

made against Brother Russell and of our alleged teachings of a second chance, no punishment for sin, etc. In our volunteer work we are making it a point to refute these charges whenever opportunity presents.

We are not inclining toward weariness in well doing. We are confident that we shall reap unspeakably glorious results in due time, and we believe the due time is not far off.

It is our delight to bear before the throne of heavenly grace our dear Pastor and all others who suffer for righteousness' sake. And we daily search our own hearts lest possibly we may shrink from joyfully sharing with these whatever the Lord may allow to come upon us. With continued love and prayers for all, we are,

Faithfully yours in his fellowship and service,
SETH T. MOORE.—Texas.

OPPOSITION PROVED TO BE BOOMERANG

DEAR PASTOR RUSSELL:—

A short time ago, having heard your teachings roundly denounced by one or two brother clergymen, I obtained the six volumes of your STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES and began to study and investigate for myself. The final upshot of this inquiry has been that the whole of your views and position as set forth in the above volumes has convinced me beyond all question that modern Christendom is upon a false foundation, and that somehow the "churches" have lost vital integral portions of that truth which was delivered once for all to the saints. I have therefore recently felt it to be my duty to resign my position as an Anglican minister, as I am now certain that the "churches" as at present organized do not, and cannot, truly and adequately represent our Lord to humanity as Redeemer. Why this is so you make abundantly and transparently clear in your STUDIES.

I have been engaged in the work of the ministry for the last thirteen years, and during this time have tenaciously held on to my position in the church, although for some years I have had the instinctive feeling that in some way things were far from right within the borders of "Orthodoxy." The difficulty was I did not know how to set about to try and remedy matters. Your third volume of the STUDIES, "Thy Kingdom Come," shows clearly that there could be no remedy in these latter days, for the time of Harvest is come, and that the evident decay and disintegration of Christendom is the Lord's method of gathering together His own spiritual, elect church. The whole thing has come to me with the force of a divine revelation—for such it assuredly is. I can only add that it has been the deep desire within to try and do my Lord's will that has kept me within the "orthodox" church until the present. Now, however, that I see, as in a mirror, that He is calling me to come out of Babylon as with a stentorian voice—in view of her wickedness, worldliness, cruelty, hypocrisy and errors—I feel that I must obey Him at all costs. I have done this, and already I feel a sense of inner peace and tranquility coming over me. May God bless and keep you, Brother Russell, and all the brethren with you who are now busy making ready for the Coming of the King!

For myself I just want to do the Lord's will in all things, and will be glad to serve and co-operate with you and the Association generally as may most effectively tend to assist in the establishment of our Lord's kingdom. Kindly use me

as you may judge will be best to this great end. I am a married man with three children, but whatever difficulties may arise I have already proved that his grace is sufficient for me. He has shown me the road to take to do his will and he will enable me so to do.

I have made myself known to the brethren in Toronto and they have welcomed me in a most kind and brotherly way. If it should be the Lord's will for me to remain in this city, it will be a joy and privilege to cooperate with them in seeking to further the great end we have in view. At the same time I have the feeling that if arrangements could be made for me to undertake a short, special course of study and training under your direction at Brooklyn it would do me much good and enable me to render more efficient service later on. I will, however, leave myself wholly in your hands and endeavor to begin to serve the Association as you may judge best.

With earnest prayers that your hands may be upheld in every possible way, and that God in his infinite mercy may shower upon you and the brethren generally still greater blessings for the great day yet to come, I am

Yours in the Lord, R. A. ROBINSON.—Canada.

BAPTIST PREACHER GETS LIGHT

DEAR PASTOR:—

I am constrained to acquaint you with the news that in God's hands you have been a means of blessing to us who were for some time spiritually cast down. I was aforesaid a Baptist pastor and evangelist in England, earnest in my endeavors for the Gospel's sake, and had to suffer because I could not bend to those who thought they had the right to lay down the law. I felt that there was something lacking in their teachings and was in such perplexity that I drifted into indifference and unhappiness.

Heartily disgusted with the worldliness and "isms" of the churches, and worst of all their denial of God's Word, I involuntarily cried, "Send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead me!" "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation!"

About this time my father mailed me a WATCH TOWER copy of THE DIVINE PLAN OF THE AGES, but I was so prejudiced—regarding you as one of the modern upstarts—that I relegated it to the bottom of my box, unread. Again I was presented with, this time, a bound copy of the same book! In curiosity I began to read, and my curiosity soon became deep interest and diligent Bible study and my prayer has been answered!

In God's power I have been able to interest others; my brother-in-law has joined in our studies and desires to add his testimony to mine in gratitude to God for your ministrations. May God continue to abundantly bless you in your noble and fearless proclamation of THE TRUTH.

As opportunity offers we do our little for the spread of present-day truths and have been blessed accordingly. True, we have had to endure misjudgment and misunderstanding, but we rejoice to be accounted worthy to suffer these things for him who endured so much for us.

Feeling sure that such testimony will gladden your heart, and rejoicingly awaiting the establishment of the Kingdom, Gratefully yours in Christ, JOHN A. PERRY.—Australia

CONSPIRACY ARTICLE IN SWEDISH

Swedish friends will please note that we now have in stock Swedish B. S. M. No. 68 for use wherever Swedish ministers

slander the Truth. Mention quantity you can use without waste—free.

THE COMING STORM AND ITS GLORIOUS OUTCOME

"He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven. . . . Whoso is wise and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord."—Psalm 107:29, 30, 43.

Psalm 107 seems to be prophetic, tracing to a considerable degree the experiences of the church of Christ throughout this Gospel age. It may be applied individually and also in a world-wide international way. The cause of all the trouble in the world is sin. There might be various ways of trying to remove the difficulty, but God in his wisdom arranged the one plan. He will permit sin to bring storms and difficulties of life so that humanity shall be tossed about, and thus learn to appreciate our great Savior, whom God has provided to be the Great Deliverer of the church and of the world. The whole matter has been arranged in a judicial manner, and in due time Christ will have the full right to bid all storms to cease and to bring

order out of confusion. Yet this must await the divine appointment. During the present age the church class has been selected, and the storms and difficulties of life have been valuable to them in developing faith, hope, patience and in preparing them for the kingdom honors, privileges and opportunities.

The world's storms, according to the Scriptures, have been varied and have occurred at different times, according to the conditions of mankind—sin and selfishness always stirring up a storm on every possible occasion. There have been many storms in the past—wars, invasions, tumults, etc.—all started from envious, selfish motives, or because of great injustice on

the part of others. Great nations have envied one another their increase of wealth, and have preyed upon the weak. Anger, malice, hatred, strife, the works of the flesh and the devil, have been cultivated. Now, having sown thus to selfishness, mankind are experiencing a mighty whirlwind on the social sea. This great storm has not yet reached its height. Our thought is that it will be much greater before the Lord will step in and say, "Peace, be still!" He has permitted this awful storm; for he knows how to make it work out for the good of humanity.

It is ours as God's people to favor peace and righteousness and to live in harmony with these conditions. But it is ours also to know what is coming on the world—more, it is ours to know the outcome, to know something of God's truth. The Lord has already given us an inward peace which no outward storm can affect. We are trusting in the promises he has given. We realize what the present condition is, and rejoice that the church will soon be glorified. What a lasting peace and joy will then be ours beyond the veil! This realization brings into our hearts even now great rest of soul, a great calm! We remember that God is able to make all things work together for good to us, and he has promised so to do; therefore we may have blessed experiences coming out of these stormy times and trials of life.

The Lord has a peculiar way of bringing peace to his people—not usually by interference with people of the world. The storms of life may go on just the same as ever; our way may be just as thorny as ever. But the Lord speaks peace to us! We hear his voice, the Word of God! By the knowledge he gives us, by his precious promises, he assures us of his wisdom, his love, his power, and of his loving purpose for his people. These things give us peace and rest of heart in the midst of outward trials and trouble. He makes known to us also his great plan for the world in general. He informs us now of the significance of the present conditions and of the glorious outcome of the great trouble about to break upon the whole world.

THE LAST GREAT DAY

We are in the "last days" mentioned by the Apostle Paul. He says, "In the last days perilous times shall come. Men shall be . . . covetous, boasters, proud . . . traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God . . . From such turn away." (2 Timothy 3:1-5) Our Lord Jesus repeatedly mentioned "the last day," and declared that certain things would occur in the last day. We understand him thus to be referring to the great seventh day, the thousand-year day of his kingdom. For instance, he said, in speaking of his disciples individually, "And I will raise him up at the last day."

