

"Mediator between God and men," between God and the world of mankind. In harmony with the divine plan, during this age, before his work of uplifting mankind is due to begin, he is doing another work that the Father has ordained; namely, the selection of brethren over whom he is placed as the "Captain of their salvation." These are counted in as members of the body of the Messiah, he being Head over them—"the church which is his body."

So, then, the Man Christ Jesus is the Redeemer of the world. But in the interim—as noted above—before the application of his merit shall be made for the world, the testimony is given to a few—as many as have ears to hear and are joint-sacrificers with him. These will be associated with him as Prophet, Priest, Mediator, King and Judge between God and men during the Millennial kingdom.

Question.—After Adam sinned, could God have made with him such a Law Covenant as he made with the Jews—a Covenant offering him life upon condition of fulfilment of the law?

Answer.—We think it would not be reasonable to suppose that it would be consistent with the divine principles, after Adam had had a full and complete trial, and after he had failed in that trial, and after he had been sentenced to death, that God should belittle his Government and his decision by making another proposition to him, after he had gotten into a more or less fallen condition. It would seem that even the suggestion of a trial would have been inconsistent with divine principles, unless full satisfaction had first been made for the transgression already committed. We see quite a difference between Adam and the children of Adam, who were born in imperfection and who have never willingly and wilfully and intelligently sinned against God and who have never been given an offer or opportunity to see whether they would be able to keep that divine law.

God gave Israel certain surroundings of typical justification and typical sanctification, etc., for the purpose of imparting general instruction foreshadowing the great blessing which he ultimately will bestow upon all mankind—giving them the opportunity of coming back into divine favor and eternal life.

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A SNARE—A TRAP—A STUMBLING-BLOCK

"And David saith, Let their table become a snare and a trap, and a stumbling-block, and a recompense unto them; let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see."—Rom. 11:9, 10.

At one time these words seemed irreconcilable with either justice or love. Supposing that the poor Jews who were blinded, stumbled into eternal torment, God's conduct seemed inscrutable—no matter if, through the Apostle, he did promise (vss. 25, 26) that, generations after, the blindness should be turned away—after the fullness of the elect church, the Gentiles, had been brought into divine favor.

We reasoned that the recovery of a man's great-great-grand-children could never compensate for his own loss, if he went to eternal misery. And although trained in Presbyterian thought, it seemed terrible to read the calm, cold assertion, "What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the elect hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded"—"stumbled," "snared," "trapped."

KNOWLEDGE OF THE DIVINE PLAN ENABLES US TO UNDERSTAND THE SCRIPTURES PROPERLY

But, thank God, our own blindness was removed and the breaking of the Millennial dawn, revealing the divine plan, set our ideas right, enabled us to rightly divide and apply the Scriptures and brought the grandest order out of our confusion. We found that the hell to which Israel went was the grave—hades; that there is no consciousness in hell (Heb., *sheol*; Greek, *hades*—Ezek. 37:12; Psa. 6:5); that blinded, stumbled Israel is still there, and that not merely their grand-children, centuries after, will have their blindness removed and their sins forgiven, but all of them will individually enjoy these favors.

They all were included in the unbelief and blindness and stumbling, that God might have mercy upon all and recover every one of them from that blindness and bring every one of them to that full, clear knowledge which will render every man without excuse and fully responsible for his choice of life through obedience to Christ, or of the "second death" through disobedience. See verses 27-32; John 5:28; Ezek. 37:12, 13; John 1:9.

To see the matter thus clearly was a great relief; but still our heart cried out to God for an explanation and a just reason for the blinding, stumbling and entrapping of all but an elect few of a nation to which, as a whole, he had made many gracious promises and for whom he had already done so much, for eighteen centuries—a nation which alone of all the nations of earth recognized him as its Ruler and were under covenant relations to him and his law.

ISRAEL'S PROMISES EARTHLY—NOT HEAVENLY

The answer of God's Word is that, while he had called Israel by his promises to a great and noble part in his plan of salvation, he did not call them to the place of chief favor and honor. His promises to them were earthly, not heavenly. And although all of the sons of Jacob were called or invited, it was a conditional call which the nation as a whole never complied with. Only the few ever kept his laws (or were reckoned to have kept them by proper intention) and hence, all along, it was true that some children of Jacob, professedly children of God, were

really of their father the devil (John 8:44), because they were not all Israelites that were of the nation of Israel.—Rom. 9:6.

When God's due time came for the great atonement for sin to be made by our Redeemer's sacrifice of himself (Heb. 7:27), that also was his due time for beginning the selection of his spiritual Israel, to whom he extends heavenly promises and for whom he has reserved the very highest place in his great plan—next to himself.

EARTHLY ISRAEL SET ASIDE UNTIL THE COMPLETION OF THE SPIRITUAL ISRAEL

Christ himself became the Head and Chief of this spiritual or heavenly Israel, of which fleshly Israel with its precious but earthly promises had so long been a type or shadow. And as soon as Christ's sacrifice was completed the work of selecting the spiritual Israel as his "bride" or "body" or "brethren" and "joint-heirs" was due to begin.

It was not God's purpose that the two Israels should continue side by side; hence, as soon as the spiritual was begun the earthly was set aside; not set aside forever, but merely until the spiritual Israel had been selected. But although the fleshly house of Israel was set aside at the time of Christ's crucifixion (Matt. 23:38), yet the first opportunity for membership in spiritual Israel was given to that people.

It is not surprising that only a handful, a "remnant," of fleshly Israel was able to stand the tests of faith and sacrifice exacted of the spiritual Israelites. Those "hypocrites" to whom it was said, "Ye are of your father the devil," would surely not be in condition to be attracted by the truth and its spirit into fellowship in the new spiritual Israel. And even of those who were Israelites indeed, who trusted in the promises of God, we cannot suppose that many would be without guile, pure in heart, and just ready for faith and obedience under the Gospel age call. By the divine arrangement, therefore, the preaching of the Gospel of the Cross skimmed off, as it were, into the Gospel church the cream class of that people—"and the rest were blinded"; and God was agreeable to their being blinded.

THE GREAT GULF BETWEEN THE EARTHLY AND THE HEAVENLY ISRAEL TO BE DESTROYED

God would allow "a great gulf" to be fixed by their prejudices between them and the spiritual Israel; he would make of them a spectacle before the world, and although outcasts from his favor for a time, they should, as a dead nation, be witnesses to his Word throughout the world; and, finally, when he shall have selected and polished and glorified his spiritual Israel, he will destroy the "great gulf," turn away their blindness as a people, and receive back to favor all of them who then will come—showing mercy upon them through the glorified spiritual Israel—vss. 31, 32.

"Oh, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" How grandly systematic and rea-

sonable and just is the divine plan of the ages!—Romans 11:33.

HOW THEIR TABLE BECAME A SNARE, A TRAP AND A CAUSE OF STUMBLING

But now another point deserves consideration: In what way was their table their snare and trap and cause of stumbling?

Their "table" signifies their food; and the table or food spread before fleshly Israel, God's fleshly children, consisted of those special favors and promises of God to them as his Chosen People. (Matt. 15:26, 27.) Thus seen, it was God's goodness and favor toward them that stumbled and entrapped them and prejudiced their unconsecrated hearts. They presumed upon God's favor. They said within themselves, "We have Abraham to our father." (Matt. 3:9.) They concluded that God must keep his promises to Abraham and that they, being his children, the kingdom to bless the world must sooner or later be themselves. They trusted in themselves and despised others; they became arrogant, haughty and self-confident, and hence that much the less the humble-spirited, that the Lord sought, for his spiritual Israel.

PRIDE LED TO OVERSIGHT OF CERTAIN SCRIPTURES FORETELLING "THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST"

Their pride led them to look only at the promises of glory and honor and power to accompany the exaltation of Israel, and led them to ignore the passages which tell that Messiah must first be rejected and "led as a lamb to the slaughter" and "pour out his soul unto death," being smitten for our sins, "the chastisement of our peace being laid upon him."

For the same reason they overlooked the statements of God's prophets, that they should first be scattered amongst all nations, where God would show them no favor; and that their later blessing would be in connection with their regathering out of all nations. (Jer. 16:13-17; Deut. 4:26-28; 28:36, 37, 63-65), and that when the Lord shall deliver them "they shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as for an only son."—Zech. 12:10.

