

page 97

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CONTENTS

Views From the Watch Tower..... 99
 Religious Aspect of the War..... 99
 Russia's Internal Troubles..... 99
 Crime Threatens National Life.....100
 The Gold in the Vatican.....101
 For Organic Church Union.....101
 Joshua's Long Day.....102
 A Vision of Coming Glory.....103
 "He that Heareth You Heareth
 Me.".....105
 Letters.....110
 Public Ministries of the Truth.....112

page 98

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By a special arrangement with The Pittsburgh Gazette a stenographic report of Pastor C. T. Russell's discourses will be printed on Mondays. We will send you "The Pittsburgh Gazette" (daily) and ZION'S WATCH TOWER twice a month for a period of 12 months for \$3.25, which is about the price of The Gazette alone. The subscriptions must be paid in advance and sent to us. For terms for extra copies of the Monday Gazette, see our issue of January 15th.

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R3342 : page 99

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER.

RELIGIOUS ASPECT OF THE WAR.

THE SUCCESS of Japan bids fair to make of her a "Christian Nation"--for are not the successful fighting nations Christian nations? And are not the unsuccessful fighters the barbarians? As a matter of fact the heathen masses of the Japanese are tractable and obedient to their rulers, economical and industrious and very poor. The leaders of that nation have adopted the civilization of Europe and America, but very little Christianity, except as it appeals to them as indispensable to foreign relations and the advancement of their own nation's interests. So far as we can ascertain, the majority of those rated as Christians are no more worthy the name than are the Evolutionists and Higher Critics of Europe and America,--they are Agnostics. The name Christian is a respectable one now-a-days, and many good fighters and brilliant thinkers prefer and adopt it as in contrast with Heathen.

We even hear that the "Anglo-Israelites" have about concluded that the Japanese must be part of

what they are pleased to term the "ten lost tribes."
Why? We presume because they are successful fighters!
Alas, that the professed disciples of the Prince of
Peace should measure the affairs of earth by such carnal
rules!

The New York Independent contrasts the paganism
of Japan and the Christianity of Russia thus:--

"Russia claims to be fighting the battle of Christendom
against a pagan nation. It is not so easy to
say which is the Christian nation. Japan allows liberty
of conscience. There are members of Christian
churches who command her battleships, who sit in her
cabinet, who preside over her parliament. There is the
full civilization that has grown out of Christianity:
public schools, the best education, the institutions of
business and benevolence which are the product of
Christianity. This has been given to Japan under the
tutelage of Christian nations, frankly adopted from this
and other countries. There is a constitutional government,
elected rulers, courts and freedom.

"But what do we see in Russia? An absolutely
autocratic government, with no local self-government,
no congress, no constitution, no public-school system,
no religious liberty, the Dukhobortsi, the Jews and the
Lutheran Finns equally forced into exile, and the Armenians
in the Caucasus driven to frenzy by the robbery
of their churches and schools. Which is the
Christian country?"

RUSSIA'S INTERNAL TROUBLES.

Geneva, Switzerland, March 13.--Japan is not all
that is worrying the Russian government at present.
As a matter of fact, the opinion prevails in revolutionary
circles here (and this is headquarters for the whole
revolutionary movement in Europe) that St. Petersburg
is in far greater dread of the work of the revolutionary
party at home than of the legions and warships of the
Mikado in the far east.

Geneva swarms with Russian spies, and the movements
of known Nihilist leaders are watched as closely
as possible; but despite all the efforts of the Czar's police,
the presses are busily turning out revolutionary
literature and most of it finds its way across the frontier
and is distributed throughout Russia.

There is no doubt that plans are being made for a
series of demonstrations against the government at the
first favorable opportunity. A decisive defeat of the
Russians in Manchuria would unquestionably be regarded
as the opportunity.

One of the leaders of the Russian revolutionists
here said recently:

"We don't propose now to make war on the Czar.
Our efforts will be directed against the creatures who

use him as a cloak for their reactionary designs. I believe that if the Czar were freed from the influence of such men as Pobiedonostzeff, Plehwe and those they represent, the nobles who think more of their privileges than of the good of the country, that his majesty would ultimately be willing to go as far in the direction of liberalizing Russia as is desirable at this time. We realize that there is a vast population in Russia, the

R3342 : page 100

descendants of former serfs, who are not ready for a full measure of self-government, but we believe the day for the autocratic government of Russia in the name of the Czar by an oligarchy of noble grafters is nearly passed.

"Russia's defeat by Japan would be the very best thing which could happen to the fatherland, and the revolutionary party will spare no means to encompass it. This is not a war for Russia. It is a war for the nobility, and the defeat of the nobility means that the people will come to their own. That there will be 'removals' of high officials when the time comes is altogether probable.

"All reforms in a country like Russia must be accomplished by agitation, and the dagger and bomb properly applied are potent agitators. Even the most radical revolutionary, however, will not move against the Czar. His danger lies not with the Nihilists, but with the oligarchs whose power is threatened. His liberal ideas and predilection for peace may cost him his life, but if he is slain it will be by the men who have dragged Russia into this predicament.

"That the Nihilists will be blamed in case the Czar is assassinated is altogether probable, but you may say that those who wish to see Russia enter a new era of greatness under a constitutional government look upon the present Czar as more likely to bring this about than any man living, and would regard his death as a national calamity."

* * *

It is well for those who are followers of him who is the Way, the Truth and the Life to avoid extreme views and positive assertions respecting the Russo-Japanese war. The new King, Immanuel, has taken the helm of earth's affairs--Michael has assumed command (Dan. 12:1) and matters will no longer be allowed to "drift." The outcome will be favorable to the preparation for and the establishment of the Kingdom of the Lord under the whole heavens, however disappointing the intermediate steps may be to those with whom "the secret of the Lord" is not. Let us not forget that the Lord is preparing for "his act, his strange act," utterly incomprehensible to those not acquainted with his "secret," revealed through his Word only to his "little

flock":

"God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.

page 100

"Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan his work in vain;
God is his own interpreter,
His Word will yet be plain.

"Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
The clouds men so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
With blessings for the 'dead'."

R3343 : page 100

CRIME THREATENS NATIONAL LIFE.

In an address on "Suggestion and Crime," delivered before the members of the Patria Club last evening, President Henry Hopkins of Williams College declared that the prevalence of crime in this country was greater at the present time than ever before, and that the very foundations of the national life are seriously threatened. He said:--

"The heart of the American people is sound and its head is level. Our business interests still rest upon a basis of honesty and honor. The sacredness and integrity of the family as the foundation of domestic, social and civil institutions are still our cherished faith. Reverence for law and a willingness to make any sacrifice to maintain the law continue to be national characteristics.

"Nevertheless the foundations of personal character and our national life are threatened. There are some very ugly features in the present situation. There is abounding evidence of an alarming increase in crime, of crime of every sort, but especially of the kind that undermines honesty, chastity and respect for law. Statistics of crime are for several reasons unreliable. Prof. Commons, ten years ago, said that crime would indicate degeneracy and danger of collapse. The blood of the body politic may become vitiated and the whole tone of public health lowered.

"We have been discussing and revising penal codes, improving our houses of correction, and correcting our prison discipline, and in the meantime crime has been multiplying. In philanthropic work we have been seeking to rescue the fallen rather than to prevent a

man from falling. It is a thousand times better to stand in the way of his fall and ten thousand times more hopeful than to raise him broken, bruised and defiled after he is down.

"This is an era of scientific philanthropy, and under this head no more important work has been done than in the department of penology. Indeed the hopeful sign of our time is the number of trained minds which are carefully investigating our social problems. It is at last almost true that the watchword of modern reform is prevention, and it is beginning to be recognized that its true method is displacement versus repression.

"The causes of crime have only begun to be scientifically studied. These causes are of course complex and diverse--density of population, economic conditions, family circumstances, the character of the Police Department. For forty years crime has increased five times as fast as population. Whatever value we may place upon this estimate, the facts for the last ten years have been worse.

"Leaving out of consideration the ghastly growth in the number of murders and suicides, we are compelled to admit that there is a growing infidelity to financial trust in the business world, so that there is a visible loss of confidence of man in his fellow man. Defalcations continue and multiply in disheartening succession. The proportion of divorces to marriages is astonishing and sickening, not only in the newest States, but in the oldest Commonwealths. Disintegration, decadence, and often destruction of the family and lowering of the ideal of the home goes on unceasingly; and back of it all is a vast and swelling volume of dishonesty, unchastity and crime.

"But most startling and disheartening of all is the progress of the spirit of lawlessness in our towns and cities, where there have grown up crowds of idle hoodlums, where there is an increasing population who

R3343 : page 101

break out into reckless violence at times of strikes and lockouts...

"Lynch law as we have lately seen it is a defiance of all moral order, a denial of free civil government, a crime against the life of the State itself. Considering society as an organism, the extensive prevalence of the luxury, artificiality and materialism of our life, the get-rich-quick craze, alcoholism, the drug habit, cigarette slavery, the social vice, and disease, all tending to weaken the brain tissue, to destroy moral fibre and to bring on not only neurosis, but insane or semi-insane neurosis."--New York Times.

* * *

We prefer now and again to quote expressions like the foregoing from men of national repute rather than make the same statements ourself. Were it our statement many would claim that we were pessimistic, --that we saw the world through spectacles colored by our understanding of the teachings of the Scriptures. But how well the facts do correspond to the predictions of the Bible respecting the characteristics of nominal Christendom of our day! The fulfilment is marked--remarkable:

"Men shall be lovers of their own selves, money-lovers, boasters, proud, railers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, trucebreakers, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, headstrong, puffed up, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof."--2 Tim. 3:2-5.

THE GOLD IN THE VATICAN.

The gold contained in the medals, vessels, chains and other objects preserved in the Vatican would make more gold money than the whole of the present European circulation.--Pittsburg Dispatch.

* * *

If true, is not the Vatican, as well as the demonetizing of silver, responsible for much of the financial stringency? And may not this have an important bearing on the fate in store for Papacy?--Rev. 18:21.

FOR ORGANIC CHURCH UNION.

Should the Presbyterians, Methodists and Congregationalists of Canada unite to form one Church? That was the subject of an informal conference of representative ministers and laymen of those churches held in this city (Toronto, Canada) yesterday. The answer to the question, according to the sentiment and resolution of the conference, was affirmative, and the question of organic union of these three denominations will in consequence be raised in a more formal way and with practical ends in view.

Dr. Carman explained that this conference was both informal and unofficial. He reviewed the history of the present movement, touching upon the efforts in the direction of union previously made, the action of the last General Conference of the Methodist Church at Winnipeg in approving with confidence and hope of an effort looking to the cooperation and organic union of the Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational denominations,

and the action of both Presbyterians and Congregationalists along the same lines. Committees had been appointed to correspond and confer on the question of such union and to report to their respective Church courts. Yesterday's informal conference was merely introductory to the formal meeting of those denominational committees.

Dr. Carman further expressed his own personal sympathy with the movement and his confident belief that such a union is not only possible but necessary, if the pressing religious needs of Canada are to be met. He presented the attitude of the Methodist Church, and, despite the difficulties, urged wise, progressive, confident action.

Dr. Warden, convener of the Presbyterian Home Mission Committee, was even more hopeful of organic union than was Dr. Carman, and instanced the experiences of the union of the various branches of Presbyterianism and of Methodism in Canada in support of it.

Dr. Sutherland, Missionary Secretary of the Methodist Church, corroborated Dr. Warden's testimony as to the good effects of the action taken last year looking to cooperation in Western Canada, and indicated the necessity for union and marked the increasing conditions favorable to it.

Mr. O'Hara, President of the Congregational Union, was heart and soul in favor of such a union as would conserve the best in doctrine, polity and life in the three denominations, secure reasonable liberty for individual peculiarities and preferences, and guard against the waste of overlapping and competition.

Rev. J. W. Pedley saw in the movements of recent years the way being prepared for the larger Church unions. Theological controversies are of the past.

Said Chancellor Burwash: "It would be the fulfilment of my life-dream, the answer to my life-prayer, to see these three Churches one in organization as well as in spirit. And the barriers are breaking down. There is no insurmountable obstacle either in the theology or in the organization of the denominations.

Dr. Cleaver read a letter from Rev. Dr. Rose of Hamilton, in which he confessed himself to be an out and out unionist, and declared that the continued separate and competing existence of the three Churches named had ceased to be regrettable, and had become criminal. Dr. Cleaver expressed sympathy with those sentiments and urged action. He believed the people would become enthusiastic if the ministers were in earnest and would lead the way.

The conference passed a resolution favorable to the calling of the several denominational committees by their respective conveners, after which a joint meeting for the more formal discussion of the questions involved will probably be held and such steps be taken as further conference may warrant. Dr. Carman, Dr. Warden and Mr. O'Hara were appointed a committee to arrange

for any further conference meetings.--Toronto Globe.

PRESBYTERIANS PROPOSE UNION.

St. Louis, Feb. 19.--After three days' conferences the Committee on Church Cooperation and Union of the Presbyterian churches of the United States and the Committee on Fraternity and Union of the Cumberland

R3344 : page 102

Presbyterian Church unanimously adopted an agreement as a basis of the union of the two churches. It is in the shape of a report to the general assemblies, and will have to be ratified by both before it becomes operative. Both general assemblies meet May 19, the Presbyterian branch at Buffalo, and the Cumberland branch at Dallas, Tex.

This action of these committees will make the Presbyterian church national in character with a membership of 1,250,000.

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R3344 : page 102

JOSHUA'S LONG DAY.

HERE is another suggestion respecting the so-called "long day" of Joshua,--namely, that it was a dark day, notable for its manifestations of divine power against Israel's enemies. We quote as follows:--

"I have read that Adam Clarke, the commentator, wrote that Joshua's 'sun standing still' had 'kept him going' three weeks. Of course he had other work in those weeks besides writing his commentary; but it has been a passage which has received much attention, and yet the explanation of it is very simple.

"Our English word 'sun' has more than one meaning. We speak of 'sitting in the sun,' which does not mean in the orb around which the planets revolve, but in the sunshine; and probably we oftener use the word 'sun' for sunshine than for the orb itself.

"Our English word 'stand' also has several shades of meaning, and one of them is 'to remain'; and 'still' sometimes means 'silent.' These words are given in Joshua 10:12-14 as the equivalents of the Hebrew words of Joshua, and they may be understood in a sense agreeing with the Hebrew; or they may be, and generally are, taken in a sense which contradicts the words of Joshua and actually convey a meaning the very opposite of that of the inspired record, as interpreted by common sense.