The Scriptures speak of the last day as being the end of this present dispensation, the end of the present reign of evil. Our Lord referred to the closing days of this age when he said, "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the Son of Man." All Scriptures referring to this day seem to point to the great commotion to come at this time. The Prophet Daniel seems to speak of the present dispensation as a "time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation." This was to be, he declared, "in the time of the end." Our Lord speaks of it: "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." (Matthew 24:21-25) St. Paul tells us that the fire of that day shall try every man's work of what sort it is. The Apostle Peter describes it vividly in his second epistle. That day of trouble and the glory to follow are the theme of all the holy prophets.

The troubles of this day are not all of the same nature. Jesus tells us that some of his followers will be accounted worthy to escape the troubles coming upon the world, which St. Peter says will involve the whole earth. In the fire of that day, some who are children of God will be found to have built their house of wood, hay and stubble, even though building upon the true foundation, Christ. All their superstructure will be burned, and themselves "saved as by fire," as the Apostle Paul tells us. Others of the Lord's children will be found to have built upon the true foundation "gold, silver, and precious stones"; and thus their works will stand. They will have a superstructure of truth and loyalty to the Lord built upon the foundation, and this will not be burned. Their building will stand the "fire" of this great day.

As the Apostle Paul in all his epistles addressed himself to the saints in Christ Jesus, we understand these words (1 Corinthians 3:11-15) to refer only to those professing full consecration to the Lord, the church of Christ. The true saints must all suffer; for as St. Paul forewarned, we must "through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." (Acts 14:22) "Hereunto were we called," St. Peter assures us. (1 Peter

2:21) But all these things only work out for us an exceeding and eternal weight of glory, if we are properly exercised thereby.

THE NOMINAL SYSTEMS OF TODAY

But, as already intimated, we find a very large class today professing to be of the church of Christ, and millions of money are being spent by these for the worship of God according to the ideas of the nominal church systems. Fine church edifices are built and dedicated to the Lord. Grand organs and trained choirs are furnished. Gymnasia, "smokers," culinary departments with dining-rooms, etc., are provided. These churches are supported by people a large number of whom are very noble in many respects.

From one viewpoint it would seem that people who are spending so much money every year for church purposes must be quite religious and very anxious to do God's will. We read of how many millions of dollars New York City spends annually for its ministers, churches, etc., etc. But we find, in fact, that in all these churches there is a great deal of formalism. Those who sing their hymns are hired to do so, and they say that they have no particular interest in religion, but are merely doing it for so many dollars. Not many of the ministers will acknowledge that their service is of much the same nature, but there are those who think that the majority of them are serving in a similar manner. Does the Lord recognize and accept such service? (See Amos 5:20-23; Isaiah 1:13-15) It is not for us to judge the heart; but on every side we find headiness, boastfulness, pride.

We do not know how the Apostle Paul could better have described present conditions if he had been living here today. If anything is said to these zealous workers in the churchianity of our day about the worldliness, pride and errors of the churches, there is a toss of the head, even though some of them acknowledge that there is much that they do not approve of. It is found necessary to have concerts, teas, frolics, etc., in the churches to raise money; for, it is claimed, if they did not have these things, nobody would come to church except the preachers and some who hold office, and who attend to perform the duties for which they are held responsible. One such church official said to the Editor of THE WATCH TOWER, "I am in duty bound to go to church so often, but I will get out of the office as soon as I can." Having had the duty of elder thrust upon him, he intended to escape from it as soon as possible.

THE PRESENT IDOL OF CHRISTENDOM

Money-love, acquisitiveness, seems to be the controlling factor today. True, many who have a great deal of money are giving it out by the millions of dollars; but ours is a money-loving day. And it is not merely the rich who have this love of money. We find it everywhere. The chief desire is to get money—not to lay it up in banks, but to spend it; people like the pleasures which money will buy. It is a money-spending time as well as a money-loving time. Pleasure holds riot today, and money is honored and everywhere sought. Our former superstitious ideas of the better blood of some than of others—"blue blood"—we in America have been largely relieved of. We have therefore not that love of aristocracy and so-called "noble birth" which prevails in the old world. People formerly believed that the kings and the nobility were of a different race altogether from the common people. But now love of money and of that which money will purchase—pleasure, power, influence—have driven the world mad. Money is worshipped as an idol. If one has money, he can get nearly anything he wants. Many such people have a form of godliness, without its power. The Apostle says, "From such turn away."—2 Timothy 3:4, 5.

This condition of things has grown by degrees. How shall we turn away from those who worship these false gods? We turn away in the sense that we do not follow in the same course. We keep our hearts from the love of pleasure and worldliness and from the greed of gain. We turn away from all these things, and go in a different direction. This seems to correspond with what the Lord says in Revelation 18:2, 4. When revealing to the Apostle John the condition of Nominal Zion, in our day, and speaking prophetically as though in our day, he says, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen . . . Come out of her, my people"—get out from under her influence, leave her! The Lord's true people are to follow the Lord's direction here. They are to stand free from this bondage to error and worldliness, and set a good example to others also; and then they are to wait for the Lord's further instructions and for the accomplishment of his glorious purposes. We need not hope at all to turn the tide—one man or a thousand men or a million men would be powerless to turn the tide of Babylon today. She is fallen; therefore forsake her!—Jeremiah 51:6-9.

OUR QUIET, CONFIDENT STRENGTH

God entered into his rest when his creative works were finished in the earth, so we, the true church, shall soon enter into our rest, the perfect rest beyond the veil. God has placed the whole matter in the hands of Christ to accomplish in the appointed time. We have confidence in the Lord and in his times and seasons; therefore we are very restful, and in coming out of Babylon we are not worried nor anxious and distressed about others. God will bring order out of all the prevailing confusion. All who will prove worthy of everlasting life will ultimately be glad to work in the way the Lord shall direct.

The world today is drunk with certain false doctrines, and do not know what they are doing. If we were with people who were hilarious, intoxicated, we would better not try to sober them up, but stop association with them. Yet there may be some in that company who would love to be as we—free to serve the Lord. It is our duty to help everybody who is feeling after the Lord and amenable in any degree to the Word of Truth. We are to do good to all men as we have opportunity, "especially unto them who are of the household of faith." (Galatians 6:10) It is to this end that we have been circulating the STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, THE BIBLE STUDENTS MONTHLY, and holding meetings and showing THE PHOTO-DRAMA OF CREATION, so that other earnest souls may, like ourselves, stand free from the general trend of our day and may live a life of sacrifice, and thus be prepared for the high exaltation coming to those who are faithful to God—a reward that we believe is now near at hand. Those who are thus prepared and panoplied with the whole armor of God will be kept in a condition of quietness and confidence known to no others in this great day of stress, turmoil and shaking.

PRESENT "SIGNS OF THE SON OF MAN"

The way by which the Lord informs his faithful, watching ones of the import of present conditions in the world and of the nearness of Christ's glorious reign, is through outward signs corroborating what we now see Bible chronology to indicate. A sign is an indication. The putting up of a baker's sign indicates that bread is to be bought there; a butcher's sign, that meat is for sale at that place, etc. Then we have the sign, or indication of coming storms, or fair weather. We are not to expect to see shining letters across the sky or anything of that kind to indicate the Lord's presence; but there has been a sign in the church for some time now—about forty years—the reaping of the ripe wheat. This has been a sign of the Parousia of the Son of Man. It has not been possible for the world to discern this sign. We also have the sign of the barren fig tree, the Jewish nation, putting forth its leaves. We see the foretold worldliness of the church systems. We see the beginning of the smiting of the nations.

When the great time of trouble shall break, the world will begin to see that a new order of things is somehow coming about; that a great change is impending. Conditions have not been so previously. As men see that the Son of Man is about to take his great power and that the Messianic kingdom is coming in, they will be apprehensive, not appreciating the fact that this kingdom is designed for the blessing of all. For a time they will not grasp the full situation. They will see the trouble, the paralysis of business, the distress of nations, socialism, anarchism, and their hearts will fail them for fear of the things approaching.

But all these things are now signs to us that the Lord is making ready to establish his kingdom and is preparing for the fall of the Gentile kingdom. This, however, will not at first be distinguishable to the world in general under the flaming fire of trouble. They will not know what to make of these things. We think that the majority of people are somewhat perplexed today. Men who are very prominent in social matters, financial matters, religious matters, are in great perplexity. Many of them are beginning to discuss the idea that the kingdom of God is really approaching.

We are told by some of our friends who attended the great Peace Meeting held here in New York City last fall that the prominent speakers participating, among them the Vice President of the United States, made numerous references to the Prince of Peace as being just at the door. The Millennium was referred to in like manner. We do not know what this means, except that they think that the Son of Man is now coming in his kingdom. We think that their perplexity will increase as they see still greater stress—financial stress, social stress—and as we enter the great time of trouble, "a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation." A Hebrew gentleman was telling the Editor that the Jews in Jerusalem are starving to death. To the four millions of Jews living in Galicia and Austria it seems to make no difference whether one army or the other passes through the country; for the Jews always suf-

fer. Wherever the armies have marched, the homes have been devastated and the land laid waste. Recently the Jews have held a Mass Meeting in New York to collect money for their brethren in Galicia and in Palestine.

