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The Editor is always pleased to have your personal letters, but as for business communications (including TOWER subscriptions) we are sure that your interests will be served best and most quickly if you will address our British Branch, London, as above.

All new publications announced in these columns can be expected at the London office about a month later, as that is the length of time usually required for ocean freight service.

The above message to the friends in Britain will apply to the friends in Australasia by substituting Melbourne for London and remembering that ocean freights from here to your coast require about three months.

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VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER

THORNS, THISTLES AND THE CURSE

AS a benevolent feature of the curse or sentence of God upon our race because of Original Sin, we are told that God said to Adam when driving him forth from Eden, "Thorns and thistles shall the earth bring forth unto thee...and thou shalt eat bread in the sweat of thy face." Without the thorns and thistles and battling with them man would have found life too easy, and would in indolence have sunken into depravity more rapidly than he has done.

But the curse is to roll away--times of restitution are at hand when the great King, Messiah, will exercise his power among men for their uplift; and when the

great demoralizer, Satan, and his associated demons will be restrained. Then the thorns and thistles would be a real menace to man's rapid rise, for they with the insect pests would serve to absorb his vitality and hinder him from intellectual progress.

We should expect, therefore, that now or very soon some means would be found for coping with and subduing these pests. Already science has done much to combat the insect foes by washes, sprays, etc. But now from governmental institutions we have the glad message that thorns and thistles may be easily vanquished --by a cheap chemical spray which kills the weeds, while non-injurious to grain, etc. It is even claimed to be beneficial to some varieties of the latter.

The Technical World says:--

"It is estimated that weeds cut down the yield of grain in this country at least twenty per cent. Under these conditions agriculturists have for several years occupied themselves in the attempt to discover a chemical that can be used for spraying grain-fields. To make it a success it is necessary that the chemical should destroy the weeds, but leave the cereals uninjured. ...Numerous methods of extermination have been tried and abandoned because they were ineffective, injured the grain crop, poisoned stock, or were too expensive.

"From this it is evident that any means that can be found to destroy these pests will mean one of the greatest discoveries for agriculture that has ever been made. No mechanical invention in farm machinery will compare with it in importance.

"It can now be said with certainty that such a discovery has been made. The first successful experiments were attempted in June, 1906, by the Agricultural College of the University of Wisconsin. The work has been carried on under the direction of Prof. R. A. Moore.

"The experiments carried on consist in spraying the field with a ten-per-cent. solution of iron sulphate. The idea of controlling wild mustard by this method was conceived last year at the university experiment station. The work was based on information derived from Germany, where experiments had been tried on mustard. Plans were laid to make tests on the university farm as soon as the wild mustard appeared.

No machine for the purpose is made in this country. A sprayer costing \$135 was imported from Germany. The tests on the university farm were entirely successful. Professor Moore then experimented on other Wisconsin farms, in Dane, Kenosha and Waukesha counties and at Lynn, Lyons county, Minn. As far as known these are the only experiments that have yet been made in this country and in every case there is evidence that the weeds have been annihilated, while there has been no perceptible injury to the grain. The grains that have been tested are oats, barley, wheat and spelt. No tests have been made on rye in the United States, but Prof.

Staglich has had success in spraying rye in Europe. Experiments are also being made on Indian corn, and the results so far have been successful. The only effect that is seen on the grain is the blackening of the lower and older leaves that are doomed to wither eventually, while the young leaves, that bring the cereal to maturity, are unharmed. There are no complaints from any center of deterioration either in the quality or quantity of the grain crop sprayed. There has been no difference observed in the time of ripening. No tests have been made in this country on clover or grasses, but experiments made in Scotland show that in no case was damage done to the young clover or grass, while the mustard was entirely destroyed.

"So far the sulphate-of-iron solution is found to act definitely on mustard, yellow-dock, cockle-bur,

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smart-weed, rag-weed, and Spanish needles, while there is every reason to believe that it will destroy Canada thistle....

"It is at once apparent that every section of the country will share in the benefit of this discovery. The various weeds that iron sulphate will destroy are found to prevail in different localities. The white daisy is familiar to Eastern farmers, the rosin-weed to Western, wild mustard is widely scattered, and Canada thistle grows in most of the Northern States."

Nor is this all that is making ready for "times of restitution," when the Scriptures declare "the earth shall yield her increase." A means has been found for

ENRICHING THE SOIL

It has long been known that soil is impoverished by the exhaustion of its supply of nitrogen. It has been known also that there are vast quantities of nitrogen in the air; but no one has known how to get it to reunite with the soil. Beds of nitrogenous fertilizers in far-off lands have been transported at great cost to rejuvenate depleted soils--but the cost is too great for general use. Recently two successful methods have been discovered for separating nitrogen from the air by electricity at a comparatively small cost, and it is confidently predicted that its manufacture on a large scale will soon supply a cheap restorative for earth's rejuvenation.

Meantime another means has been found--"some good microbes have been employed to aid the work of reclamation." These useful bacteria operate only in connection with leguminous plants--such as the various clovers, vetches, peas and beans. The nitrogen-fixing bacteria form nodules on the roots, and these absorb nitrogen from the air and fix it in the soil. This not only causes the legumes to flourish but enriches

the soil for different succeeding crops.

A circular before us from the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Washington, D.C., relates the foregoing in other terms, and offers to the public on application the salts in proper quantity free of charge.

Doubtless the same Divine Wisdom which is now supplying man with skill to construct machinery and manufacture electric lights, etc., is operating also in this "Day of His Preparation" in the ways above indicated to remove the thorns and thistles and to cause the wilderness to blossom as the rose. Thank God for the eyes of faith to recognize him as our Deliverer by whomsoever he may send the assistances.

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THE NORFOLK CONVENTION

IT seems too stereotyped to say so repeatedly, "Our last convention was best of all." Yet how else can we properly report? At Indianapolis we said, "This is surely one of the best conventions ever held, if not the best of all." Nevertheless some who attended it went later on to the Niagara gathering, and said, "This is still better." And now, some who attended all three persistently claim that the Norfolk Convention was best of all. In the Editor's opinion these three seasons of refreshing were all so good as to be beyond comparison. Each, however, had its special features. The last continued longer than the others, and, besides, afforded to many specially favorable opportunities for fellowship en route, going and returning; and this we must reckon as one of the special Convention blessings. And these comparatively few who went from one Convention to another prolonged and increased their spiritual exhilaration as per the Apostle's advice: "Be not drunk with wine...but be ye filled with the Spirit."

CONVENTION OF BELIEVERS IN THE ATONEMENT SACRIFICE OF CHRIST--"A RANSOM FOR ALL"

Saturday, Sept. 28th, the friends began to arrive in goodly numbers and full of joyous anticipation of spiritual refreshment. The local friends, joined by several who went early to assist them (the Lord reward them all!), had made excellent arrangements for the comfortable entertainment of all, whose number was about 750--some going and others coming throughout the eight days of the session. So far we have learned of none who went away without a blessing from the Lord.

The opening service at 10 a.m. Sunday, Sept. 29, started with a hymn of praise to God, after which Brother Russell led in prayer, invoking the divine

blessing upon the Convention, and upon its influence in Norfolk, and on the dear friends far and near whose hearts were with us, and upon the influence of the Convention upon the little groups and classes represented --that a holy and blessed experience might result to the comfort and encouragement of many of the saints.

Brother W. W. Murray, as the representative of the local Church, then delivered an Address of Welcome and introduced Brother VanAmburgh as Chairman for the first four days of the Convention. Brother VanAmburgh at 11 a.m. delivered the first discourse, on "Redeemed" --Titus 2:13,14. The audience, nearly all "brethren," seemed very appreciative of what they heard.

The general attendance was 600 to 800, except for the publicly advertised discourse of Sunday afternoon on "To Hell and Back," delivered by Brother Russell. On that occasion a close estimate was 2200, though some guessed double that number. Excellent attention was given for nearly two hours. Some of the foremost people of the city were in attendance. The Mayor, introducing the speaker, without endorsing anything, asked a courteous and attentive hearing. The city was considerably stirred and two ministers attempted a public refutation--the Baptist preaching on "To Hell and to Stay" and the Methodist on "To Hell and be Damned." But "their guns were spiked," we feel sure, so far as those were concerned who received and read the freely distributed WATCH TOWER on "What Say the Scriptures About Hell?" And, by the way, all of our readers are welcome to these TOWERS free, for use amongst their friends. They discuss and explain every

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Bible text containing the word "hell," and various "parables and dark sayings," which are generally misunderstood.

At 7.30 p.m. Brother Russell spoke again, on "The Hopeless and the Hopeful." (Eph. 2:12,13.) Many of you already have this through the newspapers which publish a sermon each week.

MONDAY, SEPT. 30

The opening session was devoted to praise and testimony, after which Brother Russell answered Bible questions propounded by the audience.

At 2.30 p.m. Brother Alex. Graham delivered a very interesting discourse on the text, "Having Harps of God." At 3.30 a Testimony Meeting was held for an hour and a half.

Brother C. E. Fowler spoke in the evening, taking as his topic, "Overcoming--What? How?" The necessity for overcoming the world, the flesh and the Adversary was shown, and that faith and prayer and

determination are necessary to success.

TUESDAY, OCT. 1--COLPORTEUR DAY

After a Praise and Prayer Service, Brother Russell preached from the text, "He that reapeth receiveth wages and gathereth fruit unto eternal life." The usual congregation was present and the various features of Harvest work were referred to--"Colporteuring," "Volunteering," "Pilgrim Work," and the other numerous ways, great and small, by which all who will--all who love the Lord and the brethren and the Truth--may thrust in the harvest sickle. The wages were shown to be partly present but mainly future.

In the afternoon Brother J. H. Cole addressed the Colporteurs on successful methods, and gave very helpful and interesting illustrations along the lines of our circular, "Hints to Colporteurs."

The Colporteur Praise and Testimony Meeting in the evening was an excellent one and evidenced the fact that the dear Colporteurs are receiving a great blessing and are carrying blessings to others. Some thought this service alone worth all the Convention had cost them of time and expense. Many not Colporteurs were deeply moved and blessed by it.

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 2

Our Sunrise Prayer and Praise Service at 5.30 a.m. was attended by about 450 to 500 of the friends. Brother Russell, who led the meeting, pointed out the fact that we are now in the Millennial Dawning and that God's promise is that "He shall help her (the Church) early in the morning." (Psa. 46:5.) The unusual hour, the fellowship, the hymns and prayers referring to our hopes of the dawning of Zion's glad morning, all conspired to a holy solemnity and blessed joy.

We had two hours of splendid Testimony and Praise Service, beginning at 10 a.m. One dear brother from the wilds of the North Carolina mountains, with tears of joy on his cheeks, declared that he must go home, for he was so full he could hold no more. But he remained, doubtless realizing with others that holy joy enlarges our hearts and increases our capacity.

At 3 p.m., in the largest Baptist Church in Norfolk, about 700 assembled for the discourse on "The True Baptism," by Brother Russell.

In all 53 were immersed. Two colored brethren purposed being baptised the next day in the river, because Southern usage forbade the use of the Church fount, but they were not permitted to do so.

In the evening Brother Bohnet delivered a very interesting and profitable discourse on "The Righteous shall Flourish like the Palm Tree."

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3

Brother A. E. Williamson arrived and became Chairman of the Convention for its latter half. The day was left open for rest and individual fellowshiping, the only general service being in the evening, when Brother F. Draper delivered a very interesting and helpful discourse on the text, "The Spirit, the Water and the Blood, these three agree in one." Brother Russell departed for Allegheny by the afternoon train. About thirty-five who learned of the time and place were present and gave him a hearty goodby. As he stood on the rear platform while the train pulled out all joined in singing, "God be with you till we meet again."

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 4

After another splendid Praise and Testimony Meeting lasting an hour and a half, Brother M. L. Staples preached on "The New Creation." (I Tim. 3:15.) Many, we trust, were refreshed and strengthened in purpose.

In the afternoon the harmony of the Great Pyramid's Testimony with that of the Bible was forcibly presented by Brother H. C. Rockwell.

In the evening, following a Praise service, Brother W. J. Thorn addressed the Convention ably on the topic, "Full Assurance of Faith."

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5

Another good Testimony Meeting of an hour and a half showed clearly that as the Convention progressed many of the dear friends became more and more filled with the Lord's Spirit which overflowed from their beaming eyes as well as in their fervent words. Then Brother S. D. Senor delivered an interesting discourse on "Gathering and Scattering."

The afternoon service was a discourse by Brother E. H. Thompson, whose topic was, "The Three Fires of the Atonement Day, and their Antitypes." His address was both interesting and instructive.

After a Praise service Brother A. E. Burgess gave the evening address on, "Study to Show Thyself Approved unto God: a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth." He was heard with interest and profit surely.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6

The last day of this great feast opened with another stirring testimony meeting. Then Brother H. Samson spoke pointedly and feelingly on "The Witness of the Spirit."

The afternoon discourse was by Brother A. E. Williamson, whose topic was "The Bridal Garment." A

large audience gave closest attention to this portrayal of how the robe of Christ's imputed righteousness becomes through consecration and obedience our Bridal Garment.

In the evening a symposium on Love was participated in by Brothers A. E. Williamson, S. Kuesthardt, D. H. Thornton, J. F. Rutherford and F. L. Hall. Then followed a splendid Love Feast, in which all participated with hand and heart and voice, bidding each other goodby and expressing the hope of meeting soon in the Great Convention beyond the veil--"the General Assembly of the Church of the First-Borns, whose names are written in heaven."

TWO PASSED ON BEFORE

On the Saturday preceding the Convention, Brothers H. Holmes and U. G. Munsell and their wives (all active Colporteurs) having arrived a little in advance were active in preparing for and welcoming others. Toward nightfall they went to a boat-landing to meet a party from Boston. There, learning that the boat that night would land at a different pier, the two brethren hastened to it, leaving the sisters to come on more leisurely. But, five minutes later, the two dear sisters were killed under the wheels of a shifting engine which suddenly came upon them from a freight-yard switch.

The finding of them a few moments later was a harrowing experience for their dear husbands, one of whom remarked, "If it had not been for the Truth and its blessed, quieting and hallowing influence I would at once have run to the river and suicided." The Lord's grace and TRUTH greatly sustained both of these brethren and those who sympathized with them in their grief. The remains were taken to their homes in Connecticut and buried there, steps being taken to secure an able presentation of their faith to their gathered friends. The husbands returned then and spent the closing days of the Convention--not in mourning, but in praising God for our blessed hope, which forbids our sorrowing as others who have no hope. We have the best of hope for both of the sisters, for their faithfulness and self-sacrificing spirit attested their devotion to God. No doubt their death shed a solemnizing influence over the Convention as a whole.

