

a missionary in China for many years, and am now on furlough, most of which will be spent in Travancore, India. May I ask an interest in your prayers for future guidance?

With thanks in anticipation, believe me to remain,
Yours very sincerely.—Travancore, India.

REJOICING IN TRIBULATION

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:—

Greeting in His name! Your good and encouraging letter of 17th inst. received and very much appreciated.

While we suffered much loss of goods, we did, and still do, and intend always to cling closely to Rom. 8:28. Yes, we

were in perfect peace. The flood of water did not reach our second floor by 18 inches; and though our neighbors left their homes and went to the hills, we stayed where we were (upstairs) seven days and eight nights, having plenty to eat and drink (thanks to your advice as to food for time of trouble). We went to bed every night and slept soundly.

While some of those of the world noted and commented on our peace, others said it was wicked to take things so calmly and serenely while they (the world) were so worried and so many were losing their goods.

Your brother and sister by his grace,
MR. AND MRS. J. L. DILLI.—Ohio.

BEREAN LESSONS AND TESTIMONY MEETINGS

We have requested the traveling pilgrims to do what they can to assist the different classes with whom they meet to a proper appreciation of the great value of Berean study classes and testimony meeting. While we have advised these and described their successful operation and method in *SCRIPTURE STUDIES*, Vol. VI., some of the dear friends seem not to fully appreciate them. We believe this is because they have never seen them in proper operation. With good Berean study classes and testimony meetings rightly conducted, the I. B. S. A. classes will surely be prosperous in spiritual things—whether they have any preaching or not.

The Pilgrim Brethren are selected with care, and with the thought that they are well rounded out in Christian experience and along the lines of the Berean studies and in leading testimony meetings. It is our thought, therefore, that if a Pilgrim visits a place where such meetings are not held, he cannot do the friends a better service than to give them a sample of how such meetings should be conducted to be interesting and profitable—along the lines indicated in Vol. VI.

In places where such meetings are already in vogue, and are successful and well attended by the interested, sample meetings by the pilgrims would not be so necessary. Nevertheless, we have suggested to them that where they serve a

class more than one evening, and one of those is the regular testimony meeting evening, it will be well for them to conduct the testimony meeting along the lines of Vol. VI., closing in an hour, and then taking an extra half-hour for a heart-to-heart talk along the lines which the time, place and circumstances may suggest to them as most helpful to the class. We have urged all the dear brethren who do public speaking to confine their discourse to sixty minutes—and surely not to exceed seventy minutes—and that if for any reason they speak longer than this, they will kindly explain to us the particular reasons therefor.

This is not done to hamper the brethren, but because uniformly long discourses are too strenuous for the public, and therefore apt to hinder the cause we all wish to serve. Exceptions to this are made in the case of the two or three brethren who are generally used to open a series of meetings; for a special endeavor is then made to bring out an audience and a little extra time may be necessary, and in the case of especially interesting speakers, a long discourse may be wise. The average speaker, however, can accomplish more good in an hour than in two hours.

In these and in all suggestions and regulations, dear friends, be assured that our aim, object, motive, is the Lord's glory and the blessing of his people.

IN PASTURES GREEN

“In pastures green? Not always; sometimes he
Who knoweth best in kindness leadeth me
In weary ways, where heavy shadows be.
Out of the sunshine, warm and soft and bright,
Out of the sunshine into darkest night;
I oft would faint with terror and with fright,
Only for this—I know he holds my hand;
So, whether in the green or desert land,
I trust, although I may not understand.

“And by still waters? No, not always so;
Ofttimes the heavy tempests round me blow,
And o'er my soul the waves and billows go.
But when the storm beats loudest, and I cry
Aloud for help, the Master standeth by,
And whispers to my soul, ‘Lo, it is I!’
Above the tempest wild I hear him say,
‘Beyond this darkness lies the perfect day;
In every path of thine I lead the way.’”

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“YOUR REDEMPTION DRAWETH NIGH”

“Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.”—Isaiah 26:20, 21.

[This article, excepting the paragraphs printed below, was a reprint of article entitled, “Come, My People,” published in issue March 15, 1895, which please see.]

Speaking of the trouble at the end of the Gospel age, our Lord said, “Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.” (Luke 21:36) Again (vs. 28) He said, “When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.” “My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors.”

How much trouble there will be in our passing into the secret “chambers,” in passing unto the Lord, we do not know. Yet when this trouble comes, there will be such a blessing from the Lord that those who go through it will be able to rejoice in tribulation. Whatever their experiences will be, these will be joyful in that they will have the thought of being forever with the Lord. We can rejoice even as did St. Stephen.

RETRIBUTION FOR WILFUL SIN

Verse 21 seems to refer to the operation of the principle of justice in God's judgments upon the world. The heavenly Father stands for justice, and he has appointed that all of his mercy shall be exercised through the Lord Jesus Christ. Our Lord will be specially identified with the trouble upon the nations, but it will not be so much his work as the Father's.

The day of trouble is called the day of Jehovah. We read that “In that day his feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives,” and that there shall be a great earthquake.—Zech. 14:4.

While God has done nothing for mankind during the past six thousand years, but has rested so far as any work of restitution is concerned, yet in some instances he has interfered to prevent the spread of evil, as in the case of the Amalekites and of the Sodomites. The Scriptures seem to indicate that in the end of this age he will intervene in the affairs of mankind, and execute justice in the time of trouble.

In the Scriptures, justice is represented as calling for retribution. The blood of the murderers' victims is said to cry for vengeance. Whether the sin has been literal murder, or has been some injustice which has led to crime or suicide, Justice will require of humanity this much of retribution on this score. Justice demands that the children of Adam shall suffer. The church of Christ is a separate class, taken out from the world and having their sins forgiven. They are upholders of truth and righteousness.

But this time of trouble coming upon the world will be the time when justice will get its dues, so to speak. Justice will take its “pound of flesh.” It will requite for the more or

less wilful sins of humanity. The class that has reaped the benefit of the spoliation of the poor in the past, will have to pay some of the toll to justice in squaring the accounts. The Apostle James says, "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for the miseries that shall come upon you." We are not to think, however, that in this present time God is dealing with the rich. None are on trial now except the church of Christ. The others are merely the world of mankind, one part of which God will permit to wreak a measure of vengeance on the other part. But man's extremity will be God's opportunity. His appointed time for the establishment of his kingdom will have come, and he will cause this wrath of man to work out good for humanity.

Those who are causing this trouble to come on are not aware of what they are doing. But when satisfaction shall have been made to justice, Messiah's kingdom will interpose. We read that "except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved." This exacting of a penalty for such sins as we have enumerated is not at all in conflict with the Bible teaching that Christ died for sin. Jesus pays the sin-debt of the world.

The sin-debt of the world was a death penalty. Unless the Lord Jesus had met that penalty, the world would never be released. That death penalty would have remained upon the world, without any injustice in any way. The selfishness which has led to murder is, however, much more than the meeting of Adam's sin penalty by our Lord. Whoever has, through injustice, been responsible for murderous conditions is held responsible for those conditions.

We read that in the end of the Jewish age our Lord said that God would require from that generation a reckoning for all the righteous blood shed from the time of Abel down. (Matt. 23:35) And the trouble which came upon the Jewish nation in the end of their age fully settled that account. They had light and knowledge, and thus were held responsible. They were obliged to suffer because of the injuries that were not only perpetrated by some, but endorsed or winked at by others.

LIGHT AND RESPONSIBILITY

In the close of this age, it would seem, the judgment of the Lord will be upon Christendom, which has had much light, although at times only a refracted light. But a measure of responsibility has come with it, and apparently the Lord's edict is that they shall not escape the penalty. From this generation he will require all the righteous blood shed during this age, upon it, even as he did from the Jews in the end of their age. This will cause the great time of trouble here, as it did there. So far as the world is concerned, they might not perceive the relationship between this time and the past. We know only from the Scriptures. God gives us this understanding, that we may have the greater poise and comfort of mind.

In thinking of the nature of the tribulation at the end of this age, we are first of all to remember that it is a tribula-

tion coming upon the world and the hypocrites. The Lord tells us that if we are faithful, we shall not come into the condemnation coming upon the world. The intimation is that those who are not faithful enough to get into the little flock will come into this condemnation with the world. So the Lord tells us of some who will get their portion with the hypocrites.—Matt. 24:51.

