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VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER

The opening of a New Year is a most favorable time for special circumspection—for reviewing the year past, for the looking forward to the things coming upon the earth, and for a general survey of present conditions in the world, in the church, and particularly in our own hearts. This circumspection should be taken with a view to our growth in knowledge and in grace—not from idle curiosity nor from boastful self-sufficiency.

CHRISTENDOM IN SURVEY

While church and state are in many respects totally separate, nevertheless throughout what we term Christendom they are so closely related and intertwined as to appear one, and this oneness we believe the Scriptures to teach will increase until for all practical purposes they will be one. We surmise that this will be accomplished within the next three years. The Committee on Church Federation appointed some time ago is to meet in December, 1908. Conditions during the present year will undoubtedly cause the idea of Church Federation to take firmer hold than ever upon the public mind, especially upon the cleries, and our expectation, therefore, is that two years later it will be an accomplished fact. Quite probably by that time some arrangement will have been effected between the Episcopal system and other Protestant denominations, whereby the clergy of the latter will all be recognized by the former—probably by the Episcopal clergy in some manner imparting the apostolic succession. Thereafter any not recognized by the system will be in sore straits, condemned as unorthodox, and without right or authority or privilege to preach or teach. This condition of things, as pointed out in these columns twenty-eight years ago, we look for as the fulfillment of Rev. 13:15-17.

In the Lord's providence the increase of light and knowledge preparatory for the great Millennial day has brought to Christendom great riches. Not only have the millions of Christendom been more constantly employed than ever, but by reason of education their employment has yielded larger fruitage, and in combination with machinery the results have surely been five-fold. No wonder, then, that the world's wealth has been enormously increased. As might be expected, however, all have not profited equally by this great gain. While all have profited in great measure, the master minds—especially those endowed with large acquisitiveness—have profited chiefly by the favorable conditions. As a result we see that one-seventh of the people own six-sevenths of the wealth. If on the one hand this condition of things seems hard and inequitable, let us remember on the other hand that it is the legitimate fruit of the law of selfishness, under which the world has operated now for six thousand years. That the field in many respects has been a fair and open one is evidenced by the fact that some of the wealthiest people of today started life in the humblest circumstances. If some of these in gaining their wealth have used unscrupulous means, let us remember that they did nothing more than many of their neighbors who had less success in life—nothing more than what the majority of mankind would have done had they possessed opportunity and the intellectual talent to improve it. This being true, it behooves us to look with generosity upon the rich, and to note to their credit that many of them have been very benevolent both

in public and in private. Let us remember, also, that many of the most successful have not gained their wealth by grinding the poor nor by treating them as slaves, but on the contrary have paid the best wages, treated their employees most honorably, and really have been benefactors to the world in that their business acumen enabled them to launch large projects, which gave profitable employment and large wages to many of their fellows, who would have been incapable of such management

LET A MAN THINK SOBERLY

Many are able to take the reasonable, just, philosophical view of the subject above presented so long as they are doing reasonably well themselves; but when the pinch comes and they begin to be in want they reason differently. They forget a part of the truth on the subject—they think merely of the fact that in nature and providence we are surrounded by wonderful bounties and vast opportunities, and in the scramble for wealth which these produced others got the lion's share. From this standpoint they reason that the wealth of the world and the increment belong equally to the wise and the unwise, to the learned and the ignorant, to the ambitious and the careless, and with this thought in view they are inclined to demand their share and to hold that anyone who has more than his per capita portion must have stolen it from his fellows. But since they joined in the scramble, hoping to be amongst the more successful, even acknowledging thus the principles of selfish competition, it is with bad grace that they now especially find fault with those who have been more successful than they, instead of finding fault with the system which permitted, fostered and developed present conditions. Indeed, however strenuous may be the results of present conditions of the world, we can fully justify divine providence in permitting matters to take the course which has led up to the present condition of things—up to the time of trouble which will mark the consummation of this age and the inauguration of the Millennium.

Without selfish ambition to spur men on, without the law of necessity to speed the movements of the slothful, the tendency of mankind would have been toward a barbaric indolence, contentment with a hut instead of a palace, satisfied with signs and grunts and hieroglyphics instead of an education. Undoubtedly, all the fallen conditions considered, the Lord did the best thing for the race to permit selfish ambition to crack the whip and drive the remainder of the world toward a higher civilization than that into which they had sunk, as described by the Apostle in Romans, chapters 1 and 2.

"ALL THINGS CONTINUE AS THEY WERE"

The Lord through the Apostle calls our attention to the fact that in the end of this age there would be a tendency on the part of the worldly wise to say that there would be no change of dispensation; that all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation and will so continue—that there will be no change. This is brought out as an answer that will be made to some who will claim the presence of the Lord and the change of dispensation—just as we are doing. But in accord with the Word of God, we are not heeding these worldly wise, but are hearkening to the voice of him that speaketh from heaven, which assures us of a great change, and that it is now at the door: (1) A change of rulers, the Prince of Light taking from the prince of darkness the sceptre

of this world and binding, restraining, him for a thousand years, that during the same he shall not deceive the nations. (Rev. 20:3.) (2) The overthrow of all present institutions built up under the influence of the prince of darkness, and fostered by ignorance, superstition and selfishness, and the substitution of a reign of equality and love which shall lift all men from the depths of degradation, mental, physical and moral, and bring them all to a completeness of perfection if they will, and thus to a plane of equality, destroying the unwilling as mischievous and injurious in the second death.

Emphasizing this change which he will bring about, the Lord through the Prophet declares that he will not forever plow the field and sow, but in its appropriate season he would do a reaping work. We perceive that the entire field was not sown with the good seed of the Gospel, but only a small, limited area, and that for now nearly nineteen centuries the Lord has watered and harrowed this sowing, and that the harvest time of the Gospel age is come. True to our Lord's parable the adversary was permitted to do a contaminating work—to oversow the field with tare seed, and as a consequence the acceptable crop now to be gathered is a small one in comparison with what would be expected by those who have not been able to distinguish between wheat and tares, between consecrated believers and nominal Christians. To our understanding of the Bible, as set forth in the volumes of *SCRIPTURE STUDIES*, this harvest work has been in progress since October, 1874, and will be completed within forty years—by October, 1914. Within that time we fully expect that all the wheat will be gathered into the garner, glorified, and that the tares will be gathered into bundles, if indeed by that time their burning will not have commenced. We do not understand the burning of the tares will be with literal fire, nor that their destruction will mean the destruction of the individuals, but merely that they will cease to exist as imitation wheat and take their true stand with the world as members thereof, without part or lot in the inheritance of the "saints in light."

YET SEVEN YEARS MORE

From the foregoing it will be seen that to our understanding Christendom entered upon the final seven years of harvest time in October, 1907. Promptly on time the present panic gave Christendom a convulsive tremor, and it is our anticipation that the entire seven years thus started will witness a succession of panics and difficulties, each pressing a little more upon the interests of mankind, the rich as well as the poor, and each bringing conditions to a little harder plane than its predecessor, until, with the close of the seven years, during 1915, according to the Bible, we expect that anarchy will gain the upper hand of control throughout Christendom, overthrowing present institutions, civil and religious, financial and social, and in a general way plunging the poor world into the most awful trouble it has ever experienced—a trouble so dark, so terrible, that in referring to it the Master said, "Except those days be shortened there would no flesh survive." But then he added, that because of the elect the days would be shortened. The elect church, at that time in glory with the Lord, and assuming the authority of the world, will at the proper moment intervene, and with divine power and wisdom bring order out of the confusion, and establish in the world righteous conditions, which the Scriptures assure us will then be welcomed by all mankind. Those now disposed to fight for present conditions will then, as a result of the chastening experience, be glad to look for and accept the new order of things—the reign of righteousness and love under the Millennial rule of the King of kings and Lord of lords, with whom in his throne will be associated the bride, the Lamb's wife—the elect little flock of this Gospel age.

