

OUR DELIVERANCE DRAWETH NIGH!

"The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light."—Romans 13:12.

We can see only one way in which the Apostle could have said in his day that the night was far spent. He evidently recognized the period of time since sin had entered the world as a time of darkness, of night. In proportion as man became alienated from God, the darkness became more intense. As sin abounded, many could not see what was right and what was wrong. This condition still prevails. So far have they fallen from the likeness of their Creator that their minds are benighted. The Apostle says that because men did not choose "to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind." (Romans 1:28) Their minds became darkened, unable to distinguish right from wrong.

St. Paul tells us that all this is what we might expect from a reign of sin—a reign of darkness. Satan's opposition to God made him a leader of those men who would not have God's way; and all down the centuries these have been the majority. In their fallen condition their minds were perverted, and they became an easy prey to the wiles of the great adversary. This darkness, which the Apostle styles night, has been a period of six thousand years. Now, however, we realize that we are in the dawning of a new dispensation. Darkness is giving place to light in matters relating not only to the church, but also to the world. If it was true in the day of the Apostle that the night was far spent, how much more forceful is the expression in our day!

SURELY ALL SHOULD BE AWAKE NOW!

The light of the glorious Sun of Righteousness is even now breaking over the hill-tops. It cannot shine upon the whole world until all the members of the church of Christ are glorified and exalted to power in the Messianic Kingdom. Then the darkness of sin, ignorance, superstition and wrong-doing will be dispersed.

In the verse preceding our text the Apostle points out to the Church at Rome great responsibility saying: "Knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." But how much more significant are these words to us of today, than to them! The Christian is to realize that the whole world has been asleep, in a sort of stupor respecting the highest, best and noblest things. When the child of God gets his eyes partially opened, he begins to weigh and measure matters after a different fashion from that of his previous course. As his eyes open still more widely, everything takes on a new aspect. He is able more than ever before to estimate rightly the value of things of this life and finds them not worthy to be compared with the glorious things which belong to the life eternal. He sees that for six thousand years the world has been groaning under the bondage of sin and Satan, but that the blessed morning of the great Sabbath of hallowed rest and refreshment is about to dawn.

As the Christian realizes all this, he should feel disposed to arouse himself, shake himself thoroughly from the dust of ignorance, superstition, blindness and sordidness, and to live more fully in harmony with the glorious hopes which he now entertains—living for the new era, the new dispensation. Instructed more fully from the Word of God, he will not expect his salvation, his deliverance, except in connection with the second presence—the parousia—of our Lord Jesus and the establishment of his kingdom. He will see a new force, beauty and meaning in the words of the Apostle Peter: "Wherefore, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and set your hope perfectly on the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."—1 Peter 1:13, R. V.

REIGN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AT THE DOOR

The thought of the second presence of the Lord was continually before the Apostles; and our Lord evidently designed that it should be a constant incentive to the members of his church throughout the entire age. This undoubtedly, was one reason why he did not particularly explain the length of time that would intervene before the setting up of the kingdom. From God's standpoint it would be a short interval; and even from the human standpoint it would be short to each individual, who would have only the few remaining years of his life wherein to make ready for the glorious things of the future; and "in death there is no remembrance."

As St. Paul looked back and perceived that in his day about 4178 years of the reign of sin and gross darkness, upon the world had passed, he could realize that truly the night was far spent, that the blessed day of deliverance was drawing nigh. And now we, who live in the dawn of this great day,

are most highly favored by the Lord. We can see the particulars regarding this time, which were obscure in the Apostle's time. We are standing at the very threshold of the Golden Age! As soon as the harvest of this Gospel age shall be gathered, the work of change, the transformation from the reign of evil to the reign of righteousness, will take place; and it is nigh, even at the door. Surely it is now high time that all who are truly the Lord's should awake out of sleep, cast off all "the works of darkness," and put on the "whole armour of God that we shall be able to withstand in the evil day."—Ephesians 6:13.

"ARMOR OF LIGHT" ESPECIALLY NEEDED TODAY

Whatever will not stand the fullest investigation in the light of this day of Christ, whatever will not win approval in the new dispensation now coming in, should be promptly renounced by all who hope for the Lord's favor as his children, as disciples of Christ. If we really are Christ's we belong to the new era, not to the old. We should therefore live in accordance with our citizenship and with our responsibility to the prince of light and in opposition to the prince of darkness.

We are forewarned by the Apostle that this period of time in which the change from the dominion of the "prince of this world" to that of the prince of glory takes place, will be an especially "evil day"—a period in which all the children of light will be crucially tested. It is a day that is to "try every man's work, of what sort it is." It is to be a day of fiery trial, through which only the gold, silver and precious stones will pass unscathed, in which all the wood, hay and stubble of error, sin, human tradition and falsehood will be entirely destroyed. We are even now in the fires of this day, in the time when the wood, hay and stubble are being consumed; when higher criticism, evolution, Christian science, hypnotism (whether known under its own name or whether called mind cures), etc., are devouring as a flame all the faith structure of those children of God who have not continued faithful to the Lord, and who, therefore, have not been kept by his power, through the Word and through his providences.

"WALK AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT"

All who are truly the Lord's should "walk honestly, as in the day." We are not yet fully in the day; but we belong to the day, and are therefore to live as nearly as possible up to the perfect standards of the future. So to live will mean self-denial. It will mean that we shall be misunderstood by the world and all who have its spirit. It will mean that we shall be thought foolish, that we shall be considered enemies—not so much by those who are in gross darkness as by those who profess to be the Lord's people, to be children of the light, but who really prefer darkness and error to light and truth.

We are inclined to lay special stress on the word, "honestly," used by the Apostle, and believe that he used it advisedly and in a particular sense. As we look about us today, we see that dishonesty is very prevalent. Not merely in the world, where we expect to find a certain amount of duplicity, misrepresentation and deception, and to see people passing for what they are not, do we find this kind of dishonesty very prevalent, but amongst professing Christians. We have even known professed ministers of the Gospel to boast of their dishonesty—to declare that they never have believed the creed which they have professed to believe and which they have vowed that they would teach. Intelligent ministers of all denominations are preaching what they do not believe, standing for creeds and confessions of faith which misrepresent their own sentiments. They are acting dishonestly; they are searing their consciences; they are putting themselves into conditions where they cannot make progress into the light of truth; for surely God does not purpose to have dishonest people in his elect Church. If these do not very quickly change and become honest, they will certainly have their portion with the hypocrites; for it is the hypocrites who are dishonest.

