and devotion, they need all the more our sympathy and our prayers; and, as our dear Master showed us, even our enemies are to be prayed for and have our good wishes--that the Lord would grant them in his providence such opening of understanding, such experiences as in divine wisdom would be for their highest welfare to bring them into full accord with himself, and thus back into harmony with us and all who are in harmony with him. The prophet indicates that, although he was ceasing to be their judge and ruler, he would not cease to be their instructor in the good and right way so long as the Lord's providences might permit him to serve them, and so long as they would accept his aid.

Recurring, however, to the principal point of his instructions, he points out that reverence for the Lord, serving him in truth with all their heart, was not only a proper course, but a course which would bring them the Lord's blessing. And as a help to our flagging zeal, we should continually remind ourselves of the Lord's great blessings to us. As we learn to appreciate the goodness of the Lord, if rightly disposed at all, the influences will be to strengthen us and to make us more and more loyal to him. Failing to seek with our whole heart the Lord's service after we have become his people and entered into covenant relationship with him, receiving of his favors and blessings in this life, and also, by promise, in the life to come, would mean wickedness which, persevered in, will surely bring destruction.

Faithfulness to God should be the keynote
of all our desires. "Let the words of my mouth and
the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight,
O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer."--Psa. 19:14.

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"TO OBEY IS BETTER THAN SACRIFICE."

--1 SAM. 15:13-23.--JULY 26.--

THE words of our caption, the Golden Text of this lesson, are the Lord's rebuke to King Saul by the prophet Samuel, in connection with the announcement that Saul, by disobedience to the heavenly King, had forfeited his privilege of representing him on the throne of Israel. The rending of the kingdom from the hands of Saul meant more than his own displacement: it meant that his son and successive heirs should not continue the Lord's representatives in the kingdom.

For a number of years Saul seems to have prospered fairly on the throne, and the people of Israel prospered with him. It was several years after his coronation, noted in our last lesson, that his first severe testing in respect to his obedience to the heavenly king came to him. At that time a war was instituted against the Philistines, who had been encroaching upon the Israelites to the east. Saul waited several days for Samuel to come to offer the sacrifices of the Lord previous to the beginning of the battle. Samuel was providentially hindered, and Saul, after waiting for a time, offered the sacrifices to the Lord himself, contrary to the arrangement, and then proceeded to battle, the result being a considerable defeat to his forces. Apparently he was not evilly intentioned, but lacked proper respect and reverence for the Lord and his arrangements. This may be said to have been the beginning of Saul's rejection by the Lord. Samuel's words were, "Thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord...now thy kingdom shall not continue. The Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart."

The lesson of this incident is as applicable to spiritual Israel today as it was to Saul and natural Israel in their day--"Obedience is better than sacrifice." In how many ways we may see expressions of this same condition amongst many who profess the Lord's name today! Many are "workers" in the Lord's cause in the various denominations of Christendom, and many are their sacrifices of time and money; but inasmuch as they are not obedient to the Lord, they fail of the blessing they would have, and, indeed, in a considerable measure cut themselves off from greater privileges and opportunities. Yea, many of them, we fear, are

cutting themselves off from the kingdom, from glory, and from joint-heirship with the Lord in that Kingdom. We should learn from this lesson, given us in Saul's experience, that our heavenly Father wishes us to be very attentive to his Word, and not to think for a moment that we can improve thereon, or that times and circumstances will alter the propriety of our obedience to him. Had Saul been obedient and the results disastrous, he would at least have had a clear conscience; he could have said that he had been obedient to God and was not responsible for the results. But if

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he had been obedient God would have been responsible for the results, and we know that divine power would have brought about the proper results. Let us apply the lesson to ourselves in respect to our daily conduct in every matter of life: let us hearken to the Word of the Lord and keep close to it, not fearing the results, but having faith that he who keeps us never slumbers nor sleeps and is too wise to err, as well as competent to meet every emergency that could possibly come upon us as a result of our obedience. How many of the Lord's people in Babylon would be blessed by following the instructions of this lesson. They have said to themselves, time and again, "I see that present institutions and arrangements are contrary to the simplicity of the Gospel of Christ and the practice of the early Church, but what can I do? I am identified with this system and am engaged in sacrificing for its upbuilding; if now I withdraw my hand it will mean more or less disaster. I wish I were free from human institutions and that I had my hands filled with the Lord's work along the lines of his Word, but I cannot let go, for necessity seems to be upon me. I must perform a sacrifice and this seems to be my most convenient place for so doing." The Lord is not pleased with such argument. His message to us is that to obey is better than sacrifice: leave the matter of your sacrifice in my hands;--it will amount to nothing anyway unless I accept it, and I accept sacrifices only from those who are first obedient. "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and receive not of her plagues."