Only the wheat class constitute the church of Christ. Only they will be gathered into the barn. (Matt. 13:30) The tare class will undergo this time of trouble coming upon the world. The hypocrite class will include the rich of this world. These are addressed by St. James, 5:1-6. In these verses, the Apostle is turning aside from his line of thought. Then he addresses the church again. The trouble will be especially hard on the rich, who are represented as weeping and howling for misery.

The great company class is typically represented by the scapegoat of Israel's atonement day ceremonies. The bullock typifies our Lord Jesus, and the Lord's goat his faithful followers. (Heb. 13:11-13) After the faithful ones have finished their course, then something will be done with the scapegoat—the great company. The account in Leviticus is very specific that the high priest will then lay upon the head of the scape goat all the iniquities of all Israel. (Lev. 16:21) All the sins of all the people were laid upon the head of the scapegoat, that it might bear them away—make full satisfaction. As has been suggested, God has made provision for the cancellation of original sin through Christ, and has made arrangements for the satisfaction of justice, so far as all the other sins of the world are concerned, through the great company class.

There is a correspondency between the end of the Jewish age and the end of this Gospel age in this way: As expiation for the taking of the life of Jesus was required of the Jewish nation, so at the end of the Gospel age, the sacrificed life of the church will in a measure be required of nominal spiritual Israel.

The Lord seems to give this suggestion, when he says foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; that "the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, it shall be required of this generation." (Luke 11:50, 51) And St. Paul writes that all things written in the prophecies shall be fulfilled. So in the end of this age there are certain things charged up against Christendom for their evil deeds. This will include all the persecutions of this Gospel age, including also, presumably, all the persecutions against the Jews. Therefore the Scriptures indicate that a great time of trouble similar to that which came upon the Jewish nation will now come upon all Christendom. The experiences of Israel in the year 70 will be paralleled in the experiences of the year 1915.

A WORD TO THE WATCHERS

"Let us watch and be sober."—1 Thess. 5:6.

The Apostle Paul is addressing the church, himself included, when he says, "Let us watch and be sober." He indicates in the context that we are to watch for the day, for Messiah's kingdom, which will produce that day. We know to expect the rising of the Sun of Righteousness. The church is to be delivered from sin and death early in the morning of that wonderful day. Their part is to be in the first resurrection, to glory, honor and immortality with their Lord.

St. Paul tells us that God has so arranged his program that the day will come as a thief in the night—stealthily; and that those who are asleep will not be aware that the day has come, and might therefore not be expected to be in a waiting attitude. Our Master's words are, "Take heed to yourselves, lest . . . that day come upon you unawares. . . . Watch ye therefore." (Luke 21:34, 36) We believe that he leaves the matter in obscurity, because it will be better for us as a whole not to know the exact time. For instance, in the long period of the dark ages it was better that Christians did not know just when the time of Christ's return would come. There were wonderful events transpiring in their day, and have been, in fact, in every day, but so much the more, we read, as the day approaches.

While the adversary is ever active in his efforts to do harm to the Lord's cause, he will be still more seductive in his evil influences during the last days. We must therefore, as the day draws near, be more and more alert in guarding every point of attack. The Lord allows us to do this watching, and he will reward the faithful ones; for he takes pleasure in the watchers. These will not be careless. Any who are careless

will not be of the kingdom class, for they are not of the kind that he wishes to glorify.

God wishes those who are awake to be learning more and more of his plan. These will grow in grace and in knowledge as they watch. They will not be like the world. The world will be in a stupor—they will be unworthy of the day. Darkness covers the whole earth at the present time. But God's people are granted a special light. They love the light. "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Psa. 119:105) It is not a light like that of the moon, which reaches far out, but merely a little light at the feet of those who are watching for it. Those who are going to sleep will find their light going out.

EVIDENCES OF THE NEW DAY

The way that the Lord has been marking out for his people all down through the age has been a narrow way—a very narrow way. His light is given only to those who are seeking—those who are waiting—those who are watching. These will discern the dawning of the morning.

Others will not see. They have not watched to catch the foregleams of the new day. While things transpire that are evidences of the new day, they are quite unconscious. For instance, the wonderful blessings of our day are manifestations of the new dispensation. The dawn is here. We are astonished that the people do not see. But they attribute these wonderful things to different causes. They think that these are merely the results of man's taking another step forward in progress from the monkey-stage. He has become more intelligent, goes to concerts, churches, etc. He is getting farther

away from the monkey! The power to use steam and electricity proves to these that we are entering the Brain Age! They forget that the few are talented inventors, etc.

We can see that all these great blessings belong to the new dispensation. God is bringing it about. We can see that it is not the educated people, but those less educated, who have discovered the wonderful inventions most useful to man. The inventions which have proved the greatest blessings the world has ever known have been discovered by unlearned men. These things are not due to the "brain age," as they tell us. Perhaps none of the present generation will compare with Shakespeare; perhaps none will compare with St. Paul; none perhaps will compare with Solomon, or David, or Moses.

WATCHMEN FOR A PURPOSE

The Apostle says, "Let us watch and be sober." We cannot say that he here refers to abstinence from the use of liquors, tobacco and other things which have a stupefying effect on the nerves. The thought is that we should be watchful and sober in mind. We find a great many people who are excitable—carried about by every wind of doctrine. They cannot give the reason for what they accept. They do not know that the truth is intended for only the one class of people—for those who are watching.

How carefully we should watch all the increasing signs of the new day! But the watchman who stands at the post of duty, and sees things going on, but keeps his mouth shut, is of no use at all. We want a watchman for a purpose! Those who are on the alert should call the attention of others

to these wonderful things. They should seek to arouse the household of faith.

There are people who are as fully consecrated as ourselves, perhaps, only they are not awake. We should give them a kindly shake to arouse them to see the wonderful things. And since we are to be called away soon to the marriage, we are to remember that a part of our watching should be to keep our garments white. We are to watch to some purpose. If we realized how near the Bridegroom is, how careful we would be of our robes! Others do not know, but the bride-elect knows how near the Bridegroom is. She will watch and be sober.

In one sense of the word, there might be many things to lead to excitability. We might merely jump up and down as we see the wonderful things, and clap our hands, etc. But not so! We are to be sober. Yet we are not to be stupid—stolid. We should remember that the Lord is giving us this knowledge to be used, and we should use it more and more. As we more clearly see our imperfections, we should watch and be sober, and we shall accordingly be circumspect, we shall be helpful to others, and will put on more and more the fruits and graces of the holy Spirit—patience, meekness, gentleness, brotherly-kindness, love. And as we watch, we shall be putting off anger, malice, hatred, envy, strife. Thus we shall be pleasing and acceptable to the Bridegroom, and we shall thus be making ourselves ready to enter in with him into the joys and blessings that are now so near—at the door.

THE MESSENGERS OF GOD IN "THE LAST DAYS"

"He shall give his angels [messengers] a charge concerning thee, to guard thee in all thy ways."—Psalm 91:11.

In the midst of the "perilous times" of this "evil day," and of the warning voices of the holy prophets and apostles pointing out snares and pestilences and subtle dangers on every hand—and in the midst, too, of a realizing sense of the actual existence of such evil besetments and perils—how precious to the saints are the assurances of divine protection and care and personal love!

Evidently the person referred to in our text as giving a charge, or message, is Jehovah, the heavenly Father. The Prophet David is prophesying in respect to some person, then future. That person was primarily, we believe, the Lord Jesus Christ; and secondarily, all those whom he has accepted as members of his body throughout this Gospel age—the Messiah class, Head and members. The words imply a special care of God over this class. All through the Scriptures they are referred to as those whom God specially loves and specially cares for. Our Lord Jesus is the Only Begotten, the well-beloved Son, and all those who are his members are peculiarly loved. Jesus said to some of his faithful disciples, "The Father himself loveth you."

The charge given to the angels we would understand to have a very broad application. The Apostle Paul 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. Yes, 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." The Master's words seem to imply that one or more of these angels have charge over the consecrated ones, the very elect.

Our Lord uses a different figure of speech from that of the Apostle, as though he would assure us that these messengers would not be delayed in caring for our interests. They 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. Our Lord would have us realize that we are of the house of sons, under himself the chief Son, hence no time is lost in bringing our interests to the Father. Our interests have first place, our angels have always access to the Father. Before we speak, he knows our minds. Before we realize our own necessities, he has made provision for them. A wonderful watch-care has been arranged. It is hard for us to understand how the Almighty God can give such particular care and attention to our needs. Instead of being puffed up that God has manifested such loving consideration towards us, it should make us feel how little we are, how unworthy of such blessings.

