

page 289

SEMI-MONTHLY
VOL. XXV. OCTOBER 1, 1904. No. 19.

CONTENTS

Sons and Daughters of
 Consolation--Comfort.....291
 Comfort and Comforting Needful.....292
 Comforted and Taught to be
 Comforters.....293
 The Time of Harvest.....296
 "Where is the Promise of His
 Presence?".....297
 "O the Blessedness--the 1335
 Days".....298
 Naaman Healed, Gehazi Smitten.....299
 Our Unseen Guardians.....302

page 290

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

--ADDRESS TO--

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

--OR TO--

BRITISH BRANCH--24 EVERS HOLT ST., LONDON, N.W.
GERMAN BRANCH--MIRKER STR., 45, ELBERFELD.
AUSTRALIAN BRANCH--32 JOHNSTON ST., FITZROY, MELBOURNE.

PRICE \$1.00 (4S.) A YEAR IN ADVANCE, 5c (2-1/2d.) A COPY.
MONEY MAY BE SENT BY EXPRESS, BANK DRAFT, POSTAL ORDER, OR REGISTERED.
FROM FOREIGN COUNTRIES BY FOREIGN MONEY ORDERS, ONLY. SPECIAL
TERMS TO THE LORD'S POOR AS FOLLOWS:--

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

=====

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

=====

THIS JOURNAL IS PUBLISHED IN THE
FRENCH, GERMAN, SWEDISH, DANISH AND ITALIAN LANGUAGES.
SAMPLE COPIES FREE.

=====

INTAGLIO SCRIPTURE TEXT CARDS, ETC.

This year we determined to lay in a large stock of the newest motto and text cards earlier than usual. Four large orders have already come to hand and the fifth is en route. Some of the older styles cannot be surpassed and these we have re-ordered; but the line of new styles of new texts this year is so large that we can send you all new ones, if you so request when ordering. Our facilities for importing these from London (their principal market) is unsurpassed, and our prices are about one-half those usually charged; namely, from 1c to 25c each--according to size, etc. For your convenience we will put these up in packages assorted for \$1.00 and \$2.00, including postage;-- from 15c downward in the \$1.00 packages and from 25c down in the \$2.00 packages. We will also make up some packages containing mottoes at 10c and downward, for 50c, including postage.

GERMAN AND SWEDISH TOWERS can now be supplied regularly.

=====

R3434 : page 291

SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF CONSOLATION---COMFORT.

"Jones, by the Apostles, was surnamed Barnabas; which is, being interpreted, the son of consolation [comfort]"--Acts 4:36.

COMFORT! Consolation! What rest and refreshment and peace and joy these words imply! That the name, "son of consolation," or comfort, should be given to any one of mature years tells a whole volume in itself respecting the general character of the person. We know little about Barnabas, but if this one sentence of holy writ comprised the sum of our knowledge we could not fail to love and appreciate him.

In one sense of the word the Church is spoken of as a mother, Zion, and all the true people of God are thus represented as her children--sons and daughters. Some of these are sons of comfort and daughters of comfort, while others are sons and daughters of pain, continually causing more or less of distress and discomfort to others and to themselves. We want to see this subject in its true light, in order that we may each act accordingly;--that a larger and an increasing number of the children of Zion shall be sons and daughters of comfort to all with whom they come in contact, and thus in a general way comforters to the

Church as a whole. Some may be inclined to query, Does the true Church need comfort? Are not the majority too comfortable already? Do they not rather need to be stirred up, to be reminded of their sins, to be chided and made generally as uncomfortable as possible, to the intent that they may thus be helped onward and upward?

We would not ignore the fact that there are occasions when reproofs and corrections in righteousness are proper, as the Apostle advised. But we have no sympathy at all with the thought so common with some good people; viz., that they should always be feeling miserable with themselves and making other people miserable, by continually nagging and faultfinding upbraiding and terrorizing. We believe that such well meant but mistaken efforts have done much harm, have driven away from the family circle of Zion many who could not, without hypocrisy, claim that they were the vilest of sinners, nor properly appreciate prayers in which they were represented as saying, "Lord, be merciful unto us, miserable sinners!" when they realized divine favor and forgiveness--justification from all things.

Those needing reproof, rebuke, etc., are such as are walking after the flesh and not after the Spirit--in violation of their covenant. Those who should be warned to flee from the wrath to come are such as have never yet fled for refuge to the hope set before them in the Gospel,--such as are without God, and have no hope in the world--no relationship to Christ, through faith and obedience. But the true "wheat," the true members of the body of Christ, the consecrated, are, however imperfectly, continually seeking to walk after the Spirit; though they are well aware that because of imperfections of the flesh they do not and cannot walk up to the spirit. These, instead of needing reproofs and rebukes and smitings and upbraidings for their shortcomings, which they admit and deplore and strive against, need sympathy, assistance, comfort.

Few probably have noticed to what extent the Scriptures administer this very "balm of Gilead" to the true children of Zion; but the Scriptures are full of comfort, and there is great need that all who are truly the Lord's people should see to it that they are more and more sons and daughters of comfort in the Church, administering to one another the helpfulness and encouragement and refreshment which the Lord intended. Our Lord spoke of the holy Spirit as the Comforter, and he mentions himself also as a Comforter, saying, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter." (John 14:16.) To what

R3434 : page 292

extent our Lord Jesus was a Comforter we may judge as we look back to the three and a half years of his

ministry, and at its close hear him say to his faithful ones, "I will not leave you comfortless"--orphans, bereaved of a caretaker. And as respects his care over the apostles while with them, we have a suggestion from his prayer to the Father, "Of those whom thou has given me I have lost none save the son of perdition," as the Scriptures foretold.--John 17:12.

It had been foretold of our Lord in advance through the prophets, that he would be a Comforter, as we read, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because Jehovah hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted;...to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."--Isa. 61:1-3.

All this means that our Lord Jesus was a Comforter in Zion above and beyond all other comforters. He entered into sympathy with the meek and lowly and right-intentioned in all of their weaknesses and trials and difficulties; and this is the hold that the character and words of Jesus have to-day upon our hearts, and also upon the hearts of many who are not his people in the full consecrated sense. It was not by continually chiding the apostles, and accusing them, but because, instead, our Lord sympathized with them, assisted them, and interpreted their heart-intentions liberally, generously, that they became more and more his faithful followers, even unto death. Note the case of the woman taken in sin, and our Lord's failure to make any pharisaical tirade against her. Mark his reproof to those who stood by: "He that is without sin, let him cast the first stone." Mark how, when they were all thus convicted of imperfection in some particular themselves, our Lord said to the woman, "Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more." (John 8:3-11.) Notice his dealing with the Apostle Peter, after he had denied him, cursing and swearing. Many of the Lord's followers, if in his stead, would have felt it their bounden duty to rebuke Peter publicly before all the apostles, and to have required public confession and some sort of penance; and on every possible occasion afterward to have thrown in his face his weakness and disloyalty. Such have not rightly interpreted and copied the Lord's spirit, and hence are not sons and daughters of consolation in the Church. They are, on the contrary, strife-breeders, vexatious hinderers of the work they desire to forward. They should hear the Master's voice, "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me." In proportion as we learn of the Lord we become, not mouthpieces for the Law merely, but mouthpieces specially for mercy and love and helpfulness and comfort.

So far as the record shows, our Lord did not once

mention to Peter either his profanity or his disloyalty. Peter knew about these without being told; he had already wept over them; a mere word from the Lord in chiding, reproof, might have discouraged him,--perhaps hopelessly. The nearest thing to a reproof in our Lord's conduct and language was the inquiry, "Lovest thou me?" Let all who would be true sons and daughters of consolation in Zion learn this lesson from the great Teacher--not to strive to punish and correct and reprove and rebuke; but to avoid these so far as possible, and to inquire, not so much about the past as about the present--What is the offender's present attitude toward the Lord and toward his flock?

COMFORT AND COMFORTING NEEDFUL.

It was with the full appreciation of the fact that the Church would need comfort rather than chiding and reproof that our Lord said, "If I go not away the Comforter [the holy Spirit] cannot come." The ransom must be paid, must be presented in the "Most Holy," to the heavenly Father, before his blessing could be bestowed. That blessing would yield the comfort of the begetting of the Spirit and the comfort of the exceeding great and precious promises to those who had accepted Jesus,--and to those who would believe on him through their word. True, our Lord spoke of the holy Spirit as reproofing--but not as reproving the Church; he said, "He shall reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of a coming judgment." The nearest suggestion to reproof in respect to the holy Spirit's dealing with the Church is that given by the Apostle, when he says, "Grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." And again he says, "Quench not the Spirit."--Eph. 4:30; I Thess. 5:19.

The grand provision made for the comfort of the Lord's people clearly indicates a necessity for such comfort; nor is this necessity difficult to find. The Lord's people are beset on every hand with adverse conditions--the world, the flesh, the adversary--seeking to intimidate or discourage or entrap the new creature, so as to hinder its development in grace, knowledge and love, and ultimately to hinder it from the attainment of the perfection and glory to follow, which God has promised to the faithful only. What we need, in order to make us sons and daughters of consolation in the Church, is a larger measure of love and sympathy in our hearts. In proportion as sympathy and love come in, they will crowd out the spirit of strife and contention and judging and fault-finding; even as they crowded out at first the spirit of the flesh, --anger, malice, hatred, strife, vain-glory.

As a rule (there probably are exceptions to all

rules) those who have the spirit of helpfulness, of comfort, of consolation, and who are able to pour this balm into the wounded hearts of others most liberally, are those who themselves have passed through severe trials, difficulties, disciplines, and who have thus been touched with a feeling of the infirmities of our race, and, more than this, have been touched with a feeling of sympathy for the weaknesses and oppositions which assail the "brethren" in their endeavor to walk after the Spirit--not after the flesh. Those who have not "bowels of compassion," who have little of sympathy, little of desire to lend a helping hand to the weak or the stumbling or those who are out of the way, have much yet to learn respecting the real meaning of the word love, in its higher senses--perfect love, love for the brethren, yea, love that extends to all mankind, even to enemies, as it has opportunity, but "especially to the household of faith."

The holy Spirit comforts the Church in various ways. (1) It comforts us by enabling us to come into such unity with the Truth and with the Lord that we can to a considerable extent see matters not only from the divine standpoint but also can appreciate and feel from the same standpoint. For although the spirit of the Truth is in the Word of Truth, there is, nevertheless, a necessity that the eyes of our understanding should be opened, that we may be enabled to comprehend the Word of Truth; and this double comfort is ours through the possession of the holy Spirit,--in proportion as it abounds and is shed abroad in our hearts. It, of course, abounds and is shed abroad in the Word, but this is not sufficient. It must also be in our hearts a living power. Thus we read of the early Church, "Walking in the fear [reverence] of the Lord, and in the comfort of the holy Spirit."--Acts 9:31.

(2) It comforts us through the Scriptures, and through the promises of God, the Truth--for is it not the spirit of the Truth? The Word of God, as the channel of the Truth, is to comfort us in proportion as the holy Spirit guides us into an understanding of it; as we read, "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning [instruction], that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."--Rom. 15:4.

(3) The Church, the brethren, in proportion as they become imbued with the holy Spirit and with the knowledge of the Truth, which it brings to their appreciation and comprehension, thereby become representatives of the holy Spirit in the Church--comforters. This is the thought of the Apostle when he says, "Now the God of patience and consolation [comfort] grant you to be like-minded one toward another, according to Christ Jesus."--Rom. 15:5.

COMFORTED AND TAUGHT TO BE COMFORTERS.

Reversing the foregoing order, and considering the way in which the brethren are to comfort the Church, we note that it is as the channels of the holy Spirit, and as the mouthpieces of the Word of God. No one is competent to be a comforter unless he already has received comfort from God. So to speak, the Lord's people begin receiving their comfort from the time they accept the assurances of God's Word respecting his love and mercy, as exhibited in Christ Jesus, in that he died for our sins. In their appropriation of this divine favor to themselves by faith, they had their first taste of comfort--peace, joy, blessing. As they then proceeded and learned the way of the Lord more perfectly, the door of access into a still further grace was opened unto them--the grace of invitation to joint-heirship with Christ in the Kingdom, and its glorious work of comforting and uplifting mankind in general. (Rom. 5:2.) And as this door of favor was entered, additional comfort, additional joy, additional peace and blessing were added and understood and appreciated. And then, as the favored ones progressed under the ministries of the Truth, supplied by the holy Spirit, and became more and more able to rightly divide the Word of Truth, and to appreciate the different features of it, in the same proportion their faith grew stronger, and their comforts and joys multiplied through increasing and deepening knowledge of the Lord and of his plan.

Furthermore, as they behold in the glass of the divine Word the glory of the Lord, the reflected light of his glorious character illuminating their hearts and enabling them to comprehend with all saints the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the divine love, it brings still increasing confidence and comfort. And every one of these steps of progress, rightly received, and every additional element of character developed prepares the favored one for the exercise of his privilege of being a comforter to others. True, it was his duty and privilege to begin to comfort others as soon as he received the first elements of comfort himself, and to continue distributing the comforts as they came to him. Indeed, we know both from experience and from the Word that unless he thus made use of the favors and blessings, and showed his appreciation of the grace of God by shining it forth upon others, his light thus being obscured would grow dim and eventually be extinguished. But the point we wish to impress is that ability to be a comforter depends upon growth in grace and knowledge, for none but those who themselves are comforted can dispense this grace to others.

Notice the Apostle's exhortation on this subject, and along the lines just marked out. In his second

letter to the Corinthians (1:3-7), he says, "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulations, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation [comfort] also aboundeth by Christ. And whether we be afflicted it is for your consolation [comfort] and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation [comfort] and salvation. And our hope of you is steadfast, knowing that as ye are partakers of the sufferings so shall ye be also of the consolation [comfort]."

Ten times in these verses does the Apostle use this word "comfort." He evidently had a keen appreciation of how much the Church needed such consolation, and how much the God of all comfort wished to have his faithful ones comforted, and how even the strongest in the Church, the apostles, needed comfort. What better evidence could we ask than that the spirit of comfort and of consolation, which the heavenly Father manifested, which the Lord Jesus manifested, which the apostles manifested and which all the faithful in Christ Jesus are called upon to exercise, is indeed the very Spirit of the Truth, the holy Spirit! Consequently, those who are making greatest progress in this direction, as comforters in Zion, are growing most in grace; and so we may be sure will be best able to grow also in knowledge, and to be helpful to the Church in every sense of the word, and to be used of the Lord as mouthpieces in the ministry of his Truth.