We are not prophesying; we are merely giving our surmises, the Scriptural basis for which is already in the hands of our readers in the six volumes of *SCRIPTURE STUDIES*. We do not even aver that there is no mistake in our interpretation of prophecy and our calculations of chronology. We have merely laid these before you, leaving it for each to exercise his own faith or doubt in respect to them; but showing our own faith by our works. Even our enemies must concede, and many of them do concede, that the facts as they have developed year by year since we began these presentations in 1876 have most wonderfully, most remarkably, corroborated our expectations and continue to do so. For instance, the Jews had not thought of returning to their own land when, in 1878, we pointed out that the time for favor to that people had chronologically begun, in fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably unto Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her appointed hour is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins." (Isa. 40:1, 2.) Zionism

was not dreamed of at that time, and began to take practical form seventeen years afterward.

"A CONFEDERACY!"—ISAIAH 8:12

We pointed out from the Scriptures a federation of Protestants which would receive its life or vitality through association with the Episcopal church, and that this combination of Protestants would be one side of the great scroll of the heavens while Roman Catholicism would be the other side of the scroll, and that these would not unite, but "roll together as a scroll" during this harvest time, and because of the shaking incident to the time of trouble and anarchy with which the age would end. But not until seventeen years later was the idea of federation brought forward. Formerly it was urged everywhere that the cause of righteousness was advanced by the competition between various denominations of Christendom. Now, however, the federation is surely near, and it will have an important part to play in connection with the trouble coming upon the faithful little flock, and later on it will receive by divine permission as complete an overthrow as came upon the Jewish institution, its prototype, in A. D. 70. In 1878 Christendom in general possessed faith in the precious blood of Christ, a ransom price: we pointed out from the Scriptures that a testing would come upon all and chiefly along this line, that a thousand would fall to one who would stand (Psalm 91:7); that the cross of Christ was set for a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel—to Natural Israel in its harvest time, and to Spiritual Israel, Christendom, in this present harvest time of this age.

As we look about today, we see, alas, how truly the Scriptures on this subject have been fulfilled. Not a college or seminary that we know of in the world teaches the doctrine of redemption, the very foundation of the Gospel. Some of them teach Evolution, Higher Criticism and morality; others which do not openly so teach give similar instruction in a private way—in that the professors are known to hold these views. Amongst the ministers of all denominations the same thing is true: probably not one minister in ten can be found who would declare unequivocally that it is his faith that the death of Christ was a ransom price for Adam and his race—that without his death as our Redeemer there would have been no atonement for sin, and no forgiveness of sin, and no future life for any—the plain teaching of Scripture. Moreover, these same errors have stumbled and overthrown the faith of the majority of professing Christians, remarkably few of whom would be found who know what justification by faith means, and who believe that Christ died for our sins and rose again for our justification, that by his stripes we are healed, and that the chastisements necessary for the securing of our peace with God were laid upon him who died, the Just for the unjust, that he might bring us back into harmony with God. As for the coming generation, it is growing up in unbelief as respects the foundation principles of the real Gospel of Christ. It is being instructed in "another Gospel," which is not another, because there is truly no good tidings except that which God himself has provided, the forgiveness of sins through the merit of the precious blood of Christ. Not only in the colleges, but also in the High Schools, and now more latterly in the Grammar Schools—yea, even in the Sunday Schools—the theories of Higher Criticism in respect to the Bible, and of Evolution as respects our race, are being taught. The one undermines faith in the Bible, the other puts before the mind of the youth another theory, the reverse of the Scriptural one, which—supported by teacher and professors and ministers and others—causes the Scriptural theory of a perfect Adam and his fall by original sin, his redemption by a Savior, and his ultimate restitution in the "times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken"—it makes all of these seem absurd, unreasonable.

THE TIME OF TROUBLE

Similarly the Scriptural presentation of the time of trouble has been found to be correct. Step by step the conditions have been approximating the great climax which the Scriptures declare. Education and general enlightenment and invention—blessings which belong to the morning of the new dispensation about to dawn—have awakened the world to its present rapid pace, and have turned the minds of the masses towards selfishness and the worship of Mammon in a remarkable degree. This Mammon worship is shared in not only by the wealthy but also by the poor. One man chases after a fortune of one thousand dollars, another after one of a million, another after hundreds of millions, but nearly all in pursuit of wealth. If it be claimed that this is more true of the people of the United States of America than of Europe, we reply that this may be so, because in every sense of the word the people of America are awakened at least ten years in advance of Europe; but indications are that the whole world is getting awake very rapidly, and its awakening will be a ruder one than ours, with no less strenuous results.

We are not faulting the people for their awakening in the morning time; we are not faulting them that in their hunger for a share of the wonderful blessings which God has granted in the present time they have been moving with selfish energy to the protection of their rights and the acquirement of greater privileges by means of labor unions and federations. We would be most inclined to find fault with the unjust and unreasonable demands and methods sometimes employed. And yet even here we sympathize in great measure when we remember that these, hungry for their pro rata of present blessings, have not the guidance of the Lord, his Word and his Spirit, to show them the wise and proper path. Hence some of their moves not only result disastrously to themselves, but sometimes inflict needless hardship upon some of the best-intentioned capitalists and employers. On the other hand, we must not be surprised that capitalists of keen mind, reckoning life as a battle and a game, have exercised their quick intelligence to strengthen their own position, to maintain advantage in their own hands, and to increase the same by combinations and trusts, eliminating competition and advantaging themselves in general. What more could we expect from natural men operating under natural laws, growing more and more disrespectful of the divine Word, and more and more into sympathy with the Evolution theory—that it is the law of nature to have a survival of the fittest, and that the unfit need not be sympathized with too much, but rather be allowed to drop out of the race for wealth and station and even for the right to live? Thus we find ourselves at the threshold of what we believe to be the last seven years of this Gospel dispensation.

THE PRESENT FINANCIAL SPASM

All financiers must ultimately agree that the present financial spasm was directly caused by selfishness on the part of the bankers, etc., and nearly all the wealthy are either directly or indirectly bankers or bank directors. Shrewd bankers realize that their business prospers in proportion as the volume of money currency is small in comparison to the amount of business. Hence the money of a country is sought to be restrained in volume, and at the time the present panic broke out amounted in this country to about \$24.50 per capita. It has since been increased by the issue of more National Bank notes, etc., to about \$33.00 for each person of population, which is larger than that of any other country. However, the business enterprise, etc., here is so much greater than elsewhere that in our judgment even yet we have only one-third the amount of money that the country really needs. The bankers of the world practically control the governments in this matter, and they advocate as small a volume as possible—as small as will be safe not to risk a panic. Why? Because they make their money on interest and discounts, and it is to their advantage to have the public short of money and needing to borrow. The scarcer money can be made without injuring prosperity and promoting a panic the greater will be the demands made upon them by borrowers, and the greater their profits.

The enormous amount of their profits and surplus above the capital stock is advertised by the banks with pride, as showing their prosperity and soundness. If money were three times as plentiful interest rates would be about one-third what they are today, and the bankers would not be so much more prosperous than the remainder of the people. As an illustration of how the scarcity of money operates to the advantage of the banks, we note the case of a Pittsburgher who recently got into financial trouble and applied to an institution of this city whose capital and surplus amount to many millions of dollars. After examining his property they let him have \$250,000 on credit, and took from him a mortgage for \$350,000—thus clearing, because of the necessities of the case, \$100,000. Had money been more plentiful that borrower would have found many ready to come to his assistance on much cheaper terms. We are mentioning this matter in detail to call attention to the fact that selfishness is at the bottom of nearly all financial troubles, and it is selfishness that will be to blame for the final collapse which the Scriptures predict and which we expect in 1915.