"The Hebrew, though a language of very few words,

has two words for sun: chammah and shemesh; this in Joshua is shemesh, 'the servant of the sun,' that is, sunshine, the sun's rays. There are also two words for moon: levonoh and yareach; and this in Joshua is yareach, 'the scent of the moon,' the moonlight. In Deut. 33:14, we read: 'For the precious fruits brought forth by the shemesh, sun'; not the body of the sun, millions of miles distant, but the light and influence sent forth by that body; 'and for the precious things put forth by the yareach, moon'; not the orb, but its shining; (indeed the word is plural here, 'moons').

"Now, what concerned Joshua, and what is spoken of, was not the two bodies called sun and moon, it was simply light, sunlight, or, more properly, direct sunshine, and moonlight. So we say, for example, 'The moon's on the lake.'

"A 'dark moon' would not have concerned Joshua in the least, therefore the moon was not then near its 'change'; in other words that day was not when sun and moon were near 'conjunction,' as astronomers call new moon; so Professor Totten cannot locate this miracle on a day when there would have been 'no moon.'

"Now we had better turn to the chapter, Joshua 10th, and read the history; and perhaps you have a map of Canaan also, which you can look at. There seem to have been several 'Gilgals.' The word means 'circle,' and places were so called where circles of memorial stones were set up (Joshua 4:20); but there is no proof given that Joshua's headquarters were not still at the Gilgal between the Jordan and Jericho.

"Joshua and all the mighty men of valor 'went up from Gilgal all night' (v. 8), to the relief of Gibeon, which was besieged by the five kings of the Amorites (or hillside men); the Gibeonites having beguiled Israel into making a league with them. Now what happened?

"'And the Lord discomfited them'--mark this, and do not give the credit to Joshua when it reads, 'Jehovah doth crush them before Israel.' (--Young.) 'Jehovah rageth at them [or, 'useth violence upon them'] before [literally, to the face of] Israel, and slew them with a great slaughter.'

"Before an Israelite sword was drawn, while yet the two armies were apart, 'The Lord cast down great stones from heaven upon them, unto Azekah, and they died; there were more which died with hail stones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword.' The words rendered 'hail stones' signify 'stones of congelation;' probably they were not meteoric stones, but great hail of frozen water. Such hail, 'every stone about the weight of a talent,' is spoken of in Rev. 16:21; and the smallest Greek talent was fifty-seven pounds, avoirdupois weight. See also Job 38:22; Rev. 8:7; 11:19.

"The artillery of heaven turned upon the Amorite host, probably while drawn up in order of battle to meet the attack of Joshua's men, and certainly before the two armies had met and mingled in hand-to-hand combat

with swords, else the Israelites must have suffered from the great hail equally with the Amorites.

"The formation and discharge of such hail implies a dense, dark cloud, and much electrical disturbance. Thunder and lightning would not be absent. The Amorites, having known of the dividing of the Jordan and the falling of the walls of Jericho, now perceived that the God of Israel was fighting against them; and they fled in terror at the blackness of the heavens above them, and from the slaughtering hail. What does Joshua now wish for? is it that the darkness may pass away, the sun shine forth bright and clear, ending the terror of the panic-stricken fugitives, and perchance giving them opportunity to rally and make a stand and fight?

"No such thing! He desired the darkness and terror to continue. Then spoke Joshua to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel: "Shemesh, be-Gibeon dum." That word DUM is the identical word which we spell 'dumb;' the margin informs us that the Hebrew means 'be silent.' We apply it to not giving forth sound; the Hebrew with its much fewer words applies them to things analogous. Here it is used for not giving forth light. We use the same word with this application, but then we spell it 'dim.' The Hebrew DUM is the origin of both our 'dumb' and 'dim.' Observe, we are not speculating on what Joshua meant, we are giving the very words of Joshua; and what he said was 'Sun [or sunlight] in Gibeon be dumb [or dim]. He called not for light, but for darkness; and the Amorite host was broken by Jehovah before Joshua called for a continuation of the gloom to continue their panic, and enable him to annihilate their cowed and fleeing remnants.

"Sun in Gibeon.' This preposition, be, is the first letter of the Bible--'In the beginning.' It has some latitude

R3344 : page 103

of meaning: 'in, at, to, by,' etc., but it does not mean 'over,' or 'on the meridian of Gibeon;' another preposition would have to be used to express that. This prepositional prefix is just our English prefix 'be,'--used in 'be-fore'--in the front; 'be-hind'--in the rear; 'be-low;' 'be-side,' etc. We can thus easily see what it means. The position of the orb of the sun in distant space--although it is on the meridian of Gibeon at noon there, every day in the year--is not, and cannot be denoted by Joshua's words; and the sun never was in the zenith at Gibeon or any other place outside of the tropics, since the earth had its present position. But let us go on.

"We-yareach be-emeg, Ajalon--'And the moon [or moonlight] in the valley of Ajalon.' Here is the be, 'in,' again. The shining of the moon has been in that valley, but the orb itself, never.

"'And the sun stood still': literally, 'And DUM is the sun.' Not a word of the orb pausing in its apparent

course. 'The sun stood still [that is, remained silent, dumb, dim], and the moon stayed [amad, stood, continued, "dim" as it was] until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies.'

"If we bear in mind that the Canaanites worshiped the sun and moon, we will see more force in this incident. Had Jehovah's cloud passed away and the sun shone out bright and clear, they would have been likely to think that their god Baal (who was associated with the sun) had vanquished Jehovah in the heavens, and would assist them to vanquish Jehovah's people; and their leaders would not have failed to attempt to rally them by appealing to them to see how the sun-god had scattered Jehovah's cloud and silenced his artillery. What Joshua asked for was not a bright day nor a long day, but for a continuation of the darkness and gloom which had terrified the Amorites.

"So the sun stood still [amad, stayed, as it was] in the midst of heaven, and hastened not [literally, 'pressed not'--the sunshine did not press through the pall of cloud] to go down [bo, literally meaning either 'to go,' or 'to come,' or 'to come in,' 'to arrive'--there is no word here for 'down'] about [literally, as] a whole day.' The sunshine, usually so bright in Syria, did not pierce through the clouds all that day.

"I see not a word here, or elsewhere, of the day being

R3345 : page 103

lengthened. The battle began at Gibeon and by the grape-shot of Jehovah's hail the Amorite army was soon routed; up to Upper Beth-Horon they fled, the hail continuing upon them and driving them over the crest of land down to the Lower Beth-Horon, and on in a distracted, huddling mass down to the bottom of the descent in the valley of Ajalon: that is, those of them who could get so far. This remnant of them were as it were in a trap; and if the darkness might last for the day and the coming night, and no shining of sun or moon give heart to them to rally and fight their way out, Joshua thought he might finish his work and cut them to pieces to the last man. The command was, 'Thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth.'--Deut. 20:16.

"That is what the Book says. The versions may be twisted to say that the central body of the solar system ceased its motion; or ceased to emit that electric or other influence which causes the earth to rotate on its axis, so that the fact of the case was that it was the earth which stopped, and this caused the sun to appear stationary.

"But, supposing that it is an influence from the sun which causes the earth's daily rotation upon its axis, were that power withdrawn, the earth would spin on till it gradually slowed down, and such a slowing down would not at all meet the requirements of the case. And an instant and forcible stoppage would have given a tremendous jar to everything. What a jerk it gives when a car stops suddenly;

everything is thrown forward. Suppose an express train running fifty miles an hour is suddenly checked by some obstacle, as in a collision; the passengers will be violently pitched to the forward end of the cars; but the earth's rotation is twenty times the velocity of an express train, and such a stoppage is not supposable or reconcilable with the narrative.

"The fact is, there was no 'long day' there; and all figuring as to when it was, or when it was not, is a waste of time.

"There was indeed a day when the five Amorite kings were defeated; 'And there was no day like that before it or after it,'--for its length? no--'that the LORD hearkened to the voice of a man: FOR THE LORD FOUGHT for Israel.'

"Hab. 3:11 may be thought to sanction the idea of the stoppage of the sun in Joshua's day; but see the R.V. The shining of the sun and moon are poetically represented as standing abashed,--

"At the light of thine arrows as they went,
At the shining of thy glittering spear.'

"And it is not historic but prophetic."--A. Armour.

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R3345 : page 103

A VISION OF COMING GLORY.

--MARK 9:2-13.--APRIL 17.--

Golden Text:--"A voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him."

SIX DAYS after Peter's confession that Jesus was the Messiah, and after our Lord had explained to the apostles that instead of immediate honor and glory in the world he would meet with contempt, persecution and death, and that the conditions of discipleship were willingness to suffer with him and joy in proclaiming his message, Jesus took the three leaders of the apostles, Peter, James and John, up to a high mountain--presumed to be Mt. Hermon. Luke tells us that he went there to pray, and we may reasonably suppose that the three apostles joined with him in prayer. This little prayer meeting, small in number, and the glorious result or answer to the prayers--the vision of coming glory in the Kingdom--may well be accepted as an encouragement to us all, and stimulate us to a remembrance of the Lord's injunction that we watch and pray lest we enter into temptation, and that where two or three are met in his name he will meet with them, which will insure a blessing. Frequently the blessings received are mental visions of the glorious things which the Lord hath in reservation for those who love him.

Luke says that it was while they prayed that our Lord's features and garments were transfigured: Matthew

R3345 : page 104

says that his face shone like the sun. Two others appeared on the scene, Moses and Elias, of radiant appearance, though evidently less so than our Lord. It was a vision: our Lord was not actually changed to spirit conditions until after his resurrection from the dead, but now by a miraculous power he appeared so transformed--transfigured. Moses and Elias (Hebrew, Elijah) were not actually present on the mount, for their resurrection had not yet taken place, and, as the Apostle very clearly points out, it will not take place until after the resurrection and change of the Church, the body of Christ. His words are, "They without us shall not be made perfect."--Heb. 11:40.

We have two testimonies to the effect that this entire matter was a vision, after the same kind that John had on the Isle of Patmos, recorded in the Book of Revelation. As John saw horses, beasts, angels, men, and heard them talking, and talked himself, so in this vision the Apostle heard conversation going on about the Lord and those who appeared with him in the vision, and the words were in reference to our Lord's death at Jerusalem, of which he had already informed them six days previously. The circumstances all corroborated the thought that it was a vision; but we are not left to circumstantial evidence, for we have our Lord's plain statement to this effect. As he came down the mountain side with the three apostles, he charged them straitly, saying, "Tell the vision to no man until the Son of man be risen from the dead."--Matt. 17:9.

PICTURING GLORY TO FOLLOW.

The Apostle Peter, one of the three who saw the vision, refers to it in his epistle, saying, "We have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount."--2 Pet. 1:16-18.

What was the object of this vision? We answer that it was to establish the faith of the apostles. The Lord took the three who saw the vision from amongst the strongest of the number, and that it did make a deep impression is evidenced by Peter's reference already quoted. It was a heart lesson for them to learn --that Jesus, the Messiah, the great King, who was to rule and to bless Israel and through Israel the world, and who was to establish them with him as associates

and joint-heirs in the Kingdom, was about to die and apparently thus to frustrate all their hopes, and about to disprove his own claims of Messiahship. The time that elapsed between the breaking of the news to them and the vision, six days after, was just about enough to permit them to discuss matters and digest the meaning of our Lord's words. Then came the vision on the mount which corroborated our Lord's testimony in both respects--the conversation of the vision corroborating his statement that he would suffer a martyr's death at Jerusalem; and the glorious vision itself, as well as the words from heaven, indicated that our Lord was indeed what he claimed to be--that they were safe in accepting him as the Messiah, that they were not being deluded by "cunning fables." The vision evidently answered its divine purpose.

"THY KINGDOM COME."

The vision itself represented the Lord's Kingdom: Moses was the representative of the Jewish dispensation, the house of servants, as in a previous lesson Elijah was shown to represent the Gospel Church in the flesh. There was glory and honor attached to the Jewish dispensation and to the Gospel dispensation, but a still greater glory was manifested in the presence of Jesus, who represented the Millennial dispensation and the divine Kingdom in glory, which shall indeed bless the whole world. Not many heard, understood, appreciated, obeyed, or sought to obey the Law given by Moses. Not many have heard, understood or obeyed, or even sought to obey the Gospel invitation; but when the glorious Millennial age shall come, when "the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, all flesh shall see it together." (Isa. 40:5.) In his day the righteous shall flourish and all the families of the earth shall be blessed. In that day it shall be the will of God that all shall hear the voice of the Son of man, as expressed in the vision, "This is my beloved Son: hear ye him." Thank God, we can look forward to such a glorious time and anticipate with confidence such a glorious consummation of the ages. Thank God, also, that as those who have heard and obeyed during this Gospel age, we are privileged to be the members of this glorious one whom the world will soon hear and by whom it will soon be blessed and every creature be granted an opportunity for the attainment of life everlasting.

The vision vanished as suddenly as it appeared, as John's visions vanished and changed from time to time. One account says that the apostles were heavy with sleep, and yet the vision seems not to have been a dream, but rather, as already stated, of the kind given to John on Patmos. The vision had a great lesson for the apostles, and as they followed Jesus down the mountain side to rejoin the waiting remainder of their number,

they questioned one another respecting the rising from the dead, and what that signified. Our Lord had already mentioned to them that after he had been dead three days he should rise again, and now in the vision this had been repeated. It was evidently the divine intention

R3346 : page 105

to impress the matter of the resurrection upon their minds. Nevertheless, when the resurrection of our Lord did take place on the third day, we perceive that it was with great difficulty still that they comprehended the situation. How great would have been their difficulty had it not been for this previous instruction of our Lord and through the vision!

"HE KNOWETH OUR FRAME."

One lesson to us in this connection is that divine wisdom notes our weaknesses and needs and in advance makes full and thorough preparation for them. How comforting it is to us that the same Lord who then so carefully supervised the interests of the faithful ones, is the same yesterday, today and forever, and is equally caring for us now. This thought is brought out in the ninety-first Psalm, "He will give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." There will be no danger of the stumbling of the feet members so long as we abide faithful to the Lord. His care will be over us and we will continue to be recognized as his members, and, as such, no provision for our interests will be neglected.

The apostles were gradually getting the thought that the Kingdom was to be deferred, and that the King and his associates in the Kingdom were to be of a higher order than the humanity they would rule and bless and uplift. They were seeing distinctly, too, that Jesus was the Messiah, and this led them to ask of the Lord whether or not the Doctors of the Law were correct in saying that the Scriptures taught that Elijah would come before the Messiah. The Lord corroborated the teaching of the scribes that Elijah must first put in an appearance for the purpose of restoring all things--for the purpose of making ready the world for the Kingdom. But the Lord pointed out that John the Baptist had served in a sense as Elijah to those who received him as the Messiah, and that instead of accomplishing a work of restoration, John as the antitype of Elijah had been slain, and that likewise Jesus himself would suffer.