HONESTY A BASIC TRAIT OF CHARACTER

Christians, above all other people in the world, should be honest and sincere in their professions. They should be honest in their dealings with their neighbors, with their brethren, and especially in their confessions respecting their God and their faith. This test must be met by every one who names the name of Christ. Those who love the favor of men more than the favor of God, who would rather confess and profess a lie than to espouse an unpopular cause—even when they know it is God's cause—will be given up to their lie. Such are surely proving themselves unfit for the kingdom, unfit to

reign with Christ, whatever else they may eventually attain, if later through stripes and humiliation they take the proper course.

This was the very essence of the Apostle's declaration in his second letter to the church at Thessalonica, when he spoke prophetically of this present "evil day," and the great trial that would at this time come upon the church. He declared of those who would prove unfaithful that God would "send them strong delusions that they should believe the lie"—because they were not honest—because they did not obey the truth in the love of it, but acted deceitful, hypocritically. He says of these that God will send them delusions in order "that they may be condemned"—not damned, as in the common version of the Bible—that they may be condemned to suffer the consequences of their dishonorable and disloyal course. They will come to the place where they will be greatly humiliated before those whose esteem and favor they have so sought to retain. They will be seen by all in their true garb, stripped of their cloak of hypocrisy.

Great will be their shame and humiliation then. Through tribulation and in difficulty must they retrace their steps if they would attain eternal life, would come back to the favor of God and of their fellows. But it will be a great blessing if they are restored and led into the way of life, even through very severe chastisements and afflictions. We may well rejoice that so soon all error, dishonesty and fraud, of whatever nature, will be exposed and dethroned, and that truth and righteousness will be enthroned in their place.

STARS TWINKLING IN THE NIGHT

But there has not been utter darkness at any time through all this long reign of evil—not the blackness of night. Throughout the past six thousand years there have been certain lights—like stars in the night-time. During the Jewish dispensation, the Law Covenant as a moon reflected the light of the glorious Sun of Righteousness, later to dawn upon the dark world. Our Lord Jesus, when he came, was the bright star that heralded the coming morning; for his sacrificial work made the morning possible and ensured its dawning.

Throughout the Gospel age true Christians have been lights shining in a dark place. The light that now shines from the Lord's true people is not appreciated by the world in general; for it is a spiritual light. The light of the law given by Moses to the Jews was one which the world could better understand. It was an earthly light; for it gave earthly rewards and earthly punishments. The world cannot understand the light-bearers of the Gospel age. They say: "If these were children of God, and he were really caring for them, he would not permit them to have so many difficulties and have such a hard time as they apparently have. They do not have any easier time than the world, whom they call sinners; and often their lot seems harder. How is this a manifestation of the Lord's special favor?"

But the Word of our God makes all this plain to those who trust in him. There we learn that this is not the time to receive the reward. While those who live a holy life do not have a very peaceable time as respects their outward circumstances and surroundings, nevertheless the peace of God is within, ruling in their hearts. It is a peace that is wholly independent of outward conditions.

We know that our own righteousness is but as filthy rags. We know that our depravities, while covered by the robe of our Savior's righteousness, must gradually be purged away, or we could never be fit for the kingdom. All this we see; but the world and worldly Christians do not see it. So we must not expect to be understood until the new age with its blessed light is ushered in and all the vapors of darkness are dispelled. Then the veil of unbelief and ignorance will be removed from the eyes of all. Meantime, we have a responsibility which those who cannot see do not have, and we could not excuse in ourselves the manner of life which seems reasonable or excusable in others. We know a better way. How thankful we should be that the Lord has graciously opened our ears to the melodies of heaven, which none others can hear!

This "armor of light" which we wear is composed of various pieces, each one of which is essential to our proper protection, especially in this "evil day." First we wear the robe of Christ's righteousness, "the wedding garment." Then, under the other figure, we wear the "armor of righteousness," the "armor of light," which represents not only our standing in Christ, but our spiritual attainments in him. We are to have on the "breastplate of righteousness," and must carry "the shield of faith." We must have "our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." We must surely wear also "the helmet," the covering of our intellect from the assaults of this "evil day"; for we need this protection now as never before. We must also have "our loins girt about with truth." We cannot serve acceptably and effectively if girded to service with the

girdle of error and dishonest profession. We must have truth in both doctrine and practise, in both head and heart.

We do not understand that either the putting on of the Christian armor or the putting off of the works of darkness is an instantaneous matter. We should put these dark works off as rapidly as possible, however—as rapidly as we are able to see our imperfections and defects. A Christian who has had twenty years' experience ought to be able to do much better than one who has just started in the way—who has but just begun to scrutinize his conduct—his thoughts, words and doings. It seems to take some longer to make this transfer than others. We are all endeavoring, if we are faithful, to put off the works of darkness altogether, and to put on securely the whole armor, seeking day by day to put on more and more kindness, gentleness, meekness, humility, love.

THE TRIUMPH OF LOVE

In the chapter preceding the one from which our text is taken, St. Paul has been giving some wholesome counsel concerning the proper course of the Lord's people in the everyday duties of life. His advice seems to cover a wide range of the little vexatious cares and trials that every one must meet, and to instruct us how to triumph in them through the mighty power of love. He evidently thought of the thin veneer of worldly politeness which often covers deep-seated selfishness, and showed that the politeness and kindness of manner manifested by the Lord's people should be only the genuine article. He says: "Let love be without dissimulation [pretense, hypocrisy]. Abhor that which is evil [all shams and insincere pretensions]; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another; in honor preferring one another." He remembered the temptations and vexations of life, of our business relations and intercourse with the world and of its natural tendency to engross time, energy and thought.

The Apostle also remembered the poverty and losses of some of the Lord's dear people, and counselled sympathy and hospitality—"distributing to the necessity of the saints, given to hospitality." He tells us that we should "rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep"; that we should "mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate"; that we should "be not wise in our own conceits"; that we should "bless them that persecute" us, and "recompense no man evil for evil"; that we should "provide things honest in the sight of all men"—not only the brethren, but the world also. Thinking of the numerous trials of patient endurance arising from contact with those of undisciplined hearts, he urged, "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place to wrath [get out of its way, do not allow it to overtake you]; for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.'" Therefore, "if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." You will make him ashamed of his conduct as he sees its contrast with yours.