We have already noted (Vol. IV., chap. VIII.) that the demonetization of silver was a matter instigated by the bankers. We have pointed out that it was inimical to the interests of the public. It lessened the money of the world by at least one-half. If silver were remonetized the business of the world would have none too much money for profitable handling, but that larger amount of money would make the banking business less profitable. Bankers tell the public that less money is necessary per capita than heretofore, because by our superior banking facilities one dollar chases around and, during a year, pays a thousand dollars worth of debts. We agree that the world has brilliant financiers, that our banking system in many

respects is splendid, and that the making of one dollar do the work of a thousand is very wise for the bankers and very profitable to them. However, if the one dollar did one-third as much work as at present, the danger of panics would be proportionately decreased and the prosperity of the banks also decreased. Financial matters resemble a top, whose point is money and whose upper portion is composed of bonds, stocks, mortgages, securities representing value. So long as the top is kept spinning at a rapid rate it can stand erect upon the point, but when something occurs to overturn it it is difficult to get it to spin again. The heavy top of national debts, land values, etc., now prevailing throughout the world is too great in proportion to the world's money. But we have no thought that conditions will be materially changed. The bankers have the confidence of the public, great and small, and will continue to maintain their present power, and these and other deleterious influences will have much to do with bringing forward the great trouble in its due time, through "*lack of confidence.*"

TRAVAILING IN BIRTH OF NEW ERA

We are not meaning to say that the banks of the country are not sound, reliable. Quite to the contrary: they are very rich—if their wealth be measured by the securities they hold. It is our expectation that the present stress will ere long be much relieved, but we do not expect to see as great prosperity as the past few years have witnessed; rather that there will be a down grade, with repeated hitchings or spasms of trouble, in harmony with the Apostle's illustration that this trouble is coming upon the world "as travail upon a woman with child." The final spasm, which we look for in 1915, will give birth to the new dispensation of peace and blessing, the Millennial reign of Messiah, in which we hope to share, for the blessing and uplifting of the world.

What shall we do? Quite a good many are inquiring as to the wisest course in view of our expectations. If by this query is meant, How can it be escaped? our reply is that it will be impossible to escape the coming trouble except by death, for according to the Scriptures it is to be world wide, every man's hand against his neighbor, no peace to him that goeth out or to him that cometh in. We understand the Scriptures to teach that all of the "overcomers," the "very elect," will be gone before 1915 and its terrible collapse, though they may pass through a considerable measure of persecution before that, and of course would share with others in the sorrows and perplexities of the further spasms of the trouble. Our advice in general would be, "Trust in the Lord and do good," exercise faith and the spirit of a sound mind. Remember the Lord's promise to care for all who are his, and to make all things work together for their good. Rely upon this and show your faith by your calm, quiet demeanor in the midst of trouble. As for those possessed of money, we offer the suggestion that a small home is one of the safest investments imaginable.

Should the banks some years later on become entirely insolvent, as we expect, money in them and in insurance companies, etc., would be practically lost; but a home well adapted to one's needs would still have a value. Some have queried whether or not a little farm would be profitable in the time of trouble. We rely that wherever the Lord's keeping power is there is safety; that so far as human judgment could go there would be as little safety on a farm as anywhere, for in the time we anticipate tramps and thieves will infest the country districts and beset the wayfaring man as much if not more than the city dweller. If attempting to locate a family of small children our inclination would be to prefer a town of moderate size, not a manufacturing city nor a mining village, but, if possible, a college town, inhabited by an intelligent middle class, where order would be more respected and prolonged. But the wisest and best legacy possible to leave to our friends would be a good example as respects honesty, morality and reverence for divine things. To be known to have money secreted at that time would be to invite thieves and torture and possibly death. If in the small town suggested a lot could be had sufficiently large for a back-kitchen garden, it would be desirable. That will be a time, however, for demonstrating the truthfulness of the Lord's words: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust do corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven."

OUTLOOK FOR THE WORK

We anticipate two more good years in connection with the harvest work. Already we notice that some who have heretofore been opponents of the Truth are surprised by the lightning-like rapidity with which the present financial trouble has come upon the country and has spread from ocean to ocean, and may yet perhaps influence Europe. They seem to read in this a corroboration of our expectations, and to be correspond-

ingly more willing to investigate the more spiritual features in our presentations. Let us be prompt to avail ourselves of every opportunity for putting the Truth into the hands of the public. Some of the colporteurs write us that already they have found quite a slackening of their work. From others we have the reverse report, that when they mention that the SCRIPTURE STUDIES they are selling explain the panic and show from the Scriptures the outlook for both capital and labor they find many thereby interested to purchase, and we trust to read and become more thoroughly informed respecting all the features of the divine plan. During the next two years, even if the prosperity be not so great as at present, we expect to see the work go grandly forward, and perhaps as much or more evidence of gathered wheat as in the past. Those who cannot give all of their time to the colporteur work are again reminded of the volunteer work, and that in this department all can serve. We are already arranging for a large output of tracts during 1908. We will contract for at least two millions at first, and from present prospects the financial sinews will not be lacking for the doubling of that number.

It remains largely in the hands of our readers to determine what shall be the output for the year 1908. Remember, that they are free and freight paid to your place. When writing about them give the quantity you would like to have, and also mention the reputed population of the district you hope to serve, and the number that will be coöperating with you in the volunteer service. We think it not unreasonable to suppose that our Lord's estimate of treasures laid up in heaven would include such volunteer services, or any kind of service we would render to him and his cause.

"FIERY TRIALS THAT SHALL TRY YOU"

We come now to the most important feature of this view of the future—of the last seven years of the harvest. While, as suggested, we anticipate that the harvest work will go on, that the truth will be spread very widely, it is our expectation also that another part of the harvesting work will be in progress, namely, the threshing and winnowing of the wheat already gathered from the field. Before it will be ready for the garner these tribulation processes of threshing and winnowing will be expected. If our anticipation be correct, it implies that there will be peculiar trials and testings of faith and of patience and of humility and of devotion to the Lord and to the brethren, upon those who are already in the light of present truth. To what extent have we still the chaff and straw of worldly sentiment attaching to us as new creatures, as grains of wheat? To what extent are these earthly interests and ambitions holding us fast? We must be set free, and the experiences to be expected will be of a kind necessary for a complete separation from the things of worldliness and sin. So far as our hearts are concerned they must reach absolute perfection of intent and endeavor, however imperfectly they may be able to control our mortal bodies: otherwise we are not fit for the Kingdom, not fit to be gathered to the garner. To be forewarned is to be forearmed. The Apostle declares, "Of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things to draw followers after them." The last week of our Lord's ministry was the most eventful one of all, and the one which witnessed his greatest triumph with the people when they hailed him as King as he sat upon the ass. And yet the same week meant the severest trial upon all of his disciples and our Lord's ignominious death. So we shall not be surprised if something of a similar character should come to pass during these seven years—prosperity of the work amidst intensest opposition.

The Apostle, speaking of our day, mentions "perils amongst false brethren," and already we learn that some of

these are boasting how much they shall be able to hinder the harvest work during the coming year. But we hear also the Word of the Lord assuring us that greater is he who is on our part than all they that be against us. We hear his voice again saying, "Let not your hearts be troubled," and again, "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength." So all of the Lord's true people should feel—"None of these things move us"—none of these things shall hinder us from our own faithfulness to the Lord and to the harvest work. Let us be content to wait until the great Chief Reaper at the close shall distribute his rewards and blessings. Let us continually seek his approval, and by and by we may hear his voice saying, "Well done, good and faithful servant: Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joys of thy Lord."

It is proper here that we remind the Lord's people of the Master's words to the effect that there are just two great captains in the present conflict—that he himself is the Head and Leader of the one party, and the adversary the head and leader of the other. He assured us that we cannot serve God and Mammon, selfishness. He implied that we might be in danger of mistaking which of these two masters we are serving when he said, "His servants ye are to whom ye render service." The implication is that some might be serving the adversary and mistakenly think themselves the servants of the Lord. We urge all to think carefully along these lines, to note what have been the leadings of divine providence throughout the harvest time, to note the spirit that belongs to the work—the spirit of self-sacrifice, the spirit of loyalty to the Word, the spirit of love for the brethren to the extent of laying down life in their service. We are also to notice the spirit or disposition of the adversary, that it is not to build up but to pull down, that it is out of accord with the harvest work of the great Reaper, that it is self-seeking and ambitious, and disposed to railery and to "shoot out arrows, even bitter words," against those who are seeking to serve the Lord and his cause, from whom they receive no arrows again in return.—Psa. 64:3.