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BEREAN BIBLE STUDY IN TABERNACLE SHADOWS

OTHER SIGNIFICANT TYPES

DECEMBER 1

1. Does St. Paul differentiate between merely justified believers and those who go on to sanctification, in Romans 12:1?

2. How does his discrimination there correspond to the difference between the typical priests and their brethren, the Levites, from whom they were separated to the work of sacrifice and higher service?

T.117, last par.

3. Have all justified believers of this Gospel Age been eligible to membership in the Royal Priesthood until the "harvest" time?

4. Will the opportunity for entering the ranks of the antitypical priests ever cease? T.118, line 11. C.216-220.

DECEMBER 8

5. What is the usual interpretation of the text, "Now is the acceptable time"?

6. What is the correct interpretation of it? T.118, line 12.

7. Do those who now consecrate themselves to God as priests sacrifice as New Creatures, or as sinners, or as justified humans? Rom. 12:1.

8. Do they offer spiritual or fleshly sacrifices? John 6:51; Col. 1:22,24; I Pet. 4:1; Heb. 10:10.

9. If this be true, why do we read that the Church is a "holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God"? I Pet. 2:5.

DECEMBER 15

10. Are we justified in accepting the reading of the Sinaitic MS., the oldest Greek MS. of the New Testament, which omits the word spiritual in I Pet. 2:5? See Tischendorf Testament; also list of interpolations shown in new WATCH TOWER BIBLES.

11. Is it conceivable that the Lord should wish us to sacrifice spiritual interests? Are we not always to sacrifice the earthly so as to gain the spiritual?

12. Is it probable that many in the Church at any time have been sacrificing priests? T.118, par. 1.

13. What was the proportion of numbers as between the priests and the Levites? T.118, par. 2.

14. Considering this typical teaching on the subject, should we be surprised that those professing consecration to death in God's service and living accordingly are few--a little flock as compared with the millions of Christendom? Compare C.163.

DECEMBER 22

15. How many nominal Christians make up the population of your city or town? And what number

do you know who profess faith in Jesus as their Redeemer and have renounced sin and are living saintly lives?

16. Even amongst the great, rich, wise and noble, according to the estimation of the world, do you find many possessing the fruits of the holy Spirit?

17. If the type shows 8580 Levites to 5 priests, is it not a faithful picture in prophecy? T.118, par. 2.

18. What was signified by the laver of water in the Tabernacle Court? T.119, par. 1.

19. If that washing meant the putting away of the filth of the flesh, does its antitype apply only to the antitypical priests--the "little flock"? T.119, par. 1.

20. Are natural men "totally depraved," as some teach, or do some of the divine characteristics in a modified degree still persist despite the fall?

DECEMBER 29

21. May a justified believer be wrongly consecrated to a work instead of to the Lord? T.119, par. 2.

22. Do Church work, Rescue work, Temperance work, etc., sometimes deceive well-meaning people and take the place of the proper work of complete

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sacrifice to God--to do the will of the Father in heaven and to finish his work of gathering out the "Elect"? T.119, par. 2.

23. Should we then be surprised that so few see "the deep things of God"--hidden behind the Tabernacle Vail, which represents full consecration--death of the will? T.119, par. 3.

24. Does the Golden Altar of the holy, like the candlestick, represent not only Jesus but also all those whom he accepts as "his brethren," his "Body"? T.120, par. 1.

25. Do the "royal priests" offer their own incense (prayers) to God, or are they offered by their Advocate and Head? John 15:7; Rev. 8:3; T.120, par. 1.

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THE TRIUMPH OF GIDEON

--JUDGES 7:13-23.--NOVEMBER 17.--

Golden Text:--"Though a host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear."--Psa. 27:3.

GIDEON was one of the judges of Israel raised up by the Lord. He delivered his people from the Midianites who had invaded Palestine and

taken possession of its most fertile part, pillaging the country of its produce. Under God's special covenant with Israel we know that he would have protected them from these invaders had they remained faithful to him. We are not surprised, therefore, that the narrative shows that the Israelites at this time had succumbed to the idolatrous influences of the Canaanites who still dwelt in the land. Gideon's father was one of the chief men of his tribe and district, and upon his plantation he had erected a statue to Baal in the midst of a consecrated grove, on a hilltop. Notwithstanding this established idolatry in the home, Gideon appears to have had considerable knowledge of the true God and of the deliverances effected by him for his people in the past, and when conversing with his angel visitor he shows not only his knowledge of the Lord's dealings in the past, but his surprise that the Lord had ceased to care for his people. It did not even seem to occur to him that the Lord's disfavor, as manifested in the successes of the Midianites against Israel, was on account of Israel's disloyalty to the Lord in idolatry, etc. It is probable that this same sentiment pervaded the nation in general and that, in some sense of the word, they respected Jehovah at the same time they worshiped Baal also.

God's favors to Spiritual Israel and his protection are along spiritual lines against spiritual enemies and spiritual difficulties; and yet how few Spiritual Israelites when they get into spiritual difficulties realize that it must, in some sense of the word, be traceable to the Lord's providences! How few of them properly look to see to what extent their spiritual adversities, weaknesses, coldness, alienation from the Lord, etc., are due to the permission of some kind of idolatry in their hearts! Not an idolatry, probably, that entirely ignores the Lord; but one which, while thinking favorably of his spiritual blessings and victories of the past, simply wonders at his disfavor of the present, and fails to recognize that it is impossible to serve at the same time both God and Mammon; that God's favor and close communion and protection can not be expected while we permit in our hearts a rival reverence for wealth or fame or human institutions and creeds, or self or family to any degree or extent.

Evidently the Lord saw that the Israelites were at this time ripe for a change--that under the adversities inflicted through their enemies they were humbled to such an extent that they would be ready to see where was their fault, and to turn from idolatry again to the Lord. But the Lord wished an agent for his service, and instead of using a supernatural one--an angel--he chose, as usual, to use a man. And he chose, as usual, to use a suitable man, fit for the purpose. Gideon seems to have been a man of middle age, for he had a son at this time of probably fifteen years of age; he was well born, as is implied by the record that he was fine of form and feature.

True, the adage is, "Handsome is that handsome does"; it is true, too, that some who are handsome fail to measure up to their appearance in the conduct of life; nevertheless, it is beyond question that to those who can read character, the face and form, unless marred by accident, indicate the character and the training. The noble, the brave, the generous, the wise, by nature, by birth, show these qualities in feature and form; nevertheless God is not always able to use as his servants the naturally noblest and finest of the human family. Too frequently with such nobility goes a spirit of pride and self-conceit, which renders the individual unsuited to the Lord's purposes of the present time, when humility and obedience to the Lord are the prime essentials. The Apostle noted this, saying that not many wise, not many noble, not many learned hath God chosen, but the weak things and the ignoble things--rich in faith, heirs of the Kingdom. (I Cor. 1:26.) How gracious is this arrangement which opens the way to the highest divine favor for the humblest who hears the voice of the Lord and responds with humility and zeal! Let the ignoble, then, who have tasted of the Lord's grace, be encouraged to trust that, even though ignoble by nature, the grace of the Lord is able to work in them such a transformation of character that they may in heart, at least, become copies of God's dear Son, and thus be prepared for the finishing touches of our promised "change" in the First Resurrection.

As Gideon's band may be considered a figure or illustration of the overcomers of this Gospel Age--the Church, the little flock--so Gideon himself would fitly represent the Captain of our salvation, whose example we are to follow, and whose character is to impress all his followers. Of Gideon it is declared that he looked like the king's son--that in appearance, form, etc., he had a nobility which marked him as above the ordinary

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rank and file. So our Lord Jesus is the King's Son, and so all whom he accepts to be of the little band, his little flock, are to be conformed to his image by the power of God working in them "to will and do of his good pleasure"; working in them through a knowledge of the truth;--the knowledge of the exceeding great and precious promises of God's Word. Whatever they are by nature, it is God's design that eventually they shall be like their Lord and Captain, see him as he is and share his glory, honor and immortality.

After receiving the Lord's invitation to be the deliverer of his people, Gideon also received a test; he was to hew down the trees constituting the grove of Baal and was to overthrow the statue and was to offer to the Lord sacrifices upon a rock, using the wood from Baal's grove and image as the fuel. Sure that he was

following the Lord's command, he did not wait to gain even the consent of his father, much less that of his people in that vicinity, who he knew would be greatly incensed by such a procedure. Assuring himself that his commands were of the Lord, he hesitated not one moment, but accomplished the destruction and made the offering, doing the work by night, knowing it would be interrupted by the people if done in the day time. The citizens of his clan demanded his life, appealing the matter to his father, who evidently was a chief amongst them; but the wise decision of the father was that if Baal could not defend himself against his son, there was certainly no need of any one taking up the cause of Baal.

Thus the Lord protected the one whom he had chosen for his servant, and brought him more markedly than ever before the attention of the people, so that when he sent out invitations for volunteers from various quarters, an army of thirty-odd thousand assembled to his standard. But the Lord said to Gideon that there were too many, and that all were not of the kind desired. From the human standpoint the thirty-two thousand of Israel had no show of conquering the hundred and thirty-five thousand of their enemies (Judges 8:10); but from the standpoint of faith in God, who

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called them to this service, victory was certain, though none could foresee in what way it should be brought about.

The Lord had in mind a glorious victory, but it was to be achieved by his might and power alone. The honor due to the human instruments who were privileged to share in it was not to be in their skill and strength in battle, but in their faith in God and in their zeal in obeying his orders, as an evidence of the strength of their confidence in God.

Then the Lord commanded Gideon to prove them. Gideon's army had a chance to see the hosts of the enemy; they had a chance to consider that their enemies were used to warfare while they as a people had for now a long time been accustomed to the peaceable pursuits of agriculture. Accordingly, the first test of faith applied was permission for all the fearful to return home. This reduced the army to ten thousand; yet many if not all of these who first volunteered, but were now rejected, probably had an opportunity a little later on of joining in the battle after the Midianites had been discomfited and were in full retreat. But the ten thousand courageous men, fearless in the presence of an enemy many times their own strength, must have been men of faith in the Lord, men who, in some respects at least, resembled Gideon in their hearts, in their courage, in their trust in Jehovah; nevertheless there were still too many for the Lord's purpose. The

next test was a test of zeal. When led down to the brook to drink, all but three hundred halted very leisurely and knelt down to drink, which required the loosening of their armor and unfastening of their swords. But three hundred did not stop to do this, but hastily scooped up a little water and lapped it from their hands. This zeal, inspired by a living faith in God, was just the element of character for which the Lord was looking; and these three hundred "peculiar people," full of faith and active zeal, were the only ones acceptable to God and privileged to share the honors of delivering Israel from a mighty host of oppressors.

Just so the Lord Jehovah contemplates the conquest of the world for Christ (Zech. 14:3); and Christ, like Gideon, is called of God to lead a "little flock" of "called and faithful and chosen" ones (Rev. 17:14) forth to the conquest of the hosts of sin. The selection of Gideon's army was an illustration of the Lord's method in the selection of a "peculiar people" who will share with him the honors of victory in the conquest of sin and all its defiling host.

Of these there is first a call to faith in the Lord, resulting in justification and acceptance; secondly, there is a call to consecration, in full view of the requirements, in full view of the enemy, and our Captain requests all of the justified ones who come to him to sit down first and count the cost, whether or not they are willing to sacrifice their all under his leadership. The large majority, when they come to see the cost, to realize the battle that must be waged between the followers of the Lord and the forces of the world, the flesh and the devil, are rather inclined to say, We prefer not to engage in battle, we are timid, we are fearful, we have not sufficient confidence either in Gideon or in Gideon's God. It is in accord with the Lord's will that such should be considered separate from God's army, though they may have subsequently an opportunity for joining in the battle against evil.

It is not sufficient that we should have faith in the Lord and in the Captain of our salvation and should make our consecration to the Lord's will; but further tests are made with a view to making a final selection of a very special class to constitute the little flock. It will be a test of water--symbolizing the truth. It becomes a very important question to every consecrated one as he is brought to a knowledge of the truth how he will receive it--appropriate it. In the picture or type those accepted of God to be Gideon's little flock used their hands to lift the water to their mouths, a

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sup at a time, as a dog uses his tongue to lift the water; while the others drank like as a horse who puts his mouth into the water and sucks it. The hand is a symbol of energy, and we might understand

this to signify that the persons most approved of the Lord will use energy and discretion in partaking of the truth--these will not bow down in the mire of human servility, but will maintain their own erectness of manhood and will partake of the water of truth, lifting their heads upward and acknowledging its heavenly origin by whatever stream or channel it may come to them.

The selection complete, the remainder of the brave men were not sent home but to Gideon's tent or headquarters, there to be ready for their share in the battle later. Those whom God would specially use were supplied with peculiar implements: (1) a ram's horn; (2) a pitcher; (3) a lamp, or torch, placed inside the pitcher and thus obscured from the view of their enemies. The three hundred were divided into three companies and the individuals of each company were scattered. They approached close to the enemy and practically surrounded their camp. When Gideon blew, all who heard the blasts made similar blasts upon their trumpets; when Gideon broke his pitcher and let the light of his torch or firebrand gleam forth, the others did the same, blowing meantime with their trumpets and alternately shouting, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon." It was the Lord's battle and the Lord's arrangement, and it was carried out as intended; the Midianites awakened from their slumbers panic-stricken, believed themselves surrounded by immense hosts, and fled precipitately, killing one another in their fright and confusion. Perceiving the routes they would take, Gideon hastened with his ten thousand followers to intercept them and to complete the defeat. Meanwhile others of the people, learning of the condition of things, joined in the battle to the ultimate and utter discomfiture of the Midianites, and the destruction of the vast majority of their hosts, including their leaders.

Our Captain, the Lord, has given special instructions to those whom he will specially use in the conflict of evil now in progress. Each one shall follow the example of the Captain of our salvation. First, he shall blow upon the trumpet, representing the proclamation of the truth, and proclaim that the sword of the spirit of truth is of Jehovah and of his anointed Son; and secondly, they shall break their pitchers and let their light shine out. The pitchers represent our earthen vessels, and the breaking of them in order to let the light shine out signifies that to which we are exhorted by the Apostle, saying, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, your reasonable service." We see how our Chief-Captain broke his earthen vessel; we see what a light streamed forth. Our highest ambition must be to follow his example, to walk in his steps, to lay down our lives for the brethren as he laid down his life for us. Meantime the blowing of the trumpet is to progress as well as the shouting in the name of Jehovah, our

Captain, and the sword of the spirit of truth is to be wielded. The result will be victory; the enemies of the Lord will be overwhelmed.