Although the Lord announced the rejection of Saul, the prediction was evidently not executed for several years after; perhaps ten years the decree stood, as it were a dead letter, for quite possibly Saul was properly exercised by the rejection and became more attentive and more obedient to the divine will, and David, who was probably anointed about this time, was not yet sufficiently developed to be the Lord's representative in Saul's stead.

Saul's next severe trial was in connection with the Amalekites--a nomadic and fierce people who,

on several occasions, had done injury to the people of Israel. In sending the message the Lord gave special instructions that the Amalekites should be destroyed, saying, "Utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." Without mentioning other of Amalek's transgressions, he specifies here that the destruction is on account of Amalek's opposition to Israel in the way when they came up out of the land of Egypt several centuries previously.

This narrative is seized upon by sceptics to prove either one or the other of two things: (1) That God sent no such message; that it was either the imagination of Samuel or Saul or of some one writing fictitiously in their names. (2) If it were accepted as being the command of the Lord, it would prove him to be a monster--lacking in justice, pity, sympathy and love --that he should thus command the wholesale slaughter of human creatures and dumb animals. There is but one answer to make to this matter, and it should be and is satisfactory to all who understand it. It is this:--

First, the slaughter of the Amalekites did not mean, as is usually inferred, that they, being admittedly wicked, went forth to eternal torture. Death had the same meaning to the Amalekites that it had to their cattle--a termination of whatever was desirable in the present life, and the desirable things in the present life were probably not more to the Amalekites than to their herds. The Amalekites suffered far less, slaughtered by the sword, than if they had been made the subjects of famine or a pestilence, and had died of hunger or disease--the ending of life with little pain to themselves or trouble to others--the ending of comparatively uneventful lives anyway. They all went down to the great prison-house of death--sheol, hades--the tomb. God foreknew and had already arranged a great redemption not only for them but for all mankind, and that redemption, secured by the great sacrifice of Christ centuries after their death--will by and by secure to them release from their imprisonment, an awakening from the sleep of death. They will be amongst the class mentioned by our Lord, saying, "All that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man and shall come forth." They will come forth under much more favorable conditions, to learn of the grace of God in Christ and to be amongst the families of the earth who shall be blessed by the seed of Abraham, spiritual Israel. They will not be in the chief or life resurrection, but will be awakened unto the privileges of restitution by judgments, corrections in righteousness.

Second, it is quite true of the Amalekites, as it was true of the Amorites, that they would have been cut off sooner but that their iniquity was not yet come to

the full. One lesson to be learned from this is that even though those nations may not be under special covenant relationship with God, there is a certain divine supervision--that their iniquities go not too far, and that, when they have reached their full, punishment is to be expected. We know not the particulars respecting the Amalekites, but, knowing the character of God and his justice and mercy, we may be sure that, in some particular sense of the word, their iniquities had come to the full and running-over measure before this order

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for their execution was committed to King Saul.

Saul's error in this trial was his failure to carry out the command of the Lord explicitly. He slew all the Amalekites, old and young, except the king, whom he kept alive, possibly thinking to exhibit him in some kind of a triumphal display; but as for the flocks and herds, he consented with his people to spare all that were goodly and desirable--"The best of the sheep and of the oxen and of the fatlings and of the lambs, and all that was good,...but everything that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly." (Vs. 9.)

