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BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS AND REMITTANCES

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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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CHANGE OF BRITISH BRANCH ADDRESS.

We call special attention of our British friends to the
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St., N.W. Eversholt St. is a continuation of Seymour

St., which runs alongside Euston Station. The new location is four minutes' walk from Euston Station. All will be glad to know that the increasing importance of the British work rendered the change desirable.

PLENTY OF VOLUNTEER LITERATURE.

Friends are advised that we have plenty of the Volunteer literature for 1903 on hand, and are able to fill all your orders promptly. Great blessing has been experienced by all engaging in the service, and we have reports of considerable interest being aroused. A good supply is now on its way to Great Britain.

WATCH TOWER BINDERS.

Remember, that we have these in good supply at 50 cents each, delivery free. Each Binder will hold two years' issues, and they are very convenient for easy reference and preserving the papers from injury and soiling.

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VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER.

BAPTISTS BOUND AS TRULY AS OTHERS.

WE quote from the Texas Baptist-Herald as follows:--

"Prof. M'Glothlin of the Louisville Seminary, in an address at Savannah on 'Ecclesiasticism,' spoke these timely words:

"Ecclesiasticism tends constantly to increase the amount of machinery and centralize it in the hands of the clergy. Now the whole tendency of the times, among most other denominations as well as the Baptists, is to magnify the importance of the layman in the denominational life. We delight to make him moderator of our associations, our State conventions and even the Southern Baptist Convention. We are beginning to put him at the head of our denominational colleges, and the only reason he does not play even a larger part in our Church affairs is our inability to induce him to do so. There is no disposition among our preachers to usurp authority or even to retain what they have. They labor to bring forward the layman. No ecclesiasticism here.

"But what of the increase in machinery? Here

we have a different tale to tell. The early churches were the only Christian organizations so far as we know. They were wholly independent of each other, having no connection except that which comes through unity in faith and practice. The same was true of the Baptist churches in America for nearly a century. The first Baptist Church in America was founded in 1639 and the first Association in 1707. The movement to organize the churches into associations met with determined opposition, but the work progressed, and by the beginning of the 19th century there were few churches which still stood outside the associations. The chief motives to these organizations had been the desire to better resist the State churches, to secure doctrinal agreement and to prosecute local missionary work.

"With the 19th century came the great foreign mission movement and with it the need of larger organizations. In 1814 the first national organization, the present Missionary Union, was formed. Later two other national organizations, the Home Mission Society and the American Baptist Publication Society, were organized. As a result of this same movement, combined with the great educational movement, State organizations began to be formed about 1820. The present Baptist organization was completed by the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845. All, or nearly all, these organizations met with the most determined opposition on the ground that they were not scriptural and endangered or destroyed the independence of the churches. It is not strange that there was fear. Never in the history of Christianity was there such rapid progress in organization as in the 138 years from 1707 to 1845. Baptists have existed in the United States for about 264 years, and it must be admitted that we have far more ecclesiastical machinery than the Christians had 264 years after the death of Christ. Out of the simple Baptist Church at Rome has grown the great Roman Catholic Church which encloses the world in its embrace! Are we on the same road? We have gone at a very rapid pace so far; will we stop, or will the organizations go on increasing? We have rapidly increased our organizations, but two things are to be observed which make the situation less serious than it at first appears. Before the year 294 A.D., infant baptism had been introduced and the churches had been greatly corrupted; and in the second place the local Church had lost its significance and independence. We Baptists, with all our increase of machinery, have stood true to the apostolic conception of an independent Church of regenerate people. The New Testament ideal is our ideal. And herein is our safety for the future."

* * *

We cannot agree with the editor of the Baptist-Herald

that these words are timely. They are quite behind time. Our dear Baptist friends have already lost their liberty in ecclesiasticism. For all practical purposes they are now bound as much as the people of other denominations, but they do not realize it and love their chains. Is it asked, How so? We reply that the bondage came through the error of ministerial

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ordination. Instead of recognizing, as we do, that "all ye are brethren," and that all anointed with the holy Spirit are anointed to preach,--each to the extent of his talents and opportunities,--Baptists recognized, as additionally necessary, a human ordination. The preachers took this into their own hands, implying that the Church was competent to express God's will in selecting its own pastor, but as "brethren" were so inferior that their commission or appointment or recognition of him would not do without a clerical sanction or ordination.

This key in the hands of Baptist ministers has made them the masters and lords of the Baptist Church,--much to its injury. Under their Ministerial associations numerous independent congregations, such as the apostles organized, have been welded into a denomination which these ministers control--creed and all. How so? Because any Church not a member of the Association would have no standing as a Baptist Church. And if a member of the Association, it can have no one for its minister unless the other ministers accept him. Hence, pastors must be chosen from the ministerial clique and must be acceptable personally and doctrinally to the other Baptist ministers.

The preachers, having all the vital power and authority, can, therefore, well afford to push forward their inferiors, the "laymen," to committees, chairmanships, etc. The preachers only reinforce their own power by securing the loyalty of the leading men of the denomination, financial and otherwise, at so cheap a price. Evidently the writer scents danger in the future, but just as evidently he rejoices in the Baptist bondage and hugs her chains as very precious. Baptist liberty is an empty boast--as meaningless and untrue as that other claim, that the early Church sailed under the name Baptist. The Church founded by our Lord and the apostles took no sectarian name. Baptists, as well as others, need to heed the Master's final command of Revelation 18:4.

ZIONISTS IN PERPLEXITY.

At the last Congress of the Zionists the President

of the Society submitted two important communications. One was from the British Government, proffering the Society land, etc., in East Africa under favorable conditions, similar to those enjoyed by Canada --the suzerainty of Great Britain being understood. The proposition was favorably considered by a majority of the Congress and a committee of nine was appointed to examine into the feasibility of accepting the proposition. However, a goodly and influential minority stoutly opposed even the consideration of the question, declared that the Society's funds were secured with the understanding that they were for reestablishing the Jews in Palestine and not elsewhere, and that they should object to the use of a single penny in other colonization schemes, no matter how roseate. They temporarily left the Convention as a mark of their strong sentiments on the subject.

The other important communication was from the Russian Government. It distinctly avowed sympathy with the Zionist movement as originally inaugurated, because it hoped that thus Russia might be relieved of its Jewish population and the troubles, disturbances, etc., connected therewith. It, however, as distinctly disavowed sympathy with the later development of Zionism into a national or political movement; because this had a disturbing effect on Jews living in Russia and tended to make them enemies of their home government and neighbors. The views of a Jewish writer and prominent Zionist are interesting, and follow:--

MR. ISRAEL ZANGWILL'S VIEWS.

"Viewed merely on its prosaic side, Zionism is by no means a visionary scheme. The aggregation of Jews in Palestine is only a matter of time--already they form a third of its population--and it is better that they should be aggregated there under their own laws and religion and the mild suzerainty of the Sultan than under the semi-barbarous restrictions of Russia or Roumania, and exposed to recurrent popular outbreaks. True, Palestine is a ruined country, and the Jews are a broken people. But neither is beyond recuperation. Palestine needs a people; Israel needs a country. If, in regenerating the Holy Land, Israel could regenerate itself, how could the world be other than the gainer? In the solution of the problem of Asia, which has succeeded the problem of Africa, Israel might play no insignificant part. Already the colony of Richon le Zion has obtained a gold medal for its wines from the Paris Exposition--which is not prejudiced in the Jew's favor. We may be sure the spiritual wine of Judea would again pour forth likewise--that precious vintage which the world has drunk for so many centuries. And, as the scientific activities of the colonization societies would have

paved the way for the pastoral and commercial future of Israel in its own country, so would the rabbinical sing-song in musty rooms prove to have been but the unconscious preparation of the ages for the Jerusalem university.

"But Palestine belongs to the Sultan, and the Sultan refuses to grant the coveted Judean charter, even for dangled millions. Is not this fatal? No; it matters as little as that the Zionists could not pay the millions if suddenly called upon. They have collected not two and a half million dollars. But there are millionaires enough to come to the rescue once the charter was dangled before the Zionists. It is not likely that the Rothschilds would see themselves ousted from their familiar headship in authority and well-doing. Nor would the millions left by Baron Hirsch be altogether withheld. And the Sultan's present refusal is equally unimportant, because a national policy is

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independent of transient moods and transient rulers. The only aspect that really matters is whether Israel's face be or be not set steadily Zionward--for decades and even for centuries. Much less turns on the Sultan's mind than on Dr. Herzl's. Will he lose patience? For leaders like Dr. Herzl are not born in every century."

* * *

It will be vain for Zionists to hope to establish an independent government in Palestine. None of the civilized nations would favor putting the Land of Promise wholly into their control; and if they did God would not favor it. Palestine will be "trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be filled full"--viz., October, 1914, A.D. By that time the heavenly Kingdom will be in power and the ancient worthies--Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the holy prophets--will be resurrected and constitute the earthly representatives of the spiritual and invisible Kingdom of Christ and his Bride--the Gospel Church.

Then Israel will be saved from its blindness (Rom. 11:26,27); and God will "pour upon them the spirit of prayer and supplication" (Zech. 12:10); and this, their true conversion to the Lord and the Truth, will be the start of the world's conversion (Rom. 11:15), when "Many peoples shall come and say, Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways and we will walk in his paths."--Micah 4:2.

UNEASINESS IN GERMANY.

The Kaiser has recently proposed an increase in the German army, already considered a heavy burden financially and otherwise. The press declare that there will be danger of a revolution if the matter be urged. German government bonds experienced a sharp decline immediately on the announcement.

The significance of this year's parliamentary elections in Germany cannot be fully appreciated without taking into consideration the fact that all men are not equal before the law in the Kaiser's Empire. Certain classes of voters have greater rights than others, and are permitted to cast two, three or more ballots, according to their rank or wealth. Needless to say, the privileged franchise holders are mostly adherents of the government and members of the conservative parties. The official returns showing that the Social Democrats polled 3,008,000 votes mean that they constitute more than one-half of the total number of electors in Germany, and that under a "one-man-one-vote" system they would sweep everything before them. They have gained 900,000 recruits since 1899, and their ultimate control of the Reichstag is a certainty. The Kaiser's enmity seems to help them. He will be forced to change his attitude or assume a dictatorship. He affects to treat the matter lightly, as one of chance, which may be reversed at the next election.

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1903.--GENERAL CONVENTIONS REPORT.--1903.

WE have had three splendid General Conventions this year, and each of them very successful in all respects. The first one, on April 4,5, was in the South, where the "Truth People" are much less numerous than in other quarters of our land. It was held in Atlanta, Ga., which for many reasons may be styled the principal city of those parts. The gathering of friends was estimated at 150, while the meeting advertised to the public had an estimated attendance of 450. Nineteen symbolized their consecration by water immersion. The listed speakers were Brothers Stevens and Wilbor, representatives of the Atlanta Church, Pilgrim Harrison and Pastor Russell.

The spiritual power of the Convention was great, and we trust still abides in those who attended, and extends to their home-comrades who could not attend. The sentiments of the majority, we believe, were voiced by one old brother who boarded the train on which the writer departed. Shaking our hand warmly he said,

"Brother Russell, I would not take a thousand dollars for the good I have received from this Convention; --and I am only a poor man, too." He is a mountain farmer who knows well what it means to combat the thorns and thistles and to eat his bread

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by the sweat of his face; yet he prized the spiritual blessings above all compare because of such were his treasures--heavenly.

THE DENVER CONVENTION.

The second Convention, at Denver, Colo., on July 10-12, was central to a large district not previously favored with Convention privileges. The friends in attendance were chiefly of Colorado, and from California, Nebraska, Dakota, Iowa, Kansas, Arkansas, Texas, Oklahoma, Utah, Indian Territory, Illinois, Indiana and Ohio and numbered about 350 earnest, zealous brethren and sisters, in about equal proportions. Thirty-six availed themselves of the opportunity offered and symbolized their burial into Christ's death by immersion in water.

The principal public service was attended by about 900, and it is to be hoped that our Master's name and cause were honored and blessed by the grand seasons of refreshing here enjoyed. The listed speakers were Brother Hall of the local congregation, Pilgrims Williamson, Draper, Barton, Howel and Pastor Russell. "It is good to be here," seemed the general sentiment of all in attendance. Not by any

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means the least important of its sessions were the Testimony Meetings and the final Love Feast, at which many eyes were filled with tears as the company sang,

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

All seemed to have in mind the great Convention of the future which the Apostle designates "The General Assembly and Church of the Firstborns," in which we hope to participate and which will not break up forever. What a hope,--forever with the Lord and those who are his!

THE TORONTO CONVENTION.

The last Convention of the season has just closed at Toronto, Canada,--Sept. 5-7. We surely had a blessed season of spiritual refreshment. Many said,

"This is the grandest we have ever had!" Yes!
This is always the sentiment at every Convention, and it is really difficult to determine superiority when everything is so soul-satisfying and heart-uplifting. The listed speakers were Bro. Stovel of the Toronto Church and Pilgrims VanAmburgh, Hay, Harrison, McPhail, Barton, Streeter, Samson and Pastor Russell; but many others were heard from effectively in the Testimony Meetings, which continue to be amongst the most effective sessions of all Conventions.