But many others than the little flock will be associated in the work of overthrow, though theirs will be a special work as specially chosen instruments of the Lord. Now is the time for response to the call of our Captain; now is the time for standing the tests and being full of faith and confidence in the Lord that he is able to give us the victory. Now is the time for understanding the will of the Captain, following his example, and imitating him and laying down our lives for the brethren, and as sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God and our reasonable service. Now is the time for the proclamation and for publicly declaring our confidence in him who called us, who gave us the light, and who has privileged us to be his little flock; and very shortly will come the time for the fleeing of the enemy. Let us be faithful to our tests and opportunities, and thus be accounted worthy of a share in the service and the glory that shall follow.

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Bibles, Testaments, Students' Helps, Etc.

SUPPLIED AT WHOLESALE COST PRICES

THIS LIST SUPERSEDES ALL PREVIOUS LISTS

Bible publishers announce that, owing to increased cost of material and labor, they have found it necessary to advance the price of many of the cheaper grades.

IN presenting our list of Bibles this year, we have dropped a number which we previously carried and have selected others which we think more desirable. We give below a list which, although not very large, we think will cover a range sufficiently broad to suit the wants of nearly all. However, should any of the friends desire a more complete list to select from, we shall be pleased to mail publishers' catalogues upon postal card application.

First in importance among Bibles we rank the

WATCH TOWER BIBLE

described on next page.

TEACHERS' BIBLES

No.	(Add Postage on these, 20c. each.)	Pub.	Our
		Price	Price
04403	Minion, French Morocco, div. cir., round corners, red under gold, references, linen lined, 7-1/4 x 5.....	\$1.35	\$.94
8301	Minion, French Morocco, div. cir., red under gold, illustrated, full teachers' helps, references, linen, 7-3/4 x 5-1/4.....	1.45	1.00
(Add Postage on these, 26c. each.)			
8701	Long Primer, French Morocco, div. cir., red under gold, helps, references, concordance, illustrated, linen, 8-1/2 x 6.....	1.95	1.33
8702	Same as 8701, leather lined.....	2.35	1.58

COMBINATION TEACHERS' BIBLES

These Bibles show the variations of the Revised Version at the foot of each page. Otherwise they are ordinary "Teachers' Bibles," with maps, concordance, etc., illustrated.

(Add Postage on these, 28c each.)

610	Bourgeois, French Seal, div. cir., red under gold, 8 x 6 x 1-3/4.....	5.00	1.35
614	Same as 610, leather lined.....	6.00	1.63

LINEAR TEACHERS' BIBLES

Hitherto these Bibles have been sold by Subscription Agents only. Their special feature, differentiating from other Teachers' Bibles, is that they show the readings of the Common and Revised Versions side by side in the same line, self-pronouncing.

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350	Small Pica, French Seal, red under gold, full teachers' helps, 8-3/4 x 6 x 1-1/2.....	6.00	2.10
360	Small Pica, Levant Morocco, kid lined, otherwise same as 350.....	10.00	4.25

POCKET BIBLES

(Add Postage on these, 15c each.)

01153	Ruby, French Morocco, round cor., red under gold, div. cir., text only, 5-1/2 x 3-7/8 x 1-1/8...	.95	.63
01327	Minion, French Morocco, div. cir., red under gold, text and maps, 6 x 3-3/8 x 1-1/4.....	1.20	.78
01329	Same as 01327, leather lined to edge.....	1.60	1.05
194	Minion, French Morocco, div. cir., red under gold, text, 5-7/8 x 4 x 1-1/4.....	1.10	.75

INDIA PAPER POCKET BIBLES

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093x	Venetian Morocco, div. cir., gilt edges with magnifying glass, 1-3/4 x 1-1/4 x 5/8.....	1.00	.75
(Add Postage on these, 8c each.)			
01103	Diamond, French Morocco, div. cir., red under gold, text only, 4-1/2 x 2-1/2 x 1/2.....	1.40	.98
01112	Persian Morocco, leather lined to edge, otherwise as 01103.....	2.00	1.35

- 01157x Ruby, French Morocco, div. cir., leather lined,
red under gold, text only, 5-5/8 x 3-7/8 x 9-16..... 2.00 1.35
- 03029x Pearl, Alaska Seal, div. cir., leather lined, silk
sewed, red under gold, references, 5-1/8x3-7/8x5/8.. 3.25 2.15
- 03114x Ruby, Persian Levant, div. cir., leather lined,
silk sewed, red under gold, references, 5-5/8x4x3/4. 3.25 2.15
(Add Postage for these, 4c each.)
- 0612 Diamond, Persian Morocco, div. cir., leather
lined, red under gold, text only, 3-3/4x2-1/2x7/8... 2.25 1.55
- 02002x Brilliant, Persian Morocco, div. cir., leather
lined, red under gold, maps (smallest reference
Bible made), 3-5/8 x 2-1/2 x 5/8..... 2.50 1.70

INDIA PAPER BIBLES

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- 8635 Minion, French Morocco, div. cir., red under
gold, references, maps, 7 x 4-3/4 x 5/8..... 1.75 1.13
- 8636 French Seal, leather lined, otherwise as 8635..... 3.00 2.14
- 9635 Brevier, large face, French Morocco, div. cir.,
red under gold, references, 7-1/8 x 5 x 1..... 2.75 1.90
- 9636 French Seal, silk sewn, leather lined, otherwise
as 9635..... 4.00 2.85
- 03265x Minion, Levant Morocco, div. cir., calf lined
silk sewed, red under gold (thinnest minion
reference Bible), 6-7/8 x 4-3/4 x 5/8..... 4.25 2.85

THUMB INDEX ON A BIBLE, 25c EXTRA

INDIA PAPER BIBLES--(Continued)

- 03274x Minion, Alaska Seal, div. cir., leather lined, silk
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and maps, 6-7/8 x 4-7/8 x 7/8..... 4.50 3.00
- 03554x Brevier, black face, Alaska Seal, div. cir., leather
lined, red under gold, references, index, self-
pronouncing, concordance and maps, 8-1/8 x
5-1/2 x 7/8..... 5.50 3.60
- 03581x Long Primer, black face, same as 03554x, 7-3/4 x
5-1/4 x 15-16..... 6.00 4.00
- 08651/2xLong Primer, Levant, div. cir., calf lined, silk
sewed, red under gold, teachers' helps, arranged
as cyclopedic concordance, 7-3/4 x 5-1/4 x
1-1/8..... 8.35 5.25

OXFORD REVISED BIBLES (Amer. Com.)

(Add Postage on these, 25c each.)

- 3750 Brevier, Cloth, round cor., red edges, maps,
8 x 5-5/8..... 1.00 .70
- 3752 Brevier, French Morocco, div. cir., red under
gold, 8 x 5-5/8..... 2.00 1.30

AMERICAN STANDARD REVISED BIBLE

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160	Bourgeois, Cloth, references.....	1.00	.80
172	Bourgeois, Egyptian Seal, references, red under gold, div. cir.....	2.00	1.60
	(Add Postage on these, 30c each.)		
260	Long Primer, Cloth, references, 8-3/4 x 6-3/4.....	1.50	1.15
272	Long Primer, Egyptian Seal, references, red under gold, div. cir., 8-3/4 x 6-3/4.....	3.00	2.25
	(Add Postage, 15 cents each.)		
	Minion, black faced, reference edition, self-pronouncing, a fine edition--4-3/4 x 7.		
152	Egyptian Seal, div. cir., red under gold.....	1.75	1.38
154	Persian Levant, leather lined to edge, otherwise same as 152.....	3.25	2.35
	(Add Postage, 12 cents each.)		
152x	India paper edition of 152.....	2.75	1.97
154x	India paper edition of 154.....	4.00	2.81

LAP BIBLES FOR THE AGED--References, Light Weight, Large Print

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2002	Pica, Cloth, red edges, 9-1/4 x 6-1/2 x 1-1/4.....	2.00	.90
2014	Pica, French Seal, limp, size same as 2002.....	2.75	1.43
2022	Pica, French Seal, div. cir., size same as 2002.....	3.50	1.75
2232	Arabian Morocco, grained leather lining to edge, silk lined band and marker.....	6.00	2.80

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216	Minion, French Morocco, limp, red under gold, 5-3/4 x 3-5/8.....	1.15	.82
215B	Minion, French Morocco, references, div. cir., red under gold, 7-1/4 x 5-1/4 x 7/8.....	1.50	.85

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(Add Postage on these, 3c each.)

2113	Nonpareil, French Morocco, limp, gold title, side and back, gold edges (vest-pocket edition), 4-3/8 x 2-7/8 x 1/2.....	.40	.22
2113P	Same as above, with Psalms.....	.50	.27
2115	Same as 2113, with div. cir., and red under gold.....	.56	.30
2115P	Same as 2115, with Psalms.....	.66	.35
013RL	Same as 2113, with words of our Lord in red letters.....	.60	.33
015RL	Same as 013RL, with div. cir., red under gold.....	.80	.42
2142x	Nonpareil, French Seal, limp, grained leather lining, red under gold, gold roll (thin), 4-3/8 x 2-3/4 x 3/8.....	.85	.43
2142PX	Same as 2142x, with Psalms.....	1.00	.50
010	Diamond, Venetian Morocco, limp, gold edges, 3-3/4 x 2-1/4 x 1/4.....	.50	.35
014	Diamond, Arabian Morocco, div. cir., leather lined, red under gold, India paper, 3-3/4x2-1/4x1/4.	.90	.65
	(Add Postage on these, 5c each.)		

287 Brevier, Roan leather, flexible, gold edges, with
Psalms, 6-1/4 x 4-1/2..... .42 .42

NEW TESTAMENTS FOR THE AGED

(Add Postage on these, 10c each.)

212 Small Pica, Roan, square cor., 5-3/4 x 8-1/4..... .45 .45

283 Same as above, with Psalms, 8-1/4 x 5-1/2 x 3/4..... .50 .50

REVISED TESTAMENTS

0100 Brevier, Cloth, red edges, 16 mo., including
postage..... .23

TEXT BIBLES

(Postage, 7c.)

178 Agate type, cloth, red edges, 4 x 5-3/4..... .17 .17

(Postage, 12c.)

131 Nonpareil type, cloth, red edges, 5-1/4 x 7-1/4..... .25 .25

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CONCORDANCES AND OTHER BIBLE STUDY HELPS

First in this list we mention the several volumes of

"STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURE" SERIES

--referring inquirers to the second page of each issue of this journal for prices, etc. We commend also, as aids, the following publications by other presses, which we supply at specially low prices because of the assistance they will lend to the study of God's Word. We mention these somewhat in the order in which they seem to us to be desirable aids.

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We specially recommend this Bible for its smallness of size, lightness of weight and good-sized print, and above all for the helps to Bible students and teachers bound with it. Printed on India paper; excellent press work. It is a reference Bible, 4-1/2 x 6-3/4 and 3/4 inch thick. Its special feature distinguishing this Bible from all others is

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624 pages, 250 illustrations; cloth sides, leather back and corners, gilt edges. A subscription book at \$3. Our special price 75 cents, plus 25 cents postage.

SCRIPTURE STUDIES--INDIA PAPER

Calls for SCRIPTURE STUDIES divided into small portions, light, convenient for the pocket, that could be read on the cars, etc., led us to prepare an India-paper edition. The entire volume is on this very fine paper reduced to three-eighths of an inch in thickness and about four ounces in weight. [The type is exactly the same size as in the regular editions.] It is a beauty. Leather covers, gold edges. Its cost, with postage, is raised to 75c each for the first three volumes and 85c each for the remainder per volume, at which price it is supplied to WATCH TOWER subscribers.

We regret inability to promise these definitely, as we are experiencing great trouble in securing the India paper. We hope to have the last three volumes by Dec., 1907, and the preceding three about Feb., 1908.

Specimen Lines of Various Sizes of Type Referred to on
Reverse Page:

This line is Brilliant type. This line is Diamond type.

This line is Pearl type. This line is Ruby type.

This line is Nonpareil type. This line is Emerald Minion.

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EACH SHALL GIVE ACCOUNT TO GOD

--ROMANS 14:12-23.--NOVEMBER 24.--

Golden Text:--"Judge this rather, that no man put a
stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way."

--Romans 14:13.

AGAIN the International Sunday-School Committee requests Christian people in general to consider the evils of intemperance--the importance of temperance in all things on the part of those professing godliness. Such lessons seem to be all the more important when we perceive that the rush, the push, the hurry, the consumption of nervous energy on the part of people in general, seems to be causing an increase of nervous and mental disorders and an enlargement of the lists of the insane. Certainly no one claiming benevolence of heart and soundness of judgment could in any sense of the word advocate or encourage intemperance, realizing that it is a fruitful source of crime, depravity, immorality, etc. We note with pleasure the spread of local option and total prohibition in many of the southern States. Not that such restraints are the highest ideals of liberty, but that--seeing the necessity for the restraints--those who love liberty are willing to share the bondage for the sake of their fellow-citizens, to whom full liberty is admittedly injurious. Either climatic variations or financial and social changes account for the fact that there was less

tendency to drunkenness in the days of the Lord and the apostles than there is now, and probably for this

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reason the Scriptures have less to say respecting this, which is one of the chiefest evils in our day.

But no amount of interest in the temperance question should permit us to read into the divine Word what was not intended by the inspired writers--though we may properly enough draw inferences and conclusions. First of all we must take the lesson provided for us as we find it. It is a part of the Apostle's discussion of liberty and law, custom and conscience, on questions that were prominent at the time of writing. The Jews were accustomed to observe their Law with great exactness, and very properly so. Consequently it seemed a very peculiar lesson for them to be obliged to learn, that they were no longer under the Law, hoping for eternal life through the observance of it, but were under grace, hoping for life eternal by the forgiveness of their sins through the merit of the sacrifice of Christ. The Jews at Rome, for instance, had experienced trials and difficulties for a long time in their endeavor to observe the Law--the keeping of the Jewish Sabbath Day, the avoidance of meats that had been strangled or offered to idols. When these accepted Christ they had great difficulty in realizing that the Law Covenant under which they had been seeking to please God was at an end, and that they must seek new principles for their guidance in respect to worship, service, self-control. Naturally enough some minds grasped the situation more quickly than did others. Some accepted Christ and felt all the previous bondage to the Jewish ritual; others saw more broadly that Christ had become the end of the Law Covenant to everyone that believeth, and that the Law which he had instituted had indeed the spirit of the ten commandments and the Jewish ritual but not the letter of them, and that to him that is in Christ Jesus there is no Law except that of love: love to God supremely, love to the brethren and love to our neighbors--a law seen to be very comprehensive indeed when studied, but on its surface quite different from the Law of commandments given to the house of servants.