Thus their "table" became their "trap," which still holds them tightly—their pride of heart, built upon those promises, still blinds them. But we should notice carefully that their stumbling was not because of any wrong done them by God. No; "his way is perfect." "Every good and perfect gift cometh down from our Father." "He is not a God of confusion" and "he is the same yesterday, today and forever." The "table" which he provided was good. The entire difficulty was that Israel's consecration was incomplete; hence the majority of them were not of the class whom the Lord intended should know the truth before the Messianic age, when the eyes of all shall be opened and all shall come to an accurate knowledge of the truth.

THE THINGS WRITTEN WERE SPECIALLY FOR OUR LEARNING

But now we come to the most important feature of this subject. These things were written for our learning, upon whom the ends of the ages are come. (1 Cor. 10:11.) As fleshly Israel was a shadow or type of spiritual Israel, so the stumbling, trapping, snaring in the harvest of their age foreshadowed a similar sifting out of all except a faithful "remnant" here.

Here as there, many in nominal spiritual Israel are not Israelites, but "hypocrites," and of their father the devil. Here, as there, all who are really of Israel and before whom the "table" of God's bounties has been spread with providential care—"exceeding great and precious promises"—all of these do not digest and appropriate God's promises to the upbuilding of characters pleasing to God and fit for the kingdom; and hence, even while feeding at his "table," such receive the grace of God in vain. To these, as well as to their prototypes, the "table" of truth which they delight in is sure to become a snare, a trap, a stumbling-block. And it is especially for the sake of such that we now write to put them on guard as to how they use the "food" now so abundantly supplied to us.—Luke 12:37.

Only those who have at least some hunger and thirst after righteousness [truth] are at all welcomed at this "table"; it is the children's table and others than God's

true children may gather and eat only the crumbs that fall from it.

UNLAWFUL FOR ANY EXCEPT THE PRIESTS TO EAT THE SHEW-BREAD

It is the table of the consecrated believers at which others "have no right to eat." (Heb. 13:10.) The truly consecrated are the antitypical or Royal Priesthood, whose "table" was typified in the Tabernacle and in the Temple by the table of shew-bread, of which it was not lawful for any except the priests to eat. If, therefore, you have "tasted that the Lord is gracious"; if you have "tasted of the good Word of God"; if you have had "meat [food] to eat that the world knoweth not of"; if you have tasted the "present truth"—"meat in due season"—it implies either that you are one of the consecrated ones, one of the Royal Priests, or else that you are in contact with them and receiving crumbs from their "table."

The giving of all truth, and especially "present truth," implies an object. That object is the sanctifying or setting apart to God and to his holy service. The crumbs of truth are to awaken a desire for and to lead to the act of consecration or sanctification. The full table of bounties is for those who have taken the step of fully consecrating themselves, their wills and their all to the Lord—and the bountiful supply of exceeding great and precious promises then granted to them is that by these they might be strengthened and enabled to carry out fully, step by step, the full consecration they have made—even unto death.

The object of our consecration and subsequent disciplining under the guidance and power of the truth is for the formation of character, for "perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord." The Apostle clearly shows the object of our precious promises, our spiritual food, saying, "Having, therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit; perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord." (2 Cor. 7:1.) He assures us that knowledge may be received and used for a different purpose and produce a bad, instead of good effect and puff up or make proud and self-willed.

WHAT EFFECT HAS THE TRUTH UPON OUR HEARTS?

It becomes each of us to ask himself the questions, Have not I received considerable knowledge of the truth—of God's character and plan? Has it had the bad effect of puffing me up and making me feel that I am somebody? Has it caused a self-satisfied feeling, which ignores my own weaknesses and failings and merely relies on God's mercy and seeks to exaggerate that mercy and to ignore Scripture texts which clearly show that "God is angry with the wicked every day"; that "the wrath of God is revealed against all unrighteousness," for "all unrighteousness is sin"; that whosoever committeth sin [wilfully] is [a child] of the devil," and that "all the [intelligently and wilfully] wicked will God destroy"? Or has it caused me to feel more humble and dependent on the giver of all good? And has it, properly, caused me to feel divine approval and rest and security, only under the merit of the precious blood when I am using my best endeavors for righteousness, godliness, purity and truth?

The latter is the only legitimate and proper use of the truth. If the true view of God's character, seen in his plan and the exceeding great and precious promises held out to the overcomers, reaching our ears and our hearts, fails to awaken there a responsive adoration of things that are true, things that are honest, things that are just, things that are pure and things that are lovely, and a desire to be more and more transformed to that God-likeness and accordingly to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit and to become more and more perfected in holiness—if these are not the effects of the truth upon our flesh and our spirits (minds, dispositions) we are receiving the grace of God in vain; for it was given for no other purpose. And if we receive God's grace and truth in vain, we may be sure it will be but a little while until it will slip from us and be replaced by misconceptions.

Let us, therefore, take heed to the illustration given us in God's typical people, lest our table, so bountifully spread and served by the Master himself, become to us a snare, a trap and a stumbling-block into blindness—the "outer darkness" of the world, because of a failure to properly use its blessings already received.

"Let us fear lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest [by full consecration and perfecting holiness

in our hearts and conduct and thus developing our characters and being changed from glory to glory into the like-

ness of God's dear Son] any of us should seem to come short of it."—Heb. 4:1.

"I AM MY BELOVED'S, AND MY BELOVED IS MINE"

[SOLOMON'S SONG 6:3.]

Rightly understood, we find the Bible to be a love story of surpassing interest. No earthly love story will compare with it. First, we have the Father's love for our race, which, originally created in his likeness, fell by disobedience under just condemnation. What a wonderful story of parental love blended with divine justice is conveyed to us in the narrative of how God so loved the world while we were yet sinners, that he gave his Only Begotten Son to be our Redeemer, that he might restore again to divine favor and blessing whosoever wills to return after learning of his loving provision.

How different this view of the divine character and plan from the one which once terrorized us—when we thought of God as almighty in power and knowledge, but destitute of love and sympathy; when we thought of him according to the universally accepted false teachings as having, with cold indifference, sat in the councils of eternity, before the creation of the earth or our race, and there planned our creation and everlasting destiny; that he there deliberately arranged ("according to the counsel of his own will," as the catechism expresses it) that he would place us as a race under such unfavorable conditions that only a mere handful, comparatively, would ever attain to a life of bliss, either in the present world or in that which is to come. Deciding also that the vast majority, ignorant (whom the God of this world hath blinded), steeped in inherited sin and degradation, born in sin and shapen in iniquity, should, nevertheless, be so constituted and preserved that they could never end their miserable existences; and, withal, providing, we were told, a great place for their eternal torture, from which would ascend for ever and ever, alike futile and unheeded, their prayers, their curses and their groans.

RELIEF TO KNOW THAT GOD IS REALLY A GOD OF LOVE

What a relief do we experience as finally we awake to a better knowledge of God and of his precious Word, to find that all these teachings of the dark ages were but a horrible nightmare, as unreal as they were cruel and unjust—as unscriptural as they are contrary to every reasonable conception of every reasonable mind, of the proper exercise of justice, wisdom, love and power—the divine attributes. We are reminded of the nursery tales of childhood, told to children by parents and nurses who, with grossly mistaken ideas of wisdom and propriety, used them as a lash of terror with which to secure a frightened obedience. As the bugaboos of infancy faded from memory, or at least ceased to inspire error, as we grew older and began to take note of the deceptions which had been practiced; so as children of a larger growth we have learned that many of the "terrors of the Lord"—which, however severe, are reasonable and just—have been distorted by theologians and others who would fain exercise a terrorizing influence upon the world, to restrain from evil. We have learned, in the language of Scripture, that "their fear toward me is taught by the precepts of men," and not by any of the divine precepts.—Isa. 29:13.

Oh, what a relief it has brought to our hearts to know God as really and truly a God of love, who is not only willing to save unto the uttermost, but able to save unto the uttermost all who put their trust in him! and who is so willing thus to save that he has made abundant provision that every member of Adam's race must come to a clear knowledge of his grace and to a full opportunity—by obedience to the extent of his ability—to attain eternal life through Christ Jesus.