Our Lord did not go on to explain to them how he and they and all of the faithful of the Church would, while in the flesh, represent the higher antitypical Elijah, and, as the Gospel Church, would endeavor to do a restorative work preparatory to the Second Advent, but without

success; and that hence the inauguration of the Kingdom at the Second Advent will not be peaceable, as of happy subjects receiving a glorious kingdom, but forceful, as of a King taking possession of a realm in disobedience, in rebellion, who by force will subdue all things unto himself and reign until he shall put all enemies into subjection, the last enemy being death. It was not yet due time for the disciples to understand that from the human standpoint it would be a long period between the suffering of the Head of the body and the suffering of the last members of the body, though this same period, from the divine standpoint of a thousand years being but as yesterday, would, as Scripturally referred to, "shortly come to pass." This was one of the many things that the Lord had to tell them which they could not bear then, but which the holy Spirit has brought to light in due time through the words of Jesus and the Apostles and the prophets. --John 16:12,13.

Let us accept the Golden Text as the very essence of this lesson, and apply it each to himself. Let us each learn to listen particularly for the heavenly direction. Let us remember that we are to hear the Lord and his chosen mouthpieces rather than to follow our own imaginations or the imaginations of other uninspired men. We may accept assistance from any one able to give it, but we are to scrutinize every helping hand and every voice to know that it is of the Lord and leads us to him and is in accord with his instructions. "My sheep hear my voice, and they follow me. A stranger will they not follow, for they know not the voice of a stranger."--John 10:5.

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R3346 : page 105

"HE THAT HEARETH YOU HEARETH ME."

--LUKE 10:1-16.--APRIL 24.--

Golden Text:--"Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest."

THE HARVEST work during the three and a half years of our Lord's ministry seems to have been crowded chiefly into the last nine months of that period. We have followed the course of the gradual unfoldment of the Truth, then due, and now, about five months before our Lord's crucifixion, we take note of his statement that the fields were white for harvesting, and the laborers few. The first verse of our lesson records the sending forth of the seventy men, two by two, as advance missionaries to proclaim the Kingdom of God near at hand, and thus to prepare the people for the later arrival of Jesus in the various cities of Israel east of the Jordan.

These seventy were not apostles in the special sense. They were additional to the twelve apostles--they were evangelists; they had not as large experience with the Master and his teachings, nor so important a work to do as that assigned to the twelve. Nevertheless, any service to the Lord is an important service, and to the extent that they did the Lord's will they represented him. They were undoubtedly a part of the "five hundred brethren" mentioned

R3346 : page 106

by the Apostle as having seen our Lord after his resurrection. (I Cor. 15:6.) As the twelve apostles corresponded to the twelve tribes of Israel, so the seventy evangelists corresponded to the seventy elders of Israel appointed by Moses in the wilderness and afterward represented in the Jewish Sanhedrin, which numbered seventy.

As the seventy elders appointed by Moses, and their successors, the Sanhedrin, were the elders of Israel, so in a general way these seventy whom the Lord sent forth in the end of the Jewish age represented all the leaders or elders amongst his people today. Elsewhere we have shown what are the present duties and responsibilities of elders as respects the Lord's flock;* and have also shown how at the present time these are chosen or set apart under the Lord's direction where his guidance is sought and the instructions of his Word followed. We have also shown that in a general way all of the people are fully commissioned in the same sense or degree to speak officially or as the mouthpieces of his body. To the extent of their abilities and time-given opportunities all are privileged to tell the good tidings of great joy to all who may have the ear to hear. But special blessing and special privileges in connection with the service of the Truth attach to those who in any particular manner are selected through the Lord's instrumentality for the service of the Truth--either as chosen elders of local companies of the Lord's people or as chosen pilgrims or accepted colporteurs. Each may serve according to opportunities and the divine blessing.

THE JEWISH HARVEST AND OURS.

We see that the Lord designated the end of the Jewish age as the "harvest" time, for the reaping of the wheat of that people and the gathering of them into the garner of the Gospel dispensation, and for the rejection and symbolical burning of the chaff of that people in the great time of trouble which came upon them gradually after the rejection of Messiah, and was fully accomplished in the destruction of their nation in A.D. 70. We are specially interested in everything connected with that harvest time after learning that it was a figure or type or foreshadowing of the harvest time in the end of this Gospel age--the harvest in the midst of which we now find ourselves. Our Lord called attention to these harvest conditions at the

same time that he sent forth the laborers, possibly indeed before commissioning them. Sympathizingly he drew the attention of the believers of that time to the ripeness of the conditions around them, and urged them to pray to the Lord for laborers to assist in garnering the true wheat.

Apparently it was those who prayed to the Lord and felt an earnest desire for the prosperity of the Lord's work, and the finding of the Israelites indeed who consecrated themselves to this service, this evangelistic ministry. But no matter whether they were taught first and prayed first and gave themselves to the work afterward, or whether they gave themselves first to the work and prayed afterward--the praying and engagement in the service were associated in the Lord's mind and evidently in the minds of those who participated in that harvest work. And so it is today. As we look all about us we see nominal Christendom like a great wheat field, ripe and ready for the reaping. The true children of God greatly need the message which would gather them to the Lord

*See MILLENNIAL DAWN, Vol. VI., chap. 6.

R3347 : page 106

out of all sectarian bondage, and all who have the Lord's Spirit feel drawn to render the assistance necessary, at any cost of personal inconvenience, etc.

As we think of our dear friends groping in darkness and stumbling into Higher Criticism, Infidelity, Evolution theories, Theosophy, New Thought, Christian Science, etc., etc., we cry out to the Lord for more laborers for the vineyard, knowing that he delights to see us thus interested in the work he is carrying forward. In response he is pleased to send a full company of laborers, represented by the seventy of our lesson. We may be sure that those who are most earnestly sympathetic and most earnestly praying are those who are most earnestly laboring in this harvest--whether they are permitted to labor in a public manner or are restricted to more private means of personal conversation, tract distribution and mail correspondence, whether they have the larger opportunities of the volunteer work on a systematic scale, or whether they have the still larger opportunities of the colporteur service or pilgrim work, etc.

"HOW SHALL THEY PREACH EXCEPT THEY BE SENT?"

Our Lord intimated that it would be a great honor for any to be sent forth, and intimated also that none could engage in the service unless they were sent forth by him--the Lord of the harvest. We are not then to consider that any and everybody may engage in this work today any more than in the harvest of the Jewish age. We are to pray for the privilege and opportunity of service, and when it comes to us are to seize it and use it

with zeal, as appreciating the privilege of being co-workers together with the Lord in the greatest and grandest work imaginable. There is a distinctly drawn line as to who are privileged to engage in this work. The harvesters acceptable to the Lord can surely be none others than those who are fully consecrated to him and accepted as members of the body of Christ. If others engage we cannot expect for them the success and blessing that we are authorized to expect for such as the Lord sends forth. In harmony with this suggestion we find that unbelievers, book agents and book stores are not successful in handling our publications. The blessing seems to go only with those who are consecrated to the Lord and with those of their families who are pleased to cooperate with them in this harvest under their direction.

AS LAMBS AMONG WOLVES.

Our Lord's illustration, that his representatives sent forth would be as lambs among wolves, seems a very strong and almost overdrawn statement of the case until

R3347 : page 107

we get the proper standpoint of observation. Those represented as wolves were Jews, Israelites, nominally God's favored people for centuries--the natural heirs of the Abrahamic covenant and promises. They were the people who according to the flesh were the Lord's sheep, as represented in the twenty-third Psalm, "The Lord is my Shepherd." Yet how grievously they had lost as a whole the proper sheeplike characteristics is clearly indicated by our Lord's words likening them to wolves. The sheep is an innocent and almost a helpless creature, harmless; the wolf is ravenous, destructive, selfish. Doubtless, our Lord's words seemed harsh even to his disciples, who, accustomed to the selfishness of the world, failed to see it from the same standpoint as viewed by our Lord, who was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, in the most absolute sense and degree. Our Lord, however, "knew what was in man" and judged not by the outward appearances. What, therefore, might have been an uncharitable judgment and saying on the part of the apostles was not so on our Lord's part. His own experiences less than six months afterward, and the experiences of his faithful disciples, all attested the wisdom and justice of the term "wolves" as applied to the self-righteous, Sabbath-keeping, street-corner praying, tithe-giving scribes and Pharisees, who had the form of godliness but not the power of it in their hearts and lives.

Continuing to draw lessons from the Jewish harvest and to apply them in this harvest, we begin to realize that nominal Christendom of today is likewise wolflike rather than lamblike, and that those who receive the Lord's message and go forth in his name now are similarly

as lambs amongst wolves. The Apostle draws a picture, not of the heathen world, but of the nominal Christian Church of today, when writing to Timothy he prophetically described the conditions in the end of this age. His words are, "In the last days perilous times shall come." "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but having itching ears will gather to themselves teachers after their own desires; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."--2 Tim. 3:1-5; 4:3,4.

A GREAT WORK SOON DUE.

As the principal part of the Lord's work at the first advent was crowded into the closing six months, so we anticipate that the principal work of the present harvest will be crowded into the last six years. Already we see evidences that the work of harvest here is broadening. Many more have the hearing ear for the Truth than had it a short time ago, and many more are praying for the outcome of the harvest and cooperating with their prayers by presenting themselves, all of their opportunities and talents available, to the Lord's service in the various departments of the work. It should not surprise us, therefore, if in the closing six years the evidences would be far stronger than ever before of the wolfish disposition of many who have a form of godliness and outwardly claim to be the Lord's sheep. Should the sheep suffer at their hands, we may be sure that it will not be permitted until the due time. It will not be permitted to interfere with the harvest work, and none can be seriously molested except by the permission of the great Chief Reaper, and until his time shall be fully come. All such trained in the school of Christ will be ready, we trust, to say as did the Master at the close of his career--"The cup which the Father hath poured me, shall I not drink it?"--and rejoice to be counted worthy to suffer for the name and for the cause we love.

"THIS ONE THING I DO."

The seventy were sent out without baggage. They took no changes of clothing, they wore only sandals, and took no house shoes or slippers; their journey was to be quickly made and all attention was to be given to their missionary duties; they were not to attempt to make themselves specially comfortable. It was the custom of the time to entertain travelers, and especially such as had a religious mission, prophets, etc.; and these evangelists were not to take up any collections, and hence were to take no pocket-books with them. They were to ask nothing for their services, but wherever they went they were to heal the sick, cast out devils, and proclaim their mission to the people as heralds of Jesus, declaring to them that the Kingdom of God was near at hand, soon to be established. The command to salute no

man by the way did not signify that they might not say "Good morning," but that they were not to follow the custom of their time of stopping by the way to discuss whatever matter of news might be carried from one village to another. They were not news-gatherers, nor news heralds, but the heralds of the Lord, ambassadors of the Kingdom, and were to give their time and attention specially to that one service.

We might draw a parallel between these representatives of the Truth in the end of the Jewish age, and similar ministers of the Truth in the present harvest time. We might note that the Pilgrim brothers go from place to place, taking up no collections, engaging in no other business, and declaring the same message--that the Kingdom of God is near at hand. We might note the same in regard to the colporteurs: they, too, have the one mission, and while their message is delivered through the printed page, it is the very same message--the King, the Kingdom, are at the door. And although the message is sold for a price that price is no more than the seventy received as they went from place to place. Neither do these laborers lay up treasures on earth, but are content merely to meet their daily expenses, and glad that thus doing they can feel that they are giving more than material value for every penny that they receive, besides the incalculable spiritual blessings which will go with the matter they are circulating to those who

R3347 : page 108

have the ears to hear and the hearts to appreciate the tidings of the Kingdom. The volunteers who scatter the tract matter in every city and village similarly are bearing the message that the King is at the door, and similarly are laboring without remuneration, and similarly are content with such things as they have and are not seeking for earthly reward. The spirit of the work now going on and that which was carried on in the close of our Lord's ministry have a noticeable correspondence.

BLESSED THE PEACEMAKERS--CHILDREN OF GOD.

Each laborer in the present harvest should note well the Lord's instruction in verses five and six. Wherever the Lord's representatives go peace should go, not strife, confusion, turmoil, quarreling. True, the Truth will prove to be a sword that will arouse opposition, yet it should be the Truth that causes the opposition and division and not any rudeness or unkindness of word or action on the part of the Lord's representatives. There are plenty of things to aggravate mankind in this our busy day, and all who have received the Truth should receive also its spirit, "speaking peace through Jesus Christ." The "peace of God which passeth all understanding" should have control of each one who would represent the Lord and his message, that a hallowing influence should

go with each, especially in every service and word spoken in the name of the Prince of Peace. The true character of his people is described by our Lord: they who would be properly termed the children of God should be peacemakers and not peace disturbers. "So far as lieth in you live peaceably with all men." It is not possible to live peaceably with all and yet be true to principles, but the interest of peace should be conserved in any and every proper way by the Lord's representatives.

According to the customs of our day it might be considered extreme if we were to apply the Lord's words literally and say "Peace to this house," before entering; and so also it would be considered extreme today if, not being welcomed, we were to stamp the dust from our shoes in departing from the house. However, the spirit of both these matters should be with us. On entering any house our thought should be to do good, to carry blessing, to exercise a favorable influence for peace, joy and blessing to those within; and if we, as the Lord's ministers, were rebuffed and disdained, not wanted, we should be careful not to intrude ourselves further, and, in that figurative sense of the word, we should wipe off the very dust.

"If a son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon him." If at any place we find one having the same spirit of the Lord, desirous of knowing and doing the Lord's will, we should rejoice to meet him as a brother and communicate to him the harvest message as he might have ears to hear it, and thus a blessing would be his; otherwise we should not remain. The Lord's people should never intrude themselves further than to make known briefly their message and work. If these be properly presented and meet with no response, the Lord would not have us violate the proprieties of courtesy by imposing ourselves or our teachings upon those who are unappreciative. Our Lord set us a good example in this matter.

BEGGING FOR THE LORD NOT AUTHORIZED.

The disciples were not to go from house to house as beggars, to get a meal here and a lodging there but were to expect that if the Lord had guided them providentially to those who had received them, the Lord meant to give their hosts through them a blessing proportionate to the cost of their brief entertainment. They were not to consider these hospitalities in the light of alms, for as the Lord's representatives they were there to confer blessings more than they would receive, and as common laborers even the service they rendered should be worth at least their keep. This principle was to apply not only to a house but to a city. They were not to be fastidious, but to accept such hospitalities as were proffered them; and if this meant no hospitality, they were to leave the city and go to one that would receive them and their message more

cordially.

