

God is able to kill the soul—able to blot out existence entirely—and he has threatened to do so in all cases of wilful deliberate sin, against full light and knowledge. This is a cause both for comfort and for fear. For comfort, as opposed to the false human teaching that the masses will spend an eternity of woe: for fear, lest after having tasted of divine goodness and learned of God's gracious provisions for such as obey him, any of us should seem to come short and lose our all—life!

To have the proper course in life, to be able to meet the

trials and difficulties of life as they come to us, and to meet them in the proper spirit which the Lord directs—in the spirit of rejoicing in tribulation, and counting such experiences all joy,—it is necessary that all fear of man, which brings a snare, shall be removed. And it is our Lord's direction that we shall fear Jehovah, and not fear our mortal fellows. The righteous are bold as a lion, as well as gentle as a dove, and meek as a lamb. This peculiar combination should be found in every Christian, and we doubt if it will be found elsewhere.

## "BETWEEN EVENINGS"—A JEWISH VIEW

Dear Brother Russell:—Allow me to express to you my deep gratitude for your kindness in supplying me gratuitously with the *Watch Tower* and booklets. I have not language at my command to convey to you how thankful I feel to our heavenly Father for raising you up as one of his honored servants in the spreading of the present truth, and trying to build up and assist those of the household of faith in their walk in the narrow way. It is proving a great blessing to me. I lay awake for hours mediating on the great and precious promises of God and the glorious prospect there is in store for those whom he has called according to his purpose.

In reading the last *Tower* for December 1st, I was much helped by your interpretations of "The Voices of the Three Signs," also with the typical meaning of "The Passover Lamb." But I can not quite understand what you mean when you say, "On the fourteenth day of the month it was to be killed between evenings (between six o'clock the one evening and six o'clock the next evening—the usual Jewish day)." If the lamb had to be killed on the fourteenth day, between the evening of that day and the evening of the next, which would be the fifteenth, it would have to take place after six o'clock in the evening on the fourteenth day, and that would not correspond with the time of the death of the antitype as recorded in Matt. 26:45, 46, 50; Luke 23:44, 46, and yet the properties which the passover lamb was to possess, the manner in which it was to die, the effects which were to be produced, and the ceremonies which were to be observed, as recorded in the twelfth chapter of Exodus, have been fulfilled in a most remarkable and striking manner in the promised Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, our blessed Lord.

Having been brought up in the Jewish faith up to the age of 20, I always understood the matter to be thus: The killing of the lamb was on the evening of the fourteenth day, or more correctly speaking, according to the original, *Bain Haarbayim*, between the evenings, that is, between the sun's declining west and his setting about three o'clock p. m. For the Jews observe two evenings in each day. The first commences after twelve o'clock at noon, and the second at three o'clock p. m. Between these two evenings the daily evening

sacrifice was offered up and immediately after the passover lamb was killed and prepared. But if the passover fell on the weekly Sabbath, i. e., on Friday, they began an hour sooner, that they might despatch their business by the time that the Sabbath began. Hence that day is called the preparation of the passover.—John 19:14.

The Jews computed their days from evening to evening; i. e., from the setting of the sun of one day to the setting again on the next day. This appears to be the command given by Moses, "From even to even shall ye celebrate your Sabbath." (Lev. 23:31) Moses, in giving an account of the Creation, says, "And there was evening and there was morning, one day." (Gen. 1:5) By the evening and the morning the Jews understand the same portion of time that we call day and night, or twenty-four hours; the former continued from the rising of the sun until its setting, and from that time till his reappearance was called the night. The division of time into hours was not known in the days of Moses.—Compare Gen. 15:12; 18:1; 19:1.

The day was again divided into two equal portions, from the rising of the sun until noon was the morning, and after that, until the sun had gone down, was the evening. Hence we read only of morning and evening sacrifices. Again, the morning and the evening were divided each into two equal parts, for the regulation of the morning and evening sacrifices and prayers.

The morning sacrifice and prayer was allowed to be offered at any time between the rising of the sun and the third hour, i. e., 9 a. m., and the evening sacrifice and prayer may be offered up at any time during the first evening. Hebrew, *erev katon*, the short or lesser evening, i. e., from noon until ninth hour, or 3 p. m.; and from that time until sun setting, is called in the Hebrew *erev gadol*, i. e., the greater evening. It was between these two evenings the paschal lamb was to be slain, and so was Jesus, the antitype, the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world as recorded.

I remain, dear Brother Russell,

Faithfully yours in the Lord,

J. Gronowsky,—England.

## THE HOPES OF THE EARLY CHURCH RESPECTING OUR LORD'S SECOND COMING

Some earnest and faithful Bible student has published a little tract treating the above subject so simply and beautifully that we feel constrained to lay before our readers copious extracts therefrom, as follows:—

No one can read the New Testament with care without discovering that the members of the early church were men of hope as well as men of faith. Indeed, hope seems, more than faith, to have been the outstanding feature of the character. Not that they really had more of this than that; the twain were one; they formed one noble edifice, one stately ship. But faith was the foundation work; hope, raised upon it, caught the eye of the beholder. Faith lay beneath the water line; hope reared the mast and spread the sail high in the sight of men. Their faith looked back to Calvary; but, in a sense, it was an act completed. They were not always looking backward; forward they peered, with steady gaze. The attitude of expectation was their daily, hourly attitude. Something was about to happen—someone was coming—and they are seen to be on tip-toe, looking for and hasting unto the event. To them it clearly seemed a consummation most devoutly to be wished. They constantly referred to it as "a lively hope," "that blessed hope," "this hope," "one hope," "our hope," "the hope of our calling," "the hope set before us." Every reference shows that it completely filled their hearts, and was the dominating influence in their lives. It almost diverted them from ordinary work and duty, the

warning being required not to stand "gazing up into heaven."

The hope thus cherished was not of a private kind, attainable by this believer at a certain time, and that one at another. It was one great hope, to be fulfilled to all the church, not even excluding them that slept, at one defined and self-same time. "No prophecy of Scripture is of a private interpretation," and this hope, it is evident, was not to be fulfilled to individual believers. It was not a matter of personal and private experience; not the coming of Christ to the individual heart, nor the approach of death to each separate person, but something affecting the entire community of Christians at the same point of time.

1. What was that hope which so controlled and cheered those early saints? None other than "that blessed hope, the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior, Jesus Christ." They believed with all their hearts in Jesus Christ, in his wondrous life of miracle and grace, and in his sacrificial death on Calvary's sad tree. They believed that he had triumphed o'er the grave, and had come forth to resurrection life. Many of them had seen him in his resurrection form, and had been witnesses of his ascension to the heavens. They remembered the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said unto them, "I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." They had heard "two men in white apparel" say, "This same Jesus

which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." With simple faith they all accepted these great promises. The authority appeared to them sufficient, the meaning transparent. The Lord had gone: the Lord would come. He had disappeared from view, but only for "a little while," until the "times of restitution." When these times came, he would appear again, and each one seemed to say, "Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another." This was to them the "one far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves."

#### IT WAS THE LODESTAR OF THEIR LIFE,

the goal and climax of their being, and round it their communion with each other, like their testimony to the world, continually revolved.

Even if men try, they cannot keep this subject out of sight, so long as the New Testament is read. The late beloved evangelist, D. L. Moody, made the admission that he was originally much opposed to this doctrine, "until," said he, "from constantly meeting with it in the reading of Scripture, I was constrained to become a believer in it; and now it is, to my mind, one of the most precious truths in the whole Bible." One verse in every thirteen in the New Testament refers to it more or less directly; in the Epistles alone the proportion is much greater, being more like one in ten. In First Thessalonians it is fully one in seven, and in the Second Epistle nearly one in three.

First Thessalonians is usually recognized as the earliest Epistle we possess. In our inquiry now it is of value, then, to note that the belief in Christ's return was a conspicuous feature of the church to which it was addressed. In the opening chapter the apostle testifies, "Ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven." The second chapter ends with a reference to the prospect of meeting "in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming." At the close of chapter three the prayer is offered, "That he may stablish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints." Chapter four finishes with the announcement, made by direct inspiration, that "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." In chapter five the letter is brought to a conclusion with the prayer that they who received it may be "preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

In Second Thessalonians there are but forty-seven verses, yet in no fewer than fifteen reference to the Lord's return is made. The apostle declares "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels." He beseeches the brethren to steadfastness "by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him." He speaks of "the brightness of his coming," and the "consolation and good hope" it brings; also he prays, "The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ."

