

ST. PETER SIFTED LIKE WHEAT

NOVEMBER 15.—Mark 14:27-31, 53, 54, 66-72.

“Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.”—1 Corinthians 10:12.

St. Peter was admittedly a man of strong character, very courageous, but rather too impetuous. He is one of the two disciples of whom it is written that “The people perceived that they were ignorant and unlearned men.” (Acts 4:13) In some respects, therefore, St. Peter may be said to have had less advantage than Judas. Both had equal opportunities in the school of Christ: yet how different the results with the two men! The one went down into the second death despised; the other, after ups and downs of trial and discipline, passed to a reward of glory, honor and immortality with his Master, ranking amongst the highest of the apostles.

Our lesson for today deals with the special “sifting” which came to St. Peter at the time of our Lord’s death, and of which he was forewarned by Jesus, saying, “Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.” St. Peter’s courage, manifested on so many occasions, was really his weak point. Notwithstanding all that Jesus had said to forewarn him of the sifting experiences that were just before him, St. Peter realized no dread, no fear. Hence he did little watching and praying in comparison with what he should have done, and self-confidence led to his undoing for a time.

It was the same St. Peter who, when told that he would deny our Lord before the time for the cock to crow the next morning, declared that it surely was a mistake, for he was ready to die with his Master. It was the same St. Peter who drew his sword and cut off the ear of the high priest’s servant, afterward healed by Jesus. It was the same impulsive St. Peter who was the first to acknowledge the Messiahship of Jesus.

Jesus had inquired what people were saying about him—who they said he was—and had finally asked, “Whom say ye that I am?” Then St. Peter answered, “Thou art the Messiah, the Son of the Living God.” Jesus replied that this answer indicated that St. Peter was in a blessed condition of relationship with God, or otherwise he would not have had the knowledge to make this statement. He said, “Flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.” Who could think that this same noble character would be so overwhelmed with fear that he would deny his Master, even with curses!

One thing which impresses itself quickly and forcibly upon our minds is the thought that the writers of the New Testament were certainly very different from the majority of writers in that they told the absolute truth without modification or varnish. Surely no other book is like the Bible in this respect. The founders of great religious world-systems and of various sectarian systems have manifested a very different spirit. Their heroes are all great, noble, educated, heroic. Never would they think of pointing out such weaknesses as those manifested by St. Peter on the night in which our Lord was betrayed, when he denied his Master.

Surely this gives us greater confidence in the Bible—in its honesty, in its truthfulness. We can rely upon the fact that the men who thus freely tell of their failings, and who speak of their lack of learning, must have been men of great courage, great sincerity, great love for the truth. Surely their testimony is worthy of all acceptance.

ST. PETER’S TRIAL UNEXPECTED

Temptations will come in an insidious form. We cannot imagine that at the time when he cut off the ear of the high priest’s servant St. Peter had any sympathy with the thought of denying our Lord. But circumstances and conditions

changed. The Master was taken a prisoner. Whatever power he had previously exercised whereby he walked away from his enemies, and they could not take him because his “hour had not yet come,” that power he evidently was not exercising now—his hour had come. To see his Master apparently without friends in heaven, delivered over to his enemies and led from one tribunal to the other, had a paralyzing effect upon St. Peter.

St. John had such an acquaintance with some one connected with the palace that he was permitted to enter the court and bring St. Peter with him; but they had separated. St. Peter was in the courtyard. It was cold, and he approached an open brazier to warm himself. In the light of the court, surrounded by the gossiping servants of the palace, he was keenly scrutinized by one of the maids, who said, “Thou art also a disciple of the Nazarene.”

Stunned by the identification and wondering to what it might lead, St. Peter promptly denied that he had any knowledge of Jesus. Then he moved away to another part of the court, where the shadows were deeper and the people fewer. But again he was recognized as a Galilean and accused of being one of Jesus’ disciples. Again he denied the charge. The third time he was approached with the same charge that he was one of Jesus’ disciples and a Galilean, and that his speech betrayed him. Again, with cursing, he denied that he knew his Master.

Terrible! we say. And surely St. Peter felt afterward that it was terrible; for just at that time, the early morning, came the beginning of cock-crowing, and he remembered the Master’s words that Satan had desired to sift him as wheat, and that before the cock crew he would have denied his Master three times. The whole matter came upon him with crushing force; and, wrapping his cloak about his head, he hastened away into the darkness, weeping bitterly; for just about the time that the cock crew, Jesus was led forth not far from him, and as he looked at Jesus, the Master lifted up his eyes and looked at St. Peter. It was a sympathetic glance, not an angered one; but it went straight to the heart.

St. Peter’s crime was nothing like that of Judas: he had merely sought to protect himself. He had not sought to injure or even to risk the injury of his Master. The thoroughness of St. Peter’s repentance is abundantly testified by his subsequent loyalty even unto death. Tradition has it that he was condemned to be crucified; and that, remembering how once he had denied his Master, he felt that it would be too great an honor for him to share exactly the same death as his Lord; and that, at his own request, he was crucified head downward.

THE LESSON TO ALL CHRISTIANS

Our Golden Text voices to all Christians the lesson of St. Peter’s experiences—“Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.” When we are weak in our own estimation and, full of faith, cling tenaciously to the Arm of the Lord, then we are really strong in the might which God supplies through his eternal Son. Another lesson is that however different the experiences of God’s people, all who fall into line for the great promotion to the first resurrection must expect to endure severe siftings, provings—of their love for the Lord, the truth, the brethren, and their loyalty to all these.

Let us never forget that siftings are permitted, not because the Lord has no interest in us, but because only those who can stand siftings, trials and tests, are fit for places in the kingdom.

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MAKING READY FOR THE REIGN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

“The nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldst destroy them that destroy the earth.”—Revelation 11:18.

It may be that many of the Lord’s people were expecting more than they should have looked for to occur with the opening of the Jewish year 1915, which began with September 21. The human mind seems to have a natural tendency, and one with which we should have sympathy, to expect matters to culminate more rapidly, fulfillments to come more suddenly, than they ever do come. For instance, the Scriptures tell us that about the time of the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet, certain great events, enumerated in our text, will begin to take place. Many Christian people, looking at the statement, expect all this to be fulfilled in a few minutes, or a few hours,

or at most a few weeks. But as we come to understand the Scriptures, we perceive that it covers the thousand years of Christ’s reign.

“The nations were angry, thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged.” The church are the first to receive their judgment, the decision in their case; for the world God has appointed a thousand-year day. (Acts 17:31; 2 Peter 3:8) “And that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets [the ancient worthies] and to the saints [all the holy ones], and them that fear thy name, small and great.” All this latter class—the world of mankind—will

be judged, will have the decision passed upon them, according to the way in which they will conduct themselves under the Millennial conditions. And thou shalt "destroy them that corrupt the earth." If this verse contains so much that a thousand years will be required for its fulfilment, the same may be true of other Scriptures.

Another Scripture (Daniel 12:1), describing the period of transition from Gentile supremacy to Messiah's kingdom, declares, "There shall be a time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation." Our Lord discussed this statement in his great prophecy, and added, "No, nor ever shall be." (Matthew 24:21) After speaking about the tribulation that should come upon the Jews in the close of their age, the Master said, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." (Luke 21:24) We think it reasonable for us to hold that if there are Gentile times to be fulfilled, they must have been foretold; and that if they have been foretold, then they were foreordained, or planned of God, who knew beforehand how long those Gentile times would be and when they would be fulfilled.

Our Lord's words, then, seemed to suggest to us the propriety of searching to see what we might discover concerning the times, or years, of the Gentiles. Looking through our Bibles and our histories, we found that there was a particular date when God took away the kingdom from his typical people, Israel; and that at that time he gave over the dominion of the world with more or less of a lease of power to the Gentiles. We also found that, as far as we can see from the Bible, this date when the kingdom was taken from the last king of David's line, King Zedekiah, was the year 606 B. C. (We would not say that it was not 605 or 607, but that as nearly as we can tell it was the year 606 B. C.) Then we reasoned that if 606 B. C. was the time when God took away the typical kingdom, no doubt he had at that time the purpose of giving some lease of power to the Gentile nations; and we looked to see what history and the Bible had to say upon the subject.