Let us have in mind at the opening of this year the words of our Master to the apostles in his Gethsemane hour, "Watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation." Let us remember that it was zealous Peter who most courageously said, "Lord, though all men forsake thee yet will not I!" it was he who slept while he might have been giving some words of encouragement and joined with the Master in prayer, and it was he who later on temporarily fell from his steadfastness and joined himself to the enemies of the Lord by denying him. We are glad that he ultimately recovered himself by the Lord's assistance, but how much better it would have been, how much happier for him, if he had watched and prayed. And so with us—let us follow in the footsteps of our Lord, watching and praying, walking circumspectly; let us lay down our lives for one another in the service of the truth, not rendering evil for evil nor railing for railing, but contrariwise let us bless those who seek to injure us and pray for them, realizing that not of themselves do they these things but of the adversary's misleading, even as we have the assurance that those who crucified the Lord were under Satan's delusion, as the Apostles say, "I wot that in ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." "For if they had known they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." So those who now oppose the truth do so because their eyes are holden and their ears are holden because of the adversary, and because they have allowed themselves to become entangled by his delusive snares and ambitions. We hope and pray for their disentanglement, their recovery, while we shun their ways.

PREPARING THE WAY OF THE LORD

John 1:19-34.—JANUARY 12.

Golden Text:—"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

Our Lord declared of his forerunner, "Verily, I say unto you, there hath not arisen a greater prophet than John the Baptist." The signification of the word prophet is "proclaimer"—not necessarily a proclaimer of future things, however. For instance, the Scriptures refer to the prophets and seers, the latter named referring particularly to the seeing of visions and the foreseeing of coming events. Strictly speaking, a prophet is one who teaches or proclaims, though in many instances the two qualities are combined in one individual. This was so in the case of John the Baptist. He was not only a prophet declaring the important message to the people that they should repent, etc., but he foretold coming events—as, for instance, in this lesson he foretold that our

Lord was the Lamb of God which should take away the sin of the world. He declared also that the Lord would baptize people with the holy Spirit and with fire. There was no greater prophet than John, because none of them was entrusted with a more important service of the Lord. Others had foretold the coming of Messiah, his birth of a virgin, his being led as a lamb to the slaughter, his crucifixion, his resurrection, etc., but to John was given the very honorable service of being the first direct announcer or herald of the Son of God, the man Christ Jesus.

While thinking of this honorable position occupied by John, let us remember the Master's word on the subject—"Nevertheless I say unto you, he that is least in the kingdom of

heaven is greater than he." (Matt. 11:11.) What a thought there is here respecting the honor that God has conferred upon the apostles and upon all who since their time have believed on the Lord through their word and come into vital relationship with him through faith and consecration. In proportion as we realize this honor of being ambassadors for God, let us be faithful in the use of the opportunities and privileges afforded us. It was for John's honor to be the herald of the Lord in the flesh; it is our distinction to be permitted to proclaim the *parousia* of the Son of man and his glorious reign, about to be inaugurated for the blessing of all the families of the earth. Let us be faithful even unto imprisonment, even unto death, even unto beheading, should such be the providence of God.

John's proclamation was, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand, repent"—reform, get ready for it. He foretold that our Lord would treat the people of Israel as a reaper, that he would winnow the wheat and cast the chaff into the fire. The same thought he expressed again, saying, "He will baptize [some of you] with the holy Spirit and [others of you] with fire." These prophecies were accurately fulfilled. Our Lord did a reaping work in that nation, as he said to his disciples, "I send you forth to reap that whereon you bestowed no labor." For three years and a half the Lord reaped and gathered the first-fruits of that nation as his disciples, and upon these at Pentecost he poured out the holy Spirit. Subsequently the apostles gathered others before the time for the burning of the chaff, the "baptism of fire" which occurred in the closing of their national history, which culminated in A. D. 70 with the utter destruction of the city, the temple, and their entire polity. Similarly we who are living in the harvest time of this age, and who are declaring the presence, *parousia*, of the Son of man, are aware that a reaping work is now being accomplished in Christendom, nominal Spiritual Israel, and that all the wheat will be gathered into the garner, beyond the veil, and that speedily there will come upon the world, especially upon the tare class, a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation—the divine preparation for the establishment of Messiah's kingdom in power and great glory for the blessing of all the families of the earth.

"WE BE ABRAHAM'S CHILDREN"

John's announcement that sin would bar any from a share in the kingdom, and hence that all should repent and seek divine reconciliation and turn over a new leaf, came as a shock to some who had been passing as God's holy people—the Pharisees and the worldly-wise Sadducees, higher critics, unbelievers. While some of these hearkened and confessed their sins and reformed, others disputed, claiming that John's teachings were extreme and unreasonable. Their argument was that God had promised the kingdom to the seed of Abraham—There is no other nation of Abraham's seed and none other as holy or as worthy as we, and the promise of the kingdom belongs to all Jews irrespective of their sanctity. So those who really embraced John's testimony were chiefly of the poor, confessedly sinful. We have the Lord's word for it that if the nation at large had heeded, had accepted John's message, they would have believed in Jesus. Hence we may well suppose that of the 500 brethren who became our Lord's disciples before his crucifixion, and who were privileged to see him after his resurrection, many of them were of those who had heard and heeded John's message. We may suppose also that considerable numbers of those who believed on the day of Pentecost and afterward were of those who heard John and were baptized by him for remission of sins and reformation of life. Thus do divine arrangements and agencies coöperate for the blessing of the honest-hearted, whatever may be their station in life, high or low, rich or poor.

OUR LORD'S FORERUNNER

In the East in olden times, and still, great personages in their travels are preceded by heralds or forerunners who clear the way. Dr. Trumbull describes the streets of an oriental city, "well filled with half-naked cripples, blind beggars, vain women, and men in bright-colored garments, donkeys trotting through the crowded ways. Suddenly out of all this confusion a sharp, clear voice was heard, 'O ah! O ah!'—meaning, Take care—from a young Egyptian, gaily dressed, coming on the run, swinging a light staff in his hand and repeating his cries to the throng in the street to make way for those who are to follow. Close behind him came an open carriage drawn by a span of showy horses, containing an official of the government. During my stay in Cairo one of the commonest sights was the carriage of a pasha, preceded through the crowded streets by one or more forerunners, calling aloud for the clearing of the way."

John the Baptist was to be the forerunner of our Lord in

the flesh—to clear the way, to make the announcement—that he might be properly received, etc. But John did not fulfill all of the prophecy relating to this clearing of the way and preparing for Messiah's Kingdom, which reads:—

"Prepare ye in the wilderness the way of the Lord,
Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
Every valley shall be exalted,
And every mountain shall be made low,
And the crooked places shall be made straight,
And the rough places plain."—Isa. 40:3, 4.

THE ANTITYPICAL ELIJAH

We remind our readers that in the second volume of DAWN-STUDIES, chapter VIII., we have set forth the evidences that as John in the flesh introduced Jesus in the flesh and thus fulfilled the work of forerunner, so the church in the flesh during this Gospel age has been the antitypical Elijah, whose business it is to announce the second coming of Christ, the King of glory, and to call for the clearing of the way for his Millennial reign. As you all have this presentation we will not enter into a discussion of it here.

Let us note the foregoing prophecy: We perceive that John's ministry accomplished comparatively little of this; it lasted less than two years and reached a very small proportion of one generation, of one nation. But this is the very message that the antitypical John, the antitypical Elijah, the church of Christ in the flesh, has been witnessing to the world. Its message as voiced by the Apostle is that the world is in a wilderness condition and needs the presence of the great King to bring order out of its confusion. Its message is that those who hear should walk circumspectly, should make a straight pathway in the desert, a highway for the coming King. More than this, it shows that the entire reign of Jesus and the church during the Millennium will be to prepare the world for the presence of Jehovah, that the earth may again become his green footstool instead of being a desert, rejected and condemned by him because of sin.