First Corinthians is another of the older writings; and it proves that there at Corinth, as at Thessalonica, the church had taken up the hope of which we speak. "Ye come behind in no gift," says the apostle, "waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." He tells them not to sit in judgment upon one another, but to wait "until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart." Above the table where they sit to celebrate the scene on Calvary, he writes the superscription,

#### "TILL HE COME";

and over all the tombs where sleep the silent saints, he carves the sentence, bringing hope and joy, "Christ the Firstfruits, afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." Even when the apostle has to utter the dread word "Anathema," he straightway softens it with "Maranatha," "The Lord comes," as though to let them know that, after all, judgment belongeth to another; men need not quickly curse their fellows.

In the Epistle to Philippians the time of the Advent is repeatedly referred to as "The Day of Jesus Christ," and for it they are taught to wait. "He which has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." "That ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ." "That I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain." It is clear that the Philippians shared the apostle's hope, because he says, "Our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body."

In the Epistle to Colossians, the same glad note is rung; "When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall

ye also appear with him in glory." Everything in the early church was made to hinge upon the coming of the Lord.

To Timothy, the apostle Paul gives various charges, and he makes each binding "until the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ." In view of the same event he shows that he can hold death in contempt: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

To Titus, too, he makes it clear that, by this truth, not only is the fear of death removed, but life is made pure and beautiful, men "live soberly, righteously, and godly," "looking for that blessed hope."

The Epistle to the Hebrews agrees with all the other apostolic writings. Repeatedly it speaks of the expected day.

#### "UNTO THEM THAT LOOK FOR HIM

shall he appear the second time, without sin unto salvation." "Consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works . . . and so much the more as ye see the day approaching." "Cast not away therefore your confidence . . . for yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry."

The apostle James adopts the same appeal; "Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

The apostle Peter makes much use of second advent truth. It is the vermillion and the gold with which he illuminates his precious manuscripts. To saints in suffering he writes, and thus he seeks to cheer their hearts: "Ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations, that the trial of your faith . . . might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." "Hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." "When his glory shall be revealed, ye shall be glad with exceeding great joy." "When the Chief Shepherd shall appear ye shall receive a crown of life that fadeth not away." "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying. Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation . . . But, beloved, . . . the Lord is not slack concerning his promises as some men count slackness, . . . but the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night." "What manner of persons ought ye to be, . . . looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God?" "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless."

Saint John cherishes the same glad hope, and seeks by it to strengthen and to stimulate the church. "My little children, abide in him, that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming." "We know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is; and every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

As for the Book of the Revelation, it really is the "Revelation of Jesus Christ," and is all about the second advent. In it we have the facts, circumstances and judgments connected with the Lord's unveiling, or apocalypse. "Behold he cometh," is the burden of the book; and there can be no understanding of the "words of this prophecy," if the coming of the Lord be doubted, or be lost to view. Again and again, in the midst of its mysteries, the Master's voice is heard crying, "Hold fast till I come!" "Behold I come as a thief;

#### BLESSED IS HE THAT WATCHETH"

"Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." To this, the seer himself would have us all say, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

It is well for us to scan the Scriptures thus, in order that, by line on line, we may convince ourselves what was the hope that cheered and edified the early church. After a reading, such as this, there is no room for doubt regarding it. The hope they had was that of Jesus Christ's return, and nothing else can be maintained as answering to the language they employed.

It could not be a spirit blessing they were looking for—a coming of the Lord into their hearts, for quickening and enlightenment; for such sweet spiritual presence they had never lost. "Lo, I am with you always," he had said, "even to the end of the world"; and evermore "Christ in the heart the hope of glory" was to them a living, grand reality. They did not need a coming of that kind.

Nor could they mean the destruction of the city of Jerusalem; and passing strange it seems that this should ever have been thought to have fulfilled the prophecy. What was there in this sad event to constitute a hope? It was a hope these men possessed! What had this city's fall to do with Gentile saints? Yet they, as well as Jews, were made partakers of the church's hope. Above all, why, if the destruction of Jerusalem fulfilled the Scriptures relative to Christ's return—why was the coming of the Lord proclaimed, and eagerly desired, long after Salem's towers were in the dust? The Gospel according to John was surely written after that. So were his three Epistles, and the Book of Revelation. The testimony of the early Fathers is also to the effect that the hope of Christ's return remained, like a meteor in the heavens, long after Jerusalem was removed. Clement of Rome, in his first Epistle, written about A. D. 95, says, "Let us be followers of those who went about in goat skins and sheep skins, preaching the coming of Christ." Ignatius of Antioch, about A. D. 100, wrote to Polycarp, "Be every day better than another; consider the times, and expect him who is above all time, eternal, invisible, though for our sakes made visible." Polycarp, in an Epistle dated about A. D. 108, said, "that God had raised up our Lord Jesus from the dead, and that he will come to judge the world and raise the saints, when if we walk worthy of him we shall reign together with him." Papias of Hierapolis, the intimate friend and companion of Polycarp, taught the coming of the Lord in all the churches that he visited. Justin Martyr, about A. D. 150, spoke of those as "destitute of just reason who did not understand that which is clear from all Scripture, that

#### TWO COMINGS OF CHRIST ARE ANNOUNCED"

Ireneus also, who flourished as a writer about A. D. 180, says, "The Lord shall come from heaven in the clouds with the glory of his Father, casting the Antichrist and them that obey him into a lake of fire; but bringing to the just the times of the kingdom." These men all, with one accord, waited for the coming of God's Son from heaven. They did nothing so ridiculous as to believe that the promises to that end were fulfilled when Jerusalem was burned.

Nor was it death for which these early saints were waiting. Not one of them is known to have confounded that with Christ's return. In no epistle is death set before the Christian as the object of his hope. The approach of death, the enemy, can never be the coming of the Lord—his friend. It may be that the time between the hour of death and the morn of resurrection shall pass even as "the twinkling of an eye"; one moment may be heard the voices of earthly friends around the bed, and the next (as it appears) that call that wakes the sleepers in the tomb. But we must carefully distinguish between things that differ. Falling asleep is not the same as waking, though hardly an instant may appear to pass between them; nor is grim death the coming of the Lord, though no time seems to elapse between the two events. If it be otherwise, and the return of Christ means the believer's death, then is the resurrection "past already," for that is always associated with the Lord's return. But against this heresy we are expressly warned.

No; if Greek and English words have any meaning, those employed by the apostles and the Fathers, with their equivalents in our own mother tongue, all go to show that a personal and glorious coming of the Lord was what those men of God were waiting for. No other coming ever crossed their minds. It was not till the middle of the Third century that serious opposition, or even question, arose as to the doctrine of the personal coming and reign of Jesus Christ. "Now," says Mosheim, "its credit began to decline, principally through the influence and authority of Origen, who opposed it with the greatest warmth, because it was incompatible with some of his favorite sentiments."

The English Baptist churches in their Confession of Faith, presented to Charles II. in 1660, said, "We believe . . . that the same Lord Jesus who showed himself alive after his passion, by many infallible proofs, which was taken up from the disciples and carried into heaven, shall so come in like manner as he was seen to go into heaven, and when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we shall also appear with him in glory, for then shall he be King of kings and Lord of lords." Here there is quite enough to show what was the hope within them when the early Christians spoke with one another of the coming of the Lord. It was "the Lord himself"—for whom they looked and longed.

II. The reason for such unanimity and enthusiasm in the entertainment of this hope must have been both weighty and worthy. The early Christians did not lightly hold it, and it would not be with light and careless hand they took it up. They must have had as cogent reasons for believing in, and

hoping for, their Lord's return, as they possessed for trusting and rejoicing in his first appearing. Back to the first by faith, and forward to the next by hope, they looked, with as solid assurance in one case as in the other. These were the two pivots on which revolved their Christian life, the two wings on which they mounted up as eagles; neither pivot could be weakened, nor could either wing be clipped, without grave injury immediately ensuing. "Take unto you the whole armour of God," said the apostles, and we may be sure they gave as good reasons why the Christian should "take for a helmet the hope of salvation," as for his "putting on the breastplate of faith and love."

The foremost reason must have been, that Christ himself had said he would return. The word of seers and prophets, of apostles and of angels, was of use, and these had all united to affirm that he would come again; but, after all, the Master of the House, rather than any servant, was the One whose word was to be heard. If he said, even once, he would return, that would be quite sufficient for the faithful heart. Already we have seen that many times the

#### LORD HAD PLEDGED HIS WORD

to this effect. He said distinctly, "If I go . . . I will come again." "I will come to you." "I go away and come again unto you." He spoke of himself as the "Son of man," who should "come in the glory of his Father"; as the "Nobleman" who "went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return"; as the "Master" for whose coming the servants were to watch; the "Bridegroom," whose appearing the wise virgins all would hail; and as the "Lord" who yet would come and reckon with the stewards of his house. In these, and many ways beside, the gracious Lord assured his loved ones he would come again, and they, with trustful hearts, just took him at his word. "To doubt would be disloyalty to falter would be sin." Then, as their faith laid hold, their hope was born; for they soon found, wrapped in the promises of his return, as in a garment fair, all scented with sweet lavender, things rare and beautiful, that made those precious promises the richest heirloom of the Christian church.