"The New Commandment," or new law of love, left much more to the discretion and judgment of the individual than did the Law commandments given at Sinai and written in stones. With the latter there was no discretion, but with the former responsibility for decision rests largely with the individual and his own conscience. Hence some, reasoning broadly, said to themselves, "The Jewish Law Covenant being at an end its restrictions are no longer in force where they would clash with the law of love and the spirit of a sound mind: I may, therefore, eat such food as I find

will be helpful to me, and am no longer forbidden to eat certain kinds." Further, as the mind expanded and grew it was realized that the idols were not gods at all, and hence that the custom of the people to offer the meat to idols before it was sold for consumption had really done the meat no harm, and hence it might be eaten without any disrespect to God if he were acknowledged and thanked therefor.

CONSIDERING THE WEAKER BRETHREN

In reasoning on this question the Apostle leaves no room for doubt as to his conception of the right or wrong of the question at issue. He agreed heartily with the enlightened few that an idol was nothing more than a piece of human handiwork, and that therefore the offering of meat before it as a sacrifice amounted to nothing and did not injure the meat any more than it did the idol good. The Apostle would, therefore, feel free to eat such meat if it came convenient to him, even though he might have preferred to have such as had not been so offered. But while endorsing the position of the more intelligent he sympathized with the less intelligent, realizing that with many of them it would require considerable time to surmount their natural prejudices and give their consciences the proper and sure footing on the subject. In other words, all Jews would need education along this line, and some could take the education more rapidly than others, but the former should be sympathetic with the latter and to a large extent should defer to them.

"BEFORE THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST"

Our lesson opens in the midst of this argument with the declaration, "So then each one of us should give an account of himself to God." By these words the Apostle seeks to impress the thought that the weaker brethren are not to judge and censure the others, neither the stronger brethren to judge and censure the weaker. All are to remember that God is the Judge, and that each one needs to criticise himself rather than to criticise his brother--to make sure that he himself has a conscience void of offence toward God and man. Each one so doing may feel sure eventually of the divine approval. The same thought is given in a preceding verse (v. 10), which reads, "For we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ." Each one of the Church is on trial, and our Lord Jesus as the Father's representative criticises and examines the various members of his Body, not with a view to cutting them off, but, on the contrary, for their aid and encouragement, assistance and instruction and preparation for the Kingdom. As we are now before the judgment-seat of Christ, so during the Millennial Age the whole world of mankind will be before his judgment-seat and be

separated into two classes, sheep and goats. During the world's judgment the overcomers of this Gospel Age, the brethren, the Bride, will be with the Lord in his Millennial throne as he promised, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne"; and again, "To him that overcometh will I grant power over the nations"; and again, "Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world"?--in conjunction with their Lord.--Rev. 3:21; Rev. 2:26; I Cor. 6:2.

But not only are we now standing before the judgment-seat of Christ, and day by day rendering up a measure of account in respect to our faithfulness, loyalty, etc., but eventually at the close of this age the decisions will be given by him as he pictures in the parable of the young nobleman. On his return from a far

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country, invested with full power and authority, he will give to every one in his Church according as his work has been--according to his faithfulness in the use of his talents, privileges, opportunities--according to his faithfulness and obedience to the "New Commandment" given to all, that they should love one another as he had loved them. Then every man's work shall be made manifest, however misunderstood in the present time. Some highly esteemed amongst men will be shown to be less esteemed of the Lord, and some little esteemed amongst men will be granted high honors in the Kingdom. Therefore, we are not to gauge ourselves entirely by what our fellow-men might think, but to have special respect to the Lord and his judgment of us. Hence the Apostle argues, Let us not, therefore, judge [condemn] one another any more, but let our judgment rather turn to ourselves, to see that nothing in our conduct toward our brethren shall be in any sense of the word contrary to our Master's new law of love. Watching that law carefully, and applying it to ourselves, we will be hindered from any course of conduct which would tend to stumble a brother; and such a love for the brethren as would lead us to the renouncement of our own liberties where necessary would certainly be pleasing in the sight of the Lord and the heavenly Father, and assure us a place and a higher honor than would otherwise be ours.

"FOR WHOM CHRIST DIED"

The Apostle then assures his hearers of his own conviction that there is no such thing as legally unclean or forbidden food from the Lord's standpoint for those who are New Creatures in Christ. Love for the brethren, however, should lead us to renounce to some extent our own liberties and preferences lest our exercise of liberty might do injury to some for whom Christ died. His argument is that if we have the love of Christ we will

hesitate to do anything that would wound or injure or cause a stumbling of conscience to any member of the Body. If Christ so loved them that his death was made available to their salvation, we should so love them as to be willing to cooperate for their assistance and do nothing that might stumble or hinder them. He argued further that having taken a stand for the Lord and for righteousness we should be careful that our outward conduct would conform to this in as large a degree as possible, and that this would mean that we should do nothing that to others would seem to be unrighteous. "Let not your good be evil spoken of," rather exercise yourself along such lines of goodness and in such a manner as will have the approval of all who have respect for religious things. An application of this principle today would seem to be that we who have a clearer knowledge than have some others of the meaning of the Sabbath, for instance, should so conduct ourselves in the observance of Sunday as would bring no disrespect to the Lord nor to his Word. A proper time and occasion may occur for explaining our

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higher thought respecting the significance of the Sabbath, but meanwhile let us reverentially keep Sunday, not as under the bondage of the Law, but as a great privilege and opportunity for fellowship in spiritual things, better than any we could ourselves devise. The same principle will apply to other matters or outward manifestations in which reverence for God and holy things may have a bearing upon our influence with others. Reverence for all good things is surely appropriate to all who love the Lord and love his righteousness. Increasing knowledge would make us increasingly reverential, not only in heart, but also in outward demonstration.

"THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS NOT MEAT AND DRINK, BUT
RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PEACE AND JOY IN THE
HOLY SPIRIT"

This statement by the Apostle has been grievously misunderstood and misconstrued by some, and interpreted to teach that the Kingdom of God is not a real Kingdom to come, with Jesus as the King, the Church as the joint-heirs in the Kingdom, and the world as the subjects, to bless, rule and uplift during the Millennial Age. It is used to oppose this thought, the claim being that when the words Kingdom of God are used throughout the Scriptures they signify not a real Kingdom but a rule of righteousness, joy, peace, in the hearts of believers. This is a serious misinterpretation of the Apostle's thought. His argument may be paraphrased thus: Abstain, dear brethren, from the use of your liberty in Christ wherever you find that it would

stumble the conscience of another or be to his hindrance in any manner. Consider not that the advantages of being counted in as members of Christ's prospective Kingdom consists in these liberties to eat and drink what you choose, but rather consider that the blessings we enjoy in the present time as members of that prospective Kingdom are the peace of heart, the joy of heart, the righteousness of the Lord and his holy Spirit. These are the blessings of the present time, and not the mere liberties in respect to food. Hence we may readily renounce these liberties if they interfere with the advantage of others, and we will thereby find ourselves increasing in love and joy and peace of the holy Spirit by reason of such sacrifices. The Church indeed is the Kingdom of God in an embryotic sense--in the sense that each member is here being instructed and prepared for the duties and privileges of the Kingdom to come, especially being developed and tested along the lines of his own fitness for a share in that Kingdom. But all of this emphasizes the fact expressed in our Lord's prayer that God's Kingdom is to come, and, coming, will bring about in the world that condition of things in which eventually God's will will be done on earth as it is now being done in heaven.

Continuing this thought the Apostle urges (vs. 18,19) that such service, such self-denials for Christ's sake, are well pleasing to God, and will also have the approval of right-thinking men, and that all the Lord's followers therefore should thus be making for peace and those things and conditions whereby they may edify, strengthen and build one another up. What a precious

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lesson is here! Oh, that all of the Lord's dear people could catch the spirit of the Apostle's exhortation and see how beautiful it must be in God's sight that his people should emulate the example of their Redeemer in their willingness to deny themselves for the sake of helping others. With this spirit prevailing largely in a company of the Lord's followers, assuredly there would be a great blessing and great upbuilding of one another, a great strengthening of character and great assistance one to the other, and great absence of puffed-up superiority and disdain for those unable to see and appreciate every feature of the divine plan.

"The things that make for peace." Oh, how blessed the congregation of the Lord's people which has a goodly number of such followers of Christ, especially if they be among the leading ones! How their love and peace and unity of spirit would assist them to be kind and generous toward others and helpful--not by ignoring the principles of truth, not by putting the light under a bushel, but by presenting the Truth in so kind and gentle a manner that all who are of the Truth would appreciate it and be strengthened thereby. How

potent the Apostle's argument, "Overthrow not for meat's sake the work of God"--do not jeopardize the interests of either the Church or of an individual in it merely for the sake of preserving a non-essential. As the Apostle exhorted Timothy, "Condescend to men of low estate," condescend to the weakest and humblest of the Lord's true followers; come down to them in speech and in conduct that you may be the abler assistant of those who need the uplifting and enlightening influence of the Truth in the spirit.

"ALL THINGS INDEED ARE PURE"

We are not to understand these words of the Apostle to indicate that nothing is impure or unclean. Quite to the contrary. He has elsewhere pointed out many impurities of thought and act, and advised the Church against these. Here his words are confined to the subject in hand--nothing indeed is unclean--no kind of meat. He proceeds, however, to point out where wrong might be done even in eating of that which is cleanest, most desirable, or in the exercise of any other liberty--it is evil to the one whose conscience would be injured by it. In a word, conscience is one of our most valuable assets; according to our obedience to conscience will be our standing before the Lord. If, therefore, we violate our own consciences in anything we do, we are doing ourselves injury; or if by word or example we influence others to violate their consciences, however harmless a thing in itself it may be, we are doing them a serious injury, the outcome of which we cannot fully estimate, for it might go on to great and greater ungodliness and eventuate in the Second Death. Hence, it is good not to eat flesh nor to drink wine nor to do anything whereby thy brother might be stumbled or offended or made weak.

FAITH VERSUS CONDEMNATION

"The faith which thou hast, have thou to thyself before God." That is to say, our outward conduct need not necessarily show all the depth of our knowledge and faith and liberty. God knows the heart, he sees the progress we have made, and he will be the better pleased with us if for the sake of the brethren we do not declare all our liberties at a time and a place when they might prove injurious to others of his dear family. The Apostle proceeds to point out that if we be critical in examining our own conduct and motives we may find something therein very similar in kind to that which we are disposed to criticize in others, though perhaps in relation to a different subject. His words are, "Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that which he alloweth." For instance, he who judges another, allows or concludes that that other's motives are inspired by pride or ambition; if he turns his criticism

upon himself may sometimes find something of this kind in his own heart. He who allows that his neighbor is a slanderer and condemns him for it should turn his criticism upon himself to see that his own words are always above reproach--never upon the slanderer. Happy and blessed the person who, seeing faults in others, after careful examination finds himself to be entirely free from these. Such certainly are exceptional characters.

"HE THAT DOUBTETH IS DAMNED"

With the wrong conception before the mind the words of the Apostle sound extremely harsh, "He that doubteth is damned if he eat." The idea conveyed by these words to many minds laboring under the delusions of the "dark ages" is that the person who eats

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meat clean in itself but thinking the matter to be wrong, thus defiling his own conscience by eating, would be damned--sent to an eternity of torture. But no such thought was in the Apostle's mind nor could it be properly understood in his words. He there emphasized the fact that any person eating meat, however clean, but thinking it to be a sin, a crime, to eat it, would as a consequence be under condemnation for having violated his conscience, his judgment of the Lord's will, and this would serve as a cloud to separate between himself and the Lord, who judges the heart and not merely the outward conduct. Such an alienation might ultimately lead to the loss of the great prize of our high calling, and thus into the Great Company, or possibly eventually into the Second Death. The Apostle explains why this condemnation would hold, saying, "because he eateth not of faith"--not in harmony with his conscience--and whatsoever is not in harmony with faith and conscience is a sin. The principle here applied to the question of using or not using spirituous liquors would certainly be profitable to all of God's people: the person who uses them believing them to be sinful is violating his conscience; the person who uses them knowing that another will be affected thereby unfavorably is violating the law of love, "Love thy neighbor as thyself." The matter becomes a very important one in our day, more than ever before, because today the question of conscience in the matter of using liquors is more pronounced than ever before.

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The following article, clipped from the Literary Digest, is translated from the French, and will, we trust, be both interesting and instructive to many in connection with this lesson:

"UNTO THE THIRD AND FOURTH GENERATION"

"One cannot be, with impunity, the son of a drunkard" --so says Dr. A. Joffroy, a French physician, who writes on "Alcohol and Alcoholism" in the *Revue Scientifique* (Paris, July 13). Dr. Joffroy's article reads in places like an old-fashioned temperance tract, but it is in reality a pitiless scientific statement of facts. Diseases, the author points out, are of two kinds, those that attack persons in normal health and those that touch only those who are predisposed to them. To create such morbid predispositions alcohol is eminently suited, and in this way it strikes down not only those who abuse it, but their descendants, often ceasing its ravages only when it has obliterated a whole family. We can quote here only a small part of what Dr. Joffroy says. First comes his division of diseases into the two categories mentioned above. We read:

"In the case of some diseases (scarlet fever, smallpox, plague, etc.) the pathogenic agent produces the specific malady in every one exposed to contagion, whatever may have been his previous condition of health. But, on the other hand, there is a whole class of diseases that attack only such as are predisposed. Of 100 infants fed in the same way, one or two will become abnormally fat, because, for example, the father had gout or the mother diabetes....

"But hereditary predisposition exists also with nervous diseases, and alcoholism is one of the most effective means of creating such predisposition, as well as developing it where it exists. To have cholera or rheumatism, for instance, one must have obese, nervous alcoholic parents. A man may be seized with shaking palsy, following some violent emotion,...but heredity must be present to facilitate the action, and alcoholism is generally found to be at the bottom of this heredity.'

"In mental diseases,' Dr. Joffroy goes on to say, 'the role of heredity is greater still. We may almost say that predisposition is absolutely necessary for these.' The author rejects the classification made by some authors who divide mental diseases into those of the normal and abnormal brain. The former, he thinks, do not exist, a diseased brain being always abnormal. Even poisons that act on the brain select those who are predisposed, and this is eminently true of alcohol itself. Predispositions (generally alcoholic) determine the special form of drunkenness and explain why wine makes one man gay, another sad, another quarrelsome. Likewise, hereditary predisposition explains why alcoholism results, with one man, in an ulcer of the stomach, with another in cirrhosis of the liver, with others in paralysis of one or another set of nerves. The writer continues:

"On epilepsy the action of alcohol is quite clearly

manifest; sometimes a subject plainly epileptic from infancy takes to drink at about 20, with the result that his attacks increase in violence at each excess; sometimes a man of thirty to forty years who has had only slight seizures in childhood begins to have the characteristic attacks, which disappear or lessen when he becomes abstinent....