THE IMAGE OF GENTILE SUPREMACY

Merely repeating what we have studied in the series of books called *STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES*, only putting the information in another form, we found that when God took away the kingdom from King Zedekiah, He gave the dominion to the Gentiles, the Emperor Nebuchadnezzar being the first of these world-rulers. We learned, in the Scriptures, that God gave Nebuchadnezzar a dream. By morning the king had forgotten the dream, but it was afterwards explained to him by the Prophet Daniel. In his dream Nebuchadnezzar saw a great image, the head of which was made of gold, the breast and the arms of silver, the belly and the thighs of brass, the legs of iron, and the feet of iron smeared with miry clay.

The Prophet Daniel explained that this great image, which stood before Nebuchadnezzar, represented all the Gentile kingdoms. Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom, was represented by the head of gold; next came the Medo-Persian, represented by the breast and the arms of silver; then Greece, represented by the belly and thighs of brass; then came Rome, represented by the legs of iron; next came the so-called Holy Roman Empire, represented by the feet smeared with miry clay; and last, the present government of Europe, represented by the ten toes, also of iron smeared with miry clay.

According to this vision given to the Emperor Nebuchadnezzar and interpreted by the Prophet Daniel, God designed that picture, image, to represent all the Gentile governments that would ever have sway over all the earth.

When we had this matter clear, then we said, The period of time during which these universal empires will have controlled the world must be the times of the Gentile. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, God has mentioned the Gentile times (Luke 21:24), and now in the Old Testament we find out how many times there are—how many years; for in Scriptural usage a time means a year.

As we studied the subject still further, we found that God had told the Israelites that they would come under his disfavor for seven times. (Leviticus 26:14-28) These could not be literal years; for the Israelites passed through many tribulations as long or longer than seven years. The question then was, What kind of years were these times to be? We concluded that if they were not literal years, they must be symbolic. Since a literal year, Jewish reckoning, contains 360 days, and since in prophecy a day represents a year of actual time (Ezek. 4:6), each symbolic "time" would be 360 years. So then, this period of seven times must mean 7 x 360 years, or 2520 years.

Thus we found that this was to be the period of time during which Israel was to be overturned (Ezekiel 21:25-27)—to have their kingdom and their government subject to the

Gentiles. Meantime, while setting aside his own typical kingdom, God said to the Gentiles, I will not be ready to set up my kingdom for some time. In the interim you may have the opportunity to demonstrate what you can do for the world. Institute the best government that you can. Do your very best to rule the world justly and wisely.

EARTH'S GREAT UNIVERSAL EMPIRES

Full of confidence that they would rule the world in the best possible way, the Babylonians essayed to do so, but soon reached a sad climax. There followed a general program by which the rights of the people were disregarded, the wealthy getting everything and the poor practically nothing. Next came into power the Medes and Persians, who also started out very well, with just designs and every endeavor to do right. We recall that Cyrus, the first Medo-Persian Emperor, set free the Jews and gave them permission to return to Jerusalem; and that he also sent back the holy vessels of the Temple, which were very valuable, but which he would not retain because they belonged to God. Cyrus attempted to maintain a just and righteous government; and yet before long, the Medo-Persian Empire failed to bring satisfaction to the people or to prove to be a great blessing to the world.

Then came the turn of Greece. Alexander the Great, before he was twenty-one years of age, had conquered the world. For quite awhile Greece ruled the world. Grecian civilization and various systems of Grecian philosophy went out worldwide. Greek theories on all kinds of subjects have more or less permeated all the great countries of earth; even in our day the influence which went out from Greece is felt in every form of religion the world over, the religion of Christendom being itself a mixture of Grecian mythology and Christianity along with the teachings of the Mosaic law and the Jewish prophets. But Greece had her day, and had to bid farewell to the sceptre of power.

Next came the Roman Empire, with its various forms of government, each of which was tried with the endeavor to rule the world wisely and justly. The result of all this was the centralization of power to a greater or less degree, the wealth regathered into the hands of a few, and the masses of the people neither blessed nor satisfied. Then the Roman system began to fall.

Ry and by came in that mixture of Christianity and Roman civil power which was represented in the iron feet of the image, which were smeared with miry clay; the gloss of Christianity covering the civil power as the clay covered the feet of the image. The gloss did not make the nations really Christian, but has merely caused these kingdoms and governments to look upon themselves as though they were Christian; and this is what they call themselves—Christian Germany, Christian Great Britain, Christian France, Christian Russia, Christian Italy, and Christian Austria-Hungary.

A COUNTERFEIT OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

Miry clay looks very much like stone; and God used a stone to symbolize his kingdom in the same symbolic picture that he used the miry clay smeared over the iron feet to represent nominal Christians. Christ's kingdom has not yet been established; but it will be built on the wreck of these present institutions, which outwardly resemble Christ's kingdom, calling themselves Christian nations on all their coins and declaring that God is reigning in these kingdoms. Collectively they call themselves Christendom, which means Christ's kingdom; and they were led to do this through the teachings of the church during the dark ages—not the true church, but people who deludedly thought that they were the church of Christ and who resected the real church.

We include as sectarian churches all that are not the real church. There are many spurious churches; all cannot be right. The question is, Which is the right one? None will acknowledge the others to be the right one, all claiming to be right. Not one of them is the right one, as we have concluded from the Bible description of the church of Christ. God recognizes only the one composed of those who are consecrated to him—found in the Greek, the English, the German, the Swedish churches, amongst the Baptists, the Methodists, the Lutherans, the Presbyterians and amongst people who do not attend any church at all. All who are God's saints are members of his church; all others are merely imitation Christians. These great systems calling themselves his churches are without authority of God, without Scriptural recognition. They are merely human institutions, and in them only the saintly ones are recognized of God at all as his people.

The Bible sets forth that these spurious churches are Babylon, a term which signifies confusion. They are a confused mixture, not only of all classes of people, but of all classes of doctrines, and quite contrary therefore to anything that God

and his Word uphold. From this confused mass of people, God is calling out his people, saying, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Revelation 18:4), and telling them that very suddenly a great calamity will come upon this great institution called Christendom, which will entirely demolish this system in every sense of the word.

THE END OF THE GENTILE TIMES

Studying God's Word, we have measured the 2520 years, the seven symbolic times, from that year 606 B. C. and have found that it reached down to October, 1914, as nearly as we were able to reckon. We did not say positively that this would be the year. We merely left every one to look at the facts of history and reckon for himself. Would this date be the time or would it be some other date? we asked. Many of us concluded that as far as we could see, October of this year would show the end of the Gentile lease of power; for when October comes we are getting down to the end of the Jewish year. The year 1914 actually ended Sept. 20, 1914, Jewish reckoning.

Now the question comes, Have the Gentile times ended or not? Some perhaps may be inclined to say, "No; they have not ended." Others would say, "When the Gentile times shall have ended, we would expect that the Gentiles would be entirely ousted from all power and control, and that Christ's kingdom would be established. Were there not a great many things that we expected would take place when the Gentile times would end?"

We find that some have one idea and others another. Some think that just the next hour after midnight would see a great, grand change everywhere—evil blotted out in sixty minutes or in sixty seconds. But would it be a reasonable expectation that the Gentile kingdoms would be snuffed out inside of an hour or inside of a day? If God had said so, it would be different; we know that God has all power to do his will everywhere. But are we in any sense of the word to expect such a sudden transition—that going to bed on the night of September 20, we would find, on the morning of September 21, all the kingdoms of the world destroyed and the kingdom of Christ set up, the saints in glory? etc. Such would be a lightning change! We do not think that any would have been justified in so thinking. If any had such expectation, it was unwarranted.