Not only is the work of the church in the flesh pointed out in this prophecy, but also the work of Christ and the church in glory during the Millennial Age is foretold—"every valley shall be exalted," signifying that the humble shall be lifted up out of degradation, and those who have reached high positions of influence and affluence under the reign of sin shall be humbled under the reign of righteousness, and thus symbolically "every mountain shall be brought low." The great things which belong to the present time of sin and imperfection will all be straightened out, and the incongruous things will all be smoothed over; so that eventually the world of mankind, as a result of the work of the "Times of restitution of all things," shall again be in harmony with the divine will and the divine law of love, be ready for a return of the divine presence, as represented by the prophets in the words, "He shall make the place of his feet glorious."

"WHO ART THOU, THEN?"

This was the question asked of John the Baptist—"Art thou the Messiah?" No. "Art thou Elias?" No. "Art thou that prophet mentioned by Moses?" (Acts 3:21, 23.) No. "Who art thou, then? Why do you come in this manner, speaking as with authority?" John's answer was, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. . . . I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose." (Luke 3:4, 16.) Thus did John announce the greatness of Messiah and his own insignificance in comparison. Surely we who antitype him may feel very humble in respect to all of our privileges in connection with the announcement of the glorious kingdom. Any other attitude would be unworthy of us as his representatives and ambassadors. The poet expresses this matter, saying:

"Rather be nothing, nothing—
To him let their voices be raised;
He is the fountain of blessing,
Yes, worthy is he to be praised."

How similar is this announcement to the one made by John. There Jesus was present in the flesh, offering himself to fleshly Israel. Now he is present a spirit being and equally unrecognized. There he was eventually recognized by all the Israelites indeed; here we expect that his presence, *parousia*, will be recognized by all Spiritual Israelites indeed before the "harvest" closes. It is not advisable to cast this pearl of precious truth before the world nor before the unconsecrated. The facts of the Lord's presence, that the harvest work is now

in progress, that the wheat will soon all be garnered and that the fire of trouble upon the tares will soon be kindled are only for those who are "Israelites indeed," hungering and thirsting for righteousness. But these truths are indeed meat in due season for all the wise virgins.

"BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD"

While our Lord's strength and majesty are symbolically referred to when he is styled the "Lion of the tribe of Judah," thus picturing his mighty power as the Millennial King, the picture of a lamb is certainly very appropriate to him in connection with his earthly ministry and sacrifice for our sins. His submission to the Father's will in every particular and ultimately even unto death, even the death of the cross, was very lamb-like. Furthermore, he was God's Lamb in the sense that his offering for our sins was the divine arrangement, the Father's plan. The Scriptural declaration is that God gave his only begotten Son to be man's Redeemer, that he sent his Son into the world—the Son delighting to do the Father's will. All these thoughts beautifully blend together in this expression, "The Lamb of God." Moreover, it brings to our minds the thought of the necessity for a sacrifice for our sins. In no other way could a lamb take away or bear the sin of the world. How glad we are that by the Lord's grace we not only have eyes of understanding to see him as our great Teacher, Shepherd, but also eyes to see and minds to understand that he was indeed the Lamb of God, whose sacrifice on our behalf is to cancel our sins, their penalty, etc. Only those who can recognize Jesus as the Lamb of God, the Sin-Bearer, can have the justification by faith proffered to believers in this Gospel age. Let us never lose sight of this feature of the Truth, Whoever loses his robe of righteousness through faith in the blood, loses all so far as the Scriptures reveal.

TAKING AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD

How wonderful are the statements of the divine Word!—how exact! John, as a Jew, would not be expected to understand all that his words declared, for the Jews were especially expecting Messiah to take away the sins of the Jews, and that then they, as God's Royal Priesthood, would correct the world in righteousness. But John's declaration goes farther than this, and includes all the Gentiles as well. The wisdom from on high which guided this prophetic utterance is beyond that which the majority of the Lord's people today can appreciate. The general thought today seems to be that the sin of the world is never to be taken away—that the world will sink down into eternal torment under the weight of sin—the Adamic condemnation, supplemented by personal transgressions. Christendom, Churchianity, today knows nothing about a Savior that, as the Lamb of God, shall take away the sin of the world. Alas! alas! poor, blind Christendom! It has read these words and other similar declarations of the Scriptures without getting from them the real blessing which they contain. We remember in this connection the Apostle's statement that "the man Christ Jesus gave himself a ransom for all," and we remember his further statement that Jesus' sacrifice was "a propitiation for our sins [the church's sins], and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (1 John 2:2.) Truly, as the Lord declared, As the heavens are higher than the earth so are my ways higher than your ways and my plans than your plans. How glad we are that we find God to be neither little, mean nor revengeful, but a great God whose wondrous plan so far transcends the thought of man. As we look with the eyes of our understanding we realize a measure of the fulfilment of the Apostle's prayer, which, no doubt, included us, "I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, . . . that ye may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height; and to know the love of Christ that passeth knowledge."—Eph. 3:14, 18, 19.

HIS WORK IS BEFORE HIM

John the Baptist spoke of the Lamb as being present, but of the cancellation of the sin of the world as being a future work. And this work is still incomplete. Our Lord did die as the Lamb, his sacrifice was indeed fully meritorious and satisfactory to the Father, as evidenced by his resurrection from the dead and exaltation to glory and power. But in harmony with the divine plan, the taking away of the sins of the world is divided into two parts: (1) The taking away of the sins of those whose hearts long for reconciliation with God and forgiveness, and to be in harmony with that which

is right and true and just and good. These, called believers, have their sins taken away reckonedly; or rather, as the Apostle and the Prophet express it, their sins are "covered" from God's sight by the robe of Christ's righteousness—to be entirely blotted out or taken away when, by the Lord's grace, they shall have finished their course and as faithful ones been counted worthy to enter into life eternal. In that new body then to be granted there will be no blemish, no sin to cover, all will have been blotted out. Then will begin the reign of Christ and his glorified church, his bride, the blessing of the world—the Millennial reign, the kingdom of the heavens, the rule of righteousness. (2) But before that reign shall begin, the Lamb of God—who redeemed the world more than eighteen centuries ago—will present the merit of his sacrifice and the sacrifice also of the church, his body members [made worthy, acceptable through his merit], to the Father as the second offering of the great Day of Atonement sacrifice—for all the people.—Lev. 16.

As the Lord's presentation of his sacrifice when he ascended up on high was accepted of the Father and the blessing came upon the church, the household of faith, so surely will the second presentation in the end of this age when offered by the great High Priest be acceptable to the Father for the sins of the whole world—all the people. Divine forgiveness for all, the obliquity of Adamic guilt and weakness, will then be made applicable to every creature, and only for such portions of transgressions as have been in the nature of wilful wrong doing will receive "chastisements," "stripes." (Luke 12:47, 48.) All the influences of that Millennial Kingdom will be exercised for the blessing, uplifting and assistance of all who will then be brought to a knowledge of the Lord and his gracious plans. Even stripes, chastisements, judgments are amongst the assistances for the world and their correction in righteousness. So, then, by the end of the Millennial age, the blessing of God—through the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world—shall have accomplished such wonderful, gracious blessings for mankind that all shall have reached the full perfection of restitution to human nature except the incorrigible, who will be "utterly destroyed from amongst the people."—Acts 3:23.

JOHN'S FAITHFUL WITNESS

We see in John's message an utter absence of selfishness, that stumbling stone which has kept so many of the Lord's people from themselves progressing and from being used of the Lord as a blessing to others and witnesses to the truth. John's confession was that Jesus was far greater than himself, and should be preferred before him because he was before him. He was not only before him in the sense of having had a preëxistence with the Father, but he was before him in the sense of always having had a higher station and being perfect, while John himself was compassed with imperfections of the flesh like other men.