A little further along in the same epistle (7:4-13), the Apostle uses this word, "comfort," seven times, saying, "I am filled with comfort; I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation. For when we came into Macedonia our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears. Nevertheless, God that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus; and not by his coming only, but by the consolation [comfort] wherewith he was comforted of you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoice the more.... Therefore, we were comforted in your comfort." Here we see illustrated, in the Apostle's language, the mutual helpfulness of the Church in this matter of comfort. Titus had a part in it, Paul had a part in it, the Church at Corinth had a part in it--every member possessing the holy Spirit and exercised by it had a share; and the Apostle declares that all this comfort was of God. And he expresses it as though this were God's general disposition, in every such circumstance

of his people, when he speaks of him as "the God of all comfort," and "the God that comforteth them that are cast down." We may safely understand, therefore, that wherever we find one of the Lord's followers, however great his weakness, however much cast down, we have in his case presented to us an opportunity of serving the Lord, of being channels of his mercy, and carrying to the downcast one something of comfort and consolation and helpfulness.

Speaking respecting his own course, the Apostle, in his first letter to the Thessalonians (2:11), gives us a little insight to his methods, and shows us that he neither domineered nor tyrannized over the Church, nor continually harassed, threatened and upbraided them. On the contrary, he says, "Ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you as a [proper] father doth his children." This familiar spirit in the apostles, which enabled them as fathers and as brethren in the Church to comfort and assist, should be a guide now to all who would be servants of the Lord and helpful children of comfort--sons of consolation.

It is those who enter into this real Spirit of God, the real spirit of his Truth, who are thereby proportionately prepared to comprehend the meaning of the prophecies and revelations of the Lord which are hidden to the worldly wise,--hidden to all who have not the spirit of Christ, the spirit of consolation, of helpfulness, of sympathy, of love. Possibly this is one reason why so few of the professed expounders of the Word of God meet with any success in interpreting it; probably this is one reason why so many are in darkness. They have not received the spirit of comfort and love, and therefore cannot appreciate the loving, gracious plan which the Word of God upholds. It probably was not by accident that the Apostle, when stating that we are to "grow in grace and in knowledge," put the grace first.

We have seen what it is to have the comfort of the brethren through the holy Spirit; let us inquire now what it is to have "the comfort of the Scriptures," which we are enabled to comprehend by the possession of the holy spirit of comfort. We note again the prophetic statement of Isaiah (61:1), and that while

R3436 : page 294

this applied primarily to our Lord, the Head of the body, it must, therefore, necessarily also apply to every member of the body of the anointed. The Spirit of the Lord God is upon all the members, coming down to them from the Head, upon whom the holy oil of anointing was poured; and it must be true of every member as of the Head,--"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the good tidings; to bind up the broken-hearted

[not to break hearts, but to heal the broken ones]; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for

R3436 : page 295

ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

As it is not our commission to break men's hearts, even the worldly, hard-hearted ones, but to leave them for the Lord to break through various disciplines and judgments; so likewise it is not appointed unto us to comfort those who do not mourn; nor is it our commission to specially cause mourning that we may comfort it. Our commission is to seek out the meek and the mourning ones, who have appreciated their own shortcomings and weaknesses, and who are looking for refuge and deliverance. It is part of our commission to point them to the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world, to point them to the beauty of the resurrection for the ashes of death, and the glories which the Lord has promised by and by to take the place of the spirit of heaviness and disappointment and sorrow and trouble of this present time. It is our commission to tell such that "Joy cometh in the morning," and to assist them to arise and at once put on the garments of praise, and begin to walk in newness of life, with "a new song in their mouths--even the loving kindness of our God."

It is the wrong thought which some good people get, that the Lord's children in this present time should be gloomy, morose, sad,--mourners for sin. Whoever has heard the Gospel message has cause for rejoicing. When the Lord said, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted," he said it in the Jewish age--under the Law which condemned all imperfection, on account of which, therefore, all who were hungering and thirsting after righteousness and seeking to walk uprightly were necessarily in mourning for their sins, because of their inability to come up to the grand standard of the perfect law of God, and hence their inability to gain everlasting life under the conditions of that Law. The Apostle represented not only himself but all sincere Israelites, groaning under the Law, when he cried out, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this dead body?" (Rom. 7:24.) He was mourning, and the Lord appointed that all the mourners in Zion should be comforted--comforted with the assurance that, while they were sinners and imperfect and could never justify themselves before God under the Law, nevertheless, God himself had found a ransom, had redeemed his people. It is in view of this comforting assurance of the Gospel that the Apostle, after representing himself as the Jew, under the Law, groaning and travailing, and crying for deliverance, in the next breath represents himself as

the Christian who has found the deliverance, and exclaims, "Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" Shall the victors mourn, even though the victory be not entirely their own, but primarily bought with the precious blood of Christ? Nay, verily. We neither sorrow nor mourn, as do others, because of the good hope which is as an anchor to our souls, sure and steadfast--the hope of the mercy of God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord's people, having embraced the Truth, find themselves beset on every hand with oppositions from the Evil One and his servants; and were it not that they have the comfort and consolation of the Scriptures, and the joy and peace which the world can neither give nor take away, theirs would be a sad lot indeed. But under conditions, as the Lord has arranged them, it is their privilege, even while suffering the loss of earthly things for righteousness' sake, to rejoice in tribulation, and in everything give thanks.

What is the secret of this rejoicing in tribulation? Whence comes so great a comfort as this? We answer, it comes through the comfort of the Scriptures, made luminous by the holy Spirit. For instance, take the inspired prophecy respecting Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted, because they are not,--because they are dead. (Jer. 31:15-17.) The Lord's message of comfort to Rachel, and thus to all who have suffered loss through the great penalty of death, is, "Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears; for thy little ones shall come again from the land of the enemy." Does this speak peace and comfort to the wounded heart of the parent, thinking of his child that is dead? Yes, verily; it brings a consolation, a comfort, with which no error can compare. There are, indeed, various delusive fancies which picture themselves before the minds of the bereaved, in which they fain would trust and hope; but they are weak, they are intangible, they have no foundation in the Word of God. Hence they cannot give real rest or peace in such a time of trial.

But when we hear the voice of the Lord assuring us of the resurrection, assuring us that the grave is indeed the land of the enemy, assuring us,--not that our little ones are more alive than ever, but that, having gone to the land of the enemy, they are secure, because Jesus has prevailed, has bought the world with his own precious blood. Jesus has "the keys of death and of the grave," as he declares (Rev. 1:18), and will shortly open and bring forth all the captive prisoners of death from the prison-house, the tomb. There is a comfort, a consolation, in this message, which can be applied with profit to every heart bleeding under such wounds.

All "the comfort of the Scriptures" is along this line. They show us that the present reign of sin and death is not to be an everlasting one; that a new dispensation

is to be ushered in as the result of the great Redeemer's sacrifice, and that in this new dispensation a blessing shall come to all the families of the earth, and a special blessing to the Church. Favored now

R3436 : page 296

with a knowledge of the Lord, the faithful of this time shall be made heirs with Jesus in the great Kingdom work of blessing the world. Unquestionably this is a comforting assurance, not only for those who are striving to attain to the great prize of our high calling, but also for them in respect to those--their friends and neighbors--who shall be lifted up and blessed under that Millennial Kingdom.

It is of this deliverance that the Apostle speaks, saying, that the Lord's people should not sorrow as others who have no hope, because if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, let us believe also the record of the Scriptures, that his death was a sacrifice on our behalf, and on behalf of the sins of the whole world,--so that them which sleep in Jesus will God bring from the dead by and through him. (I Thess. 4:13,14.) What a blessed, comforting thought it is that the whole world of mankind, which went down into death in Adam, has been bought, so that the death penalty shall be repealed, and thus their death be turned into a sleep, from which all shall be awakened in the Millennial morning, to have an opportunity to learn of the goodness of God, and, if they will, to accept of his favor unto eternal life, by obedience.

Finally, we notice that the Apostle implies, in some of his statements, that the comfort and peace of the Church are dependent largely upon unity of the Spirit of the Lord in the various members: and that we from experience should note that this is the case. He says, "Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you." (2 Cor. 13:11.) And again (Phil. 2:1,2), "If there be any consolation [comfort] in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." What exhortations these are to unity, peace, brotherly kindness! How they suggest to us patience, forbearance, gentleness, helpfulness and comfort one toward another in the Church; that thus the Spirit of the Lord may abound in all, that each may make the greatest possible progress in the right way. Dear brethren and sisters, let us more and more be worthy of the name Barnabas--Comforter of the brethren. Let us have the holy Spirit abounding in us more and more, for this is the Lord's good pleasure; that with it dwelling in us richly we may be all sons and daughters of comfort in Zion, representatives of our Father, and channels

of the holy Spirit, as well as of the Truth.

=====

R3436 : page 296

THE TIME OF HARVEST.

AUTHOR of MILLENNIAL DAWN and Editor of ZION'S WATCH TOWER:--

Dear Sir,--Since you have changed your views respecting Gentile Times let me suggest the possibility of still another error. You count the seventy years Babylonian captivity of the Jews as beginning with the overthrow of Zedekiah, Judah's last king, but I notice that "Bishop Usher's Chronology," given in the margins of our Common Version Bibles and based on "Ptolemy's Canon," begins that seventy-year period nineteen years earlier--namely, in the first year of Nebuchadnezzar, when he took captive Daniel and other prominent Jews and laid the Jews' country under tribute. Now if this, the common reckoning, be correct, it would make the Times of the Gentiles to begin nineteen years later than you estimate, namely, in B.C. 587, instead of B.C. 606;--and this in turn would make those times end nineteen years later than you have reckoned,--in October, A.D. 1933, instead of October, 1914. What do you say to this? Are you humble enough to acknowledge that I have struck some new light, and that you and all DAWN readers have been "all wrong," walking in darkness?

* * *

R3437 : page 296

We reply that there are too many ifs in the proposition, and that they are all abundantly contradicted by facts and Scripture, and are therefore not worthy the slightest consideration.

(1) The brother errs in supposing that we have changed our view of "Gentile Times." Those "times" or years are 2520, with a definite beginning in B.C. 606, and a definite ending, A.D. 1914. We know of no reason for changing a figure: to do so would spoil the harmonies and parallels so conspicuous between the Jewish and Gospel ages. The only "change" in view is that the anarchy to follow the ending of those "times" will not shorten them; and that the forty years "harvest" of the Church will be complete and not be interfered with by the world-wide anarchy to follow it. This, as we have shown, makes the parallel with the Jewish age still more accurate; for the Jewish harvest of forty years ended in A.D. 69--prior to the complete anarchy amongst the Jews which came

the year following.

The brother seems to further misunderstand us to teach that no great trouble will come before October, 1914 A.D. This is incorrect: we expect the great trouble of Rev. 13:15-17 before that date; but it will not be the world's trouble, the anarchy which will cause the "earth," society, to melt with fervent heat. It will be a trouble peculiar to the Lord's consecrated ones. In the past these two distinctly separate troubles were less clearly discerned than now. And this is just what we should expect--that the light shining more and more unto the perfect day would not be contradictory, but establish and clarify the truths already shown us, including the times and seasons.--Dan. 12:4,10; I Thes. 5:1-4.

THE ERROR LONG SINCE EXPOSED.

(2) In MILLENNIAL DAWN, Vol. II., pp. 36,37, we were careful to note the unreliability of all ancient histories, and, after quoting various authorities conceding this, we added, last paragraph:--

"The Bible, our God-provided history of the first three thousand years, is the only work in the

R3437 : page 297

world which--beginning with Adam, the first man mentioned in history, monument or inscription, whose name, the time of whose creation and death, are recorded, and from whom his descendants can be traced by name and age in successive links for nearly four thousand years--furnishes us a clear and connected history down to a period where secular history is well authenticated. As we shall see, the Bible record extends to the first year of Cyrus, B.C. 536, a well-established and generally accepted date. There the thread of Bible chronology is dropped--at a point where secular history is reliable. God has thus provided for his children a clear and connected record down to the present time....The Bible, therefore, is the chart of all history. Without it, as has been truly said, history would be like rivers flowing from unknown sources to unknown seas."

On page 52 of the same volume we said: "Usher dates the seventy years' desolation eighteen years earlier than is shown above--that is, before the dethronement of Zedekiah, Judah's last king--because the king of Babylon took many of the people captive at that time. (2 Chron. 36:9,10,21; 2 Kings 24:8-16.) He evidently makes the not uncommon mistake of regarding those seventy years as the period of captivity, whereas the Lord expressly declares them to be seventy years of desolation of the land, that the land should lie 'desolate, without an inhabitant.' (Dan. 9:2; Jer. 26:9.) Such was not the case prior to Zedekiah's

dethronement. (2 Kings 24:14.) But the desolation which followed Zedekiah's overthrow was complete; for, though some of the poor of the land were left to be vine dressers and husbandmen (2 Kings 25:12), shortly even these--'all people, both small and great'--fled to Egypt for fear of the Chaldees. (Verse 26.) There can be no doubt here; and therefore in reckoning the time to the desolation of the land, all periods up to the close of Zedekiah's reign should be counted in, as we have done."

From the foregoing it is evident that at the time of writing DAWN II. we were fully aware that "Ptolemy's Canon" and "Usher's Chronology" cut short the "seventy years" "desolation of the land," and counted them as but fifty-one years, Usher endeavoring to make the Bible account agree with "Ptolemy's Canon." We, however, have followed the Bible record exactly and persistently, and took secular history only where Bible history ended. We cannot make seventy years' desolation of the land into fifty-one years' desolation for the sake of harmony with Ptolemy. (Dan. 9:2; 2 Chron. 36:21.) Indeed we reject all of Ptolemy's Canon back of the first year of Cyrus, 536 A.D.--the farther back it goes, the greater its errors.

"WHERE IS THE PROMISE OF HIS PRESENCE?"
(2 PETER 3:4.)

(3) Note the confusion that would result all along the line from the one change above suggested. It would extend the Jubilee antitype nineteen years, making the Lord's presence and "times of restitution" not due in any sense until A.D. 1874 plus 19--1893 A.D. On the contrary, it would shorten the Jewish age nineteen years, and thus, according to the parallels (MILLENNIAL DAWN, Vol. II., Chap. vii.), would shorten the Gospel age also, and show the harvest as due (19 plus 19) 38 years before October, 1874,--that is to say, it would involve the idea of the Gospel "harvest" beginning 1836 A.D. and ending 40 years later, in 1876 A.D. And this would involve the thought of the Lord's presence in A.D. 1836, instead of 1874, the gathering of the sleeping saints in 1840, instead of 1878, and the end of the harvesting of the "wheat" in 1876, instead of 1914 A.D., as the time when the burning of the "tares" in the world's "time of trouble" would have been due.

All this confusion would result from an abandonment of the Bible narrative in favor of Ptolemy's Canon. Let those who want the darkness take it. Let those of us who have had our eyes of understanding opened rejoice in the true light more and more. As we have already seen, the "harvest" is a time for winnowing the "wheat"--a sifting, a separating time, and it is for each of us to prove our characters: "Having done all, stand!"

The tests of this "harvest" must be like those of the Jewish or typical "harvest". One of them is the cross, another is the presence of Christ, another is humility, another is love. The Jews were reprov'd because they "knew not the time of their visitation." (Luke 19:44.) The matter is doubly distressing for those who have once seen the light of present Truth, and afterward go into the "outer darkness" of the world. It implies unfaithfulness. "If the light that is in thee be (come) darkness, how great is that darkness."--Matt. 6:23.