It does us good at times to look back and view, not only the horrible pit and miry clay of sin out of which Jehovah lifted us when he placed our feet upon the Rock, Christ Jesus, but also to remember his mercy toward us in the anointing of our eyes, now in the end of the age, that we may see wonderful things in his Word; that we may realize how he has graciously brought us "out of darkness into his marvelous light," in permitting us to brush away the veil of superstition, misunderstanding and mistranslation which has befogged his Word, beclouded our understanding and bedimmed our view and appreciation of the great Father of lights, from whom cometh every good and every perfect gift.—James 1:17.

NOT ONE, BUT MANY INDIVIDUALS CHOSEN TO BE BRIDE OF CHRIST

But our text deals specially with another part of this great love story of the Scriptures. Our loving Father, having provided a redemption for all our race through Christ Jesus, did more: he highly honored and glorified our dear Redeemer as a reward for those things he endured faithfully through obedience to the Father (Phil. 2:8-11), and in addition to this arranged to select a bride and joint-heir in glory for his Son, our Lord Jesus. It was not an individual that was chosen to be the bride, but many individuals, and yet in all, compared with the world, a "little flock," the "elect church," called and in process of selection and perfection, to be "the bride, the Lamb's wife."

Of all the plots and peculiarities of love stories which have been conjured up by human brains, none will compare with this story of how Christ loved the church and gave himself for her—redeeming her with his own life; and how, being rewarded with excellent glory by the Father, these who would be his companions, are invited to share his cross, his suffering, his death, and to be received up into glory with him, to share his love and his throne and the Father's favor. We will not go into details here; we have done this before and our readers are familiar with every feature—so, instead, we pass on to consider some of the conditions of acceptance with the Bridegroom, and how we may make our calling and our election sure to this position of honor and blessing to which he has invited us.

ONLY A FEW CAN SAY FROM THE HEART, "I AM MY BELOVED'S"

Our text briefly, yet very pointedly, states the entire matter. (1) "I am my Beloved's."

There is no possibility for any one to get into this special elect class, "the bride, the Lamb's wife," without knowing it. There is therefore no possibility that heathen philosophers or others who lived and who died without a personal knowledge of Christ as their personal Savior, can ever be members of the elect church, the bride; all who are of it will be able to say, "I am my Beloved's." Very manifestly also, for the same reason, many who are church members "in good and regular standing," have neither part nor lot in this matter; for only a few can say, from the heart, truly, "I am my Beloved's." This union with the Beloved (Christ) implies that the step of justification through repentance and faith in the precious blood has first taken place; because only the justified are "called." (2) It is implied that the one who can say, "I am my Beloved's," has not only heard of Christ, but has made a definite, positive compact or contract with him. And this contract—to be his in every thought and word and deed, to the extent of our ability, if he will accept us and be our Bridegroom, is our marriage vow or covenant.

The Scriptures assure us that in the present time, while evil prevails and the God of this world blinds the minds of the vast majority, none can come to the Lord Jesus, except as the Father draws them. (John 6:44.) The Father is not drawing all mankind now, but only believers. He is leaving the general work of drawing the worldly for the next age, the Messianic age, when Christ and the church glorified shall, as God's agents, cause the whole earth to be filled with the knowledge of the truth. Whenever the truth reaches the heart and understanding its influence is to draw, although the drawing may be resisted not only in the present age, but also in the age to come. (Acts 3:23.) But it is only the few who are being drawn to Christ by a knowledge of the truth now, because only a few have a knowledge of the truth. And while many resist the truth and refuse the opportunity of union with the great Bridegroom, some have gladly accepted and given themselves wholly to the Lord, thus sealing the covenant binding themselves to him and by his grace binding him to them.

IF FAITHFUL IT IS THE PRIVILEGE OF EACH TO SAY, "MY BELOVED IS MINE"

It is proper that each one should decide for himself positively, whether or not he has ever accepted the divine invitation to give himself (Prov. 23:26; Rom. 12:1)

to the Lord, to be ultimately accepted as a member of his Bride, if he continue faithful to his engagement to the end. If we are faithful, and so long as we continue to be faithful, it is our privilege to look up with confidence and be assured of the second part of our text, "My Beloved is mine." And if we will, it is possible for us to continue in this attitude, "faithful unto death"; and so doing we may know that in the resurrection we shall be with our Lord, and be like him, and share his glory and his throne.—Rev. 3:21.

How much is implied in this statement, "My Beloved is mine"! We are reminded of the Scripture which declares, "He that hath the Son hath life"—eternal life. More than this, the Apostle assures us that those who have Christ, who can truly, Scripturally say, "My Beloved is mine," are really possessors of "all things." For since Christ is the heir of all things, if we have become associates with him, then, indeed, "all things are yours (things present and things to come) for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." (1 Cor. 3:22, 23.) If it lifted from us a great load to know that our sins were graciously forgiven through the merit of the precious blood, how much more of a load of care does it lift from us to know that we are vitally united with the illustrious Son of the great King of the Universe—the Son in whom the Father is well pleased and whom he has made his sole associate in the glory and dominion of the universe.

Nor does this promise of blessings in Christ apply merely to the future. The glories and honors truly are not now, but by and by to be revealed; but the Bridegroom's care, protection, provision and comfort belong to his betrothed even now, while we are in this tabernacle; so that while we are passing through the "valley of the shadow of death," we need fear no evil, for he is with us, and his rod and staff comfort us.

All who abide faithful to him, all who truthfully can say, "I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine," have not only the promise of the life that is to come, but also the promise of this present life. They hear the Master's voice saying, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age," and in the end of the age he is to be specially near, specially precious, and is to reveal himself to his faithful in an especial manner, even before she is so changed as to behold him in his glory.

ALL THE "EXCEEDING GREAT AND PRECIOUS PROMISES" BELONG TO THIS CLASS

It is the privilege of these to apply to themselves, and to realize as properly theirs, all the "exceeding, great and precious promises" of the divine Word. These may hear the voice of the Lord, saying, I will be with thee in six troubles and in the seventh I will not forsake thee. "My grace is sufficient for thee." "Call upon me in the day of trouble and I will deliver thee." Indeed, we are assured and "know that all things shall work together for good to them that love God, to the called ones according to his purpose [to be the bride, the Lamb's wife]."—Job 5:19; 2 Cor. 12:9; Psalms 50:15; Romans 8:28.

These promises of the Lord have been well summed up in the expression of the poet—

"In every condition, in sickness, in health,
In poverty's vale, or abounding in wealth,
At home and abroad, on the land or the sea,
As thy days may demand, shall thy strength ever be.

"When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
The rivers of woe shall not thee overflow;
For I will be with thee thy troubles to bless,
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

"When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace all-sufficient shall be thy supply;
The flames shall not hurt thee—I only design
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine."

What a blessing of peace, quietness of spirit, ability to endure hardness as a good soldier of Christ, and sustenance and strength in time of trial, lies behind these precious assurances of the Bridegroom to those who can see and realize unquestionably, "I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine," no tongue can express. It has in the past permitted his faithful ones to pass through many dark and trying experiences with a fortitude that has surprised the world, which has seen them in the fiery furnace, but has not seen that there is with them the form of the Son of God. (Daniel 3:25.) They have endured as seeing him who is invisible. (Hebrews 11:27.) The poor world who know not this invisible Friend above all others, and are acquainted with this Heavenly Bridegroom, and know not his sustaining grace in every hour of trial are, indeed, to be greatly pitied. They must largely bear alone those burdens which the Lord's people, his betrothed, are privileged to lay at the feet of the great Burden Bearer, whose invitation is, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

But, if the case of the world is a sad one, because it knows not our Bridegroom, how much worse is the case of those who having once known him, and having once experienced his tender care and helpfulness in all of life's affairs as a Counselor and Guide, have wandered off, having lost their first love; having forgotten that they were purged from their old sins, and become deaf to the "exceeding great and precious promises" pertaining to the present as well as to the future life; and are now striving merely for the things which perish, and which at most are but for a moment. (2 Cor. 4:17, 18.) These are in a much worse condition than the world.

As the Apostle declares, "It had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment."—2 Peter 2:21.

Let us who have named the name of Christ, who have assumed his name, abide in him—by continuing in faith, in love and in zeal, to walk in his footsteps and thus make our calling and our election sure.