The attendance was chiefly Canadian, and from New York, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois and Pennsylvania; the latter being the most prominent numerically. The number of "Truth people" was estimated at 800, while the attendance at the two public gatherings averaged about 1800 each--some estimating the number much higher. At the baptism service fifty-eight symbolized their burial into death with our Lord, and it surely was a solemn funeral occasion, yet one in which all rejoiced, remembering the promise, "If we be dead with him we shall also live with him." (2 Tim. 2:11.) The concluding session was a Love Feast long to be remembered. In some respects surely this last Convention deserves to rank chief of all Conventions thus far held under the auspices of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. Central to a large population and to the homes of a large number of the interested, the attendance of the Church and the public was larger than at any previous Convention. The attraction to the people of Toronto was thorough advertising and the best public auditorium.

The generous arrangements connected with these Conventions deserves a word of appreciation. The brethren of the entertaining Churches recognized the fact that hundreds of the Lord's brethren were coming at considerable cost, and concluded that no reasonable expense should be spared to make their stay pleasant and spiritually profitable. It is safe to say that the friends of the entertaining Church spent pro rata as much or more time and money than did those who came to them long distances. However, all was so cheerfully and heartily done, "as unto the Lord," that they evidently shared the great blessings of the Conventions also, proportionately.

NEXT YEAR'S CONVENTIONS.

It is too early to decide upon these definitely, but as the Grand Army Encampment will secure special railroad rates to Boston, and the World's Fair will probably secure special rates to St. Louis, these two cities will probably have next year's General Conventions if the churches at each desire this arrangement.

"CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY."

--COLOSSIANS 1:27.--

LANGUAGE is but a medium for the communication of thought, and words are but symbols of ideas. When words are so framed in sentences as to express an impossibility or an absurdity, when considered literally, but do forcibly illustrate a known truth when symbolically interpreted, we instinctively recognize the figure, and are instructed by it. In this way many of the deep things of God--the spiritual things--are expressed to us, since they are often forcibly illustrated by things familiar to us on the natural plane. Thus, for instance, the resurrection, both natural and spiritual, finds an illustration in the processes of vegetation (1 Cor. 15:35-38); and the processes of the beginning, development and final perfecting of the spiritual sons of God find a remarkable illustration in the begetting, quickening and birth of the natural man. (James 1:18; Eph. 2:1; John 3:3.) But if, when we read these symbols or illustrations of spiritual things, we pervert and dishonor our God-given reason by accepting palpable absurdities as their interpretation, we deceive ourselves, and in so doing are not blameless. In parables and dark, symbolic sayings our Lord opened his mouth and taught his disciples, expecting them to use their common sense in either interpreting them themselves, or in judging of the correctness of any interpretation offered by others as they should become meat in due season. And when on one occasion, instead of using their brains to draw from it the implied lesson, the disciples asked for the interpretation

of a parable, Jesus suggestively and reprovably replied, "How then will ye know all parables?" (Mark 4:13.) He would have us think, consider and put our God-given mental faculties to their legitimate use.

Bearing in mind these wholesome reflections, together with the fact that the Scriptures abound in these symbolic expressions of truth, let us consider the Apostle's meaning when he speaks of "Christ in you, the hope of glory." He uses the same figure again in his letter to the Galatians (Gal. 4:19), saying, "My children, whom I am bearing again, till Christ be formed in you," etc. Here the Apostle is likening his care and labor and endurance for those who had been begotten by the Truth to the new nature, to the physical endurance of a mother in nourishing

and sustaining the germ of human life until the new human creature is formed and able to appropriate for itself the life-sustaining elements of nature, independent of her life. So the Apostle sought to nourish and sustain those germs of spiritual being with his own spiritual life until, apart from his personal work and influence, they would be able to appropriate for themselves the God-given elements of spiritual life contained in the Word of Truth;--until the Christ-character should be definitely formed in them.

In no other reasonable sense could the Apostle bear those Galatian Christians; and in no other reasonable sense could Christ be formed in them, or in us. The thought is that every true child of God must have a definite individual Christian character which is not dependent for its existence upon the spiritual life of any other Christian. He must from the Word of Truth, proclaimed and exemplified by other Christians, draw those principles of life, etc., which give him an established character, a spiritual individuality of his own. So positive and definite should be the spiritual individuality of every one, that, should even the beloved brother or sister whose spiritual life first nourished ours and brought us forward to completeness of character fall away (which the Apostle shows is not impossible--Heb. 6:4-6; Gal. 1:8), we would still live, being able to appropriate for ourselves the spirit of Truth.

Paul feared, and had reason to fear, that the Galatian Christians had not yet come to this condition of established character--that the Christ-life was not yet definitely formed in them. He said, "I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain" (Gal. 4:11); for already they were giving heed to seducing teachers and departing from the faith, showing that they were not established in the Truth, and consequently not established in the spirit of the Truth, which is the spirit of Christ, and, hence, that Christ was not yet formed in them.--Verse 19.

Alas, how often we see among those who bear the name of Christ, and who have truly received the spirit of adoption as sons of God, that Christ is not yet formed in them! that they have not yet reached that degree of development which manifests a distinct spiritual individuality! They depend largely upon the spiritual life of others, and if their spiritual life declines these dependent ones suffer a similar decline; if they go into error, these follow, as did many

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of those Galatian Christians to whom Paul wrote. How is it, beloved, in your several cases? Apply the question to yourselves--Is Christ formed in you so

fully that none of these things move you? that, however they may grieve you at heart, they cannot affect your spiritual life? This is what it is to have "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

A cloak of mystery and superstition has been thrown around this expression of the Apostle, evidently by the great Adversary of the Truth and the Church, to the effect that in some secret way, known only to the initiated, Christ personally comes into the consecrated soul and uses that soul simply as a machine; and that, consequently, the machine is about infallible, because Christ is using it; that for them to speak, or think, or act, or interpret the Scriptures, is for Christ to do it, in whose hands they are merely the passive agents. With this idea they generally go further, and claim that Christ personally talks with them and teaches them independently of his Word; and some go so far as to claim that they have visions and special revelations from the Lord. Some speak of this presence as Christ; some as the holy Spirit; and some speak of them interchangeably.

While there is a semblance of truth in all this, and while we remember that Jesus said, "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them...shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him;...and we will come unto him and make our abode with him" (John 14:21,23), it is true that a more serious error could scarcely be entertained than this idea of personal infallibility because of the supposed mysterious presence of another being within.

Notice that this promise of the abiding presence of the Father and the Son is to those who have and keep the commandments of the Lord Jesus. Those, therefore, who ignore the Word of the Lord and have not his commandments--who do not know what they are, and hence cannot keep them, but who hearken to the voice of their own imaginations and note all the changing states of their own feelings, mistaking them for the voice of the Lord and follow the impressions

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arising from this source, instead of the commandments or teachings of the Lord--are quite mistaken in claiming this promise. Under their delusion they are following another spirit than the spirit of Truth; and unless recovered from the snare they must inevitably plunge deeper and deeper into superstition and error.

The first difficulty we meet in attempting to dispel this delusion from the midst of those infatuated with it, is the claim that this is a higher attainment in the spiritual life, up to which we have not yet measured. If the testimony of the Scriptures bearing on the subject is brought forward they say, "Oh, I

see you have the head-knowledge, but you have not the Spirit, you have not Christ in you." They then proceed to tell how Christ is in them, and that he is "teaching them wonderful things," which we shortly discover to be quite out of harmony with the Word of God. The case is indeed a sad one when all Scripture testimony contrary to their belief is set aside with claims of superior revelations of Christ or the holy Spirit which other children of God do not enjoy, and that Christ personally dwells in them, etc., etc.

Who but these deceived ones cannot see that, if their theory be true--if God talks with them and answers all their queries aside from his written Word, the Bible, through mental inspiration, or by dreams, or by audible sound--then the Bible is to such a useless book, and time spent in its study is so much time wasted. Who would "search the Scriptures" as for hid treasures, as the Lord enjoined and as all the apostles searched, if they could shut their eyes, or kneel, and have God make a special revelation to them, respecting the information desired. Surely any sensible person would prefer a special revelation on a subject, rather than to spend days and months and years examining and comparing the words of our Lord and the apostles with those of the prophets and the Book of Revelation ("searching what or what manner of time the spirit did signify"), if they could ask and have an inspired and infallible answer in a moment. None of God's consecrated ones should be thus misled of the Adversary. It is the stepping-stone to pride and every evil work;--to pride, because those who are thus deceived soon feel themselves honored of God above the apostles, who even in conference judged of the mind of the Lord as read in his Word and in his providential leadings in harmony with his Word (Acts 15:12-15); to every evil work, in that those thus puffed up fancy themselves infallible, and, separated from the anchor of truth, the Bible, Satan can soon lead them rapidly into the outer darkness of the world, or into yet darker delusions.

But the testimony of the Scriptures is quite contrary to this vaunting spirit. Paul says, "Know ye not...that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" and then he exhorts that we examine ourselves whether we be in the faith, or whether we have rejected the faith and thus become reprobates--no longer acceptable to God. (2 Cor. 13:5.) Every true child of God has respect to the commandments of God: he searches the Scriptures that he may know them, and is not left in ignorance of them; and, learning them, he endeavors to keep them, and the abiding presence of the Father and the Son is with all such so long as they continue to hold and to keep (obey) his commandments--to hold the Truth in righteousness.

To have the Truth and to keep it is not merely to

accept it on the recommendation of some friend, and because it gives some comfort and costs nothing, and to hold it until some other presumed friend dazzles the unsettled mind with some fanciful theory. The promise of the abiding presence of the Father and the Son is not to such. Christ is not in them; Christ is in the humble and sincere ones. He and the Father love and abide with them.

But how? To illustrate--a friend accompanying another to a railway station said, as he was about to board the train, "Remember, I will be with you all the way." He meant that his thoughts would be with his friend and that he would be concerned for his welfare, etc. In a similar, and yet in a fuller and broader sense, the Lord is ever present with his people. He is always thinking of us, looking out for our interests, guarding us in danger, providing for us in temporal and spiritual things, reading our hearts, marking every impulse of loving devotion to him, shaping the influences around us for our discipline and refining, and hearkening to our faintest call for aid or sympathy or fellowship with him. He is never for a moment off guard, whether we call to him in the busy noon hours or in the silent watches of the night. And not only is the Lord Jesus thus present, but the Father also. How blessed the realization of such abiding faithfulness! And no real child of God is devoid of this evidence of his adoption. Sometimes it is more manifest than at others; as, for instance, when some special trial of faith or patience or endurance necessitates the special call for special help, and forthwith comes the grace sufficient with a precious realization of its loving source. Thus

"E'en sorrow, touched by heaven, grows bright,
With more than rapture's ray,
As darkness shows us worlds of light
We never saw by day."

Every true child of God has these precious evidences of sonship, and the roughest places in his pathway are so illuminated with divine grace that they

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become the brightest, and memory continues to refer to them with thankfulness; and faith and hope and love grow strong and inspiring.

Our Lord always links the progress and development of our spiritual life with our receiving and obeying the Truth, and every child of God should beware of that teaching which claims to be in advance of the Word, and that Christ or the holy Spirit speaks to such advanced Christians independently of the Word. The snare is a most dangerous one. It cultivates spiritual pride and boastfulness, and renders powerless the warnings and exhortations of the sacred Scriptures because the deluded ones think they have a higher

teacher dwelling in them. And Satan, taking advantage of the delusion, leads them captive at his will.

These symbolic expressions of the Scriptures must be interpreted as symbols, and to force any unreasonable interpretation upon them manifests a culpable wilfulness in disregarding the divinely appointed laws of our mind, and the result is self-deception. When we read, "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (1 Jno. 4:16), the only reasonable interpretation is that we dwell in the love and favor, and in the spirit or disposition of God; and that his spirit or disposition dwells in us. Thus God by his indwelling spirit works in us to will and to do his good pleasure (Phil. 2:13); and we are reckoned as not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if the Spirit of God dwells in us.--Rom. 8:8,9.

Let us endeavor to have more and more of the mind, the Spirit of God--to have his Word abide in us richly (John 15:7; Col. 3:16)--to have and to keep his commandments, that the abiding presence of the Father and the Son may be with us; and that, realizing that the Christ-character and life are definitely formed in us, the hope of glory may be ours; for our Lord said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 7:21.) How careful then should we be in

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seeking both to know and to do the will of God. Many indeed will come forth with the plea of their wonderful works, hoping to be admitted into the Kingdom, but only those will be recognized who have done the will of the Lord, and who have no theories or works of their own whereof to boast.

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A PROPER SEEKING OF DIVINE FAVOR.

--2 SAM. 6:1-12.--OCTOBER 4.--

"Blessed are they that dwell in thy house."--Psa. 84:4.

AFTER David had been voluntarily chosen king of all the tribes of Israel, not as a result of his conquest, but as a result of his patient waiting for the Lord's time to put him into the position of king, he took possession of Jerusalem and made it the capital city of the kingdom. Then followed wars with the Philistines, who again sought to invade the land of Israel. In these wars, under the Lord's blessing, the Israelites were successful. It was after seven

years had passed under such conditions--after the kingdom of Israel had become quite settled, and was not likely to be molested by enemies--that the scene of this lesson opens. King David, at this time about forty-four years of age, recognized the fact that religious matters had been at a low ebb in the nation for many years, and that the Lord having now blessed them by reuniting them and giving them peace, an appropriate time had come to do what he could in the way of reviving the religious sentiments of the people. His own heart ever loyal to the Lord, he desired that others should more fully appreciate the Lord as their light and their salvation. So it is with all who truly reverence the Lord and trust in him; they are desirous of telling their joys abroad, and helping others into the same condition of peace and rest in the Lord.