Further, he says, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Do not allow the trials and annoyances, or the misunderstandings which sometimes bring us acute pain, to make you sour or vindictive or cold or unsympathetic; nor the more favorable or prosperous circumstances to make you proud or highminded or wise in your own conceits; for the Lord may try us in both ways as tests of character.

He also reminds us that we should be law-abiding citizens, "rendering to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear [respectful deference or submission] to whom fear; honor to whom honor." Finally, he declares that if there be any other commandment, it is briefly summed up in the one word—love. He urges that we be diligent in the cultivation of this supreme quality of character—this all-embracing grace—"knowing the season," knowing that the time is short in which to build up ourselves in this God-like and Christ-like character. We surely have not a moment to lose if we desire to be approved of our God.

If the Apostle could say to the saints of his day that "now it is high time to awake out of sleep," with how much greater force do his words apply in these closing days of this Gospel age! In the clear light of unfolding time-prophecy, we see that we are now living at the very end of the reign of sin and death; that the night of sorrow, pain and tears is almost over; that the glorification of the last members of the Christ body is very soon to be completed. Yes, beloved, "the night is far spent" [about ended] and the glorious day of deliverance and blessing is at hand. Even now the first faint streaks of dawn appear. Then let us cast away every encumbrance, everything that would hinder us in the slightest degree in running successfully our glorious race. Let us press on with renewed vigor, looking neither to the right nor to the left, but keeping our eyes "fixed on the glory of the prize," and soon, please God, the victory shall be ours!

EVERLASTING BLESSINGS

"In the Lord Jehovah trusting, everlasting strength have we;
He himself our sun, our glory, everlasting light shall be;
Everlasting life is ours, purchased by the life laid down;
And our heads, oft bowed and weary, everlasting joy shall crown.

"We shall dwell with Christ forever, when the shadows flee away,
In the everlasting glory of the everlasting day.
Unto thee, beloved Savior, everlasting thanks belong,
Everlasting adoration, everlasting praise and song."

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

"Come near to me, I pray you. . . . Be not grieved nor angry with yourselves. . . . Haste, and bring down my father hither."—Genesis 45:4, 5, 13.

What story in all the writings of all the nations compares in simple pathos with that of Joseph and his brethren! Who can read this tale of ancient time and far-off land without tears starting to the eye! Yet this fragment of Hebrew history is not only a beautiful story, but also a possible prototype of things soon to come, wherein the joyous tears of millions of people may bring home to the hearts of all true Christians the same, yes, greater heights of joy than that which moved the hearts of the first Israelitish family. When the whole Israel of God, the true Israel, draw near together, "seeing eye to eye" throughout the length and the breadth of the earth, the final drama of the Gospel age will have reached its climax, preparatory to the grand ingathering into the glories of the kingdom.

The story of Joseph's reunion with his brethren finds its setting at a time when "the famine was sore in the land." There had been seven years of plentiful harvest, and food for all had been gathered in Egypt; but the brethren of Joseph were dwelling in a land where such provision had not been made. Already there had been two years of famine, and in the five years to come it seemed impossible for any one to survive the dearth of bread.

These facts may have been designed to picture circumstances in the present time. Joseph's brethren, dwelling with their father Jacob in the land of Canaan, had all professed faith in God, and had dwelt in abundance. Now, too, God's children have had an abundance of spiritual food, the Word of God, up to the time of the closing of the door of membership in the bride of Christ—at or about the Passover of 1918. Abundantly did the rain, the present truth, come down from heaven; the truth of God descended from the spiritual heavens upon all believers everywhere. Suddenly, about Passover, certain divinely permitted circumstances stopped the rains from heaven; and then the famine set in, a sore famine for the hearing of the Word of God. The only real spiritual food anywhere is that within the storehouse of the antitypical Joseph—Christ, Head and body, on both sides the veil; and the only way to obtain this food is by meeting the conditions set down by Christ.

BENJAMIN, TYPE OF THE GREAT COMPANY

In the picture God seems to be depicted in two offices; as Pharaoh, king over Joseph (the little flock), and as Jacob, father of Joseph and of Benjamin (the great company) and of the other brothers (the professedly justified), including Judah, a class of believers not spirit-begotten but specially loving toward Benjamin, the great company. (Genesis 44:14-34) If we apply the picture to our day, the time may be regarded as between a year and a half and two years after the spiritual famine period began (about April, 1918), or October, 1919, to June, 1920. The countries typify, not places but conditions of the classes involved. Joseph in kingly power represents Christ, Head and body, partly beyond and partly this side the veil, also in kingly power. (Psalm 149:5-9) Canaan pictures the condition of professed relationship to God; while Egypt appears to represent in some respects the kingdom conditions since the closing of the door to the high calling. As in all pictures of this kind, not every detail may be expected to apply. In any interpretation of this nature it must always be understood as tentative, until actual experience has proven or disproven the correctness of the application.

The picture relates to the approaching ingathering of the great company and other believers into present truth. (Jeremiah 40:7-12) The Greater than Joseph has been recognized as bringing about changes since 1874, but he has not been known as Christ; nor have the body or feet members still this side the veil been known. "And when Joseph [Christ] came home, they brought him the present [consecration] which was in their hand [power] into the house, and bowed themselves to him to the earth"—worshiped Christ the Head, in their trouble and distress.—Genesis 43:26.

During Christ's presence he has been searching, judging, the hearts of believers as to their vital relationship to our Father: "And he asked them of their welfare [religiously] and said, Is your father [our Father] well [Is it well with you toward our Father], the old man [the Ancient of Days] of whom ye spake [preached]? Is he in good health [a living reality to you]? Then they answered, Thy servant our father

is in good health [It is well with us toward him]. He is yet alive. And they bowed down their heads, and made obeisance [worshiped Christ the Head].—Genesis 43:27, 28.

Christ, Head and body, has considered the great company (Benjamin) very favorably, and has often spoken of God's graciousness to them: "And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin [the great company], his mother's son [both children of the Covenant of Grace], and said: Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me? [All believers have in prayer to Christ made special mention of the spirit-begotten great company]. And he said, God be gracious [show special grace and favor] unto thee, my son."—Genesis 43:29.