If any of you should meet a banker, should you engage in conversation with him, you will see his face grow very sober. In some instances the tears will come into his eyes when speaking of the alarming conditions in finance today. Many wealthy people will say that when this war broke out they were worth a hundred thousand dollars, but that they do not now know what they are worth. Their stocks and bonds are not salable. So there is today a trouble that reaches increasingly throughout the earth, affecting not only all Christendom, but heathendom as well.

VIEW FROM CLEFT IN THE ROCK

As our own eyes of understanding have opened, we have sought to show to the church, and to the world as far as possible, the great divine plan of the ages—wonderful, beautiful, far superior to anything human! Bible students the world over are reading the Bible and the signs of the times in a new light; for God's own time has come for lifting the veil of ignorance and darkness which for so long he has permitted Satan to put before our eyes. To our understanding the present war is pictured in the Bible, as due to begin in 1914. It is a great "wind."

Following the great war, the Bible teaches, a great earthquake—social revolution—will take place. In connection with that earthquake will come an exaltation of religious sects, Catholic and Protestant, on the side of the kings and princes—political, social, financial, religious. Next will come the downfall of all present religious systems. Speedily the symbolic "fire" of the Bible will consume the earth—anarchy. Following the anarchy quickly will come the long-promised kingdom of God, for which Christians have prayed, saying, "Thy kingdom come," most of them with but little conception of the true meaning of their words. During the reign of that kingdom, "a still small voice," the message of truth and grace, will come to all mankind. The world's uplift will progress; and the knowledge of the glory of the Lord shall gradually fill the whole earth. The longed-for haven of rest will then be attained, "the desire of all nations."

"MY SHEEP HEAR"—AND FOLLOW

All the true disciples of Jesus will see and hear in this present "due time." "My sheep hear my voice," said the Master. If any, therefore, are in Babylon and do not hear the voice of the Lord now calling them out of this great apostate system, our plain inference is that they are not his true sheep. This does not mean that all will hear at the same moment. Some are dull of hearing; they may not be living very near to the Lord. But so surely as they are his sheep they will hear; and so surely as they are following in his steps they will hear clearly, and obey promptly. They will be eager to come out of Babylon before her plagues come like a deluge, as they will soon come. We who now have the light should hold up the Lord's message and point other Christians to the present condition of things, and let them hear the Lord and then make their decision.

"PLAGUES" UPON BABYLON

The "seven last plagues" to be visited especially upon Christendom do not mean a particular disease, as the black plague or cholera; but the word stands for trouble. The Scriptures indicate what these are—death, famine, revolution, distress, overthrow. These distresses will be both physical and mental. It will be a great trouble and distress to Babylon when she realizes that her walls are fallen. She has realized for some time that there was danger of a collapse, and has been seeking to repel anything that might come near to injure her walls. Many good people have been fighting for these denominations, thinking that they represent the Lord's people—being themselves bound more or less by the institutions of the present time.

We do not think that the Gospel age fully ended in September, 1914, but merely the Times of the Gentiles. The Gospel age will not fully end, we believe, until the Gospel message ends; and that will be when the door is shut, when the last member of the very elect shall have passed beyond the veil. It is our understanding that the elect church of Christ, the bride, will not remain in the flesh to do much of the teaching of the world, but will be glorified in the kingdom either before or during the great time of trouble, and be ready to supervise the world's instruction from the spirit plane. The great conflict is before us. The Prophet Isaiah (63:1-6) depicts in very strong language the work of our Lord Jesus among the nations

at this time and in the days just ahead. "He hath trodden the wine-press alone, and all his garments are stained with blood." the wrath of God. See STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, Vol. 4, pp. 18, 19, and p. 51, ¶ 1. We believe that this work has already begun in the present European war, which is growing in severity and awfulness day by day.

After the church shall have been glorified beyond the veil, the ancient worthies are to be her representatives in the world, taking oversight of the instruction of the peoples and ruling in human affairs; after the Messiah has commanded "Peace" to the angry nations and bidden the raging billows be calm.

FAITH THE MAINSPRING OF CONSECRATION

"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for He is faithful that promised."—Hebrews 10:23.

The Apostle is here writing to some in the early church who had given evidence of wavering, who were failing properly to hold on. He is telling them that while they had been faithful at one time they apparently had become lukewarm at least, respecting the Lord and the Christian way. He intimates that the firmness of faith in the child of God, and the firmness with which he holds the profession of his faith, has much to do with his consistency in Christian life. Our faith was the mainspring that led each of us to make a consecration to the Lord. We believed that God had provided the Redeemer for the forgiveness of sin. We believed that we would be acceptable and our sins forgiven through the Lord Jesus Christ; and that we would be made sons of God, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with the Lord Jesus. These were the inspiring incentives that first led us to God. They served a good purpose in leading us to the decisive step.

St. Paul says that these Hebrew Christians had witnessed a good profession; but some of them, at least, had been growing more or less indifferent. He declares that although by this time they should have been teachers, they needed to themselves be taught again what were "the first principles of the oracles of God." They had lost part of their faith, their assurance in the Lord.

We all know from experience how things that are brought before our minds may afterwards become dim and hazy. When spiritual things become thus hazy, when we cannot grasp spiritual verities as once we could, when we are fearful and our joy in Christ is fading, we are getting away from this mainspring of our consecration. We are losing our faith. So let us earnestly hold fast to this anchor of our souls lest we drift and be dashed upon the rocks. Unless we do hold fast to our faith we shall lose everything; for "without faith it is impossible to please God." Without faith it would be impossible to gird on the armor and go forth to fight the good fight. We would never go out to a battle that we did not believe existed, or to a battle that we did not believe would bring any results, any reward for the hardships and suffering involved.

OUR PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

The Apostle's argument is that we should hold fast the faith which began our Christian life and which is also to be

But there may be yet for a little while—just how long we cannot surely know—some work for the church to do for the world this side the veil, before the time of trouble fully sets in, or at the time of its beginning. If so, we believe that this instruction to the world is now in progress.

"Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord," even though for a brief space his righteous sword shall be unsheathed for the punishment of iniquity and the overthrow of Satan's great empire.

the finisher of our Christian life. The Lord is able to carry us through and he will do it, if we do our part. But the terms on which the Lord has received us are that we purpose to abide faithful. Hence everything depends on our holding fast to this faith which we have professed, without wavering, without harboring any doubts and fears; and the basis of our faith in our ultimate triumph is the assurance that "he is faithful that promised." We know that in the Bible there are "exceeding great and precious promises" for us. While the Lord tells us that there is nothing in ourselves that we can depend on, he assures us that his grace is sufficient, that his strength is made perfect in our weakness. We have only to lay hold upon it. If therefore we hold fast to our faith, we may obtain all that God has promised us. He will be faithful; he will not disregard his promises; he will do all that he has said.

If we hesitate and waver we are either losing our faith or losing the spirit of obedience and love. If, therefore, we realize that either of these conditions exists, we should go at once to the Word of God and to prayer, that our faith, love and zeal may be renewed. We should scrutinize our hearts day by day, to make sure that we are still loyal to the Lord, to see whether we are seeking to lay down our lives according to our covenant, to see whether we are developing the fruits and graces of the holy Spirit. Thus we shall fulfil our vows, and there shall be "an abundant entrance" administered unto us into the "everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

"Awake, my soul, awake!

The precious days are flying!

Yield not to ease nor sloth,

The far-spent day is dying.

"Up, and gird on thy Sword!

Didst dream the battle ended?

The last fight's on—and no such Cause

Was ever yet defended!

"Not yet, but soon, the Prize—

One last, supreme endeavor

Is thine, and then the Crown,

The bliss, the joy, forever!"

GENTLENESS A CHARACTERISTIC OF THE CHRIST

"The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves."—2 Timothy 2:24, 25.

The words of our text were addressed by the Apostle Paul to Timothy, an elder of the church. The Lord's people, all who belong to the body of Christ, are sons of God; nevertheless, they are all servants—bond-servants of Jesus Christ. Every true son would desire to serve the interests of his father, especially a just, loving father; and every faithful servant would wish to serve the interests of his master or his employer, particularly a noble, worthy employer or master. Our Lord Jesus, who was the special Son of the Heavenly Father, made himself servant of all, in order that he might serve the Father's interests, accomplish his will.