GOD'S TWO WITNESSES

Now look back and see what happened immediately after the expiration of different time periods. For instance, there are great day periods mentioned in the Bible, namely, the 1260 symbolic days, the 1290, the 1335 and also the 2300 days. (Daniel 12:7, 11, 12; 8:13, 14) We have not the time to go into details concerning all of these time periods. They are familiar to us, and are treated in detail in the volumes of *STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES*. Therefore we merely refresh your memories.

The 1260 years ended in 1799. From their beginning to their culmination, the power of persecution held sway. When the 1260 years ended, was anything done in an hour, in a day, or in a year to stop the persecution? Nay! One of the results was that God's two witnesses were exalted to heaven. These two witnesses of God, the Old and New Testaments, were exalted to heaven, were lifted up in the sight of the people, taken up to a position of great influence and dignity which they never before had enjoyed.

EXALTED TO HEAVEN

Previous to that time the church held that the Bible went hand in hand with the voice of the church; that the voice of the church was the voice of the bishops and the popes; and that the Bible was only to corroborate the voice of the church. But after the expiration of the 1260 prophetic days, the Bible began to take a new position.

We remind you that it was between the years 1803 and 1813 that many of our great Bible Societies were organized. Only then the printing of the Bible in every language and in cheap form was commenced, and the Bible began to go out to all nations. The Bible was lifted up before the people—was exalted to heaven, in the sense in which our Lord meant when he said, "Thou, Capernaum, art exalted unto heaven." The Bible was greatly exalted in contrast to the degraded position which it had occupied during the dark ages. But several years were consumed in bringing it up to this high position.

"THE TIME OF THE END"

Of course, error all along has more or less combated the truth, but nevertheless the truth has been going forward, step by step. The year 1799 marked the beginning of the "time of the end," when various events were to occur. According to prophecy—"Knowledge shall be increased"; "the wise shall understand"; and "there shall be a time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation." (Daniel 12:1-10)

These various predictions, the fulfilment of which was to follow 1799, have been in process of fulfilment throughout the past century. The running to and fro did not reach any particular development for some time after the time of the end had begun. The progress in the use of steam power was gradual. First came the steamboat; then came the first railway train. These inventions of necessity had to precede the predicted "running to and fro."

Only within the past few years have we reached a maximum of speed on railways and steamships. Apparently they have begun to slow down. Very few trains now go faster than twenty-four miles an hour; and so with the great steamships Mauretania and Lusitania, which are types of the very swiftest steamboats. Indeed, these vessels might not have been built were it not that the British government wished to have some very swift cruisers in time of war.

These wonderful inventions which characterize our day have come gradually since 1799. After the first part of the period came the increase of knowledge, which is reaching its climax. We are now at the place where in civilized lands compulsory education is doing about all it can do for the people; and some nations are trying to restrain education. A prominent Russian statesman recently said that education is the basis of all the revolutionary spirit amongst the people, and that if the people had less of it there would be less trouble. In due time all the other nations will learn the lesson that without some restriction, education is a dangerous thing. To an unregenerate heart it means power in an unregenerate hand—which is not always safe.

DUE TIME FOR UNDERSTANDING CHRONOLOGY

The Prophet Daniel's statement that "the wise shall understand" apparently refers to the end of the 1290 days mentioned in the same chapter. This period terminated in 1829. Shortly after 1829 the message of the nearness of the second advent of Christ began especially to be promulgated by William Miller. As a result of the exaltation of the Word of God, certain doctrines were brought forth in a very prominent way.

We have all read about the great Miller movement started in this country. (See *STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES*, Vol. III, pag 84.) We are not endorsing the teachings of Brother Miller. While he had some correct thoughts on Scripture, he also had some incorrect ones—just as had Brother Calvin and other brethren since his day. But the time had come for the announcing of the second coming of Christ; and while the second advent did not occur in 1844, as the followers of Brother Miller had anticipated, yet beginning gradually in the year 1829 certain doctrines were brought to the attention of the church which had never before been noted—certain doctrines respecting man's immortality, spiritual and human natures, etc. These subjects led to a careful searching of the Scriptures and to confidence in the Word of God above the traditions of men.

The increase of light has gradually progressed, and has by degrees been dispelling the darkness of error in both doctrine and practise, until today the Lord's people have a great deal of blessing. We are now more than a hundred years from the beginning of the time of the end; and this development of Christian knowledge has been steadily progressing, opposed in various ways, but nevertheless fighting on to victory.

Another prophetic period mentioned by the Prophet Daniel was the 2300 days. This period was to mark certain things, and at the expiration of these days the sanctuary was to be cleansed. This work of cleansing the true church, the sanctuary class, from the defilements of the dark ages culminated, we believe, in 1846, the time of the fulfilment of the 2300 days. But the work of cleansing was not accomplished in a moment or a day or even a year; and the cleansing was but limited.

We come now to the 1335 days, which culminated in 1875. Of these days the Prophet had said, "Oh, the blessedness of him that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and thirty-five days" (years)! (Daniel 12:12) At that time great blessings came to the people of God; for at that time our Master returned, preparatory to taking up his great power and commencing his long-promised reign of a thousand years. The time for his parousia had come, and he was here! The nature of those blessings we need not repeat; in fact, they could not be explained in a few words. But ever since the presence of the Master we have had evidences of the great blessings coming to us, as foretold by the Prophet Daniel.

EVIDENCES OF OUR LORD'S PAROUSIA

In what way will the Lord take his great power and reign? The Scriptures show us very clearly. In line with the same chronology the Scriptures teach us that there is a time for the parousia, or presence of the Lord. That time, as far as we are able to calculate, began in 1874. Since that date we have been

living in the parousia of the Son of Man. Is there anything to corroborate this? Yes. In the first place, we look for the Lord's dealing with his people, the church. We should expect that at the time of our Lord's coming his people would hear his "knock"—the knock of the prophecies, and whoever would open his heart and receive the things in a consecrated attitude of mind the Lord would gird himself as a servant and would come forth and serve him.—Revelation 3:20.

All of the special blessings that we, as a company of Bible Students, have received during the past forty years have been the result of the Lord's presence. He has been our Servant and has been bringing forth things new and old out of his storehouse. These old things have been coming forth in a new way—not because of human ability or skill, but because it is the Lord's due time for these things to become clear—the doctrine of redemption, the ransom, the meaning of the term body of Christ, the explanation of how the death of Christ is justification for our sins, the imputation of his merit for the Church, the giving of the merit to the world, what the sanctification of the church really means, the begetting of the holy Spirit, the begotten ones becoming new creatures in Christ, and what this term, a new creature, signifies, how the new creature differs from the old creature, how the first resurrection is to bring this new creation glorious privileges and divine blessing—glory, honor and immortality.—SCRIPTURE STUDIES, Vol. II., page 103; Vol. V., page 421; Vol. VI., pages 59-84.

Our Lord, present, but invisible, has brought us light along every feature of the divine plan, not only respecting those things that were old—justification, sanctification and redemption—but also respecting the philosophy of God's dealings—how our Lord became flesh and dwelt among us, how he was holy, harmless and undefiled, and yet was born of an earthly mother. All these things which were once confusing to us, but which are now brought to light, are evidences that the Lord is here serving his people. We know that we have received these things. We do not believe that we have received them from any human tongue or pen, but from the Lord, who is giving us "meat in due season." The result of receiving this spiritual food is that many people have been sanctified—have experienced a transformation of mind that leads them to rejoice in laying down their lives for the brethren and in walking in the footsteps of Jesus.

A gentleman recently called on us, and made the remark that after seeing the Photo-Drama of Creation he got his first glimpse of God's character and learned to love God. He had been an Episcopalian, then a Christian Scientist, and then for fifteen years an unbeliever; but now he has gotten clearer views of God and his plan. Although he is a very talented man, he is doing what he finds to serve the Lord—helping to fold the volunteer literature. The first intimation we had of his interest was his giving of \$50 for the work. After seeing the Photo-Drama, he had gotten so much good from it that he wished to help it along.