Verse 9 might at first appear to be a special message applicable in the Jewish harvest yet not applicable to the Gospel harvest; but not so. There is spiritual as well as physical sickness, and the Lord's ambassadors of today should consider it to be their mission, their business, to open blind eyes and unstop deaf ears, and generally heal the sick in a spiritual way with the balm of Gilead, the good tidings of great joy now due to be understood. Moreover, it is our privilege now as it was their privilege then to declare, "The Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." This announcement has not been a proper one all down through the age but merely in the ends or harvests of the two ages. After our Lord's death and resurrection the apostles no longer preached, "The Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." On the contrary, they declared that the Kingdom of God, which had been offered to Israel, had passed away from them now to be given to a spiritual Israel which should be selected from all the peoples and kindreds and nations. But now we have come to the end of this period of selecting spiritual Israel, and in the harvest time of this age the proclamation again goes forth, Behold, the King is at the door, the Kingdom is at hand, and the wise virgins are preparing and will enter into the marriage, as the Lord represented in the parable of the wise and foolish virgins. (Matt. 25:1-12.) It is still true that in some places the Lord's representatives will be unkindly received no matter how wisely and kindly they seek to proclaim their message, and they should heed this same injunction.

A MERE "FORM OF GODLINESS" WORSE THAN NONE.

Then the Lord calls the attention of his disciples to the cities in which his principal works were done, Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum, declaring that if the same works had been done in the heathen cities of Tyre and Sidon, or even in the city of Sodom, which was destroyed in Abraham's day, such works as he did would

R3348 : page 109

have been sufficient to have aroused the heathen inhabitants of those cities to repentance and seeking the Lord's favor. He then points out that when the great judgment day shall come it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and more tolerable for Sidon and more tolerable for Sodom than for those who had received favor in so large a measure and yet were not moved to repentance and obedience. These words suggest several important thoughts.

(1) Why was it that these Jewish cities, so long under divine instruction through the Law and the prophets, should be more dull, less ready to hear the good tidings than the heathen? We can only account for it on the general lines suggested by the Apostle when he declared that all the knowledge any of us may receive is either a

savor of life unto life or a savor of death unto death--either affects us favorably to draw us into accord with the Lord and the principles of righteousness, or unfavorably, so as to alienate us the more from him. This is a general principle, and we can readily see that the Truth coming to the fallen man under present conditions would to the few work a great blessing, and to the many would in a measure result in hardening of heart.

(2) We say to ourselves, What is to be the fate of the people of Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum in the day of judgment, in the Millennium? We see that, so far as the present life is concerned, they have shared the same fate as the cities--all of the six cities mentioned are utterly destroyed and their inhabitants are all totally dead. Will those people have an awakening in the future--will they arise from the dead? Our Lord answers the question, saying, "All that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man and come forth." Well, then, we ask, for what will they be brought forth? Our Lord answers that their coming forth will be in that day--the Millennial day, the day of the world's judgment, the thousand years of Messiah's reign--when Satan will be bound and when, as the seed of Abraham, Christ and the Church will reign as Kings and Priests to bless all the families of the earth.--Rev. 5:10.

"MORE TOLERABLE FOR SODOM."

Our Lord's declaration is that it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon than for the cities of Galilee in that Millennial time. What can this mean? It means that under that blessed arrangement conditions will be favorable or tolerable even for those people who witnessed the Lord's miracles and yet were not moved by them to repentance and discipleship; and it will be still more tolerable for the heathen peoples of Tyre and Sidon--yes, for the degraded ones of Sodom, who never heard of the grace of God, who never tasted of the divine favors, or witnessed divine healings, or had opportunities of being taught of the Lord, or being accepted as disciples of Christ.

The Apostle tells us that as soon as this Gospel age is completed, the Lord's favor will turn again to natural Israel, and that as a result blindness shall be turned away from them--Israel shall be saved from their blindness. (Rom. 11:25,26.) He goes on to explain that this will not be for anything of merit on their part, but because of the Lord's mercy, compassion, forgiveness through Christ. The prophet takes up the matter at the same point and declares that Israel shall look upon him whom they have pierced and shall all mourn because of him, and that the Lord will pour upon them the spirit of prayer and of supplication in connection with that mourning. Thus the blessing shall come again to those who rejected the Lord and crucified him, and with eyes opened still wider under the favorable conditions of the Millennial age, under the

wise administration of the Lord himself as the great King over all the earth in that day, and with the influences of Satan bound and restrained that he may deceive the nations no more by "putting light for darkness and darkness for light," the people of Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum shall have a further blessing, though a somewhat different kind from that which they rejected. They rejected the privilege of becoming disciples and joint-heirs in the Kingdom. That will never be offered to them again, because when next divine favor is exercised toward them it will be with the privileges of restitution to human nature --to that which was lost in Adam and redeemed by the death of the one whom they crucified.

"THUS IT IS WRITTEN."

The Lord through the Prophet Ezekiel (16:48-60) tells us particularly about the Sodomites, explaining the reason why they and their city were blotted out, and explaining also why the Israelites were rejected from his favor; but further explaining that when he shall have compassion upon Israel for the fathers' sake, and, according to his promise, bring them back again to their own land and to greater privileges under the Millennial Kingdom, then also he will have compassion upon the people of Sodom and recover them also to their former estate, to all that was lost,

R3349 : page 109

to restitution privileges. O, how grand are the divine arrangements and plans! Some may say, these are blessings that are coming; but our Lord intimated that certain great tribulations were coming upon the cities of Galilee. What were they? We have already referred to these. The people of the cities of Galilee and of all Palestine were involved in the great time of trouble with which the Jewish age was wound up and that nation blotted out of existence as a nation, its members being scattered amongst all nations. This was a great tribulation and sore loss to the people of Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum--especially when compared with what they might have enjoyed if they had become obedient to the Lord's message--had they become disciples and thus attained joint-heirship with the Lord and the apostles and all the saints in the Kingdom.

But how will it be more favorable in the Millennial age for those people of the heathen cities named than for those of Galilee? Will not the terms of the Millennial age be equally open to all the world of mankind? We answer, Yes, but all mankind will not be in equal

R3349 : page 110

readiness to profit by those blessed conditions of the Kingdom. It is a law of nature that a blessing having been once despised, and Truth having been once rejected,

is on that account more difficult to be grasped if offered again. This our Lord intimated when he said of the efforts of the Jews to make proselytes amongst the Gentiles, "Ye compass sea and land to make a proselyte, and when he is made he is twofold more a child of destruction than he was before." Truths received under unfavorable conditions and into unready hearts are not really blessings but are sometimes injurious. When the Kingdom conditions shall be made known to the people of Sodom and Tyre and Sidon, they will doubtless be more ready to bow to them, accept them and conform to them than some who already have had a measure of light but have been unfaithful to what they did see. Hence we may expect it to be more tolerable in the Millennial age for many of the heathen peoples--more favorable for them to fall in line with the Lord's gracious arrangements--than it will be for some who have enjoyed high place and position in the Jewish and Christian systems, but whose hearts have been far from appreciative of the principles of righteousness, etc., involved.

"AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST."

The last verse of the lesson is most impressive, most encouraging, most stimulating. The Lord would have us know that when sent out with his message and under his direction we fully represent him, so that he that heareth us heareth him. What a wonderful honor is thus conferred upon the most humble of the Lord's mouthpieces, "He that despiseth you, despiseth me, and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me." If as the Lord's people we could always have this thought with us, it would certainly be a blessing to us in two ways:

(1) It would prompt us to feel the dignity of the smallest service rendered to the Lord's cause. It would banish fear of man and all feelings of weakness and trepidation. Recognizing ourselves as the Lord's representatives we would be courageous to go anywhere, to do any service called for in his commission and providential leading.

(2) This thought would bring to us such a sense of our responsibility that all the affairs of the present life would seem trivial and insignificant in comparison to the one great thing that we do--our heavenly mission and commission. We would be more dignified in manner, more earnest in our service as well as less careful of what man might say of us. Our whole concern would be that we might please him who hath chosen us to be soldiers in his Royal Legion, to be ambassadors and heralds of the Kingdom and of its terms and conditions.

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DEAR BRO. RUSSELL,--

Enclosed herewith I send our application for the continuation of Pilgrim visits for 1904.

We greatly appreciate the privilege of these visits and the rich blessings with which they are always accompanied. Our hearts are full of gratitude to our dear heavenly Father that he has seen fit, in his wonderful condescending goodness, to thus supply us with the help we so much need.

The work at this place has made very slow progress, it seems, to our waiting hearts, nevertheless there have been some results. When Bro. Draper was here this month we had one "new" sister at our little parlor meetings who eagerly drank in the sweet, blessed truths brought out in Brother Draper's Bible talks. She seemed to be greatly blessed and benefited, and our own hearts throbbed with tenderest love and sympathy for her in her new-found joy. Praise God for one addition to our number.

I have just read, through tears of joy, your annual report. I cannot express what I feel when I ponder the glorious harvest work now going on in the dear Master's wheat field, while the tares are sleeping in ignorance and indifference. I am constantly saying to myself, Who am I that I should be permitted to share in this the greatest work ever given to mortal man for accomplishment? I am so glad our heavenly bodies will have the capacity of expressing what the heavenly mind will feel, and not be so limited that they will simply ache for want of such capacity. Thank God for the assurance that every want of the perfect New Creation will be abundantly supplied. I have just returned from a visit at L_____. While there I heard a sermon from a man who was my pastor twenty years ago. His text was from the fourteenth chapter of Job, "If a man die shall he live again?" His theme, "Immortality." Almost the entire time devoted to the subject was given to the labor of attempting to show that immortality was proven from nature, reason, science and philosophy. About ten minutes were devoted to revelation and the resurrection of Jesus as additional proof. The number of Scripture references used was three, beside the context. I was sitting between one of my sisters and her husband, who is a Baptist preacher, and when the speaker declared that by the resurrection of Jesus "life and immortality was brought to light," I could not resist giving expression to an emphatic little "Amen," realizing that he had spoken the truth without meaning to. As I listened to all he had to say, and summed it all up, my heart was stirred with unspeakable pity for my dear old friend and all my other loved ones who had such scanty fare. I watched very closely for some indication of unsatisfied hunger, but they all seemed full. Oh, the pity of it! All noble hearted and clean handed before the world, and all seeming to have real love for our dear heavenly Father and all believing they are loyal to him!

Dear brother, I have wanted to tell you how greatly

I rejoiced that our sweet and comforting belief--the truths that we greatly prize above life itself--were presented to so many people during your debate with Dr. Eaton, and presented in such a lovely Christlike way. All my Christian life I have longed to see my blessed Lord and Master so represented before the world.

May his blessings continue and increase throughout the coming year upon you and all the dear brethren who labor with you.

Yours in fullness of joy,

(MRS.) AUGUSTA KENT,--Texas.

R3349 : page 111

MY DEAR BROTHER,--

It is with deep and inexpressible gratitude to the great "Giver of all good gifts," and to you, his honored servant, that I take up my pen this morning. I have read and re-read your dear Christmas letter [of greeting to the Colporteurs] and my heart echoes every sentiment expressed.

How truly "unspeakable" are our heavenly Father's gifts, not for one day only, but for every day, and for "ages to come," for he will show unto us "the exceeding riches of his grace (favor) in his kindness to us through Christ Jesus."

The year just past has been one of great blessing to me. The Lord's "table" never seemed so bountifully spread as it is now--perhaps my appreciation is increasing, too--and our standing in Christ Jesus, and our present privileges in the service of his Truth, never seemed more grand. Angels certainly would esteem it a pleasure to be in our places.

The dear Chief Reaper has permitted us to see some results of our feeble efforts, and this has caused our hearts to bubble over with joy, and has more than compensated for all the trials incident to our work.

Our prayer is that we may be given grace and strength to continue in this glorious harvest work as long as the door of opportunity stands open. We realize also that the time is growing very short, and we desire to be diligent in his service, and pray also that the "Lord of the harvest will send forth more laborers into his harvest."

We rejoice more and more in the knowledge of the "good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people." It is the one thing which makes life worth living, and even makes it a pleasure. And "our hearts up-leap in fond anticipation"--knowing that our "union with the Bridegroom draweth nigh," and soon the blessing of the "groaning creation" will begin. Oh, that we may "walk worthy of him who hath called us to glory and

R3350 : page 111

virtue," that we may be ever in the attitude of our dear Brother Paul, who rejoiced that he was "counted worthy

to suffer shame for his name," who did so much for us!

"For him, I count as gain each loss,
Disgrace for him, renown;
Well might I glory in the cross
While he prepares my crown."

May these be the sentiments of each dear "footstep follower (I Pet. 2:21) until they "finish their course with joy" and see their dear Redeemer face to face.

With true Christian love, I remain yours in the "one hope of our calling,"

M. M. SPRINGER,--Colporteur.

DEAR BRO. RUSSELL,--

I have been long wanting to write to you. Since August last year when the Lord graciously called me, I have been by his gracious help holding steadily on to the faith. Your books, together with ZION'S WATCH TOWER, (to which I look forward eagerly) and other interesting tracts, etc., have been a valuable help to me, so instructive have they been.

It has helped to give the daily reading of the Holy Word an additional delight. Many passages having struck me as being peculiarly beautiful, I have learned them by heart, and while at my work (being an engine driver) I love to repeat them over and over to myself amid the roar and rattle of the revolving machinery. I have tried, oh, so hard, with, I hope, the blessing of the Lord, to interest some of my fellow-workmen in the great Truth, and as you know have caused two of them at least to become subscribers to the WATCH TOWER. As a child of God, wholly consecrated to Him, I am anxious that all around me should partake of the blessings and peace of mind that a child of God has amid the numerous distractions of life. My eyes have been opened to the fact that there are many blessed privileges I can live up to even in this life, and my Father has been surpassingly good to me. I am a simple man and do not know very much, but the good fortune that has come to me, and in which you have, under God, taken a part, impels me to write to you, repeating my thanks with a rejoicing heart.

With much Christian love, yours very sincerely,
W. R. CONYERS,--India.

DEAR BRETHREN,--

Some weeks ago I received (as a Presbyterian minister, I suppose) a free copy of your "Divine Plan of the Ages." Before acknowledging it, I have taken time to read it. I now ask that you will send a cloth-bound copy of it to a friend and send your bill to me. You can also

put me down as a subscriber to ZION'S WATCH TOWER. I expect later to order the MILLENNIAL DAWN series in leather. It is needless to say that the "Divine Plan of the Ages" has both interested and comforted me. I am anxious to follow up the series and to exchange a personal letter or two on some points.

Yours very truly, A. W. N.,--Missouri.