Our text is applicable to any servant of God, any member of the church of Christ, whether he holds office among the brethren or not. It is an injunction which applies to all of the church. Every spirit-begotten child of God is to teach according to his opportunity and ability, under the limitations of sex, etc., given in the Scriptures. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." (Isaiah 61:1) These words of the Prophet apply to every member of The Christ, Head and body.

PROPER MANNER OF PRESENTING THE TRUTH

But the message of the Good Tidings that the Lord has given us to proclaim is not one to be forced upon people. To be proper servants of the Lord, and in harmony with his arrangements, we must not strive, must not argue or quarrel. In meekness we are to instruct, not with an air of superiority, or a desire to show how much we know. Our message is for those who have "an ear to hear." We are not to force ourselves upon people, not to intrude upon them, in order to make them hear. While we are to be ready to sacrifice our own interests to proclaim the message of our faith, yet in so doing we are not to be strifeful, malicious or contentious.

We would not say of those who are inclined to be contentious in presenting the truth that they are not members of Christ, but evidently they have not learned the better way. They have not sufficiently developed the quality of love; they are lacking in heavenly wisdom in this respect. On one occasion two of our Lord's disciples came from a city of Samaria, the inhabitants of which would not sell them food, and indignantly asked of Jesus whether they should call fire down from heaven to destroy them. In reply our Lord said, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of Man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them." (Luke 9:55, 56)

So there are some today who are ready to quarrel on every occasion. Although this tendency does not prove that they are not children of the Lord, nevertheless, it demonstrates that they are not in the right attitude, that improvement is necessary.

The things pleasing to God are inculcated in the Scriptures. The Lord's followers are to be gentle to all men—not only to the brethren in the church, but to all others. They are not to be strife-breeders, not always getting into a wrangle, but long-suffering, considerate of the opinions and preferences of others. There may be times when a Christian is put into a position where he will be forced to defend himself; but it is one thing to defend one's self in a reasonable way, and quite another to be strifeful and aggressive.

In endeavoring to carry the truth to others, we should remember that our faith is not to be presented to everybody. "Cast not your pearls before swine." They will not appreciate your pearls. They will wish to do you injury because of not appreciating them. But while not strifeful, we are to be on the alert to hold forth the Word of Life. If the truth is attacked and honest souls are in danger of being stumbled, we must, as the Apostle enjoined, "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." (Jude 3) This does not mean, however, that we are to be quarrelsome, or to be disputatious, in the ordinarily accepted use of those terms. We are to be ever ready to proclaim the truth on every suitable occasion—with moderation, meekness and humility, but with earnestness and zeal; for this is our business. If those to whom we present the message of truth are in the proper attitude, they will desire it. It is right, therefore, for us to be ready to lay down our lives in defense of the truth and its interests.

The more cool, calm and self-possessed we are when opposed, the better we can defend and recommend the message we bear. The greater the contrast between our spirit and that of our opposer, the stronger will be our argument for the truth in the minds of others who may hear; and the more likely shall we be to disarm prejudice in the mind of the opposing one, if he be sincere and honest of heart. One who loses his self-control and becomes combative and disputatious defeats his own cause. One should never lose his head. He will be sure to say things that were better left unsaid and to manifest by tone and manner that he is not actuated by the Spirit of the Master. More harm than good might result from such a mistake. We are always to present the message gently, kindly, forcefully. It may be necessary to be positive in our statements, but the spirit of the presentation is to be gentle, whether in private or in public.

QUALIFICATION OF A TRUE TEACHER

The Apostle says that the servants of the Lord should be "apt to teach." (1 Timothy 3:2; 2 Tim. 2:24) St. Paul was

here especially addressing an elder in the ecclesia. To be apt to teach is to have the teaching ability. Not all have the ability, the gift, of making things plain to others. There are some people who the more they say the less they are understood. If there are some who find themselves in this condition, they should use printed matter and then try to learn to present the message in a way that will be assimilable to the minds of others—making it clear, plain and logical. In the presentation of the message to others patience is necessary. Be willing to go over the point again and again, having sympathy with those you are instructing, remembering how difficult you found it when you were trying to emerge from darkness into the light.

Whether presenting the truth publicly or in private, never assume an air of superiority, never manifest haughtiness. Never allow yourself to become so irritated as to say, "I know more about this in five minutes than you do in a year"; nor even imply this thought in the expression of your face, or in tone or manner. You see, you can express yourself in these four different ways at once; but any one of the four would be sufficient to place a barrier between yourself and those whom you were endeavoring to interest. You are to be meek, lowly of heart, humble.

If some one presents to you an argument or a Scripture that he thinks contradicts your position, say to him, "Well, brother, let us see whether that is in harmony with the teachings of the Bible. We must accept as truth only that which will harmonize all the statements of the Word of God. Let us prove the matter." Have a meek, teachable manner, one which shows that you are willing to learn from another if he can teach you something from the sure Word of the Lord. Thus your opponent will be more willing to hear what you have to say, if he is disposed to be at all reasonable.

Undoubtedly the Lord's people are learning more and more the lesson inculcated in our text—"the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all." It is a lesson that all must learn, elders and deacons and every member of the body of Christ. It is necessary to our own character-building, and necessary in order that we may do more effective service for the Master. When at first we buckled on the armor and took up the sword of the Spirit, we probably did some flourishing, and perhaps often did more harm than good. We felt that we had something that no one could argue down. But we have been learning to be more gentle, more wise, more patient, more loving; and thus we have become better qualified to be instructors of others. We have seen how we may injure the cause of the Lord by a wrong presentation of the truth, and how by proper presentation we may become more successful in doing the Lord's work, in reaching hungry hearts, and more pleasing to our great King, whom we all love and long to serve.

"WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?"

"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."—Matthew 22:39.

These words were quoted by our Lord in his summarizing of the Ten Commandments. Dividing the Ten Commandments into two parts, he showed that one part related to the duty and obligation toward God, and the other to the duty and obligation toward fellowmen, toward the neighbor. The first part calls for all the love of our heart, our being, our mind, our strength, for the Lord and his service; and the second part, which relates to humanity, calls for us to love our neighbor as we love ourselves.

In a special sense the Jews recognized themselves as being God's people. Therefore under the law they recognized each other as neighbors; for they were all the people of the Lord. But they thought that while they should cordially love their neighbors, they should hate their enemies—all the outside nations that God did not recognize. However, the fact that God had in the past commanded them to slay or drive out the surrounding nations did not mean that the Jews should hate them and wish to do them real injury. Our Lord seems to indicate that the Jews had taken a wrong view of matters. He taught them that to love their enemies, and to do good to those who persecuted them, was the better way. He showed them that they should have a broad view, a benevolence that would take in all the world.

To this effect he on one occasion gave them a parable—that of the Good Samaritan. In that parable he pictured a man who was not a Jew ministering to a Jew who had been injured. A Jewish priest had seen the wounded man and had passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite, not so close in relationship to God as the priest, is represented as looking at the man and then also passing on the other side. Then came this stran-

ger, a Samaritan, one not in relationship to God at all. The Samaritan promptly served the injured man—anointed him and bound up his wounds. The man had been assaulted, robbed and maltreated. The Samaritan "set him on his own beast and brought him to an inn and took care of him." He remained over night with the injured man, and when he left in the morning he gave some money to the inn-keeper and said to him, "Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee." (Luke 10:29-35) Jesus declared that in this Samaritan of the parable they had an example of one who was a real neighbor.

This parable is also for our instruction today. If we appreciate the conception of a true neighbor which our Lord gave, and say that we have the same conception, then let us observe this Golden Rule: Whatsoever I would have you do unto me, let me do even so unto you. And if you feel that if you were on the roadside, plundered and injured by highwaymen, you would wish that some one would help you, then do the same to others, if you have opportunity. And so in all things. From this viewpoint the whole world are neighbors, no matter how far apart they are—whether they live on our side of the earth or on the opposite side. This the broad, general view shows our relationship and obligation to all the world, to one the same as another. All are our neighbors. All should be treated in a neighborly way as we have opportunity. There is no exception.

It will not do to say that one should be kind merely to those who have been kind to him, that to such only are we to act the part of a neighbor. In that event, the Samaritan would not have been the neighbor. He might have thought that as no-

body had found him by the wayside and done anything for him, he consequently would not do anything either. The Lord, in this parable, and in his statement of the spirit of the law as related to our fellow-men, was laying down a principle that all should be neighbors and treat each other in a kind, neighborly manner, which is the only proper rule amongst mankind. We are to express our love for our neighbor by being thoughtful and considerate of his welfare and interests, and helpful to him as far as is in our power, other obligations being considered.