This we mention as showing the power of the truth, in contrast with the opposite influence of error. While we cannot say that we number ourselves by millions, yet we can say that nearly fourteen thousand have taken a very special vow that implies their full consecration to the Lord; many others are writing in to say that they have taken that vow—some of them years ago; and there are some from whom we shall never hear—still others who have never taken the vow, but who are fully consecrated, as far as we know.

If we ask Christian people whether or not they have given up everything they have to the Lord, the majority of them will say, "No. I want to live a good Christian life; but I never made full consecration to the Lord." All these blessings enumerated are the result of the very precious truth that has come to us, and to thousands of others. These have been very greatly blessed and helped, even though they have not made a full consecration to the Lord. This is a good evidence that something unusual has occurred within the period of the harvest time. Moreover, this work has been growing. It has been supported in a way that is marvelous to ourselves and to our enemies. Possibly many of the dear friends wonder if there is not a miracle performed. But there has been no miracle, yet it is marvelous in our sight that so much has been done with a comparatively small amount of money; for amongst the Lord's people there are not many rich, not many learned.—1 Corinthians 1:26-29.

THE TIME OF HARVEST

Our Lord indicated that at his second coming all his servants who would be in the right condition of heart would hear his knock; and that if they would open to him immediately, he would come in and sup with them. What does this statement signify? It means that his knock showed that the time for the great representative of God—our glorified Lord—to be here

had come; and that all who were ready would hear that knock, the prophetic knock, calling attention to the prophetic testimony that thenceforth we could look forward to Messiah's beginning his parousia, his harvest work, at once with all denominations.

When the year 1875 came, was everything accomplished within twenty-four hours? Surely not! Did everybody awake at the same minute? Have they not been getting awake all through the harvest time? And some of us have not been awake very long. Some of us did not hear the knock when first our Master returned; but just as soon as we did hear and opened our hearts, we got the blessing; for we were in the proper attitude of heart to receive. This is true in the United States, in Canada, in Great Britain, in Africa, Australia; true everywhere.

What has occurred during this time? We have had a harvest period, and the work of the harvest has been going on silently, gradually. The Lord has been judging amongst his people, just as he said he would. He said that he would call his own servants first and reckon with them. Of course, none of this was from anything that we saw with our eyes, but from an unfolding of God's Word.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE SAINTS

Through the testimony of God's Word we understand that the resurrection began in 1878; not that we saw anything by the natural sight of the eyes, but that through the eyes of our understanding we recognized that the time had come for that great transaction, the first resurrection, as far as the sleeping saints were concerned; and we understand that there commenced the time mentioned by the writer of Revelation, when he declared, "Blessed are they who die in the Lord from henceforth," marking a particular time, before which it would not be a blessing to die, but after which it would be a blessing. "From henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them."—Rev. 14:13.

That particular time came, we believe, in 1878; then, not only the apostles were awakened, but all the faithful in Christ Jesus, all the sleeping members of the body of Christ. That was the beginning of the resurrection of the body of Christ—the Lord judging among his people first, before the judgment of the world. He foretold that when he would come he would call his own servants and reckon with them—not with the world—giving reward to those of his church who had gone before, giving them part in the first resurrection, and then afterward dealing with us, "who are alive and remain," so that each one of us who are of the Lord's people, may at death be "changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," during the sounding of the last trumpet—the seventh.

We are living now under the sounding of this great trumpet of God; not that we are hearing anything with our natural ears, but that we are hearing with the ears of our understanding that God's time has come, and that the great institution which he is arranging for the future is now being inaugurated.

The next prophetic period is the time of trouble. In one sense, perhaps, this began back about 1872. That was the time when Communism began to be broached afresh, when Socialism began to spread itself. We believe that many people are counted Socialists who are not really Socialists, but who might become such under favorable circumstances and conditions—which likely will develop before 1916 A. D. This development of Socialism is connected with anarchy. The hopes and methods of Socialists will prove failures and then they will be so wrought up as to bring on the great time of trouble. Meantime, also, arrangements have been going on gradually for the present war. While outwardly proclaiming (1872 A. D.) at the Geneva Peace Conference that all the nations would band themselves together and advocate the peaceful settlement of difficulties, and while yet crying "Peace! Peace!" nevertheless, notwithstanding all this, the nations of the world have progressed in the building of great warships and the drilling of troops.

We will not go into details further; we merely wish to impress the thought that these fulfillments of prophecy did not come suddenly, but gradually—that they had a particular time for beginning, and were sure of accomplishment. In view of these lessons from the past, what should we think about the future? We should not conclude that everything would be transformed inside of one minute, or one hour, or one day, but gradually.

INAUGURATION OF MESSIAH'S KINGDOM GRADUAL

This leads us to expect that the remaining prophetic periods will have a similar fulfilment, and that September 20 of this year, 1914, probably marked the end of the Gentile times. If so, what we are witnessing now amongst the nations is a conflict to their finish. This is exactly what we should expect. Evi-

dently the Lord is behind the matter; the Lord's kingdom will manifest itself more and more. It will not be fully manifested, however, until the Church is with her Lord in glory. "When he shall be revealed, we also shall be revealed with him in glory."

Should we expect that the Lord would reveal himself the very moment Gentile times end? The Bible declaration is that he shall be revealed in "flaming fire." Just how long after the Gentile times close will be the revelation in "flaming fire" we do not know. Seemingly, following this great war will come the greatest "earthquake" that ever occurred—a revolution that will involve all the civilized nations. (Revelation 16:18) Then Socialism may loom up, but will be short-lived and develop into anarchy. That anarchy will be the "flaming fire" revealing the new kingdom, taking vengeance, bringing retributive justice upon the world—preceding its blessing.

If the harvest work of our Lord's presence (parousia) has been a gradual work for forty years leading up to the present time, and if the time of the end is a slow period, how long would this period be, in which present institutions will be ousted, and the present order of things be condemned and done away with, to make way for the reign of righteousness? We answer that according to such pictures we might expect the transition to run on a good many years. We might expect it to be five, ten or twenty years. But there is something, on the other hand, that leads us to anticipate that it will not be very long. The Lord has told us that he will "make a short work of it." Just how short the work will be would be conjectural. Every one may have his own opinion. At one time the Lord speaks of it as being "in one hour;" another time, as "in one day;" and the Apostle speaks of it as coming like travail upon a woman with child—suddenly.

We remember also that there is a certain parallel between the Jewish age and the Gospel age. The forty years' harvest of the Jewish age, which began with Jesus' ministry, 29 A. D., ended in the year 69 A. D.—just as we believe that the harvest of this age began with 1874 and ended with this fall, 1914. It was in the year following the expiration of forty years of the Jewish harvest that the end of the Jewish polity came—at the destruction of their city. And so the parallels would lead us to suppose that one year from the present time would finish this short parallel period, this great work of disaster upon the world, the overthrow of the nations, viz., the attempt of the different nations to gain supremacy—the failure of their efforts—then the fire of God's anger, anarchy, the destruction which will sweep the whole world and usher in Messiah's kingdom.

The Master tells us that unless these days were shortened there would be no flesh saved. (Matthew 24:22) It will be a part of Messiah's kingdom work, not only to dash those nations to pieces, but to stop the anarchy when it shall have done its work, when it shall have demonstrated to the human mind the fact that nothing that man can do will be able to help the race. Then when man's extremity shall have been reached, Messiah's kingdom will take hold; and the great disaster will be throttled, the blessings of the kingdom will begin, and mankind will receive them in proportion as they are in the right attitude of heart to respond.