The declaration, "I knew him not," should not be understood to mean that he was not acquainted with Jesus, for the record shows that they were full cousins. Rather the thought is that he knew not that Jesus was the Messiah: he knew him as his cousin, he knew him as a wonderful boy and a wonderful man, he knew him well enough to at first protest that he was not one of the kind that should be baptized—he was not a sinner. But after Jesus had insisted that by his baptism he would be accomplishing the Father's will—"fulfilling all righteousness"—then John baptized him in water. There, he tells us, at that moment he received from God the evidence that Jesus was the Messiah. He had already been informed that he was to announce Messiah and the kingdom, and that he would know the Son of God by beholding the descent upon him of the holy Spirit as a dove, but he had not expected that this demonstration should take place in connection with any whom he baptized. He himself, then, was astonished when he beheld the descent of the Spirit upon the Lord, and he announced then to the people that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God, the Lamb of God. John did not announce that Jesus was the Father, but that he was the Son of God. This was our Lord's own declaration, the declaration of the apostles, and our testimony must be in harmony with this. We are not to ignore the Father nor the Son nor the relationship between the two, nor the oneness which exists between them, which our Lord explained in his prayer, when he prayed for the church that they all might be one even as he and the Father are one—not one in person, but one in unity of heart and purpose.

CANADIAN FRIENDS DESIRING SERMONS WEEKLY

Arrangements have been made for Brother Russell's sermons weekly in *The Toronto World*. We can give a *clubbing rate* of \$1.50 per year (or, with *TOWER*, \$2.50), except in the

cities of Hamilton and Toronto, where the price will be \$2.75, with *TOWER*, \$3.75. Make up your lists speedily and *send to us* at once.

TWO DEBATES ARRANGED FOR

The Editor of ZION'S WATCH TOWER is not anxious for debate—except where it would seem to be necessary for the defense of the Truth, or provisionally indicated as likely to bring forth good fruits. However, as Dr. Eaton's challenge came unsolicited, so also, now, we have two more—both of which we have accepted in the name of the Lord and depending on his sustaining grace—as follows:—

DEBATE WITH REV. WM. DILLON, D.D.

**VERY PROMINENT AMONGST THE "UNITED BRETHREN,"
AT ELKHART, INDIANA, JANUARY 17 AND 18**

FOUR TOPICS, TWO HOURS EACH, AFTERNOONS AND EVENINGS

(1) "The Scriptures teach that there will be no probation nor opportunity for salvation after the body dies, nor subsequent to the second coming of Christ." Dr Dillon will affirm, Pastor Russell will deny.

(2) "The Scriptures clearly teach that only the 'saints' of this Gospel age will share in the first resurrection, but that

vast multitudes will be saved in and by the subsequent resurrection." Pastor Russell will affirm, Dr. Dillon will deny.

(3) "The Scriptures clearly teach that the second coming of Christ will precede the Millennium, and that the object of both the second coming and the Millennium is the blessing of all the families of the earth." Pastor Russell will affirm, Dr. Dillon will deny.

(4) "The Scriptures clearly teach that the divine penalty for sin—actual transgressions of God's holy law—eventually to be inflicted upon the incorrigible, will consist of inconceivably painful sufferings, eternal in duration." Dr. Dillon will affirm, Pastor Russell will deny.

DEBATE WITH ELDER L. S. WHITE

**SELECTED REPRESENTATIVE OF THE "CHRISTIAN
DENOMINATION" (RADICAL BRANCH)
CINCINNATI, O., FEBRUARY 23-28.**

**SIX TOPICS, TWO HOURS EACH. PARTICULARS IN OUR NEXT
ISSUE.**

FINDING THE LORD'S JEWELS

John 1:35-51.—JANUARY 19.

Golden Text:—"We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and the Prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth."

Our last lesson showed us Jesus at the time of his consecration and its symbolization by baptism, when he received the holy Spirit, which to John the Baptist was the token that he was the Messiah. It was after this that Jesus was for forty days alone in the wilderness studying the divine plan, and particularly his own share therein, under the enlightening influences of the holy Spirit which he had just received. This, we see, brought also testing and temptation from the adversary, suggestions of other and different ways from that which the Lord's Word indicated and which the holy Spirit now showed. Our Lord having passed through those temptations successfully, a victor, began his ministry of three and a half years of self-sacrifice even unto death. Naturally enough he went back to where John had been baptizing and preaching. How much fellowship he enjoyed with John is not stated, or how long he remained in that vicinity. Only the most conspicuous incidents are noted.

It was while Jesus was away in the wilderness that the Pharisees and Scribes asked John whether or not he was the Messiah and received bold testimony that he was not, and was not even worthy to be the menial servant of the great Messiah, who was to accomplish the fulfilment of the prophecies. This was just before our Lord's return, and on the next day (v. 29) Jesus—having returned from the wilderness—mingled amongst the people listening to John's preaching, etc., and it was at that time that John said, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," and acknowledged him publicly, and that he had the witness of the Spirit in seeing the dove resting upon him at his baptism. It was on the following day, as we read in our lesson, that John, standing with two of his disciples, pointed to Jesus in the distance walking and said, "Behold the Lamb of God."

"THERE COMETH ONE AFTER ME"

The beautiful simplicity and honesty of John the Baptist is remarkable because it is rare. The majority of even the noble-minded seem to have such a selfish, grasping disposition as to unfit them for a service of this kind committed to John. Apparently the majority would find it absolutely impossible to avoid the extolling of their own position and service and dignity in connection with whatever they would say in respect to another, but John seems to have been utterly oblivious of himself—he thought only of his responsibility as the Voice that should cry in the wilderness to them, announcing Messiah. Disowning all honor and distinction for himself, he directed the reverence of all hearts toward Jesus. Let us emphasize this, each in his own heart, as being the proper attitude for all of the Lord's honored servants. We are not to honor ourselves, but to honor him whom the Father has honored, our Lord and our Head. In proportion as we shall be faithful in this service and seek not our own but our Master's praise and honor, pointing him out as the one in whom is centered the divine plan—in this same proportion will we be exhibiting the spirit, disposition, which our Lord can approve and reward with a share in the heavenly kingdom and glory. If we did not cultivate this spirit and have it in our hearts we would be unfit for the kingdom—unfit to be entrusted with so great power, honor and glory and with immortality. "He that honoreth me I will honor," "He that is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of man be ashamed," "He that exalteth [praises] himself shall be abased; he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."—John 5:23; Luke 9:26; 14:11.

"ALL MEN WERE IN EXPECTATION"

The Scriptures inform us that at this time the whole Jewish nation was in expectation of Messiah. The records show this in connection with the time of our Lord's birth, the solicitude of Herod, the killing of the babes of Bethlehem, the journey of the wise men, etc. Doctor Farrar remarks on this same line:—

"We are informed by Tacitus, by Suetonius, and by Josephus, that there prevailed throughout the entire East at this time an intense conviction, derived from ancient prophecies, that ere long a powerful monarch would arise in Judea, and gain dominion over the world."

It was in harmony with this general expectation of the people that John's preaching drew such large crowds when he announced that the kingdom of Messiah was nigh, and that all those prepared for a share therein should confess their sins, repent of them and reform—inviting them to symbolize this by baptism, but applying it only to Jews, and not in reference to their original sin—which under the law was atoned for year by year with the blood of bulls and goats—but referred to repentance for all personal transgressions, misdeeds against the law. We have our Lord's testimony for it that in proportion as the people believed John's message and acted thereon, in that same proportion they were ready for his ministry and the further truth of the Gospel. Hence we are not surprised that those who became the Lord's disciples were in some manner intimately and sympathetically acquainted with John and his preaching. Is it not a rule in divine providence that one step of knowledge and devotion leads to another? It was in harmony with this that the disciples of John the Baptist had the Messiah first pointed out to them, and thus the door was opened for their becoming Jesus' disciples.