When we come to the church, there is a special relationship and bond between its members. We are to love one another as Jesus loved us. This is a new commandment. The Golden Rule is not a new commandment; for it properly belonged to man when God created him, and is designed to be the rule of life. The Jewish law, as it related to the attitude of the

people of Israel toward one another, had for its essence the Golden Rule. But Jesus said to his disciples, "A new commandment I give unto you." He meant this: Those who have become new creatures have a new relationship; they belong to a new family—the family of God.

Our brethren on the spirit plane are nearest to us of any. Whoever is a new creature, and thus a brother to all those who are new creatures, is not merely to observe the Golden Rule, but is to be ready to do toward any and all of the brethren as Jesus did; namely, to lay down his life for them. He is not to say, "I would lay down my life for him, and so I expect him to be willing to lay down his life for me." No! Regardless of his own interests and life, regardless of what others do or do not for him, he is to be willing to spend and be spent for the blessing of the brethren. He is to have sacrificial love, which goes beyond the Golden Rule. Thus are we to be true disciples.

THANKLESS, REBELLIOUS ABSALOM

JULY 4.—2 SAMUEL 18:1-15.

THE STORY OF ABSALOM—HOW DIFFERENT FROM HIS FATHER—HIS WASTED OPPORTUNITIES—HIS CONTEMPTIBLE END AS A TRAITOR AND DISOBEDIENT SON WHO SOUGHT HIS FATHER'S LIFE—THE BOY THE FATHER OF THE MAN—THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS—THE CHILD WHAT THE PARENTS MAKE HIM—EUGENICS NOT SUFFICIENT.

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right."—Ephesians 6:1.

"How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
To have a thankless child!"

Our study today discusses the death of Absalom. It is sufficiently explicit without comment. It will be of value to us, however, to look backward along the life of this young prince and to note some of his failures. In the first place, he was not well-born. His mother, King David's wife, was the daughter of a heathen king nearby. His mother may have been beautiful, probably was; for the Scriptures indicate the Absalom was a beautiful boy, a beautiful young man, having a fine, courteous manner and being a popular idol. He had the disadvantage of being a member of the royal family and not being required to labor with sweat of face.

Absalom is first brought prominently to our attention by his murder of his half-brother Amnon, to avenge his sister's honor. For this he fled to the protection of his grandfather. He was thus still further removed from any good influences associated with his father and with the true religion. After several years' absence, his father, who had never ceased to love him and mourn him, was induced to invite Absalom back to Jerusalem—where for two years more, he declined to receive his son into his presence. All of these influences were unfavorable to the young man, but none of them can excuse his treachery to his father, Israel's king.

ABSALOM'S CONSPIRACY

There were judges throughout the Land of Israel for the deciding of the ordinary causes of discontent; but when their decisions were unsatisfactory, appeal was made to the king as to a superior court. King David was busily engaged in preparing the materials for the Temple, which was not to be built until after his death. This may to some extent have hindered him from his work for the people as a superior judge, so that some of their cases, as in every superior court, were delayed of a hearing—tediously, it seemed to those impatient for desired results.

We are not sure, however, that there was anything lacking on King David's part as respects the administration of justice. We merely know that his crafty son, Absalom, made himself very popular. He was very gracious to the people, very familiar with them, always ready to hear their complaints; and he answered them very cunningly, expressing sorrow for their delay, and saying, Would that I were king! It would be different! Thus by deception, by intrigue, by falsehood, we read, he "stole the hearts of the people" from his father. The people really began to think that if they had such a man for a king, they would be immensely better off. They seemed to have overlooked entirely the fact that God was the King of Israel; and that, as the Bible says, King David merely sat upon the Throne of the Lord.—1 Chron. 29:23.

Absalom was spectacular, a beautiful prince, with long, wavy hair. He rode in his chariot; and before him were fifty swift runners, his heralds. The thoughtless people admired this; and, apparently, at least one wise man was drawn away by the infectious infatuation of this glitter.

Absalom knew of his father's religious sentiments, which apparently he did not at all share. He realized that he would not probably be his father's choice for a successor; and that the time for a new king was not so very far off, as King David was becoming aged. Following Satan's course of ambition and disloyalty to God, Absalom became disloyal to his father. He

recruited an army, proclaimed himself king, and did the matter so quickly and so thoroughly, with the sympathy of so many people whose hearts he had stolen, that King David and his regular army and the loyal ones of his court were obliged to flee for their lives. Our lesson recounts the battle which was fought between the superior forces of Absalom and the smaller forces of King David, who, however, were better trained soldiers. The victory came to King David. Absalom was slain, notwithstanding David's urgent request of his soldiers that they should not kill the young man, his son.

What a contrast we have here between the man after God's own heart and the man whom the people admired—the flashy, the showy, the ambitious, the deceitful, the intriguing, the rebellious, who sought his father's life! The man of God, notwithstanding his weaknesses, which were acknowledged, and repented of, had a heart of loyalty to God, true as the needle to the pole; and he had a sympathetic love for his son which found expression in that notable dirge, "O Absalom, my son, my son, would God I had died for thee!"

A VERY IMPORTANT PRINCIPLE

The human will is wonderful, so that we might almost say that each boy is responsible for his own career. Our expression, a self-made man, is therefore not far wrong.

This, however, does not excuse the parent whose duty it is to see that a proper child is born into the world, reasonably gifted—not merely outwardly beautiful, but conscientious, just, loyal to God and to the principles of righteousness. Nor does it excuse the parent from giving the child proper conceptions of life, proper instruction; for the Scriptures say, "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it."—Proverbs 22:6.

It seems pitiful indeed that, with all the preaching and teaching of centuries, so few parents realize their obligations toward the children they bring into the world. So few fathers realize that they are the protectors and caretakers of their wives and of their off-spring; and that not only is it their duty and privilege to select a noble, conscientious wife to be the mother of the family, but it is also their duty to place her under favorable conditions during the period of gestation, and generally to assist her to keep her mind and her heart pure, loving, noble, loyal to God and to righteous principles, to the intent that their child may be well birthmarked, of noble character—less seriously marked and blemished with sin than would otherwise be the case. Well do the Scriptures declare that the people perish for lack of knowledge.—Hosea 4:6.

True, we have eugenics thrust upon our attention everywhere; but to what purpose? Important as this teaching is in respect to health and proper choice of a life-companion, it sinks into insignificance in comparison to the principle we are noting; namely, that the mind of the mother during the period of gestation is stamping and impressing, favorably or unfavorably, the character of her child. It of course would not be possible for a mother to produce a perfect child; but with her own ideals high and true and unwavering, fixed upon things pure, noble and good, we know beyond question that her child would thus be greatly benefited both physically and intellectually, and also morally. On the other hand, as we have pointed out in the PHOTO-DRAMA OF CREATION, the perfect mother, Eve, could and did mark her son Cain with a jealous, unhappy disposition, which eventuated in his murdering his brother.

SOLOMON, KING OF ISRAEL

JULY 11.—1 KINGS 1:1—2:12.

KING DAVID AGED—A FRESH REVOLT BREWING—SOLOMON CALLED TO THE THRONE OF ISRAEL—HIS ANOINTING AS THE LORD'S CHOICE—THE APPROVAL OF THE MULTITUDE—THE MEANING OF HIS NAME—HIS NATURAL ADVANTAGES AND PREPARATION FOR HIS HONORS.

"Know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind."—1 Chronicles 28:9.

King David was seventy years of age; Absalom, his eldest son, had died in rebellion not long before the present lesson opens. David's next oldest son was Adonijah, whom the death of Absalom had made the heir-apparent to the throne, and who is supposed to have been between thirty and forty years of age at this time. Joab, for a long time the head of David's army, must have been well-advanced in years too, and probably was on the retired list, not merely on account of age, but because he had deeply wounded King David's feelings in disregarding his instructions that Absalom's life should not be taken.

Adonijah thought the time ripe for him to proclaim himself king, and especially as he had succeeded in gaining the friendship of Joab, the long-time military leader, and the friendship, too, of one of the prominent priests. He made a feast, to which were invited, apparently, all of King David's sons except Solomon, who was ostensibly known to be more or less a favorite with his father. The feast was held not far from Jerusalem, and the arrangement was made that in the midst of the feast one of the company should salute Adonijah as king. The others of his company were expected to echo the sentiment; and thus the movement would seemingly be a popular one and not a rebellion. It carried out much as planned thus far.

However, in God's providence, the matter was brought to the notice of King David, who promptly made the arrangement with the new general, Benaiah, with Nathan the Prophet, and with Zadok the priest, to have Solomon immediately placed upon the king's white mule, as a sign that the king had approved him as his successor. Then he was anointed in the name of the Lord; and forthwith the military salute was given, and the people of the whole city of Jerusalem shouted their joy, "Long live King Solomon." Next in turn, by King David's direction, King Solomon was brought to the throne and publicly crowned.