Although the Father makes such use of heavenly messengers, this by no means invalidates the thought that the Lord's

earthly children are frequently used of him as ministers, servants, the one of another. Indeed, we may be assured that the invisible messengers are required generally to act through human instrumentalities. Of this we have illustrations in the harvest work, supervised by our present Lord and his heavenly hosts, yet in the main carried on by members of his body in the flesh.

The Apostle Paul has stated that the Lord makes his ministers, or servants, a flaming fire, and intimates to us that any and every agency and power that divine providence uses is a part of that care over his people. (Heb. 1:7) In other words, every agency used of God—whether it be fire or electricity or man, or whatever—would be a messenger of God. And whatever would not be to his praise and work out what he chooses, he is able to restrain—as he tells us.—Psalm 76:10.

OVERCOMERS DEVELOPED BY TRIAL

These angels are to "keep thee in all thy ways"—not only in all the affairs of the church, both individually and collectively, but also in all times; it was kept during the dark ages as well as at other times. But this care will not keep us from temptation. None can be of this elect church unless they have trials. In order to have the overcoming qualities of heart they must have the tests. But the Lord's promised grace is to be with them for their assistance—not to overcome for them, but to sustain them. His grace is sufficient for us. He does not make up for a poor will; but he does make up for imperfect bodies. If the will is poor, he does not want such in his elect church. He wants his people to be strong in will—nothing doubting—overcomers.

The next verse of the Psalm from which our text is taken proceeds to say that these messengers which have a charge over the affairs of the church, Head and body, will keep the feet from stumbling. In a general way we might apply the term feet to some members of the body all down, in all times of the age; as we might say, for instance, one member is a hand, and one a foot, etc. The church, resting on those feet members all the way down, throughout the Gospel age, will be guided aright; they will not be allowed to stumble; for, "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my pathway." Thus they would be enabled to surmount the difficulties in their path.

So all down through the Gospel age the messengers of the Lord have helped his people over all of their trials. But this reference to the feet seems especially applicable to the last members of the body of Christ. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace . . . that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" (Isa. 52:7) This would seem to apply to the last members of the church. This could not have been said all the way down the age. It is only for us who are living at the present time to say.

These various manifestations of progress that we see, are

just beginning. The new regime is only opening. After our Lord shall have delivered and glorified the church, then he will begin the work with the world. None had the right to say, "Thy God reigneth," in the past; but since 1878, we are making this proclamation.

CHRIST'S PRESENCE A STUMBLING-STONE

The text seems to imply that the feet members at this time would be in a position of special trial, and be as a stumbling-stone. "He shall be . . . for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel." (Isa. 8:14) This stone was stumbled over in the end of the Jewish age. (1 Peter 2:8) The Scriptures set forth that Jesus is the Way. The Lord is a stumbling-stone in the pathway of many. These passages do not refer to the world. It was not the Gentile nations that stumbled over Jesus at his first advent, but it was some of the true Israelites who were there stumbled. And the text implies the stumbling of some true spiritual Israelites because of the coming of the Lord in a way totally different from what they had imagined. So we believe that there are very many good Christian people today who are stumbling over Christ's presence. They thought so and so; they imagined so and so. And all is so different from what they had imagined and expected that it is just as it was in the end of the Jewish age, when the rabbis stumbled.

The question is, Why should not the angels have charge over all good people, so that they would not stumble? Is not this the promise? We answer that the promise is made to all who are of the elect class. But in order to remain members of this body, they must all stand the trial. It will be a test. Are they willing to have the assistance of the angels—messengers? Are they willing to surmount these difficulties and to remain in the way?

One class will be in a condition to receive the trials in the proper manner; another class will be so self-confident, so overcharged with the cares of this life, and so lacking in

spiritual development, that they will not be ready to avail themselves of the services of the angels. This is because God uses as his messengers some whom the world will not be ready to receive.

PARALLELISM BETWEEN JEWISH AND GOSPEL AGES

In the Jewish age the Lord used some whom the scribes, the doctors of the law and the chief priests could not accept at all. If He wanted to use agents, or channels, or messengers, to teach the people, why did He not choose the learned scribes or the pompous Pharisees of that day? Why did the Lord use as his messengers men who had been fishermen, tax-gatherers—persons whom the learned would think entirely unfit as instructors, or teachers? We recall that in the end of the Jewish age it was written of two of them (and perhaps of them all) that the people perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men. (Acts 4:13) How could it be that God would pass by some of the most learned of that day? "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight."—Matt. 11:25, 26.

So today the Lord is using channels, agencies, messengers, that are not acceptable to many whom they approach. And while these are making up their minds to believe, slow in this because overcharged with the cares of this life, the elect company will be made up. Then the others will say, "Lord, Lord, open unto us." But the Lord will declare that he cannot recognize them as members of his body, the elect. They will not have shown the spirit of meekness, gentleness, patience, love, necessary to give them a place in this body. So it will be only the body members who will be lifted up by the messengers and carried safely through the trials and difficulties which will be permitted to test the love, loyalty and obedience to the will of God, of all who have made with him a covenant of sacrifice—even unto death.

HOPE

"O Father, just to see thee face to face,
E'er endless death
Should claim me for its own—
To hear thy voice, behold thy throne!
And for one moment
Hear thee call me thine, and thine alone!
Ah! that were worth
Long years of suffering and pain.

"But what, O God, must be the joy of this—
To see thy face,
To feel thy touch, and folded to thy breast
To hear thee say, 'We ne'er shall part!'
Break not, O heart!
Though thou hast naught of worth,
Be this thy plea
God's own almighty love, and Christ's sufficiency."

SPIRITUAL VISION PROPORTIONATE TO HEART PURITY

"Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord."—Isa. 52:11.

The Vessels of the Lord in the Tabernacle, and also in the Temple, were those vessels which were connected with the holy services—in the Court, in the Holy and the Most Holy. They consisted of hooks, censer, pans, snuffers, cups, bowls—a variety of precious vessels. Those used in the Holy and the Most Holy were of gold, and those used in the Court were of copper.

The only ones who were allowed to handle these vessels at all were the consecrated class. The priests handled these in the Holy and the Most Holy in certain parts of the service, and in less important services they were covered up and borne in the hands of the Levites. So the vessels were handled only by the priests and the Levites. They required a cleansing before being used, and so were washed. Every bearer of these was required to be cleansed, typically washed free from sin.

In the antitype, our Lord is the great High Priest. The most faithful of his followers are those who are counted as the priesthood in God's sight, on trial now to see whether they will constitute the priests in glory. But all who have made consecration have the robe of Christ's righteousness. Whoever is not thus clothed upon by the righteousness of Christ, whoever is not thus justified in God's sight, can have neither part nor lot in handling the holy things—the precious truths.

The antitypical significance of the Prophet's exhortation in our text is that as in the type God required that everything should be clean, so we must be clean, pure of heart. "Blessed are the pure in heart." We have not perfection of flesh at the present time. When we have come into Christ, this imperfection of the flesh is said to be covered by a clean, white robe, representing the righteousness, the merit, of Christ. We must abide in him. So long as we are in the flesh, we must have the robe of Christ's righteousness, in order to be clean.

Moreover, as it was required of the priests that they keep their robes clean, so we are exhorted to put away all filthiness of the flesh and to keep our robes clean. We are told that the church will be without spot, and clean. (Eph. 5:26, 27) And if we marvel how this could be, the Scriptures show us how it is. We were cleansed from sins of the past when the robe was given us, and this means also a provision on God's part for the continued cleansing of all the sins that are ours through weakness, through temptation, through unavoidable failures. But nothing in this provision indicates a cleansing from wilful sin.

PURITY OF HEART ESSENTIAL

We as new creatures could not have wilful sin and still remain new creatures; for the new creature represents the mind of Christ, which is holy. Whatever weaknesses and imperfections there may be are attached to the flesh; and all these are covered by the robe of Christ's righteousness. We approach the throne of heavenly grace and find grace to help in every time of need.

The context seems to make the text applicable in the present time. It was applicable in our Lord's day. He was holy, harmless, undefiled. It was applicable in the apostles' day. All these must be clean. One, who was unclean, Judas, went to his own destruction. We believe that he went into the second death because he failed to use the opportunities that had been given to him.