It is at this juncture that the Prophet Samuel came to him and the colloquy of our lesson ensued. The general narrative--the indignation of Samuel and the Lord's positive announcement--clearly indicates that Saul had not misunderstood his instructions, but had with considerable deliberation violated them. Consequently we must understand his words addressed to Samuel to have been to a considerable extent hypocritical. He first salutes the Prophet with blessings, and assurances that he had performed the commandment of the Lord successfully. But immediately the prophet replies, "What means, then, this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" The prophet understood at once that the work of destruction had not been complete, that Saul and the people of Israel were anxious to take a spoil. This was wholly contrary to the Lord's direction. They were not to destroy their enemies to their own advantage, but simply to act as the agents of the Lord in thus executing his decree, the sentence of justice. They were not to take booty and thus to become like the nations about them--a robber nation, profiting by the troubles they inflicted upon the enemies of the Lord. This is in full accord with the Lord's character and the foregoing explanation of it.

Saul, seeing that the prophet was not likely to sympathize in any measure with his violation of the command, began hypocritically to represent that all those fine sheep and oxen had been captured from the enemy to be sacrificed to the Lord, and incidentally this would have meant a great feast for the Israelites, because the flesh of animals so sacrificed was eaten by them. Samuel

stopped the king in his explanation and told him of the Lord's words of the night preceding (which, in Jewish counting, would be "this night," because their day began in the evening). The message of the Lord calls attention to the fact that Saul was humble when he was chosen as the Lord's representative upon the throne, and at that time he was very willing to give strict obedience to the heavenly voice, but the intimation is that now he had grown more self-confident and therefore less reliant upon the Lord and less attentive to the Lord's commands; getting into the wrong attitude of heart, he had failed to properly execute a very plain specific direction. Knowingly and in violation of the Lord's command he had the spoil separated, and spared the best when the Lord had commanded the reverse.

If, in applying the principles of this to the Lord's people of today, we think of the Amalekites as representing sins and of how the Lord's command comes to us to put away sin entirely, utterly destroying everything that is related to it, we may get a good lesson. Like Saul, many are disposed to destroy the vilest things connected with sin, but to save alive the king sin, merely making him a prisoner. Many are disposed, too, to seek out the things which they realize to be condemned of the Lord to destruction--such things as would be choice and desirable to their taste--and frequently, like Saul, they claim that even these sins of the less obnoxious kind are held on to for the purpose of sacrificing them and thus honoring God. How deceitful above all things is the heart! How necessary it is that all who would be in accord with the Lord should be thoroughly true-hearted, thoroughly sincere, and that under the Lord's direction we should seek to take away the life of every sinful principle, evil teaching, evil doctrines, evil engagements, unholy words and thoughts and deeds.

Saul sought to defend his course, to put as good a face upon the matter as possible and to lay the responsibility for the saving of the spoil for the sacrifice upon the hosts of Israel, who, with himself, were so desirous of offering sacrifices to the Lord. Samuel's answer is the pith of this lesson and contains its Golden Text. He clearly points out to Saul what the latter should have known, and what all should recognize, namely, that offering sacrifices is far less pleasing to the Lord than obedience to his Word. No one could offer an acceptable sacrifice to the Lord unless obedient in his heart and unless the sacrifice represented that obedience. So with the Lord's people today. It is not so much of ill-gotten wealth that we may sacrifice to the Lord; it is not so much the proceeds acquired directly or indirectly by wrong doing that we may sacrifice acceptably. Our sacrifice must be from the heart, and, first of all, must be the will. He who gives his will, his heart, to the Lord, gives all; he who gives not his

will, who comes not in obedience of heart unto the Lord, can offer no sacrifice to the Lord that could be acceptable. "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice," is a lesson which should be deeply engraved upon the hearts of all the sanctified in Christ Jesus. To have the spirit of obedience is necessary, too, and whoever has the spirit of obedience will not only obey the divine will, but will seek to know the divine will more and more that he may obey it. It is of this class that the

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Scriptures declare, "His word was found and I did eat it;" and again, in the words of our Lord, "I delight to do thy will, oh my God; thy law is written in my heart."

Saul had been very diligent in his opposition to witchcraft and idolatry throughout the land of Israel, and in so doing was accomplishing a good work in accord with the divine plan, the divine will; but the prophet calls his attention to the fact that his energy in such matters would not prove an offset to his deliberate wilful neglect of the divine injunction. The Lord's commands against sin and every evil thing are to be executed to the very letter, no matter how highly exalted the sin may be in dignity and place, and no matter how precious or valuable or desirable or toothsome the sin may be to our fallen natures. Though it be as dear as a right hand or as a right eye, there is no course open to the Lord's followers but to be obedient--even unto death.