The Ark of the Covenant, it will be remembered, was the chief article of furniture in the Tabernacle service which the Lord instituted at the hand of Moses in the wilderness. We have no certain knowledge of the regularity of the Tabernacle worship during the period from Joshua to date. Quite probably the services were maintained with more or less regularity. It is possible that since the Ark was the chief center of interest in connection with that service, its movements, etc., may have included the movement of the other articles of furniture of the Tabernacle, its boards, curtains, lamp, table, altars, etc.

Shortly after Israel entered Palestine Joshua located the Ark at Shiloh, twenty miles north of Jerusalem. (Josh. 18:1.) That it was still there at the close of the period of the Judges, and while Samuel lived with Eli, is shown by 1 Sam. 1:3. The sons of Eli took the Ark with them into battle against the Philistines, thus evidencing their faith in the divine institutions, although their lives were corrupt; but as a result of this misuse of the Ark, the Lord permitted it to be captured by the Philistines. However, while they possessed it a curse seemed to accompany it. In the temple of their god, Dagon, his image fell down before the Ark, and the people of the cities in which it was located were afflicted with plagues. The Philistines were glad to get rid of the Ark, and loading it upon a cart

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started the oxen in the direction of the Israelites. From the time of its return the Ark was in the custody of Abinadab, the priest, and his sons, one of whom was Uzzah. The Ark had thus been with the house of Abinadab in the hill Gibeah and Kirjath-jearim, otherwise called Baale, seventy years.

Any religious movement amongst the Jews must necessarily center in and about the Ark of the Covenant, for it was the symbol of the Lord's presence and of his mercy and grace toward them as a people. We remember that

when in its place in the Most Holy of the Tabernacle a bright light, called the Shekinah glory, represented the Lord's presence between the two Cherubim of its golden lid, which lid was called the Mercy Seat, because upon it the blood of atonement was sprinkled each year, which covered the sins of that people for a year, and was repeated year by year continually, as a foreshadowing type of the blood of Christ, by which the real atonement is made. In the box under this lid or Mercy Seat was the golden pot of manna, Aaron's rod that budded and the two Tables of the Law, symbolizing the gracious arrangements and promises of the Almighty to his people. Spiritual Israel, thank God, has inherited the realities which were thus typified. Christ is the Ark of the Covenant. In him the Law has full satisfaction. In him is vested the priestly office, represented by Aaron's rod, and in him is provided the heavenly manna. All these things are made ours by the Mercy Seat, and we have access to and are accepted before the Mercy Seat as members of the High Priest's body, by virtue of the blood of atonement shed by our Redeemer as a propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

King David realized that the Ark of the Lord, representing his presence, should be in the capital city of the nation, making it the city of the great King, and directing the minds of Israel, not only to their earthly king and his laws and regulations, but through him to the heavenly King whom he represented. To have this event notable--to arouse the religious sentiments of the whole people--the king realized that they must all to some extent participate in the movement, and hence he gathered from all quarters thirty thousand of the chief men of the nation--not only its military representatives, but the heads of the tribes. There is a good lesson here for all spiritual Israelites who have any prominence in the carrying forward of religious work. It is not sufficient that a leader, a representative, shall attempt some prominent service for the Lord and for the Truth. It is wiser, better every way, that all of the Lord's people be invited to join directly or representatively in any prominent matter connected with the Lord's service. Even in the affairs of a small congregation it will be found disadvantageous to have one person do all the speaking, all the leading, all the serving. Far better, far wiser is it, far more in harmony with the Scriptural direction, that each should endeavor to take a part in the service, and be encouraged so to do along the lines of his natural talents and in proportion as he shall be found humble, faithful and helpful.

The holy joy and rejoicing of the journey with the Ark from Kirjath-jearim toward Jerusalem was suddenly interrupted by the jolting of the cart, which Uzzah, who had it in charge, feared would overthrow it. When he put forth his hand to steady the Ark he was

smitten dead for his error. Consternation took the place of rejoicing. The thirty thousand who had come together specially to honor the Lord, and David himself also, were alarmed. Fear fell upon all, and David at once determined that this was either a mark of divine disfavor concerning the bringing of the Ark to Jerusalem, or that increasingly disastrous experiences might come to him and to the city by reason of the presence of the Ark. All were in fear, and the question now was, what to do with the holy oracle. A courageous man of the tribe of Levi, Obed-edom, was willing to receive the emblem of the Lord Jehovah's presence into his premises--probably the Ark was set up with the Tabernacle, etc., in his yard or court or appropriate place.

"David was displeased because the Lord had made a breach upon Uzzah"--not displeased with the Lord, we may be sure, from what we know of the man, for David's reverence for the Lord and his confidence in his righteous dealings are clearly manifest in all of his writings. We may properly understand this to mean, then, that David was displeased with his former determination --to take the Ark to Jerusalem; displeased that his good intentions respecting the revival of religion and the honoring of the lord had thus gone astray through a lack of particularity on his own part and on the part of the priests who had charge of the movement, in that they did not obey the direct and explicit instructions of the Lord concerning the manner in which this sacred emblem of his presence should be moved. See Num. 4:15; 7:9, where it is specified that the Ark was to be carried upon the shoulders of the Levites by poles running through certain rings arranged for the purpose. That this was David's attitude of mind is evident upon the reading of the ninth verse: "David was afraid of the Lord that day, and said, How shall the Ark of the Lord come to me?" We can imagine the disappointment and chagrin, not only of David, but also of the thirty thousand representative Israelites, when they scattered to their homes, disappointed respecting their good intentions, which apparently had not been fully approved by the Lord.

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The statement that "the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah" is not to be understood to signify violent passion on the Lord's part, but evidently is an accommodated expression to bring down to human comprehension the fact that the Lord was displeased with the action of Uzzah, and thought proper to punish him for his neglect. Quite possibly long association with the Ark had bred in Uzzah a familiarity and loss of respect for it as representative of God; and his open violation of the divine regulation on the highway, and in the sight of the representatives of all

Israel, would have brought the divine commands and threatenings respecting the Ark and the various holy things of the Tabernacle into disrespect. The Lord resented this in the interest of his people, and incidentally took the opportunity to teach all Israel, through their representatives there assembled, a great lesson on

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the propriety of reverence for the Lord and for the particularities of his commands.

The reverence of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Whoever has not learned this primary lesson in reverence has not made a proper start in his worship and service. Unless he learns this lesson he is not likely to accomplish anything that will be pleasing to the Lord--he is apt to be a stumbling-block, rather than an assistance in the Lord's service. Indeed, those who are the Lord's consecrated people, and who have been privileged to handle holy things, and to enter into the Most Holy by the blood of Jesus, approaching the throne of the heavenly grace in prayer, have continual need to remember the appropriateness of reverence as they approach the Lord or engage in any service for him. All such should learn from this lesson how they touch holy things, and to do so according to the divine direction and not otherwise. The poet has noticed this tendency of some to "rush in where angels fear to tread." Such irreverence sometimes manifests itself conspicuously in prayer, where the one who should be a worshiper, overflowing with thanksgiving for mercies received, undertakes to give direction to the great King of kings concerning the management of his work far and near and in all particulars. The Lord does not smite down such today, and make public examples of them for their irreverence, but we may be sure that, as the Apostle says, such petitions will receive no consideration of the Lord. (James 1:7.) A lesson in this matter to us is that obedience is better than sacrifice. The carrying of the Ark upon the shoulders of the four Levites might not have been as majestic a procedure as the one attempted with the cart; it would nevertheless have been more pleasing to the Lord, because it was according to his directions. Let us apply this lesson carefully, and see to it that we not only desire to do the Lord's will, but that we so desire to do it in his way that we will give close attention thereto, hearkening to the statements of his Word, or, as the prophet expresses it, let us be amongst those who tremble at his Word--who are extremely careful to note and particularly follow the Word of the Lord in every matter. "They shall be mine, saith the Lord, in that day when I come to make up my jewels."

To those who discern the Scriptural teaching that death is the cessation of life, and not an entrance into life more abundant, there will be no need to explain

that Uzzah's conduct not only justified the Lord in making him an example before the nation, instructing the whole people in reverence, but also that no injury was done to Uzzah's eternal future. He lived before the redemption price had been paid, and before any door to eternal life had been opened. He was one member of the human family for which Christ Jesus our Lord gave his life a ransom. As a consequence, he will be one member of the human family who shall ultimately hear the voice of the Son of Man and come forth from the sleep of death--to have it testified to him, in that his "due time," that God has been gracious to our entire race, and has redeemed us with the precious blood. (1 Tim. 2:4-6.) It is to those who have gotten the mistaken idea which ignores the resurrection and claims that there are no dead to be resurrected, but that the dead are more alive than they ever were before, and who, therefore, think of Uzzah as being dropped immediately into the hands of devils for eternal torture--it is to these that this narrative seems perplexing and unjustly severe. Thank God for the clearer light now shining upon his character and plan!

During the three months that the Ark was at the home of Obed-edom the Lord's blessing was specially with the family, to such a degree that their neighbors took knowledge of it, and the matter eventually reached the attention of the king. We think it not unreasonable to assume that there was something in the character of Obed-edom, and the conduct of his home, in his reverence of the Lord and his confidence in him, that had to do with the blessing accompanying the possession of the Ark; because we have no record of any special blessing coming to the house of Abinadab during the seventy years that the Ark remained there. We might draw a lesson from this applicable to spiritual Israel. The Bible in some respects represents the Lord to us, as the Ark represented him to natural Israel. To it we go for the settlement of our questions. From it we hear the message of the Lord speaking peace to our souls, the forgiveness of sins, etc. The Bible has been in many homes in Christendom for more than seventy years without bringing any special blessing to those homes; yet to some, even in a few months, it

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has brought inestimable favors. What is the difference? We reply that very much depends upon the genuineness of the Israelite and the degree of reverence he has for the Lord and his Word, and his carefulness to consult that Word in respect to all his affairs, and the affairs of his home. Those who have the blessing of the Lord's Word, and especially those who have any light upon its pages in this dawning of the Millennial morning, if they are not receiving great

blessing from it in their own hearts, peace, joy, comfort, courage, strength, and finding such blessings also upon the members of their households, have reason to inquire to what extent they are responsible for their failure to profit thus.

Hearing of the blessing of the Lord upon the home of Obed-edom, King David took fresh courage, and realized that these different experiences of Uzzah and Obed-edom taught the lesson that those who reverently and carefully sought to know and to do the will of the Lord would have a blessing in proportion to their nearness to him, while the careless and the irreverent only need be in fear. Again the king assembled the representatives of the nation from all quarters, the chief men of the tribe and the chief representatives of the army, etc., and apparently this day of the bringing of the Ark to Jerusalem was the most joyful and the most notable day in David's entire experience. See an account of this in 1 Chron. 15, 16. On this occasion care was taken to follow the divine direction, and the Ark was borne on the shoulders of the Levites, frequent stoppages being made, during which sacrifices were offered to the Lord.

On the whole we discern that the Lord's dealing in this matter taught David and all Israel a great lesson, and was very advantageous to the nation as a whole. Thus it is with all the corrections in righteousness which the Lord may at any time give to those who are truly his; rightly received they will bring forth peaceable fruits of righteousness, reverence and obedience.

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KING DAVID'S REPENTANCE.

--PSALM 51:1-17.--OCTOBER 18.--

Golden Text.--"Create in me a clean heart, O God."

PROSPERITY did not work to King David's personal advantage. After years of phenomenal success under the Lord's blessing, when his kingdom was mighty and his name honorable, and the necessity for his personal participation in wars was passed, and his heart had begun to gravitate towards earthly pleasures and was less zealous for the Lord and the Law than at first, the king fell into very grievous sins, which appear all the more black in contrast with the high moral character shown by him in his earlier life, when he was the man after God's own heart. The story of his sins, how he became enamored of Bathsheba and committed adultery with her, and subsequently, to shield himself, caused her husband Uriah

to be placed in the forefront of the battle that he might be killed by the enemy, involving the loss of several other lives as well, is told in the Scriptures in a most straightforward manner, without the slightest effort to condone the king's wrong-doing. No excuses are offered in connection with the account; the full weight of these awful crimes is laid directly on the king's head. Whatever excuses may be offered on his behalf must come from the reader of the account. We may suggest some thoughts along this line: In that day the kings of the world exercised a despotic authority, and it was a theory among the people that the king could do no wrong--that whatever he pleased to do was proper to him because of his high position as the head and ruler of the nation. We could in no sense of the word agree with such a thought. Nevertheless we can reasonably suppose that a sentiment so general would have more or less influence upon the mind of the king. He who respected Saul's life, because he was the Lord's anointed, may have to some extent fallen into the misconception that his own anointing by the Lord relieved him in some degree from the responsibilities resting upon others of his nation.

For about two years after these crimes were committed the king sought to stifle his conscience, and to consider that he was only using kingly liberties in what he had done. Nevertheless his conscience smote him, and he felt an alienation from God and a condemnation under his law such as he would not have felt had he been of a different stamp of character. God was not hasty in reproofing him, either. He allowed him to have a full taste of heart bitterness--allowed him to feel the darkness of soul, absence of joy, resulting from the cloud which had come between him and the Lord. It was at the appropriate time, after David had passed through secret mournings and travails of the soul, that the Lord sent him a reproof through Nathan the prophet to bring the whole matter clearly before his mind. Nathan, under the figure of a parable, excited the king's sympathies and declaration of a very severe judgment--a death sentence--against the person offending, and then the Prophet brought home to him the lesson saying, "Thou art the man!"