DEAR BROTHER.--

Regarding the article in the Feb. 1 TOWER, "Can the Ethiopian Change His Skin," allow me to say, that I have ascertained by inquiry, from different colored people, that in this small town there are several instances of this change taking place. It usually begins with a small spot on some part of the body and gradually enlarges, and, strange to say, the individuals are loath to speak of it. My information extends to other communities, and the same experiences are occurring there. This appears to be general amongst the race all over the country. If a general inquiry was made amongst the colored people throughout the country it would be found that this is generally the case. I think that this is one of the many indications of the great changes that will soon take place when our dear Redeemer assumes his power and reigns.

Yours in the service of the loving Master,
C. C. SEABROOK.--Kansas.

GENTLEMEN,--

Being in possession of the first three volumes of the MILLENNIAL DAWN series, through a rather peculiar circumstance, I request information in regard to the succeeding volumes, and prices.

I may as well inform you that heretofore I had been a skeptic in regard to the Bible until I got hold of the books mentioned.

No person of intelligence can read these books and not be convinced. They are truly wonderful and show that God would surely raise up men who can and will interpret the Scriptures harmoniously.

Yours respectfully,
H. C. MITCHELL.--Ohio.

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page 113

SEMI-MONTHLY.
VOL. XXV. APRIL 15, 1904. No. 8.
CONTENTS.

Views From the Watch Tower.....115
 Could the Heathen Do Worse?.....115
 Dr. Russell Conwel Says Church
 is Dying, Slowly but Surely.....116
 The Trial of Faith.....116
 The Memorial Celebrated.....116
 "Pray Without Ceasing".....117
 "Like Unto Men Who Wait for
 their Lord".....122
 "To Obey is Better Than Sacrifice"
 (Poem).....126
 Interesting Questions Answered.....126
 Los Angeles General Convention.....114

page 114

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

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

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GENERAL CONVENTION, LOS ANGELES, CAL., MAY 7,8,9.

All sessions of the Convention will be held in Elks
 Hall, 231 S. Spring St. Visiting friends who desire accommodations
 secured for them should write in advance

their intention to attend, stating the number in each party, the name, color and sex of each individual, and the price of accommodations desired. On account of long distance from Allegheny, applicants for accommodations should address the chairman of Committee direct, viz., Brother F. P. Sherman, 211 N. Spring St., Los Angeles, Cal.

Accommodations can be secured at 50c each for three or four persons in a room and \$1.00 each for rooms for single persons or couples.

Reduced rates are available over the railroads on account of "M.E. General Conference." From points within the State of California the rate is one fare and a third for the round trip. Very Low Rates are granted from outside the State. Travellers should enquire for "General Conference Excursion Ticket." Friends arriving over the Santa Fe Railroad can reach hall by Washington St. car; and those arriving by Southern Pacific, should board yellow car marked "Arcade Depot."

Going and returning the Editor will hold several

ONE-DAY CONVENTIONS, AS FOLLOWS:

DALLAS, TEX., MAY 1.--A morning rally at 10 o'clock will be held in the Woodmen's Hall, 349 Main St. The public afternoon meeting will be held at 3 o'clock in Carnegie Hall, Public Library. Subject: "To Hell and Back! Who are there? Hope for the return of many." An evening meeting specially for the interested will take place at 7.30 in Woodmen's Hall.

HOUSTON, TEX., MAY 3.--All meetings will be held in the Auditorium; at 10 a.m., a rally, and at 2.30 p.m. a meeting for the interested. A public meeting will be held at 7.30 p.m. Subject, "The Oath-bound Covenant."

SAN ANTONIO, TEX., MAY 4.--Morning rally, at 10 o'clock, and afternoon meeting, specially for the interested at 3 o'clock, will be held at Red Men's Hall, 219 St. Mary's St. Public meeting at 7.30 p.m. at Beethoven Hall, 418 S. Alamo St. Subject, "To Hell and Back."

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL., May 12. PORTLAND, ORE., May 15. ST. PAUL, MINN., May 19. ALLEGHENY, PA., May 22.

GAZETTE SERMON REPORTS FOR THE POOR.

"Blessed is the man that considereth the poor." A dear friend of the cause, interested in the weekly published discourses by Brother Russell, has handed the Society a sum of money to be used in purchasing Gazettes every Monday and mailing said discourses to such as may request them amongst the WATCH TOWER readers too poor to purchase for themselves. We will do this and stamp each one, using the money so far as it will go. Send in your orders: postal cards will do. If samples of the paper

containing the six Eaton-Russell debates are desired, say so.

Others who can pay for their papers are referred to the special "clubbing" rates granted by the Gazette on 3 mos., 6 mos. and yearly subscriptions, etc., in our issue of Feb. 15, page 2.

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R3350 : page 115

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER.

COULD THE HEATHEN DO WORSE?

GENERAL Alexei Nicolaevitch Kouropatkin, the famous soldier, upon whom Russia depends for the success of her army in the far east, is said to be the most popular officer in the Russian service, and is recognized as the Czar's best general. He was a boy of eighteen when he began his military career under Skobelev and participated in all the brilliant engagements in the war against the Bokharans. Kouropatkin did not become well known in the Russian army, says Ernest Haskell in the New York Evening Post, until years afterward, when he was Skobelev's favorite captain and chief of staff at Plevna, Turkestan, in the conquest of Khokand. Here is a picture of Kouropatkin as presented by the Indianapolis Journal:

"It has been twenty-two years since the capture of Geok Tepe; perhaps Kouropatkin has become less sanguinary with age. But if he should live to be a hundred and in that time should become as mild-mannered and soft-hearted as any humanitarian of the age, he could never live down the memory of that dreadful day. Geok Tepe was a fortress in Central Asia held by the Turkomans and besieged for a month by Russian forces under Skobelev. Kouropatkin was the active commander, and when at last the stronghold fell he gave orders to give no quarter on account of age or sex. And here he added the crowning touch to the unlovely reputation as a human tiger which he had gained in the Russo-Turkish war.

"The words of an eye-witness give a faint idea of the glories of civilized warfare as exemplified by this famous general. He says: "The whole country was covered with corpses. The morning after the battle they lay in rows like freshly mown hay, as they had been swept down by the mitrailleurs and artillery. Hundreds of women were sabered, and I myself saw little babies bayoneted or slashed to pieces. Many women were dishonored before being killed. The troops, mad with drink and the lust of fighting, were allowed to plunder and kill for three days after the assault."--Literary Digest.

FROM TALK TO ACTION.

"Hitherto Socialism has been a theory. It has been debated by doctrinaires; it has sometimes been applied in microscopic experiments, but never until now has it captured the government of a State as important as Saxony. There is no parallel to it in the history of civilization.

"It would seem to be good policy for the German Socialists to concentrate their efforts on making Saxony an object lesson in the value of their theories. Of course their road is not yet clear. The lower house of the Saxon Parliament is chosen by a complicated system of double election, and most of the members of the upper are appointed for life. Still these paper barriers cannot long stand against a determined popular majority of a hundred thousand. If the Saxon people really want Socialism they can get it.

"Like the other German States and the Empire itself, Saxony has advanced some distance in this direction already. The railroads and telegraphs are public property. The business which in this country is done by express companies, insurance companies and private savings banks is done there largely by public agencies, municipal, royal or imperial. If we should begin now to socialize our business affairs it would take us twenty years to reach the point at which Germany stands today.

"Since the State in Germany now does everything that it can do consistently with the maintenance of the present social system, the advocates of a new social system have no preliminaries to dispose of before putting their own theories to a complete test. They have waded through the shallows of public ownership of public utilities, and the next move must be to strike out into the deep waters of Socialism.

"It seems to be 'up to' the German Socialists to try this experiment in Saxony. A kingdom as populous as Ohio furnishes an ample field for a fair test. The great cotton mills of Chemnitz, the machine shops of Zwickau, the type foundries of Leipzig, the mines of the Erzgebirge, would be impressive examples of socialized industry if they were worked successfully by the State. Probably the success of such an experiment would complete the triumph of the Social Democrats in the German Empire, and it would certainly give a powerful impetus to their agitation throughout the world. On the other hand, its failure would, of course, have a dampening effect on the movement everywhere. But the Socialists must believe that their theories would

work well or they would not hold them. They have been talking for a good many years with great effect. Now is their opportunity to act."--Literary Review.

DR. RUSSELL H. CONWEL SAYS CHURCH IS DYING SLOWLY, BUT SURELY.

"In an address which was the feature of the fourth annual meeting of the Baptist Social Union of New York, Rev. Russell Conwel, D.D., pastor of the Baptist Temple of Philadelphia has declared that modern churches are dying slowly but surely, because of indifference of pastors and congregations.

"The modern Christian Church,' he said, 'is becoming submerged because of laxity. Pastors are growing indifferent, and congregations are all the time becoming smaller. There are too many movements, too many office holders and differing phases of creed. The result is that the parent Church is dying. The only reason that a young man goes to Church nowadays is because he knows that his best girl is there.

"The Y.M.C.A. is more prosperous than the Church, because it is made attractive by its books and gymnasiums, with a true Christian spirit. With hospitals and colleges the sectarian spirit is waning. Men who make large endowments, as a rule, stipulate that the institutions they help shall be non-sectarian. If the Church is to live we must get back to the first teachings of Christ."--Exchange.

THE TRIAL OF FAITH.

"The Edomite saint must have looked into birds' nests when he used the comparison, 'I said, I shall die in my nest.' That is what a good many people say. They build each a nest for himself, and not for a summer, but for a life. They say that they shall die in it after many years of enjoyment of it. But they need the treatment the mother bird gives her young. Her first step is to make the nest uncomfortable. 'As an eagle stirreth up her nest,' she mixes the thorny outside with the downy inside. So God, by his testing providences makes the place of rest one of unrest to us, and thus lures us out to trust ourselves to his care and guidance over untried ways. And so he brings us to a stronger, maturer, more useful life. The wind roots the tree deeper in the soil. The stormy waves cause the anchor to take a stronger grip. There are advantages in disadvantages. Disappointments have proven God's best appointments. Financial ruin has proved a man's salvation. Sickness has brought many highest health.--Dr. G. Hallock.

THE MEMORIAL WIDELY CELEBRATED.

REPORTS of the observance of our Lord's Memorial Supper on March 29th, its anniversary, have come in quite promptly this year--much to our pleasement. We rejoice to be able to announce that the interest and the numbers reported show quite an increase over those of last year and previously. In a sense the present is the opening of the year to us, as it was to typical Israel. Our remembrance of the Master's sufferings--"the just for the unjust"--and of our debt to him, and of our consecration to die with him in the battle of righteousness against sin, all press home on our hearts and serve to reinvigorate us for a fresh start in the service we love to render, even at the cost of afflictions and self-denials which, with the Apostle, we count but "light afflictions, working out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

The letters received from every direction breathe the same spirit of love and devotion, with resolves for the future year, and prayers for the prosperity of the work centered here at Allegheny. We also remembered you all and continually do so in our daily worship. Brethren, continue to pray for us. As the work widens and deepens we need more of heavenly wisdom in connection with its general direction.

Of those already reported the following are those showing the largest attendances: Allegheny, Pa., 366; Altoona, Pa., 36; Boston, Mass., 197; Cleveland, O., 68; Dayton, O., 39; Los Angeles, Cal., 112; Lynn, Mass., 34; New York City, 62; Philadelphia, Pa., 170; Toronto, Ont., 68; St. Louis, Mo., 69; Washington, D.C., 67. We append a few of the letters, remarking that they are samples of all as respects sentiments.

The Church at Allegheny had a most enjoyable season of fellowship with the Lord and fellow-members on the 29th ult. The attendance, 366, was the largest we have ever had--overcrowding our conveniences--and so far as we can judge all but fifteen partook of the Memorial emblems. The Spirit of the Lord was richly with us at the afternoon session, also, when a baptism service was held. Owing to the fact that at Allegheny we have given opportunities for symbolic baptism on the first Sunday of each month there were fewer baptisms on the 29th than some above reported. That day there were thirteen.

* * *

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:

Sixty-seven brethren and sisters met tonight in Bro. M_____ 's studio and partook of the spiritual privileges of the Memorial, as well as the emblems thereof. The number is exactly the same as last year, but since January 1st no less than five faithful ones have entered other fields of usefulness, colporturing or otherwise. Besides, several were unable to be present. It was a blessed occasion of refreshment as our hearts feasted together in faith upon those verities which the emblems so beautifully symbolize.

We were happy to adopt the suggestions made in Vol. VI. pertaining to the order of the service, in which I enjoyed the privilege of being the leader. Brothers F_____ and R_____ respectively offered our prayers of thanksgiving and praise for the "bread" and "wine," and various brethren shared in other portions of the service, while all were enabled to share in the heart-communion with the Lord.

Your brother in Christ, E. T.,--Washington.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:

The Church in this place and vicinity met last

page 117

night in our home and celebrated the Memorial Supper, and thus we remembered him who redeemed us by his blood. 26 were present, who all partook. We rejoiced together that the "unspeakable gift" of everlasting life was reckoned to us by the sacrifice of our dear Lord, appropriated to us by faith, and we pledged ourselves afresh to serve him faithfully, even unto death, saying: "O for such love I would make some return," and realizing that "my humble offering I know he'll not spurn." Within the past year--from Memorial to Memorial--ten have been immersed and in about a year four of our number have entered the harvest work as colporteurs. The spiritual health of the Lord's people here seems good, if one may judge by the thoughtfulness and loving consideration which all seem to manifest one toward another, and it seems correct to think of Love as the golden reed by which God measures us. Oh, that we may come up to this mark of perfect love!

Your brother in this blessed hope,
D. K.,--Springfield, Mass.

CHAS. T. RUSSELL:

Dear Brother in Christ,--It gives me great pleasure to advise you of the blessed privilege extended once more to the Church at New York of commemorating the death of our dear Redeemer. Sixty-two partook

of the emblems of the broken body and shed blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, which sacrifice I am sure we appreciate much more than we did one year ago. May the feast continue until by his grace we shall celebrate it anew with him in his Kingdom. Our dear Brother R-- ably set forth the Truth in detail; the service altogether was very impressive and of great blessing to many.

No doubt you will be pleased to know that fourteen of like precious faith symbolized their consecration at the baptismal service Sunday, the 27th.

Yours in the faith, fellowship and service,
S. Y.,--New York.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:

The Lord's Memorial Supper was celebrated last evening in the vestry of the People's Temple with 197 adults and three children present. The season was, as it has always been, a blessed and impressive one. All or nearly all of the thirty-seven dear ones who were immersed symbolically into Christ last Sunday were present--an object lesson and illustration to the Church of Boston and vicinity of the truth that "he that reapeth receiveth wages." No one had any idea that so many as sixteen brothers and twenty-one sisters were to be baptized, the number being the largest we have ever had, as was also the number partaking of the emblems of our dear Lord's body and blood.