Adonijah, whose plans seemed to be working thoroughly, was astounded, and so were those with him, when they heard the clamor of the people, blowing of horns, etc., and later learned that it meant that Solomon had been crowned and enthroned. Adonijah feared for his life and fled; and his adherents melted away. Later, however, Solomon sent word to his brother Adonijah, assuring him of peace.

Thus beautifully King David's public career ended, not in an eclipse, but at his zenith, in his full maturity of old age, and in his perpetuation upon the throne in the person of his chosen son. To him may well be applied the poet's words: "He sets as sets the morning star,

Which goes not down behind the darkened west.

Nor hides obscured amid the tempests of the sky,
But melts away into the light of heaven."

SOLOMON, SON OF PEACE

Solomon's name has come to signify wisdom, but originally, primarily, it meant peaceful. It surely was a prophecy of his wonderful life, in which was no war.

Solomon was the son of Bathsheba, after she had legally become David's wife. Somehow, not explained, the Lord had revealed to David that Solomon was to be his successor, and David had promised Bathsheba to this effect. Solomon was born at a period when King David's activities as a warrior had very nearly closed and when the great double sin of King David's life and his repentance from it had, we believe, wonderfully moderated and chastened him. His loyalty to God in this serious matter, his earnest prayer for forgiveness and his realization of peace from God, apparently had made a new man of King David. Even though before this he had been loyal to God, he apparently was now still more devoted. The peace which he craved, and which was a mark of divine forgiveness, may have had something to do with the gentle and thoughtful character of King Solomon, and something also perhaps to do with his name. It may have been given him as signifying that his birth marked peace with God on the part of his parents.

In any event, in Solomon we perceive a different character from that manifested by any of his brethren whose histories are recorded. He partook of his father David's religious disposition more than the others. He was thus highly favored, and really probably more gifted. Truly it is time for us to estimate to what extent others and ourselves are handicapped or blessed by dispositions and character-traits which we inherit.

Another thing favorable to Solomon would appear to have been the fact that his mother was not of a heathen family, but an Israelite, and therefore more in sympathy with the divine arrangement, law, worship, etc., than others of David's wives.

Additionally, the record seems to show that King David, having in mind a successor to his throne, and perhaps by that time having realized that he had not done his full duty by his other children in allowing them to grow up under the adverse influences of the court, rectified the matter in the case of Solomon while he was still young, leaving him partly in his mother's care, and appointing him as the ward and pupil of the Prophet Nathan. This excellent start in life doubtless had much to do with Solomon's career, which we shall examine in our next Study.

DIFFERENT PHASES OF THE WORD TEMPTATION

"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted of evil, neither tempteth he any man. But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust [desire] and enticed."—James 1:13, 14.

Many people—and particularly those of oriental countries—have within them a fatalistic tendency; as, for instance, the Mohammedans would be inclined to say respecting any calamity that came upon them, "It is of God," and simply submit themselves and make no further effort. These people would be inclined to have a similar attitude in respect to sin, and to say, "It is God's will that I should do wrong; and I am not, therefore, blameworthy. If his will is that I should sin, I will sin. If his will is that I should bear the marks of sin, I will bear the marks of sin." This is a grave error. God tempts no man to sin.

It is, of course, quite proper that we should recognize God's hand in his dealings with us and should be very submissive. But the Apostle points out that temptations are not of God, but of one's self. Many Christians are inclined to take the opposite standpoint of the Orientals and say, "There are no temptations from God; hence all our temptations are from the adversary."

But the Apostle James points out that our temptations are the result of our own natural desires and weaknesses. These are stimulated from without—often from our companions and associates in life. All about us there are examples and influences toward evil, in various forms—enticements. These might be charged back primarily to Satan; for all sin entered into the world by him. Satan had to do with the beguilement of our first parents, and so had to do with the introduction of sin. And Satan and his demon hosts now operate, as far as possible, in conjunction with our weaknesses. But this does not clear us of personal responsibility; for none of these have power to coerce our wills. Our responsibility may vary ac-

cording to the natural strength or weakness of our character. Therefore we are to "judge nothing before the time." It is a matter that God alone can fully judge—as to how much one can overcome.

God's people are to realize, then, that no temptation is of God; and, resisting temptation, they will be on God's side. They are to be overcomers of temptation, resisters of temptation, whether from within, or from the adversary, or from the weaknesses of others, which might lead them into sin, into things contrary to God's will.

The Apostle says that God tempteth no man. If we should think of God as tempting us to sin, it would be a horrible thought; for by reason of his power, none could resist what he brought to bear upon us, and we would surely be overcome. But when we know that our temptations are not from God, we know that he will help us and will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able to bear; but that he will, with every temptation, provide a way of escape. He will protect us according to his promise, as we need protection and assistance. With this thought in our minds, we can be strong.

HOW GOD TEMPTED ABRAHAM

When we look back into the Old Testament, we read that "God did tempt Abraham," saying, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, . . . and offer him for a burnt offering." The question arises, How shall we reconcile this statement, "God did tempt Abraham," with the statement of the Apostle that God "tempteth no man"? The reply is that St. James in our text is limiting the word temptation to temptations to evil. God tempts us to do good. He sets before us the "exceeding great and precious promises," the wonderful

promises he has made to us. They act as magnets drawing us, as we might say. In this sense of the word we are tempted of God. But God does not tempt us to do evil, to commit sin. God tempted Abraham, tested him, not with a view to do him harm, but with a view to doing him good; and because Abraham stood the test God could accord to him the greater blessings. And he did so! He gave him great blessings in this life, as well as a promise of greater blessings to be his in the life to come, in the resurrection.

The test for Abraham was that he should offer in sacrifice his son Isaac, in whom centered all the promises. By his prompt obedience Abraham gave proof of his loyalty. He accounted that God was able even to raise his son from the dead, that the promises might be fulfilled. (Hebrews 11:18, 19) When his loyalty had been tested to the limit, when the knife was raised to slay his son, the Lord through the angel stayed his hand and provided him with a ram for a sacrifice.

WHY GOD CANNOT BE TEMPTED TO EVIL

The further statement of our text is that God cannot himself be tempted by evil. We inquire how this is. We remember that our Lord Jesus was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners"; but that he "was in all points tempted like as we [his disciples] are, yet without sin." (Hebrews 7:26; 4:15) If Jesus was thus holy and fully in accord with the Father, and the Father cannot be tempted, how could Jesus be tempted? We answer, Our Lord was perfect in the flesh, perfect as a human being. But humanity has its limitations of knowledge and of endurance. The human brain and the human body are not adapted to know everything or to bear everything. This is one reason why God does not tell us everything. We must walk by faith. The man who is begotten of the holy Spirit, and who is able to understand many of the deep things of God, cannot appreciate all of the eternal things; for they are beyond his grasp.

We might take, for illustration, a dog, a very wise dog, capable of carrying out our directions to a considerable extent. Yet, if we should try to talk to a dog about trigonometry, or higher mathematics in any form, or about astronomy, he would be—we could not say bewildered, but—unable to understand at all. And so between humanity and God there is a wide gulf. It is not possible for humanity to grasp all the parts, all the details, of the divine plan. Even with the begetting of the holy Spirit we see things "through a glass darkly," and not face to face, the Apostle tells us. We shall, when

perfected on the divine plane, behold things fully, completely; we shall see from God's standpoint.

OUR LORD'S TEMPTATION

So our Lord Jesus, naturally perfect as a man, at baptism was begotten of the holy Spirit and became a new creature; but that new creature lived in and operated through the human body; and so long as he was in the flesh, Jesus was subject to limitations. He was also surrounded by imperfect beings, their desires, their views, their imperfections. In order to sacrifice the earthly interests, then, he would need much faith. Therefore, he had severe trials of obedience to God, of faith in God. He was not tempted because of sin or weakness; for he had neither sin nor weakness. He was not tempted in the same respects as a natural man would be; for he was not like a natural man—he was spirit-begotten. He was tempted in respect to his obedience to God, in respect to trust in the Father's providential care. And we are tempted in like manner, for our development, that we may faithfully lay down our lives, may gladly give up the things that are seen, that we may attain to the things not seen.

In respect to strength and knowledge, our Lord as a man was evidently different from the Father. The Father could always know at once the good from the evil, and is not weak in any sense of the word—to be tempted by anything—is strong to carry out his own will, having no inclination whatever to sin, but a repugnance to it. Infinite strength dwells in God. Because our Lord Jesus assumed the same attitude toward sin, we read of him: "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." (Psalm 45:7; Hebrews 1:9) All of the brethren of the Lord Jesus must take the same stand everywhere regarding sin, and especially sin in ourselves, and the tendency toward sin in us. A continual battle is going on in the Lord's disciples as they endeavor to follow his example.