As it was possible for Judas to fail, it is also possible for us to fail—to a greater or a less extent. As he was put out of the divine service because of impurity of heart, love of money, etc., so we may be sure that all not pure in heart will be put out of this service. Just as none would be placed in this service if not pure in heart, so if any become impure they will be put out of it.

This is illustrated by the case of Ananias and Sapphira, who were put out of their affiliation with the priesthood be-

cause of their love of money and their attempt to deceive. We remember this also in the case of Simon Magus and others mentioned in the New Testament. There might be some defiled of heart and other people not know of it. As the Scriptures intimate, there might be some highly esteemed among men, and not highly esteemed in God's sight. And there might be some not much esteemed among men, but highly esteemed of God. "The world knoweth us not, even as it knew him not."—1 John 3:1.

PRESENT-DAY OPPONENTS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

No doubt there are those occupying pulpits who may esteem themselves as really the ministers of God, and be thus esteemed of others, who do not honor his Word. We are told that some of the ministers of Satan are thought to be ministers of God. (2 Cor. 11:13-15; Rev. 2:2; 3:9) Some of them confess that they have no faith, no God at all. Some of them say that God is simply the god of nature. And others, again, say that they believe in God, but do not believe in the Scriptures.

We cannot suppose that these are bearing the vessels of the Lord's house in any sense of the word. Probably they never did bear these vessels. Or possibly they might have done so, and then gone into error, gone out of the court condition altogether, become enemies of the cross of Christ. (Philip. 3:18) The Apostle speaks of some such who hold down (Greek *katecho*) the truth in unrighteousness. In this text the word hold is used, not in the sense of retaining the truth, but of oppressing it.—Romans 1:18.

In another epistle the Apostle speaks of some who preach Christ with contention (Phil. 1:15, 16); but he is not in any way here referring to those bearing the vessels of the Lord's house. He seems to refer to those who have not known Christ, but who nevertheless were drawing attention to the fact that there is a Christ; that they had heard that there was such a claim put forth—that there is a Christ—just as there are some today who are more or less calling attention to certain features of the truth. We would not think that these in any sense of the word are bearing the vessels of the Lord's house, but rather that they are opponents.

The passage from which our text is taken seems to indicate that those who bear the vessels of the Lord's house would have a special force and influence at the present time. This is shown in the statement, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" (Isaiah 52:7) This seems to be applicable now in a sense

that it never was previously; for the time for the kingdom reign is practically here, the time for this message of God is at hand. We believe that the kingdom of God is in process of erection, and the gathering of the saints now in process of completion. With the completion of this class will come the inauguration of the kingdom.

The context also shows that the time is near when the message shall be preached to every creature. We believe that this is even now being fulfilled. Many are seeing the restitution of all things and the glorious outcome of the divine plan. All who would be thus engaged in proclaiming the message are exhorted to be clean.

THE PURE IN HEART THE TARGET OF THE ENEMY

The intimation of the Scriptures everywhere is that there are adverse influences at work in the world, tending to defile the people of God. They all have, of course, through the weaknesses of their own flesh, a sufficiency of temptation, we might say, to overcome. But the Scriptures say that this is not all they have to contend against. There are fallen angels that operate through occult influences and that are intent upon defiling especially the saintly class. But they are intent upon defiling all.

The purer the person, the more surely will he be the target. You notice that the speckled birds are more a mark for the huntsman than are the others. Thus all who are bearing the vessels of the Lord's house are special targets for the fiery darts of the wicked one. So we must contend against the world, the flesh and the adversary. Those who are in the right condition of heart, the pure in heart, earnest as the Lord's children, watch to keep their garments clean. Unless they watch, they will surely get their garments defiled. Satan is specially endeavoring to touch them; and we know that wherever he would touch there is defilement. Whoever the wicked one touches receives a measure of injury. And there is a measure of culpability in the individual before he is touched.

The suggestion is that to whatever extent one becomes defiled, unclean, in that proportion he would not be fit to be entrusted with the vessels of the Lord's house. Perhaps all of God's people can say from experience that they know something of what this means. Doubtless it is the experience of all of the Lord's children that in proportion as their hearts are clean their spiritual vision is clear. And in proportion as they depart from this purity, in that proportion they would have less and less opportunity for service—for bearing the vessels of the truth.

INDIVIDUAL CLAIMS FOR RETRIBUTION

"Lay not this sin to their charge."—Acts 7:60.

The words of St. Stephen on the occasion of his martyrdom, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," must not be understood to mean that he was in any way dictating to the Almighty how to deal with those who were taking his life. Nor are we to think that he was praying for the forgiveness of all the sins of these people. We are to narrow the matter down to the words used—"Lay not this sin to their charge."

So far as St. Stephen was concerned, he had no special claim to make upon Justice for retribution. The question then arises, Has any one such a claim? The answer is that it would seem that any one who suffers injustice has a claim for retribution. In our common courts, there are some crimes and acts of injustice which are taken up for consideration, though there are others which would never be touched, unless the individual concerned took up a charge.

In St. Stephen's case, we understand that the wrongs done him are charged up against the wrong-doers. They were already tainted with original sin, as members of the human family; they were already under condemnation to death. The Lord Jesus had already begun the work of making satisfaction for their sins and for the sins of the whole world. In his own time and way, God will judge these sinners. Hence they shall have a just recompense, in proportion as they were guilty of wrong-doing.

Jesus intimates that crimes against any of the members of his body will have to be expiated. The doing of injury to one of the Lord's people is especially evil in God's sight, and especially punishable; for these are in special covenant relationship with him, while the world is outside of this protection of divine Justice, except in a general way.

The words attributed to our Lord, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," given in our Common Version Bible, are not found in the oldest Greek MSS. It would be rather more difficult for Jesus to offer such a prayer than

for us to do so; for the Scriptures declare that he knew what was in man. We do not know. Any prayer that we might offer respecting man would be very different from what Jesus would offer. Therefore, we must leave these words out of consideration when thinking of St. Stephen's words.

GENERAL AND SPECIAL RIGHTS UNDER THE LAW

We ask ourselves, To what extent was St. Stephen right and within his privileges in offering such a prayer? If he were one of the apostles, we should be bound not to make inquiry, but to suppose that he was right. The fact that the words are recorded in Scripture does not prove anything more than if they were from one of us.

In our common law, there seems to be this principle—each individual seems to have certain rights in addition to the general rights under the law. These special rights he may or may not press, if occasion should arise. In St. Stephen's case, we understand that he had a right to waive the claims of justice, and did so. It is as though he had said, "I put in no protest, and ask for no vengeance on my account."

The question then arises, Did he have a right to wish for vengeance on them? We think not. Our Lord's instructions are, "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful." (Luke 6:36) But so far as the general principles of righteousness are concerned, we must not interfere. St. Stephen very properly limits his prayer in this sense, as if he were saying (paraphrasing), "Heavenly Father, I am not asking for vengeance on them, but that they may not be held especially responsible for this sin against me."

DEFENSE OF THE INTERESTS OF THE TRUTH A DUTY

We are admonished by our Lord to love our enemies, and to do good to them who hate us, and to pray for them who despitefully use us and persecute us. The question then comes in, Would it ever be right for us to appeal to justice? Should we always say, "Father, forgive them; I forgive

them"? Should we wish that the courts should do nothing against them? No! Where the interests of the Lord's cause are involved, it is our duty to say something in defense of the truth; but not in a personal matter.

Of course, the world will not understand our motive, for the world does not act except for personal reasons. Consequently, they would suppose that we acted for our own sakes. But we have given up all our earthly rights, in consecration; that is, we covenanted to give up every claim to our just rights in the world. This is the substance of our consecration.

Where the interests of the Lord's cause are involved, however, it is our duty to act for the good of the truth, for the reason that certain impressions inimical to the truth may be stopped. We see illustrations of this principle in the case of the Apostle Paul at court; also when he said to Elymas the sorcerer, "O thou child of the devil, . . . thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season." (Acts 13:10, 11) In these cases, and also in that of Alexander the coppersmith, we may be sure that the Apostle was not seeking personal revenge.

This attitude should also be ours in all the affairs of life. If anything is done in opposition to those who oppose themselves, it should be done in the same spirit that the Apostle showed in the course which he took. We all find that as we grow in grace and in knowledge we develop a spirit of charity—forgiveness. This is as it should be. Greater knowledge of God, greater development in character-likeness of Christ, should make us the more generous, forgiving.