Our hearts are touched as we think of the suffering of our Head and Elder Brother, yet we glory in his great victory o'er the grave, the redemption bought thereby, and rejoice that we are one year nearer, if faithful, to drinking anew with him of the fruit of the vine in our Father's Kingdom. One of our beloved and faithful Elders served the Boston assembly, while the other served friends in another city. A number of the brethren were also with smaller companies in neighboring towns.

With new courage and zeal for the Master's service, I am, as ever, and in behalf of all of the brethren,
Yours in the Beloved, H. A.,--Boston.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:

The friends at this place met at our hall in commemoration of our Lord's death. Each year seems to make this season dearer to us and we can truly say that this one has been the most blessed of all.

We feel more keenly the responsibilities as well as the blessings that come to us through participation in the loaf and cup. There were thirty-four present and the emblems were sent to some who were unable to be present. We are looking forward to that time when

we shall drink the "new wine" in the Kingdom with our dear Master.

With Christian love, I am, as ever, yours in the faith,
C. B.,--Lynn, Mass.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:

About 170 of the friends gathered in the Church at 10th and Dauphin Sts. this evening to commemorate the death of our Lord. Seventeen symbolized their consecration by immersion at an earlier hour.

All the friends send you Christian love and greeting.
Your brother, H. P.,--Philadelphia.

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R3351 : page 117

"PRAY WITHOUT CEASING"

--LUKE 11:1-13.--MAY 1.--

Golden Text:--"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find."

WE ARE NOT to suppose that the disciples had never prayed up to the time mentioned in this lesson, when they asked the Lord to instruct them in the matter. On the contrary, we are to suppose that they had, in common with the Jews in general, and in harmony with our Lord's example, been accustomed to go to God in prayer. They seem to have realized that, as our Lord's teachings were considerably different from those of the Scribes and Pharisees on various points, so also his conception of prayer was probably different, and they desired to have instruction on this subject along the lines of his advanced teaching. Several instances are recorded in which our Lord Jesus prayed in the presence and in the hearing of his disciples --a sufficient number to preserve us from the error of some who claim that public prayer is improper. Nevertheless, apparently our Lord's usual method was to go to the Father privately, after the manner he described to his disciples when he said, Enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father in secret.

The spirit of this injunction was carried out by our Lord when he withdrew from his disciples into a mountain alone for prayer, and we have several records

R3351 : page 118

of his spending a considerable portion of the night thus in communion with the heavenly Father. One lesson to us from our Lord's example would be that if

he in his perfection needed to have spiritual fellowship and communion with the Father in order to carry on the assigned work, we, his disciples, imperfect according to the flesh, and every way lacking the wisdom, etc., which he possessed, have much more need to look continually to the Lord for the guidance and comfort, the sustenance needed in all the trials and difficulties of life in the narrow way. It is in accord with this that the Apostle exhorts, "Pray without ceasing,--in everything giving thanks."

THE SECRET OF A HAPPY DAY.

We do not understand the Apostle to mean that the Lord's people are to be continually upon their knees, but rather that their hearts are to be constantly in an attitude of prayer, mentally, spiritually, looking to the Lord for guidance in all the affairs of life, and to see that their conduct has the divine approval. This thought of perpetual communion with the Lord, continually looking to him for his smile, continually watching that no earth-born cloud arise and hide from us the Father's face and blessing, is the attitude of the advanced Christian. To such an one every day and every hour is a time of fellowship with the Lord. Whenever business cares, household worries, etc., interfere with such communion it is an evidence that we are being overcharged with the cares of this life, and the difficulty should be corrected: either we should rectify matters by diminishing our business responsibilities, etc., or, if this be impossible, we should counterbalance the cares of life with the more earnest and more repeated turning of our hearts to the Lord for guidance in even the trivial affairs of life, much more in the great ones.

It was probably on our Lord's return to his disciples from such a season of private fellowship with God that they asked him respecting prayer, as recorded in our lesson. Had he been much in the habit of praying with them audibly we may presume that they would have known to take his style of praying as proper copy for their own.

The account of this prayer, as given by Luke, differs considerably from the account given by Matthew, the latter, apparently, being much the more complete statement (Matt. 6:9). We are not to understand that our Lord meant, Say ye, but rather, as it is elsewhere given, After this manner pray ye. In other words, our Lord gave, not the words for our prayers, but a general sample of style. We incline to think that our Lord's followers have, to a considerable degree, neglected the style, and, instead of the brief, orderly petition, all seem inclined to adopt more or less of the mannerism which our Lord ascribed to the improper prayer; namely, vain repetitions, as though it were expected that the prayer would be accepted only if it were of certain length. We

are not to suppose that our Lord spent hours in prayer, and yet used so brief a form as the one here given to the Apostles, but we may reasonably expect that the order which he here set forth would be the one which he observed, namely--(1) The address,

"OUR FATHER, WHICH ART IN HEAVEN."

The term, Our Father, would necessarily be a new one to the Jews, for they were a house of servants. By this the apostles were to understand that, having become identified with the Lord Jesus, they were now privileged to consider themselves sons of God, and he their Father. Perhaps that was one of the particular points on which they desired instruction. They may have heard the Lord Jesus addressing God as his father, and may have wondered whether or not they would be so privileged to address him. This prayer would assure them that God recognized them, not as servants merely, but as sons. This is in accord with the statement made by the Apostle John (John 1:12), "To so many as received him, to them gave he the privilege to become sons of God." The term is one of special endearment.

The affection of a true father for his child, being one of the most precious in the world, is used to illustrate the relationship of the Lord's consecrated members to the Creator. It is necessary to be some time in the school of Christ as disciples, learners, before we are able properly to appreciate the meaning of this word Father as applied to God, but the more we come to know of the love of God, which passes all understanding, and the more we are enabled to draw near to him through faith and obedience, the more precious will this term Father become.

(2) "HALLOWED BE THY NAME."

This expresses adoration, appreciation of divine goodness and greatness, and a corresponding reverence. In addressing our petition to the Lord our first thought is to be, not a selfish one respecting ourselves, nor a thought respecting the interests of others precious to us, but God is to be first in all of our thoughts and aims and calculations. We are to pray for nothing that would not be in accord with the honor of our heavenly Father's name; we are to wish for nothing for ourselves, or for our dear ones, that he would not fully approve and commission us to pray for. Perhaps no quality of heart is in greater danger of being blotted out amongst professing Christians today than this thought of reverence for God. However much we have grown in knowledge, and however much we have gotten free from superstitions and errors, and however advanced in some respects is the Christian's position of today over that of

a century ago, we fear that reverence has been losing ground, not only in the nominal church, but with many

R3352 : page 119

of the members of the one "Church of the living God, whose names are written in heaven." Every loss of reverence is a distinct disadvantage, both to the Church and to the world, paving the way to various evils, and ultimately to anarchy.

The difficulty is that ignorance and superstition were the foundation for much of the reverence of the past, and, as the light of Truth dispels the error, only the few receive the precious Truth instead of the error, and real reverence of love instead of reverence of superstition and fear--and even with these the transition sometimes involves loss of considerable reverence. The Lord's people will do well to cultivate this quality, and they will be helped so to do by following the order of prayer which our Lord has here laid down--considering first the will and honor of God as superior to their own and every other interest.

(3) "THY KINGDOM COME."

As God and his glory and honor are to be first in the minds of his children, so their next thought should be for the glorious Kingdom, which he has promised shall bless the world. However much our own personal interests and affairs may be pressing upon us, and however much we may desire to have the Lord's blessing and guidance in them, they are not to outrank our appreciation of his beneficent arrangements which he has so clearly promised in his Word. We are to remember that the Kingdom, when it shall come, will be a panacea for every ill and every trouble, not only for us, but for the whole world of mankind. We are not, therefore, to permit our own personal needs to be too prominent, but are to remember that the whole creation is groaning and travailing in pain together, waiting for this glorious Kingdom and the blessing upon all the families of the earth, which our heavenly Father has promised shall yet come through the seed of Abraham.

This thought respecting the Kingdom, its necessity, and the blessings that it will bring will keep prominently before our minds our own high calling to joint-heirship with our Lord in this Kingdom. And in proportion as that hope is clearly before our minds it will be, as the Apostle explains, as "an anchor to our souls, sure and steadfast, entering into that which is within the veil." This anchorage of hope in the future, in the Kingdom, will enable us to pass safely, and with comparative quiet, through the trials and storms and difficulties of this present evil world. More than this, our thoughts respecting the Kingdom will remind us that if we are to be heirs of the Kingdom it will be necessary that we

have the appropriate discipline and training. And so, while praying, Thy Kingdom come, our hearts will naturally think next of the fact that our hopes are that when the Kingdom comes we shall be participators, with our dear Redeemer, in its glory, and in its great work of blessing the world. And in proper order then will come the thought that we must now have the necessary trials, difficulties and disciplines to properly fit and prepare us for the duties of the Kingdom. This thought in turn will make all the afflictions and trials of this present time seem to us light afflictions, knowing that they are working out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Thus the very offering of this prayer in its proper order will bring us a measure of relief from our perplexities, trials and disappointments before, in their proper order, we reach these to mention them at the throne of grace.

(4) "THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH, AS IT IS DONE IN HEAVEN."

This petition offered from the heart implies that the one offering it has made a full consecration of his will, his heart, to the Lord, and that as he hopes for the Kingdom by and by to come and subdue all unrighteousness and to establish the divine will from sea to sea, and from pole to pole, so now, the petitioner being thus in accord with the Lord's will, and thus wishing that it might be universally in control, will see to it that this will is ruling in his own heart--that in his own affairs God's will is done to the best of his ability in his earthly condition, even as he hopes to have it perfected in the Kingdom. No one can intelligently and honestly offer this petition and not desire and endeavor to have the Lord's will done in himself while on earth. Thus a blessing comes to the one who offers this petition before he has asked any special blessing upon himself or others. The mere thought of the divine arrangement brings a blessing, a peace, a rest, a sanctification of heart.

(5) "GIVE US DAY BY DAY OUR DAILY BREAD."

Matthew's statement is, we think, preferable on this point also: "Give us this day our daily bread." The thought seems to be that of continual dependence upon the Lord, day by day, for the things needed--accepting for each day the Lord's providential care and direction of our affairs. Daily bread should here be understood in the broad sense of food and raiment--things necessary. The Lord's people, who recognize him as their Father, must trust him as children, while seeking to use the various instrumentalities and opportunities within their reach. They are to provide the things necessary for themselves, yet to recognize the divine provision and care which has pre-arranged matters

so as to make their present conditions and blessings attainable. Agnosticism and higher criticism in general may deny, if they please, divine providence in connection with the grains and other supplies for man's necessities; but the eye of faith sees behind these supplies the love of God, and the wisdom of God, and the power of God, making ready for man's necessities, and

R3352 : page 120

giving the things necessary in such a manner as will be for the advantage of mankind--through sweat of face, etc.

The petition does not warrant us in asking for particular kinds of food and delicacies. Whether our energies and carefulness in respect to life's affairs shall result in temporal prosperity, accompanied with the comforts and some of the luxuries of life, or whether we shall barely have sufficient, and that with unceasing toil, we are to leave to the Lord's providence to direct. The Scriptures admonish us that we are not to be avaricious, but, while "not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord," we are to "be content with such things" as divine providence may grant us.

The child of God on common fare and in common clothing may really be much happier than are some much more prospered in temporal matters. His contentment with inferior conditions arises, not from a less ambitious mind, but rather from his faith and hope and love, which, under the guidance of the Lord's Word, discern that the present life is merely a vestibule to eternity, and in realizing that the Lord is supervising the affairs of his people. So the trials, persecutions, discouragements and disadvantages in the present time will work in them and work out for them preparation of heart, development of character, which will make them meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

(6) "FORGIVE US OUR SINS."

Those who come to God in prayer acceptably must approach him with a realization of their own insufficiency and unworthiness: they must realize that they

R3353 : page 120

are by nature sinners, and that their flesh is both fallen and weak ("so that they cannot do the things which they would"). Not the Adamic sin, but personal transgressions are here referred to, for Adamic sin, unrepented of and unforgiven, would stand as a barrier so that the supplicant would have no right to go to God in prayer at all until he had thus repented and been forgiven through the merit of the Mediator. He would have no right whatever to call God his Father, but

would still be one of the Adamic race--unregenerated. Our coming to God in prayer and calling him Father imply that we have accepted the mediation of the great Redeemer, through the merit of his sacrifice--imply that our sins have been forgiven, that we have been covered with the robe of Christ's righteousness, and that the Lord is no longer dealing with us as sinners.

What sins, then, have we to confess? We reply that all should recognize that their very best efforts in the flesh necessarily come short of perfection--short of the glory of God. Although the forgiveness of sins is not here mentioned as being through the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ, yet other Scriptures clearly show us that this is the only ground of our fellowship with God, --that there is no other name given under heaven or amongst men whereby we must be saved from our sins.

To petition the Lord for forgiveness of sins implies that we are at heart opposed to the sins, and that any sins committed have not been wilful ones; and the Lord, according to his covenant of grace with us, agrees to accept the intention of our hearts as instead of the actual, full, complete, perfect obedience to the divine requirement in thought and in word and in act. This petition, then, signifies that we recognize that the robe of Christ's righteousness granted to us has become spotted or sullied, and that we desire to be cleansed, so that we may again be without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. On the contrary, this cannot refer to wilful sins, because, as the Apostle explains, if we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the Truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, and hence no more a basis for forgiveness; and the end of wilful sin is Second Death. It is, however, proper to remark that there are what might be termed mixed sins--sins in which a measure of wilfulness may have combined with a measure of ignorance or inherited weakness.

In the case of such sins the Lord expresses his willingness to cancel the wrong upon its being properly repented of, but he reserves to himself the giving of stripes, or chastisements appropriate and necessary to his child as an instruction in righteousness, and correction of weaknesses, etc. Happy are they who, with growth in grace and knowledge, find their hearts so fully in accord with the principles of the divine arrangement that they will never transgress with any measure of wilfulness; but blessed also are those who, finding some measure of wilfulness in their deflections from the divine rule, are pained thereby, and who, as the Apostle says, are led to discipline or correct themselves that they may the more quickly learn the lessons, and bring their bodies more completely into subjection to the new mind--"I keep under my body and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be

judged."

(7) "FOR WE ALSO FORGIVE EVERYONE THAT IS INDEBTED TO US."