OTHER SHEEP NOT OF THIS FOLD

"Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd."—John 10:16.

During the Gospel age the Lord has but one church, one flock who follow him. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." (John 10:27.) From the very first there has been no change in the Lord's flock, either in the terms of discipleship or in the reward promised; as we read, "Ye are called in one hope of your calling."—Eph. 4:4.

The "other sheep" evidently refer to others who will become the Lord's followers under different conditions and under a different call from that which has gone forth during the Gospel age. The present flock are called upon to sacrifice the earthly nature and become partakers, with the Master and Shepherd, of the divine nature. (Romans 12:1, 2; 2 Timothy 2:11, 12; 2 Peter 1:3, 4.) The Lord's flock of the future will not be invited to sacrifice and to a change of nature, but will, on the contrary, be privileged to maintain and retain the human nature; and by obedience will gradually, step by step, experience restitution to perfection of mind and body and morals, lost through sin in Eden and redeemed by the great sacrifice at Calvary. These are not now of the "flock," for they are not invited to the di-

vine nature and a heavenly mansion, but will be invited to earthly nature and Paradise restored during the reign of Messiah.

"WHEN HE WHO IS OUR LIFE APPEARS WE SHALL APPEAR WITH HIM"

These other sheep are particularly mentioned by our Master in Matt. 25:31-46. This parable of "the sheep and the goats" belongs, not to this age—the Gospel age—but to the coming age—during the Messianic reign. The introduction of the parable (vs. 31) shows this, saying, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy messengers with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats."

The Savior has not yet appeared in his glory, and the promise is that "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye [the church, the sheep of the present age] also appear with him in glory." (Col. 3:4.) In a word, the overcoming "sheep" of the Gospel age will be associated with the Great Shepherd in his work of dealing

with the world of mankind during his reign. Then all mankind will be on judgment or trial, to be tested with a view to proving who will develop the sheep-like disposition, and who will develop the goat-like disposition.

THE DIVIDING OF THE SHEEP WILL BE IN PROGRESS DURING THE MESSIANIC REIGN

During that thousand years all who develop the spirit of obedience will be accepted as members of the Shepherd's flock, on the right hand of favor, as worthy of eternal life; and at the close of that dispensation will hear his words, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."—Vs. 34.

Those of the contrary spirit who, under the favorable conditions of that glorious time, will fail to develop the characteristics of the Lord's sheep—gentleness, meekness, love—will be accounted unworthy of eternal life, unworthy of being considered among the Lord's sheep. By that time

these will have taken their places on his left hand of disfavor. Then will they be rejected. The sheep class will abide in the Lord's favor and be granted an abundant entrance into everlasting life; while the goat class will be rejected as unworthy of eternal life and will be sent away to experience his disfavor of everlasting punishment.

That punishment, however, will not be everlasting torture, but everlasting death—a death which will last through all eternity; for the Lord will not again become a sacrifice, nor will he offer further opportunity to those rejecting the divine arrangement during that glorious reign. As in the parable a goat is used to symbolize those who are contrary to the Lord, so fire is used as a symbol of the destruction which will come upon the goat class. Fire is the most destructive agency known and is fitly used to symbolize destruction. Verse 46 of this parable might very properly be read, "These shall go away into everlasting cutting off (Greek, *kolasin*) [from life], but the righteous into life eternal."

GOD'S PITY FOR THE HEATHEN

APRIL 30.—Jonah 3:5 to 4:11.

"Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations."—Matt. 28:19.

Skeptics have long been inclined to treat the story of Jonah's experiences in the belly of the great fish as a seaman's yarn. Many pulpiteers even laugh at the account of Jonah's experiences as suitable only for the credulous and not for wise, "Higher Critics." Nevertheless, the Great Teacher refers to Jonah and his experiences in the belly of the great fish, and those who believe the Scriptures will seek no better ground for their faith in the story than this. Nor is Jonah's account without a considerable parallel. One of the New York journals recently gave a detailed account, profusely illustrated, showing how a sailor, overboard, was swallowed by "a great sulphur whale," but after several hours escaped, his skin made purplish from the action of the digestive fluids of the whale's stomach.

So far as we know, Jonah's case was the only one in which anyone spent parts of three days and nights in the belly of a fish. True, the throats of the majority of whales seem too small to admit a man. We remember, however, that they are quite elastic. The great sulphur variety is of enormous size and is said to have a throat capable of swallowing a skiff (much larger than a man) and less flexible. Besides, the Bible description of the matter tells us specifically that God prepared a great fish. No one who has a proper appreciation of the powers of the Almighty would question for an instant the ability of God to prepare a special fish, either at the moment or, foreknowing Jonah's course, long in advance. The exceptional character of Jonah's experience constituted him a type of Jesus, who, in death, was swallowed up of the earth, as was Jonah by the fish; and as our Lord was liberated from his prison-house, so was Jonah.

PREACHING TO THE NINEVITES

Our special lesson, however, is connected with Jonah's preaching to the Ninevites. Nineveh was a great city outside the pale of Jerusalem and therefore at that time outside the lines of divine favor; for from the giving of the Law until three and a half years after the Cross, God's favors were exclusively confined to the Jewish nation under the terms of the Law Covenant—Cornelius, the centurion, being the first Gentile to receive evidence of divine favor at the close of the period of Israel's exclusive favor.

In the case of the Sodomites, Ninevites and Amalekites, divine justice decreed that their iniquity had come to the full, and that for them to live longer would be unwise, and for them to be cut off in death would not only hinder them from further degradation, but also furnish to mankind a general lesson, to the effect that there is a limit to the divine permission of evil. The fact that these people were thus condemned and overthrown did not signify that they had ever enjoyed salvation, or even an offer of salvation. Like all of Adam's children, these people were under the sentence of death, "Dying thou shalt die"; "As all in Adam die." They were merely cut off from further life under present conditions. Their opportunity for future life by resurrection from the dead was not interfered with. Neither they nor others had yet been redeemed.

Hence the future life, secured by the redemptive work of Jesus, was in no sense interfered with by the sentence of death issued against them en masse. Indeed, the Jews were not saved either. The offer of salvation made to them under the Law Covenant did not give them eternal

life; as St. Paul declares, "By the deeds of the Law shall no flesh be justified in God's sight." If the Jews were justified by the Law, then Christ died in vain.

The offer of life given to the Jew was merely to prove to him, and ultimately to all, the impossibility of any obtaining life under the divine law without divine assistance—without the Savior and his work at Calvary and additionally his work for the world as the Mediator of the New Covenant, during his Messianic reign of a thousand years. In harmony with this the Apostle declares, "Christ brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel." And again, "There is none other name given under heaven whereby we must be saved." And again, "This great salvation began to be preached by our Lord."—Hebrews 2:3.

THE NINEVITES REPENTED

Jonah's preaching was that within forty days God would destroy Nineveh. But the people, impressed by his message, repented of their sinful course and sought divine forgiveness. The King's proclamation was that "neither man nor beast, herd nor flock taste anything; let them not feed nor drink water, but let them be covered with sackcloth, both man and beast, and let them cry mightily to God; yea, let them turn every man from his evil way and from the violence that is in their hands." The Lord hearkened to the Ninevites, accepted their repentance, and permitted their national life to continue for a time.

We are, of course, to understand that God knew the end from the beginning—that he knew that the Ninevites would repent and that he would not blot them out within forty days, in accordance with Jonah's preaching. Nineveh did pass away utterly, great city as it was, but not within forty literal days. Possibly the time meant by the Almighty was what is sometimes termed prophetic or symbolical time, a day for a year—forty days, forty years.

The lesson shows us how much greater is the compassion of the Almighty than that of his imperfect servants of human kind. God was pleased to have the Ninevites turn from their sins to hearty repentance. He was pleased to grant them an extension of earthly life. But Jonah was displeased. His argument was, There, God did make a fool of me. He told me that this great city would be destroyed within forty days and I preached it. But all the while he must have known that it would not be destroyed within forty days. God has brought discredit upon me and I am now to be regarded as a false prophet.

Jonah was more interested in himself and his own reputation than in the Ninevites and their interests. The Lord's servants must not be so! Self should be lost sight of; as the great Apostle Paul advises, "Love seeketh not her own;" and again, "Christ pleased not himself."—1 Cor. 13:5; Rom. 15:3.