Remember, dear brother, our Lord's words in the context: "If thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness." An "evil eye" represents a mind perverted by anger, malice, hatred, envy, strife, ambition, etc. Such a mind's eye is sure to mislead the judgment which seeks to be guided by it. Those who have such an "eye" never would be drawn to the Truth. But some drawn to the Truth with a true eye --a true, honest, guileless heart--may become perverted through the cultivation of a wrong spirit, through selfishness, ambition or what not, and lose the true eye and soon lose the beautiful vision which enchanted them previously. The Lord explains the philosophy of the thing in the words, "Light was sown for the righteous, Truth for the upright in heart."

HOW TO TEST THESE THINGS.

First of all, go to the Lord in prayer, desirous of

R3437 : page 298

knowing the Truth. Ask for the pure heart, for humility, for the wisdom which cometh from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. (Jas. 3:17.) Next take up your DAWNS--the medium through which God has already blessed your study of his Word--with the Scriptures, and afresh prove all its teachings. In such an attitude of study we feel sure that you will be more firmly convinced than ever that the Lord's providence has specially guided in the preparation of those books for the present time--for the Israelites indeed, in whom is no guile.

Coming to Chapter vii. of Vol.II., on the "The Parallel Dispensations," you will find it one of the most convincing proofs of the whole presentation. This is one of the tenfold cords of evidence which your suggested change, or any change whatever, would render useless, nonsensical.

Turn to page 232 of DAWN II. There you will see the reckoning showing the period of Israel's history from the death of Jacob to the death of Christ to be 1845 years. You will perceive that the seventy

years' desolation are counted in the calculation. But if we were to accept "your theory," or rather the common theory built upon Ptolemy's and Usher's chronology, it would reduce this 19 years, and instead of 70 make it 51 years' desolation. This would reduce the result so that the entire length of Israel's history, being 1845 years, would be 19 years less, namely, 1826 years from Jacob's death to Christ's death in A.D. 32, where their "house" was left desolate, and forty days later at Pentecost, when the "house of sons" was instituted.

Now, then, notice that if the Jewish age was a type or pattern of the Gospel age the latter would be 1826 years long (1845 less 19) to the point corresponding to Christ's death, the point where Israel's "Mishneh" began to count, as pointed out by the Prophet, "Even today do I declare I will render double unto thee"--that "day" being clearly marked by the prophecy of the riding on the ass and the "shout." Now count 1826 years since A.D. 32 to find the Gospel age parallel. It would be 1858 A.D. What occurred then to correspond to the rejection of nominal Israel? Nothing!

Three and a half years prior (1854) would in this calculation correspond to or be the parallel to the beginning of our Lord's ministry, and should here represent the Lord's presence and the harvesting time for

R3438 : page 298

gathering the elect "wheat" into the "barn." What occurred in 1854 to meet these requirements of the parallels? Nothing!

Forty years from the beginning of our Lord's ministry saw the full end of the Jewish harvest in A.D. 69--followed by anarchy and destruction in A.D. 70. So the parallels demand that forty years from the beginning of the harvest and parousia here, the Gospel age should be fulfilled and the "wrath" be poured upon the nations. This would in this argument be 40 years from 1854, namely in 1894 A.D. What occurred at or before or since that date that would parallel the awful calamities that befel natural Israel, and what evidence is there that "the harvest is past, the summer ended and we are not saved?" None whatever!

On the contrary, how grandly all the prophetic periods agree with these parallels, and how irresistible is their "voice" to those who have "ears to hear." Frequent restudies of these testimonies of the Lord's Word will be profitable to us all; and none is grander, more faith-inspiring, more convincing than this Chapter vii. of Vol. II. on Parallel Dispensations. At best, as the Scriptures declare, we are leaky vessels, and the multitudes of cares of this life tend to crowd out the "Wonderful Words of Life" to such an extent

that many on re-reading declare that they received as great, if not greater blessing than the first time. The DAWNS are merely the Scriptures in rearrangement, with connecting comments; and hence it is no wonder that some write to us that they have read them as much as a dozen times and appreciated their lessons more each time. God's Word is new every morning and fresh every evening to those whose hearts are attuned to it, in the song of Moses and the Lamb.

"OH, THE BLESSEDNESS--THE 1335 DAYS."

A move of nineteen years, as the brother suggests above--or for that matter a change of even one year--would affect all the time prophecies of Vol. III. of the DAWN. The 1260 days, the 1290 days, the 1335 days, the 2300 days of Daniel, would all be thrown out of gear, out of the beautiful relationship shown in the Parallel Dispensations.

We all remember how we were thrilled when first studying we found that the parallels of dispensation showed that our Lord was due to be present in October, 1874, as the exact parallel of the beginning of his ministry and the "harvest" of the Jewish age; and how this thrill was intensified when we found the same date exactly marked by the Jubilee type; and how we almost shouted for joy when we found that Daniel's "1335 days" ended at precisely the same date; and, finally, how we repeated over and over the Prophet's words, "Oh, the blessedness of him that waiteth and cometh unto the 1335 days."

What a blessedness indeed! As the Apostle intimated it would be, so we have found it, "Times of refreshing!" Take away these parallels, disjoint this testimony by changing any part of the chronology, and you have a still mightier work before you;--the

R3438 : page 299

work of accounting for the rich spiritual food the Lord has been supplying to us since October, 1874--since the time of his presence, and in full accord with his promise that he would gird himself and become the servant of his true ones at his second presence and serve them "meat in due season," sending it at the hands of his faithful servants. We have dealt with this subject at greater length than it may seem to deserve, believing that it may stimulate some to follow the Apostle's exhortation, "Let us give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest we let them slip."--Heb. 2:1.

=====

R3438 : page 299

NAAMAN HEALED, GEHAZI SMITTEN.

--2 KINGS 5:1-14.--OCT. 23.--

Golden Text:--"Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved."--Jer. 17:14.

THE KINGDOM of Syria bordered the land of Israel on the north and east, and at the time of our lesson was quite influential amongst the nations of the earth. Sometimes it was in conflict with Israel, while at other times these two and other nations combined in their opposition to the Assyrian empire, a still more influential neighbor farther east. Naaman was the general in chief of Syria, noted for his personal ability as a soldier, and especially recognized by the King of Syria because at his hand the Lord had granted deliverance to Syria and Israel in combination against Shalmaneser II.

Naaman's victory is credited by this verse to Jehovah. (Jehovah is the original word wherever "Lord" is spelled in small capital letters throughout the common version of the Old Testament). We are not to gather from this that God has supervision of every war and every battle of earth, and that those who win have his favor and those who lose his disfavor. The Lord's favors were with the one particular nation, Israel, from the time of their adoption as the children of Abraham down to the time that, in our Lord's words, their house was left unto them desolate--divine favor withdrawn from them. The Scriptures, however, explain to us that the Lord did interfere with the affairs of outside nations to some extent--to use them as servants or tools for the accomplishment of his purposes. For instance, we are particularly informed in the Scriptures that on several occasions the Lord brought nations against Israel for the chastisement of his peculiar people, leading them captive into foreign lands, etc., as in the Babylonian captivity.

These interferences on the Lord's part were not by way of bringing salvation or the Gospel message to the heathen lands, but merely part and parcel of his dealings with Israel--the preparing of Israel to be his peculiar people, to be ready for the coming of Messiah. Again we see from the Scriptures that the Lord, while granting a certain lease of dominion to the kingdoms of this world, in the interim between the overthrow of the typical kingdom of Israel and the time for the establishment of the antitypical kingdom of spiritual Israel under the headship of Christ in Millennial glory, has, nevertheless, had a general supervision and figuratively has held operations under control--"Thus far shalt thou go but no farther"--the remainder will he restrain. When the Lord's time shall come for a full interference with the rule of this world, for the full putting down of all antagonistic authority and for the enforcement of righteousness in the world, it will be on a very different scale from anything that has ever yet transpired: Messiah, clothed with all power and authority,

and having associated with him the overcomers of this Gospel age, will be the great King who, as Jehovah's Vicegerent, shall rule the nations with a rod of iron, laying righteousness to the line and justice to the plummet.

THE LITTLE BOND-MAID.

On the occasion of one of the conflicts between Syria and Israel, the Syrians, being successful, carried away some spoil and loot, including young Israelites, who thus became bond-servants to the Syrians. One of these, a maid, became a servant in the home of Naaman, Syria's greatest general. Seeing him afflicted with leprosy--an incurable disease then as now--she suggested that in Israel was a great Prophet of God, Elisha, of whom she had heard wonderful things, miracles, and who she was sure could heal her master, Naaman. We are not informed how serious Naaman's ailment was, but we do know that lepers, even under unfavorable conditions, often live long,--they have been known to live as long as forty-five years under the affliction. It is a repulsive disease, a wasting away or rotting of the part affected, an eating of the flesh, somewhat like a cancer, yet it is not generally painful until in the latter stages. It was just such a disease as a man of ability and activity like Naaman would be specially anxious to get rid of. His grasping at the suggestion of a little girl was possibly of the Lord's oversight, for ordinarily a man of his ability would pay little heed to such a suggestion of miraculous power in a neighboring country less in extent and influence than his own. Naaman evidently brought the matter to the attention of the king, who quite enthusiastically grasped the hope for the recovery of his favorite general. So a royal letter was written to the king of Israel, saying, "Now, when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have herewith sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy." We are to remember that the King of Israel, while professedly making some acknowledgment of Jehovah, was really an idolator, fostering in the kingdom false worship such as the Lord had not commanded. We are to remember that under these conditions he had no dealings with, and we may say scarcely any knowledge of, the Prophet Elisha, who made his home in the capital city of Samaria.

When King Jehoram read the letter he saw that it was expected of him that a miracle should be performed,

R3438 : page 300

and, rending his garments as an indication of despairing trouble, he declared that the King of Syria was merely making a pretext of this letter, seeking another occasion for war and to invade Jehoram's weaker dominions, to carry off more spoils and captives.

The news of this incident spread throughout the city, but possibly aside from this Elisha had a divine revelation respecting the status of the matter. Evidently conscious

of God's power with him for such an emergency--perhaps directly instructed to this effect--Elisha sent word to the king, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothing?--wherefore be in despair? Let the Syrian stranger come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet of the Lord in Israel. King Jehoram was glad in such an emergency to direct General Naaman to the Prophet, and doubtless did

R3439 : page 300

so with many assurances that the healing of lepers was not in the power of kings or princes or ordinary beings; but here was the man the little captive maid had evidently referred to, and that he wished for Naaman the best results. So General Naaman's cortege of horses and chariots drove over to the door of Elisha's house and there received a message from the Prophet, "Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean of thy leprosy."

We cannot wonder that Naaman was angry and indignant that a person of his rank should thus be lightly dismissed. It would be just like any worldly-minded person to be indignant under such circumstances: it requires the grace of humility to accept slights and indignities without appearing to notice them. We feel sure that it would not be the Lord's will that we, as his followers, should in any sense of the word duplicate or copy the manner Elisha displayed on this occasion. On the contrary, the very essence of Christian grace is declared to be love, which is kind, long suffering, patient, gentle, and which renders honor to those to whom honor is due, etc. The better the Lord's people can keep this in mind as a rule for daily life the larger generally will be their success in serving the Truth. Meekness, gentleness, patience, kindness, are all elements of Christian character, and must be cultivated if we would by present experiences be made fit for the heavenly Kingdom.

We are not in this criticising Elisha and his course, for Elisha was not a Christian, having lived several centuries before the great Head came, before the redemptive work was accomplished, before the new and living way was opened up for us to walk in his steps. Elisha, as a Prophet, occupied a special position, and we do not know but that his conduct in this case was specially directed of the Lord and was particularly wise and suited to the conditions. Naaman did not comprehend that in calling upon Elisha he was really calling upon God, of whom Elisha was merely the servant. It was appropriate, therefore, that Naaman should learn the lesson, and he probably did learn it by the experiences referred to. In fact Elisha's course declared, "I am greater than you, because while you are the servant of the king of Syria, I am a servant of the King of kings, the Almighty; while, therefore, in harmony with my King's wishes, I shall grant the boon requested, I will do it in such a manner that you shall learn the lesson that you receive it as a favor and not,

as you expect, in exchange for the expensive presents and rewards which you have brought with you."

As a general we might suppose that Naaman had considerable combativeness, and it manifested itself in his indignation at Elisha's course. To his companions and servants he expressed that indignation, declaring that he need not have come on a long journey to be told to go and wash himself, and that anyway the rivers of Syria were superior in sparkling purity to the Jordan. The latter was true, for the river Abana is noted for its crystalline, pellucid purity. Of its waters a writer says: "The Abana is no doubt the modern Barrada, the river to which the delightful oasis of Damascus owes its beauty and very existence; the Greeks called it the 'Golden Flowing.' It has the clearest waters possible, and singularly bright in color; in the morning a full, deep, emerald green, in the evening a sapphire blue. It was impossible not to think of the two jewels, so exactly did it resemble their clear gem-like lines at times."

The offended Naaman offered none of the presents he had brought for the Prophet, but indignantly started with his chariots homeward. Naaman's servants were able to take a calmer and more deliberate view of the situation than himself, because not so acutely interested. To them it seemed as though the Prophet had indeed exercised a great deal of dignity, as though he were the servant of a very great king indeed; to them this seemed all the more to support his claim of ability to heal the disease. Doubtless they reasoned, too, that the Prophet's home was not an extravagant one and he evidently was not greedy of filthy lucre, and asked no compensation for the receipt given. As the chariots rode homeward these matters were discussed, and Naaman greatly cooled off and began to take the more reasonable view of the situation, and was finally persuaded that while they had to pass the river Jordan anyway in the homeward journey he would follow the Prophet's directions, which could do no harm if they did no good. He did this, dipping himself seven times as directed, and with the seventh dip his flesh was healed of the leprosy, and his flesh and skin not only became healthy but fresh as that of a child--better than ever before. He was clean, his leprosy was gone.

LEPROSY A SYMBOL OF SIN.

Leprosy is used in the Scriptures to symbolize sin, and was sometimes inflicted by the Lord as a punishment for sin, as, for instance, in the case of Miriam, Moses' sister, who was smitten with leprosy because of her improper attitude and disrespectful language to and about her brother Moses, in answer to whose prayer she was healed. Sin is an incurable disease, and therefore well represented by leprosy; like leprosy it doth eat like a canker and all having it are "unclean." There are many suggestions as to how sin can be gotten rid of: there are philosophies which deny its existence, others which tell us

that a moral life atones for sin. But these various philosophies, theories, suggestions, resemble the waters of Syria, which Naaman well knew could not make him clean, could not restore his health. The Word of God has pointed out to us the only cure for this malady of sin, the only channel through which forgiveness can be had--"There is none other name under heaven given amongst men whereby we must be saved, but by the name of Jesus." However man may philosophize about the matter, sin is undeniable and its cure impossible except as the Lord will grant relief.