So then, God tempts no man, neither is he tempted of any, to sin. He cannot be tempted of evil. Evil can have no influence with him. Our Lord Jesus is now in that condition where he cannot be tempted. He is of the divine nature, and perfect in power. And so when we shall have reached this same condition by the resurrection "change," we shall likewise not be subject to evil or temptation. We shall have perfect power, and shall be in full accord with that which is right, that which is of God.

THE FATHER'S WISE COUNSEL

"My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways."—Proverbs 23:26.

Solomon, the wise man, had many wives; we may therefore reasonably suppose that he had sons. Yet to suppose that he addressed these words to one of his sons or to each of them in succession would not, in our judgment, seem reasonable; for we can scarcely think that Solomon would wish to call special attention to his own ways—"Let thine eyes behold my ways." He was not always a good pattern for a son to follow. It seems to us that we must look further for the meaning. We remember that Solomon was early granted special wisdom from the Lord, because of his earnest request in that direction just after he had become king. We might understand that he was personating wisdom, that wisdom was saying, "My son [whoever desires to be a son of Wisdom], give me thine heart." Since Wisdom would be only another name for the Creator, we might understand that God is giving an invitation to his sons to give their hearts to him and observe his ways. This, at all events, seems to be the good lesson that we may gain from this Scripture.

HOW SONSHIP IS LOST OR MAINTAINED

We see that God, who was the Father of our race, gave us our being, made us perfect, at first, in our father Adam. He also gave perfect life and being to the angels, and he wished that all these give their hearts to him. They were his sons from the time they were created. Lucifer was a son of God. Adam was a son of God. The proper course for a son of God would be to turn himself over entirely to do the will of his Father. But in the case of Lucifer, we find that instead of turning his heart over to the Father, he was self-seeking and attempted to do his own will; and he miserably failed. In the case of some of the angels who kept not their first estate, though they were sons of God they did not give their hearts to the Lord; and they miserably failed. In sinning all these lost their sonship. Only by continued loyalty and obedience can sonship be maintained.

God has arranged that humanity may come back to him. Likewise we understand that any of the fallen angels who re-

pent may in the great judgment day come back into fellowship with God. His message would in due time be, to as many as desire to return to him, "If you would be my son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways."

Not until since the time of the first advent of our Lord Jesus, had this opportunity of becoming sons of God been given to any of his fallen creatures, and then only to a certain class of the fallen race of Adam. These were called to be sons on the divine plane of being, an offer never before made by Jehovah to any of mankind. Our Lord Jesus as a Son had wholly given his heart to God. And although when he came to earth this course of loyalty and obedience led by the way of tribulation, it led to glory, honor and immortality. Those who have since then sought to become sons of God, hear the message that the Father will not receive any except those who come through his Son Jesus as their Redeemer, and then make full consecration of themselves to do God's will.

We see that any who have attempted to be people of God and have stopped short of meeting these terms have made a serious mistake, and have not attained that which they wished to attain. We are to hold back nothing. We must yield full allegiance to the arrangements which God has made for our salvation. Our hearts must be brought into this attitude of full consecration, and held there. To those who in loyalty of heart meet all these reasonable requirements of the Lord he says, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."—Rev. 2:10.

GOD'S WAYS AS SHOWN IN NATURE

Those who give their hearts to the Lord are exhorted further to observe his ways. What does this mean? Are we to attempt to do all that we see God do? It is proper for the Lord to execute judgment and to lay penalties upon those who are out of the way, who need chastisement. Would it be proper for us to judge or condemn in this way? No. It is not ours to condemn, to pass sentence, on any. We may condemn sin, and may disapprove of what appears to be sin

in act or word, and may kindly point out what we believe are good reasons for thinking it is sin. We may rebuke in love. But we are very liable to mistakes in such matters; and to condemn a person as unfit for the Lord's family, etc., is not our province. So we are not to follow the Lord's ways in this respect. But we see in the Lord's ways illustrations of his character—his wisdom, his justice, his love, his power. We note these qualities of his character by observing his ways; and they call forth our admiration and reverence. All God's ways will be ours some time, but not yet; for we are not like him, perfect, and not yet in a position of responsibility.

The world does not, perhaps, realize that they are copying the Lord's ways in very much that they are doing in this wonderful day—making force-pumps, engines, dealing with electricity, etc. Very few realize that they are attempting to follow God's ways. For instance, in the human body there is a wonderful mechanism by which the blood is pumped through the arteries and veins and by which the blood is checked. This mechanism is only copied in the best engines in the world. If men had only known how to copy from the nerves of the body, they would have known long ago how to run trunklines by electricity, etc. Any one who will observe God's ways will be much wiser than those who fail to do so. But the world knows not God. The people of God, however, even though they may not be inventors, may gain great blessings by observing God's ways in nature.

Note further the wonderful and superior wisdom manifested in the human body—a machine run with a very small amount of supply, which it takes at intervals and by which it is enabled to keep up the energies of life and its strength. And consider the horse. The amount of oats and hay that the horse will eat is comparatively small, yet the amount of energy and strength this will produce is wonderful. But with the human being there goes with this strength and activity an intelligence, a power to think and reason, which is very wonderful, and the more we examine it the more wonderful we find it.

GOD'S WAYS AS SEEN IN HIS WORD

When we become sons of God and begin to observe his ways, we begin to get faith, knowledge, the spirit of obedience, more devotion to God. All who are sons of God will study his ways. We especially learn of his ways from the study of his Word. This does not mean merely reading or memorizing the Bible. There are people who can quote whole chapters or books of the Bible, and yet do not understand what they read. In thinking that in the reading of so many chapters we are doing a meritorious thing we are mistaken. It is not the mere reading of the Bible that is helpful to the Lord's people, but with it the renewing and strengthening power working in us to will and to do his good pleasure.

THE CLASS TO BE HONORED BY THE LORD

"Them that honor Me, I will honor."—1 Samuel 2:30.

The words of our text are found in conjunction with the story of Eli and his family. Eli was God's representative in a very special sense—a priest and a judge of Israel. Eli's sons were also priests; yet they seem to have been egregiously wrong in their course of conduct, living in licentiousness, favoring injustice, taking advantage of their own position and that of their father to do violence to the principles of righteousness. Eli was reproved of the Lord because he did not maintain proper control over his sons and prevent their doing the things that were unjust, unrighteous, contrary to God's will and a disgrace both to his cause and to their priestly profession. These words of reproof were uttered to Eli, through the boy Samuel, as an indication of what was God's mind and to show him why the honor that had been given to him and his family would be taken away. The Lord's view of the matter is shown in the words of our text, "Them that honor me, I will honor."

RESISTING THE PROUD, GIVING GRACE TO THE HUMBLE

We believe that this is a principle that holds good always. Now, today, those who are seeking to honor God He will be sure to honor. Those who are seeking merely self-honor may obtain some of that honor, may glorify themselves to a certain extent; but it will not be the Lord that will glorify them. In the service of his cause, his truth, they will not be honored by him. "The Lord resisteth the proud, and giveth grace [favor] to the humble." The way to honor God is to seek to know his will and to do it from sincere hearts, to have God first in all our affairs, to show forth his praises. We are to never mind ourselves, our own honor. We are to serve in accordance with the principles which the Lord is promoting. To seek the glory of God is the proper course for us who are his children and whom he has blessed.

It might seem as if our text is in conflict in some sense with the words of our Lord, "Love your enemies." When we come to analyze the text carefully, we perceive that although the Lord says that he will honor them that honor him, and

declares, "They that seek me early shall find me," yet he does not say that he will do harm to those who do not love him and honor him. On the contrary, the Lord's provision is so comprehensive as to include "all the families of the earth." God thus loves those who are his enemies—loves them to the extent of providing a sacrifice for them and a reconciliation with himself. But he does not honor his enemies.

HATING THE SIN, LOVING THE SINNER

We may well believe that God loves those especially who seek to do his will. We are commanded to love our enemies, but this does not mean that we are to love our enemies in the same way that we love the members of the body of Christ. The difference is that we would love our enemies with a sympathetic love, while we would love our brethren in Christ with a holy love, a love of kinship, of comradeship. Sin is not lovely to God; or to any one else who is in relationship with God and is possessed of his Spirit. Sin is a deformity, an enormity, displeasing to the mind, the Spirit, of God. But God has a sympathetic love for the sinner; and he wishes us to have the same, to be ready to do good to those who would do us injury, who would treat us unkindly, who would persecute us. We are thus to be imitators of God.