Although fully rejected, Saul's removal was not yet due. Samuel associated himself with him in a public sacrifice, commemorating the victory over the Amalekites, and on this occasion he slew Agag with his own hand--departing then to his own home. He never afterward saw Saul, yet the Scriptures declare, "Nevertheless, Samuel mourned for Saul"--thus again showing us the beauty and strength of his character. He was ready to do the command of the Lord in any and every particular, yet was not without a feeling of compassion for those who were out of the way;--not a compassion which would make them his friends and lead him to cooperate with them in their wrong course, but a compassion which would have been glad to have cooperated with them at any time in a righteous course.

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THE LORD LOOKETH ON THE HEART.

--1 SAM. 16:4-13.--AUGUST 2.--

Golden Text.--"Man looketh on the outward

appearance, but God looketh on the heart."

SAUL'S rejection by the Lord because of disobedience meant not only his own ultimate removal from the kingdom, but that his family, his sons, should not succeed him in it. It meant, also, the Lord's selection of another man, another family, for the office of ruler in Israel and representative of the Lord upon the throne. The Lord's choice was David, to whom Samuel indirectly referred, saying, "The Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou [Saul] hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee." (1 Sam. 13:14.) David, at the time of this lesson, was about twenty years old; consequently, the words of the prophet just quoted must have been uttered about the time of David's birth. Thus we have another illustration of God's foreknowledge and design, in respect to those whom he specially uses in his service, from their very earliest moments. Similarly, God's choice of Jacob was declared before he was born; and similarly, the Apostle Paul tells us that he (Paul) was chosen of God from his mother's womb. We are to separate from this declaration any false thought respecting the divine choice, and note that none of these were chosen to eternal life, but each of them, all of them, chosen and fitted for special service. It gives us a suggestion of the possibility of paternal and maternal influences affecting the natural disposition of a human being from before his birth. He still has a will, and even though favorably endowed, it remains with himself to determine, to will, whether or not he will walk in the Lord's ways, and to what extent he will be obedient. There is no coercion of the will, for the Lord seeks such to worship [serve] him in spirit--willingly, heartily--and in truth.

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David's grandmother was the gentle Ruth, who gleaned grain probably in the very fields with which David was familiar. His grandfather's name was Boaz, a page of whose history is recorded in the book of Ruth. His father Jesse, like his grandfather, was doubtless one of the elders of the city of Bethlehem, respected and honored as a noble man. Of his mother we know little, except that he mentioned her twice as "a handmaid of God."

Samuel mourned and prayed for Saul, and was apparently disappointed that this man, of whom he had expected such great things and under whose guidance he had anticipated great prosperity for Israel, should be rejected. Quite probably fearful forebodings of a civil war to result from the installation of a new king perturbed the prophet's mind. He knew that Saul

would not quietly submit to lay down the scepter which he had taken up with so great modesty in obedience to the Lord's arrangement; his mental eye could see the probability of civil strife which might rupture the nation and cause great trouble. He should have had greater trust in the wisdom and power of the Almighty, but his trouble was more or less like that which assails all of the Lord's people even today. The lesson from this to our hearts should be that we will implicitly trust the Lord to manage his own affairs: that we will trust him where we cannot trace him, and be obedient to his directions, and, so far from mourning at the execution of his plans, will rejoice, knowing

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that all things are working together for good to them that love God--that all things will ultimately work blessings for those who are in accord with the Lord--blessings for the future life if not for the present.

When sent to anoint David, Samuel exhibited a power not elsewhere noticeable in his character. He did not hesitate to perform the Lord's bidding, but intimated that he clearly understood that it meant the risk of his own life--that Saul would kill him as a traitor if he should anoint a successor to the kingdom. The Lord made it clear to him that it was not the intention to make the matter known at once, and directed him that he should go to Bethlehem and make a sacrifice there, and, incidentally, improve the opportunity of finding and anointing the one who, in due time, would be made known and exalted to the throne. At the time, he was merely to perform the initial work, which David's father and brethren would not understand, thinking, perhaps, that the anointing meant special blessing or a commission from the Lord to engage as one of the members of the school of the prophets or something else of this kind. Quite probably, however, the prophet privately informed David of the meaning of the anointing, just as he had privately informed Saul when he secretly anointed him to the office of king.