King David, we are to remember, did not belong to the spiritual house of sons, and hence had a far less clear view of such matters than that which would properly

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belong to every member of the house of sons, begotten of the spirit and "taught of God." We are not, therefore, to expect to draw a lesson to ourselves along similar lines. Rather we of the spiritual house, under the clearer conceptions of the divine will, are to remember the higher interpretation of adultery and murder set forth in the New Testament: that whoever desires

adultery, and is merely restrained from it by outward circumstances or fears, is really an adulterer in his heart (Matt. 5:28); that he that is angry with his brother, he who hates his brother, is a murderer--because the spirit of anger is that which, unrestrained, would lead to murder (Matt. 5:22); and that the person who covets the things of another and is merely restrained from taking them for lack of opportunity or fear of consequence, is at heart a thief. If these principles be applied by the New Creation in the examination of their hearts, it is entirely probable that some of the "house of sons" today may find themselves very near the plane of King David as respects sin, and so viewing matters they will exercise proportionately greater compassion in their judgment of the royal transgressor. Such, too, will find great consolation in the Lord's compassion, provided they are exercised in respect to their offences as David was concerning his. "There is compassion with thee that thou mightest be feared," is the prophet's expression. If God were wanting in compassion, as are many of our fellow creatures, there would be nothing to hope for under such circumstances. It is when we realize that there is forgiveness with the Lord for all who are penitent at heart, and who, therefore, give evidence that their sins are not wilful, but rather of the weakness of heredity and under the pressure of blinding temptations, that we are moved to repentance by a hope for better things.

The 51st Psalm is generally recognized as being the one in which the Psalmist expresses to God his contrition for his sins, and the fact that it is dedicated to the Chief Musician implies that it was the king's intention that it, in common with other of the Psalms, should be chanted in the Tabernacle services, for which he had set apart a large number of singers. We thus perceive that if the sin was flagrant and gross, the atonement which the king endeavored to make was a most public one. Probably many of the nation had felt more or less of the king's condemnation, and its influence must have been very injurious; and now in his public view of it as sin, and his prayer for divine forgiveness, the king would undo so far as possible not only the injury which he had inflicted upon his own conscience, and which as a cloud hung between the Lord and him, but he would undo also the evil influences as respects the conscience of the nation--on the subjects of adultery and murder.

Here again we see why David was described as a man after God's own heart. His sins were not pleasing to God--quite the reverse; but the after appreciation of the enormity of the sins and the hearty repentance therefor to the Lord, and the desire to be cleansed from every evil way, were pleasing to the Lord. Here we have an illustration of how all things may work together for good to those who love God. By reason of his heart-loyalty to the Lord, and the principles of

righteousness, even these terrible sins resulted in bringing a great blessing to David's own heart--humbling him--giving him an appreciation of his weakness and littleness, and of his need to abide close to the Lord, if he would have the Lord's fellowship and compassion and be safe from the temptations of his own fallen flesh. So, too, with the New Creation. How many of them have realized profitable lessons and blessings out of some of their stumblings--not that the stumblings were good nor of the Lord, but that the Lord was able to overrule such circumstances for good to those who are of the proper mind--rightly exercised by them to repentance and reformation.

The first three verses of the Psalm express David's appreciation of his sin and his trust in the Lord, without any attempt to apologize for his shortcomings. He trusted to the Lord to make whatever allowances could be made and merely appealed to his great "loving-kindness."

In calling to mind the multitude of God's tender mercies in the past, he expressed faith and trust that in some way the Lord could blot out these grievous transgressions and forgive them. The Lord had not yet clearly defined the way in which he could be just and yet be the justifier of sinners. Only vaguely through the shadows of the Day of Atonement sacrifices had he intimated that he had some way of his own by which in due time the guilty but repentant ones might be cleansed. David grasped the thought of mercy as understood in the types and shadows of the Law, and much more may we of the house of sons grasp the thought of our Father's forgiveness when we see that it is exercised towards us by the Lord Jesus Christ, who already has given himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, and whose sacrifice has been accepted of the Father,--as manifested by our Lord's resurrection from the dead, and by the descent of the holy Spirit at Pentecost. If, therefore, David could trust the Lord for loving-kindness and tender mercies and forgiveness of sins, the members of the house of sons should be able to exercise full faith in the divine character and plan of salvation from sin.

The fourth verse would seem to ignore the fact that wrong-doing had been done to fellow-creatures, but we may preferably understand it to mean that while this wrong to fellow-creatures was recognized by the king,

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he recognized a still higher responsibility to God, whose laws he had broken and whose kingly office, typifying that of the Christ, he had dishonored. Hence, in contrast between what man might think of his crime as against man and his own still higher consciousness of his sin as against the Lord, the latter seemed so much greater as to practically obscure the former. The greater sin as against the Almighty quite

overshadows the wrongs to humanity. David declares his recognition of the fact that God is the great Judge, and that whatever his judgment would be he knew in advance that it would be right.

In the fifth verse he introduces an extenuating thought, as though reminding the Lord that he was born in sin and therefore that perfection was not possible for him. But he does not use this fact as a screen behind which to hide his own responsibilities. Free to will, though a sinner by nature, he was necessarily responsible for yielding as he did to temptation, but he was confident that the Lord would give him the benefit of every mitigating circumstance.

It will be noted that David expected punishment from the Lord for his sins, and was here expressing his confidence that the Lord would send no punishment which would not be reasonable and within the limits of justice. What he was praying for in this Psalm was not a remission of proper punishment, but rather for the cleansing of his heart in the sight of the Lord and for his restoration to the divine favor. As a matter of fact we find that the Lord did send a severe punishment upon the king, and that he restored the sinner to his favor, granting him to experience again the joys of his salvation. According to the sentiments of other kings of his time, evidently acquiesced in by the people of Israel, the king had taken an extremely moderate course in sin, in that he had not directly taken the life of Uriah but merely connived at his death in battle; but the king appreciated the fact that God was looking deeper than this and desired truth--righteousness in the inward parts--in the heart. Outward crime and a crime allowed in the mind are alike heinous in God's sight: his experience had taught the king wisdom. Now he wished to be thoroughly cleansed, and poetically says, "Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean. Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow." Hyssop was used in the sprinkling of the unclean under the Law. David, grasping to some extent the significance of the symbol, desired the antitypical cleansing of his heart. His appreciation of the Lord's thoroughness in dealing with sin and of his compassion in forgiveness are good lessons for some of the still more favored members of the "house of sons." Many of the latter, although having seen with "the eye of faith" the great Atonement for sins made by our Lord Jesus, are still unable to appreciate the fact that the application of the merit of his sacrifice is quite sufficient to cleanse us from all sin and perfect us, that we may be recognized as absolutely pure in the Father's sight and dealt with accordingly--not as sinners, but as sons.

From the statement of verse 8 we may reasonably infer that during the year that preceded this repentance King David was in so miserable a state of mind that even the music of the singers and of those who played skilfully upon the harp and all the joyous songs

of Nature were sore to his heart--had no gladness in them to comfort his heart when it was barred from the Lord's presence and fellowship. This is the thought of our hymn, which says of the soul which enjoys the light of the Lord's favor:--

"Sweet prospects, sweet birds and sweet flowers
Have all gained new sweetness to me;" and
"His presence disperses all gloom,

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And makes all within me rejoice;" and
"While I am so happy in him,
December's as pleasant as May."

King David was longing for the joy and gladness which he had experienced in times past, and figuratively he likens himself to one whose bones had been broken. He knew that his joy and comfort would return if he could but have back again the Lord's favor. He knew, too, that the Lord could not look upon sin with any allowance, hence his prayer: "Hide thy face from my sins and blot out mine iniquities [unrighteousness]. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence and take not thy holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation: and uphold me with thy free Spirit."

No true Christian can read these words without feeling a deep sympathy with the different expressions; and even though as New Creatures in Christ Jesus we have had no experience with such terrible sins as those which weighed upon the heart of David, nevertheless our higher responsibilities and higher conceptions of sin under the "new commandment" and under the instructions of the holy Spirit, as sons of God, cause us to feel with proportionate weight transgressions which in the sight of the world would appear nothing--such, for instance, as we have just mentioned: covetousness, hatred, slander, which are thefts and murders from the higher standpoint of the divine view appropriate to the New Creation.

In verse 13 the prophet proposes to the Lord that his discomfiture in divine disfavor was used for the instruction of others,--to show transgressors the Lord's ways and to turn sinners from the evil of their course. How appropriate this thought to us! Not until we know experimentally through faith in the blood of Christ that our sins have been put out of the Father's

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sight, not until we have experienced the joys of his salvation and forgiveness, are we in any condition to be servants to the truth or illustrations to others. Hence we see that it is only those who have been begotten of the holy Spirit who are anointed to preach the gospel.

To others the Lord says, "What hast thou to do to take my word into thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction and castest my words behind thee?"--refusing to submit to the divine requirements.

The 14th verse repeats the same thought in a different form. If the Lord will deliver him from his guilt in connection with his sin, his tongue shall thereafter sing loudly the Lord's righteousness--not David's righteousness. This is the song that all the blood-washed may sing, "True and righteous are all thy ways, Lord God Almighty. Thou hast redeemed us from amongst men." None of us have any right to sing our own righteousness, for as the Apostle declares, "There is none righteous, no, not one." The mission of the cleansed ones is to accept and use the Lord's mercy towards them, to extol his righteousness, to acknowledge their unworthiness and to call upon others to recognize this fountain of righteousness and forgiveness.

"O Lord, open thou my lips: and my mouth shall show forth thy praise." This expression implies that none need expect to have a proper opening of their mouths to show forth the Lord's praises, and give the call from darkness into his marvelous light, unless the Lord shall first have opened their lips with his mercy and truth; for otherwise how could any expect to tell the glad tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people? This equally implies that all who have had forgiveness of sins should be in a condition of spirit to make a full consecration of their all to the Lord, and then all such should expect an unsealing of their lips, that the message of God's truth and grace may flow out from them for the instruction and blessing of others--as it is written, "Grace is poured upon thy lips." "Thou hast put a new song in my mouth, even the loving-kindness of our God." While these are appropriate specially to our dear Redeemer, they are appropriate also to every member of "the Church which is his body," and all claiming to be of "the body," who have never had their lips unsealed to confess the Lord to the extent of their opportunity, have reason to question everything pertaining to their relationship to the Lord.

In verses 16 and 17 the King shows that he had acquired a deep insight into the meaning of some of the typical sacrifices;--though probably, by inspiration, he wrote more wisely than he understood. As we have seen in our study of Tabernacle Shadows of Better Sacrifices, only the Day of Atonement sacrifices were sin offerings, the burnt offerings and peace offerings of the remainder of the year representing the consecration to the Lord and his service. Grasping this thought prophetically, to whatever extent he also grasped it intellectually, King David expressed his realization that the Lord is pleased rather with a broken and contrite condition of heart than with burnt

offerings, which were but types. So, too, we learn that nothing that we can give the Lord, even after our acceptance in Christ, has any value in his sight until first of all we have given him ourselves,--our hearts, our wills.

Let us ever keep in memory that a broken and contrite heart the Lord never despises, will never spurn. Therefore into whatever difficulty any of the Lord's people of the New Creation may stumble, if they find themselves hungering for the Lord's fellowship and forgiveness, if they find their hearts contrite and broken, let them not despair, but remember that God has made a provision through the merit of Christ which enables him to accept and justify freely from all sin all that come unto him through Jesus--through faith in his blood. There is a sin unto death--a sin unto the Second Death--from which there will be no recovery, no resurrection; but those who have broken and contrite hearts on account of their sins may know that they have not committed "the sin unto death," for their condition of heart proves this, as the Apostle declares: "It is impossible to renew again unto repentance" any who have committed the sin unto death--wilful sinners against full light and knowledge. Let all, therefore, rejoice in the grace of our God, who is able through Christ, his accepted way, to save unto the uttermost all who come to him, laying aside sin and its desires.

"Now, if any man [of the Church stumble into] sin [through weakness and temptation--not intentionally] we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (1 John 2:1.) Such, therefore, may come with faith to the throne of the heavenly grace that they may obtain mercy and find grace to help in every (future) time of need. (Heb. 4:16.) But, like David, their prayers and hopes should be for a restoration of divine favor and not for escape from chastisements needful to their correction. God forgave David, but also chastened him.--2 Sam. 12:11-14.

Surely King David must have learned a great lesson in mercy from this sad experience. How many times must he have called to mind his response to Nathan's parable, "The man that hath done this thing is worthy of death: and he shall restore the lamb four fold, because he did this thing and because he had no pity!" Alas, poor David! these words showed that he had a mind, a heart, that was no stranger to justice and pity in other men's affairs, and hence that he was the more guilty in his much more serious violations of justice and compassion. "Blessed is he that is not condemned in that which he alloweth,"--who is not condemned by his own declarations in respect to the affairs of others. Oh, how merciful to the failings of others it should make us when we remember our dear Redeemer's words, "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses"; and when again we remember that we

may not even pray for forgiveness of our sins unless we from the heart forgive those who have injured us and again desire our fellowship.

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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--

BRITISH BRANCH--24 EVERS HOLT ST., LONDON, N.W.
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TERMS TO THE LORD'S POOR AS FOLLOWS:--

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

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

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TO OUR GERMAN FRIENDS.

Our dear Brother Otto A. Koetitz has just left us for Germany, his wife and child accompanying him. He goes to take the place of Brother Henniges as manager of the Elberfeld Branch. Brother Henniges, with his wife, will proceed to Australia, where he will open another Branch Office. Let us all join in prayer for divine blessings upon these brethren in their new fields of labor.