PRELUDE TO THE TIME OF TROUBLE

We see that God gave the lease of dominion to the Gentiles. The words of the Prophecy were that Zedekiah's crown would be overturned, overturned, overturned, until he comes whose right it is, and God would give it to him. Has the kingdom begun in any sense of the word? We so believe. We think that the light now going forth is under the direction of the Captain of our Salvation. We think that the present distress amongst the nations is merely the beginning of this time of trouble. They did not wait for the time to come when they would be smitten. In their "anger" they got into trouble before their lease had expired.

At present the nations show such a bitterness toward each other, such a desire to conquer and destroy one another, that they are determined to continue the war, even if it result in the loss of their own wealth, the destruction of their own homes, and of one another. The spirit of competition, which was supposed to have died, had only been covered up for a little while; and the spirit of the adversary is still there. Although they are called Christian nations, they have not received the Spirit of the Lord; they have not received the spirit of meekness, gentleness, long-suffering, brotherly kindness and love, the fruits of the holy Spirit; but on the contrary, the spirit which St. Paul says consists of hatred, wrath, strife, murder—works of the flesh and the devil. For this reason they are angry and have involved themselves in the present turmoil.

The nations did not even wait for God's wrath to come, but began to bring it upon themselves nearly two months in advance. They became so angry that they began to destroy

each other even before their lease of power had expired. God's wrath will continue in this great time of trouble to its completion—the "fire." The great dreadnaughts and super-dreadnaughts, great guns and little guns, Czars and Emperors, will soon dash each other to pieces. The anarchy that will follow this war will be the real time of trouble.

THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON

Our thought is that the war will so weaken the nations that following it there will be an attempt to bring in Socialistic ideas, and that this will be met by the governments—the wealthy and all classes interested in the present order of things, "the world which now is," the present "heavens," or ecclesiastical system, and the "earth," the social order. The present order will be supported by the rich, by financiers, politicians, princes of industry, and the kings upon the thrones. All these will do their best to maintain present conditions, and will summon the clergy to their support. Then will come a general uprising everywhere; on one side those who are beneficiaries of the present institutions will be against any change. Against them, on the other side, will be the masses, who are striving to better their condition; for in God's plan, the time has come for a change.

Shall the Lord's people have any part in the struggle? Nay! Let us ever keep in mind that we are peacemakers. Not only are we peaceable ourselves and seeking to live peaceably with all men, but we are to be peace-promoters, and to help others to see things straight and right. That course would be tending toward putting away anarchy and strife; but anarchy will surely come, despite all endeavors to the contrary.

Nevertheless, the Lord shows us through his Word that there is to be a victory on the part of the new order of things, now coming in. The Socialists do not want anarchy; but they are not far from it. Anarchy is the worst thing that could be—a lack of some form of government being the worst thing the world could experience. The warring element will fight out this battle; and this will be the way in which God will promote the change, which is represented in the Bible as a great "fire," which will consume the present "heavens," or ecclesiastical ruling powers, and the "earth," or social institutions.

Following that great "fire," then, will be manifested the "new heavens and the new earth." The new heavens, the new ecclesiastical ruling power, will be the church of the future in glory, the bride of Christ, enthroned with him. The new earth will be the new order of things on the earth, which will be in the hands of the ancient worthies, "whom the Lord will make princes in all the earth," when his kingdom shall be fully established.

"THY KINGDOM COME"

Our text proceeds to say, "And the time of the dead, that they should be judged," that they should receive their proper rewards and punishments, and be righteously dealt with, is closely associated with this time of angry nations. The whole dead world will be dealt with during that thousand years of Christ's reign. The object of that dealing is that he "should give reward to his servants the prophets," beginning at the proper time. Their reward is that they are to be the earthly princes in the kingdom, in all the earth. "And to the saints." The saints will be changed in the first resurrection, "right early in the morning." (Psalm 46:5, margin) "Them that fear thy name, small and great," shows the reward of all those who will come into harmony with the Lord during the thousand years—this pictures the blessing of restitution coming to all mankind. These blessings they are to receive as they show their obedience to him in all things.

What will the consummation be? "And shouldest destroy them which destroy [or corrupt] the earth." Those that give forth a corrupting influence and that refuse to come into harmony with righteousness during the thousand years will be destroyed from amongst the people. Nothing will be left of them. Everything evil will be destroyed, root and branch; only the righteous will prevail throughout all eternity. All having sympathy with unrighteousness will be destroyed. We see, then, that the entire Millennial age will be needed to accomplish the work outlined in our text. It is not to be suddenly accomplished; we are not to expect a sudden fulfilment of that work.

Will the culmination of Gentile times bring in the kingdom by a very slow change, or how will it be done? September 21 did not bring any great change, but it saw this anger and this war-fever already begun amongst the nations. The spirit of anger has been brewing in them for the past forty years. They have been in preparation all this time, not spending money for amusement, but for foreseen war. They have built great navies knowing that the majority of these vessels were to go to the scrapheap as soon as new types of battleships came in, making all the older ones obsolete. They were not wasting their

money. They recognized that this great struggle was coming. In the German Navy, the custom is to instill into the men the thought that they will be the conquerors of the world, and they expect this great war to decide the matter.

We are treading upon what might be termed, perhaps, dangerous ground, in assuming the possibility, even, that during this year that has begun there would be such an upheaval of nations, such an attempt on the part of kings, rulers, political princes and merchant princes to hold things where they are; and that to do this they will probably raise up the churches to great power, in order that they may through them, if possible, hold back the new order of things. Whether this comes within this year or a longer period, no matter; we believe this is the way which the Bible indicates it will come. When the church systems shall be thus raised up, all who stand for the plan of God will be evil-spoken of, evil thought of, whereas they are the best friends of the world, the truest—just as the Lord is the truest friend of the whole human family. But if Jesus was crucified, so will these have trying experiences, and although the offenders may be of the household of faith, we must feel kindly toward them. As St. Peter said to his Jewish brethren, "I wot, brethren, that in ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers."—Acts 3:17.

THE JEWISH QUESTION

Some one may say, We do not see the Jews back in Jerusalem yet. Is Jerusalem still trodden down of the Gentiles? In reply, we ask, What do you think our Lord meant when he said that Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled? Do you think that the walking over the stones and streets in Jerusalem was what the Lord meant by the treading down of Jerusalem? If so, you were very foolish in your thought. Jerusalem represents the Jewish polity, government, institution, people. The Jews had already been trodden down for centuries before our Lord's remark—in fact, they were under the heel of the Romans at the time Jesus uttered those words; and they would continue to be under the domination of those Gentile governments "until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

Gradually the Jewish people have been emerging from their down-trodden condition—persecuted for eighteen centuries. The time is here when the message has been and is still being delivered to them, as recorded in Isaiah 40:1, 2: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins."—Isaiah 40:1, 2.

This prophecy was fulfilled, as pointed out in the STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, in the year 1878; and ever since that time, the star of Judaism has been rising; the Jews have become more prosperous ever since, as they themselves realize. Nowhere have they been so prosperous as in these United States, where they have received their greatest blessing; while in Russia and Germany they have been persecuted to some extent, but not in the same degree as formerly.

JERUSALEM NO LONGER DOWNTRODDEN

The treading down of the Jews has stopped. All over the world the Jews are now free—even in Russia. On September 5, the Czar of Russia issued a proclamation to all the Jews of the Russian Empire; and this was before the times of the Gentiles had expired. It stated that the Jews might have access to the highest rank in the Russian army, and that the Jewish religion was to have the same freedom as any other religion in Russia. Where are the Jews being trodden down now? Where are they being subjected to scorn? At present they are receiving no persecution whatever. We believe that the treading down of Jerusalem has ceased, because the time for the Gentiles to tread down Israel has ended.