MILLIONS SOON TO RECEIVE THE TRUTH

The time will soon have come for the blessing of the great company. The feet members of Christ will yearn in love for the revelation of themselves to the spiritually-minded, but not altogether faithful Christians, soon to be released from blindness and from religious bondage. This class will be the little brother Benjamin of the Joseph class. The two classes started together as babes and children in Christ. It will be in troublous times; but the tears of the little flock will be the tears of a holy joy, shed in the secret place, the Holy: "And Joseph made haste, for his bowels [heart affections] did yearn upon his brother [the little flock will yearn over those dear to them and coming soon by millions into the truth], and he sought where to weep, and entered into his [secret] chamber and wept there."—Genesis 43:30.

"And he washed his face [the priesthood may not show signs of weeping], and went out and refrained himself, and said, Set on bread [present some features of truth]. And they set for him by himself [the feet members feed uniquely upon divine truths], and for them by themselves [mere believers assimilate the Bible truths intended for them], and for the Egyptians which did eat with him by themselves [religious worldlings and believers cannot assimilate the same ideas]; for that is an abomination unto the Egyptians"—worldlings abominate the truths about the blood-bought sacrifice.—Genesis 43:31, 32.

"And they sat before him [all are before Christ in these judgment days], the firstborn according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth [before Christ all believers occupy their true and hence appropriate position]; and the men marveled one at another [at the discerning classification of Christians]. And he took and sent messes [measures of Bible truth] unto them from before him [all truth comes from Christ]; but Benjamin's mess [the truths of the great company] was five [a divine or spiritual number] times so much [the great company feed upon spiritual truths] as any of theirs [the professedly justified]. And they drank [imbibed doctrines], and were merry [happy] with him"—in the truth made known to them.—Genesis 43:33, 34.

THE ANTITYPICAL BENJAMIN'S CUP

"And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, Fill the men's sacks [vessels, minds] with food [the truth] as much as they can carry, and put every man's money in the sack's mouth [truth cannot be bought except by consecration]. And put my cup, the silver cup [the Bible truths on spiritual subjects], in the sack's mouth of the youngest [great company], and his corn money. And he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken."—Genesis 44:1, 2.

Then follows the story of the finding of the cup in Benjamin's sack, representing the general recognition by the great company of their possession of the Bible in its spiritual phases. (Genesis 44:3-14) The one who has the cup—the spirit of the Word—is recognized as facing death. The great company members are seen by "Christians" generally to be consecrated in a way that will bring about the death of their flesh: "With whomsoever of thy servants it [the cup] be found, both let him die, and we [the professedly justified] also will be my lord's [Christ's] bondmen"—servants on the human plane.—Genesis 44:9.

Eventually the class having the antitypical cup is to live as the servant of the Greater than Joseph; and the associates of the Benjamin class, former persecutors of the Joseph com-

pany, are to be blameless: "He [the great company] with whom it [the cup, the spirit of the Word] is found shall be my [Christ's] servant [Revelation 7:15]; and ye [once persecutors] shall be blameless"—after a Millennial age repentance and cleansing.—Genesis 44:10; Leviticus 16:26-28.

ALL CHRISTIANS NOW ON JUDGMENT

In verses 14-34 Judah represents a specially loving and zealous class among the professedly justified believers, such a class as might, through a good heart condition, become in the earthly phase of the kingdom sons of the ancient worthies and gain life with them on some spirit plane.—Ezekiel 46:16, 17.

It becomes a time of judgment for all the brothers of Joseph; for he says: "Wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly make trial?" (Genesis 44:15, margin) The brothers then acknowledge their wrong-doing toward Joseph: "And Judah said, What shall we say unto my lord? [What can sinful nominal Christianity say?] What shall we speak? Or how shall we clear ourselves? [They cannot clear themselves of the charge of persecuting God's elect and of much other evil-doing]. God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants [through the interpretations of Revelation and Ezekiel and through churchianity's manifest persecution of men of God]; behold, we are my lord's [Christ's] servants, both we and he also [the great company] with whom the cup is found."—Genesis 44:16.

"And he [Joseph, representing Christ] said, God forbid that I should do so [only the spirit-begotten can be servants on the heavenly plane]; but the man [great company] in whose hand the cup [spiritual things] is found, he shall be my servant; and as for you [the professedly justified], get you up in peace unto your father [in the earthly phase of the kingdom]. Then Judah, [a specially noble class of mere believers] came near unto him [drew especially near to Christ], and said, O my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn [as in the troublous days here spoken of] against thy servant; for thou [Christ] art even as Pharaoh"—all should honor the Son even as they honor the Father.—Genesis 44:17, 18.

FUTURE WORK OF THE GREAT COMPANY

In Judah's recital (44:19-34) are the following words: "We have a father [our Father], an old man [the Ancient of Days], and a child of his old age [the great company], a little one [babes, children, little ones in Christ]; and his brother [the Christ, Head and body] is dead [as dead, outcast as sinners to other believers], and he alone [the great company alone, as it seems to the Judah class] is left of his mother [the Covenant of Grace], and his father [our Father] loveth him. [How tenderly does God love all his spirit-begotten children!] If he should leave his father, his father would die [a figure of the Father's great love for the great company class]. And thou [Christ] saidst unto thy servants, 'Except your youngest brother come down with you [learn the present truth at the divinely foreknown time], ye shall see my face no more'—no kingdom favor can come to the now professedly justified unless the great company gain the knowledge and character development necessary for its coming great work.—Genesis 44:20-23.

"My father said unto us, Ye know that my wife [the Covenant of Grace] bare me two sons [the little flock and the great company], and one [the Christ, Head and body] went out from me [so it seems to all other believers], and I said, Surely he is torn to pieces [a living sacrifice] and I saw him no more [so it seems to other believers, who have never been able to discern the mystery of Christ in us]. (Genesis 44:27, 28) "His life [our Father's life, through spirit-begetting] is bound up in the lad's life [the great company has its spiritual life direct from God]. How shall I [noble, but not wholly consecrated believers] go up to my father [approach unto God] and the lad be not with me?"—Believers depend greatly on the great company for spiritual assistance.—Genesis 44:34.