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The German translation of DAWN, VOL. V. is about ready, and orders will soon be promptly filled.

The German edition of ZION'S WATCH TOWER it is proposed shall be a monthly from and after January 1904.

A new edition of TABERNACLE SHADOWS in German is now ready and in good supply.

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TO FOURTH CLASS POSTMASTERS.

We should be pleased to hear from all of our friends who hold positions as Fourth Class Postmasters, and who would enjoy the privilege of serving the truth. We are aware that there are a number of such, and we should be glad to have word from them at as early a date as possible.

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VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER.

FALLING FROM THE FAITH.

NOT content with showing from the Scriptures that we are living in the "harvest" of this age, when the Lord as reaper will separate thoroughly between the genuine and the nominal, imitation "wheat," gathering all of the former into the Kingdom "garner," we have endeavored from time to time to point out the fulfilment of this all around us. As already indicated, this "falling" appropriately appears

first among the teachers in Churchianity--the masses readily following their blind leaders into the ditch of unbelief.

One of the notable evidences of this growth of unbelief in God's Word and in the entire plan of salvation which it alone sets forth, is found in the following extracts clipped from a recent issue of The Ram's Horn. Not because the writer, Rev. R. F. Horton, D.D., of London, is higher in position than others who have taken the same stand (or rather have similarly lost their standing and fallen into unbelief); nor because The Ram's Horn is the only or even the leading religious paper to publish such open defiance to the Word, but because the journal was started as an opponent to infidelity--as a champion of the Bible and of faith in "the blood of the cross" as the only ground of forgiveness of sins--the only basis of the sinner's justification before God.

The matter is presented in the Question and Answer form, and is given the full indorsement of the journal. It follows:--

"Do you believe that man was evolved from the lower forms of life, or created as related in Genesis?"

"I believe that man was slowly evolved from lower forms, and that evolution is even now not complete; but I also believe he is being evolved into the likeness of the image of God. Men as individuals are in all degrees of evolution. The image of God is what logicians used to call the final cause of man, the goal and purpose for which man began his adventurous career. The goal explains the means. Man is here with his face towards the goal, and the goal is the measure of the stature of Christ. Evolution cannot explain causes, cannot explain life itself, but must draw on a region of truth beyond itself to explain its own processes.

"Do you believe in the fall as related in the Bible?"

"Yes, exactly as related--as an allegory, a parable in order to explain the mystery of moral and spiritual evil, remembering that Adam is but the Hebrew word for man, and Eve the Hebrew word for life. The story is the pictorial presentation of that alienation from God which is the constant experience of human life, caused by disobedience. We disobey and know it, reach out our hands, and in strange inflation of our little godless minds we set up ourselves, and by self-exaltation are ruined because we have left our God. The fall is strangely illustrated by the writings of atheists."

The Ram's Horn's editor properly calls these "great questions" and their answers "clear cut and definite." We are glad to have the truth clearly and definitely presented, and when error is stated we prefer to have it definitely proclaimed also; there is less danger that it will deceive ordinary readers. We only wish that Rev. Horton had been still more explicit: some

of the Lord's unsuspecting sheep will still be in danger of being deceived by these answers, and it shall be our duty and privilege to help them get clearer light upon the full meaning of the explanations.

The reply to the first question is clear cut in its denial of the Bible's account--that God created man in his own image; a very different thing from creating him either as a higher order of monkey or as a microbe, and expecting him to attain the divine image by his own efforts. Indeed, Dr. Horton totally ignores God's

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creative work in man when he speaks of "the goal and purpose for which man began his adventurous career." The Bible teaches that it is God's purposes and not man's that are being worked out, and that God gave man his start--and a good start at that--in an Eden whose every condition was fit for the testing of one already in the divine image and on trial to determine his obedient loyalty to his Creator's commands: the reward of obedience being a continuation of the divine image and favor unto life everlasting, and that of disobedience the loss of that image and favor in death.

Dr. Horton declares that "the goal explains the means." By this his readers are to understand that the past six thousand years have marked such progress amongst men as to imply that the process, continued, will result in man's attainment of God's image. Evolution is the "means" this eminent D.D. credits for all the progress of the world--Evolution is the Savior he lauds for raising man from lower planes of existence; and still uplifting him will, he hopes, ultimately make him an image of God. He does not tell us if he has any hopes for those now dying and for those who have died for centuries past without attaining God's image. He leaves us to wonder whether he expects that such will never have God's image, or whether he believes that a process of Evolution continues beyond the tomb, and that it will ultimately "save unto the uttermost." If he carries Evolution into the heavenly conditions, would not consistency require him to claim that the angels are evolving? and that God himself is evolving? And if so, if God is not yet perfect, how can Dr. Horton or anyone else speak of man's becoming an image of a God who has not yet evolved into a definite, fixed character?

When considering that man is imperfect, and that his proper aim should be perfection, we are not to take Dr. Horton's Evolution theory as the only one that will explain the situation. God's Word, through his chosen mouthpieces--his Son, the apostles and the prophets--is more trustworthy than Dr. Horton. God's explanation of present conditions is that, "By one man's disobedience sin entered the world, and death by [as the result of] sin; and so [thus] death passed

upon all men." (Rom. 5:12.) The Apostle explains the lesser degradation of some and the greater depravity of others by saying that, while all sinned and fell, some indulged more wilfully and fell more deeply than others. When they knew God they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise they became fools,... wherefore God gave them up to uncleanness through lusts of their own hearts...who changed the truth of God into a lie....And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient,--being filled with all unrighteousness.-- Rom. 1:21-29.

This is the Bible side of the question--not that monkeys set for themselves as a goal an imaginary image of God, and have gotten so far along toward it as is represented by present-day civilization, but that man in God's image was disobedient to his Creator's commands and sought out many inventions and degraded himself (Eccl. 7:29), and God has permitted him to set low standards and ideals before himself to his own ruin. The Bible accredits the high ideals which are doing so much to lift man out of degradation not to anything in monkeys or fallen men, but to God's revelations of his plan of salvation, which, however imperfectly understood, is "the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth," and indirectly a power for good upon the heathen as well as upon the people of civilized lands who believe not, in the proper and specific sense of that term. The promises of the Redeemer, and his work of redemption and restitution, lighted the hopes of natural Israel and lifted that nation above the other nations, which more or less caught its spirit of hope; and since the Redeemer's death and resurrection, and his outpouring of his spirit upon Spiritual Israel, his Church, a "little flock," has been the light of the world, which in a small degree has uplifted the civilized nations to a semi-decency which in many is but a thin veneer of "form of godliness."

The second answer deserves careful scrutiny, for it is an evasion instead of an answer. It is evident that the answer should not have been Yes, but No, I do not believe in the fall as related in the Bible. Adherence to the theory of Evolution forces this man, and everyone else who reasons logically, to deny the plain Bible narrative--not only the Genesis account but also the New Testament records, and to falsely teach that Adam and Eve were myths, that they never existed, that the record is merely an allegory--a fable. What, then, did our Savior mean when he said that he "came to seek and to save that which was lost," and to "give himself a ransom for all"? (Matt. 18:11; 1 Tim. 2:6.) What did the Apostle Peter and all the holy prophets mean when they spoke of the "restitution of all

things" if our race did not fall and need restitution? (Acts 3:19-21.) What did the Apostle Paul mean when he said, "In Adam all die," and "By one man's disobedience," and "As by a man came death," and "The first man was made a living soul"? If the Bible record respecting Adam is unreliable we have no record of a first man, and if unreliable in this matter it could not be depended on at all. If left without an Adam and a fall and a Paradise lost we should have no

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use for a restitution, and a Paradise restored, by a Redeemer. If no fall no sin, and no need of redemption.

Thank God for the good hope set before us in the Gospel, so different from the Evolution delusion. "This hope we have as an anchor to the soul, sure and steadfast," and reasonable and consistent and Scriptural in every particular. It acknowledges the fall, the need of the redemption accomplished by our Lord at Calvary, and the Church's need of full deliverance from sin and death in the First Resurrection, and the world's need of the great Millennial Kingdom for its restitutive uplift opportunities for "the whole world."

Dr. Horton contradicts his first reply in his second. In the first he says, "Man is here with his face towards the goal," which implies that man is doing finely along

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Evolution lines; but he contradicts this in his second, saying,--"We [including himself] disobey and know it, reach out our hands and, in strange inflation of our little godless minds, we set up ourselves, and by self-exaltation are ruined because we have left our God." --Where, then, is the face toward the goal and the Evolutionary power in man? Does not the gentleman's reasoning rather confirm the Apostle's words than his own?--See Rom. 1:21-29.

CHURCH COMMUNISM ARGUMENTS.

An exchange says:--

"We declare that the germs of divine communism were planted in the Church nineteen hundred years ago, and that in the harvest of the dispensation, divine communism must characterize the economics of those who awake to a realization of the genuine science of the Lord's coming. He who denies the principles of communism as it obtained in the early Church in obedience to the law of love to the neighbor, cannot consistently lay claim to acceptance of the apostolic doctrines and practices."

* * *

We consider that the writer of the above item erred in saying that the germs of communism were planted nineteen centuries ago. Such of those germs as were proper for man were planted six thousand years ago, when God created man perfect, in his own image. The conditions resulting from the fall made communism impossible--injurious, and therefore unwise. The Lord's people, in proportion as they become heavenly minded, should be better prepared than others for a return to proper communism; but experience teaches what the Apostle Paul proclaimed, namely, that the treasure of the new heart, the new mind, can exercise itself only through our earthen vessels--all of which are more or less twisted and cracked, "so that we cannot do the things that we would."

It is far from the truth to claim that our Lord and his disciples dwelt together on communistic lines. On the contrary, the very terms of discipleship were that Jesus should be the acknowledged Lord and Master. To his disciples Jesus' word was law. They certainly did not have a commission of authority. True, Judas was treasurer of the funds, not, however, by vote or general appointment, but by the Lord's permission; for the moneys contributed were given to Jesus (Luke 8:3) and not to the disciples. He voluntarily shared with them. Clearly, however, he personally cared for his mother, Mary; and evidently, too, his disciple John had separately a home and means of his own.--John 19:27.

After Pentecost, under the impulse of the new mind, the Lord's people evidently did attempt what every true Christian feels considerably drawn to, namely--a limited form of communism. But communism was not taught as proper Christian usage, and not one word can be found in the Bible inculcating it. It was purely a voluntary movement, which the apostles neither aided nor opposed, and which speedily proved itself impracticable under present conditions. The Lord permitted his people to experiment thus as a valuable lesson--teaching the need of the resurrection-change to transform their bodies.

When the lesson had been given the Lord permitted a fierce persecution to scatter the Jerusalem Church, and we hear nothing more of Christian communism in the Bible. Quite the contrary. The Apostle writes to "them that are rich among you," and took up collections for the poor, and exhorted each Christian to lay aside for benevolent purposes according as the Lord had prospered him--showing thus that neither the labor nor its monetary result were considered common property. The exhortation to "do good unto all men as we have opportunity, especially to the household of faith,"

and the exhortation that, seeing a brother have need, we should not content ourselves with giving him our good wishes but should share with him the gifts which we by God's grace enjoy;--these, and many other Scriptures we might cite, show clearly that communism was not practised and that the apostles did not improve such opportunities to inculcate or even commend communism. Doubtless many of God's blessings will be common to all men during the Millennium and after it;--yet this surely will be far from the anarchious kind of communism advocated by some today. The Millennial Kingdom will be a monarchy --a theocracy. Similarly the heavenly Kingdom is not communistic in government, for grades are recognized --angels, principalities and powers, etc. And, as now, in the Church, the Apostle declares that God sets the members as it pleaseth him. So we find him

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teaching that after the First Resurrection shall have brought the entire body of Christ to perfection of the divine nature, there will still be no communism of authority, but there shall be least and greatest in the Kingdom, even as star differeth from star in glory.

HIGHER CRITICISM'S WIDE INFLUENCE.

A German scholar and editor of a religious journal says:--

"We are at the beginning of a new epoch in the life of the Church. The seventy-year war between mythology and theology in the domain of the Old Testament has seemingly ended in a complete defeat of the traditional views. The critical views practically control Protestant thought everywhere and have assumed international proportions. Not one university man in Germany holds to the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, and all make concessions to the newer views.

"And yet when a person coolly and deliberately looks at the so-called 'certain results' of the critical investigations of the last century and a half, what are these 'results'? Nothing else than the conclusion that most of the books of the Old Testament are literary frauds; that they do not correctly teach the historical development of the religion of Israel, and, to make matters worse, intentionally and purposely misrepresent this history, especially those books that have been 'revised' in harmony with the spirit of the Deuteronomist. The whole Mosaic code, in its real essence, at any rate, is held to be a later fabrication, and its claim to have been given in the wilderness is regarded as an historical falsehood. Its whole

historical background, it is asserted, is a fabrication, and the Law is but the outcome of a struggle between the advocates of the local cults and the hierarchical tendencies of the Jerusalem priesthood.

"There is only one other religious book that, in its origin and development, can be compared with the Old Testament, as the critics regard it, and that is the Book of Mormon. A mere glance at this parallel must convince the earnest Christian that he can have no share in the radical criticism of the times. The strongest argument against the hypothesis is to state it in its simple and naked truthfulness."

"THE AWFUL PROBLEM OF FUTURE RETRIBUTION."