Another thought in connection with this: the likeness of the healing of Naaman's leprosy to the healing of sin is that the former required seven dippings into Jordan. We may well presume that each time Naaman dipped himself he looked for results, to see whether or not the leprosy was departing; but we may be sure there were no results until the seventh dip, and had he desisted with the fifth or sixth, saying, "It is useless, there is no improvement manifest," he would have failed of the blessing. The seven may well represent to us perfection: not that we are to either believe into Jesus seven times, not to be converted seven times, nor to consecrate ourselves by baptism into death seven times; but that as seven represents perfection,

R3439 : page 301

the thought would be that our belief must be perfect or complete, our obedience must be perfect or complete, our baptism into death in Christ must be perfect or complete, otherwise there is no remission of sins, otherwise we would fail to get the blessings desired and promised. Let us impress this upon our hearts and minds and upon all with whom we have influence--that half-hearted consecration and obedience are not what the Lord is pleased to honor and to bless.

Several things connected with Naaman's experiences show us that the Lord's blessing of healing was conferred upon a man of naturally noble traits. First amongst these was the fact that his wife's maid, a servant, was interested in him and solicitous for his welfare. The love of the young, the innocent, the pure, is not always a sure test of character; but it should be given its weight when thinking of persons of whom we have not the fullest knowledge. Secondly, when Naaman found that his disease was gone he might have said to himself, "Well, I have received a great blessing and I have gotten it cheaply. If the Prophet had come down to me in a courteous manner and assured me of these results, or proffered to come with me, I fully intended that he should have a liberal gift, if not all the rich treasures which I have brought with me; but now, seeing that he did not put himself about so much as to come down to my chariot, I certainly need not put myself about to return many miles to Samaria and proffer him a gift. Perhaps, indeed, he would refuse it. I will go upon my journey and keep the stuff." Such a course would

have shown us that Naaman was not a noble man, however successful he had been in winning the confidence of his king, and however much the Lord had used him in delivering Syria and Israel from the power of the Assyrians. Noble minds are not seeking selfishly to get all they can of this present life and give as little as possible to others. The truly great take pleasure in being just, yea in being generous. We may be sure that a generous heart is appreciated in the Lord's sight as well as in the estimation of truly noble men and women. In proportion as we see this let us each watch his own heart and mind and conduct, that each may thus bring himself nearer and nearer to the noble standard which the Lord and the best of his children approve.

We remember that during our Lord's ministry ten lepers cried to him as he passed, "Have mercy upon us, thou Son of David." They by this expression acknowledged him as the Messiah, the Root and Offspring of David, and they desired of the Lord healing from leprosy--very much Naaman's situation, only that in the former case most of them were Jews. We remember that the Lord sent them on a journey during which they were all healed, but that only one of them returned to give thanks, to acknowledge his blessing. Our Lord commented on the fact and seemed to be deeply grieved with the ingratitude of the nine, and even pointed out that the one who did return and praise the Lord was not a Jew but a Samaritan--not an heir with Israel in the promises, but one of those outside the covenant favors of the Lord. Similarly Naaman was outside the covenant promises, a fact which is mentioned in the New Testament also as an evidence of God's mercy. We are told that there were many lepers in Israel at the same time that this noble Syrian was, by the Lord's favor, healed.

Let us, dear friends, see to it, being Israelites indeed, "heirs according to the promise," and having received of the Lord healing, forgiveness and blessing, that we are full of thankfulness, full of gratitude, and that we

R3440 : page 301

spare no pains to express this, and that we do not seek to have it at no cost to ourselves, but rejoice to be able to render unto the Lord a fruit of his blessing and mercy and thank-offering--even as Naaman desired to do on this occasion, returning to Samaria to the Prophet and tendering him the gifts that he brought for the purpose. They were consecrated beforehand when he was hoping for blessing. Would he, after receiving the blessing, withhold any part? To have done so would have proven him unworthy of the blessing. Similarly the Lord's people, fleeing from sin and desiring forgiveness, reconciliation, etc., are generally disposed to make full consecration of everything to the Lord; but after receiving of his grace, if they attempt to keep back any or all of the consecrated earthly things, how would their course appear to the Lord and to all who had

his light and the spirit of Truth. Let us each measure our own hearts by this rule.

The silver and gold taken by Naaman as a present is estimated to have been the equivalent of \$77,540.00, and additionally ten costly or state-occasion robes of considerable value. This was not considered too large a gift for the object desired and for the station or rank of the giver. The gift was proffered to Elisha with the words, "Behold, now I know there is no God in all the earth but in Israel: now, therefore, I pray thee, take a present of thy servant." But Elisha answered, "As the Lord liveth, before whom I stand, I will receive none. And he urged him to take it; but he refused." Had Elisha accepted the money he doubtless could have used it in connection with his mission as the Lord's Prophet, or amongst the poor of Israel; nevertheless he evidently did better in refusing it. Thus also it is with those servants of the Lord who give of their time and talents to his service. It cannot be said that it would be wrong of them to receive compensation, salary: it could not be said that as servants of the Lord they were worthy of no compensation; yet we believe that as a rule the Lord will be more glorified if those serving him were more particular to keep the ministries of the Truth entirely separate and distinct from all mercenary considerations. The Lord, who owns all the gold and silver and the cattle on a thousand hills, is able to provide for his work and for all of his servants, and we believe that he is more honored in their looking to him and trusting in his providences than in accepting anything in the nature of pay for the dispensing of his grace.

Naaman's acknowledgment of the God of Israel as the only true God was evidently not merely bombast, for forthwith he requested enough of the consecrated soil of Palestine for the building of an altar to the Lord, that he thus might in Syria present an offering on consecrated earth. Moreover, his mind had grasped the situation that now as a follower of the Lord, whose understanding had been opened, he could no longer with propriety do the things formerly done by him in false worship in association with his king. He inquired of the Prophet how the Lord would regard it if he went with the king of Syria into the Temple of Syria's heathen god, Rimmon, the king leaning on his shoulder, and he be expected to bow himself with the king; --would the Lord pardon such conduct on his part or must he take still more decided grounds, utterly refusing to accompany the king?

The intimation seems to be given through the Prophet that Naaman would be justified in taking the usual course, as formerly, while in his own heart he would be serving the Lord and offering worship to him only. The point at issue seems to be that Naaman was not in all this an Israelite but still a Syrian--still a stranger to the covenant and promises of Israel, still without God and having no hope in the world. He might, therefore, do things with the king that would have been improper for an Israelite to have done, because the latter was under special

covenant relationship to the Lord. We are here reminded of Cornelius, the first Gentile convert, mentioned in Acts 10. He was a man who feared God, gave much alms, sought to live righteously, soberly, and still--not being a Jew--he was an alien and a stranger so far as the covenant of Israel was concerned, as he could not be received into fellowship with the Lord until after the atonement sacrifice, until the end of the "seventy weeks" favor upon Israel, and even then only by hearing and believing the "words" of life and being begotten of the Spirit: so Naaman the Syrian, not living in so favored a time, could not be received at all into covenant relationship.

The noble conduct of this man, his candor, his apparent willingness to sacrifice everything for the Lord, puts to shame the course of many who by God's grace have become "Israelites indeed" and have been adopted into the divine family as sons. Many of them have very much less conscience on such subjects--many are much less careful about sailing under false colors, misrepresenting the Lord and the Truth. Many, for the sake of earthly fame or position or present prosperity, are willing to sacrifice practically everything. Let us, dear readers, see to it that we place the Lord first in all our calculations, and that if we acknowledge and admire such honesty and sincerity in the heathen general, Naaman, much more should we find it in our own hearts, in our own conduct, and much more should the Lord expect of us in the way of obedience even unto death, obedience to right, to principle, to truth, to Him.

GEHAZI'S DUPLICITY PUNISHED.

On the other hand note the ignoble Gehazi, Elisha's servant, who though a witness to God's power through the Prophet had not been really and truly blessed by a proper character development. His heart was full of selfishness, and he grieved that the presents had not been received. He hastened after Naaman's chariot, and, by misrepresentations and lies in his master's name, received presents of considerable value--but he received more. The Prophet of the Lord, discerning the entire matter, pronounced against him as a penalty for his wrong course the leprosy of Naaman. So, we are sorry to say, there are some in daily contact with the Truth and with the Lord's consecrated servants who do not partake of the spirit of the Truth, nor of the spirit of the servants,--in whom selfishness is the ruling passion and who will, therefore, eventually not only fail to receive the great blessings, such as came to Naaman, but additionally will receive the divine disfavor, the second death.

Our Golden Text is not particularly related to the lesson, but, nevertheless, is very appropriate in connection with some of the inferences we have drawn from it. Those

afflicted with the moral leprosy, sin, are here represented as calling to the Lord for the necessary healing, for the necessary salvation. The Lord heard our calling before we uttered it. Before we were born, yea, before the foundation of the world he had prepared an answer for our crying; he had prepared to answer the cry of all those who truly seek through him release from sin and its penalty, for Christ Jesus our Lord is declared to have been the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world. Our salvation begins in the moment of our full acceptance of the forgiveness, but it continues through the remainder of the present life and will be completed with our participation in the glorious resurrection of the Millennial morning. Whoever, meantime, goes back voluntarily to sin, to "wallowing in the mire," or whoever meantime rejects the great Mediator, the only avenue of salvation, loses all --for there is no other name given under heaven or amongst men whereby we must be saved, no other way than by hearkening to his voice, his Word.

=====

R3440 : page 302

OUR UNSEEN GUARDIANS.

--2 KINGS 6:8-23.--OCTOBER 30.--

Golden Text:--"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them."--Psa. 34:7.

OUR LESSON is based upon a miracle which the Lord wrought through Elisha the Prophet. As already noted, the kingdom of Syria lay to the north and east of the kingdom of Israel, and the two were not separated by natural boundaries, such as mountains, seas, etc. Consequently wars between the two countries were not infrequent. We recall that in one of these raids of the Syrians upon the Israelites, Naaman's wife's maid was taken captive. We recall that when Naaman came to the king of Israel the latter thought his coming merely a pretext for another war. Our lesson calls our attention to a later determination upon the part of the king of Syria to invade Israel, get spoil, etc. Several plans of attack were devised to raid one city or another, but each time these raids were frustrated, for the Syrian army found the cities they attacked freshly prepared for defence. The king concluded there was a traitor in his court or camp who disclosed his secret plans and arrangements to the king of Israel, and instituted a search for the traitor. His counsellors, however, had heard of Elisha--perhaps through Naaman or those who accompanied him at the time of his healing. These explained to the king of Syria that a more likely interpretation of the matter was that the Prophet Elisha revealed to Israel's king all plots and schemes against the interests of the nation.

Although the king was evidently a man of force, he was not wise in his determination to ascertain the location of Elisha and to capture him first, and thus to secure a free hand in looting the cities of Israel. He might have known that if Elisha could inform the king, he could be equally well informed in matters respecting himself. But thus it is with all who leave the wisdom of God out of their calculations. The Apostle sums up the matter for

R3441 : page 302

them, saying, The wisdom of man is as foolishness with God, for the world by its wisdom knows not God and does not take into consideration the boundlessness of his wisdom and power. The Christian, on the contrary, recognizing divine power and wisdom and coming into accord with the same, is thereby blessed. Whatever was the measure of his wisdom and prudence as a natural man, this would be certainly intensified by his participation in the wisdom which cometh from above--"the spirit of a sound mind," the Spirit of the Lord.

As soon as the king learned that Elisha was at the little town of Dothan he sent an army, including horses and chariots, to surround the city and to make sure of capturing the Prophet. The latter doubtless understood in advance, but working in harmony with the Lord's arrangement he did not flee the city. He was entirely restful in mind respecting the matter, but his servant was greatly alarmed--he thought of the Prophet and himself being carried prisoners to Syria to thenceforth be bondmen, etc.

R3441 : page 303

Elisha, however, comforted him with assurances respecting the divine power which encompassed them, much greater than the power of their enemies. Then, not only as a lesson to the servant, but also doubtless intended of the Lord as a lesson for his people all the way down through the ages, Elisha prayed that the young man's eyes might be opened that he might see and realize the true situation. At once the servant perceived that all around the city the entire hill was amply protected against the surrounding hosts--"horses and chariots of fire" around and about Elisha and himself. We must assume that the horses and chariots of fire were in the nature of a vision granted to the servant and to us, as illustrative of the divine power and protection given. Thus viewed, what the servant saw was an active parable, a picture similar to the symbolic pictures of Revelation--serving the intended purpose most thoroughly, most completely, and giving to the eyes of his understanding a proper conception of the divine power present with the Prophet.

DIVINE PROVIDENCE ALL ABOUT US.

This is the center of our lesson and is in full accord

with other Scripture statements, as, for instance, the Golden Text, the latter giving a picture, not of horses and chariots representing power, but an encampment representing a continued and abiding presence of the divine representatives, safely guarding all the interests of the Lord's faithful ones. The Apostle assures us that the angels of God are ministering spirits sent forth to minister unto and to serve those who shall be heirs of salvation, the saved ones of this Gospel Age--not only the overcomers of the little flock, but also the overcomers of the great multitude. All of these, because believers in Christ, because at heart faithful, because fully consecrated to the Lord and begotten of his Spirit, are the special and happy objects of his grace, ministered to and served by the invisible messengers. Our Lord Jesus sets forth practically the same thought in his declaration, "Their angels do always behold [have access to] the face of my Father." (Matt. 18:10.) The Master's words seem to imply at least one or more angels having charge over the consecrated ones, the very elect. He uses a still different figure of speech in illustrating the matter, as though he would assure us that these messengers would not be delayed in caring for our interests, would not be hindered by more important heavenly business, but would at once have direct access to the divine presence and attention, so that our interests would have all needed consideration.

Gathering together these various pictures, we have as a whole before our minds something like this: Our great all-wise, all-powerful heavenly Father has numberless messengers at his command, and has deputized and appointed many of these to care for the interests of his cause on earth--especially to watch over and minister unto the very elect. Nothing can by any means, therefore, harm these, except as the heavenly Father sees that the earthly injury or disadvantage would prove profitable either to the individual new creature or to the Lord's general cause. This is in full accord with his general assurance that all things shall work together for good to them that love him.

Such a use of the heavenly messengers by no means invalidates the thought that the Lord's earthly children are frequently used of him as ministers, servants, the one to the other. Indeed we may be assured that the invisible messengers or servants, generally if not always, are required to act through human instrumentalities--preferably through the very elect. Of this kind of service done by the brethren one for the other under the supervision of divine power and messengers, we have illustrations in the harvest work: for instance, supervised by our present Lord and his heavenly hosts, yet in the main carried on by the members of his body still in the flesh. Again we have illustrations of the same in the declaration of Psa. 91:11,12, "He shall give his messengers charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." Doubtless the heavenly messengers are connected with this work, yet nevertheless the work itself is apparently, we may say

surely, done through human instrumentalities--the Church in the flesh. For instance, the Lord in this present harvest time has given his messengers, the leaders of his consecrated people, "a charge," a message, a word of warning, counsel, advice,--an opening of the Word of Truth, an enlightenment of their understandings,--that they should bear up all the members of the "feet" class, all of the very elect in this time of serious trial, testing and stumbling, lest at any time any of this class should stumble through the peculiar trials of the present time. How manifestly this is fulfilled: the harvest message in its various features, bearing on every phase of Truth now due and every phase of error now being brought forward, is God's keeping power by which, according to his guarantee, we know that nothing shall by any means hurt the "feet" members of the true "body of Christ."