"In order that I may be clearly understood I will repeat the definition that I have given elsewhere of incipient degeneracy. "The totality of organic defects, of hereditary or acquired origin, which, by lessening organic resistance, create new morbid aptitudes and make causes pathogenic when of themselves they would be powerless to injure a normal organism."

"And I repeat again that, in the creation of these new morbid aptitudes, this hereditary predisposition, which dominates almost all pathology, alcoholism stands preeminent, doing more harm and counting more victims than tuberculosis. Alcoholism, in fact, not only affects the individual, but its effects are continued to his descendants. One cannot be, with impunity, the son of an alcoholic. Alcoholism begins with the father and strikes down his children, and generally its action continues, until, in the fourth or fifth generation, it has destroyed the family. But before this final result is reached, the alcoholics and their descendants are, according to circumstances, hurled into disease, madness or crime, filling our hospitals, asylums and jails, as I have already said.

"Blind indeed are those who, ignorant of the dangers of alcohol, see in it only a source of revenue!"--
--Translation made for the Literary Digest.

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AN INTERESTING QUESTION ANSWERED

QUESTION.--In Acts 20:28 the reading is peculiar, and seems to imply that the Father, and not the Son, was the purchaser of the race; yet this disagrees with other Scriptures. How should we understand the matter?

ANSWER.--The Diaglott translation is very much better than that of our common version, and reads, "which he hath purchased with the blood of his own"--"Son" being understood.

The question may still arise with some, In what way did the Father purchase the race? We answer, In the same way that he has been the author of the entire plan of salvation. All that our dear Redeemer has done for us has been the carrying out of the great plan of Jehovah, purposed in himself before the foundation of the world. It is in harmony with this that the Father declares himself the Redeemer, "Jehovah thy Redeemer, and the Holy One of Israel." (Isa. 41:14; 43:14; 54:5.) Again we read, "Jehovah is my

Shepherd." (Psalm 23:1.) In like manner the Father is the Creator, although all things were made by the Son (as the Father's agent) "and without him was not anything made that was made."--John 1:3.

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VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER

CURIOSITY A DANGEROUS SNARE

INCREASINGLY the evidences multiply which show the power of the fallen angels in the affairs of men. We call attention to the fact that curiosity is the "bait" which they generally use to entrap their victims. Apparently the human mind is so constituted that these "demons" cannot intrude upon it except with its consent: hence the resort to curiosity to gain the consent of the will to investigate. Then gradually the leading is onward into foolishness or perhaps to obsession. Mechanical toys which answer all kinds of questions are amongst these. They are of various designs, but all requiring personal manipulation, and all tending to establish reliance in and communication with the fallen angels who personate the dead and sometimes personate the Lord himself, and give religious counsel in the endeavor to bind to themselves the confidence of mankind.

The more absurd the proposition the more likely will it be to arouse curiosity. It seems absurd to believe that a "Ouija board" can and does answer questions correctly. There is reason to doubt that the operator may have something to do with the movements, and each must try for himself, thus slightly coming under the power of these "wicked spirits." (Eph. 6:12, margin.) The only safe plan is to have nothing whatever to do with "occult powers." They are all "powers of darkness"; for the holy angels do not thus communicate with man during this Gospel Age, and as "the dead know not anything" (Eccl. 9:10) they cannot. Hence all such occult powers are of the lying spirits, with which men may have communion and fellowship only at their peril.

To our surprise, all that we have written on this subject does not keep some of our readers aloof from these snares. We have heard recently of some who were "not afraid to operate a Ouija board." The Truth should and does give courage, but this is not the way to exercise it. Our Lord says, "Fear God,"--that is to say, "Fear to disobey and to offend God." The Apostle says, "Let us fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest we should seem to come short of it." The Editor of this journal fears not what men or demons can do to him, so long as he abides in the loving favor of God; but he would fear to disobey the Lord in respect to having communication with these demons and their various "curious" devices. It is well that we not only remember the promises of God; but let us also remember to be "obedient children." "All things shall work together for good to them that love God--the called ones according to his purpose," and the delusions of the end of this age will not be such as would deceive the very Elect; but we should remember the other side also, namely, that such as would have the special watch-care and deliverance promised must "abide under the shadow of the Almighty." Of such, only, it is written,

"A thousand shall fall at thy side--ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee."

Indeed we fancy that those of us who have been blest with the greater light upon God's plan should be the more loyal to him and should be able to stand severer tests.

"WALK BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT"

The Scriptures clearly teach that in the past God spake unto the fathers miraculously, and so we believe. Yet we would not listen to such "voices" now. We should close our minds against all such revelations either to ourselves or others. It is now the fallen angels that thus seek to commune with us claudiently. We should, if such were heard, pray at once to God, "Deliver us from the evil one."

"God hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son"--and his chosen apostles. We have their messages, and these, we are assured, are "able to make us wise unto salvation," and sufficient that the man of God should be thoroughly furnished unto every good word and work. The Apostle Peter also emphasizes this, saying, "We have a more sure word of prophecy

unto which we do well to take heed as unto a light shining in a dark place until the day dawn and the Day-star arise in your hearts."

We know of one "brother" in the Truth recently deceived by the Adversary into foolishness by these "voices" which personated God. It is our duty to warn all against these "seducing spirits" (I Tim. 4:1) and to repeat the caution of God's Word in respect to every teaching of men and demons, "If they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them"--they are of the darkness while we are children of the light.

We have also warned our readers against those claiming gifts of the Spirit, including "unknown tongues." Nevertheless we have just heard of a dear "brother" who was very nearly captured, ensnared, thus by the Adversary. He attended a meeting where "the faithful" evidently became obsessed in some degree. He went to the altar, submitted his will and had already begun to feel a power coming into his arms, which were becoming rigid, when another "brother" went to his rescue. Surely "holy-rolling" trances, fits and frenzies are contrary to the holy Spirit as exhibited by Jesus and his apostles, and denominated "the spirit of a sound mind."

There is much more excuse for the world and the

nominal Church than for the Truth people along these lines. We cannot understand how anyone who has read carefully and prayerfully the six volumes of DAWN-STUDIES could be in doubt as to any of these delusions.

The explanation of falling into such a trap would surely be that the person had to some extent neglected the study or the practice of the Truth and had measurably lost its spirit. Let us remember that our Lord has provided the full armor for all the soldiers of the cross in this "evil day," but that it remains for us to put it on and use it if we would resist the evil one in our Redeemer's name. All these should know the source of such pranks and communications--they should not be curious. And if they do recognize their source and still dally with them instead of being active and zealous in showing forth the light of Truth, it implies that they are not appreciative of the great privileges they enjoy. Just such we must suppose the Lord will wish to sift out as not "more than conquerors."

AS THE SERPENT BEGUILED EVE

We have mentioned Satan's use of human curiosity to entrap the mind. We refer now to mother Eve's seduction by him from loyalty to God. It was the sight of the serpent eating without harm the fruit forbidden to her and Adam that aroused her curiosity. The matter seemed to contradict the divine threat that the eating of that fruit would to Adam and his race mean, "Dying thou shalt die." Too late she found that she had been deceived and that not the effect of the fruit, but the reward of disobedience, was death. So with us, the danger is in leaving God to hearken to and connive with demons --the disloyalty--the neglect of our own grand opportunities in this "harvest" time.

By this we do not mean to be understood as condemning all curiosity and investigation of proper matters, of which there are many. We cannot even condemn the world for having curiosity respecting things occult, for they have not the Word of God to guide them as have we. But surely those who have tasted the good Word of God and the powers of the age to come, and been made partakers of the spirit of holiness, --these are well nigh inexcusable for curiosity along the lines occult. We should always keep in memory that "Secret things belong to God, but things revealed belong to us and to our children always." The revelation granted to us in the Word of God is so complete as to leave no room for legitimate curiosity respecting any of the works of darkness. Any attempt to investigate them tells of our lack of faith in the divine Word!

A SIGN OF OUR TIMES

COMPARE 2 TIM. 3:1-4

"The Roman Catholic Bishop of Elphin, in Ireland (Dr. Clancy), in a pastoral letter read a few weeks ago in his diocese, reveals a sad state of things in modern Irish life in that part of Ireland. The Bishop writes: "The absence of reverence for God and of respect for the awful sacredness of an oath are unhappily prominent features of modern Irish life. Cursing, blaspheming, profane and ribald language of the most revolting character assail the ears of the passers-by in our towns and villages, and the utter disregard for truth, even under the sanction of an oath and the solemn surroundings of our law courts, has become so frequent and so flagrant that, as a consequence, our religion is dishonored and our faith brought into contempt."--Exchange.

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THE LESSON OF SAMSON'S LIFE

--JUDGES 16:21-31.--DECEMBER 1.--

Golden Text:--"Be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might."--Eph. 6:10.

MANY have wondered that three chapters of the Old Testament have been devoted to the story of Samson--great, strong, good-natured, witty. Still more strange it has seemed to some of us that his name should appear in the list of faith-heroes enumerated by the Apostle in the book of Hebrews, chapter 11. Here his name appears with those of Abraham, David, Gideon, "who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions." No other similar character is mentioned in the Scriptures; he stands unique amongst the Bible heroes. Dr. Lang remarks:-- "His irony, his grim laughter as well as his feats of strength are duly recorded. The story is strange,

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pathetic--one over which we smile and sigh, one of boisterous mirth and fearful sorrow--such wit, such folly, such force, such feebleness, comedy so grotesque and tragedy so awful."

Those who have not learned to rightly divide the Word of Truth--those who have not learned to study Scripture dispensationally--will surely be perplexed when they think of Samson as one of the saints of God, and then attempt to measure such saintship with the teachings of Jesus and the apostles. Meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, brotherly kindness, love,

Samson no doubt possessed in some measure, as might any natural man; but most evidently he was not begotten of the holy Spirit--not, therefore, one of the sons of God in the sense that Jesus and his followers are recognized in the Scriptures. The same is true in considerable measure of all the ancient worthies. No such standards were set before them as are set before us of this Gospel Age. They were not called to the high calling of a change of nature from human to divine. They were not begotten again to be New Creatures in Christ Jesus. The time for this was not yet. Christ, the forerunner on this heavenly narrow way, had not yet come. The sacrifice of atonement had not yet been offered, and none therefore could come unto the Father as sons or receive the begetting of his Spirit. The very highest rank possible to the most noble of that time was that they might be called servants of God. Moses was faithful as a servant over his house, and Samson and the others belonged to that house of servants. So, then, we must not think to copy Samson nor to set his life as a standard for our children or others. We are to assign him the place in the divine plan which the Scriptures give him, and then his life and his doings will be seen in their proper light and not prove a stumbling-block to us.

THE MISSION OF SAMSON

Samson's parents were consecrated people of God in the fullest sense that it was possible for them to be at the time. They believed in God, trusted him, and desired that in some way their son might be used of him in his service. They and their son, had they lived during this Gospel Age, under its light and privileges, no doubt would have been saints of a high order in the Church. Samson's special consecration to the Lord was followed by a Nazarite vow, such as is described in

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Numbers 6:2-6: it included total abstinence from grapes, wine and all intoxicants, permission of the hair to go uncut, and the avoidance of contamination with dead bodies. Many took such a vow temporarily, but Samson and John the Baptist apparently voluntarily took the vow for life. And here it is well to remember that through all the vicissitudes of his peculiar career there is no intimation that Samson ever violated this vow. In its observance we have a testimony to his faith and his loyalty to God--in harmony with God. In this respect at least he was an overcomer of a high order; and all the faithful, all the overcomers of this Gospel Age, who have taken the vows of the cross and the narrow way in the footsteps of Jesus, should be able to appreciate very highly the loyalty of Samson to his vow. If we are similarly faithful to the

observance of our vows we may be sure of a place in the heavenly Kingdom.

SAMSON JUDGED ISRAEL TWENTY YEARS

We have seen the child Samson consecrated to the Lord's service; we have seen his acceptance of this consecration in his taking of the Nazarite vow. Some have confused this vow with the statement that our Lord was called a Nazarene. This is a mistake. The people of the city of Nazareth were called Nazarenes, but those who took the special vow were called the Nazarites. Our Lord was not a Nazarite. He took no vow respecting his hair or the use of grapes and the fruit of the vine. He was a Nazarene, because for years his home had been in that city.

The Scriptures indicate also that God accepted Samson for his service. Now the question arises, In what way could God use him? What service could he render? Would God send him to preach the Gospel? No, there was no Gospel, no good tidings, no message to declare yet. That message could not go forth until first of all the Redeemer had come and the satisfaction for our sins had been made. Thus the Scriptures declare that Christ brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel--life eternal, life for the world of mankind, for all who eventually would receive the goodness of God through Christ, and be restored by him to the full of human perfection. For these the eternal life is the divine intention. More than this, our Lord brought immortality to light as the special gift of God to that special class, which--called during this Gospel Age, in the dark time when the way is narrow and difficult--has been obedient to the heavenly calling, and, laying aside every weight, runs with patience the race set before it. For these the divine provision is glory, honor and immortality. But these things were not available either to Jews or Gentiles in Samson's day, and hence there were no missions or ministries of grace and truth as we have these now. However, God had a work to be done at that time, as we shall see, and he used Samson as his agent in connection with that work.

After settling in Palestine the Israelites did not remain earnest and loyal to God and inspired with the promise made to Abraham, that through their nation God intended to bless all nations under the leadership of Messiah. When more or less of lack of faith with idolatry came in, God allowed them to be oppressed by the heathen nations on either side of them. At the time in question the Philistines had, by divine permission, conquered them and reduced them to a kind of slavery, by not permitting them to have any except the very crudest of tools and by not allowing amongst them blacksmiths, whose trade at that time was largely the forging of swords and spears and other implements of

warfare. Thus the Israelites were unarmed, while the Philistines, their oppressors, were well armed. And

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while the Israelites were learning a lesson from their captivity they were also losing their courage. The Lord, knowing their condition, was preparing for their deliverance, and he accepted the consecration of Samson and made of him his agent for the raising of a patriotic spirit amongst the people, for their invigoration by hope, and for the paralyzing to some extent of the power of the Philistines, so that the Israelites might gradually begin to recover themselves from their bondage and to look again to the Lord for the deliverance which he was willing to grant them on their return to his favor. Samson's great strength, considered by the people in its relationship to his Nazarite vow, would be a continual lesson to them of the power of God. They could see that the Lord was quite able to accept of all who were consecrated to him, and to make them mighty indeed to the overthrow of their enemies. Had the lesson been rightly applied we may readily suppose that all the children of the Israelites would have been similarly consecrated, and that the people would have been looking forward to the Lord's mighty deliverance of them; but they were slow to learn.