In the New York Christian Advocate Rev. G. Jackson treats a timely topic thus:--

"I close these brief notes on Methodist doctrine with a reference to the dark and awful problem of future retribution. In Dr. Dale's summary of the characteristic doctrines of the evangelical revival, 'those which its preachers were constantly reiterating, and on which they insisted most vehemently,' he names as the fourth and last, 'the eternal suffering to which they believed that those are destined who have heard the Christian Gospel in this life and rejected it.' He then goes on to point out in words which I could wish to transfer bodily to my own pages, the great change which the belief of large numbers of persons now belonging to evangelical Churches has undergone in relation to this subject. There are some--their number is probably small--who have accepted what is commonly known as the theory of universal restoration, who believe, that is, that all men will certainly at last reach the blessedness and glory of eternal union with God. Others again there are--and it is well known that Dale himself was one of them--whose study of the New Testament has led them to the conclusion that men possess immortality only in Christ, and that consequently those in this world who have rejected him are destined to eternal destruction, to a second death from which there is no resurrection. Others again can reach no definite and positive position; they find in the words of Christ and his apostles apparently conflicting teaching. Such, according to Dale, is the present position of the doctrine in our evangelical churches. How far are his words true of Methodism? That we have been greatly influenced by the modification of belief it is impossible to deny, though how far the change has gone it is not easy to say. So far as I am able to judge, dogmatic universalism has no place among us at all. A few, perhaps, especially since the publication of Dr. Joseph Agar Beet's work on 'The Last Things,' have been looking

toward 'conditional immortality' for relief from the agonizing burden of the old belief. But the overwhelming majority of those to whom a restatement of their faith has become a necessity would probably prefer to class themselves amongst those who can reach no definite and positive conclusion. I am told on the highest authority that the late Dr. Moulton, who held an unrivalled position in Wesleyan Methodism as a saintly scholar, was wont in private to describe his own attitude as one of 'reverent agnosticism.' The phrase not inaptly describes the state of mind of multitudes of his younger brethren today. On the one hand, they can receive neither universal restoration nor conditional immortality, for they are resolved to be loyal to the New Testament, and they do not find either of these doctrines there. On the other hand, they dare not speak as did many of their fathers of the doom of the lost, for neither can they find warrant for this in the words either of Christ or his apostles. Therefore they are agnostics."

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CHURCH UNION IN NEW ZEALAND AND CANADA.

A Canadian journal says:--

"Signs are not wanting that Christian religions await only the coming of a Morgan to be fused into a gigantic trust, if such an ill-omened word may be used to describe Church union. New Zealand Presbyterians have taken the lead by appointing a committee to wait on the Methodists and Congregationalists of that country to consider the merging of all three denominations. Encouraged by this example, the lay conference of the Methodist Church at Winnipeg has passed a resolution heartily indorsing the action of the New Zealand workers and instructing a special committee to make inquiries with a view of definite proposals of a similar nature to Canadian Presbyterians and Congregationalists."

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A THEOLOGICAL DISCUSSION.

THE following, copied from the Program for a debate arranged between the Editor of this Journal and a prominent Methodist minister of Allegheny City, will be self-explanatory:--

HISTORY OF THE PROPOSITION.

On March 10, 1903, Rev. E. L. Eaton, D.D., pastor North Avenue M.E. Church, addressed a letter to Pastor C. T. Russell, of the Arch Street (Bible House) Chapel, in which he said:

"Believing that nothing helps so much to get at the exact truth of a fact or doctrine as a full and free discussion of it; and that any legitimate thing that will attract the attention and arouse the interest of those who are indifferent to Scriptural truth is commendable; I have thought that a public debate of some of those questions about which you and I differ, and which we both believe to be vital to the Christian system, would be of immense interest to the public, and perhaps of great spiritual profit to those who heard, provided that the discussions be carried on--as I feel sure they would be--in a Christian spirit and with moral and spiritual earnestness. Therefore I have decided to call your attention to the matter, and to inquire whether you would be willing to engage with me in a joint discussion, at some suitable time and place in this city.

"The questions which I have in mind, but which I have not exactly formulated, are concerning the following:

"1--The Second Coming of Christ.

"2--The Millennium.

"3--Post-Mortem Probation.

"4--State of the Dead Between Death and the Resurrection.

"5--Eternal States of the Saved and the Lost.

"6--The Doctrine of Salvation."

The Christian, brotherly spirit of the communication was responded to in like manner by Pastor Russell on March 12 in a letter as follows:

"I assure you that your courteous expressions and Christian sentiments are fully reciprocated by me. I agree with you that such a public discussion as you suggest--of our divergent views on the teachings of the Bible--ought to be profitable, stimulating to Bible study on our part as well as on the part of all Bible students hereabouts. I therefore accept your proposition, and join you in mutual assurances that the 'Golden Rule' shall be observed, which will insure Christian courtesy of the very highest standard."...

Other engagements and appointments hindered an early consummation of arrangements, but on June 27 the gentlemen concerned appended their signatures to a joint letter embodying the general conditions which should regulate the discussion, viz.: that in debate the first speaker should have fifty minutes, the second speaker fifty minutes; and that each should have ten minutes for reply; that the meetings should be absolutely free to the public, and should be held in Carnegie

Hall, Allegheny, on October 18,20,22,27,29,
and November 1.

PROPOSITIONS.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON, OCTOBER 18, THREE O'CLOCK.

Proposition 1.--The Scriptures clearly teach that divine grace and power, full and free, have been constantly exercised toward mankind since the fall, to the intent that all, if they would, might be saved. Hence there will be no probation after death, nor need of any. Dr. Eaton will affirm. Pastor Russell will deny.

TUESDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 20, EIGHT O'CLOCK.

Proposition 2.--The Scriptures clearly teach that the souls of the dead are unconscious while their bodies are in the grave. Pastor Russell will affirm. Dr. Eaton will deny.

THURSDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 22, EIGHT O'CLOCK.

Proposition 3.--The Scriptures clearly teach that all of the saved will become spirit beings, and after the General Judgment will enter heaven. Dr. Eaton will affirm. Pastor Russell will deny.

TUESDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 27, EIGHT O'CLOCK.

Proposition 4.--The Scriptures clearly teach that only the "saints" of this Gospel age will share in the "First Resurrection;" but that vast multitudes will be saved in and by the subsequent resurrection. Pastor Russell will affirm. Dr. Eaton will deny.

THURSDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 29, EIGHT O'CLOCK.

Proposition 5.--The Scriptures clearly teach that the second coming of Christ will precede the Millennium; and that the object of both--the second coming and the Millennium--is the blessing of all the families of the earth. Pastor Russell will affirm. Dr. Eaton will deny.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON, NOVEMBER 1, THREE O'CLOCK.

Proposition 6.--The Scriptures clearly teach that the divine penalty for sin--actual transgressions of God's holy law--eventually to be inflicted upon the incorrigible, will consist of inconceivably great sufferings, eternal in duration. Dr. Eaton will affirm. Pastor

Russell will deny.

* * *

We bespeak the prayers of the dear friends of the Truth, that in connection with this opportunity for presenting the Scripture teaching concerning the wonderful plan of God we may have wisdom from above; and that the name and character of the Lord may be glorified.

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HOW TO SECURE REPORTS OF THE DEBATES.

Anticipating your interest in the proposed discussions, we have negotiated with the leading Pittsburgh daily, The Gazette, to publish reports of each session in their issues of the following days.

Our arrangement follows:--

Eight copies of each issue containing the debate reports (with one copy each of the intermediate issues, as required by law to secure cheap postage) to one address, postpaid for 55 cents; or the same, with one year's subscription to ZION'S WATCH TOWER, for \$1.50. All remittances should be sent direct to the WATCH TOWER office.

Believing that many of the friends will consider these six reports desirable for circulating amongst their friends and neighbors we have felt no hesitation about guaranteeing The Gazette 1250 subscriptions. Order at once, as, otherwise, the number printed may not be sufficient to fill all orders.

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THE DAVIDIC COVENANT.

--2 SAMUEL 6:4-16.--OCTOBER 11.--

"Thy throne shall be established forever."--2 Sam. 7:16.

DAVID, during the first six years of his reign over all Israel, was kept actively engaged in resisting the enemies of Israel and enlarging the borders of the nation, in harmony with the original divine grant. Having to a considerable extent accomplished these things, and having built for himself a palace in Jerusalem, the reverential elements of his nature noticed the inconsistency of his dwelling in a palace while the typical residence of Israel's great King, Jehovah, was but the Tabernacle tent. His reverential impulses

promptly suggested the building of a temple to replace the Tabernacle, and properly enough he consulted the Prophet Nathan, who rejoiced in this manifestation of the King's loyalty to the Lord, and indorsed the program. That same night, however, the Lord gave the prophet a message for the King, which, although it showed appreciation of David's intentions, forbade their execution, explaining that the reason that the Lord's presence was manifested in a tent, and not a permanent structure, was not because the Lord had not thought of this, nor because others of his servants would not have been glad to have erected such a structure at his bidding, but because the divine plan was otherwise. The Tabernacle was for the time being preferred, for certain reasons not explained at the time. The Lord, however, did assure David that by and by he would have a permanent temple, and that David's successor and son should erect it.

The Lord's people may learn a valuable lesson from this incident. We are not to conclude that, because our plans and projects are reverential and designed to be for the glory of God, therefore they must have the divine approval. With spiritual Israel, as with David,

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it is frequently true that "My ways are not as your ways, nor my thoughts [plans] as your thoughts [plans]; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, saith the Lord." Those who are of David's disposition--"after God's own heart"--will not only consult with those whose judgment they would consider helpful, as David consulted with Nathan, but if subsequently the Lord rejects their best judgment, and does not cooperate in the execution of their plans, will do as David did in this instance: they will uncomplainingly acquiesce in the Lord's plans, and cooperate therewith, and thus further attest that they are of the kind the Lord loves to honor and call Beloved. To these also the Lord will grant other special blessings and favors, as he did to David.

The spirit of David in this matter--his desire to honor the Lord and to build him a great house or temple--finds its parallel in the heart sentiments of every true Christian. We do not refer to those who merely take pleasure in erecting grand temples of stone, but specially to those whose ambition it would be to organize the Church of the present time--to glory in its grandeur and completeness of organization and function and service for the Lord. Those not in the right condition of heart, heady, self-willed, confident that their good intentions must be pleasing to the Lord, have proceeded to build various structures, each claiming his to be the temple of the Lord. As they have neither sought nor received divine instruction on the subject, but are following their own ideals, there is necessarily considerable

diversity in these buildings, each seeming to its builders to be the right, proper and appropriate temple of God. These temples now number hundreds, the larger and more imposing ones being the Roman Catholic temple, the Greek Catholic temple, the Church of England temple, the Methodist temple, the Lutheran temple, the Presbyterian temple, the Baptist temple, the Congregational temple, etc., etc.

But a small class follow the example of David, and receive instruction from the Lord to the effect that the present is not the time for temple-building; that he could have built his temple heretofore, and found many willing to serve him in this respect, but that he prefers that his representation in the world in the present time shall be extremely simple and unostentatious. Such

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receive of the Lord assurances, however, that in his own time and way, under a succeeding form of the kingdom, a much more glorious temple shall be constituted than would be possible for us to build at the present time--an enduring temple which shall be filled with the glory of the Lord. All who are of the Davidic character, of the disposition beloved of the Father--acceptable members of his dear, beloved Son--will, as soon as they learn of the divine purpose, promptly submit themselves, and cooperate in the divine plan. That plan in the type was that David, as the man of war, battling for the right, and severely tried and disciplined, should represent the saints of God in the present militant condition, warring with the world, the flesh and the devil, and becoming in their own hearts and faith strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. According to the same type it is the mission of the present time to prepare the gold, silver and precious things for the future temple--ready for its construction. In the type these were literal things, but in the antitype, as the Apostle shows, the Lord's saints are the gold, silver and precious stones, which very shortly now, in the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom, will be all thoroughly organized on the plane of glory, honor and immortality, and filled eternally with the life and glory of the Father. As David and his work of preparing for the temple, typifies the Church in this present time, and our work of preparing ourselves and each other for the glories to follow, so Solomon's Kingdom which followed represents the Kingdom of the glorified Christ--the real Kingdom, of which the present is but the embryo, and the construction of Solomon's Temple typifies the resurrection of the Church, in which all the members shall come together in glorious completeness, in the morning of the Millennial day. "Weeping may endure for a night [in connection with our fightings with foes without and within, and suffering for righteousness' sake], but joy cometh in the morning [when

that which is perfect shall have come, and when that which is in part shall have been done away]." (Psa. 30:5.) "God shall help her [the Church, the Bride of Christ], and that right early"--in the morning.-- Psa. 46:5.

In connection with this refusal of David's proposition the Lord gave him very gracious encouragement, reminding him that every step of his onward way had been guided from on high, and that it was because he had faithfully looked to the Lord as his guide and counsellor that he had now reached the degree of development and relationship to the Lord and to the Kingdom occupied. So the Lord encourages all who are of this David class in spiritual Israel today. All who are looking to the Lord, and hearkening to his Word, are reminded that the Lord is attending to his own work in his own way, and that it is a far superior way to anything which we could devise. We are pointed to the low estate we occupied on the animal plane, and how the Lord by his grace has advanced us step by step, until now we are children of God, heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord, if so be that we suffer with him. It is for us to appreciate the lesson of past experiences, and to trust that he who took us from the horrible pit and the miry clay, and placed our feet upon the Rock, and put the new song into our mouths, is able to bless us still further, and that in proportion as we hearken to his Word, through his prophet, the Scriptures.