Again Matthew's rendering is better: "Those who trespass against us." As we are imperfect and cannot keep the divine law, so likewise others are imperfect. As the degrees of deflection from the divine law vary with the degrees of the fall, so also we must expect that the trespasses of ourselves and others, one against another, will vary, according to natural temperament, weakness, etc. As we realize that we have received, and will still need, divine compassion and mercy in respect to our shortcomings, so the Lord teaches us that

R3353 : page 121

we must exercise similar benevolence toward our fellow-creatures, both in the Church and outside. Elsewhere he lays down this rule very stringently, that if we do not from our heart forgive those trespassing against us, neither will our heavenly Father forgive our trespasses. Thus the Lord would develop in his consecrated people the spirit of the Father, even as he instructed us, saying: "Be ye holy, even as your Father which is in heaven is holy."

That is to be the standard. However far short of it we may come, we can have no lower standard than that; and in proportion as we are striving for that standard and realize our own weaknesses and imperfections, we should have proportionate compassion upon fellow-creatures and their shortcomings toward us. This is love, sympathy, compassion,--and whoever does not attain this degree of love which will have compassion upon others and their weaknesses, and which would be ready to forgive them and glad to forgive them; and whoever does not succeed in this matter to the extent of being able to love his enemies, so as to even pray for them, that person fails to reach the mark of character which the Lord demands, and he may be sure that his own deviations from perfect rectitude will not be overlooked, because he is lacking the one important quality of love, which covers a multitude of sins of every kind. None, surely, will gain a place in the Kingdom class, in the Bride class, except they have this forgiving quality, this quality of love.

(8) "BRING US NOT INTO TEMPTATION."

We are to remember the words of the Apostle (Jas. 1:13) to the effect that God tempteth no man, and we are to apply this thought to the prayer. So doing our prayer will not signify that we fear God will tempt us, but that we entreat him that he may guide our steps, our cares in life, so that no temptation, no trial, shall

come upon us that would be too severe for us; that he may bring us by a way in which we will not be tempted above that we are able, and provide a way of escape. when we are sore distressed. The Apostle assures us that this is the divine will, and that such a prayer would be in accordance with it. He says God will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, but will with every temptation provide also a way of escape. The temptations are of the Adversary, and of our own fallen natures--through our own flesh, and through the weaknesses of others. God is not responsible for these, but he is able to so guide the way of his people that they shall not be overwhelmed in these natural difficulties, weaknesses, besetments, nor by the wiles of the Adversary.

(9) "BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL."

These words are not found in the original, but corresponding words are found in Matthew's record: "Deliver us from the Evil One." There never was a time when there was greater need of this petition than at present. The Evil one is specially seeking to trap and ensnare the Lord's people in the present time, and the Scriptures inform us that God is permitting this, and, in that sense of the word, that he is sending strong delusions--permitting the Adversary to bring strong delusions upon the world and upon the nominal church. Our Father is permitting this because the time has come for a complete separation of the wheat from the tares. He has promised, however, that those who are truly of the wheat class--the sanctified in Christ Jesus, who are seeking to walk in his steps--shall not be stumbled, shall never fall, but shall have an abundant entrance ministered unto them into the everlasting Kingdom. The question, then, is one of loyalty of heart to the Lord.

The trial of this day shall try the work of every man [in the Church] of what sort it is. It will be so severe that if it were possible the very elect would be deceived; but this will not be possible, because the Lord will specially care for these. Nevertheless the Lord will be inquired of by his people in respect to these matters which he has already promised, and as they pray, Deliver us from the Evil One, they surely will labor in the same direction. It is our expectation that very shortly now the forces of evil will gain much greater strength than at present, with all deceivableness of unrighteousness; and meantime the Lord is staying the adverse forces that his true people may put on the armor of God and be able to stand when the evil day shall come.

FAITH AND HOPE DEVELOPED BY DELAY.

In verses 5-8 our Lord gives us a parable, showing

how importunity might bring an answer from an earthly friend who at first declined a request. Our Lord uses the illustration in respect to the heavenly Father, not by way of implying that God is averse to his people's requests and will only grant them when their comings become tedious to him, but by way of showing what patient persistency men will have in connection with some slight earthly favor desired, and as illustrating how the Lord's people need to be much more solicitous and earnest in respect to the heavenly blessings they desire. Our heavenly Father has good things; he has promised them to us; he takes delight in giving them to us, yet some of them are afar off. For instance, he has allowed his dear people to pray, Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven, for nearly nineteen centuries. Why has he not answered the petition sooner? Why did he suggest that we should so pray, if the answer were to be so long delayed?

We reply that the Lord had a plan, including the time for the Kingdom, already mapped out before he taught us to pray for it; and that the prayer of now

R3354 : page 122

nearly nineteen centuries, going up from the hearts of his people, have been blessings to their hearts, and have led them to appreciate and long for the Kingdom far more than if they had not thus prayed. The longing for the Kingdom has been a blessing of itself and has been an encouragement, and so we are praying today, more earnestly perhaps than ever before, Thy Kingdom come, because we appreciate the need of God's Kingdom more and more as we get down to the time when it will be ready to be given to us.

ASKING, SEEKING, KNOCKING.

Our Lord's words in conclusion of the lesson are very soul-satisfying to those who have faith: "I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given unto you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." We have the Master's words for this, but we are to remember the order as already expressed to us in prayer; we are to ask nothing that will not be hallowing and honoring to our heavenly Father's name; we are to ask nothing that would be an interference in any measure or degree with the coming of his Kingdom, or the doing of his will on earth as in heaven; we are to ask in harmony with the divine plan, and to be assured that that divine plan, revealed in the Word and prayed for by us, will ultimately be fully accomplished, and that it will be a most heart-satisfying portion when we do receive it.

The asking, seeking and knocking are to be done by us individually. We may ask the Lord for a share

in the Kingdom, and may labor for it, praying his blessing upon our labors; but we may not attempt to direct the divine arrangement and to ask the Lord to specially favor others in connection with the Kingdom. Because some one is related to us and very dear according to the flesh, is no reason why we should conclude that the Lord would necessarily choose such an one for a member of his Bride. On the contrary, we are to preach the Word to such an one, to tell him of God's goodness and grace, and of the Kingdom, and of the blessing, and to encourage him to make a consecration of himself to the Lord; and, in connection with that consecration, we are to urge him to ask for himself, to seek for himself and to know for himself that he may receive and find and enter into the blessed favors of the Lord.

EVERY GOOD AND PERFECT GIFT COMETH FROM THE FATHER.

Our Lord appeals to the fatherly spirit in man, reminding his hearers of how they would delight to give good gifts of food to their children, how they would not only not give them something poisonous or injurious when they asked for good blessings, but they would not even give them the injurious things when asked for. Much more is our heavenly Father good, kind, benevolent, and disposed to bless his children. Much more will he give to us the right things. We have thought of this frequently when hearing some of our dear friends praying that the Lord would baptize them with fire, as he promised in the Scriptures. We are rejoiced to think that God, in his goodness, would not answer that prayer, would not take advantage of the misunderstanding of the matter, and answer a prayer which would be so injurious to the petitioner. What they desired was a measure of divine blessing; what they were asking for was the curse, or trouble which came upon the chaff in the end of the Jewish age, and which is again to come upon the tares in the end of Gospel age.

We trust that the Lord's people will more and more cultivate a spirit of prayer, and that so doing they will more and more appreciate their relationship to God as children, and come to him as to a father, with simplicity, with sincerity. We are not at all advocating the thought that is today so prevalent, of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. That false doctrine finds no place in the Word of God. God does not stand sponsor for the depraved race as it now appears. He was the father of Adam in his perfection, but these imperfections, which have come to have so prominent a place in the children of Adam, the Lord declares to be of the Adversary, and to some he said, of his day, Ye are of your father, the devil, and his works ye do. In order to get back again into the family of God, as Adam was, a son of God, before he

sinned, it is necessary for us to go by the appointed way--through the merit of Jesus, the merit of his sacrifice for our sins. More than this, having been thus justified as sons on the human plane, we have been accepted in the beloved one to sonship, as New Creatures in Christ. It is from this standpoint that we come to the Father, from this standpoint that we have our fellowship, and from this standpoint that we are hoping, trusting, believing that all things are working together for good to us, because we love God and have been called according to his purpose.

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R3354 : page 122

"LIKE UNTO MEN WHO WAIT FOR THEIR LORD."

--LUKE 12:35-48.--MAY 8.--

Golden Text.--"Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when he cometh, shall find watching."

FOLLOWING up his instruction respecting his approaching death and resurrection, and after the transfiguration vision which emphasized this lesson to the apostles, our Lord began to explain to them something respecting his second coming and what their attitude should be in the interval. The present lesson

R3354 : page 123

emphasizes this matter. During the Lord's absence his people were to be continually on the alert; their loins girded would represent that they were to be ready for service all the time--actively engaged in promoting the interests of the Kingdom. According to the custom of that time, loose, flowing garments were used, and the girdle at the waist drew these into proper place so as to permit of the ordinary services of life. When rest was sought the girdle was loosed. Consequently the lesson of the figure is constant activity on the part of the Lord's people during his absence from us. We are not to become charged with the cares of this world and slumber and sleep, and thus refrain from attending to the duties properly devolving upon us.

Each one of the Lord's servants is represented as a light bearer, and instructed to let his light so shine before men that they, seeing his good works, may glorify the Father in heaven. The picture is that of general darkness, ignorance, superstition and sin in the world, while the Lord's disciples have been granted the light of divine revelation and wisdom and understanding, which not only transforms them and makes of them New Creatures, but also shines through them unto all with whom they come in contact. "Ye are the light

of the world." A suggestion is here in place, namely, that the Great Light, the glorious sunrise of the Millennial morning, has not yet taken place; the Lord's people are still in the world as little lights, shining in the midst of general darkness and watching and waiting for the morning. The Prophet's words were in line with this when he said, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." This night time of darkness and ignorance and sin began with the curse of death, which came upon our race through father Adam's disobedience, and the whole creation is groaning and travailing together, waiting for the morning, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God --Christ Jesus and his brethren, his joint-heirs in the Kingdom.

Our Lord gave a parable to illustrate the alertness and attentiveness that should characterize his followers. Amongst the Jews there would be no occasion on which the servants of the household would be expected to be more alert or to manifest more interest in the welfare of the household than on the night or morning on which their master would come to his home bringing with him his bride. And so the Lord chooses this as an appropriate illustration of the alertness that should characterize his followers while waiting for his second coming. As a matter of fact, the servants in this parable are the bride of another parable, but represent the matter from another standpoint. The sole lesson here is that diligence in service, that watchfulness for the interests of the Master's cause, that faith in his promise to return and expectancy of the event, serve as an aid or stimulus to proper service. When the master of the house should arrive with his company it would be a reflection against the interest of his servants and their love and devotion for him if on such an occasion they were found asleep or otherwise than ready to open the door at the Master's intimation of his arrival.

IF THOU WILT NOT WATCH THOU SHALT NOT KNOW.

The parable implies that at our Lord's second coming he will have arrived before any of his faithful servants will be aware of the fact. His presence will be made known by the knock, and the knock would correspond to an announcement, through some special servant or servants, either orally or by the printed page, setting forth the evidences of the Master's presence. For instance, the publishing of time prophecies showing that the time is fulfilled--that certain prophecies marking events belonging to the close of the Gospel dispensation and the opening of the Millennial dispensation are accomplished, and that certain signs mentioned in the Scriptures are fulfilled--such testimonies are in the nature of a knock, which would be heard by such of the servants of the Lord as would be awake at that time. It is not for the servants in general

to do the knocking, but for the Master himself to set in operation the forces and agencies he may choose to use for producing this knock and the announcement.

A blessing is promised to those servants who at that time shall be on the alert and hear the knock and understand it, and welcome the Master. Verse 39 shows quite distinctly that none except the servants are to appreciate the knock--that the world in general will not know of the time of the Master's return, but only his servants. No particular time for the Master's coming is set, but the intimation is clearly given that it is not for them to know the times and seasons, but

R3355 : page 123

for them to be on the alert continually, not only during the first watch, but during the second and during the third, that at whatever time the Master's knock may be heard they may respond promptly. It is not the thought, let it be noticed, that the servants are never to know when the Master will come: it is the thought that on his arrival he will cause such a knocking to be made as will be appreciated by all of his servants who are awake and waiting and watching. Wherein would be the use of the knock if the servants were not to know when they heard the knock? The knock is to be the evidence of the presence, and the servants are not to know in advance, but are to know at the time of the arrival and that without seeing.

THE MASTER WILL SERVE HIS SERVANTS.

What will be the special reward of these servants? The parable states it: their Master will "gird himself [he will become their servant] and will make them to

R3355 : page 124

sit down to meat and will come forth and serve them." This implies that at our Lord's second coming he will be present before any of his servants know of his arrival. He will knock or cause announcement of his presence to be made. Those who will hear the knock will be such only as are awake and ready, expecting him and on the alert for the knock. These will receive a special spiritual feast. It will be special because it is on a special occasion and intended as a special reward for their manifestation of interest and devotion. It will be special also, because the Master of the household, turned to be its servant, would have all the keys to all the riches of grace and blessing, and, as elsewhere explained, will bring forth from his treasuries--his pantries--things new and old, substantial and delicacies. The faithful ones will surely have a royal feast, such as never before was granted them.

These things, we hold, have already been fulfilled. The knock, or proclamation of the Lord's presence, as indicated by the Old Testament prophecies, has been given since 1875 and is still being given. The knock of the parable might appropriately be but for a few seconds, but the fulfilment would properly cover a period of years. The servants of the household are taking notice, and each one as he opens his heart and mind to the fact of the Lord's presence receives a fulfilment of the blessing promised--receives a feast of fat things, spiritual--an understanding and appreciation of the divine plan and a soul nourishment and strengthening such as was never his before. That this serving of the servants by the Master should be understood to be an individual work and not merely a collective service and feast, is evidenced by the Lord's statement in Revelation 3:20. Here the Lord represents the same event in connection with his message to the last phase of his Church nominal, the Laodicean phase. He says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man [individual] hear my voice [knock] and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him, and he with me."

"A THOUSAND YEARS...ARE AS A WATCH IN THE NIGHT."

According to the ancient Jewish method of reckoning the night time, the second watch would be from ten to two o'clock and the third from two to six o'clock. The parable does not state in which watch the Master may be expected. That question was left open; the faithfulness of the servants would be tested in proportion to his delay. Many would find it easy to keep awake and alert during the first watch, not so many during the second watch and still fewer during the third. It is in accord with this implication of the parable that we find today general lethargy prevailing amongst Christian people respecting the return of the Bridegroom and the glorious things of the Kingdom then to be brought unto his faithful household. Many are asleep in Zion, many are overcharged with the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches. Not only have worldly people made a god of business, money and pleasure, but many who are at heart lovers of righteousness and who desire to be considered servants of the Lord, are seriously overcharged--absorbed in worldly things. Their hearts are so filled with these and their minds so occupied with dreams of Churchianity and pleasure and personal interest that they cannot hear the knock. They know not of the Master's presence; they open not their hearts to this wonderful announcement, for which the Lord's people have waited so long and prayed so earnestly, "Thy Kingdom come." They are missing, as a consequence, a great blessing implied in our Lord's parable, and definitely stated in Daniel's prophecy--"O, the blessedness of him that

waiteth and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days."--Dan. 12:12.