Samson judged Israel after the proper meaning of that word "judging" in the original, but not according to the usual acceptance of the word today. He judged Israel in the sense of avenging wrongs that they sustained upon the enemies who committed those wrongs. Samson was not merely a warrior because of his love of fighting; he was a patriot, he was a firm believer in the Oath-Bound Covenant, he was hoping for the deliverance of Israel from all antagonists, and for the nation's exaltation as God's people, to be his mighty power in the world for the blessing of all nations. He was therefore opposed to everything that opposed the Israelites; and the Philistines being their oppressors and opponents he directed his energies against them. Their wealth was gained largely from the extensive wheat-fields lying between the mountains of Judea and the Mediterranean Sea, and in order to injure them financially Samson on one occasion took peculiar means for setting fire to these wheat-fields owned and operated by the Philistines for their own profit. It was not a joke, although the means used were peculiar, unusual. Samson was a general in the field of battle, and in his own person and in his own ingenuity he represented infantry, cavalry and artillery, using every means at his command to break the forces of the oppressors and to deliver his people, judging their oppressors or penalizing them, injuring them, punishing them, and to that extent helping to deliver Israel.

The abject servility of the Israelites is manifested

by the fact that, instead of cooperating with Samson and with him claiming the divine promises for the possession of the land of Palestine and the overthrow of all opponents, they so feared the Philistines and had so little faith in God that they were even willing to deliver Samson to the Philistines, and did deliver him bound. He allowed the binding and delivery, knowing his ability to break the bonds and to put to flight those who thought they had him in their power, and he did so. What a lesson again to the faint-hearted, that they should have courage to accept the Lord's promises and be obedient to his directions. They had already been in the land for a long time, but had failed to conquer it because of lack of faith, whereas with the proper faith one might have chased a thousand and two might have put ten thousand to flight.

SAMSON A BLIND PRISONER

When we remember Samson's zeal for God and for his people, when we remember his faithfulness to his vow as a Nazarite, when we remember his great strength--which enabled him with no other weapon than the jawbone of an ass to fight a large company of his enemies and to slay about a thousand of them--his undoing by a woman carries with it a great lesson. The Philistines directly and indirectly planned the seduction of their powerful enemy, using as a decoy the beautiful Delilah, and the man who was so strong in other respects was found vulnerable from this point of attack.

What a lesson to Spiritual Israelites! How we also should realize that the great Adversary will be on the alert to use any snare or trap for the undoing of those who are faithful soldiers of the cross. If we were to draw an analogy as between Samson's temptation and the temptation of the Body of Christ it would imply that we should be specially on guard against the blandishments of the world and the Adversary through the nominal Church, which figuratively is called a woman --more, she is described in the Scriptures as a harlot.

It was when Samson rested his head upon the lap of Delilah that he was shorn of his hair and of his strength--a condition of his vow being broken. Similarly those who are strong in the Lord and in the power of his might through their faithfulness to the vows of consecration as followers of the Lord Jesus are in danger of going to sleep in the lap of the modern Delilah, Churchianity. A spirit of drowsiness is their spirit, of rest from the activities and self-sacrifices of their vow, a spirit of slumber; and with that spirit goes their strength. Is there not in some respects an analogy between the experiences of Samson and the experiences of the Church of Christ? Consider the activities of the early Church and the victories they gained in the name and strength of the Lord. Consider how the Adversary

entangled and seduced the Church, and how for a considerable time the stupor and drowsiness and ease and worldliness were upon those who vowed to be faithful to the Lord and his service. Consider how the strength of the Gospel message was lost while in that drowsy condition in the "dark ages." Consider how the eyes of our understanding were put out even as Samson lost his natural sight. Consider that even since the Reformation time the Church has been to a large extent under the blinding influence of the Adversary, a slave to Churchianity and the world, even as Samson was the slave of the Philistines. As their slave Samson was used instead of a horse to turn a great wheel for grinding

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their food; and thus indeed the Church has been grinding food of a certain kind for many while still a slave to the world and under its blinding influences.

THE DEATH OF SAMSON

Here our lesson really begins. The Philistine worshippers of Dagon had called for a great religious festival in honor of their god, whom they credited with the success of their warfare not only upon the Israelites but their sea victories against the Sidonians and Egyptians. Samson was a prisoner in their prominent city, Gaza, where the festival was to begin in a great temple. In the midst of their hilarities Samson was brought forth as an exhibit of the power of their idol, of their god Dagon, over all enemies. They would have this one who had slain thousands to sing and play on an instrument and dance before them, and after he had thus made sport for them he stood between the two main pillars upon which the center of the structure rested and where he was in full view of the thousands who were in the temple proper itself, and also from the roof of it could be seen by about three thousand congregated thereon, the prominent men and women of the nation, the lords of the Philistines. Samson, still full of the spirit of his consecration, still full of the desire to serve God and his nation, entreated that the sacrifice of his life in the Lord's cause might be acceptable and might be used at this time in the slaughter of all the principal people of the Philistines, and thus signify a greater opportunity for the Israelites to be released from their slavery than any other means that could be thought of or made available at the time. The Lord was pleased to accept the sacrifice, and Samson, exerting his great natural strength combined with whatever the Lord was pleased to additionally grant, the two great central pillars of the structure gave way, the whole edifice came down with a crash, the three thousand people on the roof as well as the materials of the building serving as the executioner of the hour; or,

as in the other figure, as Samson's artillery against his enemies, who were also the enemies of the Lord and the opponents of the divine program for which Israel stood.

Modern buildings in many respects differ from those of ancient times, so that to us it may be difficult to imagine the truthfulness of this description. However, we have items of history which somewhat correspond. Pliny describes two theaters built of wood by L. Curio, which he says were large enough to contain all the people of Rome, and were supported by a single hinge; and if this were to give way, there would have been a greater slaughter than at the battle of Cannae.

We have seen some analogy as between Samson's experiences and the history of the Gospel Church: may we not carry this analogy farther, and see in the death of Samson and its influence an illustration of the closing of this Gospel Age, the consummation of the sacrifice of the Church and the resulting influence upon the world? It is of course hazardous to attempt the reading of prophecies or symbols not yet fulfilled. Nevertheless we suggest that the Scriptural delineations of the future correspond in many respects with the picture given us in the life of Samson. Have we not come to the time when the Lord's people are recovering a little of the strength of the early Church? and have we not also come to the time when the worldly wise are feasting and rejoicing and giving honor to the god of Evolution, and through their Higher Critics denouncing the true Israelites and their hopes and the divine testimonies? Have we not come very near to the time when those who are still faithful to the Lord and the principles of his Word are made sport of by the worldly-wise? and have we not come to the time when some at least of the Lord's true people are ready to put forth all the strength in their power through the Volunteer work and the Colporteur work, the Pilgrim work, and a thousand other energies to move the pillars of error which uphold Churchianity? It is appointed for the Church to die, to die in sacrifice, to die in the interests and service of the Truth--to lay down their lives for the brethren, the Israelites indeed, for their deliverance from the bondage of the world. The strength of our reformation lies in the Abrahamic promise, in our confidence in God, and in our vow to do his will. With the death of the last member of the Church, the Body of Christ, will surely come, as the Scriptures point out, the downfall of Churchianity and the present system of world power, and all this will but make ready for the glorious Kingdom of God's dear Son, though the incidentals shall signify a time of trouble upon the great ones, the mighty ones, the chief captains of earth.

OUR GOLDEN TEXT

"Be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might." Here we have an exhortation applicable to the people of God at all times and under all conditions and under all circumstances. It would have applied to Samson in his day as a natural man, a servant, and it applies to us of today who are New Creatures in Christ Jesus, servant-sons of the Most High. If we look back to Samson and all the ancient worthies recounted by the Apostle, we note that the secret of their strength of character, by which they endured and overcame, resided in their faith in God and in the promises. And so it must be with us. But there is a difference between faith and credulity: the latter may give a spirit of energy, but will not endure. The former is the power of God which enables us to endure all things as good soldiers of the Lord Jesus Christ, soldiers of the Truth, soldiers of righteousness, fighting against sin and error and all ungodliness, including the artful wiles of the Adversary, by which he would deceive us and the whole world, misrepresenting the divine character by the "doctrines of devils" foisted upon the Lord's people during the "dark ages," to the blinding of the eyes of their understanding. Now in the Lord's providence our eyes are becoming more and more opened, in harmony with the Apostle's prayer, "I pray God for you that you may be able to comprehend with all saints

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what is the breadth and length and depth and height; and to know the love of God which passeth knowledge." --Eph. 3:18,19.

Hence it is important for us, not merely to believe, but to believe the truth. Our Redeemer prayed, "Sanctify them with thy truth, thy Word is truth," and the Scripture tells us of some who, not having sufficient love for the truth, are abandoned of the Lord to believe a lie, and through that false faith to find ultimately the condemnation of their heart attitude and to be counted unworthy a place with the "Very Elect." Let us set the Word of the Lord above all other messages: yea, more than this, let us prize the divine Word and plan above any of our own misconceptions and imaginings. Thus we shall be willing to buy the truth at any cost and to sell it not for any price. Thus we shall be found acceptable to our Lord, and shall be kept strong in the Lord and in the power of his might, until our trials shall be finished and he shall say, It is enough; come up higher; enter into the joys of thy Lord.

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RUTH'S CHOICE

--RUTH 1:14-22.--DECEMBER 8.--

Golden Text:--"Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."--Ruth 1:16.

MANIFESTLY the chief object in the brief narrative of Ruth and Naomi was to preserve an authentic record of a link in the chain of our Lord's human ancestry. Though a Gentile by birth, Ruth was a sincere Jewish proselyte, incorporated into the commonwealth of Israel, and as such she was recognized of God as one of his chosen people. And not only so, but she was also honored with a place in the line of our Lord's human ancestry, being the great-grandmother of David. The same was true of Rahab, also a Jewish proselyte, who became the mother of Boaz, the great-grandfather of David.

The story of Ruth and Naomi is an interesting one as an item of Jewish history. It has its lights and also its shadows; for the characters were but samples of our fallen humanity coming gradually under the influence of divine grace. All that was noble in them therefore calls forth our admiration and esteem, while the blemishes are to be deplored.

Naomi and her husband Elimelech, pressed by hard times and a threatening famine, decided to leave the land of Israel and the people of God and try their fortunes among the Gentiles in the land of Moab. In doing so they were leaving the special privileges of association with God's people, and failing also to contribute their part toward their comfort and encouragement and godly counsel in the time of general distress. They were also exposing themselves and their children to the unhallowed influences of an idolatrous people. This was the part they chose merely for temporal advantage, rather than to share the hardships at home and trust in the Lord to supply their needs.

The result of this wrong course was only trouble. Elimelech died there, and Naomi was left alone with her two sons to rear. By and by the two sons married heathen wives who knew not the God of Israel. Then they also died; and Naomi, bereft of all but her two

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daughters-in-law, feeling that the hand of the Lord was against her in that she was thus sorely chastened, decided to retrace her steps to the land of her nativity, and again to cast in her lot with the Lord's people.

When she had thus, by sad experience, learned the needed lesson and determined again to submit herself to the Lord's leading, the favor of God began to return to her. She found a great comfort and blessing in the manifested devotion of Ruth, her daughter-in-law, and in her conversion to the Jewish faith. "And Ruth said, 'Entreat me not to leave thee, or return from following

after thee: for whither thou goest I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people and thy God my God. Where thou diest I will die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me."

That this was not a mere impulse on the part of Ruth is also manifest from her subsequent course of faithfulness to her mother-in-law; and Naomi's appreciation and devotion to her interests were just as manifest. Evidently though Naomi and her husband had erred in judgment and had been faint-hearted they were still loyal to God and let their light shine in the land of Moab, and both the daughters-in-law had been influenced by it, while Ruth was fully converted to God.

Their kindly reception by the people of Bethlehem and the sympathy and kindness shown them were other great blessings. And finally the marriage of Ruth to Boaz, a man of character, wealth and influence, furnished a happy home to the desolate women and Ruth was honored of God in the line of our Lord's ancestry.

The advice of Naomi to Ruth concerning Boaz was not of unalloyed wisdom. Such a course today would brand any woman as a loose, if not a disreputable, character. And that Boaz feared such reproach is also clear from his request of Chap. 3:14. In advising such a course Naomi again betrayed the weakness of her trust in God. But God in kindness had mercy on her weakness; and, their hearts being free from evil, God overruled all for good.

The words of Ruth, contained in the Golden Text of the lesson, serve to remind us of one of our duties. We who by nature were Gentiles (as Ruth was a Moabitess) have by God's grace become Spiritual Israelites; and should determine that henceforth former conditions, interests, pleasures and relationships are gone forever. To us "old things have passed away and behold all things have become new."

How forcefully this lesson is brought to our attention by the Psalmist's words, which prophetically represent the Church, and urge her to "Forget also thy

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Father's house and thine own people: so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty; for he is thy Lord--worship thou him." (Psa. 45:10,11.) It is expected that those who have had the high honor of betrothal to the great King's Son, the one "altogether lovely," will become so enchanted with their future prospects as to be almost oblivious to the things of this present time, except as to "things needful."

"Only for Jesus! Lord, keep this forever

Sealed on my heart and engraved on my life!

Pulse of all gladness and nerve of endeavor,

Secret of rest and the strength of our strife."

Next to the Lord himself are his people, and whoever

loveth not him that is begotten of God does not really love God. And to love God and his people means that we will delight to meet with them. Where opportunities for fellowship in praise, prayer and the study of the divine Word exist and go unimproved it marks a coldness or at least a lukewarmness of our love for God and holy things, which argues unfavorably as respects even our sharing the Bridegroom's throne.

To counteract the influences of sin and worldliness and to grow in grace let us resolve to fully cast in our lot with the Lord's faithful, saying, in Ruth's words, "Thy people shall be my people and thy God my God; where thou dwellest I will dwell and there will I be buried."

DWELLING WITH GOD'S PEOPLE

All of God's people can dwell together in love, in fellowship, under the divine care as a "royal priesthood" "seated together in heavenly places"--in the antitypical Tabernacle's "Holy." So far as our earthly abode is concerned we may today live comparatively closely, by virtue of the convenient railway and mail services. It behooves us all, therefore, to "speak often one to another" that, as the Prophet declares, the Lord may hear and note and prosper our blessing of one another. (Malachi 3:16.) And we suggest that it is a partial fulfilment of the injunction that we "make straight paths for our feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way," if we seek such dwelling places as will conduce to our occasional interchanges with the household of faith. Let us put God first and Christian fellowship and growth in grace second and both before wealth in all of our reckonings. Thus we will best seek first the Kingdom of God and its righteousness and find all other things added in proportion to our real needs as New Creatures.