As to a government in Palestine, the Jews have just as much of a government as any other people there. Nominally, the Turkish government has the rule. When we have the opportunity, we intend to call the attention of our Jewish friends to the fact that the time of their disfavor and the times of the Gentiles have expired, and that they may re-establish their kingdom in Palestine; for there is nothing now that intervenes. Some years ago, we called their attention to the fact that the Gentile times were fast closing; and the message, by the way, went all over the various countries of the world where Jews live, it having been printed in the Yiddish and the German languages. That Message has carried peace to them, telling about their restoration and pointing out to them this very time. Now we are able to tell them that the Gentile Times have expired, and that they may go up and take possession of the land. We do not know how soon they will take possession. According to their faith it will be unto them.

A proper conception of the divine plan and arrangements shows that now is the time for the Jews to get the land of

Palestine from the Turkish government. The Turks are anxious to get some money, and, as they do not have very much at the present, it seems as though they would be willing to get rid of something that is not doing them any particular good. Now would be a good opportunity for the Jews to offer to buy Palestine: and they would probably get their country for a few million dollars.

The Turks realize that if they lose in the present war, they would lose Palestine; in this favorable time the sale of that country would be of some value to them. There is nothing in our Lord's statement, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled," that would militate against this thought. On the other hand, everything is in its favor; for the treading down of the Jews has ceased. Now it is merely for them to go up and possess their land.

THE EXPECTATIONS OF THE CHURCH

Some one may ask, Since the fulfilment of the various time prophecies demonstrates that God's methods of operating are slow, may it not be that the kingdom will not be ushered in for five, ten or even twenty-five years? Our reply is, we are not a prophet; we merely believe that we have come to the place where the Gentile times have ended. If the Lord has five years more for us here, we shall be very glad to be on this side of the veil; and we feel sure that all the Lord's truly consecrated children also will be glad to be on this side if it is the Lord's will. If the Lord has even one more year for us as good as the past year has been, what more could we ask?

Nothing could induce us to part with that knowledge of God and his plan in which we rejoice today. All the world over, that which makes the Lord's people appear happy is not special beauty on the outside, but the light on the inside, the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, the light of the knowledge of the divine truth in our hearts. This light shining through these earthen vessels is heart-cheering and comforting. We cannot imagine anything better. As the poet says,

"It satisfies my longings, as nothing else can do."

We are happy to be coworkers with God; and by and by we shall be coworkers with him on the other side of the veil.

Look back now and see how the Lord's promises have been fulfilled—how during this time of harvest it has been, as he said it would be, a blessed time. Listen to the words of the Prophet concerning the time since 1875, and note how his prophecy has been fulfilled: "Oh, the blessedness of him that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days"—the blessedness of those who have been living from 1875 onward.

What blessings have we received? Just as the Bible has said to us, so has it been. Those who open their hearts to the Lord find that he not only comes in and sups with them, but that he becomes their servant, comforts them, and serves them with "meat in due season." This accounts for all these blessed truths upon which we have been feasting since we have entered into the light of present truth; and it proves that this divine plan of the ages is not from any human being nor is it a human plan or scheme; for no human being is capable of bringing such glorious things out of the Word of God.

Looking back over the past eighteen hundred years at the futile efforts of able, good men and women to bring something reasonable and harmonious out of the Bible, we find nothing satisfactory. On the contrary, we are ashamed of all the creeds of the past. Even those made in the past century do not satisfy anybody's longings. Those who are paid to preach them are ashamed to do so, and cover them up as much as possible.

Our Lord said that at his second coming he would serve things "both new and old"; and this has been so. Not merely are new things coming to our attention respecting the glory of the coming kingdom and the work throughout the thousand years of Christ's reign, but old things are coming to us in a clearer, better light. Among these is the doctrine of justification by faith, about which Brother Luther preached centuries ago, and which we thought had been correctly defined and thoroughly understood. Now we find that we did not understand justification by faith at all. Sanctification was preached by good people, too. When we came to a Biblical understanding of the subject of sanctification, all that we knew before seemed childish and contradictory. How beautiful and harmonious these doctrines became! Then there are the types of Leviticus, which picture all the glorious features of the divine plan. All these familiar subjects are now shining as new, having been brought forth by our great Master, who is doing

the serving, who is giving "meat in due season," "things both new and old."

Take the doctrine of baptism, which has been preached about for all these centuries past. Now we are finding out that what we did not know about it has filled volumes. When we come to an understanding of the subject of baptism, it is beautiful, grand! We never supposed that it had so much meaning. The reason for all this increase of knowledge is that we are living in the blessed time mentioned by the Prophet Daniel, "Oh, the blessedness of him that waiteth and cometh to the 1335 days"—in other words, as aforesaid, those who are living after the expiration of the 1335 days. We are living in the time during which God has been pouring in upon our hearts and minds all this joy, peace and blessing mentioned by the Prophet; but it did not happen in one hour, in one day, or in one year. It has been a gradual unfolding of divine truth. The path of the just shines more and more.

"WISE AS SERPENTS—HARMLESS AS DOVES"

We all agree that with the end of all of the different prophetic periods of the past, evidently there was no sudden explosion of new things; but that, on the contrary, the new conditions came in gradually. Now, however, in respect to this time in which we are living, there seems to be a little difference; for in speaking of this great time of trouble coming upon the world and about the changes to take place at this present time, the Lord everywhere represents it as coming suddenly. "In one hour," is a frequent expression; not meaning necessarily a literal hour, but a very short space of time. "In one day" is another expression, indicating a brief period of time. The Lord says he will make a "short work in the earth." We believe it. We remember again that the Master says, "Unless those days should be cut short, no flesh would survive; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

What did he mean? We believe that this spirit of frenzy that is now manifesting itself in the Old World is bound to spread, and that this national anger, hatred, malice, of one nation against another will extend to persons. We think it very wise, then, that the public press and the various officials of this country are seeking to have all recognize the fact that we are a mixed people, and that we have our natural sympathies with those of our kinsfolk who are beyond the seas, and any special activity in seeking to defend any particular nation now at war would cause malice and hatred, would tend toward the condition spoken of in the Bible when "Every man's hand will be against his neighbor and his brother."

We think it very wise on the part of the government officials to advocate that we take no side in the present war; for to do so would foster the spirit of anarchy; and we think that so far as all religiously-inclined people are concerned, they should do all in their power to prevent the spread of this spirit of anarchy, even though it will surely come. In this way we shall be doing our duty, even if our endeavors to bring peace to the world are thoroughly ineffective. We should always bear in mind that we are representatives of the Lord of Righteousness and of the great King of Peace, who will ultimately take the throne of power.

RE THE DELIVERANCE OF THE CHURCH

What shall we expect concerning this great change coming in the next year? It seems to us possible that one year might work all this great change that we are expecting. But perhaps it will not be so. We must wait and see. We merely suggest the possibility that in one year all these great things will come. That will be very sudden, as travail upon a woman with child—without warning. This war came without warning, and very speedily the nations were fighting one another; for the time has come.

As these things were previously held more or less in restraint, now the Lord is letting them loose gradually; and he will let them loose more and more until the great anarchy comes which would entirely destroy our whole human race unless it was arrested. In the meantime the kingdom class will have been glorified, and our great King will have taken unto himself his great power, and with the elect, the body of Christ, the church, he will bring in peace and blessing to mankind, as soon as the world shall have passed through the fire of anarchy and the present order of things shall have been dissolved in the great heat—not a moment sooner. Then the elect of God will interpose that the world may not be destroyed, that humanity may not destroy itself; and then will be the beginning of the blessings that are to come to all people through Christ, through the merit of his sacrifice, through the channel of The Christ glorified—Jesus and his joint-heirs in the kingdom.

As we look at these things, we realize that we have every reason to do all in our power to prepare ourselves for this glorious work. We remember also what our dear Redeemer told us to do: "When ye see these things begin to come to

pass [do we see them? We think so!], then lift up your heads and rejoice, knowing that your deliverance draweth nigh." Just how nigh, the Lord did not say. Therefore, we may not attempt to say.