SEEKING FELLOWSHIP WITH JESUS

The two disciples to whom John the Baptist made the remark, "Behold the Lamb of God," at once concluded that if they had found the Messiah whom John was introducing it was time to seek his fellowship, and if possible identify themselves with his ministry. Nor does John the Baptist seem to have offered the slightest remonstrance against their leaving off coöperation with him. The name of one of these is given in the narrative, Andrew; the name of the other is omitted, but it is presumed that it was John, the writer of this Gospel, whose modesty in such matters is indicated by the withholding of his name on another occasion also—when he refers to himself as "that disciple whom Jesus loved." How beautiful this modesty, how much it endears the character of John to all of us. A less modest man in writing of the matter would probably have told of how he first thought of following Jesus and invited Andrew to accompany him. But we can not only have much more love for John because of this characteristic of humility, but it gives us correspondingly more confidence in all he has written—that ambition did not warp or color any of his descriptions of the matters recorded by him.

The modesty of the two men is further exemplified by their course of conduct in following the Lord instead of approaching him boldly and saying, "Sir, we have the honorable distinction of being amongst the most prominent disciples of John the Baptist, and now introduce ourselves to you." On the contrary, they followed quietly, wondering where our Lord resided and how they might have an opportunity without ob-

truding themselves to become acquainted with him. Their reverence for him and their modest opinion of themselves restrained them from improprieties. However, after they had followed the Lord probably a considerable distance on his journey toward his abode, he turned to them saying, "What seek ye?" or, as we might translate it into the form of today, "Is there anything I can do for you?" Taken by surprise, they merely answered the Master, "Rabbi, we are wondering where you reside." Our Lord answered, "Come and see," and they went with him and spent the remainder of that day (for this was about four o'clock in the afternoon) in his company. Their queries and our Lord's answers during that afternoon and evening are open for our imagination, for no record is given us. Doubtless they explained to the Lord what they had heard respecting him from John the Baptist, and made inquiries regarding his future work and kingdom. We may be sure that our Lord told them only part of the truth, in harmony with his subsequent statement to all of the disciples, "I have many things to tell you, but you cannot bear them now."—John 16:12.

LESSONS FOR THE NEW CREATION

There are several lessons here that may profit us: (1) The humility of the disciples in their approach; (2) Their proper ambition to have all that God had provided for them and to make use of their opportunity—to progress from being the disciples of John to the discipleship of Jesus; (3) Their seeking in this unobtrusive manner to have fellowship with the Lord and to become better acquainted; (4) Our Lord's generous reception of them and hospitable invitation to his home; (5) His wisdom in not telling them the whole truth—neither about the heavenly things nor about the earthly trials and difficulties. Meat in due season is the Scriptural order—milk for babes, strong meat for those who are more developed, as the Apostle recommends.

How much need all the Lord's dear followers have for applying these various lessons each to his own heart and experience and practice! How many of us have had a zeal without wisdom, and have fed new beginners with strong meat, which has troubled and hindered them if it did not choke their interest. But we are all pupils, and let us all learn more and more to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves, as earnest in showing the pearls to those ready for the sight as in withholding them from those who are swinish and unprepared.

"WHAT ARE YOU SEEKING?"

There is peculiar force in this query, and no doubt our Lord used it with the intention of awakening this very thought in these two who first sought his companionship. It is a good question for each one of us to put to himself, and for us to suggest at a proper time to all others who are manifesting any interest in present truth. What are we seeking? What are we looking for? We know what the world is seeking—wealth, honor, fame, ease, etc.—and we know that many who turn toward the Lord still have the spirit of the world. They would like to be the Lord's disciples and still have and cultivate and enjoy the hopes and ambitions that are more or less worldly. It is appropriate that we should give heed to the Master's words as though they were addressed to each of us individually, What are *you* seeking? Let us answer our Master in our own hearts and in prayer; and before we make answer, let us consider well that it may be a truthful one, for we might indeed deceive ourselves, but could not deceive him with whom we have to do. It is right that we should seek the kingdom and that we should know that there is a great honor and glory and dignity associated with it by divine arrangement, and that thus we should "seek for glory, honor and immortality." But in conjunction with this seeking of the kingdom we should remember our Master's words on another occasion, that we should seek chiefly the kingdom of God and *his righteousness*.

We are to remember that the kingdom is not to be reached by an unrighteous path, that injustice, iniquity, lawlessness, self-indulgence, selfishness in any form are paths which lead in other directions. We are to remember that the Master by word and by example indicated to us that to live godly in this present time would involve us in a measure of persecution, as it did him, and that the servant must not expect to be above his lord in the world's favor. Hence to say we are seeking the kingdom means that we are taking the path leading thereto—the narrow way of self-denial. It means that we have enlisted under the banner of the Lord, with a full knowledge that our loyalty to him will mean to us opposition from the world, the flesh and the Adversary, as we seek to be good soldiers of the cross and to endure hardness in fighting against sin. It is those who seek the Lord with sincerity, with honesty, without guile and without selfishness, who find him, have fel-

lowship with him and become his true disciples, and eventually will have joint-heirship with him in his kingdom.

"FIRST FINDETH HIS OWN BROTHER"

One of the two who heard John and followed Jesus was Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter—"He findeth first his own brother Simon." The revised version may be understood to imply that both disciples sought their brothers, but that Andrew found his brother first. If, as is supposed, John was the other disciple, we know that he had a brother, James, and that the latter also was brought to the Lord. The particular thought we wish to emphasize here as worthy of special commendation, embodying a proper lesson for us, is the fact that these disciples in beginning the service of the truth went first to their own brethren. This implies that they had brotherly love in their hearts, as we should properly expect all would have who would be found worthy to be disciples of Jesus. It implies that they had influence with their brethren along religious lines, which probably would not have been true if they had not been recognized by their relatives as men of character and principle. If, therefore, any of the Lord's people should feel impelled to first go to strangers with the good tidings it would be a less favorable sign as respects the esteem in which they are held. However, let them not feel discouraged if they have not this favorable evidence to begin with. Let us remember the Apostle's assurance that amongst those the Lord is choosing for his disciples there are not many great, noble, influential—that they are mainly the ignoble.

The very fact that the Lord has granted us the privilege of his fellowship is an assurance that there was something in us that he did not despise, and was willing to take over, that he might mould and fashion it by his truth and grace, and finally present it beautiful and irreprovable before the Father through the glorious change of the first resurrection. Again, however, let us emphasize the propriety of loving those who are our kin to the extent that we will do all in our power for their assistance. As this is a rule that should prevail amongst brethren it should also be a rule as between husband and wife, parents and children. If a wife should receive the truth, her first joy should be, if possible, to bring the matter to the attention of her husband. If a husband receive the truth it should be his first joy and privilege to bring the matter to the attention of his wife, and so between the parents to the children. We confess that we have been surprised at times to find that this course, which seems so natural and so proper, has not always suggested itself to those who have come into the light of present truth.

We advise that where a different course has been followed it is time for a change. Let the husband plan for the welfare of the wife and assist her in arranging the home matters, so that she may have time for studying the truth, attending meetings, etc. Let the wife coming into the truth give diligent attention to arrange matters most favorably for her husband, that he also may enjoy the blessings, the privileges of study, etc. The old adage, that "Charity begins at home," is as true of religious charity as of other kinds. "Husbands, love your wives"—do all in your power to bless them, especially in their highest spiritual interests, and to bring to them this highest of all joys. "Wives, reverence your husbands"—appreciate them, and desire that they shall have all of the good things obtainable, and use your best influence for their assistance.

"WE HAVE FOUND THE MESSIAH"

With this message they greeted their brethren, and, as explained in the text, the Hebrew word Messiah corresponded to the Greek word Christ. They knew that for long centuries Messiah had been promised, and that their whole nation, through varying vicissitudes, had been looking, hoping, praying for his coming and for the blessings which he would bring to their nation as their king, delivering them from all evil and exalting them with the power of God to be the light of the world, and thus through them shedding blessings upon all nations. The afternoon spent by these two with Jesus had convinced them that the words of John the Baptist were correct, that Jesus was "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

It is not explained how Peter received the message, but judging him from his subsequent course of conduct, we must assume that he came with haste to see, to know, to judge for himself on the subject. The nature of the evidence given him by Jesus is not related, but he believed, became a disciple, received a new name—an added name. He was Simon Bar-Jona, or Simon, son of Jonah; now, henceforth, he would be more particularly known as a disciple by the name of Simon Peter, that is, Simon, a stone. Thus early did Jesus indicate his knowledge of the man, recognizing him as one of the living stones for the glorious Temple of the future, as this Apostle himself afterward explained.—1 Pet. 2:4, 5.