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"SPEAK, LORD, FOR THY SERVANT HEARETH"

--I SAMUEL 3:6-14.--DECEMBER 15.--

SAMUEL, the Prophet, is one of the grand, strong characters of Old Testament times. The story of his early devotion to the Lord and his obedience and perseverance in well doing, constitutes a grand lesson, not only for young Christians, but also for those more advanced in years, including parents. As the story of Ruth gives us glimpses of a time of life of the Israelites such as is generally obscured by the records of wars and troubles, so also does the story of Samuel. He was of the tribe of Levi,

already consecrated to the Lord, and accepted. An insight into the deep piety of his parents is given in the first chapter of the Book. A child born under such circumstances of prayer and devotion to the Lord, could not, under natural laws, fail to be noble minded and religiously inclined. Would that we could impress this thought upon all Christians who become parents --that their children should be devoted to the Lord from the moment of conception! and daily prayer and effort should be made that pre-natal influences might all conduce to the highest mental, moral and physical welfare of the offspring. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" asked the Prophet, and he answers, "Not one." Our expectation should not, therefore, be that the children even of the saints would be absolutely perfect; but we are to remember that the Lord accepts the heart, the intention, the will; and that agreeably to his arrangement of nature, the mind, the intention, the will of the parents may be expressed in their child. True, the imperfect mind cannot even grasp or picture perfect things, but it can approximate them, and in that same proportion it can impress that approximation of character upon the offspring.

UNEQUALLY YOKED PARENTS

There is an old adage that "blood will tell"--that is, that culture and good breeding will be marked in the offspring. It is surely a fact that character will tell. Christians, thoroughly devoted to the Lord and seeking day by day to know and to do the divine will, and who are under the instruction of the holy Spirit in the School of Christ and somewhat developed in grace and in knowledge of the truth, whose minds are transformed by the renewing of the holy Spirit, and their affections set upon things above, will surely mark and impress the spiritual qualities of their own hearts upon the natural offspring. Such children, well born and devoted to the Lord from conception, will, of course, in childhood be trained by the same parents in the ways of the Lord, in the ways of righteousness, of justice, of truth and of love. Thus begotten and thus trained, it seems very improbable that they should afterward depart from the way of the Lord, or that they should permanently remain transgressors, even though temporarily misled through temptation.

While the Lord has directed his children not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers, nevertheless, where the yoking or marriage has occurred prior to their covenant with the Lord, he has arranged that the fruit of their marriage, their children, shall be accounted as the Lord's through the consecrated parent; and his blessing will accordingly be with the consecrated child regardless of the fact that one of its parents

was an unbeliever. The Apostle clearly states this in I Cor. 7:14.

It is a serious error--and one into which some Christians have fallen--to suppose parentage to be dishonorable or sinful, some even claiming that "original sin" was of this sort. The Scriptures teach quite to the contrary, declaring that "marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled." We are to remember, too, that the divine plan for the propagation of the race was arranged and the command to multiply and fill the earth was given before sin entered the world--before the disobedience in Eden. The Apostle severely reprimands those "forbidding to marry," and distinctly says, in his letter to Timothy, "I will, therefore, that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the Adversary to speak reproachfully." --I Tim. 5:14.

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Neither is this in conflict with his declaration in I Cor. 7, that "he that marrieth doeth well, but he that marrieth not doeth better." In his letter to Timothy he is speaking of the younger persons of the congregation; whereas in his advice in Corinthians he is addressing such members of the Church as had made a full consecration of themselves to the Lord, and were seeking to run in the race course toward the mark for the prize. And our advice to others on this subject should be strictly along these inspired lines. The advice not to marry will usually be found helpful to those who have made a full consecration of themselves to the Lord, who will find that they can accomplish more in the Lord's service free, as far as possible, from earthly obligations and division of heart. But for others who are not New Creatures, though moral and well disposed, marriage is the reasonable and proper expectation of life according to divine arrangement; it should not be hindered, but should be counseled as wisely as possible.

CONSECRATION OF OUR CHILDREN

We are to recognize a difference between the consecrated parents of Samuel and their prayers for a son, and the proper prayers of consecrated people of the present time. Only since Pentecost have the Lord's people been privileged to be "New Creatures in Christ Jesus," begotten of the holy Spirit; and such seek and pray for spiritual rather than natural children;--by spending their lives as did their Master, seeking to transform children of the first Adam into spiritual children of God. It is in view of this, and when addressing spirit-begotten ones, that the Apostle declares, that "he that marrieth not doeth better,"--because he

will, generally speaking, find the unmarried condition most favorable to his new ambitions.

Born in response to prayer and consecration, Samuel was, doubtless, a remarkable boy; and his parents showed the sincerity of their prayer in the fact that he was early brought to the high priest at Shiloh and formally presented to the Lord's service. We read that this was when he was "weaned," but are not to suppose that it was when as an infant he was weaned from the breast; but, rather, interpreting the word on a larger scale, we should understand it was when he was weaned from his mother, in the sense of being able to get along without her care: this was probably when he was from ten to twelve years of age.

We are often surprised that Christian parents, begotten of the holy Spirit, do not manifest more of this spirit which actuated the parents of Samuel. Many seemingly consecrated people hold back their most precious possessions, their children, from the Lord, and incline to devote them to some worldly calling in life--medicine, law, industry. Whether their course is prompted by too great humility or too great selfishness, it is not our province to determine; but seemingly they either have not the faith to believe that the Lord would accept their offering, or they cherish, perhaps but half unconsciously, a desire to see their children prosper after the manner of the world, and fear that their consecration to the Lord might in some manner blight their earthly prospects. What a great mistake! Do not such parents know that it is their privilege to present themselves to the Lord and all they have, including their children? and do they not know, too, that "The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he added no sorrow with it"? (Prov. 10:22.) Can they not realize that it is better to be a door-keeper in the house of the Lord than to dwell in the tents of wickedness? and that greater happiness would accompany a devoted life, even though spent in poverty, than could come through any other course, even though surrounded by every luxury? Have they not learned these lessons from their own experiences? and can they not apply them likewise to their own children?

"TRAIN UP A CHILD"

Samuel ministered to Eli in the temple; that is, he served the high priest--who was specially the Lord's servant and representative--in his dwelling apartments which were close by the tabernacle,--for the temple was not yet built. Samuel's parents, in thus subjecting him early in life to the duties of a servant, were really putting him in a most excellent school. In our opinion it is a mistake to suppose that the early years of life--from ten to eighteen--should be largely spent in play; not only is the wisdom of bringing children early into positions of responsibility, and more

or less of routine and drudgery, exemplified in the case of Samuel, but it is also exemplified in the cases of many of the prominent people of this land today. Mr. Carnegie, whose fame is world-wide, entered early upon the drudgery of life as a telegraph messenger. Mr. Edison, whose fame as an electrician is also world-wide, began life's drudgery as a newsboy. And thus it is in perfect accord with the experiences of today in worldly things that we perceive that the consecration of Samuel as a servant of Eli at an early age had probably much to do with the firmness and grandeur of his character when, subsequently, he became the Lord's Prophet, and the last and the greatest of Israel's judges.

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Our observation is that there is no more common mistake made by parents than that of supposing their children could not properly understand or appreciate religious things at an early age--say twelve years. The experience of Samuel and our own experience and that of many others assure us that some of the deepest religious sentiments may be experienced as early as twelve years of age. This should be watched for by the parents and should be cultivated with much more care than the tenderest flowers in their gardens. The flowers of veneration, spirituality, hope, faith, trust, in the child-mind need and should have tenderest care and watering and weeding and assistance. The parent by nature and by divine direction occupying a responsible position as gardener to these, must appreciate flowers in the hearts of his own family; and if he neglect his responsibilities he is culpable and will surely suffer, not only disappointment in respect to his children in the future, but suffer also in that he will be the loser of certain blessings in his own heart; because it is a part of the divine arrangement that he that watereth others shall himself be watered.

Public responsibilities and duties, and trying to save other people's children, can never excuse any Christian parent from his responsibilities toward his own children; nor can he shift his responsibilities upon Sunday School teachers. His neglect of duty will surely work to his own disadvantage as well as to the disadvantage of his offspring; and if in the past he has been negligent in this matter he cannot too soon rectify matters, though he will need to pray for and to seek to exercise greater wisdom in order to overcome his past neglect.

Dr. Haslett, in his Pedagogical Bible School, submits the following as the sum of his findings from various statistics:--

Out of 8,424 conversions--
5,054 occurred between the ages of 12-20 years.

3,183 " " " " 16-25 "
187 " at 25 years and over.

GOD'S MOUTHPIECE TWELVE YEARS OLD

The story of the Lord's first message to Samuel is beautiful in its simplicity. The boy evidently was accustomed to obeying the calls of Eli for various services at various times, and to this end had his sleeping apartments near by, Eli being advanced in life, about seventy-eight years. Three times the Lord called Samuel, and he answered, "Here am I," and went to Eli. It was after the third call that Eli instructed him to say, "Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth."

The record is that for a long time such a message from the Lord had been "precious," that is, scarce: Eli, although a good man, and sincere and faithful and kind in his dealings with Samuel, had been too lax in his dealings with his own sons, who were priests and had much to do with the services of the Tabernacle, and who, therefore, in every sense of the word should have been pious and exemplary men. The Lord had already sent Eli a warning message respecting his sons who were profligate and open transgressors, not only in financial affairs, but also in morals. Eli should have realized his responsibilities and should have checked their wrong course and, if necessary, should have dismissed them from the service of the Tabernacle even though they were his own sons; but in proportion as he had grown weak in mind and body, they had grown strong, self-willed and impious, and the old man seems not to have had the necessary strength of character to deal with them. The Lord's message delivered to Samuel was in respect to Eli's family and the punishment that should come upon them for their sins, which were much more grievous in view of the fact that they were the exemplars and instructors of the people.

A KIND AND INDULGENT PARENT

There are two kinds of unfaithful parents:

(1) The harsh, cruel, wicked, who not only inbreed an evil disposition, but inculcate the same by precept and example. If both parents be of this stripe the child's condition is almost a hopeless one for the present life. The restitution conditions of the Millennium will be needed to eradicate the taint. Yet where one parent belongs to God the result may under divine providence be the reverse--the child may not only be better born, but discerning the evil of his parent's course may thereby be repelled and prepared to take the opposite course.

(2) Some "kind and indulgent parents" are very unfaithful to their trust. With our children partakers of the general weaknesses of the race, a kindness and indulgence which allow noxious weeds to develop in

their characters is gross unkindness, very reprehensible in the sight of God and those in accord with his Word.

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Indeed, it is possible that this term, "kind and indulgent parent," is frequently used very inappropriately. In many instances it would be more truthful if less polite to say, "A weak and incompetent parent."

Surely all proper parents from the divine viewpoint will be kind to their children, and all such should be glad to be indulgent also, to the extent that the best interests of the child will permit--and not one inch further. But while the correcting rod must not be spared when necessary nor used when unnecessary, nor too severely--yet the best rule where possible, where the disposition of the child will permit, is the rule of love. Beginning early the parents' love combined with firmness should so mould the child's mind that it would have absolute confidence in the parents' love and in their loyalty to God's regulations in all of life's interests. To such a child the look of sadness and regret or the tear of sorrow on the parent's face will be more efficacious than many blows and much violent language.

JUDGE ELI UNFAITHFUL TO GOD

Judge Eli's weakness as a parent led him to unfaithfulness to God. His is not a sample of an "overcoming" character: he more nearly represented the character of the "Great Company." He had many good qualities. No vulgar sin is laid at his door. In many

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respects he placed the honor of God far beyond his personal interests. We see no manifestation of selfish ambition on his part opposing Samuel's advancement. Indeed to his credit be it noted that he fathered Samuel well. He disapproved the course of his sons, but, aged, he failed of the courage to denounce their course with proper vigor, as the Lord's words seem to intimate. We are not to forget, either, that among the twelve directly under our Lord's instruction one exercising his free will became a traitor. We fear that, however trained, those who turn out badly are generally not well-endowed in their begetting: though here also we remember Satan as an example of a perfect begetting and perfect training, which were lost before the energy of his ambitions.

Eli's experience with his wayward sons calls for our sympathy, even though he brought his difficulties upon himself by reason of his neglect of the early training of them in the ways of the Lord, in the ways of his righteousness. Doubtless he often looked at the

faithful lad who ministered to him so patiently and industriously, and wished that his sons had been of similar disposition; but the time so to wish advantageously and profitably was long gone by; they should have been begotten in the spirit of consecration, and trained in conformity therewith, and the Lord's Word for it is that when they were old they would not have departed from it. There is a lesson for parents here, too; the fact that the Lord's service is to be considered of primary importance and is to be defended even at the expense of their own flesh and blood.

THE VOICE OF THE LORD

In the morning Samuel hesitated to tell his kind master, Eli, the unfavorable message he had received of the Lord in the night; but Eli was anxious to know whatever the Lord had to say, and importuned until Samuel told him all. There is a good lesson here for the Lord's people--a lesson of humility and kindness; the lad might have felt puffed up to think that the Lord, who so seldom spoke to any, had now spoken to him; he might have felt himself honored and above Eli, in that the message spoke of the discomfiture of the latter; pride might have made him boastful and inconsiderate of the feelings of his master so that he would have taken delight in telling him of the calamities that would come, and how greatly he had been honored of the Lord. Samuel, on the contrary, exhibited the spirit of meekness, apparently not even considering the honor that had come to him; but, rather, sympathizing with his master, he would have preferred not to burden his heart with the message of calamity.

The Lord is speaking now to some of his faithful ones through his Word, through his "knock" (Rev. 3:20), which tells us of his presence, through the signs which mark the incoming of the new dispensation: are any disposed now to be haughty and proud and boastful because the Lord has permitted them to hear his voice and to know something of his plan and of the calamities coming upon Babylon? Should they not rather be filled with humility so that self would be lost sight of entirely? Should not all favored of the Lord speak of the trouble coming upon Babylon sympathetically, with a disposition to assist to an escape, rather than a disposition to gloat over and rejoice in coming troubles in which present systems will be completely overthrown?

The Lord speaks in our day in a different manner from that in which he spoke in olden times: as the Scriptures declare, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." (Heb. 1:1,2.) The Word of the Lord is still precious and scarce in that it is not, at the present time, given to all, but only to a certain class; as it is written,

"He that hath an ear to hear let him hear." The majority of mankind hath no ear to hear at the present time, no eye to see the glorious beauty of God's plan. As the Apostle explains, "The god of this world hath blinded their minds"--earthly things, earthly ambitions, earthly hopes, earthly calls and voices, distract their attention, fill their capacity; but blessed are our eyes for they see, and our ears for they hear, and blessed shall we be if, like Samuel, when we hear the Lord's message we respond promptly, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." Such as thus respond shall be taught of God--by the Word of his grace--the words of the Lord Jesus, and the words of his inspired apostles --instructed and guided in the understanding of these through the holy Spirit, through the various helps and channels and agents which the Lord is pleased to use--perhaps a tract, perhaps a book, perhaps a letter, perhaps a conversation, perhaps a sermon.