The first thing they discovered there was this, that in the certainty of Christ's return there lay the guarantee—the only guarantee they had—that they would see their Lord. Some of those early saints had seen the Savior when he stood on earth; but now his words were true, "You see me no more." Oh, how they longed to view him once again. To many of them the apostle Peter's words were more appropriate, "Whom having not seen, ye love; and in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice." But all the church most earnestly desired to look on him whose love had won their hearts. There is evidence that at a very early date the words of Isaiah were appropriated, "Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty."

Apart from the Savior's coming most assuredly there is no warrant given that these anticipations shall be realized. It is then that "every eye shall see him." No wonder that the early Christians "panted for the appointed hour." Then would be the revelation, the unveiling of the Lord; "the day of this appearing and his kingdom;" and till it came they could not be at rest.

#### WE SHALL BE "CHANGED" AND "SEE HIM AS HE IS"

They also learned to say, "when he shall appear," and "we shall see him as he is," "we shall be like him," "changed into the same image, from glory to glory"; for "as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." This is a marvelous announcement, and hardly could we credit it, unless it were most clearly given in God's most Holy Word. For the assistance of our faith, it is even given repeatedly, and we can only gratefully accept the truth. The early Christians certainly did this.

They believed that this "glad change" in them, "which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord," would be accompanied by the awakening of them "which sleep in Jesus." For their dear ones who were dead, as well as for themselves, their only hope lay in the second advent. They did not say, "There is no death; what seems so is transition." No, they accepted death as a reality. "We believe that Jesus died," they said, "even so," there are "them also which sleep in Jesus." "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." Still, they are dead, and resurrection is required to make them live. Not by making light of death did they attempt to comfort one another; but by making much, yea, everything, of the sure and certain hope of joyful resurrection, to take place at the coming of the Lord. He was the mighty magnet that would yet "descend from heaven," and as steel is drawn to steel, so they declared "the dead in Christ" would rise to him.

They believed that that would be the day of their presentation to the King. By the apostle Paul they were distinctly so

informed. In writing to Corinthian saints, he said: "Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you." Until that day, on various grounds, they could not be presented. Christ would not even, until then, be King. So long as he was Priest within the veil, they could not go to him. The type forbade it: "There shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place, until he come out." The Lord himself declared it: "Whither I go ye cannot come." "I will come again and receive you unto myself." For that day of joyful welcome to his court they had to wait. They did not dream of "going to heaven one by one"; they would "be caught up together to meet the Lord." They could not think of entering his glorious presence until they were "presented." They could not be presented until they were prepared and fitly robed. Not in the drab dress of this mortal body could they stand before him. "This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." But they believed that when he came this necessary *change* in their apparel would be wrought; and then should they be brought into the presence of the King in "raiment of needlework and clothing of wrought gold," "a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing."

That would be the time, then, of their triumph and reward. Sometimes when men die their friends affirm they have gone to their reward; but

#### NOT SO SAID THE EARLY CHURCH

They could not; for the Lord had definitely named another time than that of death: "Thou shalt be recompensed," said he, "at the resurrection of the just"; "in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory." "Behold, I come . . . and my reward is with me to give every man [then] according as his work shall be." The apostle Peter confirms that with the word, "When the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory." "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ" before reward can be distributed, and we are distinctly told it is at "His appearing" that this seat shall be set up. "Henceforth," said the expiring Paul, "there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." He had no thought of going by himself into the presence chamber, and in some private way receiving his Lord's "welcome" and "well done." No! he wanted "all them, also," whom he had known on earth to be beside him then; especially those whom he had led to taste redeeming love. "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?" It is when the nobleman returns that he will call his servants and hold reckoning with them. No wonder, then, that faithful men kept ever in their minds that great event. The coming of the Lord was not denied, nor lost to view, until, in later days than those of which we speak, the Christian church had lost its zeal, and in sad, wanton ways was walking with the world.

"Thy kingdom come," he had himself instructed them to pray thus, and they believed that till he came the kingdom would not come. Not for the gradual spread of truth and the conversion of the world, they looked . . . They knew that all the purposes of God regarding men would be fulfilled, but they appear not to have thought of that as one. The Gospel must be preached in all the world, 'tis true; but they accepted Christ's own words, that this should be but "for a witness unto all nations"; and as James the apostle said, "to take out of them a people for his name." They did not vainly hope the world would better and yet better grow; they knew that "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse." They never said that things would so improve that the last days of this dark age would be its brightest and its best. "This know," said they, "that in the last days

#### PERILOUS TIMES SHALL COME";

for wickedness shall be rampant even with "a form of godliness." With one consent these early Christians waited for the Lord. By his appearing would his kingdom be secured.

Many members of the early church were Jews, and for their nation's sake they wanted Christ to come. That day would be a glorious day for them, the time of Israel's repentance and recovery. Then "the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth," and from their eyes the veil shall be removed. "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and mourn." "And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save

us; this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad, and rejoice in his salvation."

The thought of Israel's salvation at the Lord's return would make glad the hearts of the Gentile saints as well as Jews; for Israel's restoration, they were told, would girdle the whole globe with the glory of the Lord. "If the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness!" Then it is that the Lord, by his Advent, "shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel"; then it is, and not in this the Gospel day, that "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Then "He shall judge among the nations, and rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks."

Peace shall spread through all the earth,

When the Lord doth come.

Truth and righteousness go forth,

When the Lord doth come.

God with men shall then be found,

Every place be hallowed ground,

Life and beauty shall abound,

When the Lord doth come,

With such results expected from the coming of the King, it is no surprise that it became the early Christian's hope. Each member of the church seems to have held it. A Christian who had not this hope was an anomaly. Milner says, "This constituted in the second century so decidedly an article of faith that Justin held it up as a criterion of orthodoxy." Bishop Newton says, "It was generally believed in the

FIRST THREE, AND PUREST, AGES [CENTURIES]."

Bishop Russell, though an anti-Millennarian, says, "Down to the beginning of the fourth century the belief was universal and undisputed." While Gibbon, with no prejudice either way, says, "It appears to have been the reigning sentiment of orthodox believers." He also adds, "It was productive of the most salutary effects on the faith and practice of Christians." Of course its effects were salutary! It disposed the church to prayerfulness and patience, to purity and peace, to sincerity and soberness, to loyalty and love, to fidelity and firmness, to watchfulness and work. Solace it gave in suffering, and in bereavement balm; in persecution perfect peace, and even in the martyr's fire the Master's joy.

Would God this were the church's hope today! Only comparatively few within her bounds lay hold of it. The doctrine of the second advent is by most neglected, although the word of God is full of it.

When not entirely relegated to the lumber room, it is often held up to ridicule, and they who dare to say that they believe in it are treated as—well-meaning folk, perhaps, but—simple souls, and far behind the age. Well, some of us are quite content to be behind the age. Whenever it, in any matter, goes ahead of Jesus Christ and his immediate followers, we shall let it go. "The goodly fellowship of the apostles" is good enough for us, and on the subject now before us we are with that noble company. Simple we may seem to modern men to be; but it is the ancient truth we hold, the good old way we tread.

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#### PAROUSIA FIRST—EPIPHANIA AND APOKALUPSIS FOLLOW

As in the distance the various peaks of the mountain are blended so as to be undiscernible, so in the distance the various features of the second advent of our Lord were indistinct. But now is our salvation near—"nearer than when we first believed"; and we should expect that the holy spirit, which we were assured would bring truth to the attention of the Lord's people as "meat in due season," would continue to "show them things to come" as they would be due to be understood. And thus we have found it, praise the Lord! God's word is as a shining light shining more and more unto the perfect day. In its light we can now see that our Master will be *present* for a time, in the harvest time of this age—invisibly *present* doing a work in his church, before any outward sign or revealing to the world takes place. His work in his church will be the separating of the true from the merely nominal—the "wheat" from the "tares." His *revealing* will be in the "flaming fire" the great time of trouble with which this age will close, and in which the "tares" shall cease to be "tares"; but *before* that fire can come, as the parable was given to show, he will be present in his wheatfield gathering the wheat into the garner and bundling the tares for the burning.