The succeeding verses of the lesson mingle and commingle the natural blessings upon David and his literal posterity and upon natural Israel, with the still greater blessings that are to uplift all who will come into covenant relationship with God through the antitypical Son of David, the glorified Christ and his Millennial Kingdom. Vs. 10 undoubtedly had a measurable fulfilment in literal Israel, in that for several hundred years they remained in their own land, under their own covenant--an experience very different from that preceding under the rule of the Judges. But the time when the Lord will plant them, and when they shall be moved no more and afflicted no more by the wicked, must apply to the grander restoration of the future, when, as he has promised, he will gather them out of all nations and peoples whither they are now scattered, and bring them into their own land. This later prophecy is in full agreement with the one made to David by Nathan. Then, as another Scripture declares, the Lord will restore to Israel her lawgivers as at the first, and her judges as at the beginning. Then it will be, too, that the house of David will be firmly established in great David's greater Son, the glorified Christ. Here the promises to the natural and to the spiritual seeds are more or less intertwined, just as they were in the Abrahamic promise. The seed of Abraham was both an earthly seed and a heavenly, as the sand of the sea

and as the stars of heaven--the natural seed and the spiritual--and as the Apostle declares, the promise is sure to both of these, its proper part to each.--Rom. 4:16. Compare Rom. 11:25-32.

David's throne was perpetual through the line of Solomon down to Zedekiah, and when the Lord rent the Kingdom from the hands of Zedekiah he did not give it to another family, but proclaimed an interregnum --a suspension of David's Kingdom, which might not go to another. The language of the prophecy concerning Zedekiah is, "O thou profane and wicked prince, whose time is come that iniquity should have an end: remove the diadem, take off the crown; this shall no more be the same. I will overturn, overturn, overturn

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it, until he come whose right it is, and I will give it unto him." (Ezek. 21:27.) There has been no King of Israel, from Zedekiah's day to the present--the overturning of the Kingdom has been very thorough. The kings who reigned over Israel at the time of the first advent, and previously and subsequently, were not Israelitish kings, nor of Israelitish birth, but were appointees of Gentile governments, which, from Zedekiah's day to the present, have trodden under foot the sacred land. The fulfilment of this promise to David is nevertheless secure, sure as the word and oath of the Almighty; and we who were by nature Gentiles, but who have been betrothed to Abraham's great Son and David's great Son and Lord, are still looking forward to and praying and patiently waiting for the fulfilment of this promise, saying, "Thy Kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven"--even as our Lord taught us to do. As soon as this antitypical David, "Beloved," shall have assumed the reigns of government at the time appointed of the Father, he, as the antitype also of Solomon, on the natural plane, will build the Lord's house, and his throne shall be established forever--for it is the throne of the Kingdom of Jehovah: and although in its mediatorial sense it will terminate at the close of the Millennial age, yet in a still higher sense it will continue to all eternity, because David's Son and Lord has been associated with the Father in his throne, and his Bride shall be with him where he is, and share his glory, according to his promise.

Much of this promise was applicable to Solomon. The Kingdom of David, or rather the Kingdom of the Lord, was established in the hands of Solomon. He did build a typical house or temple in the name of the Lord. God did deal with him as with a son, chastening his iniquity, yet continuing his mercy with him: he did not suffer the kingly power to depart from David's natural seed, as he took it from Saul.

The 14th verse may properly be applied to those

begotten of the Spirit to be Sons of God and joint-heirs in the coming Kingdom. "For what son is he that the Father chasteneth not?" Even the Head of the body, although in him there was no sin, needed the experiences

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called chastisements for his preparation, for his great position in the coming Kingdom. Indeed, he bore the stripes of the children of men, as the Prophet declares, and we, as members of his body, will not be spared by the Father from the needed corrections in righteousness, which would make us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light--so long as we receive them in the spirit of sonship, seeking to know and to do the Father's will.

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THE JOYS OF GOD'S FORGIVING LOVE.

--PSALM 32.--OCTOBER 25.--

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered."

THIS Psalm will be quickly recognized as King David's exultant acknowledgment of God's forgiveness of his sins against Uriah. The first verse is the keynote of the entire Psalm. Verses 3-5 record the King's mental distress during the period in which his sins had come as a cloud between him and the sunshine of divine favor which he previously had enjoyed. His distress of mind naturally affected his physical health to such an extent that all of life's duties became burdensome and practically all of its pleasures died. In this fact we perceive that the King was far from the condition of a hardened criminal. His heart had been set for right and for the Lord, and was still set in that direction, even though under temptation he had grossly violated the simplest laws of justice and friendship. The fact that he had gnawings of conscience, that his soul was not at ease under the burden of divine disapproval, were the hopeful signs in the case.

Since David was not a wilful sinner--since he did not at heart approve and rejoice in sin, but despised it, mourned for it--the Lord very graciously guided his affairs so that the lesson became more and more severe to him, until finally he could not bear it longer. Then, when the boil of contrition was fully ripe, the Lord sent his message through Nathan the Prophet to lance it, and his sharp reproof and severe sentence marked the culmination of the King's terrible mental distress and brought him to the point of confession to God and

before the nation--to the point of prayer for divine forgiveness and restoration of divine favor, without which he realized that his agony of mind would continue.

The King's prayers were heard--God was gracious to him, his transgression was forgiven, his sin was covered, his iniquity was no longer imputed to him, because his heart was repentant--in it there was no guile. His repentance was sincere, full, thorough. The Psalmist exultingly sings of his own restoration to divine favor, and, doubtless under divine guidance, represented his as being a sample or illustration of what God is willing to do for all who similarly have sincere sorrow for sin, true repentance, who confess their faults and make fresh acknowledgment of their faith. It is safe to say that in thousands of God's people, not only in David's own nation but in every nation, kindred, people and tongue familiar with God's Word, the King's experiences and the lessons of this Psalm, showing his reconciliation with

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God and the exercise of divine favor toward him, have inspired faith and brought peace and rest to those cast down through weaknesses of the flesh--some of them as grievous or more so, if possible, than David's, and some of them for sins less great in the sight of men but realized as being great in the sight of God--sufficient to separate the sinner and his Lord.

As a picture or illustration this does not specially relate to the sinner coming from the alien world and seeking entrance into God's family: it rather represents one who had already enjoyed divine favor and lost it--one who had gotten from the light into darkness. The Scriptures clearly point out to us that even after we have become children of God it is possible to "fall away." They show us two classes of those who fall. One class is described in Heb. 6:4-7; 10:26-31: these we may have no hope for, because at heart they have become sympathetic with sin; they are wilful sinners, as the Apostle here describes. It would not be appropriate that God should exercise his mercy toward those who, after having come to a clear knowledge of the Truth, wilfully, preferably, approvingly delight in sin. The only thing remaining for these, as the Apostle declares, is judgment which will devour them as adversaries of God and adversaries of righteousness. Of this class the Apostle declares, "There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it."--1 John 5:16.

It is of the second class that the Apostle says there is a sin not unto death--one which may be repented of, which may be forgiven, and out of which the transgressor may come with valuable lessons which may ultimately result in blessings of knowledge and experience which will be helpful to him in future conflicts and triumphs. David's sin was of this latter class--not wilful, not approved by him, but of the class of sins referred

to by the Apostle when he says, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (1 John 2:1.) Of the same class of sins the Apostle says, "He is just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness," and again, "Though he fall yet shall he not be utterly cast down." The fact is that transgression that is wilful and approved by the heart means an utter fall from divine favor in every sense of the word, while stumbling into sin contrary to the will, through weakness of the flesh and temptation, is to be considered a stumbling from which there is every hope of recovery.

Some one will perhaps argue that practically every transgression is a wilful one, because the Lord's people, however weak in body, have still the power to will aright if they would. Such are inclined at times to accuse themselves of wilful sin, and to fear that they are under the ban of the second death. We point, however, to David's case as an illustration of what is not esteemed of the Lord to be a wilful sin. King David deliberately planned for days and weeks and months in connection with his transgression. It cannot be denied that there was a measure of wilfulness in it, but there was a measure of something else also: namely, of weakness of the flesh, inherited as a member of the race from father Adam. Only divine judgment could clearly, distinctly discern how much of David's sin should properly be accredited to wilfulness and how much to weakness. That it was not wholly weakness or ignorance is evident, and that it was not wholly wilfulness is equally evident. It was therefore what we might term a mixed sin. The proof that it was not wholly wilful is found in the fact that David's conscience afterward, before being reproved by the Lord through the Prophet, recognized his sin and realized the barrier which it had raised between the Lord and his soul. Had the sin been wilful, instead of feeling sorrow and contrition the King would have felt disposed to go on in the course of sin still farther, and would have had no longings for divine forgiveness and reconciliation. His desires for these prove to us that, although he had deviated so grievously from the proper paths, his heart, his will, was still on the side of the lord and of righteousness. Let this serve as a lesson and illustration for all who have fallen into sin and who long for divine forgiveness and reconciliation. Let such accept the mercy of the Lord by faith and rejoice therein as did King David. Let them remember that those who have sinned the sin unto death it is impossible to renew again unto repentance --impossible to bring them back to a condition where they would be truly contrite and repentant for their evil course.

True repentance implies a rectification of the wrong to the extent of one's ability. David's sin being a public one, known to the nation, it was appropriate that the repentance should be as public as was the sin,

and we have reason to believe that David would not have received restoration to divine favor had he not been thoroughgoing in his confession and his endeavors to make good the wrong he had done. His course had led some to blaspheme God's name (2 Sam. 12:14), and it was appropriate that his repentance should, so far as possible, offset this. And so the story of David's repentance has come down the ages with the story of his crime; and while the one has given occasion to blasphemers, the other has given hope and encouragement to many overtaken in faults, who, like David, at heart were loyal to the Lord.

We are to distinguish sharply between forgiveness of sin and remission of penalties. In this case we see that David's sin was forgiven, yet the punishment which the Prophet had foretold came upon him in due time. Thus we see that forgiveness here stands not for judicial

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forgiveness, which would have exonerated the forgiven one from all punishment, but it stands merely for the removal of divine disfavor which had come upon the King as one of the results of his transgression. We are to notice also that the King had not in his mind the thought of escaping the punishment which God had foretold and described; his joy was in respect to the restoration of communion between himself and the Lord --the removal of the sin-born cloud which had hidden from him for a time the light of the divine countenance, the smile of heaven, the fellowship of God. And so it will be today with all who, falling into sin wilfully, repent thereof and seek a renewal of the fellowship of the Father and of the Son from the right standpoint. Their moving desire will not be simply escape from punishment, but specially a renewal of communion of soul

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broken by transgression. It is in full accord with this that the New Creation at the present time rejoices in forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with the Father through the Son, yet live under practically the same conditions as the world, subject to the aches, pains, trials, difficulties and disappointments which belong in general to the fallen race because of original sin. The blessings of our new relationship to God consist not in our release from the burdens and difficulties of the groaning creation, but in the realization that we are no longer under divine condemnation, no longer children of wrath even as others, but brought nigh unto God in fellowship and communion through the blood of Christ. Our hope of deliverance from the burdens which afflict the whole groaning creation are centered in the promised Kingdom blessings at the second advent of our Lord. Inspired by these hopes and promises we sorrow not as

do others, but are enabled to rejoice in tribulation and to wait patiently for the Lord's time and for the Lord's way--the First Resurrection.

This thought, namely, that in the present time our sins are merely covered from divine notice through the merit of our Lord,--that they are merely forgiven or given over or set aside, are hidden and not actually blotted out--is very clearly stated by the Apostle Peter (Acts 3:19-21) when, preaching under the influence of the holy Spirit, he declared that his hearers should repent and be converted to the Lord, so that their sins might be blotted out when the times of refreshing should come--the times of restitution--the Millennial age and Kingdom.

In that glorious Millennial day the Church, now reconciled, will first pass inspection, and those counted worthy will share in the first resurrection, and the bodies they will then receive will be perfect, without blemish and without flaw--very different from the mortal bodies of the present time, all of which are more or less marred by sin, mentally and physically. The receiving of the new bodies perfected will mean that all the blemishes, all the marks of sin for this class, were blotted out in the tomb, in the flesh, their spiritual bodies being perfect, even as it is written of this first resurrection class: "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown an animal body, it is raised a spiritual body."

The world not having received reconciliation, not having received forgiveness of sins, will not receive the blotting out of sins in the Millennial morning. The great blessing that will come to the world of mankind as distinguished from the Church, the body of Christ, the little flock, the elect of the present time, will be the blessing of forgiveness--full, free. The great atonement day (the Gospel age) will then have closed, its better sacrifices will all then be in the past, its blood of atonement will then have been presented before the Father and will have been accepted on behalf of the whole world. As a result of this acceptance, the divine forgiveness will reach the whole world through Christ--a remission of the sentence pronounced upon the world in the person of Adam. This is specifically stated by the Apostle, saying, "As by the offence of one judgment [sentence] came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift [will come] upon all men unto justification of life." (Rom. 5:18.) But as forgiveness to David did not mean a repudiation of such penalties as were due him because of the measure of wilfulness contained in his sins, and as forgiveness in this Gospel age to the Church does not mean an immediate release from the penalties that are upon the race, so likewise the forgiveness of the world's sins at the dawn of the Millennium and the beginning of Messiah's reign will not mean the removal of all the marks of sin,

the disabilities, death conditions, which come upon all men partly through their own wrongdoing. As with the Church now, forgiveness of sins means a covering of those sins, that we may be treated as though we were not sinners: so with the world in the next age --the forgiveness of the world's sins will mean that thenceforth Christ stands for the whole world before God as the covering of their sins, and that on account of the sacrifice paid by Christ on behalf of the world the sentence of everlasting death upon them is annulled. The work of Christ and of the Millennial Kingdom will be to lift up all who will of the world of mankind to the full perfection of their human nature, so that at the close of that age they may be perfect and entire as human beings. The work of the Millennial age will therefore be a work of blotting out sins--blotting out the evidences and traces of sin in body and mind. The weaknesses and impairments which sin has brought upon humanity will be thus overcome, and it is for this

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reason that that age is called the times of restitution, the times in which gradually the original likeness of God will be brought back to all those who will accept the divine favor through the great redemption.