God has been pleased to choose certain ones of the human family to be his ambassadors. Instead of speaking to humanity directly, the Lord speaks through these representatives, his children. These are the ones he will be pleased to honor, to make his representatives—these who seek to do his will, who are loyal to his word. Would God choose ambassadors who would not properly represent him? Surely not! We, his children, can enter into the spirit of the Lord's testimony here; and it is for us, therefore, to seek to honor him by showing forth his praises to others, both by proclaiming the pure message of truth and by our exemplary lives, that we may have his blessings now and may have the great honor that he has promised his faithful in the kingdom, so near at hand.

BEREAN BIBLE STUDY CLASSES

From various quarters we learn that the Berean Bible Study classes are increasing in number. This is very gratifying, of course, but at the same time it is leading into a certain difficulty. Where classes exceed twenty or so in number, they become unwieldy and proportionately less of a blessing and an aid. No matter how skillful the leader, it is impossible to do justice to larger classes within reasonable hours. We offer a suggestion: namely, that the entire class have a special time or times for meeting on Sundays when a part of the service might be in the nature of a short address, or several of them, from different brethren manifesting ability along that line. Then, during the week, have classes in homes in various parts of the city or town under different brethren manifesting ability as class leaders. These new classes, ranging from ten to fifteen,

will have the opportunity of growing somewhat and then, later, develop into additional classes. Thus the witness of the truth will reach larger numbers, and various districts will be served, each and all having opportunity of participating at every meeting.

This same rule, we believe, will be found advantageous in respect to the Wednesday evening prayer, praise and testimony meeting. Let us never forget the importance of furnishing an opportunity for each consecrated brother and sister to participate in the class studies and in the testimonies. "If thou believe in thine heart and confess with thy mouth" is the Lord's suggestion of proper faithfulness. It is those who are thus faithful who usually reap the greatest blessing.

THE SIN OF SELF-SUFFICIENCY

"Everyone that is proud of heart is an abomination to the Lord."—Proverbs 16:5.

Pride would seem to be an inordinate and excessive amount of self-esteem or self-conceit. Everyone should have a reasonable amount of self-appreciation, to the extent that he would be able to know what powers he really has, so that he will not be negligent in the use of these. The feeling that would lead one to think he has no ability when he had ability would be an injurious kind of humility, an excessive humility. There are indeed differences of talents—some having a larger number and more valuable talents than others. These are to be esteemed and appreciated, but they are not to be a matter of pride.

Some use the word pride incorrectly. They say, "I am proud of my family," when they mean, "I rejoice in my family," or "I am very pleased with my family—I am glad that my family is what it is." To have an inordinate prejudice that would appreciate everything done by one's family or one's friends and depreciate everything done by the family or the friends of another would be wrong. There is no excuse for pride—and especially none for self-conceit. It is generally due to ignorance; although, of course, when due to ignorance, it is the more excusable.

The pride mentioned in our text is not due to ignorance. It is too great an appreciation of self. All such pride, the Lord tells us, is an abomination in his sight. This is not merely that God does not like it, but that there must be a reason why he abhors it. No creature has any real cause for pride. As the Apostle asks, "What have we that we have not received from the Lord?" We have absolutely nothing. If we had ten talents instead of one, our ability would be nothing to be proud of; we did not produce these talents. On the contrary, they were given to us. But to display the talents or to boast about them would show that we thought they were our own, and that we were proud because of our possession of them.

No man has a right to be proud because of receiving something from another. To that extent he is a debtor, a recipient. In the case of humanity, we are all recipients of the Father's favor. All of the blessings of life—both temporal and spiritual—are of divine provision for us. And if we have many of these blessings, there is still no occasion or pride. Pride implies self-sufficiency.

The Scriptures represent Satan as saying that he would like to have an opportunity of displaying his wisdom, his ability. He was confident that he could do something. He

did not realize that everything that he had received came from God, and that the one blessed could not rise higher than the Fountain of Blessing. He did not realize that his wisdom and powers were inferior to those of God. Hence, Satan became a transgressor.

We may be sure that if the Lord's people cultivate any heart pride, they have thus a sign that they are not right in the sight of God. Even before they become the Lord's people, he has assured them that if they are of a proud heart he will not receive such into his family, will not beget them of the holy Spirit. Humility is the essential of all who would be of the Lord's family. "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time."—1 Peter 5:6; Matthew 23:12.

PRIDE LEADING TO DESTRUCTION

Yet there is a spirit of pride in the world. Some are proud of their ancestors; others are proud of their talents, etc. It would not be good that God should bless those who have any other than a grateful feeling of being a recipient of divine blessing. In fact, the time and trouble that is just upon us is the result of pride. All people seem to be proud. We may not be able to judge of the heart, but we do know of their attitude—their feeling of self-sufficiency. Each nation feels that theirs is the greatest talent; theirs are the finest guns, theirs are best everything; and it is this feeling of self-sufficiency that led the nations into the present conflict. Some of them express themselves as trusting that the Lord is on their side. They think that the Lord has always favored them—they are so good and so great that God could not help giving them the victory; and under these delusions they have gotten into this great war.

In respect to this great war and all the troubles that will ensue the Scriptures say, "The proud, yea, all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, said the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." (Malachi 4:1) Pride leads into all sorts of mischief. Before the Millennium is over, God will see to it that there will not be a root of pride in the whole earth. So at the end of the Millennium there will be no pride amongst the inhabitants of the earth, but there will be an appreciation of God and of what he has done for mankind. There will be a spirit of thankfulness, gratitude, just as we believe it is in heaven.

INTERESTING LETTERS

SERIOUS FAULTS NEEDING CORRECTION

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:—

For quite a while I have been desirous of writing to you of some matters which happen in some classes, yet I have not had the courage to do so for fear I might be in error. The matter, however, has come to my attention so often, and it seems to be so injurious to the Lord's cause, that I am impelled to drop a few lines, asking your pardon for whatever may seem to you as bad judgment on my part.

Some good brethren are elected as elders; they are zealous to do the Lord's will. Berean meetings are tendered them and accepted. Some of these dear brethren seem to get the thought that it is important to "feed" outsiders, but not so important to "feed the flock of God." So often when one comes to a Berean meeting, the leader will say as he opens the meeting, "Dear friends, I am sorry to say that I have not looked over the lesson," or, "I was so busy doing thus and so that I do not know where the lesson begins." Often I have heard this remark by leaders: "The class is pretty well posted on these things, and it does not make much difference whether I know much about it or not."

This thought seems to make them careless and indifferent. It seems to be so distressing to have a good-sized class and then hear the leader make such remarks of ignorance. What is the result? The meeting opens; a question is asked. Brother A. gives his view, then Brother B., then Brother C., then Sister D., etc. The views apparently conflict. A brother who thinks he knows all about it, says, "That is all wrong; it is thus and so"; then some more discussion follows; then the same brother jumps up and says, "That is not right." The leader is embarrassed, and not having studied his lesson dares not say a word, and finally the question is passed by without any definite decision.

I notice that in some meetings some of the dear friends who are backward go home without opening their mouths, because they are not encouraged. Some who are well up are called upon to do the talking, and sometimes the class has to sit and listen to a little debate between three or four.

Another matter: While it has been mentioned so many times in THE WATCH TOWER nevertheless some leaders, as well as the class, when they begin the lesson, have the question book in one hand and the STUDIES in the other. Since much reading is done, discussion is shut out, with the occasional remark, "It is so plain in the STUDIES that discussion is hardly necessary."

If these thoughts I have brought to your attention are out of the way, Brother Russell, kindly throw the letter in your waste basket. Nevertheless, until then, it shall be my earnest prayer to the Lord that something may drop from your guided pen which may correct these conditions and help the dear brother elders to realize their responsibility in this branch of the Lord's service—feeding of the flock.

Your Brother in the one Hope,

[If brethren chosen to be elders are found incapable, it is the duty of the class to elect others—perhaps some of less ability, who, by study, will be more helpful. A good leader is not the one who talks too much, but the one who, by coaching the diffident, will help them to correct expression; or who, if the expressions are in his judgment incorrect, will very kindly suggest the proper thought without particularly calling attention to the mistaken views that have been presented—backing up his own expression with Scripture citations and citations from the "STUDIES."]

A JOYFUL EXPERIENCE

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:—

An experience which we recently had so filled our hearts with joy, it seems we must extend the blessing to you:

A sister requested me to go to the depot with her to distribute literature to passengers awaiting trains. I replied "Yes," but no sooner had the answer left my lips than various suggestions of the opposite spirit came to me. As we neared the station I felt "faint," but the thought of our prayer meeting next, "I keep my body under," came to me and I was glad of an opportunity to overcome. Everyone received the papers with a smile or a "Thank you," which encouraged me.