GOD REPENTED OF THE EVIL

The query arises in some minds, How can God repent and change his mind if he knows the end from the beginning? The answer is that the word repent has a wider meaning than is generally appreciated. Humanity uses it only in respect to a change of purpose. But, as modern dictionaries show, the word may mean either a change of action or a change of purpose, or both. God's purposes do not change. He never repents of them. But he does change his conduct.

Thus Israel, his favored people for centuries, were cut off and God's dealing towards them changed. But God's purposes never changed toward Israel. He foreknew and foretold their rejection of Jesus and his rejection of them, and how later on they would be re-gathered to their own land and be forgiven and be blessed by Messiah when he assumed his Messianic Office as King of kings and Lord of lords—"the Prince of the kings of the earth."

The Lord taught Jonah a lesson respecting his sympathy for a gourd, an inanimate thing, and his lack of sympathy for the Ninevites. So it is with many preachers and others. They have sympathy for the flowers, for the birds, for the lower animals, for children and, to some extent, for all mankind under the distresses of the present time. Nevertheless

such people sometimes become angry at the bare suggestion that God does not intend to roast the Ninevites, Sodomites, Amalekites, or anybody else, to all eternity and that his gracious purposes for the world in general will be manifested in giving all an opportunity to attain to human perfection, a world-wide Eden and everlasting life, if they will hear and obey the Great Messiah—whose Head is Jesus and whose members, the elect Church, have been in process of selection and preparation throughout this Gospel age.

Our Lord declared that the Gospel was to be preached no longer to the Jews only, but to all nations. The preaching was not intended to convert all nations, and has not done so. It was intended to gather a saintly few from all nations, and this it will soon have accomplished.

"PRIDE GOETH BEFORE DESTRUCTION"

MAY 7.—2 Chronicles 26:8-21.

"Pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall."—Proverbs 16:18.

A great and prosperous king in Jerusalem was Uzziah. He made a good beginning, was reverential toward God, and put his capital and the remainder of his kingdom into a good condition for defense against enemies. When thinking of the wars of Israel we are to remember that this nation for a time represented God's rule in the earth in a sense that no other nation ever did, either before or after them.

Israel's kings were anointed by divine commission and authority, as were no other kings, and they were said to "sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the Lord," as no other kings before or since have held dominion. Theirs was not, however, the kingdom of God for which we pray, "Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth," but merely a preparatory arrangement with the typical Israelites. God's kingdom will really come to earth after Messiah shall establish it. For a thousand years he shall reign to uplift the humble and to bless all who seek righteousness and to punish and correct all others and finally to destroy the incorrigible in the second death. It was, therefore, quite in line with the arrangements of that time that the kings of Israel and Judah should fortify and strengthen themselves and defend the land which the Almighty had specially given to their nation.

The truthfulness of our text was illustrated in King Uzziah when his fame had spread abroad and he began to feel his greatness. Pride came in; he forgot that he was merely the Lord's representative in the kingdom, and that his first duty as a loyal subject of the Almighty was to hearken to and obey the divine commands.

Having accomplished great things from a political and military standpoint, Uzziah essayed to a religious distinction. He evidently felt that God was proud of him and of his success and would be very pleased to have him enter the temple after the manner of the priests and offer incense at the Golden Altar. He knew of the rules and regulations governing the temple and its service, but considered himself above them. He would go direct to God and not recognize the priest.

Many successful people fall into the same error of supposing that their success in business or in politics, their brilliancy of mind, or their polish of education are the only requisites in the sight of Jehovah. They feel that if they should go to church and acknowledge God, God should be very proud to have them and, of course, should give them the first place in everything. This is a mistake. The great King Eternal, "the Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity," has rules and regulations governing all attempts to approach him. There is just the one way of approach and no other.

THE MELCHISEDEK PRIEST

"Oh!" says one—"I see. You wish us to understand that the laity have no access to God, that they must come through the clergy, even as King Uzziah should have approached God through Israel's High Priest! But I deny that the clergy are any more than other mortals. I claim that many of them are less brilliant of mind than myself; that many of them are less educated, and others totally devoid of business sense. I admit that it may be well enough for the common people to approach God through the clergy, but whenever I approach I do so on the strength of my own personal intelligence and with the realization that the Almighty is glad to have me come to him. When I pray I often say, 'Oh, Lord, I thank thee that I am not as other men, nor even as this publican.'"—Luke 18:11.

No, friend, that is not our thought—not the Bible thought, not the lesson we should draw from the Scriptures under consideration. We must admit that there is no Scriptural authority for a clerical class in the church of Christ—unless it be the twelve Apostles, St. Paul taking the place of Judas.

Those twelve Scripturally rank as a hierarchy—the special mouthpieces of the Great Teacher. We are not intimating that the soul desirous of approaching God must come through the clergy of any denomination; we do emphasize, nevertheless, that there is but the one way of approaching God and that is by and through the Great Advocate whom he has appointed for us—"Jesus Christ the Righteous"—"a Priest for the age, after the order of Melchisedek" (Heb. 5:6); "No man cometh unto the Father but by me," was his message; "There is none other name given under heaven or amongst men whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12), is the Apostle's message.

INCENSE AT THE GOLDEN ALTAR

Those whose eyes of understanding have never been opened to a realization that Jesus is the divine Appointee for the reconciliation of the world to God may be excused if they approach God in prayer aside from him. Their prayers may be answered to a limited extent, if offered in sincerity, from the heart, and because, as the Apostle intimates, God "winked at" their ignorance of his arrangements.

But as King Uzziah knew of the divine arrangement, that his prayers as incense could be offered to the Almighty on the "Golden Altar" only by the priest, so those who now have come to a realization of the fact that Jesus is the great antitypical Priest through whom communication with the Father has been opened up would come under condemnation should they intrude into the divine presence in prayer, otherwise than as provided in the divine arrangement, as King Uzziah was smitten with leprosy for his presumption and pride.

Leprosy, Scripturally considered, is a type of sin. Uzziah's experiences, therefore, signify, typically, that whoever would approach God aside from his ordained Priest, having a knowledge of the impropriety, would come under divine sentence as a wilful sinner. The penalty would be in proportion to the degree of enlightenment previously enjoyed.

FOURSCORE VALIANT PRIESTS

When the king entered the holy of the temple to offer incense at the golden altar the High Priest and eighty of the under-priests followed him, protesting against his sacrifice. Although this was only their duty, it nevertheless marked them as valiant, courageous men, for in ancient times a king had great power. And King Uzziah was feeling his own greatness, and proud of it, and was likely to resent any interference with his kingly prerogatives.

Their words of protest voiced what the king already knew respecting the restrictions attaching to the services of the temple, but they added, "Go out, for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honor from Jehovah God." True honor, true blessing, true prosperity, cannot be found in opposition to the divine arrangements. The king's course, therefore, must bring him dishonor. Had he hastened to glorify God, he would have received a blessing, no doubt. But, instead, violation of the divine law brought him the curse.

The lesson is a plain one, exemplified by our text and by St. Paul's words, "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted; he that exalteth himself shall be abased." (Luke 14:11.) It was not enough, even if the king had good intentions, instead of pride, backing him up. Good intentions should have guided him to a study of the divine arrangements and promises. Ignorance of the Law is not an excuse. Hence the Apostle's exhortation, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth."—2 Tim. 2:15.

The lesson seems to be one of humility, both for the church and the world. Some are born humble-minded and others

self-conceited. The latter, therefore, are handicapped as respects this grace, though Scripturally advantaged in respect to courage to battle against present adversities. On the whole our handicaps through imperfections of the flesh are not so unequal as to make it easier for one than for another to enter into the kingdom under the call of this Gospel age, for where much is given much is required; and the judgment of the Lord will be according to the heart, the will, the intention, the endeavor, and not according to the flesh and its weaknesses and failures.

Humility is important, not only on its own account, but also because the other graces of the holy Spirit cannot be cultivated without it. The Apostle begins the list of these

spiritual graces with meekness. How could one be gentle or make good progress in the cultivation of these graces if he were not meek? How could one be patient and submissive in the trials and difficulties of life if not meek? How could one be kind toward opponents and in all things if he were not meek? How could one be patient toward all if he were not meek? How could one have brotherly kindness except through meekness? How could one be Godlike except he possessed meekness? How could one be loving in the Scriptural sense without meekness? Along these lines all who will be of the church will be tested. And meekness and humility must be cultivated and must abound in the heart, in order to enable the cultivation of the other fruits of the Spirit.