But we cannot be far from our change; and we advise that all of the Lord's people live day by day just as though this was the last day on this side of the veil, and that to-night or tomorrow would usher us into the glorious things beyond the veil. Living in this way will surely be at least a good experience for us, bringing blessings and ripening of character. What a blessed way to live!—every day in anticipation of seeing our Redeemer and sharing in his wonderful work! The things connected with this present time seem less and less important to us, on account of which our names are cast out as evil by those who are living for all they can get out of the present life.

"DRINK YE ALL OF IT"

What may be done to our mortal bodies? None have the power to injure us as new creatures. We are waiting for our change, which will come to some in one way and to some in another. God be praised! His will be done! Our Master had a cup at the conclusion of his experiences, and it was an especially bitter one, his suffering as an evil-doer and as a blasphemer being especially severe. Under the Jewish law, blasphemy of God's name was really one of the most grievous crimes, and was especially punished by ignominious death. Jesus was not the blasphemer, but the scribes and Pharisees were the blasphemers. Yet Jesus was to die as the blasphemer, while those who were really doing the blaspheming were the ones who put him to death!

We should not wonder if in the divine arrangement God might have some such bitter cup for the feet-members of the body of Christ. Why should we think so? For various reasons. We have so much favor from God, that it would seem that we would deserve to have severer testings and a fuller and more bitter cup than others have had. Furthermore, the Scriptures seem to imply that it will be so.

Elijah was a type of the church, and we remember that at his departure he went in a chariot of fire; and we believe that this symbolically represents the time of trouble on the church when the time of our departure shall come. Then, again, John the Baptist was a semi-type, the semi-antitype of Elijah. John's experiences were very bitter. He was imprisoned for a while and not permitted to do any preaching; and he no doubt wondered in the time of his imprisonment whether or not he had been mistaken in his glorious expectations in regard to the Messiah. Then came the sudden edict for him to be beheaded. Herodias and Salome were anxious to get rid of him, but King Herod was not. We remember that in our interpretation of this type the king represents the civil power, Herodias represents the Roman Catholic Church and Salome, the daughter, represents the Protestant Churches Federated. These are more or less united to the civil powers, the "Mother" especially. We remember that there was some special dancing on the part of Salome before the king, who was so pleased with her that he told her that she might have anything she desired, even to the half of his kingdom. After she had conferred with her mother, they decided that the best thing that could happen for them would be the death of John the Baptist.

So it was in the Master's case. The religious rulers decided that the best thing that could be done was that he should perish. We remember that it was the last high priest of the Jewish nation, Caiaphas, who prophesied respecting Jesus that it was expedient that one man should die for the people rather than that the whole nation perish. So it was in the case of John. Herodias and Salome concluded that John the Baptist should die, and thereby they would cease to have his continual reminder of their wrong course; and so they would have him beheaded.

Whether or not this is to be a part of the antitype remains to be seen. It would not surprise us if it will be so. We are not speaking positively; but we wish to be "wise as serpents." Let us not be surprised at whatever things the Lord may permit to come. Let us remember that our Master was given a bitter cup of suffering in his closing hours, and that the Father did not seek to remove it from him. But Jesus meekly accepted it, saying, "The cup which my Father hath poured for me, shall I not drink it?" So we should be well prepared for whatever cup of bitter experiences and ignominy the Lord may have for us. At the same time we should have in our minds the refreshing thought given us by the promise in the Scriptures, that the Lord will not permit us to be tempted, or tested, above what we are able to bear, but will with the temptation provide a way of escape. The further assurance is that "All things shall work together for good to them that love God, to the called ones according to his purpose."—Romans 8:28.

WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Have we heard the call to be the bride, the Lamb's wife, to come out of the world, to be dead to the world, to give our wills to him, to sacrifice our earthly treasures? Have we become footstep followers of Jesus? "If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself [give up his own self-will], take up his cross and follow me." Have we been following the Master, and will we continue to follow him? In our hearts we should be saying, Yes.

The Master said that in the regeneration those who would now follow him would have glorious bodies, like his own. "We shall be like him, and see him as he is"—sharers in his glory. May that be the portion of all of us! Let us rejoice together in the glorious things that our God has arranged for those who are his church—first for the great Head of that church, our Lord Jesus, and later for us, his humble followers, who are seeking to become joint-heirs with him in his kingdom.

Let us remember that it is not knowledge alone that sanctifies. Knowledge is valuable to the sanctifying of the spirit only when we comply with the conditions that we shall mortify the self-will of the flesh and cultivate more and more of the Spirit of our Lord, about which St. Peter tells us. We are exhorted to put off all these: malice, hatred, wrath, strife, etc.; and to put on all these: joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, brotherly kindness and love. The Apostle Peter says, "If these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ"; and "thus an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

JESUS TRIED BY PILATE

NOVEMBER 22.—Matthew 27:11-26.

"Pilate saith unto them, What then shall I do unto Jesus who is called Christ?"—Verse 22.

Pilate was the Roman Governor of Judea, the representative of Caesar's government. We are not inclined to blame him seriously for the death of Jesus. He acted as he was expected to act. He was in Judea, not to settle Jewish theories or religious disputes, but to keep the people of Judea quiet, orderly, subject to the government of Rome. It was policy, so far as compatible with the peace and quiet of the country, that he should rule justly; but justice was to be sacrificed at any time in the interests of the Roman Empire. Tradition has it that Pilate had heard previously of Jesus, and had even met him by appointment privately, making inquiry respecting his teachings.

Our last lesson showed us Jesus before the Jewish Sanhedrin as early in the morning as possible, before the people would be generally astir, before therefore there could be any general co-operation on the part of Jesus' friends, by the people, respecting his arrest, etc. As quickly as possible the high priest and representatives of the Sanhedrin hurried Jesus to the Praetorium, asking Pilate to condemn him. Pilate inquired as to what charge they had against Jesus. They evasively answered that of course he was a wicked man, worthy of punishment; else they would not be there at all accusing him.

Pilate reminded them that under the Roman usage they had great liberty in dealing with all disputes of a religious kind, that he was not posted in Judaism, and that therefore they should deal with the case themselves. The priests responded that they knew this; but that they had no power to inflict the death penalty. Thus they revealed the depth of their wickedness—that they had been plotting deliberately to have Pilate inflict the death penalty upon an innocent person. Then they began to accuse Jesus, claiming that he was perverting the nation—turning it away from loyalty and obedience to the Roman government—that he was telling the people that they should not pay taxes to Caesar, and that he was claiming himself to be the Jewish King Messiah.

These were serious charges before the Roman Governor, which he was bound to consider; and we have noticed that they were totally different charges from those brought against Jesus by the Sanhedrin trial. Although the charges were false, Jesus made no defense. He knew that the time had come for him to die. He would not attempt to turn aside that which he knew to be a part of the divine program for him.

JESUS BEFORE PILATE

Pilate looked upon Jesus, no doubt thinking that one so gentle in appearance would not be at all likely to raise an insurrection that would be injurious to the interests of the Roman Empire. Another account tells us that Pilate perceived that the chief priests and scribes were moved with envy in making their charges. Pilate perceived that something in Jesus' teachings appealed to the people more than did the teachings of these religious rulers, and that he was being asked

(2 Peter 1:5-11) Let our ambition and aim be to have a share in that kingdom!

"WHO SHALL STAND?"

Let us remember that we are in a testing season. The apostles had a similar one during the interim between our Lord's death and Pentecost. After our Lord's resurrection he appeared to his disciples a few times, and then they did not see him for many days. Then they became discouraged and said, "There is no use waiting"; "I go fishing," said one. Two others said, "We will go with thee." They were about to go into the fishing business and leave the work of fishing for men. This was a testing time for the disciples. So also there is one now. If there is any reason that would lead any to let go of the Lord and his truth and to cease sacrificing for the Lord's cause, then it is not merely the love of God in the heart which has prompted interest in the Lord, but something else; probably a hoping that the time was short; the consecration was only for a certain time. If so, now is a good time to let go.