Another parable also shows that before *revealing* himself in any manner to the world, he calls *first* his own servants and reckons with them (Luke 19:15-27) Ah! dear brethren,

what a holy awe it brings to our hearts to know that we are *now* living in the *presence* of the Son of Man; that now the "wheat" is being gathered and the "tares" being bundled;—that *now* the servants are reporting their use of the pounds and talents entrusted to them, while the world sees nothing and enquires, "Where is the promise of his *presence*, while all things continue as they were from the beginning?" Nor can any but the few hear and appreciate the evidences, or understand the Master's words that as the world *knew not* in the days of Noah, even thus shall it be in the *presence* of the Son of Man (Matt. 24:37)—they shall *know not*, and the ordinary avocations of daily life shall continue,—until disturbed by the commotion and trouble of the *Epiphania*, the *Apokalupsis* of the King in the pouring out of the seven last plagues—when

the judgments of the Lord shall be abroad in the earth and the inhabitants of the world shall learn righteousness, and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain [kingdom] of the Lord's house. He shall teach us of his ways and we shall walk in his paths."—Isa. 2:3.

Think up the addresses of all your earnest and pious Christian friends and send them to us for samples of this issue; and if they are interested assure them that if they will request it, mentioning this offer, we will send them a pamphlet on "*The Parousia, Epiphania and Apokalupsis of our Lord*," free! Call to their attention, also, the still fuller treatment of this subject in "*The Time is at Hand*," 360 pages, 25c, or loaned free to all who promise a careful reading and to return it postpaid.

## "THE MORNING COMETH"

"Lo! from his Eastern heights sublime,

I hear the herald's joyous warning;

Day's glory deepens; far upclimb

The rosy splendors of the morning;

See yon triumphant steeds of light

Chase the retreating hosts of night;

The valleys sing, the hills rejoice,

'Tis coming. Yes, 'tis coming.

"'Tis coming. Yes, our night of tears

Shall fade before Immanuel's glory,

Which now, to gild our earth, appears,

Foretold in ancient song and story;

Foretold in that seraphic strain,

With notes which haunt our world again,

For traveling through the shadowy years,

The Just, the Merciful appears.

Behold! the Lord of glory."

## FURTHER OBSTACLES TO THE "DAWNS"

When unlawfully cut off from the cheap rates for mailing the paper-covered *Dawns*, we did the next best thing, and availed ourselves of the special rates granted on this class of matter, in ten pound lots, by the Express Companies. Thus we have been enabled, up till now, to send the *Dawns*, in packs of ten or more, to any Express office in the United States at the rate of thirteen cents per volume.

But now this, too, is changed! The Express Companies, finding us at their mercy, have adopted the same rule as the Post Office. Undoubtedly they would be willing to raise their rates on books and everything—just as high as Post Office competition will permit.

In view of these facts, we have been obliged to increase the wholesale rates on *Dawns*. It may be argued that the increased price will make no difference to us, as the *Dawns* are sold at cost anyway; but we answer that our object is to put as large a number into circulation as possible—hoping that, by

and by, they will be more sought and more studied by the masses than now;—and we well know that the lower the cost the more can be circulated.

We propose meeting the issue by supplying our readers with the cloth-bound *Dawns* (prepaid to any part of the world) for twenty-five cents per volume. By having the binding done in very large quantities we hope to nearly get out whole: but if at a slight loss we will consider it money well spent in the wider circulation of the truth.

One good result will be the better appearance the books will make, wherever they may go; another, their greater durability; and, additionally, they will appear more frequently on the bookshelf, and thus become the better known. Order hereafter in cloth binding.

The retail price of *Dawns* will hereafter be 35 cents, plus postage, 10 cents; but all *Watch Tower* subscribers are welcome to the wholesale rate as above.

## STEPHEN'S DEFENCE AND EXECUTION

ACTS 7:54-8:2.—MARCH 2.

"Pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you."—Matt. 5:44.

Stephen's defence before the Sanhedrin Court turned out to be a defence of the truth, rather than of himself. Full of zeal for the Lord and for a proper use of his privileges as a minister of the truth, Stephen was courageous—seemingly to the extent of ignoring all thought of personal safety. His defence is not part of this lesson, but it is, nevertheless, worthy of consideration. It displays a clear insight into the past history of his people, and a clear appreciation of the lessons inculcated through their experiences. In a word, it gives evidence that Stephen was a Bible student—"a workman who needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." Stephen in all this was a worthy example to the Lord's flock, the lesson still being appropriate. With us also the first thought should be the privilege of serving the truth, and if the will of God be such, the privilege of laying down life, even, in its service. A full consecration to the Lord on our part, and a keen appreciation of the truths of the Scripture, will ultimately make us courageous—not careful for the present life when weighed in the balance with the interests of the Lord's cause. But now, as in Stephen's day, such courage can only come from a knowledge of the divine plan, and the knowledge can only come through a right *dividing* of the word of truth;—and such abilities imply a devotion of time and energy to the study of truth, and the guidance of the holy spirit in the understanding of it.

The charge against Stephen was blasphemy against the holy place, Jerusalem (and especially its holy Temple, which sanctified it), and against the law of Moses. Passing by the charges, Stephen went into a history of the Lord's leading of Israel from the time of Abraham down to his own time; and thus showed his full faith in the holy places and in the promises and presence of God, which made them holy. His familiarity with the facts, and the reverent manner in which he

stated them, and the conclusions which he drew from them, must have shown his judges clearly that so far from being a blasphemer of Moses and his institutions and holy things, he was a firm believer in these, and a zealous advocate of them. So with us: when discussing holy things there may at times be those who, intentionally or ignorantly, will attribute to us evil conditions or evil motives. With us, as with Stephen, the best manner of dealing with such charges is to show, without ostentation, and by deeply reverent manner, that we are trusting implicitly in the gracious promises of God, and that we appreciate fully his various providential leadings and dealings in the past, not only as respects ourselves, but with all his holy people. Now, as in Stephen's case, the best answer respecting our fidelity to the holy things is represented in our knowledge of them, and in the reverent manner in which we mention them.

Stephen rehearsed to his hearers the fact that Moses, the great Law-giver, whom they now revered, had at one time been rejected by Israel, saying, "Who made thee a judge or a ruler over us?" But he was God's agent and representative, and hence, in due time, he became Israel's deliverer. He reminded them also that Moses had said, "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you from among your brethren, like unto me." The lesson which Stephen desired his hearers to draw is, that as Moses was rejected at his first offering to the Israelites so the one like unto Moses would, like him, be rejected—had been rejected, in the person of Jesus. Nevertheless, as Moses subsequently became the leader and commander of the people, and delivered them, so also Jesus would in due time become the great deliverer of his people,—at his second advent. He pointed further to the fact that the prophets all down through the Jewish age had been refused by the people in the time of their presence and ministry with



them, many of them being foully dealt with; but nevertheless subsequently they were discerned to have been the Lord's representatives. Stephen would have his hearers recognize Christ as the great prophet, whom God had set forth to be the instructor of the people. We see no attempt to defend himself, except by showing up the truth. He evidently relied upon his course of conduct and teaching corroborating the history which he was now delineating. Let us also, in our intercourse with others whom we would lead into the truth, pay less attention to self-defence than to a presentation of the divine Word. As the Apostle declares, the sword of the spirit, the Word of God, is sharper than any two-edged sword.—Heb. 4:12.

About this time, apparently, some manifestation of impatience on the part of the Court caused Stephen to hasten to his conclusions abruptly, saying, "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the holy spirit; as your fathers did so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted, and they have slain them which showed before the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers; who have received the law by the dispensation of angels, and have not kept it." (Vss. 51-53) It is not necessary to suppose that these simple, true words were uttered in any harsh tone or strident manner; for everything about Stephen's attitude seems to imply gentleness, forbearance, love. It was the truth, and it was the right time to tell it. He evidently knew what was likely to be the result anyway, and wished to give his testimony, that as those who had foretold the just one had been killed it was no more remarkable that those who afterward bore witness to him should be killed also.

His persecutors were thwarted; their attempt to traduce him and show him an enemy of the Lord, of the nation, and of the law, had abundantly failed. He stood before the Sanhedrin a great teacher, reproving them, and showing from their own Scriptural records that they were now intent on doing toward him as their fathers had done toward the Lord's faithful in every age. His hearers were "cut to the heart." This expression reminds us of the record (Acts 2:37) of those who heard Peter preach on the same theme—they were "pricked to the heart." But people can be pricked to the heart, and yet have very different results follow. Much will depend upon what is in the heart when it is pricked. If it be good the results will be good; if it be evil the results will be evil. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks, and the course of action is guided. These men were in a wicked condition of heart, and the truths uttered by Stephen were to them stings, rebukes, arousing their hatred to a pitch of frenzy—"they gnashed on him with their teeth."