IN THEE I TRUST

Only for thee, Lord, would I live, while here below;
It is my great delight, thy love to show;
Use me, then, first as thou seest best—
Not mine to choose, but mine to trust and rest.

Only to thee would I resign my will, 'tis all
I have to give; and, Lord, it seems so small
A thing to offer unto thee,
Who didst lay down thy life for me.

Only to thee, my Lord, I'd come when trials press,
Assured that thou alone canst comfort best;
My deepest griefs, I need not to thee tell,
Thou understandest all, dear Lord, so well!

'Tis only thou canst send the peace which soothes my pain,
That bids my weeping cease, and sunshine follow rain,
My every fear remove and doubt dispel,—
I rest on thee, and know that all is well.

JENNIE G. SHARP.

THE CALL TO DIVINE SERVICE

MAY 14.—Isaiah 6.

“Then said I, Here am I; send me.”

Let us study today Isaiah's vision. The temple at Jerusalem, otherwise called the House of Jehovah, was the scene of the vision. But instead of the holy and most holy, the mercy-seat, the altar, the table of shew-bread and the golden candlestick, everything was changed—a glorious throne was there, and upon the throne the Lord. On either side of him, as representing the divine attributes, stood the four seraphim, while the entire temple was filled with his train of followers. The temple was full of glory-light and two of the seraphim cried, “Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah of Hosts.” The two on the other side replied, “Let the whole earth be full of his glory.” Following this response the door-posts were shaken and an obscuring haze filled the temple, dimming the glory.

LET THE WHOLE EARTH BE FULL OF THE LORD'S GLORY

The signification of this vision we draw from the words of Jesus. He refers us directly to this vision. (John 12:41.) In fulfillment of the divine promise Jesus appeared at his first advent and tentatively offered himself to Israel as their great King of Glory, the great Mediator of the New Covenant, promised them by Jehovah. (Jer. 31:31.) God knew that Jesus would be rejected; nevertheless the offer was made. Had he been received and had he then taken to himself his Messianic glory and power it would have meant that a sufficient number of the Jewish nation had received him with their whole heart, so as to constitute the complete number of the bride class, to be associates in the spiritual kingdom. In that event there would have been no offer made to the Gentiles of joint-heirship with Messiah in his glorious kingdom—Israel would have gotten the entire blessing. The kingdom would have been established forthwith and the nation of Israel, accepting Messiah, would at once have become the channel of divine blessing to all nations.

But when the voice declared, Let the whole earth be full of the Lord's glory, the unreadiness of the world to receive the message was indicated by the shaking of the door-posts and the darkness beclouding the glorious scene. The fulfillment of this we see in the fact that the Jewish nation, which is the doorway to this glory, was not in proper condition. A new doorway must be provided through which the glories of the King of kings will issue forth to the world. St. Paul declares that the shaking of anything, in a typical sense, represents its instability, its removal—that something superior may be established in its stead. The Jewish nation was removed from its favored position and a new nation, a new doorway, a new channel of access between God and men has since been in process of establishment.

“YE ARE A HOLY NATION”

No other nation in the world was found more worthy than Israel of the honored position. Consequently, God proceeded to make a new nation composed exclusively of saints. As St. Peter explains, “Ye are a royal priesthood, a holy nation.” (1 Pet. 2:9.) First of all, the saintly Jews were taken, to be the nucleus of the new nation, spirit-begotten, heavenly.

Subsequently, the selective processes having continued throughout this Gospel age, with its close the holy nation will be completed by the power of the first resurrection. Then everything will be in proper readiness, and the command, Let the whole earth be filled with the glory of Jehovah God, will go forth and the world will be blessed—natural Israel being promised a prominent share in connection with this grand work.

In the vision Isaiah recognized that the shaking of the door-posts and the obscuring mist signified an unpreparedness somewhere for the glory of the Lord and he cried out, recognizing his own imperfection and the imperfection of those with whom he dwelt. A glimpse of the Lord's glory showed his own defects and those of his neighbors.

This was the effect of Jesus' teaching upon all those who received his message. The law shone out more resplendently than ever and they found that they violated it more than they had supposed—not only in deeds, but also in words and thoughts. The holy ones, as represented in Isaiah, took the matter to heart and humbled themselves before the Lord and acknowledged that they were not fit to be the teachers of men, but that the whole Jewish nation and all others were imperfect, and that any message which their lips could carry would be imperfect.

As Isaiah's lips were touched with a live coal from the altar, it illustrated how the saintly ones of Israel and from all nations during this Gospel age have had the required blessing upon their lips and have proclaimed the divine invitation, “Present your bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God.” (Rom. 12:1.) This message, enkindled by the live coal from God's altar of sacrifice, has gone hither and thither throughout the world for eighteen centuries. It has not only taught a cleansing from sin, but a service to God.

“HERE AM I; SEND ME”

Isaiah continued to be the type of the holy people. God has desired to send his message of grace and the invitation to sacrifice to all who would have the ear to hear. And the sanctified, whom Isaiah typified, have throughout this age said, “Lord, here am I; send me.”

Our lesson further shows that the message of this Isaiah class would be unpopular. Few would hear; few would see; few would receive the blessing of forgiveness and begetting of the holy Spirit. The Master and his Apostles began this proclamation. It has continued the same to this day.

But we are not in this to be discouraged. Only the “little flock,” the pure in heart, the followers in the footsteps of Jesus, will get this blessing and be prepared to constitute the kingdom class, the new doorway or threshold connecting the divine Holy with the world of mankind.

Israel's experiences are used as the measuring line to show when the completion of the church will be accomplished and the glory of the Lord shine forth upon Israel, and through Israel to all nations, peoples, kindreds and tongues, for a

thousand years. That measuring line tells of the desolation of Israel's land, of its becoming utterly waste and of their removal from the land. The last verse of the lesson tells of how in the end there will come a sprout out of the roots—a holy seed, a holy people, under divine providence, will be raised up. These holy ones of Israel, on this side the veil,

will be the ancient worthies, who will be resurrected and enter into their reward as the earthly representatives of Messiah's kingdom. (Heb. 11:38-40; Psa. 148:11.) To these Princes will be gathered the faithful, loyal, holy of the Jews, the nucleus, the beginning of the earthly phase of the Messianic kingdom.

THE FIG TREE IS WITHERED AWAY

“And Peter, calling to remembrance, saith unto him, Master, behold the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away.”—Mark 11:21.

Our thought is that this particular incident in our Lord's earthly ministry may be very significant. We see that nearly all his acts were good, not only for the time being, but, as it were, pictures of larger things to come after. In the casting out of devils, etc., he was showing forth the glory of his coming kingdom. When his kingdom shall come, all the sick will be healed, all the blind will have their eyes opened, all the lame will walk; there will be literal healing and blessing of the world. All devils will be cast out.

The Lord did not attempt to heal all the sick he saw when on earth. We recall the case where the impotent man was lying on the porch at the pool of Bethesda. Jesus went to that one man and said, “How is it that you are here?” He said, “When the time comes for the moving of the water, others step down before me.” Then Jesus merely said to him, “Arise, take up thy bed.” He said nothing to the others. He did not pretend to heal all the sick. He was merely demonstrating his mighty power, which will be fully expanded when the glorious kingdom is established.

Therefore, we think we are taking the proper view of matters when we suppose that even the little things, every little act of the Lord Jesus, was in some degree prophetic, significant of the great things to come. Take, for instance, his coming into the boat at night. There was a great storm; but as soon as Jesus came into the boat, they were at the shore where they were going.

Now in the instance under consideration, we read that Jesus came unto a certain place and there was a fig tree and he declared something about gathering of figs; “for the time of figs was not yet,” our common version reads; more properly it would read, “for the time of figs was not over,” was not past. It would be strange for Jesus to come before the proper time to look for figs.

And he cursed the fig tree and said, “Let no more figs grow on thee to the age.” Then later St. Peter called attention to the fact that the fig tree was beginning to wither, and Jesus said, “Have faith in God.” What is the reason?