MANIFESTATION OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

The divinely appointed time has now about come for the mystery, the great secret of God, "hidden from ages and from generations," to be completely and finally finished, and for the great company and all other believers to see who are the members of the body of Christ. As the narrative proceeds: "Then Joseph [Christ, Head and body, including the body members still this side the veil] could not refrain himself before them all [the time will have finally come, possibly at about the time before mentioned] and he cried, Cause every man [of the Egyptians, worldly churchists] to go out from me!" [In the final fall of ecclesiasticism, wherein the false followers of Christ will be detached from the real. (Jeremiah 23:39; Ezekiel 24:21)] And there stood no man [worldling] with him [the Christ] when he made himself known unto his brethren

[when the truth comes to the great company and to other believers as to who are the real feet members of Christ, whom they had sold into Egyptian bondage and oppression]. "And he wept aloud [a great outburst of repressed love on the part of the body members]; and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard"—it will be manifest even to the worldlings who have gone out.—Genesis 45:2.

"And Joseph [through the Christ, body members] said unto his brethren [it will be made known to all believers] I am Joseph [these hitherto despised and cast out ones are the true body of Christ]; doth my father yet live [is our Father a living reality to you]? And his brethren [mere believers] could not answer him [former persecutors could have nothing to say]; for they were troubled [margin, terrified] at his presence"—in deep trouble because of Christ's second presence and especially because of their treatment of his feet members.—Genesis 45:3.

"And Joseph [through the feet members] said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you [draw near to Christ in renewed consecration]. And they came near. And he said [through the feet members still on earth], I am Joseph [the true members of Christ] your brother [all believers are brethren on one plane or another], whom ye sold into Egypt"—whom ye as believers persecuted.—Genesis 45:4.

"Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves [do not weep or gnash your teeth in self-reproach and useless regrets] that ye sold me into Egypt [ostracised, misrepresented, persecuted the feet members]; for God did send me before you to preserve life"—without the help of the feet members the great company and other believers would die religiously in the stress of troublous times.—Genesis 45:5.

"For these two years [possibly from the spring of 1918 to the winter of 1919 or spring of 1920] hath the famine [for the truth] been in the land [among professing Christians]; and yet there are five years [to the spring of 1925, to the resurrection of the ancient worthies] in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest"—no general religious work for the world can be done.—Gen. 45:6.

FEET MEMBERS LIKE POLISHED BRASS

"And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance [first from the bondage of a fallen ecclesiasticism]. So now it was not you that sent me [the suffering body members] hither [to the time and conditions mentioned] but God [the cup that my Father hath poured]; and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh [Genesis 41:38-45], and lord of all his house [all power in heaven and earth] and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt"—lord of lords.—Genesis 45:7, 8.

"Haste ye [the time is short for reconsecration before the Gospel age ends]; and go up to my father [reconsecrate yourselves] and say unto him [thank God for the truth revealed]. Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt [all the world]. Come down unto me [thy kingdom come], tarry not [the time for the kingdom is at hand]. And thou [mere believers and great company, and God with them] shalt dwell in the land of Goshen [a specially favored condition in the world], and thou shalt be near unto me [unto Christ, Head and body, including those still in the flesh], thou and thy children, and thy children's children [all whom you have taught to believe in the Lord] and thy flocks and thy herds [animals represent the individuals as to the flesh], and all that thou hast [everything wholly consecrated to Christ]. And there will I [Christ, Head and body] nourish thee [mere believers and great company, with present truth] for yet there are five years [1919 or 1920 to 1924 or 1925] of famine [of the truth to the people generally]; lest thou and thy household [of faith] and all that thou hast, come to poverty"—spiritually.—Genesis 45:9-11.

"And behold your eyes [eyes of understanding, anointed with the word of truth] see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin [spiritual understanding of the great company], that it is my mouth [the body members in the flesh are Christ's mouthpiece—in Christ's stead we beseech you, Be ye reconciled to God] that speaketh unto you. And ye shall tell my father [thankfully acknowledge to our Father] of all my glory in Egypt [not least of all, Christ's glorious victory over apostate ecclesiasticism], and of all that ye have seen; and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither [in your consecrated hearts]. And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept [the blessing of knowledge of present truth and of full reconciliation to God will come to the spirit-begotten great company, as well as loving fellowship with the body members of Christ on earth]; and Benjamin [the great company] wept upon his neck"—great joy of the great company over the revelation to them of the Christ in the flesh.—Genesis 45:12-14.

"Moreover, he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them [enjoyed the mutual spirit of true reconciliation with all believers]; and after that he talked with them"—[the feet members will teach present truth directly or indirectly through preaching and through print to the great company, and through them to all believers during the brief period of opportunity after the fall of ecclesiasticism].—Genesis 45:15.

That it was Pastor Russell's belief that there should come a time when the body members on earth should become manifest, or show forth the truth to everyone, is apparent from the following extract from THE WATCH TOWER of 1916, page 344, in comment on Revelation 1:15: "In the end of the age, the feet members of the body of Christ will be illuminated by the truth and will shine forth as polished brass."

DIVERSITIES OF OPERATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

"And there are diversities of operations; but it is the same God which worketh all in all."—1 Corinthians 12:6.

Now, as at all times, there is a variety of operations of the holy Spirit. This Spirit is holy or divine power, the power of God. It is an invisible power, which manifests itself in many different ways. God is a Spirit Being, powerful, yet invisible to human sight. Likewise the angels are powerful, invisible beings, and manifest themselves by their works, their operations. The only way by which spirit beings may become visible to humankind is by the performance of a miracle. The spirit must assume a material body for the purpose of manifestation to human eyes.

During the ages preceding the Gospel age holy spirit beings manifested themselves at various times to godly men and women, to deliver messages from the Lord. In the initiatory stages of the Christian church, also, in the days of the apostles, there were angelic manifestations to God's people. But after the apostles died and the church became established, these manifestations ceased, having accomplished their designed end. It is noticeable that whatever angelic manifestations and revelations have been received since that time have always been misrepresentations, deceptions, leading many away from the revealed truth of the Scriptures. At a time when the canon of Scripture was almost completed, the Apostle Paul put the church especially on guard on this point, declaring that the Word of God is sufficient, "that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work," and warning that in the latter times "some would depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons."—2 Timothy 3:13-17; 1 Timothy 4:1.