Undaunted by their manifestations of hatred and malice, Stephen was so filled with an appreciation of the Lord's goodness, and of his being a servant of the truth, that he was all aglow with interest in his theme, and his face illuminated with an angelic expression, such as the truth only can impart. It was then that looking away from his own surroundings—away from his enemies' faces—he was granted a glimpse of the Lord at the right hand of the Father. Whether it was a mental vision, such as any of us can awaken in our minds, such as the Apostle referred to when he said that we should be continually "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith," or whether it was actually a vision granted to Stephen at this particular time, we know not;—most probably it was a vision.

He of course did not see in reality what he described, as that would be an impossibility;—"No man hath seen God at any time," and the Only Begotten of the Father is now the express image of his person, and he also would be invisible to humanity; even the light of his glory would have smitten Stephen down, as it smote Saul of Tarsus a short time afterward. But that Stephen should have had a vision or revelation of his Master and his high exaltation is entirely reasonable; he told what he saw, and this furnished the occasion of his death. His adversaries could have found nothing against him in anything he had said, or that any witness could have proved, but now, affecting great indignation at the thought that Jesus, whom they had crucified, Jesus the imposter, had become exalted to heavenly glory, next to Jehovah himself—this furnished an opportunity for the claim that Stephen was a blasphemer, and therefore ought to be stoned to death. All being in a wrong attitude of heart, the same impulse affected all, and they rushed upon the faithful servant of the truth, pushing him out of the city to a secluded spot, where they stoned him to death. Let us likewise be faithful to the Lord, and we also shall have revelations of our Lord's glory—not, probably, visions or dreams, but such mental pictures as are clearly delineated before us in God's Word, which now is commonly in the hands of his people; and under the leadings of the holy spirit reveals to us the deep things of God which

human eyes have not seen nor ears heard.—1 Cor. 2:10, 13.

The stoning of Stephen would seem to have been a violation of the Roman law. The Mosaic law, indeed, commanded stoning as a penalty for blasphemy; but from the time the Romans took possession of the country they seem to have decreed that life could not be taken in any legal form except that of the Roman law; but Stephen's enemies were so enraged that they were evidently willing to risk some personal injury rather than be defeated in their purpose of destroying their enemy, whom they could not match with Scripture or logic.

The Lord's servants today are in no particular danger of being stoned to death after the same manner; but the majority of them have had experiences, nevertheless, which in many respects correspond. False representations, anger, malice, hatred, strife, etc., hurled against the Lord's people, are often hard to bear; and yet all those who receive such figurative stoning in the same manner that Stephen received his literal stoning, are sure to be greatly blessed. They find that although such experiences are severe as respects the flesh, they are nevertheless helpful, profitable, as respects the new nature. They thus demonstrate the truth of the Apostle's statement, "The outward man perisheth, but the inward man is renewed day by day,"—by just such experiences rightly received.

It is here that attention is drawn to the fact that Saul of Tarsus was probably a member of the Sanhedrin, which tried Stephen, and surely one of those who consented to his death;—standing guard over the outer garments of those who executed the will of the Sanhedrin, in doing the actual stoning. He refers to the matter himself subsequently, in contrite language. (Acts 22:20) Let us have hope, therefore, that some of those who today assault us, because of loyalty to the Lord and his Word, may yet be amongst those who will penitently acknowledge the error of their ways. Indeed, a number of instances of this kind have occurred; a number of those who are now deeply interested in present truth at one time were so bitterly opposed that they burned the publications which represent these truths, and gloried in the deed. It shows us, too, how God looks at the heart, and teaches us that some who are not bad at heart may at times be so blinded by prejudice that light appears darkness to them and darkness light.

Stephen's attitude in receiving his persecution was most noble. He prayed for himself and for his enemies—that the latter might be forgiven, so far as he was concerned;—they will have enough to answer for and to receive "stripes" or just retribution—for himself, that the Lord would receive his spirit. There has been some query as to what would be implied in this expression, "Receive my spirit." We have already shown\* that the primary sense of the word spirit is energy or "life," and that the spirit, energy or life, of all flesh was forfeited through sin; but that believers, recognizing the fact that Christ has died for our sins, recognizing the fact also that whosoever accepts Christ, as his Redeemer, receives through him a new right to life—that to such the spirit of life is no longer reckoned as forfeited, but reckoned as being restored to them again,—and that unto eternal life, if they are faithful. Not that Christians are privileged to retain their hold upon the spirit of life now, and thus avoid dying, but that God has promised us, through his Word, that he who has the Son has life—has received back again by faith through him a future right to life, to be fully attained through a resurrection. Nevertheless, it is explained to us that "our life is hid with Christ in God," and will not be ours until "he who is our life shall appear" at his second advent,—and grant, according to the Father's plan, new or resurrection bodies to his people. (Cor. 3:3, 4) Stephen meant to express to the Lord his confidence, his trust, in a future life through a resurrection, when he made this expression, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit"—receive my life, preserve my life, that it may be granted to me again in the resurrection, according to thy gracious promise: I commit my all to thee, in hope.

Stephen's attitude under persecution may well commend itself to us: our love for the Lord and our benevolent sympathy with all the gracious features of his plan should lift us above any and everything like vindictiveness or spitefulness against our enemies; and should permit us to see that their mistreatment of us, is largely because they are blind to the truth. They know not us, even as they knew not the Lord; and, as he said, if they called the Master of the house Beelzebub, and said all manner of evil against him falsely, we must not be surprised if the same should be our lot. We know, therefore, to count it all joy when we fall into such matters; and should rejoice that we are counted worthy of a share with the Lord in the trials and difficulties of this

\* MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. V, Chap. 13.

present time, that in due time we made be made partakers also of the glory to follow. With us also the one thought should be the pleasing of our Lord and the attainment, through him, of the life everlasting—having him to care for our spirit of life, and to revive us again in the resurrection in due time.

#### "HE FELL ASLEEP"

In the midst of his prayer he fell asleep—he died. Commenting on these words an "orthodox" writer says: "Though the pagan authors sometimes used *sleep* to signify *death*, it was only a poetic figure. When Christ, on the other hand, said, 'Our friend, Lazarus, *sleepeth*,' he used the word, not as a figure but as an expression of a fact. In that mystery of death in which the pagan saw only nothingness, Jesus saw continued life, rest, waking—the elements which enter into sleep. And thus in Christian speech and thought, as the doctrine of the resurrection struck its roots deeper, the word 'dead,' with its hopeless finality, gave place to the more gracious and hopeful word, 'sleep.' The pagans' burying place carried in its name no suggestion of hope or comfort. It was a burying place, a hiding place, monumentum, a mere memorial of something gone; . . . but the Christian thought of death as sleep brought with it, in the Christian speech, the kindred thought of a chamber of rest, and embodied it in the word cemetery—the place to lie down to sleep"—*Word Studies*.

Throughout the Scriptures the word "sleep" is frequently used as a synonym for death—but only in view of the hoped-for awakening—the resurrection. It was because Abraham and his posterity believed God that he was able to raise them up from the dead, and that his agreement so to do was implied in the promise that all the families of the earth should be blessed, that it was impossible for them to think of their departed ones as being totally *extinct* in death;—from that time onward sleep, as a synonym of death, became common amongst those who waited for the consolation of Israel. And in New Testament times, in harmony with our Lord's declara-

tion, "The maid is not dead, but sleepeth," and again, "Lazarus sleepeth," etc., we have the term *sleep* commonly used amongst the followers of Jesus in the various New Testament writings. (See Matt. 9:24; John 11:11) Many, however, who use the term *sleep*, and who place it upon the tombstones in their cemeteries, overlook entirely the fact that it implies that the sleeping one is unconscious, that he will not be conscious until the waking time, the resurrection. The figure is a beautiful one, viewed from the right standpoint, the standpoint of divine revelation, which shows us the blessings of mankind, restitution, which are to be expected as soon as the morning of the new Millennial day shall have been fully ushered in.

Doubtless there were many who considered the martyrdom of Stephen a great calamity to the church, a great loss of influence; a cutting off of one of the ablest exponents of the Gospel. But we are not sure that they took a correct view. Viewed from God's standpoint, quite possibly the testimony which Stephen gave at the close of his life was a most beneficial one; first in its influence upon the believers, in teaching them by precept and example faithfulness, even unto death; and that the Lord's people could die as they lived,—joyful through the faith that is in Christ. His death also probably bore a valuable witness to some of his enemies. Quite possibly the Apostle Paul's first favorable impressions toward Christianity were received through his witness of the courage and zeal of this noble martyr,—whose spirit of Christ he doubtless witnessed in others of the hated "sect, everywhere spoken against."