It is for us to rejoice in these blessings and favors of the Lord and to increase our faith; and the lesson under consideration is a help in this connection, as showing us how even before the house of sons was organized, the Lord had power and exercised it in the house of servants in a way that illustrates to us the abundance of that power.

With the morning light the Syrian soldiers drew near to the village of Dothan, making inquiry for the Prophet, who, by prayer, brought upon them "blindness." The original word, however, does not signify total blindness, but rather a visual indistinctness, somewhat akin perhaps to mesmeric or hypnotic conditions as they are known today. The Prophet proposes to lead them to Elisha and his home, the latter being in the city of Samaria and thither he led them. When they were within the walls of the city and completely, therefore, at the mercy of the king of Israel and his warriors, the Prophet dispelled the illusion, and, opening the eyes of their understanding, made himself known to them and introduced them to the king of Israel, etc. The latter inquired of the prophet whether he had led them there to be smitten, to be destroyed as the enemies of the Lord and of the kingdom, but his answer was, No; that he should set a feast before them of royal bounties and send them back to their king and friends--in a word, that he should figuratively "heap coals of fire on their heads." This was done, and the result is given us in a few words, "So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel."

The closing incident of our lesson is worthy of appropriation by spiritual Israelites. So long as we are the Lord's we may have absolute confidence respecting the results in all of life's affairs, and this confidence in God should tend to make us more generous and kind toward our enemies--to all those who would despitefully use us or persecute us. So far from seeking to do them injury in return or to speak evil of them in return, the admonition of the Lord is, "If thine enemy hunger feed him, if he thirst give him drink, for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." "A soft answer turneth away wrath." A return of good for evil may not at once make

a friend of an enemy, but it will at least bring blessing to our own hearts, and is much more likely to bring blessing to the enemy than if we should return him evil for evil.

=====

page 305

SEMI-MONTHLY.
VOL. XXV. OCTOBER 15, 1904 No. 20.

CONTENTS.

Views from the Watch Tower.....	307
Russian Official Prayer for Aid.....	307
The St. Louis Convention.....	310
Archaeological Verification of Bible Records.....	310
Christianity vs. Modern Culture.....	311
The Rank of the Ancient Worthies.....	312
The Great Company.....	313
Stumbling Stones or Stepping Stones (Poem).....	314
Joash, the Boy King.....	315
Repairing the Temple.....	316
Interesting Letters.....	316

page 306

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

--ADDRESS TO--

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

--OR TO--

BRITISH BRANCH--24 EVERS HOLT ST., LONDON, N.W.
GERMAN BRANCH--MIRKER STR., 45 ELBERFELD.
AUSTRALIAN BRANCH--32 JOHNSTON ST., FITZROY, MELBOURNE.

PRICE, \$1.00 (4S.) A YEAR IN ADVANCE, 5c (2-1/2d.) A COPY.
MONEY MAY BE SENT BY EXPRESS, BANK DRAFT, POSTAL ORDER, OR REGISTERED.
FROM FOREIGN COUNTRIES BY FOREIGN MONEY ORDERS, ONLY. SPECIAL
TERMS TO THE LORD'S POOR AS FOLLOWS:--

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

=====

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

=====

THIS JOURNAL IS PUBLISHED IN THE
FRENCH, GERMAN, SWEDISH, DANISH AND ITALIAN LANGUAGES.
SAMPLE COPIES FREE.

=====

A DESIRABLE GIFT.

We have prepared a choice edition of "The Divine Plan of the Ages," as "Scripture Studies," bound in full Morocco with gold edges. Price, \$1.00, postage or expressage, 10c; to WATCH TOWER subscribers at wholesale rate, 60c., carriage prepaid. We feel sure that many of these will be used as Holiday Gifts to friends. The usual price of such like books would be at least \$2.00.

THE EDITOR'S ST. LOUIS DISCOURSE OF SUNDAY, OCT. 2.

This discourse seems to have been quite widely published. The World's Fair Commissioners secured copies of it and mailed it to journals all over the country, requesting that they publish the discourse--or extracts from it. The Brethren and Sisters, we feel sure, will be glad to help circulate any paper publishing these discourses. Reflect, too, that such circulation carries the Truth to places and people not to be reached by the tracts and TOWERS. Openings of this kind we may accept as part of the Lord's providence, and we should accordingly make as full use of them as possible. Let each of us, while praying for the prosperity of the Lord's cause, watch also for opportunities to secure it--no matter how humble.

=====

R3441 : page 307

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER.

THE OFFICIAL PRAYER OF RUSSIA FOR DIVINE AID
AGAINST JAPAN.

THE Official Messenger of St. Petersburg, Russia, published the following prayer appointed by the Holy Synod.

"By virtue of an imperial ukase to the effect that during the present trials of our dear country more ardent prayers should be offered for the victory of the Russian troops, who are worshipers of Christ, over a cruel enemy, full of guile, the Holy Synod pronounces

the time ripe for special prayers to be offered in all of the churches in the empire on Sundays and holydays, after mass, beseeching that heavenly aid should be sent to the Russian army, which is sacrificing its life for its faith, its emperor and its country, for long life for the victorious troops and for the repose of the souls of the warriors who fall."

The following prayer has been specially ordained:

"Although unworthy, we implore thee who art strong in battle for aid, and humbly beseech thee to

R3442 : page 307

accept our weapons in thy cause, to give thy Christ-loving army victory, and to permit it to subdue the enemy.

"Send from on high thy hand and touch the hearts of the enemy so that they shall make supplication to thee, the God of peace, who loves his creatures.

"Strengthen us with thy might, defender of the orthodox faith, send thy arrows to confound the enemy.

"Strike them as with lightning and give them into the hands of thy faithful troops.

"Thou who hearkened to Moses, bless the emperor's doings, multiply his glory and confirm his empire. By thy almighty hand preserve his army. Send thy angel to fortify his troops and give them salvation.

"Send peace upon us. May thy invisible finger defend thy servants, show them the right path, forgive them their sins, and bestow upon them the crown of glory.

"Grant the emperor peaceful life and well-being, the fulfilment of his desires and a conquest of his enemies."

The prayer also appeals to the virgin, and concludes by beseeching eternal rest for the dead and for all those who have laid down their lives for their faith and their country.

A secular journal editorially comments on the prayer thus:

"Those who remember the horrid barbarities of the Russian troops on the way to Peking will shudder at the blasphemous bigotry and assurance which calls the Russian army Christ-loving. If they were Christ's they would do his works. Moreover, instead of a prayer for divine guidance, these mistaken ones call on God for reinforcements. They do not ask him to guide the Czar aright, but merely to endorse his policies. There is one tiny clause, evidently an afterthought, which asks that the Russians may be shown the right path, but its position, following as it does an appeal to the Deity to smite the enemy and to deliver them into the hands of the suppliants, shows they don't

want this asked-for guidance until they have settled with the Japanese. They seem to forget that the same God made both the Japanese and the Russian."

* * *

Poor, blind priests and people! although nominally "Christians" how sadly they need the true eyesalve! How glad we are for them and for the whole world that God's promise is soon to be fulfilled: "All the blind eyes shall be opened"--"the blind shall see out of obscurity."

The Apostle says that "the god of this world [Satan] hath blinded the minds of them that believe not." We see this illustrated in the present instance. False doctrine is blinding the Russians just as it does other nominal "Christian nations."

That false doctrine had its start in the third century, when faith in the coming Kingdom of Christ began to fade;--when the Millennial Kingdom promises

R3442 : page 308

began to be interpreted as signifying the Church's control of world power. Under this error the Papal hierarchy rose into power until it controlled practically every nation in Europe. These nations have since broken away from her, except Austria-Hungary, but the Popes still claim temporal power, assert that they represent Christ and that his Millennial reign has been in process of fulfilment in Papacy.

Russia coalesced with the Greek Catholic Church which, through the Holy Synod, recognizes the Czar as the head of the one and only true Church of Christ. From the Russian standpoint, therefore, the success of Russia in conquering China and Japan means the prosperity and spread of Christ's Kingdom, which ultimately, all-conquering, shall fill the whole earth.

The same error poisons all the remainder of Christendom; for although the casting off of the Papal yoke seemed to mean the overthrow of this error amongst the masses of Europe it really meant nothing of the kind: the error merely took another form. At first each sect of Protestants proposed that it was the Kingdom of Christ and must prevail and conquer the world. But as splits and factions increased the number of these spiritual kingdoms of Christ, and demonstrated that none of them could conquer the world single-handed, a truce was called in 1843, when the Evangelical Alliance was formed. Since then the theory is that "all the sects as well as their Papal mother" constitute the Kingdom of Christ which must conquer the world.

This thought still dominates, and under it every civilized government which favors the Church styles itself a kingdom of God. The union spirit grows,

and soon, according to the Scriptures, will bring to Protestantism and Catholicism, cooperating, the old-time power over secular affairs formerly exercised by Papacy during "the dark ages."

It is time for all of God's true people to discern this error, which in various ways has misled, is misleading and will yet further mislead all those blinded by the Adversary on this subject.

What is the antidote for this poisonous blinding error, do you ask? We reply that the remedy is a return to the primitive faith of the Church; namely, a recognition that all these man-made institutions are pseudo kingdoms--false, deceptive misrepresentations of Christ's Kingdom; that Christ himself will be the great King in that Millennial Kingdom, and that his true saints of the entire Gospel age, after sharing in the First Resurrection, will constitute the Holy Synod or Royal Priesthood promised. How this truth frees us from the blindness which once afflicted us even as it still afflicts others! and how it inspires us with true ideals and the best and most powerful aspirations! The faithful all down these eighteen centuries have waited for God's Son from heaven and for his Kingdom, for which we still pray: "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth even as it is done in heaven."

TOLSTOI'S SERMON ON THE WAR.

"All over Russia, from the palace to the remotest village, the pastors of churches, calling themselves Christians, appeal to that God who has enjoined love to one's enemies--to the God of Love himself--to help the work of the devil to further the slaughter of men.... Christian pastors continue to invite men to the greatest of crimes, continue to commit sacrilege, praying God to help the work of war, and, instead of condemning, they justify and praise that pastor who, with the cross in his hands on the very scene of murder, encouraged men to the crime. The same thing is going on in Japan.... Japanese theologians and religious teachers no less than the military in the techniques of religious deceit and sacrilege, but distort the great Buddhistic teaching by not only permitting but justifying that murder which Buddha forbade. The Buddhistic scientist Soyen-Shaku, ruling over eight hundred monasteries, explains that, although Buddha forbade manslaughter, he also said he could never be at peace until all beings are united in the infinitely loving heart of all things, and that, therefore, in order to bring into harmony that which is discordant it is necessary to fight and to kill men.

"It is as if there never had existed the Christian and Buddhistic teaching about the unity of the human spirit, the brotherhood of men, love, compassion, the sacredness of human life.

"Stupefied by prayers, sermons, exhortations, by processions, pictures and newspapers, the cannon's flash, hundreds of thousands of men, uniformly dressed, carrying divers deadly weapons, leaving their parents, wives, children, with hearts of agony, but with artificial sprightliness, go where they, risking their own lives, will commit the most dreadful act of killing men whom they do not know and who have done them no harm. And they are followed by doctors and nurses, who somehow imagine that at home they cannot serve simple, peaceful, suffering people, but can only serve those who are engaged in slaughtering each other. Those who remain at home are gladdened by news of the murder of men, and when they learn that many Japanese have been killed they thank some one whom they call God....

"The frightful work commenced is continued. Loot, violence, murder, hypocrisy, theft and, above all, the most frightful fraud--the distortion of religious teachings, both Christian and Buddhistic--continue....

"This evil which is leading men to inevitable destruction has manifested itself with special power in our time, because, having lost all rational guidance in life, and having directed all efforts to discoveries and improvements, principally in the sphere of technical knowledge, men of our time have developed in themselves enormous power over the forces of nature; but, not having any guidance for the rational adaptation of this power, they naturally have used it for the satisfaction of their lowest and most animal propensities.

"Bereft of religion, men possessing enormous power over the forces of nature, are like children to whom powder or explosive gas has been given as a plaything.

R3442 : page 309

Considering this power which men of our time possess, and the way they use it, one feels that, considering the degree of their moral development, men have no right, not only to the use of railways, steam, electricity, telephones, photography, wireless telegraphs, but even to the simple art of manufacturing iron and steel, as all these improvements and arts they use only for the satisfaction of their lusts, for amusement, dissipation and the destruction of each other....

"Man has no choice; he must be the slave of the most unscrupulous and insolent among slaves, or else the servant of God, because for man there is only one way of being free--by uniting his will with the will of God. People bereft of religion, some repudiating religion itself, others recognizing as religion those external, monstrous forms which have superseded it, and guided only

R3443 : page 309

by their personal lusts, fear, human laws and, above all, by mutual hypnotism, cannot cease to be animals

or slaves, and no external efforts can extricate them from this state, for only religion makes a man free. And most of the people of our time are deprived of it."

Again he says: "Christian nations are all in one and the same condition of having rejected religion; and therefore, notwithstanding dissensions among themselves, they are all united and form one confederate band of robbers, among whom theft, plunder, depravity and murder, individually or collectively, go on without causing the least compunction of conscience, and even with the greatest self-complacency, as occurred the other day in China. Some believe in nothing, and are proud of it; others pretend to believe in what they for their own advantage hypnotize the common folk into accepting as a faith; while others, again--the great majority, the common people, as a whole --accept as a faith the hypnotic suggestions to which they are subjected, and slavishly submit to all that is demanded of them by the dominant and unbelieving hypnotizers."

THE NEW PROTESTANTISM.

From the following it is apparent that the cleavage or split which we have predicted is already under way in Germany. Infidelity, masquerading under the name of Higher Criticism, has for a time deceived many and will continue to appeal to all the "tares" and to confuse some of the "wheat"; but the time is at hand when the latter must recognize the deception and not be bound with the tares in their "bundles" or organizations. Alas that the wheatfield is so overgrown with "tares" that the "wheat" is but a small minority. We quote from the Christian Intelligencer (N.Y.) as follows:--

"That there is a reaction from the rationalistic and critical character of the Protestant Church in Germany is apparent, not only from the attitude of some of the leaders of thought in the empire, but from the rapid increase and growing influence of an organization known as 'Association Agitation.' Pastor Zeller of Stuttgart describes it as to all intents and purposes a pietistic agitation, and directed against the type of theology that prevails in the universities and in the pulpits. It is a protest of the heart against the head, and is accordingly one of the ever-recurring reactions that put in their appearance in the ups and downs of the Church history. It is not positively new, but its earliest beginnings date to the days of Professor Christlieb of Bonn, and it has largely been influenced by the ideals of the practical Christianity of England and America, especially of the latter. It is largely a movement of the laity, who find that the pastors, with their intellectual university training and their views, do not reflect the piety and the positive

Christian convictions that the 'associations' consider as belonging to the essentials of Christianity. The prejudice against the Church and its pastors has extended so far that in some circles pastors are prohibited from membership or participation in the meetings of the association. The associations are largely controlled by a remarkable religious enthusiasm. The agitation is undoubtedly healthful, and betokens the vital hold the Bible as an inspired authority has upon the common people in the land of Luther. The evil and danger of the movement is in the disposition apparent in some quarters to cut loose from the Church and regard all theological studies as useless, if not harmful."