IGNORANCE THE REAL CAUSE OF MUCH INJUSTICE

The Lord blesses us in giving us a clearer knowledge of the truth. When we come to the knowledge of the truth, it gives us a sympathetic feeling for the world. We are all fallen. But the Apostle says, "Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Cor. 6:11) Others, who are not cleansed, not sanctified, not justified, are in the gall of bitterness, so to speak.

When we consider all the evil deeds done in the world, and

when we look back through the pages of history, we can see that the majority of those who perpetrated evil did so because they did not appreciate the principles involved in the matter. St. Peter, speaking by inspiration, says that in ignorance Israel killed the Prince of Life. (Acts 3:15, 17) St. Paul, who gave the authority of the Sanhedrin for the stoning of St. Stephen, tells us that he did these things in ignorance, in blindness; and that he verily thought that he was doing God service.

If this was true of all these cases in the past, may we not think that quite certainly the same principle is operating now—individually? The Lord is able to stop these things, and will do so in due time. He will lift the veil and let the light shine out in due time. But it is not the due time as yet. The church has not yet completed the sufferings of Christ.

OUR SHARE OF THE CUP OF SUFFERING

We should rejoice in having a share in the sufferings of Christ, and should receive our share in meekness and uncomplaining obedience, realizing that the Father hath poured the cup which we are to drink. If we love our enemies and do not wish to do them harm, but on the contrary wish to open the eyes of their understanding and to do them good, then we have the right spirit. Any desire to do them injury would prove that we are lacking in the Lord's Spirit. Whoever finds that he has a spirit of viciousness will find that he has much to learn. But whoever finds in himself evidence of the Spirit of the Lord in this matter, may rejoice.

By and by, these very ones who are persecuting, slandering, doing evil towards us, will see clearly, and they will be ashamed. As the Scriptures say, "Your brethren that hated you and cast you out for my Name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified; but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed." (Isa. 66:5) The time when they shall be ashamed is the time when Christ shall appear and they shall see. "And when he shall appear, we shall be like him." So, then, our opportunity for revenge will be future, and our revenge will be to do our enemies good. We will do them so much good that they will be thoroughly ashamed of what they are now doing against us.

"WITH WHAT JUDGMENT YE JUDGE"

Recently we received a copy of a letter sent to Rev. Moorehead. We have not learned if it received a reply. The spirit of the letter is kind and moderate, hence we publish it. It is in marked contrast with the various slanderous attacks made upon the Editor of THE WATCH TOWER. A number of religious papers of various denominations attack Brother Russell with slander and abuse, and such a manifestation of alarm and viciousness as to suggest that they are terrified and fearful that all their honor of men and titles and scholarship and musty creeds will be scattered as the chaff of the summer's threshing floor.

We trust that Brother Russell's friends, as well as his enemies, recognize how different is his attitude. He does indeed attack false doctrines unsparingly, but he never, in his sermons or any of his writings, descends to personalities. It is because the clashing creeds cannot be sustained by their devotees that the latter manifest their displeasure by attacking Pastor Russell.

The letter follows:

REV. WILLIAM G. MOOREHEAD, D.D.

DEAR DR. MOOREHEAD:

I read some time ago your article in the seventh volume of Fundamentals on "MILLENNIAL DAWN," the teachings of Mr. C. T. Russell. I felt like writing you at that time but did not. Recently I read the summary of your article in one of my religious papers and have had an increasing impression to write you. I hesitate to do so because of the high regard I have always had for you as one of my teachers of twenty years ago, and also because of the high esteem in which you are held in the company of Biblical expositors and Christian workers in general. Yet I feel also that in the interest of truth and fairness your article should have some attention.

I feel that this article from your pen is unworthy of a man like you. I cannot understand why such a careful student as yourself should make statements such as you make in this article, when they are so manifestly and greatly in error.

In addition to reading five of the six volumes of "MILLENNIAL DAWN" carefully, and the sixth volume in part, I have also read many other pamphlets, magazine articles and sermons of Pastor Russell's, and also every criticism I have found or heard of in opposition to his teachings. I was one of his critics for about fifteen years, and I based my criticisms upon reading about half of one chapter of one of his books. A few years ago it occurred to me that I might not under-

stand his full thought, so I took time to inform myself on the subject I had been criticising, and when I obtained more information I became an admirer of his work, though I do not agree with him in all his conclusions. I have reached the conclusion concerning the authors of the criticisms that I have read, that they do not know any more about Pastor Russell's teachings than I did in the days when I was so liberal with my condemnation. They all remind me of the testimony of the two witnesses who offered testimony before the Jewish council when Jesus was on trial. They said, "We heard him say: 'I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.'" Now Jesus had said something like that—though essentially different. These critics seem to have read Pastor Russell's works with the same methods and motives that Thomas Paine, Robert Ingersoll and others of their class read the Scriptures and criticized them. This seems very unfortunate since it has been done by men who have been eminent for Christian character and leaders of Christian thought.

Coming now to your article: I cannot take up all the mistakes you have made in this, but will confine myself to those lying on the surface. In the opening sentence you assure us that in the MILLENNIAL DAWN series there are "six rather bulky volumes, comprising in all some two thousand pages." On page 123, you speak of "a careful reading of these volumes," so we conclude that you have read them all carefully. (This is what you should have done before putting yourself on record in criticism of them.) I note that in your references to and quotations from these books you confine yourself to the first three volumes, and chiefly to the first two. I note also that you quote a single sentence, or part of a paragraph, giving only a partial presentation of the author's thought, and then proceed to criticize it. This is a most unfair method. It reminds me of an article I read a few years ago in which the writer was opposing the doctrine of the total depravity of man, and as a proof text he quoted John 9:3, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents," and said that Jesus here taught that here were at least three persons who had never sinned. Your method with Pastor Russell is identical.

Under the heading, "Ninth Error," in your article, you say: "One of these, the ninth error, essential and fundamental in Christianity, is the person and work of the holy Spirit. There is a strange and ominous silence regarding this

most important subject very apparent in the writings of Pastor Russell. A careful reading of those volumes, comprising more than one thousand pages, has discovered but one solitary reference to the Spirit; it is a casual mention of the Spirit in connection with the Day of Pentecost. The statement is simply made as a historic fact, or rather as an event which marks a stage in the development of the Christian church. Not one word of teaching has the writer found in *MILLENNIAL DAWN* as to the distinct personality of the Spirit, or as to his supreme agency in the salvation of sinners."

Now I must say frankly, though courteously, that I cannot understand how, or why, a man with your record for accuracy could be so careless or dishonest as to make such a statement. In your opening statement you say, "There are six volumes of two thousand pages;" and here you say that you have given these volumes a careful reading, and count but ONE thousand pages, and then you make a bold and erroneous statement—that the author ignores the holy Spirit. A judge would not think of rendering a verdict with only half the evidence in, but you speak boldly in condemnation of Pastor Russell when you are only half way through his books. Now, if you have given these volumes a "careful reading," I do not see how you missed in the fifth volume, pages 163 to 300, where the author gives ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SEVEN PAGES to a full presentation of the person and work of the holy Spirit, in connection with the redemption of the race of man. How can you explain this?

It is true that Pastor Russell may teach some things concerning the holy Spirit that you will not agree with, but he does not ignore the Spirit, as you say he does. It is evident that in making this criticism you were very careless, to say the least, and this should make those who are seeking the truth very cautious about accepting your statements without full verification.

Another mistake which lies on the surface in your article is found on page 125, where in reference to Pastor Russell's lecture on the subject of "To Hell and Back Again," you say: "Crowds have listened with no little satisfaction to his assertions that there is no hell, no eternal punishment, no hope-

lessness after death." Now I have not heard Pastor Russell speak at any time, nor have I read this particular lecture, but if he in this lecture teaches that there is no hell, and no punishment for the finally impenitent, then he in this lecture flatly contradicts what is very clear in all his writings. I have never read an expositor who speaks with more clearness and earnestness of the eternal punishment to be meted out to the finally impenitent. It is true that he does not believe in a literal lake of fire of burning brimstone, and that men are eternally tortured in this, but in this he is not out of harmony with thousands of other good, orthodox teachers.

I hope you will not think me impertinent if I, as one of your former students, ask you a question here, as we used to have the privilege of doing in the class-room. In this article of yours, in *Fundamentals*, on page 126, you say: "We read in Revelation 19:20; 20:10, that after a thousand years in the lake of fire the Beast and the False Prophet are still there undestroyed." Now, I have looked up the several translations that I have in my library and I do not find that word "undestroyed" in any of them. In what translation will I find it, and what is the authority for putting it into that passage? I am a seeker after the full truth, and if that has any authority for being in that passage I would like to know it, for it is important.