He who would continue to be taught of the Lord must continue to listen for his voice, continue to be in the hearing and obeying attitude of heart. The difficulty with some apparently is that their own wills are not fully extinct, dead--that their consecration is not complete; hence while consecrated enough to wish not to disobey the Lord's voice, they have certain ideas of their own respecting what his voice should say, and they prefer to interpret his message in conformity to their own preferences: they will to do more or less their own wills, and will to hear the Lord's voice directing them in accordance with their own wills. This is a most dangerous situation and is generally accompanied by self-conceit and self-assertion and will ultimately lead far from the Christian's goal. Let each of us resolve by the Lord's grace that we will out of honest heart continually seek to hear the pure Word of God, and that with a desire to obey it as far as we are able.

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THE HOLY ANOINTING OIL

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--

I have several thoughts regarding the typical anointing oil which I desire to have your opinion on. They have been very faith-inspiring to myself, and so I desire to impart them to others, but hesitate to do so before laying them before you.

In Ex. 30:23 we read God's instructions to Moses regarding the holy anointing oil, as follows: "Take thou also unto thee principal spices, of pure myrrh 500 shekels, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, even 250 shekels, and of sweet calamus 250 shekels (v. 24), and of cassia 500 shekels after the shekel of the sanctuary, and of olive oil an hin."

Notice here it reads "principal spices," in contrast to v. 34, same chapter, where it reads "sweet spices" used in the incense or holy perfume. So these principal spices would represent principal things which would go to make up the anointing which we receive to become priests and kings with Christ.

As far as I know the meanings of these spices are in no way significant, but compared with other Bible verses we may see their significance. In Ex. 31:2-5 we have Bezaleel, referred to as the builder of the tabernacle, a type of Christ. His ancestry is typical of the existence of Christ on the various planes he has lived. Bezaleel was son of Uri, he in turn son of Hur, and he in turn a son of Judah. Now Judah means praised; so was Christ praised in his prehuman existence, referring to the glory he possessed with the Father before the world was. Hur, the next offspring, is representative of Christ's humiliation; as the word Hur means grave, so Christ humbled himself even unto death, yea, to the ignominious death of the cross, down into the grave. From there he came forth with the right to life for every human being, and is the Light of the world, as Uri signifies light; and now he is the shadow of the Almighty, the robe of righteousness provided by God for us, as signified in the word Bezaleel, "shadow of the Almighty."

V. 4 says that this Bezaleel could devise cunning works to work in gold (the divine nature) and in silver (the spirit nature--Great Company) and in brass (the perfect human nature), showing Christ can complete work in all the planes of existence. V. 5, And in the cutting of stones (polishing the jewels), to set them

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(as the Father pleases), and in the carving of timber (the fallen race) to make all manner of workmanship (as restitution will produce for the race). This verse shows the present condition of the race and the Church, the unfinished material. Verse 2, referring to this Bezaleel, says, "And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom and in understanding, and in knowledge and in all manner of workmanship." This is the typical anointing of Bezaleel; and the antitypical anointing of Christ recorded in Isa. 11:2 contains the identical component parts as that of Bezaleel, viz.: "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord." The only difference in the two verses is in respect to the terms "counsel and might" and "workmanship," but both embody the same idea, i.e., deputyship and ability, or how to go about a matter and the ability to accomplish the same. These three verses parallel as follows:

EXODUS 30:23 EXODUS 31:3 ISAIAH 11:2
 HOLY ANOINTING OIL BEZALEEL CHRIST

Filled with the Spirit of Lord rest

Olive oil, an hin	Spirit of God.	upon him.
Myrrh, 500	Wisdom	Wisdom
Cinnamon, 250	Understanding	Understanding
Calamus, 250	Knowledge	Knowledge
Cassia, 500	Workmanship	Counsel and might

In the above parallel we find knowledge parallel with calamus and understanding with cinnamon, and of each a like quantity is prescribed, even 250 shekels. So we would also expect in our anointing from above to find our knowledge and understanding equal--that is we would have the understanding of all the knowledge received of God, so that seeing we might discern and hearing we might understand.

For example, we read in the Scriptures that Christ is a corresponding price for our sins. Now, if we fear Jehovah we have that knowledge, for the fear of God is the beginning of knowledge. (Prov. 1:7.) When we see how that Christ became a perfect fleshly man and was an exact counterpart of Adam and gave up his life for Adam's, we see, or understanding tells us, how he is a cover for our sins. So knowledge from God is accompanied by its equal of understanding, and this is how we have become established in the faith. If God gives us knowledge he also gives us a test on that knowledge, and fortifies it with the understanding thereof.

Myrrh, which represents and is parallel with wisdom, is equal in amount with calamus and cinnamon combined, 500 shekels of myrrh and 250 shekels each of calamus and cinnamon. So we find God in the anointing also gives wisdom equal to our knowledge and understanding combined. Wisdom is knowing what to do. To illustrate: Knowledge tells us that God loves his only begotten Son; understanding tells us it was on account of his cheerful obedience even unto death that the Father took such delight in him; wisdom then draws the inference, that if we would also be well pleasing to the Father we must do as Jesus did, follow in his steps, get our minds into the same frame as Jesus had his, for if this mind is not in us which was also in Jesus, we are not pleasing to the Father. Again, the knowledge that Jesus died for our sins brings responsibility, and the understanding of the ransom brings added responsibility, and our responsibility is equal to what we see we ought to do, or our wisdom.

Workmanship may also be translated deputyship, but never means work or labor. It has the two ideas embodied in itself that are expressed in its parallel in Isa. 11:2, viz., counsel and might. Counsel here means advice, or how to do a thing; might here means the ability to perform. Now, cassia, which represents

workmanship or counsel and might, amounted to 500 shekels, the same as myrrh, which represented wisdom, or knowing what to do. So God, after showing us our responsibility or what we should do, accompanies it with an equal amount of advice or information how to do it, and also enough ability to perform what is expected of us. All that is expected of us is to will--a full consecration to the Lord and his service--and all the rest he will supply in knowledge, understanding: knowledge of what we should do and ability and information how to do it. With more than this he cannot anoint us.

This mixture of oil and spices was well ground together, so that each drop of oil contained the four spices in the same proportion as the whole mass; so each drop of anointing we receive that comes down from above has all its constituents in the proper proportion. God gives no knowledge except for a purpose, and establishes our faith by giving the understanding thereof, then shows us what that knowledge is for, by showing us what is expected of us, and also gives us the advice and ability needed for the accomplishment thereof, and we must make active consecration to complete the Lord's will.

Chap. 30, v. 32, in Rotherham's translation reads, "And according to the proportions thereof shall ye not make any like it; holy is it." V. 33, "Whosoever compoundeth any like [according to the proportions thereof] shall be cut off from among his people." This would show us that after the same proportions thereof no other anointing would be allowed. So we might expect many imitation anointing oils, using the same ingredients, but not in the same proportions as the true anointing oil, having knowledge and understanding equal and balanced, and these in turn accompanied by their equal of wisdom and counsel and might. Some imitations may be so close that only God could tell the difference; hence these are false brethren.

In Eccl. 9:10 we read, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do with thy might; for there is no work nor device nor knowledge nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest." The word translated device here is translated reason and account in Eccl. 7, verses 25 and 27, respectively. All three words are closely related to understanding and are the results of understanding. Solomon here uses these four--wisdom, knowledge, device (or understanding) and works (result of workmanship)--to show that the absence of these produces physical death, or is the sign of physical death, and conversely their presence signifies physical life. So if we have been anointed with spiritual wisdom, understanding, knowledge and workmanship, or counsel and might, and are in a state of activity in our consecration,

we will have spiritual wisdom, spiritual knowledge, and our understanding and counsel will give us spiritual device, so we will know how to form character and bring forth spiritual fruits, and our spiritual might received from God will be the power to bring about our spiritual works. If we possess these we will be spiritually alive, and if not we will be dead in trespasses and sins. Paul, in Col. 1:9,10, prays that the saints may be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all spiritual wisdom and spiritual understanding--being fruitful in every good work and walking worthy of the Lord--these very same four again.

These four produce the fruits of the Spirit, therefore they are the principal spices. The odor emanating from such a typically anointed one is symbolical of the fruits of the Spirit we show forth--the more anointing the more fruits; and surely it is desirable to be in the presence of one so antitypically anointed.

The oil being olive illustrates something divine and is representative of the divine power and supervision used in the anointing of the antitypical priesthood. The oil was the means of distributing the spices over the body, and each drop carried the four spices in the same relative proportion as that of the whole mass. So whatever amount of anointing a member in Christ receives from the Head, it has its constituents of knowledge, etc., in their proper relative proportions. The oil may be the Bible, which carries all these four elements of the anointing to us, God's power being used in connection therewith in anointing us.

Hoping I have not wearied or bothered you, dear brother, but not wanting to have it for myself, I considered it my duty to communicate this to you. I have hesitated much in writing to you, but have done as I considered it my duty. Thanking you for all the blessing received from you and asking an interest in your prayers that I may remain in Christ to the end,
Your brother in Christ, M. E. RIEMER--Mo.

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SOME INTERESTING LETTERS

DATE OF NEHEMIAH'S COMMISSION

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--

With reference to first complete paragraph of Vol. II., p. 67, the following facts, culled from "Tregelles on Daniel," regarding Ussher's position in the matter of the date of Nehemiah's commission, may be of interest to WATCH TOWER readers, seeing that he is deservedly considered as an authority on chronology.

"Archbishop Ussher drew up a scheme of chronology which is commonly followed rather for convenience than for absolute accuracy. About a hundred and fifty years ago Bishop Lloyd undertook to affix Ussher's dates to our English Bibles, but in this instance (Nehemiah's commission) he made a considerable alteration, substituting another date of his own, so as to adapt the reign of Artaxerxes to his own theory.

The date which stands in our Bibles for the 20th year of Artaxerxes is B.C. 446. This makes the commencement of his reign B.C. 465; but the date fixed by the best and most nearly contemporary historian will put the matter in a different light. Thucydides mentions that the accession of Artaxerxes had taken place before the flight of Themistocles. This authorizes us to adopt Ussher's date and to place the commencement

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of the reign 473 or 474 B.C. This would give the date of 454 or 455 B.C. as his twentieth year and the date of the commission."

It appears that Archbishop Ussher was the first to establish the date of Nehemiah's commission as 454 B.C. as a result of lecturing on the 70 weeks of Daniel in Trinity College, Dublin, in 1613. Other critics who support the date given in DAWN II. are Vitringe, Kruger and Hengstenberg, as well as Tregelles, above quoted. With much love, I remain,

Yours in the Lord, J. P. BURNS,--England.

"SCRIPTURE STUDIES" AS CHRISTMAS GIFTS

DEAR FRIENDS:--

It might interest you to know that we are already offering the books for "Christmas gifts." We find that many secure their Christmas presents several months ahead, and that this month is the one in which many are very pleased to secure "such a beautiful, appropriate, and above all such a reasonable [in price] gift!" Often we can get orders for several sets in one home, in view of the fact that the books make such splendid gifts. Today we got more than one order on this account. We mention this because we think it might help wonderfully during the next six weeks in securing orders from people who would perhaps not buy for their own use. We say, "Many are taking them for gifts, and it is of course a compliment to a friend's intelligence to give him a book, and especially a work of this kind, and you get the entire three for only 98c!"

With much Christian love and appreciating more and more the great privilege of laboring in the harvest field, we are, Yours in Him,

J. AND L. HUTCHINSON,--Colporteurs.

THE WATCH TOWER BIBLES

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--

I wish to thank you for the copy of the new Bible you have so kindly sent me. It is needless for me to tell you that I am delighted with it, not only because of its elegant binding and compact form (such that it will easily go into the side-pocket of an ordinary coat), but especially because of the extraordinary helps for Bible study that it provides. In the 220 pages of abbreviated DAWN comments there are 11,608 references to the DAWNS and booklets; or, in other words there are that many Scripture explanations utilized. 4793 texts are examined--about one-seventh of the total number in the Bible.

Just here let me say that I have been deeply impressed in gathering and compiling these explanations to note how perfectly they are in accord with each other and with the Word itself. This beautiful harmony of thought and expression speaks very significantly of the fact that the Lord of the Harvest has exercised close supervision of his message. Few works have ever been subjected to such a critical analysis, and nothing but the TRUTH could stand before the word-by-word and clause-by-clause method which was used. It now remains to be seen whether the Truth people, with their sharp eyes, will find that my representation of your works has been as faithful and as accurate as your representation of the Scriptures has been! If they find a whole lot of mistakes I will take refuge in the thought that I did the best I could and that it was a hurried job --only about 1400 hours of labor altogether.

Sister Seibert has done a grand work in the "Epitome of the Faith." The first thing I did when I got the Bible was to read every word of it. I cannot conceive how it could be more complete in plan, orderly in arrangement or concise in statement. I have already made use of it on two occasions with excellent results, and am sure it will be greatly appreciated.

I feel sure this new Bible will have a very rapid sale, as I do not see how any one who is really in the Truth can afford to go without it.

Your brother and servant in Christ,
CLAYTON J. WOODWORTH.

CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--

Being my Pastor in a very special sense to me, and knowing of your deep interest in all who understand, even to a limited degree, the Harvest Message, I am

taking the liberty to write you on a subject that has been on my mind for a long time.

I am sorry, very sorry to say it, but many times I have found, on close acquaintance with the brethren in the Truth, men who professed full consecration, that they neglected their families so very badly relative to the Truth. Seemingly anxious to spread the Truth amongst their friends and neighbors, yet they made no provision for their wives, so that they could attend the meetings, and would even talk before their families in such a way as to leave the impression that maybe the Truth was not for their wives and children.

I confess this is beyond my comprehension--how a man with brains enough to comprehend the Truth, and after reading the six volumes of MILLENNIAL DAWN and the TOWER, could or would do or say such!

A man can leave all the cares of the home and the care of the children to a perhaps not too strong wife, and spend all of his spare time while at home reading; and Sunday morning, instead of helping his wife and encouraging her, just get up and eat, dress and leave, and let her know he expects a hot dinner when he returns from the class, and it is no wonder she cannot go. It certainly doesn't look fair to me. Just nominal Church people do better than that.

From the depths of my heart I pity the man who has the Truth and objects to his children attending the nominal Church Sunday school and makes no effort to teach his children and never has family prayer unless some of the Colporteurs or Elders call on him. These things are so. I wish I could believe otherwise.

Several cases have come to my personal knowledge where the wife was really hungering for fellowship with the class and believed all the Truth she could understand, and whose husband, while himself attending the class every Sunday, was the real cause that hindered her. I feel confident a special, pointed article from your pen would do good to many.

Yours in the service of the King, _____, --Tenn.

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