ST. PAUL MINISTERS DISCUSS PRAYER.

"I don't want to make a sensational statement, but I will say, and I won't qualify it, that in your congregations not more than half the people believe in prayer."

"Rev. John Copeland, pastor of the East Presbyterian Church, was not contradicted when he declared this opinion yesterday afternoon at the rooms of the Bethel association before two dozen members of the St. Paul Ministers' association. Mr. Copeland said he knew that people didn't believe in prayer when they assumed irreverent attitudes during invocations. Only last Sunday he had been obliged to announce that no child would be allowed thereafter in a Sunday school class unless he would bow his head during prayers.

"Mr. Copeland was commenting upon a paper entitled 'The Problem of Prayer.' Rev. R. M. West, of the First Baptist Church, who read the paper, thought that people that didn't believe in prayer didn't have the proper conception of prayer. 'Prayer,' he said, 'is not a mere petition, a mere asking for something, but it is the spiritual communication between man and God. Yet many persons are so sure that God's will and that Christ's name is a blanket privilege covering everything those people happen to want, that they seem to regard God as an unthinking being whose chief happiness is to do what they'd like to have done. Other persons pray with a view to assisting God in the government of the universe. That's a bigger burden, I fear, than the average supplicant can carry. Sensible Christians will remember always the limitations of prayer as fixed by the divine order, by the sovereignty of God, and by his fatherhood; they will never fail to add, "Thy will be done."'"

"Rev. David Morgan, of the Bethel, agreed that laymen, even ministers, are losing some of their faith

in prayer. 'It's a fact,' said he, 'that ministers in

R3443 : page 310

this city have said they didn't want any more revivals, which were only attended by hired girls and by people that didn't pay anything.' Mr. Morgan himself remembered the time when he felt himself hanging over hell-fire by a hair--'a hair ready to break any instant,' was the way he expressed it. His thought used to keep him awake nights, 'but it doesn't disturb my rest now,' he said."--St. Paul Globe.

=====

R3444 : page 310

THE ST. LOUIS CONVENTION.

BRETHREN and sisters from every State in the Union and from Canada gathered in a big crowd at St. Louis in answer to the Convention Announcement published in these columns. All classes and conditions of life were represented, but as usual, not many rich, not many great, not many wise, according to the course of this world: chiefly the poor of this world, rich in faith. It was a joyful gathering, a kind of foretaste of the Kingdom, and seemed to direct all hearts to the General Assembly of the Church of the Firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. The general testimony was, "It is good to be here." Some said, "If fellowship of kindred minds is so precious under present limitations and imperfections what will the heavenly fellowship be when we all shall have been clothed upon with our perfect and complete spirit bodies; when we shall see as we are seen of the Lord and know as we are now known of him." The thought gives great refreshment to the "pure in heart," who, however weak and stumbling their flesh and efforts, are at heart desiring and seeking the Lord's will in all things.

The three days allotted to the Convention were crowded full of spiritual refreshments with brief intervals for temporal food and rest. Various brethren from various quarters participated in the social meetings in prayer, testimony and singing--as leaders and otherwise. The preaching services were conducted by the following "Pilgrim Brethren": McPhail, Raymond, Draper, Hay, Barton, Johnson, Bundy and Van Amburgh. The Editor spoke on two occasions, besides conducting a Question Meeting.

The Monday (Oct. 3) sessions were all held in the "Disciple Church," Locust St. Following the afternoon discourse on Baptism, 148 symbolized their consecration by water immersion. There were adults, 65 males, 79 females, and 4 minors.

The Love Feast of that evening closed the Convention, and it was surely an inspiring occasion. The dominant thought of the hour was the blessed privilege of being accounted worthy to suffer with Christ now and the glorious prospect of reigning with him in the near future, and the necessity for trials and tests and faith in him who has promised us grace to help in every time of need.

The Convention was the largest yet held by our Society. About ten to twelve hundred "believers" were present. The Sunday afternoon service was the most largely attended, about 2,000 being present. If these gatherings continue to increase in size what will we do for accommodations? But who knows?-- the Lord may permit some "snare of the Adversary" to sift and test these, and thus thin out our ranks. Who shall be able to stand all the "harvest siftings?"

=====

R3443 : page 310

ARCHAEOLOGICAL VERIFICATION OF BIBLE RECORDS.

CERTAIN findings of the higher criticism are assailed in a volume from the pen of the Oxford professor, A. H. Sayce, on "Monument Facts and Higher Critical Fancies." In this volume the author marshals the facts of recent archaeological discovery, and points out their bearings upon the conclusions of Old Testament critics. So high a value does he place upon the character of his evidence as to lead him to affirm that "the more archaeological and the less philological our evidence is, the greater will be its claim to scientific authority." The reason for this claim is given as follows:

"For purposes of history, philology can be only accidentally of service, so far as it throws light on the meaning of a literary record, or assists in the decipherment of an ancient inscription. It is the linguistic sense of the record, and not the history it embodies or the historical facts to be drawn from it, with which alone philology is properly concerned. We must not go in for dates or for the history of the development of civilization and culture.

"Still less can we look for help to what has been called 'literary tact.' 'Literary tact' is but another name for a purely subjective impression, and the subjective impressions of a modern European in regard to ancient Oriental history are not likely to be of value. It is quite certain that an ancient Oriental author would not have written as we should write, or as we should have expected him to write; and, consequently, the very fact that an ancient Oriental document does not conform to our modern canons of criticism is an argument in favor of its genuineness....So far

as the historical side of the question is concerned, the philologist, pure and simple, is ruled out of court.

R3443 : page 311

It is the archaeological evidence of Egyptology and Assyriology, and not the philological evidence, which can alone be applied to the settlement of historical disputes."

One of the first strongholds of the philological critic assailed by archaeologists was the assumption, current for more than half a century after the publication of Wolf's "Prolegomena," concerning the late use of writing for literary purposes. But the clay tablets found at Tel-el-Amarna, says Dr. Sayce, establish that:

"The Mosaic age, instead of being an illiterate one, was an age of high literary activity and education throughout the civilized East. Not only was there a widespread literary culture in both Egypt and Babylonia which had its roots in a remote past, but this culture was shared by Mesopotamia and Asia Minor, and more specially by Syria and Palestine."

Furthermore:

"Moses not only could have written the Pentateuch, but it would have been little short of a miracle had he not been a scribe....Egypt, where the Israelites dwelt so long and from which they fled, was a land of writing and literature, and the Canaan which they invaded was even more so, for here three literary cultures met, as it were, together--the culture and script of Egypt, the culture and script of Babylonia, and the culture and script of the Philistines from Crete."

Another discovery, that of the Babylonian code of Khammurabi, has overruled the denial of the critical school that a legal code was possible before the period of the Jewish kings. The position which the archaeological critic is enabled to take is that "the Mosaic code must belong to the age to which tradition assigns it, and presupposes the historical conditions which the Biblical narrative describes. Not only has the code of Khammurabi proved that the legislation

R3444 : page 311

of Moses was possible, it has also shown that the social and political circumstances under which it claims to have arisen are the only ones under which it could have been compiled."

From the papyri and temples of the Nile valley come other corroborative evidence; this evidence, Professor Sayce claims, establishes the fact that "the story of the Exodus, as it is set before us in the Old Testament, must have been derived from contemporaneous written documents, and must describe events

which actually took place." It is no fiction nor myth, no legend whose only basis is folklore and unsubstantial tradition, but history in the real sense of the word.

Driven from the first assumption of the late use of writing for literary purposes, the "higher critics" began to apply the theory of evolution to the religious and moral ideas, the political conceptions and theological dogmas of the ancients, and then declared that they knew "precisely how religious ideas must have developed in the past," and could "consequently determine the relative age of the various forms in which they are presented to us." They decided that "certain conceptions of the priesthood or the sanctuary are older than others," and, consequently, where "there are books or passages which do not conform to the critic's ruling," the critic "forced them to do so by an alteration of the traditional dates." The fallacy of such procedure lies in the inability of the European critic to think in common with the Oriental mind.--
Literary Digest.

=====

R3444 : page 311

CHRISTIANITY VS. MODERN CULTURE.

PROFESSOR BOUSSET'S views on the essence of religion are thus epitomized by the Digest:

"Modern culture is worldly. It is marked by a decided self-consciousness and a feeling of strength and a joy in life. It is positive and aggressive and keenly feels its own importance and value. Its typical representatives are such characters as Goethe and Bismarck. The former has made it clear that modern culture, while it involves depth of feeling and calls into activity the higher powers of life, is rooted in the interests and concerns of this world. Bismarck, too, though a model of modern manhood, was entirely concerned in the affairs of this earth. The dominant ideals of our age are reflected in such phrases as "the duty of self-preservation," "self-assertion," "the struggle for the control of the world." Everywhere we find a strenuous life, a pushing forward, a struggle for existence, a contest of the classes.

"Over against these ideals Christianity in its traditional form stands out in decided contrast. Christianity is at heart a religion of salvation, and is controlled by the idea of a redemption. It proceeds from the standpoint that the whole human race has been corrupted from Adam onward; that it is sunken in the darkness of sin. It centres around the two ideas of sin and grace, and came into existence to meet the universal longing for salvation.

"It is clear that these two forces represent opposite tendencies of thought. To insist upon the principles

of traditional Christianity is to rob modern culture of its very life; it opposes a pessimism to the optimism of modern thought. And yet a reconciliation between the two is not absolutely impossible. It can take place, however, only as the result of a modification of the current view of Christianity. A new conception of religion must make itself felt, and this change can be readily effected. It must center around the person of Jesus and must abandon its dogmatic system. In the person and in the preaching of Christ, as an historical phenomenon, we have the basis for an understanding between Christianity and the culture of our day. Jesus himself never accepted the total corruption of man as the basis of his preaching. Rather it was an ideal of moral perfection that he held

R3444 : page 312

up to his hearers--of life in God and activity according to his will. Such we find to be the kernel of the Gospel proclamation. Deliverance from sin and forgiveness of sin were indeed emphasized in his preaching; but his dominant thought was that of struggle toward an ideal moral life. This is the idea that must take possession of modern Christianity, if it is to be reconciled with modern culture and civilization and to win for itself the educated classes. Not as a dogmatic system, but as a moral power, based on the powerful personality of Jesus, must Christianity be proclaimed to the thinking people of our times.

* * *

Thus is illustrated the desire of many to unite the Church and the World. They desire to retain some faith in Christ and some hold upon him, but at any cost must "win the educated classes," and must drop every feature of the doctrines of Christ that would interfere with "modern culture." Union, numbers, honor of men are prized above Truth: and the latter is sacrificed--almost to the death--for the former, though not without pangs of regret.

It is of the divine ordering that matters are thus: "The Lord would judge his people." He would apply to them the very tests which he declared during his ministry, saying--"My word shall judge [test] you in the last day" [in the dawning of the new Millennial Day.] "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon;" "Ye are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." "If ye were of the world the world would love his own, but now ye are not of the world even as I am not of the world: therefore the world hateth you." "If any man would be my disciple let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

As in the Jewish "harvest" "there was a division of the people concerning him," so it must be in this

Gospel age "harvest." As in that testing time only a remnant were found to be "Israelites indeed in whom was no guile," so it will be found here-- the great masses of professed followers of Christ are insincere; they love self and the world and its things more than they love God and his spiritual favors.

But is not this a serious charge?--that the masses are insincere. Yes, it is serious, but it is also true. They show their "guile" by their willingness to sacrifice the Truth for almost anything--any mess of

R3445 : page 312

pottage. However, "the Lord knoweth them that are his," and will keep his own who "love not the world," who love the Lord himself supremely, who love the Truth, whose consecration is sincere. "They shall be mine, saith the Lord, in the day when I come to make up my jewels."

Note, too, how love of the error is willing to compromise the Truth, and really blinds itself to it to have its own way. In the above Prof. Bousset says, "Jesus himself never accepted the total corruption of man." We presume this means that Jesus never taught the Adamic fall and the consequent depravity of the entire race. We reply, that he surely did teach that all are so undone that the divine sentence rests upon all as unworthy of everlasting life, hence as all "lost." Hark to his words: "The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost." And again he indicates that all are under the ban of death, saying, "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." "The Son of man came...to serve, and to give his life a RANSOM [a corresponding price] FOR ALL." "I am come that they might have life." "I am the resurrection and the life--no man cometh unto the Father but by me." "Without me ye can do nothing." If these Scriptures do not teach that all men were lost, helpless, undone without the great sacrifice for sins which our Lord offered, pray then what do they teach?

Let us, dear friends, lose no opportunity for serving the Truth to the brethren, even to the extent of laying down our lives for them and it; but let us not compromise with the world nor with error to gain numbers. Let us rather be co-workers with the Lord, and knowing that now is the "harvest" time let us expect the very separations which we see taking place. We could not frustrate the Lord's plans if we would, but we could do injury to our own interests by disloyalty to him, his Word and his brethren.

=====

R3445 : page 312

THE RANK OF THE ANCIENT WORTHIES.

IN DAWN, Vol. VI., there appears to some of us to be a confusion or contradiction respecting the relative order of resurrection and honor attaching to the Ancient Worthies and the Great Company. The passages in question are found at top of page 121, first paragraph on page 129, and at top of page 131. Kindly help us over our difficulty.

We are pleased to show the accord of these statements. On page 121, at top, we are discussing the natures, and show that the Little Flock, of the divine nature, will be above all others; that the Great Company will be next, of the spirit nature, not divine; and that the Ancient Worthies will be next in grade of nature--"a little lower than the angels."

On page 129, first paragraph, we are endeavoring to show the relative ranks of these classes--in dignity, in honor of position. Here we rank the Ancient Worthies higher than the Great Company. This seems to us the logical order, since the Ancient Worthies --in their overcoming more particularly--resemble

R3445 : page 313

the Little Flock, who voluntarily lay down their lives for the Truth. This logical order seems to be supported, too, by the Scriptures--not only the type of the order of the Levites referred to on page 129, but additionally we have the Scriptural declaration that these Ancient Worthies are to be "Princes in all the earth," which implies a special dignity, or honor of position as the earthly phase of the Kingdom. Again, in Rev. 20:9, these Ancient Worthies seem to be marked as still a special, separate and distinct class in the earth, represented by the camp of the saints [holy ones], and the beloved city. The fact that at that time, at the close of the Millennium, they will have reached perfection, and the fact that these Ancient Worthies will be still a markedly separate class, implies to us a higher honor of rank, over and above the perfection of human nature. What the Lord may have of special reward for these in the everlasting future, beyond the Millennium, we are not told; but as we consider the heavens, the work of God's hands, and the innumerable worlds therein under preparation for inhabitants, we may reasonably suppose that these Ancient Worthies, who were faithful during the reign of evil, even unto death, will have some further honorable service, not only during the Millennial age, but subsequently. For various reasons, therefore, we rank them higher in honor than the Great Company, though of a lower nature.