The Apostle is very sweeping in his statement of the all-sufficiency of the written Word, saying, "All Scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable for doctrines, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." There was no need for further revelations. And he said: "But though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." (Galatians 1:6-9) Evil spirits, fallen angels, have certain powers of manifestation which they received originally from God, but which they have misused. Very many have been deceived by these angels into thinking they were receiving revelations from the Lord; for they often speak in the name of the Lord, transforming themselves, outwardly, into angels of light, as the Apostle forewarned. (2 Corinthians 11:13-15) (See also our pamphlet on "Spiritism is Demonism") To listen to any of these revelations, whisperings in the ear, or impressions upon the mind, is indeed very dangerous. Every mental impression should be tested by the Word of God, written for our guidance. Whatever will not stand this crucial test should at once be rejected. The delusions of today along this line are very subtle, the deluded apostles of the fallen spirits being transformed as apostles of light. God's Spirit always operates in full harmony with his written Word.

SPIRIT'S OPERATION IN DIFFERENT AGES

Every perfect creature made in God's image and likeness is possessed of the holy Spirit. Before his fall Adam had the holy Spirit—the holy mind or disposition implanted by the Creator in the heart of this perfect man. The prophets of old had the holy Spirit, and on certain occasions were operated upon directly by this Spirit, or power of God, to write and speak words that often they did not themselves understand. (Ezekiel 20:49; 1 Peter 1:10-12) In this sense they had God's holy mind to the extent that they sought to do God's holy will; but the operation of the power of God upon them when they received divine messages was mechanical.

Comparing the Spirit's operation in the persons of the prophets before Christ with its operation in the apostles during our Lord's ministry, we see that some of the same things were done by the prophets, though not everything. In some instances sleeping ones were awakened from death by the prophets; leprosy was healed by Elisha; the widow's cruse of oil was supplied by Elijah; bitter waters were healed. In all these instances the miracles were wrought in the divine name, by the holy Spirit, or power, of God.

When our Lord Jesus was in the world, the power which he communicated to his disciples was a measure of his own power, his own spirit. After his resurrection, he breathed upon them and said: "Receive ye the holy Spirit." In this instance there may have been a communication of a measure of power at the time, or it may have been a forceful way of telling them that they were in a few days to receive this power, this holy Spirit, in a special way, after he had ascended to heaven to appear for them. At any rate it is not to be confused with the operation of the holy Spirit at Pentecost.

The communication of the holy Spirit in the outpouring at Pentecost was something altogether new, different from any previous manifestation of divine power. The holy Spirit as it came upon the church at this time was from the Father. The Father had directly recognized them as sons. The Lord Jesus was indeed the agent in bestowing this blessing, but he declared that it was from the Father. He had previously told them to tarry at Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high—until they should receive "the promise of the Father." (Luke 24:49) Some of the outward manifestations of the holy Spirit at this time and its after results were the same as when Jesus himself had communicated the holy power to them during his ministry.

But a manifestation of the holy Spirit might mean one thing at one time and another thing at another time. In the case of the prophets of old, the outward manifestation was given in order that the people might notice and therefore give the more earnest heed to the message; and the purpose seems to have been the same when our Lord sent forth the disciples, the twelve, and the seventy, in his name—that his message that the kingdom was at hand might be carried all over the country, for the purpose of awakening people to the fact that Messiah had come. After Pentecost, the message of the disciples was that this same Jesus whom the Jews had crucified had been raised from the dead. With great power they gave witness to this fact.

The same holy Spirit now operated for a different purpose, to convict the Jews and lead them to Christ. This same holy Spirit will also operate in the future when it will be poured out upon all flesh. Its operation will be manifested in enlightenment of the mind, in assistance and instruction, in gradually healing the nations—mentally, morally and physically.

BEGETTING OF THE SPIRIT DIFFERENT FROM ALL

But the special feature of the holy Spirit's operation during this present age is different from any other. It consists of a begetting of a new nature, and is accompanied by a supernatural illumination of the heart and the mind, enabling one to grasp spiritual truths, to see into the deep things of God, never seen before. The new mind is small in its beginning, but must grow day by day, feeding upon the Word of God, becoming more and more able to appreciate and assimilate the things of the Spirit, which the natural man perceiveth not. The embryo new creature, the babe in Christ, must grow in grace, in God's favor and in spiritual strength, becoming more like Christ in character, more fixed and established in the truth as it is in Christ Jesus.

In John 7:39 we read, "The holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." The Father could not give this spirit of sonship to any until Jesus had been crucified, had arisen and had ascended into heaven, the Most Holy, to present his sacrificial merit on behalf of those who would be of the church; in other words, after he had deposited his merit in the Father's hands for the benefit of all of this class; for none could receive the spirit of sonship save through the Redeemer.

During this Gospel age, some have had the blessed privilege of thus receiving the Spirit, of becoming sons of God, on a spiritual plane; and if this class continue faithful to their covenant with the Lord, they shall be born beings of the divine nature. Such an offer was never before made, and never will be repeated. This class receive special instruction and guidance from the Father through Christ for the high position to

which they have been called. No longer, as in the apostles' day, do the spirit-begotten receive miraculous gifts of the Spirit; for these are no longer needed. But they have the fruits of the Spirit, which have remained, and which are far more important than were the gifts. These fruits are to be developed in their characters by study of the Word, by prayer and by painstaking effort day by day.

The new creatures in Christ are the anointed class. The anointing and the begetting result from the same operation of the holy Spirit. The begetting represents our individual start in the new life. The anointing represents our coming into the body of Christ. When we present ourselves in consecration and are accepted, we are at once begotten of the holy Spirit and inducted into the body, coming thus under the anointing which flows from the great Head, Christ Jesus. The one operation of the spirit begins the individual work and also the new relationship as one of the anointed company, or body of Christ.

The various fruits of the Spirit which must be developed as we go on in the new life are the most desirable that could be imagined. They are enumerated by the Apostles Paul and Peter in somewhat different phraseology. St. Paul specifies these fruits as love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control. The Apostle Peter lists them as faith, fortitude, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly love, and lastly the broad general love that covers all men even our enemies. This list is very comprehensive and includes all the fruits of the holy Spirit. If we bear these fruits richly, aboundingly, he says, we shall never fall, but shall have abundant entrance into Christ's kingdom.