In verse six King David suggests that his own experience should be helpful to others who at heart were godly--desiring God's way of righteousness, but who had stumbled in the way. He advises that they pray to the Lord promptly--that they should seek him while he may be found. David's own experiences seemed to teach him that every day removed him farther and farther from fellowship with the Lord. His exhortation is that in order that the floods of great waters of trouble should not reach such an one, he would be spared much by going promptly to the throne of heavenly grace to make confession and to obtain mercy and grace to help in future times of need.

In verse seven the King reverts to his own experiences and how he had found peace in the Lord--a hiding-place in which he could have rest; and although he knew to look forward to the prescribed punishments, his heart now being in fellowship with the Lord he could realize that the Lord's presence would be with him in those punishments and preserve him in that trouble, and that he would be, so to speak, enabled to hear the heavenly messengers singing songs of his deliverance even whilst in his affliction.

The concluding verses of the Psalm represent the Lord as the speaker, instructing David and all of his people who, like David, desire the Lord's guidance and feel wretched and troubled when any earth-born cloud intervenes between the Lord and their souls. The Lord engages to be the teacher, the instructor of all such; he will overrule their affairs, he will make all things to

work together for good. Even their stumblings shall not prove disastrous; but because they maintain the spirit of devotion to the Lord and to the principles of righteousness, he will make even their missteps to become valuable lessons, that they may be henceforth less liable to stumble, and learn to look unto the Lord and to be guided in their goings by his eye.

Those whom the Lord instructs, and who will receive his instruction, will not be like the horse or mule that must be turned and guided by force. Their hearts will be so in sympathy with the Lord that he can deal with them otherwise, to their blessing and joy. The wicked shall have their sorrows, but the Lord's people will not be counted in among these; for his mercy shall be with them, restoring their souls. Therefore this class, through the Lord's mercy, will be counted righteous --not that they were righteous of themselves, but counted righteous through the divine provision in Christ. These may be glad in the Lord, though they could not be glad in themselves. These, because upright in heart even though prone to sin and full of weaknesses according to the flesh, may be brought off conquerors through him who loved us and bought us with his precious blood--may shout for joy as they realize the abundance of the divine provision "for the propitiation of our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."--1 John 2:2.

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ABSALOM'S SHAMEFUL DISLOYALTY.

--2 SAM. 15:1-12.--NOVEMBER 1.--

GOLDEN TEXT:--"Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."--Ex. 20:12.

THE closing years of King David's life included a series of very trying experiences, which, however, under the Lord's providential care, apparently worked out for him a ripeness of heart and character exhibited to us in the Psalms of his later writing. These disastrous experiences date from the time of his sin, and to a considerable extent they were used of the Lord as punishments for that sin. Although in the case of Absalom's rebellion we may trace the evil which there culminated to circumstances which occurred long previous to David's sin, we are also to remember that it was quite in the Lord's power to have shielded the King so as to have prevented the success of Absalom's deceitful machinations. Amongst these earlier influences may be mentioned David's marriage to Absalom's mother, who was not a Jewess but a foreigner, the daughter of a heathen king. The counsel of the Lord

is to the effect that his people should not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers, and this counsel applied to the typical Israelite as it still applies to spiritual Israel. This disregard of the divine wisdom was

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sure to produce unfavorable results in some manner at some time. Children born to such a mismatched marriage are sure to inherit certain elements of character and disposition from the unbelieving parent which will eventually show themselves. In the story of Absalom we see an illustration of this. His vanity, insubordination, disloyalty, went hand in hand with an ambition which seemed to hesitate at nothing. It killed a half-brother who stood between himself and the throne, and later on stimulated a usurpation of his father's throne, and the seeking of his father's life.

Absalom is a distinguished example of dishonor to a father, and the resultant cutting off in the prime of life. The story of his unfilial conduct is told in this lesson. For the murder of his half-brother under provocation he fled from his father's dominions, and was three years an exile in the king's (his grandfather's)

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country. Then in intrigues in official circles his father's love for him was prevailed upon to such an extent as permitted his return to his home land, and eventually to all the privileges of the heir apparent to the throne. It is at this time that our lesson opens. The young man, remarkable for his handsome appearance, introduced a custom from his grandfather's court, a custom which still prevails in Egypt, namely, that a prince should have a special chariot and a bodyguard of fifty trained men. King David seems to have had so much love for his son that he practically let him have his own way in these matters. The people were pleased with the display, etc., of royalty in the person of their prince, and for several years a great and sobering change had come over the King, who was also advancing in years and who no longer showed himself amongst his people as much as formerly.

The vain young prince was quick to see that his spectacular course pleased the people, and quite probably he heard that his young brother Solomon was David's choice for his successor in the kingdom, and he concluded to make a bid for the royal honors of his father. His method was a crafty one: he would steal the hearts of the people from his father to himself. He had no filial affection; only selfish ambition is manifested in his course. He would use his father's indulgence, which had shielded him from the penalty of his crime, to undermine his father's influence. Surely, if it is wrong to render evil for evil, it is a despicable crime

to render evil for good--to a father or a friend or to anyone.

The King in these days acted as a superior court, so that cases not satisfactorily adjudicated before the regular judges were appealed to him. As the nation grew these cases of appeal became more and more numerous, and doubtless the King's advancing age and his greater attention to religious things, writing of Psalms, etc., interfered to some extent with his conduct of this court business. Absalom perceived all this and turned it to his own account. Meeting those persons who had appeals and who were delayed, he expressed sympathy for them, assuring them that if he were a judge in their case justice would be speedily meted out--of course implying that his hearer had justice on his side and would therefore be pleased with the results. As a prince it was the order of that day that he should receive homage from the people of the realm, and feigning a love and humility which he evidently did not really feel, he lifted up and kissed these people. A royal kiss would be a matter to be boasted of. To have the fellowship, nay the affection, of a prince would mean to many a complete perversion of their judgment and a binding of them to him as his obedient servants.

Not only was this conduct unfilial, dishonoring to his parent, but it would have been disloyal to any ruler, ignoble toward any benefactor. Indeed the word "stole" is none too strong. In stealing the hearts of the people the theft was not less, but even greater, than if he had stolen money or merchandise. There is a point of morality here which is but faintly discerned by many in our day. We regret to be forced to believe that quite a good many are very willing to steal the affections of another and to misrepresent another to their own advantage. The Lord's people of the New Creation need continually to be on their guard against any such tendency in their flesh, which might disguise itself so that its real character would not be discerned readily by the new mind. The Golden Rule should be applied by the saints to all the affairs of life every day. It is a safe rule, and those who use it freely and are obedient to it will assuredly grow in the fruits of the Spirit, all of which are branches of the one great spirit of Love.

This conspiracy against his father may be considered as having begun immediately on Absalom's return from exile, or as dating from his full acceptance back to fellowship with his father and a princely position. In the latter case it was four years in progress, in the former case six years. When he considered that matters were properly ripe for action, in order not to excite the suspicion of the King or others he asked of the King permission to go to Hebron, there to offer a great sacrifice unto the Lord in harmony with a vow made years before, and the occasion was thus made so important that the taking with him of many of the chief men

of the army and of the city would not be considered remarkable, but rather an honor to the King through his son.

Meantime spies had been sent throughout the twelve tribes, and trumpeters were posted in various quarters, so that when the appropriate time would come and Absalom should proclaim himself king at Hebron, these trumpeters, being heard by others, the whole line of trumpeters throughout the twelve tribes would sound almost simultaneously, and the spies in Absalom's secret service as well as the trumpeters would explain the meaning of this to be that Absalom was now king. The people, who had learned to love Absalom because of his mock meekness, would thus gain the impression that the revolution of the kingdom was complete; that King David was certainly thoroughly vanquished, and that their personal prosperity with the new king would depend upon the prompt manifestation of their loyalty to his cause. The matter worked remarkably well, and as a result practically the entire nation was turned to Absalom in a day.

Some of those who went from Jerusalem to Hebron were totally ignorant of the use that was being made

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of them, yet their influential names being associated with Absalom would affect the populace; and they in turn, being with him and favored by him as his friends, and their future being dependent upon his grace, had everything to gain by adherence to his cause and everything to lose by its repudiation.

The conspiracy was successful to a degree that could scarcely have been anticipated. Practically the whole nation gave allegiance to Absalom, and that in so outward and marked a manner that it was necessary for them subsequently, after his defeat and death, to publicly request the King to return to the head of the government of all the tribes. If we wonder that a nation should so quickly forget the valuable services of so eminent a ruler, to whom it owed so much of its prosperity, let us remember that the King's confession would not be viewed by the populace as it is now viewed by God's holy ones. Doubtless some appreciated him in a measure, but more would disesteem him for "showing the white feather," and many would be inclined to consider him an "old hypocrite." His seclusion during those eleven years and his accumulation of treasure for the building of the Temple--perhaps involving taxes upon the people--could all have been viewed from an evil standpoint and have assisted in his unpopularity. It is the fortune of all of the Lord's people to be misunderstood by the worldly, even when conduct and words and intentions are the very best. How careful, then, we all should be to walk circumspectly, and to avoid every appearance of evil!

Here, too, we may have an illustration of how God is able to overrule the affairs of the world in such a manner as to execute his designs without interfering with the free agency of any. Had it not been for David's sin and the penalty prescribed for it, Absalom might have had the same evil designs upon the kingdom,-- might have made the same effort to accomplish his designs; but the Lord would not have permitted the matter to reach so successful a climax. An example of this is found in the subsequent attempt by a younger brother of Absalom to take the throne. He proceeded in many respects as Absalom did and under more favorable conditions, in that at that time the King had grown quite feeble with age and was unable to administer the interests of the kingdom personally or to take the field in battle. However, in due time the Lord brought the matter to the attention of David, so that the revolt was nipped in the bud before it had time to take effect, and Solomon instead of Adonijah was anointed king.

Just so it is with the Lord's people today. Conspiracies may arise to threaten the interests of the Truth, but the Lord is at the helm, and will permit these to go no further than in his judgment is wise--only so far as they will work for the Lord's glory and the accomplishment of his plans, for the instruction and disciplining of his people, and for the sifting out of those who at heart are enemies of the cause. The general lesson for us is confidence in the great King of kings and Lord of lords; implicit obedience to him and loyalty to the principles of his government; the law of love in our dealings with all the true Israel of God and with mankind in general. The Lord is able and willing to make the things which would seem to harm us work out for our everlasting good and work disastrously to those who essay the injury of his people and his cause.

The Golden Text is well illustrated in our lesson. Absalom, the disrespectful, ungrateful, disobedient son,

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selfish, avaricious and grasping, came to a disgraceful end in the prime of life, and marks a lesson to his kind. On the other hand Solomon, the peaceful, the good, the wise son, attained to the kingdom, and attained to it, too, with his father's blessing and the divine favor.

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REV. DR. MORGAN SAYS HE IS NOT AN INFIDEL.

"I preached this summer in Fifth Avenue Church, New York, a series of sermons on some of the

saying of the Gospel of John. When I came to deal with the death of Christ, I began by saying that it brought me face to face with a moral mystery; that unless there was some explanation of that tragic ending of a pure life, it was the most terrible reflection on the government of God, and would make me an infidel. The whole sermon was to answer that position and to show how the death of Christ reveals the infinite goodness of God. But next morning I saw in the New York Journal a flaming headline:

"DR. MORGAN PUZZLED ABOUT THE DEATH OF CHRIST: SAYS THAT THERE IS A MORAL MYSTERY IN IT, AND IT MAKES HIM AN INFIDEL."

"This was copied into religious periodicals, and ever since I have been receiving letters explaining the death of Christ. In fact, the cutting has been sent to me three times within the last two weeks by people in England."

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ZION'S WATCH TOWER, having circulated the error, takes pleasure in correcting it. It is always difficult to choose words which the worldly cannot misconstrue, and doubtless this illustration will make Doctor Morgan, and us all, more careful than ever to avoid expressions subject to such distortion. On the other hand we are glad that in this day of "falling away" from the faith there were still numerous religious journals ready to protest against such teachings in pulpits dedicated to God.

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FAVORABLE METHODS OF SERVICE.

The chiefest service we could commend, open to all who are unencumbered and in active use of their faculties, is the Colporteur work. It is an honorable form of ministering the truth from house to house, as the apostles served. It is a service which the Lord seems to have blessed as much or more than any other for gathering the "wheat." It is apparent at once to all that to sell such books as the DAWNS at 35 cents each, cannot be for money-making: that it is merely another way of preaching the truth. No other religious books are sold at any such price. Indeed, few subscription books sell for less than two to three dollars each. Any who can serve in this work are invited to write to us for "Hints to Colporteurs."

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