WHEN YE SEE THE FIG TREE PUTTETH FORTH LEAVES YE KNOW THAT SUMMER IS NIGH

It is our understanding that the fig tree was a type or picture of the Jewish nation, to whom Jesus came when it was proper to expect fruitage. But coming to the Jews, he did not find the nation bearing fruit. The great ones of the nation were cast off; and only the publicans and sinners were ready to accept his message.

It is remembered that the nation had a blight upon it. At the end of his ministry, Jesus, riding to the brow of the hill overlooking Jerusalem, said, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.” (Luke 13:34, 35.) A very short time afterwards it began to lose its power; and the Jewish nation lost its identity completely as a nation in the year 70—37 years after.

While the Jewish nation has thus been in hades, in the tomb, so to speak, it is as a nation that they are referred to thus. Of course, they go into the tomb as individuals, as every one else; but as a nation also they have gone into the tomb. But according to the Scriptures there will be a resurrection of the Jewish nation, and a picture of that raising up is given where it says, “the bones came together, bone to his bone,” etc. (Ezek. 37:7.) Those bones represent the whole house of Israel, which is referred to as saying, “Our hope is dead” (Vs. 11); our ambitions are all gone or are asleep!

So God is telling them that all the kingdom hopes of that nation are to be revived. As Jesus said to his disciples in one of his discourses—When ye see the fig tree beginning to put forth its tender leaves, we know that summer is nigh. We see the fig tree putting forth its leaves today (see Matt. 24:32; Mark 13:28); we see the Jews looking back to Jerusalem, and we thus see the fig tree putting forth its leaves, or giving signs of life, looking forward to the re-establishment of the Jewish nation. God says there will be such a Jewish nation again.

BROTHER RUSSELL'S WESTERN TOUR

In accordance with the brief announcement in the January 15th TOWER arrangements are being completed as fast as possible for this long Trans-Continental Tour of over 7,000 miles.

Route.—Stops will be made and Brother Russell will speak at Conventions of the International Bible Students Association at Indianapolis, St. Louis, Kansas City, Wichita, Pueblo, Colorado Springs, Denver, Salt Lake City, Los Angeles, Pasadena, Santa Cruz, San Francisco, Oakland, Sacramento, Portland, Tacoma, Seattle, Victoria, Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg and Duluth.

Itinerary.—All the details for the movement of the party are in the hands of Brother L. W. Jones, M. D., 3003 Walnut street, Chicago, Ill. We are just in receipt from him of a beautiful Itinerary, giving full particulars regarding the various features and arrangements of the trip, route, Convention stops, rates, etc.

Special Train.—It is proposed to use an entire Special Train, consisting of several cars, in which the party will travel as one large family, eating and sleeping on the train for practically the entire journey of over a month, beginning June 9th, the date Brother Russell leaves Brooklyn. The train will consist of Compartment, Standard Pullman and Tourist Cars, providing for seven different grades of accommodations, according to the needs, desires and pocket-books of those participating.

Meals.—Each price includes 64 meals for each. A refund will be made if less than 64 meals are eaten on the train. Other meals may be had at various places where Conventions are held. The several grades follow:—

One entire compartment for one person, with 64 meals, \$237.
The entire compartment for two people, 64 meals each, rate each, \$141.

One entire compartment for three people, 64 meals each, rate each, \$109.

One section in Pullman for one, 64 meals, rate, \$157.

One section in Pullman for two people, 64 meals each, rate each, \$93.

Half section in Pullman for one person, 64 meals, rate, \$93.

One section in Tourist for one person, 64 meals, rate, \$109.

One section in Tourist for two people, 64 meals each, rate each, \$69.

Half section in Tourist for one person, 64 meals, rate, \$69.

Railroad Fare.—The railroad fare is additional to the above prices. The round-trip rate from Chicago and return to Chicago is \$77.50.

Deposit.—As large contracts must be made in advance for the cars, supplies, etc., a deposit of \$50 will be required from each.

Early Action.—The magnitude of such a movement is little appreciated by those unaccustomed to arrange for such things, and in order to know what contracts to make and how to provide the best possible service at a minimum of cost for each and every one, it is essential that it be known as soon as possible how many will take advantage of this special service. Another reason why early reservations should be made on this Special Train is that

quite a number are desirous of joining en route for a portion of the journey, but it is difficult to give them very definite information until there is some idea as to the size of the main party who will take the entire trip. It will, therefore, be rendering a favor and service to those dear brethren who can go only a portion of the way, if those who can go all the way will make reservations immediately.

Brother Jones urgently requests those who contemplate going that they get into communication with him at once.

PROPER AND IMPROPER JEALOUSY

"Jealousy is cruel as the grave; the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame."—Song of Sol. 8:6.

Jealousy of another is always an evil quality; as the text states, it is "cruel as *sheol*," which engulfs all mankind; it is unreasoning and insatiable. One has said of it, "Jealousy is really—whether so recognized or not—a thirst for blood, life; at any moment, when reason is a little weaker than usual, jealousy is ready to kill the thing it hates or the thing it loves." It signifies either apprehension of being displaced in the affections of another, or of being outdone by a rival in matters of favor or popularity with others.

The jealousy mentioned in our text is the most vicious kind of cruelty, committed in the name of love, or through envy; it is one of the great foes which confront every Christian and is closely allied to hatred, malice, envy, strife, and should be slain on sight as an enemy of God and man, and of every good principle; and to the extent that its presence has defiled the heart even for a moment, a cleansing by the spirit of holiness and love should be invoked. It is not only a cruel monster of itself, but its poisonous fangs are almost certain to inflict pain and trouble upon others. The mind which is once poisoned with jealousy so rapidly brings everything within its environment to its own color and character that it is with great difficulty that it can be entirely cleansed from it.

"I, THE LORD THY GOD, AM A JEALOUS GOD"

Nevertheless, love, wisdom, hatred, jealousy, are attributed to God and should all be in us. We read, "I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God." If man could have his hatred and his jealousies along the same lines as God, it would be all right. We, as God does, should hate sin, but not the sinner. God's jealousy is just and is sure to bring to the sinner a just punishment. He tells us that when we have other gods, we must consider him jealous; but the impropriety of jealousy is when it leads to bitterness and other like qualities to which the fallen human mind is subject and liable. When the Lord announces himself as a jealous God, he means us to understand that he wants all of our affections, all of our confidence, our entire trust. He wants that we should be so fully in accord with him that his will shall be supreme in all the affairs of life.

He will take up the matter with such in detail.

We publish above the information in full so that all who may not only desire to be of the party, in spirit, but who also find themselves so circumstanced that they can participate personally in the trip, may fully know of its financial cost to them and be better able to determine whether it will be pleasing to the Lord for them to join the party. We urge that all who take this trip should do so filled with the spirit of Truth—meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, brotherly kindness, love.

This is not to be considered selfishness on the part of the Almighty; because this, under his overruling providences, means to his creatures the largest amount of happiness, the largest amount of success in the duties and affairs of the present life, and the fullest preparation for the blessings which God has prepared for, and promised to, those who love him.

"I AM JEALOUS OVER YOU WITH A GODLY JEALOUSY"

When St. Paul wrote, "I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy" (2 Cor. 11:2), we cannot understand that he was actuated by a mean jealousy, but that he was jealous for, or in the interest of, the Corinthians; he was jealous also for the things that were right and that they should be in accord with them. His jealousy, therefore, was an earnest, anxious solicitude and vigilant watchfulness, a godly jealousy for the best interests of the Lord's precious truth. This, of course, is a jealousy such as we all should feel in the church. If we see a condition such as that to which the Apostle refers, a departure from the simplicity and purity which is in Christ, we should feel, "This is all wrong," and should do all in our power and in reason to correct this difficulty. So, if we see anything in one member of the church that would be likely to cast a reflection upon the Lord's cause, we should feel it proper to put forth efforts to correct that one, lest harm be done.

When we have that jealousy in the Lord's cause, it is different from a jealousy in our own interest. Very few get too jealous in the Lord's cause; however, it would be well, even in his cause, to scrutinize our words, deeds, etc., properly; and while we should be very zealous, very jealous in the Lord's cause, yet we must be very sure that it is not a private matter; and should consider whether or not we are "busybodies." Then, too, we should consider whether it may be a proper thing for the elders to deal with and whether or not it would be our duty to go to the elders. We should all have a great deal of jealousy for the Lord's cause and the Lord's work, but be very careful that it is not the bitter kind mentioned in the text; in other words, we should be very sure that it is not jealousy of another, but jealousy for another, for his interests and best welfare.