On page 131, at the top, we are discussing the time order of resurrection for these three classes, and present the thought that the Ancient Worthies will

be perfected in resurrection next after the Little Flock --that they will be the first to share in the general resurrection. For be it remembered that only the Little Flock share in the First Resurrection. "They shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." (Rev. 20:6.) Without any positive Scripture to fix this matter, it is our expectation that the resurrection of the Ancient Worthies will occur about 1914, or shortly thereafter, while we understand that the Great Company will not be complete for at least a little while after these-- some of them passing through the great time of trouble, of anarchy, following the end of Gentile times.

We trust a careful examination of the above, and with these suggestions, will make the matter clear to all.

=====

R3445 : page 313

THE GREAT COMPANY.

HAVE any members of the "Great Company" class existed prior to the harvest period of the Gospel Age? If so, how can we apply Rev. 7:14 to such?

We reply: This class is composed of consecrated believers who fail to go forward in the narrow way of self-sacrifice and who, failing to sacrifice, fail to attain joint-heirship with the Lord as members of the Bride company: nevertheless, having been sincere in their consecration, the Lord in much mercy does not count their lack of courage in turning back in the sense of denying him, for those who so draw back, the Apostle explains, "draw back unto perdition and destruction," Second Death. In mercy the Lord brings upon such persons trials and difficulties which they uncourageously attempt to escape. Since they have consecrated unto death and God has accepted their covenant and granted them the first-fruits of the Spirit, and since they neglected to sacrifice the flesh, the only alternative for them is the Lord's providential interference in their affairs, leading to the "destruction of the flesh," or failing this their portion will be the Second Death.

Why not grant them a share of restitution, do you ask? We reply that that which is begotten of the Spirit cannot be born flesh; it must be born of the Spirit or not at all.

These conditions which prevail today have prevailed in some measure since the beginning of the Gospel age. The Apostle speaks of such a one. Writing to the Church at Corinth, he says, I, being absent in person and present with you in spirit, judge such an one, and have delivered him over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may

be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.--
I Cor. 5:3,5.

It is safe, however, for us to assume that the proportion of the consecrated unworthy of a place in the Bride Company is greater today than it was in past times, because in the past the line of demarcation between wheat and tares, between the children of God and the children of this world, was much more marked than at the present time, when many have a form of godliness without its power--many have Christian mannerisms who do not claim to have been begotten of the Spirit. Today, therefore, it is more difficult than ever for the consecrated to see where duty lies and to follow its course of self-sacrifice, when so many good, noble and moral people are taking the opposite course. The narrow way is, therefore, more difficult to walk in today than it was some time ago. Hence, while the number of consecrations has increased rather than diminished, the number who appreciate the real meaning of their consecration and who joyfully lay down their lives in the service of the Truth is probably smaller. It therefore follows that the mass of

R3445 : page 314

the "Great Company" belong to the closing end of the Gospel age.

Respecting your last question concerning the proper applicability of Rev. 7:14 to this class, if it has existed throughout the age, we suggest that the majority of the class being here may be spoken of properly enough as though it were the whole, since the treatment it receives will represent the treatment accorded to all others of this class in the past, only in a more intensified form. All such have surely been called upon to pass through troubles--forced through them as it were because they did not freely sacrifice and lay down their privileges, interests, etc., in the service of the Truth. Similarly in the same chapter we have the entire 144,000 of the Little Flock spoken of as though it were filled and made up in this present time, whereas these also have been in process of development throughout the Gospel age. That is to say, the original Abrahamic promise descended to the twelve tribes of Israel, but those twelve tribes were

R3446 : page 314

typical of spiritual Israel. At the first advent spiritual Israel was started with those of each tribe who were Israelites indeed in whom there was no guile. There were not enough of these to fill the elect number, 144,000, and hence the Gospel call was extended to the Gentiles to bring in from the Gentiles a sufficient number to complete 12,000 to each tribe.

This filling up of the tribes from those who were by nature Gentiles is similar to reenlistments made in the United States to fill up vacancies in military regiments in the Philippines. Thus a man from Ohio or Illinois might enlist in a New York or Pennsylvania regiment and become a regular member of the same, though the regiment would still be known by its original name. So with our incorporation into the elect twelve tribes. We know not to which tribe the Lord assigns us when we become his.

This is the same thought which the Apostle develops in Rom. 11, where he speaks of the original promise of God made to Abraham as the root of the olive tree, and the twelve tribes of Israel the tree itself. The branches of this tree are the individuals, and the Apostle explains that all except the Israelites indeed were broken off when that tree became spiritual at our Lord's first advent. He further explains that we who were by nature Gentiles are being engrafted into membership into this Israelitish tree, and are partaking of the richness of its root, the Abrahamic promise.--See Galatians 3:29.

=====

R3446 : page 314

STUMBLING STONES OR STEPPING STONES.

I have been sorely tried, dear Lord, been sorely tried today,
The sun has veiled his brightness and a cloud hangs o'er
my way.
Why is my heart so heavy, and the daylight cold and gray?
I've tried to please thee; I have striven to faithful be and
true;
I've sought for heavenly wisdom in the thing that I should
do,
Yet I've been "put to grief;" and oh, can I have grieved
thee, too?
A fellow pilgrim on the road a wound has given to me,
Its sting and smart I keenly feel,--its need I cannot see.
Stumbling stone or stepping stone, O Lord, which shall it
be?

A sorrow came to me today--a grief so dense and deep,
The shades of deepest darkness about my heartstrings creep;
The tears have flowed unceasing till no power is left to
weep.
I bow beneath my weight of woe, speechless and stunned;
my heart
Sinks down like lead within my breast; its bitter ache and
smart
Seem almost more than I can bear. A sharp and cruel dart
Has pierced me, and I prostrate lie. O Father, speak to
me!
Thy hand lies hard upon me: can this trial come from thee?

Stepping stone or stumbling stone, which shall this sorrow
be?

A blessing came this day to me, a joy surpassing sweet.
A glad way opens up to me, wherein my willing feet
Turn joyfully; how blest am I within this dear retreat!
My way had dark and lonely been for many a weary year;
My Lord has brought this gift to me when all was sad and
drear;
Now, where my path was bleak, the flowers of love and
bliss appear.
And yet, dear Lord, this blessing which thy love has given
to me
May fill my heart too fully, and may wean my soul from thee.
Then, stepping stone or stumbling stone, my God, which
shall it be?

Momentous question! on its answer my eternal joy
Hangs trembling; shall I be refined as gold without alloy?
These woes and blessings potent are to save or to destroy.
The time flies on! the "harvest" wanes, the glorious end
is near!
O, Master, shall I lose e'en now the "prize" I hold so
dear?
Shall I be lured by siren song, while strains of heaven
break
On ears attuned? Oh, guide me, Lord and keep me still
awake.
May I rejoice to walk with thee, and suffer for thy sake.

But I am weak; O, Master dear, do thou my spirit thrill,
Grant me thy grace, and strength impart to do thy perfect
will,
And in affliction or in joy obey and love thee still.
Almighty Lord, to thee I fly--no other help I know;
Oh, aid me in my need, I pray, and make my heart to glow
With holy fire, and on me, Lord, thy precious love bestow.
I hear thee speak, I will obey, I stretch my hands to thee,
In every providence of thine thy changeless love I see,
And stepping stones to heavenly heights each pain and joy
shall be. --Alice G. James.

=====

R3446 : page 315

JOASH, THE BOY KING.

--2 KINGS 11:1-16.--NOVEMBER 6.--

Golden Text:--"When the righteous are in
authority, the people rejoice."--Prov. 29:2.

THIS LESSON of itself contains very little of the spiritual
"meat" for the household of faith. Nevertheless
historical portions of the Scriptures, such

as used in this lesson, have their special place and render service to the general cause. The connections of history are as necessary to the Bible as bones are to the living body. For this reason let us give special attention to the connecting history, that we may have before our minds a general view of the conditions in Israel at the time of the incidents of this lesson.

Going back, we remember Elijah's great work as the Prophet combating the influence of King Ahab and his heathen queen, Jezebel, and the Baal idolatry which they introduced. Although Elijah did not succeed in making a complete reformation in Israel, he did succeed in turning back to a considerable degree the influence of Baalism. As we have seen, not only did true religion prosper more in the kingdom of Judah but also in the kingdom of Israel, and it was respected during the period of Elisha's ministry as the Lord's Prophet. Although it was not the religion of the court it was the religion of the Israelites indeed. The prosperity of the cause of Jehovah in Elisha's day is best seen in contrast with the conditions which prevailed in the earlier part of Elijah's ministry.

Meantime the influence of Baalism extended from the court of Israel, and especially from the heathen queen, to the court of Judah: the son of the king of Judah marrying the daughter of the heathen queen, who, in character, evidently had a strong resemblance to her mother, Jezebel. From the time of her association in the kingdom of Judah the idolatrous influences there began to gain strong foothold and a Baal temple was built, and under the royal protection the licentious worship of Ashteroth found favor with many of the people.

Upon the death of her husband, the king of Judah, his queen, Athaliah, daughter of Jezebel, continued her influence in the kingdom with her son, who then became king, and at his death, contrary to the law and usage of the Jews, she determined to make herself sovereign, and, to accomplish this, caused all of her grandsons to be put to death. That is, she supposed that she had accomplished this end; but her daughter, who had become the wife of the high priest and was evidently under his influence, saved the life of the youngest of the king's sons--her nephew, Joash--secreting him with a nurse in one of the apartments adjoining the Temple set apart for the use of the priests.

Our lesson relates to this boy, the heir of the throne of Judah, who at seven years of age, under the guidance of his uncle-in-law, the high-priest, was anointed and proclaimed the king of Judah. The lesson gives the particulars of the transaction by which the Temple guard became the king's guard--how the king's grandmother, the usurping queen, was first attracted to the Temple by the commotion amongst the people, and then quickly realizing the situation, cried, Treason, Treason, and fled to the palace, where she was executed.

A few years before the incident of this lesson, under the Lord's direction, Jehu had been anointed king over the sister kingdom of Israel, and although in many respects himself a

bad man, he served as the sword of the Lord to execute retribution

R3447 : page 315

upon King Ahab and Queen Jezebel, who had wrought so much injury to the cause of true religion in the kingdom of Israel. Now, by the death of the usurping queen, Athaliah, the daughter of Jezebel, the same pernicious influence was overthrown in Judah: that is to say, the reign of Jehu in Israel and of Joash in Judah marked a period of backset to Baalism.

Students of history, not seeing the divine plan of the ages, have been perplexed at the prosperity of evil doers in individual affairs as well as national, and the perplexity of such is increased when they consider the fact that Israel and Judah were nations with which God had made a special covenant and over which he exercised a certain measure of control. If heathen nations were allowed to go as they would into idolatry, etc., why was it that evil doers, evil practices, false worship, etc., were permitted to prosper in the nations over which God claimed oversight, control, etc.?

The answer and the only answer is that God's time for taking active control of the affairs of the world, subduing evil and advancing righteousness, had not yet come. The entire Law dispensation, from Moses to Christ, was introduced during a period when nothing else could have been brought in. The Gospel could not have been proclaimed at that time because the foundation for it had not yet been laid--the foundation being the redemption accomplished by the death of Christ. Nor could the death of Christ have been properly accomplished sooner, or the Gospel age and its work been begun sooner, because in the divine plan and foreknowledge that great event was arranged to take place just long enough in advance of the Millennial Kingdom to permit of the gathering out the Church of the First-born, the Bride class, Christ's joint-heirs in the Kingdom.

For these reasons God introduced the Law dispensation, as the Apostle declares,--"The Law was added because of transgressions, until the promised seed should come." The Law Covenant made with Israel served two particular objects: (1) In its laws and Atonement Day sacrifices, typical jubilees, etc., it foreshadowed or typified glorious and great things to be fulfilled during this Gospel age, some of them during the Millennial age. (2) It served to show the constantly downward tendency of sin, and how impossible it would be for the world to lift itself out of present degradation and sin and weakness even if God should release the whole world from original sin

R3447 : page 316

and the original death penalty. Moreover, we are to remember that although Israel and Judah exhibited great weakness along the lines of idolatry, nevertheless

they were by no means as corrupt in these respects as were the nations round and about them--the remainder of the world. Whatever peculiarity there was consisted in the fact that they still maintained some reverence for the invisible Jehovah, some semblance of worship for him whom other nations regarded not at all.

The whole history of Judah and Israel shows us that, notwithstanding the trend of the majority towards sin and idolatry, there were still amongst them Israelites indeed whose hearts were sincere towards God. We have examples of this in Elijah and Elisha, the sons of the prophets, the Shunamite, and others. Nevertheless, in thinking of all these we are to remember that they were still in the dark as respects the divine plan. No revelation of God's great salvation had yet been made: only a dim light of a hope of the resurrection of the dead and everlasting life for those obedient to God had reached even the wisest and best of them. In harmony with this is the statement of the Apostle, "The Law came by Moses, but grace and truth by Jesus Christ," and again his declaration that "Christ brought light and immortality to light through the Gospel," and again the statement that this "salvation [in which we now rejoice] began to be spoken by the Lord." --John 1:17; 2 Tim. 1:10; Heb. 2:3.

We are not, therefore, to compare present-day conditions amongst those who profess to be spiritual Israelites, with the old-time conditions referred to in this lesson, because in the meantime the true Light, the Lord Jesus, has come into the world; and although the world as a whole has not recognized him, the Israelites indeed have had the eyes of their understanding opened, so that they are blessed and benefited by this true Light, which in God's due time shall lighten every man that cometh into the world--when the Millennial day shall dawn and the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his beams. Then, in the fullest sense of the word, the righteous shall be in authority--Christ, the great King, and the Church, his Bride and joint-heir in the Kingdom--and then the people will rejoice. They will rejoice in a manner not possible at present, for now, as the Apostle declares, even under the best of rulers, while Satan is at the helm, "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together." --Romans 8:22.

=====

R3447 : page 316

REPAIRING THE TEMPLE.

--2 KINGS 12:4-15.--NOVEMBER 13.--

Golden Text:--"We will not forsake
the house of our God."--Neh. 10:39.