DEGREES OF SPIRIT'S MANIFESTATION

In considering the fruits of the holy Spirit as given in the Word, we must suppose that all of these are fully developed in any being who is in the likeness of God and has been tested and proven, the difference on the different planes of life being not in kind but in degree, according to the capacity. Mankind have lost the image and likeness of God to a very large degree. Hence in a natural man of today those qualities are lacking which would have been present had he remained perfect. The members of the Gospel church are put through manifold trying experiences designed under divine blessing and assistance to develop these very qualities; for as they are, if faithful, to be exalted to the very highest plane of being, they must develop these spirit-fruits to the highest degree; and supernatural illumination is granted them in order that they may be able to successfully accomplish this.

While we remain in the imperfect tabernacle, the flesh, we cannot manifest these precious fruits perfectly, because the flesh is unable adequately to show forth the sentiments of the new heart, the new mind. Sin has so marred the human brain that it will not perfectly respond to the holy mind within. For this reason the robe of Christ's imputed righteousness must be supplied to cover our need until our earthly course is finished.

VARYING DEGREES OF GLORY

Considering the restitution of the world in the age just before us, we see that God has set aside the thousand years of Messiah's kingdom for the purpose of instructing mankind and of bringing them back to full perfection of mind and morals. This bringing of men back to the image of God will mean that they will become sons of God, and will then possess all the fruits and graces of the holy Spirit that the church must now develop. What, then, will be the difference between these different classes? We answer that as we have stated above, the difference will be one of quality and of quantity, not of kind. The operation of the holy Spirit in human conditions would necessarily be limited; for men will be sons of God on the human plane. Similarly, the manifestations of spirit-fruits in angels would correspond to their plane of being.

To illustrate these various differences, we might take some of the precious jewels. We might let the emerald represent human perfection, the topaz angelic perfection, and the diamond divine perfection. These are all precious, all beautiful. Each is perfect on its own plane, but their planes are different one from another. The diamond emits the greatest degree of light. Thus it will be with the divine nature. The Lord has promised that the faithful church shall have the very highest glory and honor—immortality. Hence she will manifest all the glorious attributes of perfect character in the highest degree of any of Jehovah's intelligent creatures.

But all of the sons of God, on whatever plane, will have God's holy Spirit. None others will be permitted to continue their existence beyond the final test to follow the Millennium. God will have a glorious universe throughout the ages of eternity; and from every inhabited world peans of praise shall resound, to be taken up and repeated by every loving, loyal heart in every part of Jehovah's boundless domain. Existence will be sublime in that glad day, for which all other days have been made; and the most glorious heritage of all will be the heritage of the Christ of God.

CHRISTIAN GIVING

[The last two paragraphs of this article were reprinted from Vol. VI Studies in the Scriptures, p. 343. The remainder was reprinted from article entitled, "Will a Man Rob God; Yet Ye Have Robbed Me," published in issue of June 15, 1899. Please see the articles named.]

CONQUERING EVIL

SEPTEMBER 8.—EPIHESIANS 5:11-18.

[The first seven paragraphs of this article, as originally published in August, 1918, were reprinted from article entitled, "The Sin of Covetousness," published in issue of July 15, 1898. Paragraphs 8 to 11 inclusive were reprinted from article entitled, "Ahab's Sin—Covetousness Murder," published in issue of September 15, 1915. The remainder of the article was reprinted from article entitled, "Awake Thou That Sleepest and Arise," published in issue of March 1, 1902. Please see the articles named.]

WINNING THE WORLD TO CHRIST

SEPTEMBER 15.—MATTHEW 5:13-16, 28; ACTS 16:9-15.

RETURN OF CHRIST THE ONLY HOPE OF THE WORLD—TWO THOUGHTS FORMING THE BASIS OF THE THEORY THAT THE WORLD MUST BE CONVERTED DURING THE GOSPEL AGE—COMMISSION OF THE CHURCH—DISCIPLES TO BE GATHERED OUT OF ALL NATIONS—THE GOSPEL TO BE PREACHED WORLD-WIDE AS A WITNESS TO THE PEOPLE—THIS PORTION OF THE WORK FINISHED.

"Go ye into the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation."—Mark 16:15.

From time to time we have demonstrated that there is no hope whatever of general world-blessing through Christ along the lines commonly held by Christian people; that is, the conversion of the world by present-day missionary efforts. We herewith review this subject, not with the purpose of casting disrespect upon all missionaries, but in order to demonstrate afresh the fact that this world-conversion-through-foreign-missions delusion is doing positive and serious harm to the Lord's true people by leading to false expectations and, consequently, to misdirected efforts.

Foreign missions were undertaken with two convictions, one correct, the other false: (1) The correct, scriptural conviction that the only name by which any can be saved is the name of Jesus—faith in his sacrificial death, and obedience and devotion to him; (2) The false, unscriptural conviction that there is no hope for any who die in ignorance of the only name whereby we must be saved. These intertwined theories have

been the cord which has drawn hundreds of noble lives to self-sacrifice, especially during the first half of the nineteenth century. They have been the cord also which has drawn, and still draws, millions on millions of money from sympathetic purses. And we need not wonder if the money has in turn drawn some into the missionary work simply for an honorable and easy living.

HOW OF DUAOB NOLLORVEN

We are not objecting to the sacrifice of noble lives and of consecrated money, however; for we firmly believe that lives and money given with sincerity have been pleasing to the Lord, even though given under some serious and discreditable misapprehensions of the divine character and of the plan for human salvation. But we hold that this mixture of truth and error is very injurious to the people of God, in that it diverts their hearts and their efforts away from the truth, away from Bible study, away from growth in knowledge and in the graces

of the holy Spirit. Moreover, it inculcates instead the thought that the chief object of life for all Christians should be the snatching fellow creatures from the hands of an angry God intent upon hurling them into eternal torment at the hands of demons; or, if not this, the making and contributing of money to pay the expenses of those who do the snatching.

As a result Christian people "have no time" to study the Father's Word, no time to study the divine plan, no time to cultivate their own hearts. They often say to themselves, and sometimes unguardedly to others: 'Bible study? Nonsense! We already know enough when we know that millions of human beings are going down to hell. By and by we hustlers who have been less careful for our own spiritual development and for Bible study, but more on fire and burdened for souls, will have brighter crowns than will these hair-splitting Bible students, if indeed they are not rejected from heaven entirely.'