The lesson takes hold of the subject at the point when Samuel had arrived at the town of Bethlehem. The Elders were in fear, thinking that his presence signified some sin on their part or on the part of some of their fellow-citizens which God had sent him to reprove and to punish; hence, their inquiry whether or not he came peaceably--whether or not his presence meant a blessing or the infliction of a penalty. Their fears were allayed when they heard that his mission was a peaceable one--to offer a sacrifice there unto the Lord. Some time before this the ark had been captured by the Philistines, and the tabernacle services thus discontinued had not yet been reestablished; for this reason this sacrificing was performed by the Lord's specially

appointed prophet. The command to the people of Bethlehem to sanctify themselves if they would be participators in the blessings of the sacrifice, signified that they should wash their persons and put on clean clothes and draw nigh to the Lord with their hearts. Thus they typically represented that justification and sanctification which the Church of this Gospel age enjoys. Samuel seems to have taken supervision of the family of Jesse to the intent that he might without public display find the man whom the Lord had chosen and anoint him to the office and give him the divine blessing in preparation for it. Jesse properly introduced his sons to the prophet according to the order of their birth, his eldest, Eliab, first; and as he was of fine appearance Samuel naturally assumed that he was the Lord's choice; but as he looked to the Lord for direction in the matter he got the response (in what manner we know not) which constitutes the Golden Text of this lesson. Judging from the human standpoint of appearance, age, ability, etc., Eliab was the most suitable person in Jesse's family to be the king over the nation; but not so in the Lord's sight. The Lord was looking at the heart and had already selected David as a man after his own heart, although at this time being under age, etc., his father had not thought worth while to send for him to be present at the feast. As one after another appeared, and the prophet found not him whom the Lord's spirit indicated as the one to be anointed, he inquired, "Are all thy children here?" when Jesse suddenly remembered that he had another boy, his youngest, in the field with his sheep.

Our Golden Text appeals to all in connection with the high calling of this Gospel age, and year by year experience shows us its general applicability. We, too, as the Lord's messengers, are seeking for those to be anointed with the oil of gladness, the holy spirit, that they may be kings and priests unto God in the Kingdom he is about to establish, which will supersede present kingdoms. We too, like Samuel, might feel afraid to proceed with this work of anointing the successors of present institutions, did we not realize that the work of sealing the elect of the Lord, which is now in progress, is a secret work which the world cannot understand. Indeed, none understand this matter of the sealing, the anointing of the holy spirit, except those who have received it, and they are all of the David class. The name David signifies "beloved," and as it applied specially to our Lord and Master, of whom it was said by Jehovah, "This is my beloved Son," so also it applies to all the members of his body, each one of whom must be beloved, else he cannot be acceptable as a member. The Head says of such, "The Father himself loveth you," and again he says that we should love one another as he has loved us. It is not too much to say that all who receive this anointing of the Lord must

ultimately be of this David, or beloved, character--the spirit of love must be in them, love for the Lord and love one for the other, else they are none of his.

In seeking for the Lord's anointed who shall by and by reign in Millennial glory for the blessing of the world, as antitypes of David, we notice that as he was counted by his brethren too insignificant to be considered in this connection, so also are those whom the Lord is choosing and anointing for his heavenly Kingdom. Our Lord Jesus was disesteemed of his brethren, and when the suggestion was made that he should be the Lord's anointed, his people hid, as it were, their faces

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from him--disdained him, despised him, and considered him hopeless in respect to anything great or glorious, --"as a root out of dry ground." The same has been true respecting the members of his body, the true elect Church; they also have been despised and rejected of men, and of them the Apostle declares, We are counted the filth and offscouring of the world; we are counted fools all the day long for Christ's sake.-- 1 Cor. 4:13.