So with us; we know not which act in life may glorify the Lord most, or whether our living or dying would be most helpful to his cause. We are to leave this in the Lord's hands, and to remember that our course in any event must be one of faithfulness, and that if faithful nothing can by any means harm us, but all things must work together for our good.

## PERSECUTION AND ITS GOOD FRUIT

ACTS 8:3-13.—MARCH 9.

*"Therefore, they that were scattered abroad went everywhere, preaching the Word."*

Persecution is never right, nor is it a joyous matter; nevertheless, God can overrule this, as well as all wrongs, for the good of his people, who can learn also the lessons of "rejoicing in tribulation," and of tracing divine providences through them,—seeing by faith the desirable results. The first persecution of the church began about the time of Stephen's death, noted in our last lesson. This is variously estimated as having been from three to seven years after the day of Pentecost, though we have no means of definite information. Saul of Tarsus (afterward called Paul the Apostle), was evidently a leader in the heresy-hunting and persecution which started with Stephen and extended in a general way to all believers,—except the apostles, who, for some reason, seem to have been providentially protected.

The persecution began in Jerusalem, because this so far had been the center of the work, as our Lord had directed,—“beginning at Jerusalem.” Not only was it the principal city of Palestine, but, as we have previously seen, it was the resort of pious Jews from all quarters of the world, many of whom sought to make it their home in the close of life, even if they had previously lived abroad. The Lord had graciously granted a season of development for those brought into the church at Pentecost, and subsequently; and now that they had reached a fair degree of growth in grace and in knowledge, he permitted the winds of persecution to blow against the church, and to scatter the ripened seeds hither and thither, in every direction.

The same God who directed thus in the affairs of the early church, still loves and cherishes his own; still directs and guides in respect to the interests of his own cause, his Zion. Now, as then, it is with him to permit or to hinder persecution, according as in his wisdom would be for the best interests of his people, and the outworking of his glorious plans. The persecution which then arose had, doubtless, a two-fold effect: (1) It served to test and to sift those who had already named the name of Christ;—to prove their loyalty, their willingness to endure hardness as good soldiers;—their worthiness to be reckoned amongst the overcomers. Not only did it test them, but it undoubtedly strengthened them; for experience shows us that every trial and test endured with faithfulness brings an increase of victory and strength of character. (2) It became the Lord's means of spreading the truth in every direction, and thus of greatly broadening, as well as deepening, his work in the world. Having first blessed

those who, by his providential arrangements, had been gathered to one center, he now scattered them, as lights throughout Palestine and the adjacent country.

Drawing applications to ourselves from this feature of our lesson, we note how the Lord has gathered to this new land, America, a specially prepared class of people, liberty-lovers and truth-lovers, from all parts of the world. We note how he has lighted the torch of liberty and civilization here more generally than elsewhere. We note how, in this specially prepared soil, he has planted the present truth, the "harvest" message which is now shining forth in a feeble manner, not only to all the people of this favored land, but, to the world in general. We note a correspondence, also, in the fact that thus far in this harvest our persecutions have been quiet,—rather than public, open, and demonstrative. We like the early church, have had an excellent opportunity for cultivating the knowledge of the truth and the graces of the holy Spirit. Surely it will not surprise us now, or shortly, if the Lord's providence would permit some open persecution: and if this should be the divine will, are we in that proper condition of heart that it would profit, instead of discourage us, and destroy our faith? Would it mean to us, as to the faithful of the early church, merely an enlargement of our opportunities, and the broadening of the Lord's work today? We trust it would be so.

An important lesson for all of the Lord's people to learn, is that the Lord himself has full charge and direction of the affairs of his church; that he who blesses it with his holy Spirit, and with the light of the knowledge of God, is the same one who has permitted a restraining of the persecutions and siftings from without and from within. Those who learn this lesson thoroughly are the only ones who, amid all the affairs of life, can rest themselves fully in "the peace of God which passeth all understanding." Let us learn to trace divine providences in the past, and to appreciate them and to apply them as far as possible, to affairs of the present time; and then to trust the Lord, even where we cannot trace him, knowing that all things shall work together for good to them that love him.

#### HOW TYNDALE'S PERSECUTION RESULTED

As an illustration of how persecutions sometimes, indeed generally, greatly prosper the cause of truth, note the following respecting that eminent English reformer, William Tyn-

dale, who was amongst the first to publish the holy Scriptures in the English language. Not being permitted to do his work of Bible translating in Great Britain, he removed to the city of Worms, Germany, and published there his first complete edition of the New Testament. Several hundred copies of the work went to England. These, by order of King Henry VIII., were bought up for destruction, by the Bishop of London; but Tyndale read the meaning of this providential hindrance of the circulation of the work thus: "I shall get money of him for these books to buy myself out of debt, and the whole world shall cry out at the burning of God's Word; and the overplus of money shall help me to correct again, and nearly to imprint the same." And so it was. Bishop Tunstall purchased not only all he could secure in Great Britain, but also purchased copies in the city of Antwerp, and had a public burning of these at St. Paul's Cross, London, A. D. 1526. Later on, in spite of the prohibitions of the king, and the energy of the clergy, copies of the New Testament, published in the English language, were smuggled in by vessels laden with grain.

What we all need is implicit trust in God and a burning zeal for the service of the truth, which nothing can daunt or hinder. If thwarted in one way we are to adopt another plan; if hindered in that, to change again—always observing the laws and principles of righteousness, and relying upon the Lord to overrule the results to his own praise. Under the Lord's providence hundreds of thousands of copies of *Millennial Dawn* and millions of tracts have been scattered as seed in all civilized lands. It would not surprise us at all if some persecution or opposition were to arise which would cause these seeds of truth to germinate. The man who, in his anger, stamped his feet upon the seeds, merely pressed them into the earth, where they the better took root. And so it may be in respect to any opposition which the great adversary may raise up now, and which the Lord may permit. We may not pray for temptations, trials and persecutions, nor may we pray to escape them; but it is surely our privilege to ask that the Lord will not abandon us in temptation, but will ultimately deliver us from the evil one—in his own time and way—and generally, to overrule our affairs to his own praise.

#### DEACON PHILIP'S MINISTRY

There was a Philip amongst the twelve apostles, but it is not he that is referred to in this lesson. This Philip was one of the seven deacons whose choice by the church has been related. (Acts 6:5) Evidently he had used well the opportunities thus afforded him, by attending not only to the distribution of the natural food to the needy, but by the feeding of his own heart upon the spiritual food also,—thus preparing himself, as a servant and messenger of the Lord, for further service of a more spiritual kind. Philip was one of those whom the persecution drove out of Jerusalem. Let us stop here to notice that the early church might have said,—Persecution is getting severe; but we will stay where we are, suffer imprisonment, etc., esteeming that the Lord is able to protect us here as well as elsewhere. This would have been sound reasoning; but it would indicate a neglect of the Lord's directions to his church, saying, "When they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another." (Matt. 10:23) The persecution was intended to scatter them, and failure to take heed to the Lord's directions might have led some of the most earnest and faithful of the church to obstinately resist the designs of providence. So now, let those who may be called upon to endure persecution remember the Lord's direction; and after giving a proper testimony, if the door of opportunity opens, let them remove to another locality, where their faithfulness and increased knowledge and wisdom in the handling of "the sword of the spirit" may give them opportunities for still greater usefulness. This was the case with Philip, who removed to Samaria, and apparently lost no time in beginning the ministry of the truth, preaching Christ.

It will be remembered that this city of Samaria was the capital of a district called Samaria, whose people were known as Samaritans: being of mixed blood, Jewish and Gentile, they were counted by the Jews as though they were Gentiles; hence "the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans." We remember, further, that it was respecting these people that our Lord said to his disciples, when sending them forth, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Matt. 10:5, 6; 15:24) Our Lord thus marked the Samaritans as being separate and distinct from the Israelites. We remember, further, that it was because our Lord would not enter into the City of Samaria, and heal its sick, that the people of that city refused to sell the disciples

food, as they passed by. It was in resenting this affront that James and John, the apostles, said to our Lord, "Wilt thou that we command fire from heaven to consume their city?" Jesus answered, "Ye know not what spirit ye are of; the Son of Man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them." It was a woman from this same city who later met the Lord at the well, and got from him a little taste of the water of life, then brought many of her friends and neighbors, who also tasted and were refreshed, and many of them believed on him. Nevertheless, our Lord's testimony then was, "Ye worship ye know not what; . . . salvation is of the Jews."—John 3; Luke 9:54-56; John 4:22.