Now, in closing, I want to say that you need have no concern about one of your pupils following Pastor Russell. I have his books in my library and consult them freely, as I do every other good expositor I can find, and afford to buy. I have gotten beyond the early stage of the disciples who wanted to forbid some to teach or cast out devils because they "follow not US." I have gotten unlimited aid from you, and also from Pastor Russell. I do not feel like saying with you that he is "being used of the evil one to subvert the truth of God." My church officials still regard me as sufficiently orthodox that they can go to sleep and allow me to continue preaching to the congregation.

With kindest regards for you and highest appreciation of the help I have received from you, I am

Yours in His service, T. S. THOMPSON.—N. Dak.

MOSES CALLED TO SERVICE

JULY 20.—Exodus 3:1-14.

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."—Matthew 5:8.

Moses was forty years old when he fled from Pharaoh, discouraged. He was eighty years old when God called him to be the leader of Israel. The first forty years of his life were an ordinary schooling, the last forty a special schooling in meekness. He was now ready for service at exactly the time when God wished to use him. So thoroughly discouraged had he become that he who was ready to lead the hosts of Israel without a special divine commission and authorization was now so distrustful of himself that even when called of the Lord he apologized, pleading his unfitness, etc. He did not realize that he had only then become fit.

So it is with some of God's children today. They little realize the importance of the lesson of meekness—submission—teachableness. He who learns this lesson is getting the most important preparation for divine service. "The Lord resisteth the proud, but showeth grace to the humble"—the meek, the teachable, the submissive. The Apostle, on the strength of this principle, urges the church, saying, "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God"—submit yourselves to whatever God's providence shall bring to you in life's experiences—"that he may exalt you in due time"—after he shall have made you ready for the exaltation and for the service he wishes you to perform.—1 Peter 5:6.

Moses was tending Jethro's flocks, and perhaps considering how wise it was that forty years before he had been unsuccessful in arousing his brethren to flee out of Egypt. He could see now, in the light of maturer years, what a herculean task he would have had as their leader. He could see with maturer years the dangers and the difficulties of the wilderness journey. He could better understand the difficulties that would have attended his people in attempting to take possession of the land of Canaan—how they would have been resisted by the inhabitants of the land, more experienced than they in warfare, etc. Quite possibly he philosophized upon the folly of human ambitions, and concluded that the people unready to be delivered had been as wise or wiser than himself in remaining rather in bondage.

THE BURNING BUSH CONSUMED NOT

Thus ruminating, while his flocks pastured on the mountainside, Moses caught sight of something most unusual. A bush was afire, yet it was not consumed. The longer he

gazed, the more curious he became, until he resolved to investigate. He approached the bush. From it came a voice, declaring the phenomenon to be a manifestation of God's presence and power. Moses obeyed the command that he should take off his sandals, because it was holy ground, by reason of the presence of the angel of the Lord. Moses covered his face in reverence, while he hearkened to the divine message.

God's message portrayed to Moses' mind the foundation for his hopes and those of the Israelites. The statement, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob," brought to this instructed man of God a clear understanding of what was signified by this experience. By it God reminded him of the special covenant which he had made with Abraham, and had renewed with Isaac, and confirmed to Jacob for an everlasting covenant. Thus Moses was assured that God had not forgotten the good things which he had promised. Thus his faith and hope must have been re-established. He learned that God's time had come for the deliverance of the Israelites and for their attaining the Land of Promise—Canaan, the land flowing with milk and honey—i. e., very rich, very productive.

If during those forty years, and perhaps before, Moses had time and again wondered whether God really cared for the Israelites and why he permitted them to be oppressed by the Egyptians, he now had God's own assurance that he did know it and that he did care, with the intimation that for some good reason he had all these years waited, and had withheld help which he at any time had been able to give, and that he had a purpose in so withholding. The Lord's explanation of the matter closed with an invitation to Moses to now be his servant, and messenger and mouthpiece to Pharaoh, calling upon him to liberate the captive Israelites.

"CERTAINLY I WILL BE WITH THEE"

Then Moses, who forty years before was full of confidence and courage, and ready to lead the Israelites, but who now was lacking in self-confidence, replied to the Lord: "Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" This meant, Lord, surely you know that I am a failure; with all the educational advantages that I had, I am fit for nothing better than

to be a sheep-tender; Lord, surely there must be some one much more competent than I for the leadership of Israel, else I fear that my people will never get out of Egypt.

God's reply was: "Surely I will be with thee." I shall not expect you to do this of yourself. I realize that it is a great task, a mighty work, but "I will be with thee." By way of making the matter forceful, the Lord declared not only that Moses should lead forth the people, but that they should come to that very mountain, "the mount of God"—and worship him there.

Moses, remembering his previous failure, was cautious. He inquired what response he should make to the Israelites if he should tell them that God sent him this time and they should inquire, Who? Which God? What is his name? The divine answer was that God's name is, "I AM THAT I AM"—the self-existent One. But Moses had become so distrustful of himself that he still could not think of undertaking this great work. He urged that the Egyptians would not let the people go. He felt more and more convinced that their intention was to keep the Israelites as their slaves. Another objection was that the Israelites themselves would not believe that God had really appeared to Moses.

Answering these objections, the Lord gave Moses certain signs, convincing him that he was talking to the Omnipotent One, and assured him that these same signs would be convincing to the Israelites and the Egyptians.

SLOW OF SPEECH AND INCOMPETENT

So meek was Moses that although he fully believed the Lord and trusted his power, he could not realize that even with divine help he would be successful. It must be God's thought that some one else would be found for so important a work. Moses declared, "I am not eloquent, but am slow of speech and of a slow tongue." Moreover, he was inexperienced as a servant or prophet of the Lord. Surely it must be that the Lord was merely trying him to see whether he would be rash enough to undertake such a matter, but really intending to use some one else. But no! The Lord's answer was, "I will be with thy mouth and teach thee what thou shalt say."—Exod. 4:10, 12.

So today the Lord's true people of the Gospel age are all spirit-begotten, and are all thereby authorized and qualified to be ambassadors for God, to speak the truth in love, in the name of God, and as servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. But

to some of us at times it seems impossible to realize how great the honor God has conferred upon us in inviting us to be his agents and mouthpieces in speaking his message to the world, or to the brethren in the church. And then when convinced that the Lord will be with us, some are in danger of being too rash and wilful in connection with the matter. While such need no encouragement, doubtless those who, like Moses, need to be encouraged, are in less danger of being injured by the great honor that attaches to the service of God in any capacity.

To the humble ones now, as to Moses of old, God declares: "I will be with thee; I will be with thy mouth and teach thee what thou shalt say." As one lesson is to have no confidence in ourselves or in our own judgment or strength, another important lesson is that we should have every confidence, absolute confidence, in God. Not until this lesson is learned will any be really fit to be God's mouthpieces. In the case of Moses, humility, lack of self-confidence, meekness, had become so pronounced in him during his forty years of training along that line that he prayed the Lord that, even if he should be used, some one else might be the spokesman. God heard his request and granted that he should have his brother Aaron for a companion and mouthpiece, when he would go before Pharaoh to make demands in the name of the Lord.

Nevertheless, Aaron was not the one competent for the great work. He did not have the same schooling that Moses enjoyed. Therefore God appointed that Moses should be as a god, or ruler, to his brother Aaron and that the latter should be as his servant, or mouthpiece, speaking only as authorized by the meek and lowly Moses in whom, because of his meekness, God was reposing the responsibility.

Everything in the Scriptures points us to the fact that humility is a quality most essential to all of the Lord's people who would be used of the Lord in any important or special work for him. If the followers of the Lord could continually keep this in memory, and would persistently shape their course accordingly, how much they would be used, we may be sure. Any service for the Lord is an honor; but the more we are permitted to serve, the more will be our blessing in the present life and the greater also will be our reward in the life to come. Let us, therefore, as the Apostle says, humble ourselves under God's mighty hand, that he may exalt us in due time.