A CITY WITHOUT WALLS

"He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls."—Prov. 25:28.

Forceful, indeed, is the simile found in our text. A city, especially in olden times, was a place where people were congregated for mutual advantage and protection. Marauders were abroad ready to plunder and the wall of the city was very much in the nature of a preservation from harm, that the inhabitants might be able to protect their valuables, their rights, their interests.

For a like purpose God, in creating man, gave him a will. It is one of the strong elements of man's likeness to his Creator. We may have a will, however weak our bodies, or, however strong our passions. That will may be strong whether we are brought into outward subjection to others or not. Our bodies may be enslaved, but our wills cannot be enslaved without our permission. Our will is something which cannot be taken from us; but it needs to be defended; it needs to be repaired; it needs to be made strong in weak places.

THE NECESSITY FOR STRENGTHENING THE WILL

Those who do not attend to this and do not strengthen the will where they find special liability to assaults, are sure to have it much broken down so that, by and by, they reach a place where they have no will, no self-control. Just as in a devastated city the protecting walls have been destroyed and the enemy finds easy access, so the human being who

yields to sin and various weaknesses and assaults of the adversary has lost his real manhood and is in danger of losing everything.

It is a part of our duty as Christians and as new creatures to withstand all assaults of the adversary; and these assaults come, not from visible forces alone, but from evil spirits; from those who seek to obtain possession of us—as is the case with those who come under the control of these evil spirits. Their wills are subdued, broken down, and they are in the hands of their enemies, exactly as pictured in our text. Let such strive to cast out the enemy, to resist him, to strengthen the walls of their minds and to make an alliance at once with the Lord Jesus. Let them give their hearts fully and completely to him and accept his will, his Word, his guidance, in every matter.

True, when thus released from the bondage of sin and of Satan, they become bond-slaves of righteousness and of Christ; but when it is realized that to be the bond-servants of Christ means to serve that which is good and true and right, and to be in harmony with the Father, all should rejoice to place themselves fully and unreservedly under the control of him who hath so loved the entire race of mankind as to purchase them with his own precious blood. Surely all are safe in his hands!

But it is not sufficient that any of us merely place ourselves in the hands of the Lord. The Psalmist counsels us, "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring to pass; and he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light." (Psa. 37:5.) The Apostle Paul tells us that "It is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." (Phil. 2:13.) He works by means of the promises in his Word; by means of the various experiences of life, its disciplines and humbling processes, and it is well that we take heed to each lesson as it comes if we desire to have a character developed in the likeness of our Head.

"HE THAT RULETH HIS OWN SPIRIT IS GREATER THAN HE THAT TAKETH A CITY"

We are not to lose sight of the fact that we are to be "workers together with God" in the accomplishment of the great transforming work to be wrought in us by the renewing of our minds. Our battle with self is our greatest battle, and we have the Lord's Word for it that he that "ruleth his own spirit [his own mind, will] is better than he that taketh a city," because he has to that extent learned to exercise the combativeness of a true character in the right direction—that of self-control.

But, lest we become discouraged with the slowness of our progress, we should ever remember that the attainment of the control of our own spirits, our own minds, the bring-

ing of these into full accord, full harmony, with the Lord and, so far as possible, into accord with all of the Lord's people who are in accord with him, is attained "finally," as the Apostle informs us; it is gradually reached by "patient continuance in well doing," relying upon the divine assurance of grace to help in every time of need.

Let us all strain every energy toward this final and grand development. We are to have it continually before us as the standard, the ideal, the aim, and although we may fail time after time, if we are rightly exercised in the matter we shall be stronger as the result of each failure; for each failure will show us, more clearly than we previously discerned, the weak points of our characters, naturally resulting from the fall. And if each weak point be carefully noted and guarded against as respects the future, we shall come, by and by, by the grace of God and under the direction of our great Teacher, by his Word and example and providential leadings, to that subdued condition, that harmonized condition, which will fully accord with the will of God.

To such, looking back, even the failures which, subsequently recognized, led to greater fortification against the wiles of the adversary and the weaknesses of the flesh, may be seen to have been overruled by the Lord for our blessing, according to his promise that "all things shall work together for good to them that love God."—Rom. 8:28.

WHY SHOULD I FEAR?

"Whene'er the storms come down on thee,
And days of peace all seem to flee;
This thought thy peace again shall bring,
Why should I fear?—the Lord is King.

"E'en when the tempest rages high,
And darkest clouds are drawing nigh,
With hands of faith to this, O! cling—
Why should I fear?—the Lord is King.

"Amid the stormy waves of life,
Above the tumult and the strife,
The chimes of hope still sweetly ring—
Be not afraid—the Lord is King.

"Thy ship is toss'd by wind and wave,
But there is one whose power can save;
Across the sea he hastes to bring
Both rest and peace—the Lord is King.

"Yes, Jesus walks upon the sea,
And in the storm he comes to thee;
Then trust in him, rejoice and sing;
He calms the waves—the Lord is King.

"He stretches out his hand to thee,
And from thy fears he sets thee free;
Beneath the shadow of his wing
He keeps thee safe—the Lord is King."

"THE BIBLE IN STONE"

"In that day shall there be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the Lord; and it shall be for a sign and a witness unto the Lord of hosts in the land of Egypt."—Isaiah 19:19, 20.

It is a mistake to think of ourselves as more brainy than our forefathers. The fact that we are living in the day of steam-power and electric light, the telegraph, telephone, phonograph, etc., does not prove, as some assume, that we are more brainy than our forefathers. As a matter of fact, very few of us are inventors of anything useful; only here and there have great inventors sprung up, and they tell us that they achieve their greatest success by something akin to sudden inspiration. They stumble upon their inventions, rather than work them out.

Furthermore, our inventions are usually the product of several minds, the suggestions from one proving seed-thoughts for another. The printing press and mail service have been great factors in the distribution of the knowledge of truth throughout the world, enabling one to profit by the thoughts of another. The Bible explains the progress of these days and informs us that it is because we are in the day of God's Preparation—preparation for the Messianic kingdom and the world-wide blessings which will then prevail.

STATISTICS SHOW THAT OUR RACE IS STEADILY DETERIORATING

As a matter of fact, statistics show that our race in most civilized lands is steadily deteriorating. Announcement has recently been made that the hat manufacturers of Great Britain notice that the demand for smaller hats has been increasing and the demand for larger hats decreasing, as shown by their records for years back. The Evolution theory, which is directly opposed to the Bible teaching of man's creation, has helped to give the impression that the wonderful inventions of our day are the result of evolution—that a little way back our forefathers were in a class akin to the monkey.

What are the facts? If we look for poets, where shall we find them? Have we today, in this so-called "Brain Age," any one to match with the poet Shakespeare? or the Psalmist? or Job? According to the Evolution theory, one who lived 3,500 years ago should have been merely an intelligent ape; yet who can read the Law of Moses and not be struck with his intelligence, justice, wisdom and generosity? Well would it be if we, in our civilized times, should copy some of Moses' regulations; that, for instance, of the Jubilee year, in which all property rights reverted to the original owner.

THE GREAT PYRAMID ONE OF THE EVIDENCES OF THE SKILL OF THE ANCIENTS

The Great Pyramid of Egypt is one of the evidences of the skill of the ancients, which those of Evolution fame would have us think were mere uneducated monkeys. Today, with our latest machinery, we might possibly duplicate everything in the Great Pyramid, even down to the fine joints between the immense stones. But every thoughtful person examining the Great Pyramid, or reading accounts thereof, must be impressed with the wonderful precision exercised by its builders—a precision supposed to have been impossible for any living prior to our day.

The Pyramid, however, is but another evidence in contradiction of the Evolution theory. No doubt all of our readers have read *STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES*, Vol. III, the last chapter of which describes the Pyramid and sets forth much of the wonderful symbolic teachings shown in its construction. It shows the Pyramid to be in exact harmony with the Bible. Indeed, some, after reading this volume, have referred to the Great Pyramid as "The Bible in Stone."