The fact that Philip now came into Samaria, under the leading of divine providence, and preached the Gospel there, signifies that the time had come for the Gospel to be extended beyond Judaism. It implies, therefore, that this incident occurred at least three and a half years after our Lord's death—after the close of the seventieth symbolical week, and the full end of Israel's special favor as respects the gospel invitation of this age. Evidently the apostles had less strenuous feelings of opposition against the Samaritans than against Gentiles in general, because they were of mixed Jewish blood.

The Samaritans were ripe for the Gospel, and the fact that the Jews had disdained them much as they did the Gentiles no doubt made them all the more ready to receive the Gospel message, which ignored all caste and class distinction, and accepted into its brotherhood all who confessed their sins, accepted Jesus as the Redeemer, and made full consecration to him. Philip's preaching was backed by the open manifestations of the spirit, in healings, etc., as was all the preaching of that time—intended to establish the faith, and to counteract the wonder-workings of Satan, through necromancers, those possessed of a spirit of divination, etc.

The truth reached the Samaritans just in time to rescue them from some of Satan's wily arts, known at that time as "Black Art," etc., practiced by Simon Magus, the sorcerer. The record is, that his influence with the people had been great, both with rich and poor; and that they recognized him as possessed of "the great power of God." Times have changed since then; sorcery and magic no longer captivate the world to the same extent, and the great deceiver has changed his tactics with the times. As the Apostle declares, he assumes a garment of light, and presents himself as a messenger of light, for the deception of those who are seeking the truth. Today he has a variety of devices, snares and traps for those who are awaking out of the slumbers of gross superstition and ignorance brought down from the dark ages. To these he variously presents himself as a Higher Critic, searching for the truth in the Bible, and finding it a mass of contradiction. To others he appears as an Evolutionist, teaching doctrine wholly contradictory to that of the Scriptures, proving that there was no fall; and hence that there could be no redemption from a fall, no times of restitution from its consequences. To others he appears as a Christian Scientist, affecting the name of Christ as one deception, and the name of Science as another, and presenting a confused medley opposed to both—yet backed, nevertheless, by certain physical reliefs and cures distributed (by the same power which worked through Simon Magus) to those who will yield themselves to the deception, and who will deny the truth and persistently stick to the denial;—they shall have the reward of healing.

We who now oppose the adversary and his methods are not armed with the powers of physical healing, whereby to appeal to the people; but we are possessed of the truth, which operates as an eye-salve upon the eyes of the understanding of those who accept;—as a cleansing from sin and a relief from burdens;—as the oil of joy upon their heads and in their hearts. The whole matter has taken a higher plane, by reason of the advancement in general knowledge and civilization which have come to the world as a result of the shining of the light through God's faithful ones in the past. Now, as then, the truth brings conviction to those who are in a proper attitude of heart, and relieves them from the bondage of ignorance, superstition, priestcraft, and sectarianism,—bringing them into the liberty wherewith Christ makes free indeed all who become truly his.

Those who accepted Philip's message, and made a consecration to the Lord, signified it by baptism—immersion—in water, symbolizing the immersion (burial) of their wills into the will of God as expressed in Christ;—signifying that henceforth they would be dead to self and to the world, and rise to walk in newness of life, as members of the body of Christ. We read nothing about a creed or a sect or a denominational



name, nor about the recording of the names in a denominational register. The early church recognized, as we do, that the important matter is that believers should be *joined to Christ*, and that their names, on this account, should be "written in heaven." Simon, who had previously been the religious (?) leader of the people—their leader into darkness, into the wiles of the adversary,—became one of Philip's converts, one of those immersed, and a constant attendant upon Philip's ministry, beholding with amazement the power of God operating through him, which power he recognized as being superior to the power of Satan which had operated in himself.

#### A MAN WITH AN UNREGENERATE HEART

News of God's favor to the Samaritans, and of their acceptance of the Lord, soon reached Jerusalem; and representatives of the whole company of the apostles and others at Jerusalem went down to Samaria to note the work of the Lord, and, no doubt, to encourage the believers. But they went specially because the *gifts* of the holy spirit (miracles, healings, tongues, etc.) could only be communicated through the apostles. However well Philip might proclaim the gospel and immerse believers, he, not being one of the chosen twelve, had not the power of communicating those gifts. (As those gifts were communicated only by the apostles it is evident that they must have ceased in the church shortly after the apostles died.) Peter was one of those sent, and John, the very one who had said, "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire from heaven, to destroy these men and their city?" was the other delegate. How much change the Gospel of Christ had wrought, even in this good man! He had learned of Jesus, and now had the same spirit, which sought not to destroy men's lives but to save them.

When the apostles arrived they prayed with the disciples, and then laid their hands upon them, communicating some of the gifts,—power to speak with tongues, to interpret tongues, to perform miracles, etc. As Simon Magus was one of the believers, one of the baptized ones, he, with the rest, undoubtedly received some gift of the holy spirit. Yet he, and quite probably others of the number, were not in full harmony with the Lord and his gracious plans. The *gifts* of the spirit might be imparted instantaneously; but the *fruits* of the spirit could only be had by growth. Those gifts, therefore, are not to be esteemed as being such good evidence of the divine favor, and nearness to the Lord, as are the fruits of the spirit, which all of the Lord's consecrated people of today should possess in some degree.—meekness, patience, gentleness, brotherly kindness, love. The Apostle Paul declares that if he had not merely one of those gifts, but all of them, yet lacked love, it would profit him nothing, eventually, as respects the great favor to which the Lord has called his church—1 Cor. 13:1-8.

Simon Magus, while astonished with what he had seen, and interested from that standpoint, and convinced that the power was a holy one; and although he had cast in his lot with the believers, and received a gift,—was still "in the gall of bitterness, and in bonds of iniquity," as the Apostle Peter subsequently told him. He was thus all the time, but neither recognized the fact himself, nor did the others recognize it. It was then that his interest in the matters under consideration led him to the point of asking Peter to give him the apostolic power of communicating gifts; promising him in return a good compensation in money;—thus showing that he was not interested in the truth and its service from the right standpoint;—that his was merely a curiosity interest, and that selfishness had not given place to love; that he would like to have this apostolic power so that he could use it in a selfish way, for his own aggrandizement, and for his own advantage amongst the people.

#### A SIMON MAGUS CLASS TODAY

There have been many of this same disposition since. They are not necessarily worse men than many others in the world, because they give evidence that they have neither part nor lot with the Lord's people. It is safe to say that there are hundreds of thousands, yes, millions, of the Simon Magus class in the nominal churches of today; men and women who have never discerned the real spirit of the Gospel: but who look at its various arrangements from a mercenary point of view, considering what shall be the gain or loss, the advantage or disadvantage, of their relationship thereto;—and maintaining the relationship because of the honor or social position or worldly prosperity which it has brought them, or is bringing them, or which they hope yet to obtain through it. To all such we would like to say, kindly but firmly, "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter." We would not say, nor did Peter say to Simon, Your day of grace is past, and you shall be eternally tormented. What God may have for such in the future, under different conditions, we may or may not see clearly; but the point which we are now noting is that such characters have no share in the *kingdom*; neither in its present, nor in its future development. Even amongst those who have received present truth, we have reason to fear that some have received it, not in the love of it, but merely in a spirit of curiosity; or with a view to having something which they can use as a means for bringing themselves into some place of prominence amongst the brethren. Such persons are dangerous characters—dangerous as respects themselves, and dangerous as respects their influence in the church. Such should be carefully avoided in the selection of leaders amongst the Lord's people, no matter what their natural gifts, riches, or talents may be.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

#### BELIEVERS, AND THE BANKRUPTCY ACT

Question: Would it be right or wrong for the footstep-followers of our Lord Jesus Christ to take advantage of the Bankruptcy Act for the relief of Insolvent Debtors?

Answer: It would be entirely proper for any person to take advantage of the law. The thought which lies back of this law is that in the vicissitudes of life some persons become hopelessly insolvent, and that it is the proper thing for their neighbors to relinquish their hold upon them and let them have a fresh start in life, provided they give up all that they have to their creditors. This humane law reminds us strikingly of the divine law given to Israel, and represented in their Jubilee system, under which, every fiftieth year, all debts of every kind were cancelled, and each family inheritance was restored; and that, we again remember, is but a type, or illustration of the heavenly Father's dealings with the world of mankind, who are all his debtors, and who, by application to the Mediator of the New Covenant, will be granted shortly immunity from every previous debt, and opportunity to retrieve their fortunes and to build new characters, without prejudice from original sin and condemnation.