"GO FORTH INTO GALILEE"

On the day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and en route found Philip, whom he personally invited to become his follower, and then speedily Philip found Nathanael, known also in the Scriptures as Bartholomew.

This finding of the disciples is described to have been at Bethabara, where Jesus was making his home, and which by the revisers is called Bethany—thus giving the suggestion that our Lord was acquainted with the family of Lazarus and Martha and Mary before he began his ministry, and that it was to this point that the disciples followed him from the fords of the Jordan, where John had been baptizing. Evidently our Lord tarried in the vicinity of John's mission for a time, there to find some of the most earnest ones whom John's preaching had gathered together.

It will be noticed that the disciples here mentioned all came from Galilee, John and James, Andrew and Simon Peter, Philip and Nathanael. (Judas alone was a Judean.) What were these men doing so far away from their homes? We can only suppose that they were amongst the masses who heard of John and his preaching, and who were so deeply interested in the coming Messiah that they came what was considered in those days a considerable journey, leaving their business that they might hear what John had to say, and join with him as his disciples in helping to prepare the way for Messiah. How the Lord does use one ministration of the truth to prepare our hearts for a later and fuller illustration of it! This corroborates the statement of our Lord's prayer to the effect that these disciples were true, God-fearing consecrated men before they came to Jesus. In the prayer Jesus says, "Thine they were and thou gavest them to me." (John 17:6.) A lesson to us in this is that if we are faithful and zealous to every portion of truth that comes to us, according as we receive and act upon this we will be prepared for another. Had these men not had the spirit of consecration they never would have left their affairs to join with John in his ministry, and then they might not have been so well prepared to be the honored apostles of Jesus.

"WHENCE KNOWEST THOU ME?"

The story of the call of Nathanael is a specially interesting one. Our imaginations have little difficulty in filling in the items omitted by the narrative. Philip himself had come within the charmed circle of our Lord's influence, and had realized that it was a blessed privilege to become his disciple and that he must be indeed the long-looked-for Messiah. Full of this confidence he looked for his friend Nathanael, whom he recognized as being of one mind and heart with himself in the desire to serve the Lord and to be ready for Messiah's kingdom. Finding him his salutation was, "We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write—Jesus of Nazareth, [adopted] son of Joseph." Nathanael was apparently a man of keen intellectual power. He felt that his friend Philip had accepted something too hastily, and that he was being deceived by a pretender, and his prompt objection was, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" As though he had said, "That is a mean city of itself; no great people of any reputation would ever come from thence; no prophecies, so far as we know, make any reference to that city. What you tell me of your Messiah rather tends to prejudice my mind against him."

And so it is today with some of the Lord's true followers who are expecting the second coming of the Lord as the great King of glory. When we tell them that we have found the truth on this subject and that the law and the prophets all corroborate the fact that we are now living in the harvest time, in the *parousia* of the Son of man, they are disposed to sneer at our zeal and enthusiasm and to bid us be very careful lest we be deceived. They ask, Whence comes the message of the *parousia*? and when they are told that it is not from the great, the wise, the mighty of this present time, not from the Doctors of Divinity, but from humble sources that the message reaches them, they ask, "What could you expect from such a source?" intimating that rather we should look to the Scribes and Pharisees and Doctors of the Law today.

Let us answer such doubting brethren as Philip answered Nathanael, "Come and see!" Investigate, test the matter by the Word of God. Apparently Nathanael would not go with Philip. The latter may have gone his own way dejectedly, because one whom he esteemed to be a true servant of God was apparently unwilling to hearken and to investigate. But Nathanael had his own reasons for not at once complying with the invitation. He felt that the matter was one of great importance; that it affected not only his own interests but the interests of his friends and of the Lord's cause in general. He must be cautious. He had already heard of Jesus, and had been considering and praying about this very subject be-

fore Philip came to him; he had asked to be kept from delusions and snares—that his judgment might be guided of the Lord, that he might not be deceived by a pretender. He would follow a little later, and, free from all prejudice, would endeavor to judge of the merits or demerits of the case, relying upon the Lord's blessing, which he had sought.

How glad we would be if all our dear friends who give evidence, so far as we are able to judge, of being true, loyal servants of the Lord, were to take the course that Nathanael took to seek the Lord and his protection and guidance, and then to investigate, proving all things by the Word of God! And while we may be sure that though some may not as promptly take this course as did Nathanael, all who are of the truly overcoming class will ultimately take it and ultimately be guided, that they may indeed come in contact with present truth and realize the *parousia* of our Lord and his work of harvesting the church and gathering the ripe grains into the garner preparatory to their shining forth with him in the glory of the kingdom for the blessing of all the families of the earth.—Matt. 13:43.

BLESSED ARE YOUR EYES AND EARS

As we notice in this lesson the reception that our Lord gave Nathanael, we are forced to contrast it with the very different reception he gave to some of the Scribes and Pharisees and Doctors of the Law when they approached him in a caviling spirit. To these he spoke in parables and dark sayings which he did not expect them to appreciate or to understand, but to such as Nathanael our Lord was most gracious, because knowing the hearts of all he could wisely discriminate. We may not exercise such a liberty because such a knowledge is not ours; it is for us to be patient and courteous to all, and to do our best to assist all to an understanding of the truth, whether they shall hear or whether they shall forbear—convinced, however, that only the Israelites indeed will hear effectually, will receive the call and be profited thereby to the attainment of the prize.

Before Nathanael had quite reached Jesus and those who were with him, the Master said, in his hearing, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile." A wonderful tribute this! No wonder Nathanael was fit to be of the little flock and one of the apostles! No wonder Philip wrestled with him, praying him to come and see. His honesty of heart made him worthy of the blessings of which the mass of his nation were not then worthy. As we read in John 1:11, 12, Jesus "came unto his own and his own received him not; but to as many as received him to them gave he liberty [privilege] to become the sons of God." And he helped those who were in the right attitude of heart to receive him; he assisted their faith and encouraged their confidence, saying to one, as we remember, "Be not faithless, but believing."—John 20:27.

But Nathanael, although he realized that he was an honest, true Israelite, seeking for whatever God had to give to his faithful, was not satisfied with this testimony—such an expression might be given by another in flattery. He would cross-question the Lord, and he said, "Whence knowest thou me?" You have made a statement; what is your authority for it? I do not know that we have ever met before. Jesus replied, "When thou wast under the fig-tree, before Philip called thee, I saw thee." Ah, well did Nathanael remember how he had crept under the low-spreading boughs of the fig-tree and how he had prayed to the heavenly Father for wisdom and for the proper evidences on the subject of concern. Here he had the very answer to his prayer. The one who could know about that prayer and could thus answer it and reveal himself must indeed be superhuman—all that he claimed, the Messiah. Nathanael's faith operated quickly, and he responded, "Rabbi [Master], thou art the Son of God: thou art the King of Israel."

And is not our Lord's dealing practically the same today? Is it not true that those who now in faith and prayer seek for enlightenment respecting the times and the seasons and the features of the divine plan, and information respecting the harvest work—is it not true that these are specially helped of the Lord? that the Truth is made specially clear before their minds? whereas others coming to the subject through idle curiosity perhaps, or with a half faith fear a coming trouble and are desirous of knowing how to escape it, are left comparatively in darkness? Let us who have discerned these beautiful traits and qualities in the class of disciples whom the Lord chose at his first advent, see to it that we cultivate similar characteristics, and that we expend our special energies to bring the Truth to the attention of others who give evidence of meekness and faith and loyalty to God.

"THOU SHALT SEE GREATER THINGS"

As soon as Nathanael had confessed his faith our Lord assured him that what he had already come to appreciate was