HIS PRESENCE UNKNOWN TO THE WORLD.

"But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through."

The reference here is to a thief-like coming, and the Greek word, translated broken through, would mean literally "dug into." Many of the houses of olden time were not built of stone or bricks but of dried mud, somewhat like what are known as adobe houses in some parts of the West and in Mexico. Entry into such houses could be gained more quickly by digging through the wall than by forcing the door. The goodman of the house or its master does not refer to the Lord, for the house referred to is the "present evil world"--the social structure as at present organized. It is not necessary to conclude that Satan is meant, although he is in a general way the master of present institutions, "the god of this world," the "prince of this world." We may properly enough understand the goodman of the house to here signify earthly governments, the powers that be, the representatives of the ten toes of Daniel's image and of his fourth beast.

This matter of the second coming of the Lord and the knock which will be heard by those of his servants who are awake, but not heard by his servants who are asleep and overcharged, will be totally unknown to the world. To them his presence will not be that of a master longed for and served, but that of an opponent whose house they have in his absence taken possession of and used contrary to his interests. These, if they knew the time of his coming, would have fortified themselves in some manner and have sought to defend present institutions and to perpetuate them.

The coming as a thief upon the world signifies a

R3355 : page 125

quiet coming, unostentatious, unknown, without heralds or any commotion likely to disturb. The breaking up of the strong man's house--the breaking up of present institutions, civil, religious, political, financial--is already under way, just as the knocking for his servants is in process. The entire social structure is under control of the new Prince. He is marshaling his forces, and will cause even the wrath of man to praise him and to work out his purposes in the overthrow of every known institution built upon selfishness. Great will be the fall thereof--"a time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation"; but upon the ruins the King of kings and Lord of lords will rear the grand Kingdom of the Lord, for which all who are his already

pray, "Thy Kingdom come," and which, when it shall come to be instituted by the Lord, will be indeed the "desire of all nations."--Haggai 2:7.

"IN SUCH AN HOUR AS YE THINK NOT."

The essence of this lesson is summed up in the 40th verse, "Be ye also ready; for in an hour ye think not the Son of man cometh." No one will be aware of the hour of the Son of man's coming; it is not a matter that is left in such a form as to be speculated upon in advance. His knock will be the first intimation of his presence. And so it has been fulfilled: none of us knew in advance when the Lord's coming would take place; it was after it had occurred that we heard the knock--his voice through the prophets of the Old Testament, declaring to us that we are already in the harvest time and in the days of the presence of the Son of man. Here we have fulfilled the words of the Lord in Matthew 24:37, "As the days of Noah were, so shall also the parousia [presence] of the Son of man be." The text shows that the thought is that as the world was ignorant of coming events in Noah's days, and, being ignorant, was eating and drinking and planting and building, so it will be in the days of the presence of the Son of man: the world will be ignorant of the fact of his presence, and the ordinary affairs of life will be progressing as usual. Only "ye brethren" who hear the knock will discern the presence and get the blessing.

Peter inquired whether or not this parable was applicable only to the twelve apostles, or to all those who were disciples in a general sense. Our Lord measurably ignored the question in his reply, "Who then is the faithful and wise steward whom his lord shall set over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season?" The implication seems to be that when the right time should come for understanding the parable, it would be clearly set forth: that at the time of the parable's fulfilment the Lord would appoint a servant in the household to bring these matters to the attention of all the servants, and that certain responsibilities would rest upon such a one respecting the dispatch of his duties. If faithfully performed a great blessing would be his reward, and if unfaithful to his charge severe penalties would be inflicted. The implication would be also that if faithful the servant would be continued in his service, and if unfaithful he would be dismissed and another take the position and its responsibilities.

"THE FAITHFUL AND THE WISE STEWARD."

We would naturally enough endeavor to interpret our Lord's words as signifying a composite steward--that is that a certain number or class of brethren together would constitute the steward of this parable.

In endeavoring to make such an interpretation we are

R3356 : page 125

met with several difficulties, however.

(1) To suppose such a class in the Church would be to recognize what is elsewhere denied--to recognize a clerical or authoritative class as distinct and separate from the remainder of the Church, because this steward is to dispense the meat in due season to the household, to the fellow-servants. The Church of Christ, we hold, is not composed of clergy and laity, but "ye are all one in Christ Jesus, and one is your Master, even Christ." There would be no violation of principle, however, in supposing that the Lord at the time indicated would specially use one member of his Church as the channel or instrument through which he would send the appropriate messages, spiritual nourishment appropriate at that time; because at various times in the past the Lord has used individuals in such a manner. For instance, Peter used the "keys" of the Kingdom of heaven at Pentecost, and again at the home of Cornelius, and in both places he was used as a special servant in connection with the dispensing of special truths. This did not constitute Peter a lord over the other apostles or over the Church, but merely a servant.

(2) However much we might endeavor to apply this figure to the Lord's people collectively, the fact would still remain that the various items stated would not fit to a company of individuals. For instance, in the 42nd verse, in the common version it is rendered, that faithful steward; the revised version, the faithful steward; as though a particular one were meant and the term not used indefinitely for a number. Turning to the Greek text we find that the emphasis is there also and in double form--the faithful, the wise steward. If it were a case in which we could apply this text to Christ, there would be no difficulty, or if it were a case in which it could be applied to the whole body of Christ, there could be no difficulty, in harmonizing the one with the many members of the one body of Christ; but since the servant mentioned is to dispense food to the other members of the body, his fellow-servants, the term seems to be limited to some particular individual. However, just as we said of Peter, that he was not by reason of special use made a lord over the brethren, so we say of whoever is meant

R3356 : page 126

in this passage, that in no sense of the word would this constitute him a lord, or dictator or master, or imply his inspiration. All that we could say would be that it would be one who would be privileged to be a servant, and not many seem anxious to fill such a position in the true sense of the word. This servant, if

found faithful, would be intrusted more and more with the distribution of every feature of Present Truth as represented in the parable, by his being given the dispensing of the food in due season to the household. Unfaithfulness on the part of this appointed one would mean his degradation from this service, and presumably the service would go on at the hands of another, his successor.

The expression, "Verily I say unto you, He shall make him ruler over all his goods," should not be understood to apply to future glories and honors, but merely to a more general charge or stewardship as respects the dispensing of the Lord's "goods" or truths due to be protected or disbursed during the remainder of this "harvest" time. In other words, the steward through whom the Lord will dispense Present Truth in this "harvest," will, if found vigilant, humble, faithful, be continued in the stewardship and be used of the Lord more and more in the service of the household--down to the close of the "harvest."

"NOT AS LORDS OVER GOD'S HERITAGE."

That this servant must not act or be regarded as a lord is clearly indicated in the 45th verse, which shows that such a misuse of his appointment would work his downfall. At no time has the Church ever had need to be on guard against its servants who really endeavored to serve it and to hand forth from the Lord's treasure house the meat in due season. The Church's dangers have always arisen from those who sought to lord it over God's heritage, and to dispense their own wisdom or the wisdom of other men instead of the Word of the Lord.

Verses 47,48, seem to imply that the servant's responsibility to the Lord will be in proportion to his knowledge of the Lord's will; and that the Lord will deal with him on the principle that having had much knowledge and opportunity, the requirements at his hands will be proportionately large.

While this exhortation in general seems to apply to one particular servant through whom the other servants are to be supplied (see Matt. 24:45-51), we can see that the same principles in a general sense would apply to each servant in turn, as he would receive either food or stewardship. His responsibility would be in proportion to what he received or had opportunity to receive, and to the manner in which he used the blessing. We of today, living under such great favor from the Lord, enjoying the light of Present Truth as we do, have every reason to give thanks and more and more to appreciate the things new and old from the Master's storehouse of Truth that he is now dispensing to us, and which each in turn is privileged to dispense to others and has responsibility for in proportion to his knowledge. The Lord help us each to be faithful,

and to remember that our Lord was a servant as well as a Son, and that our highest privilege as sons is to be faithful servants, stewards of the manifold grace of God.

R3357 : page 126

"TO OBEY IS BETTER THAN SACRIFICE"

Obedience to the Lord our God
Is what he doth require;
He looketh not for sacrifice
Without his Spirit's power.

The light of Truth that shines from God
And shows to us his way,
Reveals the path wherein to walk
While in this house of clay.

If God's great plan in vision speaks,
As prophets said it would,
Oh, may we heed its welcome voice
And be among "the good."

Pray, do not compromise the Truth;
Oh, sell it not, my friend:
Obedience doth our God require
Until our course shall end.

If faithful to our trust on earth
And hold "the faith" once given,
Then will our Master say, "Well done!
Come thou, and enter heaven."
--James Hay.

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R3356 : page 126

INTERESTING QUESTIONS ANSWERED

CONCERNING BAPTISM OF JEWS.

Question.--Would a Jew coming into Christ today symbolize consecration just as do Gentiles, or would his baptism signify repentance for remission of sins, as per Acts 2:38?

Answer.--The special favor of God toward natural Israel as a nation ended at the time of Christ's rejection when their house was "left desolate." A personal favor continued with the true Israelites for a further 3-1/2 years to the end of their covenanted 70 weeks of years. It is possible that

some sort of special favor continued with this class until the full end of the Jewish "harvest," A.D., 69, but certainly no longer.

The Apostle Paul refers to this change, saying that

R3356 : page 127

"the middle wall of partition" between Jew and Gentile had been broken down. It follows, therefore, that Jews could not now come into relationship with Christ on any other terms than could Gentiles. As natural branches they are "broken off," and would require re-engrafting just the same as would the wild-olive branches.-- Rom. 11:19-24.

Question.--Was there any difference between the immersion of John and that mentioned by Peter (Acts 2:38)?

Answer.--Yes; John's preaching of repentance was merely an exhortation to renounce sin and prepare for a coming Messiah. The exhortation of Peter was to repent of sin, because the Messiah had come, and the sin to be repented of included the national sin of rejecting Messiah and crucifying him; hence, of the latter it is said that it is a baptism in the name of Jesus.

Question.--In Eph. 4:5 we read that there is "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." How does this agree with the thought that the Jews were immersed for the remission of sins, whereas the Gentiles were immersed into Christ?

Answer.--The one baptism is not the symbolic one, but the actual one, viz., the burial into Christ. This, in the case of those who are Gentiles, signifies a full consecration and full burial into the will of Christ; but this same baptism to the Jew would mean a transfer from Moses to Christ, from being dead in Moses to being dead in Christ. The sin of violation of the Jewish Law Covenant being repented of and forgiven, the Jew who was under that covenant is thenceforth counted as being under the New Covenant, and to him the outward form or symbol of baptism would mean a repentance from the works of the Law and his failure under the Law Covenant, and his acceptance in Christ, the new Mediator of the New Covenant. To us who are by nature Gentiles there can be no such repentance from the dead works of the Law, for we were never under that Law, and there can be no such transfer from Moses to Christ, because we never were in Moses.

Question.--Does Rom. 10:12 have any bearing on this question? "There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him."

Answer.--It has a bearing, but not as contradicting the foregoing. There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek when both have come into Christ--thenceforth they are on the same plane, on the same footing; but there was a difference in the way the Jew and the Greek properly attested their coming to Christ at the

opening of this Gospel age.

Question.--Was the re-immersion mentioned in Acts 19:3-5 made necessary because the persons were Gentiles, and had symbolized their baptism in a manner appropriate only to the Jews?

Answer.--We think it was, for the latter reason.

HOW DOES THE ANTITYPICAL SCAPEGOAT CLASS BEAR THE SINS OF THE PEOPLE?

Question.--What is represented in the typical confession of sin by the high priest over the "scapegoat" in the Tabernacle sacrifices, as recorded in Lev. 16:20-22.

Answer.--We understand that this goat represents a consecrated class which fails to perform sacrifice; and that its being sent into the wilderness at the hand of the "fit" man represents that all the consecrated who have not sacrificed their lives according to covenant, but who

R3357 : page 127

have, nevertheless, not repudiated the Lord, will be brought, in the time of trouble approaching, into such straits that they will be forced either to deny the Lord or to lay down their lives for the Truth. But since this laying down of life will be in a sense compulsory, it is not reckoned as being a "sacrifice" but a "destruction of the flesh." Here your inquiry comes in, Why does the high priest confess over this class certain sins which have already been atoned for by the blood of the bullock and the blood of the goat? We reply that sin may be considered from two standpoints: First, as the divine condemnation, which cannot be liquidated by the sufferings of the transgressor, but which must be met by the atonement sacrifice of the great High Priest, Head and body. Second, there is a retributive operation of divine law amongst men which brings upon the sinner a measure of suffering for sins. This latter, we believe, is represented in the sufferings of the scapegoat in the wilderness. As the Lord charged up against the living generations of Jews at the first advent, who had the light and knowledge peculiar to their own day, and who sinned against this light and knowledge, and required at the hands of that generation all the blood shed from Abel down, so we understand that, similarly, there is a great responsibility in God's sight resting upon those who today constitute nominal Christendom, who are nominally children of the Lord and tethered at the door of the tabernacle. At the hands of nominal Christianity today will be required much, for if nominal Christendom entire were consecrated to the Lord there would be no necessity for the time of trouble to come at all, but the Lord might come and set up his Kingdom amongst a willing people without the necessity of overturning present institutions in a day of wrath. Consequently, when

the day of wrath comes, it will be but the just recompense, and the divine wrath should be fully manifested upon and toward this nominal class.

RESPECTING DEUTERONOMY 29:29.

Question.--Please make some comment on Deut. 29:29.

Answer.--We understand this to mean that the Lord's people are to be careful to study and obey all that the Lord our God has commanded, searching diligently to appreciate it as it may become due to be understood. There are questions, nevertheless, respecting which the Lord has made no particular revelation, and we are to avoid the waste of time in considering those things, and to realize that had they been important for us to know the Lord would have revealed them in his Word. This is in harmony with the Apostle's statement, "All Scripture that is given by inspiration of God is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work." These assurances of sufficiency of the meat in due season to the household of faith should not only relieve us from anxious thought on outside lines, but should make us suspicious of anything and everything that is being taught that is additional to the Scriptures, as well as contrary to them.

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