While it would be lawful and proper enough for you to avail yourself of the privileges of this Bankruptcy Act, it may not be convenient for you to do so, because it would require some considerable attorney's fees to put the matter through, and unless you have some purpose or object respecting this in the future that would make it worth while to have the dockets cleared and to permit you to go into some kind of business, you had, perhaps, better let the matter stand as it is.

The general principle is a correct one, that the world of

mankind are, in a general sense, human brothers, and that they should not oppress one another, but be ready to forgive one another their debts, when the circumstances are such that the debtor is unable to meet the obligations, and when he will probably never be able to meet them without unjustly depriving his family of life's necessities. In harmony with this thought is the general law of civilized lands, that debts are not perpetual, but that at the expiration of five years they become void and legally dead, unless specially stated to the contrary by the recording of them as judgments. However, on the other hand, should anyone living in debt come into possession of wealth, so that he could pay his obligations, it should be his pleasure to pay them, whether he had taken advantage of the Bankruptcy Act or not.

#### THE GARMENT SPOTTED WITH THE FLESH

Question: What is meant by the Apostle in the statement, "Hating even the garment spotted by the flesh" (Jude 23)?

Answer: The garment to be worn by Christians is the robe of Christ's righteousness, the spotless robe which is given to those who come unto the Father. All who have love for the Lord and for righteousness will desire to maintain as far as possible this absolute perfection of righteousness imputed to them through faith. To do this they will seek to walk after the spirit, and not after the flesh. But notwithstanding their good desires they may not infrequently come short of the glory of God, and fail to live up to all even of their opportunities. All such shortcomings of every kind are reckoned as stains or spots on the imputed garment of Christ's righteousness—spots,

marks of fleshly weakness. Those who have the right attitude of heart will hate sin, and hence will hate all fleshly spots or weaknesses of every kind, and will make haste to take the matter to the Lord in prayer, and, so far as possible, to make good any wrong they may have committed, even though unwilfully done; and that under the \*New Covenant the blood of Christ cleanses such from all sins, and in this manner they are able to keep themselves unspotted from the world. By and by this faithful class will experience the resurrection change, and being possessed of new bodies in full accord with their new minds they will thenceforth be without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

From this it will be plain that none need have spots upon his garment except he be careless respecting the matter; and such as are thus careless are to that extent lacking of the Master's spirit—they are not overcomers of the world, but to some extent sympathize with sin. This is the class which, for this reason, will fail to be accounted overcomers and will fail to obtain the great prize of joint-heirship in the kingdom. This is the class which will be obliged to go through the great tribulation with which this age will close, to the intent that in that tribulation they may learn lessons which will be valuable to them to all eternity, and this learning of lessons is scripturally called "washing their robes, and making them white in the blood of the Lamb."—Rev. 7:14.

#### WITH SUCH AN ONE NO, NOT TO EAT

Question: What about 1 Cor. 5:11? "With such an one no, not to eat."

Answer: We understand the Apostle to refer to church relationships, and that the Lord's people are in duty bound to maintain a very high standard of purity of morals; so much so that they would not even fellowship in the church or at the common meal or love-feast with any who were known positively to be of disreputable character. This would not mean one against whom merely an evil thought had been encouraged; or one against whom the shaft of slander had been hurled; for other Scriptures show us distinctly that the Lord's people are not to be evil surmisers in their carefulness to maintain a high standard of Christian living. Verse 10 seems to indicate that in our social and business affairs we should to a reasonable degree avoid fellowships and dealings with the disreputable.

#### IS GOD THE FATHER OF ALL MEN?

Question: The Apostle, in Acts 17:29, seems to speak of the natural man as the offspring of God. How should we understand this?

Answer: God represents himself as the Life-giver, or Father of every living thing, since all life proceeds from him; but, specially, he is the Father, or Life-giver of all created in his likeness. The natural man was thus created, represented in Adam; and although much of that original likeness has since been lost through sin and depravity, it is, nevertheless, still proper to speak of the man from the standpoint of his original creation. It is to be remembered, however, that according to the Scriptures all in the transgression lost the standing of sonship. All are God's offspring, that is, all spring from, or derived their life from the Almighty; but he recognizes as sons only those who are in harmony, in fellowship with him, and this now includes only those who are reconciled through the precious blood.

#### GOD COMMANDETH ALL MEN EVERYWHERE TO REPENT

Question: In the 30th and 31st verses of the same chapter we seem to have a contradiction. Verse 30 declares that God "commandeth all men everywhere to repent," and verse 31 declares that the appointed day for the world's judgment is future. If the judgment of the world has not yet begun, in what sense and with what justice does God command all everywhere to repent now?

Answer: While the command to repent is to "all men everywhere," nevertheless it reaches only those who have an ear to hear. The vast majority of mankind have not yet been commanded to repent, because God's voice through his messengers has not yet reached every creature. The assurance, however, is that the message shall reach all in due time. And whoever hears the message will receive with it a full knowledge of the gracious opportunity for complying with its conditions and arrangements. In the present age the arrangement is that they will be judged according to their faith, while those who hear in this next age will be informed of a justification by works—that they "shall be judged every man according to his works."

\* See June 15, 1919, for critical examination of Covenants

Thus viewed, it will be seen that God's arrangement for judging the world in the next age is complete, and it is in view of this feature of future judgment, or future trial, or opportunity which will be granted to all mankind for attaining to everlasting life, that God commands that every one should repent of sins and make effort to come back into harmony with him and to receive the boon of eternal life. Had God made no arrangement through the ransom for the giving of eternal life to the world, it would have been useless to have commanded repentance; for why should men seek by repentance and striving against sin to attain a life eternal if it were unattainable—if no arrangement had been made through the redemption by which God might be just and yet the justifier of those who believe in Jesus and who seek to follow his directions and to attain the gift of life in him?

#### THE ANNUAL MEMORIAL SUPPER

Question: If, as you claim, the Scriptures teach that the annual celebration of the Memorial Supper is the only proper one, please say when and why a change has been made to a more frequent observance?

Answer: (1st) You know, and all know that the Roman Catholic, the Greek Catholic and the Syriac churches, as well as the Church of England, celebrate Good Friday as the memorial of our Lord's death, and the histories of all these churches show its observance as far back as church history goes,—any of them,—all of them.

(2nd) You know, and all know, that the so-called Protestant Churches (Methodist, Presbyterian, Disciples, Congregational) ignore Good Friday. Really they protest in part against it, but ignorantly, without good reason, because of having lost sight of the original significance and importance of the day from a Scriptural standpoint. Those called "Protestants" recognize no particular day, but keep the feast weekly, monthly, bi-monthly, tri-monthly, etc., according to their fancy or convenience.

The above facts are known to all; but the reason for this change on the part of Protestants is known to but few of those even who practice the change, and is not to be found recorded in histories of any kind. The reason for this we will explain, and it will be manifest to all, although we cannot refer you to any other writings than our own on the subject. It is:—

(3rd) The Protestant reformation against Roman Catholicism was very properly specially against what Papists denominate "the sacrifice of the mass." And it was because Papists celebrated Good Friday as the most particular mass day, that Protestants were so particular to ignore that day.

(4th) The original deflection in Papacy, by which the sacrifice of the mass took the place of the original sacrifice made at Calvary, was gradual, and covered a long period of time, and is not to be found in the particular edict by the Pope or others. This, like many other false theories, grew gradually and spread itself gradually and unobservedly over the nominal church of that time; and the records of the true church of that time are not to be had, for it was so insignificant, in the eyes of the nominal system, that its views were ignored, but later on its writings, protests, etc., were destroyed as heretical.

The custom of performing the mass any and every day, and at any and every hour of the day and night, as might suit the convenience of its observers, having gained a thorough foothold, the original day (Good Friday) and its commemoration of the original sacrifice, was gradually merged by Papists into a great mass day. Nevertheless, even in this respect it has held a predominant position above all other dates with the devotees of the system, and every Roman Catholic who makes the slightest claim to faithfulness to his church, is expected to be present and participate in the service of Good Friday, whether he attends mass at any other time of the year or not. This is a matter of fact that can be readily demonstrated by application to any Catholic.

(5th) Church history, as represented, not only in denominational literature, but also in the cyclopedias, records the fact that the method of computing the time for Good Friday was early changed from the Jewish method of counting the Passover, to a very slightly modified counting which always brings the anniversary on Friday and the anniversary of Easter on a Sunday. The Jewish method of reckoning made the days fall irregularly on any or various days of the week from year to year. Hence the change to the present method of counting was considered to be justified. So universal is this custom that the principal almanacs give not only the date of the Passover according to the Jewish reckoning, but also its date according to this modified counting of Christendom—"the church calendar."