MAKING THE WILDERNESS BLOOM

Bible students are more and more having proofs set before them of the fulfilment of the Scriptures. The promise has stood in the Bible for centuries, that God would ultimately turn away the curse from the earth and that, instead of thorns and thistles, it would yield blessings to mankind. This great change was to come at the close of the six great days of a thousand years each—the period of the reign of sin and death. The great seventh day, the day of Christ—a thousand years—is to witness a wonderful transformation from darkness to light, from evil to good, from the curse to the blessing.

That thousand years of blessing is in the Bible styled "The times [or years] of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began." (Acts 3:19-21) Bible Students are calling the attention of each other and of the world to the fact that the six thousand years of the reign of sin and death are past, and that we are living in the dawn of Messiah's day—the Millennium.

Blessings are coming to mankind from every quarter. But they are not coming as miraculously as many had expected. God's blessing is coming through human enlightenment. He is lifting the veil, and men of ordinary capacity are seeing things which their equally bright forefathers never dreamed of. Artesian wells are serving to irrigate certain sections and to make them very fruitful. The diverting of streams for irrigation purposes is rapidly making arid lands blossom as the rose.

Advancement along the lines of horticulture is improving our plants and flowers greatly. It is difficult to imagine how more beautiful bloom could ever have been seen in Eden of old, or how anything more nearly perfect and beautiful could ever be hoped for in the paradise which by and by will be worldwide. Horticulture is receiving enlightenment and blessing from heaven. Ideal apples, pears, plums, grapes, etc., are coming to us in the place of the poor stunted fruits of the past. We may well wonder how there could be much further improvement made in some directions. Yet the matter of improvement is about in its infancy.

We quote below an interesting item respecting a valuable work now being conducted by Mr. Burbank, of California, a

man who has already given us some new varieties of fruit and done much to educate the world along horticultural lines. We quote:

"While the recognition of the value of Burbank's work by the Carnegie Institution and the appropriation of funds was helpful at a time most needed, it is not as important from a utilitarian standpoint as was the bill passed by Congress last August giving Mr. Burbank grants of lands for conducting his experiments regarding the spineless cacti. The bill provides for the placing of twelve sections of desert land at his disposal in locations to be selected by him in California, Nevada, Arizona and New Mexico, each section containing 640 acres of land.

"While the stories of the spineless cactus and its possibilities as an addition to the food and industrial resources of the country were ridiculed at the beginning, the demonstrations already given by Mr. Burbank are convincing proof of its practicability. About ten years ago he began to study the cactus with a view of making it useful to the human race, instead of the enemy it always has been regarded. He recognized its good qualities, namely, that it was hardy and would grow where nothing else would, in the blistering heat of the desert, and that it had much nutrition stored in its thick leaves and golden or crimson fruit.

"His first two objects were the removal of the sharp thorns covering the branches, leaves and fruit, and the removal of the woody, fibrous skeleton of the leaves, which made them indigestible. The cactus selected by Burbank for his experiments was the *Opuntia* species, native to Mexico and South America. Hundreds of thousands of seeds were planted and extensive crossings were made between the pollens of the flowers. In making the thornless cactus, Mr. Burbank recognized the fact that it took much of the vital force of the cacti to develop the powerful thorns and supply the leaves with fibers. In breeding these away he gave nature a chance to devote her energy to improving the fruit. He has accomplished this in a manner that seems absolutely marvelous.

"The fruit of the cactus is like a fat cucumber in appearance, slightly flattened at the ends. It is delicious for jelly and jams, and one variety has a pineapple flavor. The

juice has been found invaluable for mixing paint, and the coloring of the red fruit is permanent and of great brilliance. Cactus fruit already is on sale in the Western States, and a large commercial company has been formed in California for its exploitation.

"At present Mr. Burbank is devoting his time chiefly to the selection of the sites of his experiment fields in the desert lands supplied him by the Government. If, as is generally believed, his claims can be demonstrated upon this large scale, he will add many millions of dollars to the resources of the world. There are billions of acres of desert ground in

different parts of the world, and if these are all made productive, the benefit to all is apparent.

"It is claimed that an acre of cactus plants will produce 200 tons of food value. A corn production of a ton and a half is considered good, and a five-ton yield of alfalfa is exceptional. The leaves of the cactus may be used as forage as acceptably as alfalfa. If the produce is utilized for the manufacture of wood alcohol, the yield is estimated as amounting to \$1,200 value per acre as against \$35 for Indian corn. It must be considered that this cactus is to be produced entirely upon desert lands, which never before have been productive of anything of commercial value."

MEN OF DESTINY

JULY 27.—Exodus 5:1-14.

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted."—Matthew 5:4.

Napoleon was styled a man of destiny, and surely many things connected with his experiences look as though the Lord's providence had something to do with him. This does not signify that he was a servant of God—far from it! But it does signify that divine wisdom has at all times been able to overrule the wrath of man to serve him, and the remainder to restrain, thus to cause all things to work out the divine purpose. Just what were the divine purposes in Napoleon's day was far from clear, to even the saints of God then living. Indeed, we may say that that purpose is only partially understood by the Lord's people yet, although Bible Students can see with the eye of faith many ways in which the campaigns of Napoleon worked changes which undoubtedly have had much to do with the world's progress during the past century. To the ear of faith God declares, All my purposes shall be accomplished. "The word that is gone forth out of my mouth shall not return unto me void; it shall accomplish that which I please, saith the Lord."—Isaiah 55:11.

The Pharaoh who reigned in Egypt at the time that God delivered the Israelites was also a man of destiny. We may be even more sure of this than in respect to Napoleon, because we have divine assurance of the fact. "And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth." (Exodus 9:16) St. Paul declared that God hardened this Pharaoh's heart that he should not let the people of Israel go free. He quotes the divine Word: "For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for the same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth."—Romans 9:17.

But God's people very seriously misunderstood the purport of these words when in the past they interpreted them to mean that God had created Pharaoh a wicked, hardhearted man, and that subsequently he still further hardened his heart. Not so! The Scriptures declare that all God's work is perfect. He never made an imperfect man. Adam was created in his Maker's likeness, His moral image. It is sin that has wrought the havoc, that has made man selfish and hard-hearted.

VIEWING THE OTHER SIDE

This degeneracy has been passed down from parent to child along the lines of heredity, so that Pharaoh was by nature what his forefathers had made him, plus the action of his own volition. St. James declares, "God tempteth no man." (James 1:13) There is nothing surer than that God has never directly used his mighty power to harden the heart of any human being. On the contrary, the Lord's providences, blessings, instructions and mercies are all intended to soften the heart, to take away its stoniness.

Bible Students now realize that the Apostle meant to tell us that from amongst the princes of Egypt God raised up to the throne of that kingdom a stubborn ruler, upon whose heart the mercies of God, in lifting one plague after another, would have only a hardening effect. And God raised this prince to the throne, so as to teach a great lesson respecting divine tenderness, gentleness and forgiveness, and to illustrate the principle that God's greatest blessing to mankind—a free will—may be perverted by Satan to work his greatest injury.

Not all men of destiny are in opposition to God, however. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, Solomon and the prophets, as well as Jesus and his apostles and all his followers, are men of destiny—foreknown, "called of God." With these men of destiny the Lord equally operates, and similarly. Upon these his mercies, tenderness and gracious promises have a softening effect, making them tender-hearted, forgiving, loving, more and more tending toward the development of the graces of the holy Spirit—"meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, brotherly-kindness, love."

The destiny of these men is only partly worked out in the

present life. They are permitted to pay a goodly price for the maintenance of their fellowship with God and inheritance of his promises. This costs them the friendship of the world, and oftentimes the loss of things highly esteemed amongst men, but it brings them the "Peace of God which passeth all understanding." And this peace and joy and comfort amidst tribulation are merely the foretaste of the riches of divine grace which God has in reservation for these—in Messiah's kingdom.

Such of these saints as lived before the Redeemer offered his sacrifice for sins are to have a better resurrection to earthly nature than the remainder of mankind will have, and to be "princes in all the earth" as the human representatives of the Messianic kingdom for a thousand years. The men of destiny, from the time of the first advent of our Lord down, are to have a still higher reward—a change of nature. The Captain of their Salvation, the Redeemer, has already reached his destiny of high exaltation, "far above angels, principalities and powers"—"at the right hand of God."—Philippians 2:9; Ephesians 1:20, 21.