But with the advance of intelligence a reaction from so unreasonable a position was bound to come; and it has come. People in general no longer believe in the horrible devil-god of the past, seeking for any possible pretext for the torture of as many as possible of his creatures. Reason is asserting itself; and man no longer poses as the sinner's only friend to save him from a malicious God. Any such proposition is too absurd for the enlightenment of the twentieth century.

But men will have theories; for these are still, as ever, the basis of action, the rudder of human effort. It has become evident to all thinkers that one or the other of the strands of the original mission-cord is false, unreliable, rotten. Question: Which of the two strands will they reject?

We answer that the true one will be rejected and the false one retained. Men will continue to believe that all hope ends with death; and they will reject the inspired declaration that faith in Christ is the only hope, and his the only name. They have already concluded, and are becoming more and more convinced, that although the name of Jesus is a good rallying cry, especially when missionary contributions are called for, yet it is not the only name for salvation. They have concluded, but do not care to declare it in so many words, that education and civilization are, rather, the only names for salvation. And at home and abroad the term salvation is more and more coming to mean, not a personal relationship to him who is the light of the world and in whom alone is life everlasting, but social progress, municipal and national reform—social uplift. Thus has the false idea of missions and of their conversion of the world led God's people farther and farther away from his Word, which in their zeal without knowledge they reject.

MISSIONS TO SUCCEED DURING THE MILLENNIUM

To those who are rightly instructed on the subject by God's Word, who lean not to their own understanding, but who daily search the Scriptures to be thereby taught of God, the utter failure of missions to convert the world to even the imperfect conditions which prevail throughout Christendom is faith-strengthening. This failure demonstrates beyond question the truth of the Scripture teachings that God is not yet attempting the conversion and salvation of mankind, but is leaving that great work for the future, to be accomplished by the Messianic kingdom, when it shall be established in power and great glory during the Millennium. It corroborates fully the Bible declaration that the present work of God is the election of a church which, when polished, finished and glorified with her Lord and Head, shall by and by bless all the families of the earth as Abraham's seed. (Galatians 3:8, 16, 29) Then will be fulfilled the petition of our Lord's prayer: "Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven."

Many students of the Bible derive a wrong thought from our Lord's commission to his disciples just before his ascension. That commission divides itself into three parts: (1) Making disciples of all nations; (2) baptizing them; and (3) teaching them. (Matthew 28:19, 20) The Greek word which in the Authorized Version is rendered *teach* in verse 19 is altogether different from that so rendered in verse 20. (See margin) The former Greek word signifies to proselyte or make disciples; the latter, to instruct. Thus it will be seen that a wrong thought is derived from this text by those who interpret it to mean: 'Go and convert all nations.' This is not the thought; but rather, 'Go ye and gather converts from all nations, and baptize and teach these converts.'

This view is in accord with our Master's declaration on other occasions, when he testified that the world would not be converted at his second coming, but quite the reverse. It is also in harmony with his statement in Matthew 24:14: "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

A FRUITFUL SOURCE OF ERROR

Whoever gets the wrong thought respecting the commission of the church is apt to take the wrong course in his endeavor to comply with it. Those who have concluded that the Lord designed the conversion of the world during the Gospel age are led to various subterfuges, in both mind and conduct, in order to attempt to carry out the commission which they have misunderstood. This is leading some at the present time to ignore the Scriptural definition of the terms of membership in Christ's kingdom—to lower the standard of both faith and conduct, in order to admit a larger proportion of the human family and to convince themselves and others, if possible, that the world is growing better and is being converted.

Furthermore, some not only have concluded that the preaching of the cross of Christ and faith in the redemption is unnecessary, but have even gone beyond this and have claimed that even an historical knowledge of Christ is unnecessary, that heathen religions are to be esteemed as part of the preaching of the Gospel, and that the heathen obedience to their own religious customs is to be esteemed as obedience to the Gospel. Thus more or less false views of the church's commission are leading astray many who see no hope in any other way of ever attaining to that which our Lord commissioned nearly nineteen centuries ago, and which otherwise they would feel has so far failed most miserably and can never be accomplished.

On the other hand we hold that, rightly read and understood, the commission has been fulfilled; that the message of Christ and the Messianic kingdom has been proclaimed, directly or indirectly, with more or less force and energy, in every nation under heaven, and that as a result some from every nation have been made disciples; and that incidentally a witness has been given to all the peoples of the earth respecting the redemption and the divine provision for salvation through the Redeemer. Of these disciples gathered out of all nations by the Lord's message a "little flock" will be found to whom it will be the Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom, in joint-heirship with Jesus in glory as the seed of Abraham, through whom during the Millennium all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Only from this standpoint can our Lord's commission be properly appreciated and its fulfillment recognized.

THE WHOLE CHURCH COMMISSIONED

That our Lord gave this commission, not merely to the apostles, but to all who should believe on him through their word, is clearly shown by the words with which he closed the commission: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age." The apostles did not live until the end of the age; and hence the Lord's words signify that he will be with all of his followers who avail themselves of his commission and endeavor to present his message to those having ears to hear out of all nations. Of course he did not mean that he would be present with them personally; for he had already told them that he would go away but would return at the end of the age (John 14:2), and his words are not to be understood as contradictory. In the present instance his meaning evidently was that he would supervise their work, would be the real Head of the church, would oversee all of their affairs, would be with them in the sense of supporting, guiding and counselling those who would walk in his way and proclaim his message, in proportion as they were faithful to the charge.

This assurance of the Lord's presence was designed to give the apostles courage for the work which he was committing to them. While he was with them in the flesh they merely followed his directions; and as soon as he was smitten they were as sheep having no shepherd. Now he was going away; but he wished them to realize that his power would be with them and that his supervising guidance of their affairs would be granted them, as surely as while he was with them in the flesh, though apparent only to the eye of faith. According to their faith it should be unto them a strength, a power.

All down the Gospel age the Lord's people have similarly been required to walk by faith and not by sight; and doubtless the lesson has been valuable to them in spiritual upbuilding, much more so than had he remained in the flesh with us. If, then, the thought of the Lord's spiritual supervision of his work was to be a source of encouragement and strength to those who would attempt to teach in his name all down the age, much more may we of the present time realize his actual presence in the close of the Gospel harvest. Although we see Jesus with no other than the eye of faith, yet we who believe have joy unspeakable and both strength and courage for the work; for he is once more present with his church in the harvest work, even as he was with the apostles in the sowing of the seed at the beginning of the age.