Again he declares that "not many great, not many wise, not many learned, hath God chosen; but chiefly the poor of this world, rich in faith, to be heirs of the Kingdom." And this principle of the divine selection of things that are not [esteemed amongst men], to bring to naught the things that are [esteemed by men], is noticeable all throughout this Gospel age. Often have we, like Samuel, looked about us amongst men seemingly eligible to a place in the Kingdom--upon those who are high in position,--socially, intellectually, morally, educationally,--and in the esteem of men, and expect that surely the Lord would sanction their anointing with the oil of gladness, and grant them a knowledge of the truth pertaining to the Kingdom, etc., only to find ourselves mistaken, and to get a fresh lesson that God looketh not on the outward appearance but upon the heart. We concede that we are unable to read the heart, but we are fully satisfied to accept the divine decision in such matters, and to trust that when in due time all the secrets of this present time shall be disclosed, we then shall be able to understand the meaning of the Lord's selections more completely than we do now--we shall then be able to see what a difference there was between the hearts of those the Lord accepted and the hearts of those outwardly humble, whom he did not so highly favor in respect to the Kingdom call. Meantime, we must simply wait and trust the Lord and accept his decisions, as expressed by our dear Redeemer when he said, "I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so

it seemeth good in thy sight.--Luke 10:21."

Instructed respecting the Lord's methods, we are not to despise the least, the most ignoble or illiterate of those who give evidence of a purity and honesty of heart toward God, and to whom he seems to give the anointing of his spirit and the "ear to hear." Rather, while making known the message to all as we have opportunity, we are to rejoice specially with those upon whom the Lord's favor is manifested, regardless of their earthly surroundings, etc. The Lord knoweth them that are his, and it is for us to recognize, to honor and to cooperate with all such, as the ambassadors and representatives of our Lord and Master.

Often have we thought as we have looked over a congregation of the Lord's people and beheld some not prepossessing in personal appearance, some not well educated or refined, some ignoble, but, nevertheless, bearing the marks of the anointing of the Lord, the

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light of the truth shining in their faces, the confidence and hope of the truth inspiring them, and their lives indicating a transformation from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son,--often have we thought of such, that had the Lord sent us forth to seek his bride, we might have ignorantly passed by some of his choice jewels and have gathered in some whom he rejects as unworthy--because we are unable to read the heart. This thought should make us very humble, gentle and meek toward all, and very trustful of the Lord and very much inclined to look for his leading in respect to our labors as his servants, just as Samuel looked to the Lord in connection with the anointing of David.

Samuel's words, "We will not sit down until he come hither," referred to the feast of which they were about to partake. It was the custom that, after the sacrifice had been offered, the sanctified persons present and those in spirit sharing in the sacrifice might join in a feast, eating the flesh, and thus celebrating a communion with the Lord. It was this feast that Samuel decided should not be commenced until David's arrival; --indeed, by reason of his being the Lord's anointed, he would be the most important one present at the feast. Perhaps in this also we can see a figure of the Lord's blessing in the divine plan. A great feast of fat things has been designed for the whole world of mankind, but it cannot be participated in until the justifying and sanctifying sacrifice has been killed--and, more than this, the feast cannot be commenced until first the Anointed One shall come and shall receive the anointing. The anointing began with our Lord, the Head of the Church, and has throughout the Gospel age been flowing down upon all the members of his body, the Church. The sacrifice has been killed, and

we, as members of Christ, have been participating in the sacrifice. Shortly the whole matter will be accomplished and then, as the Lord's anointed, the feast of fat things will be spread,--the Anointed One--Head and body, being the principal in that great antitypical feast.

The blessing and power of the Lord accompanied David's anointing in some manner--just how we may not understand, because the manifestation of the spirit was not the same in that time as it is with us, the Church, since Pentecost, respecting which the Apostle declares, "The holy spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." (John 7:39.) However, in some manner God's blessing and power were with David, enabling him to progress in knowledge, etc., and fitting and preparing him for the duties of the office to which he had been anointed. May we not consider as an antitype to this, the anointing which comes upon the Church from the time of her acceptance with the Lord? Ours is not a physical anointing, nor are the blessings conferred of a temporal character: it is as New Creatures that we are anointed; as New Creatures that we grow in grace and knowledge and love; and as New Creatures that, by and by, we shall be perfected in the First Resurrection and come to the throne with our Lord and Master as our Head.

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