The loyal band following in his footsteps in the narrow way, seeking, according to the divine promise, glory, honor, immortality and joint-heirship in Messiah's kingdom, are also men of destiny. But their destiny has not yet been attained. It is for them to wait until the full number of the elect church shall have been called, chosen and proved faithful. Then their destiny will be reached by the glorious change of the first resurrection; for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." By their change they will be perfected in the divine nature like their Master. (2 Peter 1:4) O glorious destiny! United, or married, to their Lord on the heavenly plane, they will be his joint-heirs, a royal priesthood, to reign with him a thousand years for the very purpose of blessing the world of mankind, for whose recovery Christ died.—Revelation 20:6.

Eventually, the destinies of those faithful before the Cross and those faithful since the Cross will be united in the kingdom, as St. Paul declares. The ancient worthies, although proved, cannot be made perfect until the church, of still higher destiny, shall have reached her glory.—Hebrews 11:38-40.

"I KNOW NOT THE LORD"

In due course Moses, accompanied by Aaron, who acted as his mouthpiece, presented himself before Pharaoh and delivered the divine message respecting the liberation of the Israelites. He was met with derision, Pharaoh declaring, "I know not Jehovah, neither will I let Israel go." For a time it seemed as though the whole work would be a failure. It was a time of testing to the faith of not only Moses and Aaron, but all the Israelites. Pharaoh with great hardness of heart sent forth the edict that the tasks of the Israelites should be increased. The Israelites were doing forced labor, making bricks for public buildings. Apparently the bricks were made of unburned clay, and straw was provided for use as a binder. By the new rule, the Israelites must produce the same number of bricks per day, but must additionally scour the fields and hedges to gather some kind of stubble that would serve them as binders. Thus their tasks were practically doubled; and if not performed, they were beaten. Can we wonder that the Israelites of less faith murmured against Moses and Aaron and blamed them with the increase of their tasks! Nevertheless, by these very bitter experiences the people were all the more prepared to welcome the liberty subsequently offered them in God's providence.

And is this not true in respect to some of our spiritual liberties also? To some extent, at first, our efforts to please and obey God bring greater trials of the flesh, greater oppositions from the adversary. The Lord would strengthen our faith, and cause us to appreciate the privilege of being set free

from the power of sin and death, and of being inducted into his family.

Confirmations of this very account of the tribulations of the Israelites were discovered by the French savant, M. E. Naville, in 1884. He found the city of Pithom, which the Israelites built. (Exodus 1:11) In the British Museum in London and also in the Metropolitan Museum, New York, there are on exhibition some of these very bricks. In size they are about four inches to eight inches square and about two inches thick—unbaked, but very hard. Another traveler, describing the walls of Pithom, says: "The lower courses of these walls, and for some distance up, are made of well-made bricks, with chopped straw in them; but, higher up, the courses of brick are not so good. The straw is long and scanty, and the last courses have no straw at all, but have sedges, rushes, and water plants, which had been mingled with the mud in their making."

PREPARATIONS FOR CANAAN

The statement of Exodus 1:14 is generally understood to imply that the Israelites were compelled to learn all the trades and occupations of their masters. They had been from Abraham's time a pastoral people, and by this very

operation they were forced, as it were, into an industrial school in the foremost civilization of that day. It was a severe training, but a very useful one and undoubtedly a grand preparation for the necessities that lay before them. Shall we say that all this was of chance? Shall we not rather say that the Lord in his providence was dealing with them—humbling them, as well as qualifying them for the large opportunities he intended to present?

Whoever can discern the Lord's leadings in connection with typical Israel of old should be fully prepared to note and appreciate divine providences in his own case as a spiritual Israelite. Nevertheless, few lessons are harder to learn than this one—that God supervises the affairs of all who are truly his. Nevertheless, it is well to remember that only those who have entered into covenant relationship with God, and who are maintaining that relationship, can apply to themselves the comforting words of St. Paul. "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."—Romans 8:28. Our present experiences of disappointment, trials, vexations, oppositions, etc., are designed to work in us the peaceable fruits of righteousness, and to thus "work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

SOME INTERESTING QUESTIONS

ADAMIC OR SACRIFICIAL DEATH?

Question.—Suppose that one of God's consecrated saints should die by some convulsion of nature—flood, fire, etc.—would such a death be sacrificial, or would it be Adamic?

Answer.—A consecrated child of God could not die the Adamic death. His death would either be the sacrificial death or the second death. If when he died he were a consecrated child of God, his death would be merely a completion of the consecration which he had previously made. Our lives are made holy and acceptable by the great High Priest, in whatever form death may come. But if in the meantime this consecrated child of God should turn away from him, then it would be the second death. If he sin wilfully, deliberately, he commits the "sin unto death."—1 John 5:16.

OUR LORD'S BAPTISM

Question.—Was our Lord baptized in water before he was baptized of the holy Spirit?

Answer.—The Scriptural account of our Lord's baptism at Jordan seems to imply that God made the manifestation of the descent of the holy Spirit on Jesus after his baptism in water. He was baptized into death before he went into the water, in the sense that he had given up his own will; in the sense that the apostle quotes from the Old Testament—"Lo, I come; in the volume of the Book it is written of me; I delight to do thy will, O my God." (Psa. 40:7, 8; Heb. 10:7) Our Lord came to do everything written in the Book concerning him.

Our Lord was already dead to his own will; otherwise he could not have gone to John at Jordan. But God's manifestation of his acceptance of Jesus' sacrifice of himself, apparently

waited until after Jesus had performed the symbol. So we read that after he had come up out of the water, the holy Spirit descended like a dove. God gave that outward sign, not for all, but for John, who "saw and bare record," as the Scriptures declare.—John 1:32-34.

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Question.—How near to the character-likeness of our Lord Jesus Christ must one attain on this side the veil in order to have good hope of being one of the elect on the other side of the veil?

Answer.—Jehovah God will not accept anything that is imperfect. Even our human nature presented to him sacrificially by the High Priest needed first to be covered by the merit of the Priest himself and to be thus perfected before being divinely accepted. In thinking of ourselves, however, we are to remember that we have the new creature in an earthen vessel. It is the new creature that must have the likeness of Christ.

In the flesh we are beset by the world, the flesh and the devil. All these things conspire to hinder the new creature from working perfectly in the old body. The will must be nothing less than perfect. As Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart." (Matt. 5:8) Purity of heart must be absolute.

The pure of heart are those whose intentions are pure, whose motives are pure, who desire the best—long for the best. These may have strong consolation, may have full confidence toward God respecting the glorious things he has promised; for they could do no more than the best they are able to do in the mortal body—and thus show their devotion.

VOLUNTEER EXTENSION WORK

The Volunteers this year are doing nobly and we have splendid ammunition. No doubt the results will be great. However, we must not hope to know the details until we reach the kingdom. Meantime it is ours to do faithfully what our hands find to do—what our Lord privileges us to do. We are his ambassadors, his witnesses.

We suggest that class extension work find parallel in volunteer extension work. After you have served your place of residence, seek the Lord's blessing in an endeavor to extend the distribution of free literature to other towns and cities within a reasonable radius. The Society is pleased to supply the ammunition free of all charges. It merely wishes, with

the order, the names of the places to be served and the assurance that the work undertaken will (D. V.) be promptly done—that the literature will not be permitted to lie by unused. Remember that census population includes infants and that a proper estimate of one paper to the family would be one to five of the population. That is to say, a town of 5,000 would require 1,000 copies of the volunteer matter. In cases where the population is found to be foreign, remember we have free literature in nearly all languages.

"He that reapeth receiveth wages and gathereth fruit unto eternal life," is the message of our Master to us, one and all.

THE REFINER'S FIRE

He sat by a fire of seven-fold heat
As he watched the precious ore,
And closer he bent with a searching gaze,
As he heated it more and more.
He knew he had ore that could stand the test,
And he wanted the finest gold,
To mould as a crown for the King to wear,
Set with gems of a price untold.
So he laid our gold on the burning fire,
Tho' we fain would have said him, "Nay";
And he watched the dross that we had not seen
As it melted and passed away.
And the gold grew brighter, and yet more bright,
But our eyes were so dim with tears,

We saw but the fire—not the Master's hand—
And questioned with anxious fears.
Yet our gold shone out with a richer glow
As it mirrored a form above,
That bent o'er the fire, unseen by us,
With a look of ineffable love.
Can we think that it pleases his loving heart
To cause us a moment's pain?
Ah, no! but he saw thro' the present cross
The bliss of eternal gain.
So he waited there with a watchful eye,
With a love that is strong and sure,
And his gold did not suffer a whit more heat
Than was needed to make it pure! —Unknown.