THE DEATH of Athaliah, the usurping queen, quickly

following the anointing and proclaiming of her grandson, Joash, as the proper heir to the throne of Judah, was noticed in our last lesson. Joash, the new king, being but eight years of age at this time, was properly under the care of his uncle-in-law, the high priest, who had secreted and protected him from infancy. The choosing of this particular time for bringing forward King Joash was no doubt influenced by the affairs of the neighboring ten-tribe kingdom of Israel. In the latter, by the Lord's direction, Jehu had been anointed as the king to supplant the weak and wicked Ahab and to punish the wicked and idolatrous Jezebel, his queen--thus to rid the ten-tribe kingdom of iniquitous rulers, whose influence seems to have been evil continually to the extent of their opportunities. No doubt the success of Jehu encouraged the high priest, Jehoiada, to overthrow the usurped dynasty of Jezebel's daughter and to re-establish the line of David upon the throne. More than this, we may properly assume that as the Lord directed in the anointing of Jehu to succeed Ahab, so he directed in the anointing of Joash to succeed Athaliah, and that the priest was guided by the Lord in the matter, though perhaps unconsciously.

The high priest Jehoiada, as sponsor, made the coronation the occasion for a general revival of interest in true religion and for the reviving of corresponding opposition to the idolatrous worship of Baal, which the pseudo queen had introduced. Inspired by the counsel of the priest, inspired also by the circumstances surrounding the coronation in the Temple court with its reminder of Jehovah, the true God, of their past history as a nation under his care, the assembled people reached such a fervor of excitement for the Lord and against idolatry that they surged forth, and as a mob tore down the adjacent temple of Baal, slaying its chief officiating priest, breaking its statuary, etc.

Mobs are rarely if ever to be encouraged, but in the present case we are to remember that, under special divine arrangement, just such a course of opposition to idolatry was directly commanded, and that, besides this, the people were keeping under and obeying the direction of the lawfully constituted government of the Lord, in the hands of his representatives, the king and the priest, which government had been illegally suppressed for a long time, and was now merely assuming its proper position and overthrowing its illegal opponent.

The new government, seizing upon the newly awakened religious fervor of the people, proposed the immediate repair of the Temple and the re-instituting of its service by the true priests of God, who during the period of Baal worship had been unable to give their time and attention to the religious services of the Temple and to the instruction of the people in the matters of the Law. Because, being opposed by the usurping government, and the revenues of the people being directed to the support

of Baal worship, the true priests of God and the services of the Temple had been neglected and practically out of commission.

All this was now to be changed, and the government gave commands for the raising of the money necessary. (1) There would be the tax which the Law of Moses enjoined, a poll tax, a half shekel. (Exod. 30:13.) (2) "The money every man is set at," possibly the tithes--one tenth of all the profits of the year. (3) "Money that cometh into every man's heart to bring"--voluntary donations above those required under the Law. The priests were to collect this money, each in the neighborhood and from the persons with whom he was acquainted.

The good intentions of the king and the high priest failed, for fifteen years after this, when the king was twenty-three years of age, the Temple had not yet been repaired, as our lesson shows. The reasons we are left to surmise, but the inference seems to be either that the people did not trust the priests with the money, fearing that they would use it upon themselves and not upon the Temple, or that the moneys paid and donated were largely

R3448 : page 317

consumed, and perhaps not improperly, in the maintenance of the priests, their families, etc. At all events, at the time mentioned, the king called for the high priest and the under priests to make report why the commission given to them fifteen years before had not been accomplished.

The result of the conference was that the priests in general agreed that the repairing matter should be taken out of their hands and left wholly under the care of Jehoiada, the high priest. The latter arranged a method by which the people of Israel might know that the money contributed by them for Temple repairing would not be diverted to other uses: he prepared a chest securely locked, with a slot in the top, into which donations for Temple repairs could be put. This plan worked successfully and the repair of the Temple proceeded in the hands of competent workmen and faithful overseers. The repairs and their cost must have been considerable, for the Temple was now more than one hundred and fifty years old and had long been in disuse, and it is presumed that many of the stones from it had been taken and used in the construction of the Temple of Baal near by. Verse 13 merely signifies that none of the money was used for furnishings of the Temple until the Temple itself had been thoroughly repaired, because 2 Chronicles 24:14 shows that ultimately a sufficiency of money was donated to furnish the Temple utensils.

CONSIDERED AS A PARABLE.

The foregoing is all interesting to us as an item of history and as an illustration of the sameness of human nature

in all periods amongst all peoples. But now let us see what lessons we can draw from these experiences of natural Israel, beneficial to us as spiritual Israelites.

One lesson is that while the High Priest, our Lord Jesus, can be thoroughly trusted in connection with the entire work, nevertheless some of the under priests have less of the self-sacrificing spirit and are more or less inclined to use upon themselves for their own comfort and pleasure means which otherwise might have been better used in the repairing of the house of God--the true Temple, the true Church.

The spiritual Temple and its doctrines, hopes, practices, etc., have become seriously deranged during the long period of the triumph of sin, the "mystery of iniquity," the "mother of harlots," during the dark ages. The Reformation movement of the sixteenth century was bold and courageous, and promised great things in the way of repairs needed in the spiritual Temple. But, alas, the Protestant clergy have used the means and opportunities connected with this reformation for their own personal advantage. Considerable has indeed been done, considerable stir has been made amongst the people, considerable money has been raised, and yet withal comparatively little has been done in repairing the faith and hope and love of the Church, the true Temple--comparatively few of the gross errors have been eradicated.

But here, as in the lesson, the Temple shall be repaired --the High Priest has taken full charge of the matter. The people of God, when they once see the need of repairs and the safety of the channel, will be encouraged to do everything necessary on their part for the accomplishment of the work, and in this work the clergy of nominal Christendom, who should have been active in the service, are being ignored--our great High Priest can do his work without them.

Another lesson we may learn is the association between faithfulness to the Lord and the service of the Lord. As soon as the people of Israel had consecrated themselves to the Lord, and in proportion as they did so, their every source of income would gladly cooperate in the building up of the interests of the Lord's cause. And just so with spiritual Israelites: in proportion as we realize in our hearts a fulness of consecration to the Lord, in the same proportion everything that we possess is subject to corresponding responsibility. There are the proper taxes or demands upon our time, talents, influence and means for the service of the Lord, and then each may give additionally, over and above this responsibility, a free-will offering to the Lord, according to the abundance of his love, according to the zeal of his heart. And this love, this zeal, and the self-sacrifice to which it leads, measures our devotion to the Lord. Thus the Lord is gauging all who have named his name and professed a full consecration to him --he is gauging their love not merely by the dollars and cents contributed to his service, but also by the time, influence, etc., which they possess and their willingness in the

use of these in his service and in the opposition to Satan, and to all the errors of which he is the father and author.

Another harmony in this illustration is that the work mentioned in our lesson was done for and upon the Temple;

R3447 : page 318

and so any work we may now do as spiritual Israelites, and any sacrifices which we may now make, are to and for the Church, which is the Temple of God. The work of the present age is the preparation of this Temple; the work of the next age will be the blessing of all the families of the earth through it and its then glorified Royal Priesthood. It is in harmony with this thought under a different figure that the Lord declares, "His wife hath made herself ready." Her chief energy or self-sacrifices are to be on behalf of the Church--as the Apostle declares, we may "do good to all men as we have opportunity, but especially to the household of faith."

It will be noticed that we are not using this lesson as an occasion for the solicitation of money. But while we never solicit, we do realize that there is a special blessing of the Lord upon the voluntary giver, as the original signifies, "The Lord loveth a hilarious [merry] giver." He appreciates, he loves to see in us such an interest in him and his cause that everything else in comparison seems worthless, that our best talents and powers of every kind we will delight to use, not grudgingly but heartily, joyfully, in association with himself and under his guidance and direction, according to our best understanding of his will, in the service of his Truth and his brethren.

=====

R3448 : page 318

ENCOURAGING WORDS FROM FAITHFUL WORKERS.

page 318

GENTLEMEN:--

I am in possession of a copy of the first volume of the Millennial Series entitled, "The Divine Plan of the Ages," and I believe you will be pleased to know that I am delighted with the work. I never have seen anything before that has shed so much light on the meaning of the Bible as it does. I have been a close Bible student all my life since a boy, but I have been wandering in the dark most of the time until now. The scales have fallen from my eyes at last, thank God, before it was too late. I was born of Christian parents who belonged to the Presbyterian Church, was baptized in that faith, and lived all my life in the belief of the doctrines connected therewith. But of late years I have had some misgivings in my mind. I never could see how to reconcile some of the teachings

of the church with some passages of Scripture. But I rejoice to say that is all made clear now. I cannot think of anything that expresses my true sentiments so well as four lines of poetry that I committed to memory more than fifty years ago but never saw their beauty till now. Here they are:--

"When all thy mercies, O my God,
My rising soul surveys,
Transported with the view I'm lost
In wonder, love and praise."

Now, having received so much good myself, it is natural that I should like others to be partakers also; and I would like to make some arrangement if I could see my way clearly to engage in some way to help spread the Truth so that others might receive some benefit.

Yours respectfully, JAMES KING,--Mass.

R3448 : page 318

DEAR BROTHER AND HONORED SERVANT OF GOD:--

It is with gratitude that I acknowledge the blessing the Lord has seen fit to bestow upon me through your last labor of love, DAWN VI. I wish to thank you as the instrument used of Him and pray you may have the grace sufficient to keep you faithful even unto death.

With so many chapters of good things, it would be difficult to say which is best; but I believe, to me, the chapter on Judgment has been as helpful as any, giving me a keener sense of the repulsiveness of the evils of the tongue, and I hope I may learn to be dumb until I can use my tongue only to sound His praises and honor His name.

The beautiful clearness with which you have shown us the type of man and woman has also helped me much. It was a new thought to me that approbateness was more peculiar to women, and I trust I may set a double picket on that line, so that I may use it without abusing it. I also hope hereafter, when privileged to sit in a congregation of saints, to do so with more reverence. I thank you also for mentioning the covering of the head.

It has been my privilege to be with the Los Angeles Church for two years, and I wish to tell you something of the showers of blessing that have come to me through them. Their fervent love and unceasing efforts on my behalf have helped to teach me the way of God both by precept and example.

I have learned something of the narrowness of "this way," and I would ask an interest in your prayers that I may more fully appreciate the privilege

of walking therein.

With Christian love from one who hopes ever to be able to subscribe herself.

Your Sister in Christ,

HATTIE L. WOODWARD,--Cal.

FRIENDS:--

I received the tracts you sent me. Thanks be to the Lord and you for all they have revealed to me. Let me tell you how it all came about: I picked up a tract on the stairs one day when I came home from work, called "The Hope of Immortality." I never knew who put it there, but I know it was the Lord who sent it. I read it and it showed me very clearly my need of a Savior, and through it I have given my heart to the Lord Jesus and am now trusting in his finished work.

At the bottom of the tract it said that if the reader was interested he could by making application have "What is the Soul?" which you sent me, and a few more with it which looked as though they were especially for me. I took great pleasure in reading

R3448 : page 319

them, for I do hunger and thirst after righteousness.

Yours in Christ,

C. WATT,--R.I.

DEAR FRIENDS:--

I enclose a copy of a letter I addressed to about sixty ministers of St. Louis. As yet I have received no returns, as they are so wrapped up in World's Fair entertainments and civic reforms that they have no time to spare to point the inquirer the way to life:

* * *

R3449 : page 319

DEAR SIR:--

Some time since I mailed to your address a copy of the Pittsburg Gazette, special edition, containing reports of the Eaton Russell debates. I have also come into possession of some pamphlets bearing on these subjects, printed at Allegheny, Pa., one of which I am mailing to you.

I am an ardent student of the Scriptures, and am associated with a small number of others who, like myself, love the Lord and seek always to increase our knowledge of his Word and revealed wisdom, to the end that we may become more able to do that which is pleasing to him. We are not connected with any

particular denomination, but we realize that many earnest and well-informed disciples of Jesus are members of each, whose intellectual capacity is far greater than our own, hence this request, which I feel you will not consider presumptuous,--that, if agreeable and convenient to you, I may be privileged to have an expression of your views on the questions involved in these debates, either briefly or at length, as pleases you, and your opinion as to what methods would be best to pursue in order that a Truth-hungry child of God may reach a proper conclusion on these and other doctrines which seem to clash, and, while each claims a Biblical basis of proof, run counter to each other.

I can assure you that, knowing you to be a leader of thought among professing Christians, any assistance to further light on God's revealed Word will be greatly appreciated and your words will receive respectful consideration, should you deign to reply.

Awaiting your convenience, I am, in Christian hope and love,

Sincerely yours, J. LOCKWOOD,--Mo.

page 319

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--

Each Pilgrim brother sent to us seems more capable of presenting the Truth and more humble and loving than the one preceding. Are they improving in ability to proclaim the glad news of salvation, and our call to glory, as likewise in spirituality and meekness, or are we developing Christian love and character so that daily we are enlarging our capacity for appreciation of the old, old story, which each time repeated becomes, as we sometimes sing, "more wonderfully sweet," or are both they and we making progress in the heavenly way, so that everything said and done touches the chords of harmony within and thus thrills our hearts with ever-increasing delight? On each visit of a Pilgrim we find ourselves congratulating each other and declaring "he is the best of them all," not merely as one capable of presenting the Truth--a forceful speaker--but one whose character conforms more closely to our ideal of a perfect life.

These Pilgrim brethren are truly in a great work, a work that affords splendid opportunity for ennobling those they visit. They have great responsibility, which perhaps they do not fully realize as yet. They doubtless also have many temptations to pride and self-esteem and must constantly be on their guard against self-exaltation. Not only in the words they utter but in their actions they minister to us either favorably or unfavorably. A Pilgrim returning a second time impresses us with his experiences and we

can see where he has gained in spiritual things since his previous visit. I am glad so many are now in this good work. We of the Washington congregation may not so much need the frequent Pilgrim visits, but we want all we can get and as many as can be sent, though not more than our rightful share. Our heavenly Father has through your instrumentality been very gracious to us, and especially in the immediate past. There is much we have for praise, and thanks to you in serving us so well. The Lord bless you richly for your works and earnest effort for all his people.

Your brother in Christ, J. A. BOHNET.--D.C.

R3449 : page 319

DEAR BRETHREN:--

Enclosed please find report. I must tell you that we have encouraging experiences by the way, with an occasional rebuff. In an out-of-the way place I saw two men by the roadside. As I introduced the work, one man broke in with the remark, "Did you ever read that great debate by that man Russell and Dr. Eaton? He is a smart man but he could not stand before Mr. Russell." He spoke in a very enthusiastic way. When informed that the book I sold was by Bro. Russell, he took it, and I trust it will become a great blessing to him.

In showing the Plan of the Ages to the M.E. minister at G_____ he remarked, "I have that book. I did not read it much, as I did not find it as definite as I expected." I began to read page 224 in explanation of the Chart, "The Path of Glory." I had not read far when he said, "We have found out that is not so; Adam was never perfect." We then brought the ransom to his attention, and having acknowledged that Jesus was perfect as a man, he could not well resist the force of this grand Bible truth. He said he was glad to have met me, would read the book, and asked could I speak for him some time I was that way. He seemed very sincere and desirous of the Truth, and now that he has it I trust it will be received into a good and honest heart.

We hope to add to the great blessing received at the Convention at Boston and be more successful in the harvest work.

In the Lord's name and with Christian love,
A. N. MARCHANT,--Colp.

=====