Very probably it is now as it was when Jesus said to his disciples on a certain occasion, "Will ye also go away?" The answer was, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." We would starve spiritually if we went to any other than the Lord's table. We know not anywhere else to go. We shall stay right at the Lord's table. He has been feeding us on the message of truth and life, and we believe that he will put on the table everything necessary for those who are hungering and thirsting for the truth; and that the truth on every subject necessary for us will be given as the Lord is pleased to reveal it; for he has promised, "they shall be filled."

to perform a mean and unjust act for persons who sought to shirk their own responsibility.

However, Pilate must not appear to be sympathetic with the Nazarene. He must not appear to treat lightly the charges made respecting another king than Caesar. He therefore demanded of Jesus, "Do you not hear the things witnessed against you? Why do you not answer, and plead guilty or not guilty?" Jesus said nothing.

Pilate then went out to the scribes and Pharisees, who had refrained from entering the Praetorium because the day was the beginning of the Passover. After conferring with the chief priests and hearing from them, apparently, Pilate asked the question, "Art thou the king of the Jews? Do you acknowledge that?" Jesus responded by asking, "Is the question because of anything that you see and know of my teachings, or is your question merely based upon the assertion of my enemies?" Pilate replied that the chief men of Jesus' own nation had delivered him, and now he would like to know what he had done that was the cause of this opposition.

Jesus answered that his kingdom was not of this world—this present age or order of things. He was, therefore, not in conflict with Caesar's kingdom. This would account to Pilate for the fact that neither Jesus nor his friends made any manifestation of rebellion against the civil government, as would have been the case if his had been an earthly government. His kingdom, he declared, was of the future. Pilate replied, "You do, then, claim to be a King, and that some time and somewhere you will exercise dominion?" Jesus answered that he was a King and that to this end he had been born, to this end he came into the world. He must bear witness to the truth; and all who were of the truth, and only such, would be able to appreciate his testimony.

"Ah," said Pilate, "that is a question with everybody: What is truth? Nobody seems to know." Then he went forth to the Jews and said, "I find no crime in him. He is in no way a malefactor against Caesar or his laws. He has done nothing that could lead me to interfere justly with his liberty or his rights."

The high priests and the Doctors of the Law were alarmed. Was it possible that just at the moment when they had hoped to crucify Jesus, he would escape from them! Then they vehemently charged that Jesus was stirring up the people, preaching everywhere, and that his preaching had begun away off in Galilee. When Pilate heard the word Galilee, he asked, "Is he a Galilaean?" Being told that he was, Pilate said, "Then I can easily transfer this whole troublesome matter to Herod, King of Galilee," the latter at the time also having his palace in Jerusalem.

Jesus was sent to Herod, who had a curiosity respecting him. He had heard many things of Jesus, and would have liked to see him do some miracle. Herod asked our Lord

questions, but there was no response. The chief priests and scribes violently accused Jesus to the king. Herod and his soldiers mocked him, and sent him back to Pilate with a gorgeous robe on, a mocked King. This act of deference on the part of Pilate, and the return of the courtesies by Herod, bridged over an enmity which had existed between the two for some time.

NEITHER PILATE NOR HEROD CONDEMNED

Addressing the accusers of Jesus again, Pilate said, "Ye brought unto me this man as one that perverteth the people. Behold, having examined him before you, I have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him; no, nor yet Herod; for I sent you to him (and he sent him back unto us) and behold, nothing worthy of death has been done unto him. I will therefore chastise him and release him." Evidently the chastising, or whipping, of Jesus was done to save his life—with the thought that the Jews would be appeased in having Jesus suffer to this extent.

At this time of the year on several occasions Pilate had released prisoners in honor of the Passover. The multitude at this time cheered Pilate, and inquired whether or not he would release some prisoner. Thinking this a favorable opportunity to dispose of Jesus and get him out of the hands of the chief priests and leaders of the people, Pilate said to the people: "Shall I release this One to you who is in prison claiming to be the King of the Jews?" The crowd looked to their religious leaders and were incited to urge the governor to release Barabbas, the highway robber. Pilate said to the throng, "What, then, shall I do with Jesus, called the Messiah?" And the multitude, influenced by their clergy, cried out: "Let Jesus be crucified!" Pilate asked: "Why, what has this man done? I find no cause of death in him. I will therefore chastise him and release him." Jesus was therefore delivered over to the multitude, only too willing to mock him, as well as to scourge him. Pilate said to the waiting Jews, "I will bring him out shortly, scourged, and you will know that I find no crime in him."

PILATE'S ENDEAVORS TO FREE JESUS

Jesus, therefore, came out wearing the crown of thorns and purple gown. Pilate said unto them: "Ecce homo!"—Behold the Man! See the One whom you are trying to have me put to death. Behold that he is one of the noblest specimens of your race or of humanity. See him in his sorrow and humility. Behold the beautiful dignity of his character. Whatever you have against him, you will feel placated now that you see his humility. But they cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Pilate answered: You may crucify him if you choose, but I find no fault in him—I find no crime in him. Then the Jews came to the real point of the matter, the real reason of their opposition, namely, that Jesus had declared himself to be the Son of God and that they considered that blasphemy. When Pilate heard that he was all the more afraid and returned the question to Jesus: Whence art thou? But he got no answer. Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldst have no power at all against me except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin. Then Pilate thought again to release Jesus, and yet it might stir up tumult in the city, which his office obligated him to keep in peace and quiet. But the Jews cried out: If thou release this man thou art not Caesar's friend;

everyone that maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar. This was putting Pilate in an awkward position. To release Jesus would seemingly make him the supporter of Caesar's opponent—the more strange, because Jesus was accused by his own countrymen and really had nobody to defend him except Pilate himself.

To add to Pilate's perplexity he had at this time received a message from his wife, urging him to have nothing to do with opposition to Jesus, and informing him that she had had a special dream respecting the matter. Again Pilate had recourse to the people, as in contradistinction to their rulers. Presenting the noble personage of Jesus before them he exclaimed, "Behold your King!" But this seemed only to incense the multitude, who cried the more vehemently, "Away with him! Crucify him! We have no king but Caesar."

In desperation Pilate had water poured upon his hands and washed them in the sight of the people, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man! See ye to it." The people cried, "His blood be upon us and upon our children!"

And has it not been so! For more than eighteen centuries the Jews have suffered—aliens from God! without prophet! without priest! without sin-offerings! without Atonement Days! (Hosea 3:4, 5) Ah! but the time nears when, their iniquity being pardoned, the Lord will pour upon Israel the spirit of prayer and supplication; the eyes of their understanding will be opened and they shall look upon him whom they pierced and they shall all the more praise him!—Zechariah 12:10.

Complying with the demands of the people in all things not contrary to the interests of the Roman Empire, as was his bounden duty, Pilate surrendered to the demand and delivered Jesus to death and released to them Barabbas, the robber.

THE SAME SPIRIT PREVAILS

Let us not think that human nature has changed during the past eighteen centuries. Rather let us believe that, the circumstances being the same today, Jesus or his disciples might be executed in any land, provided the civil magistrates desired their death and deemed it expedient in the interests of peace, and especially provided their religious rulers and teachers demanded such a sacrifice of the innocents, considering it necessary to their own hold upon the credulities of the people.

Let us not be surprised if similar experiences should come to some of God's saintly people in the near future. The pages of history show that so-called interests of religion, voiced by religious rulers, have been powerful with civil rulers to the subversion of justice and the death of the innocent throughout the age. The course of God's people at all times should be that marked out by the Master—full resignation to the will of God—full realization of God's supervision of all the interests of his cause—and full trust that the results will work out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

"Though all the world my choice deride,

Yet Jesus shall my portion be;
For I am pleased with none beside;
The fairest of the fair is he.

"Thy sufferings I embrace with thee,
Thy poverty and shameful cross;
The pleasures of the world I flee,
And deem its treasures only dross."

THE PRUDENT HIDETH HIMSELF

"A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself."—Proverbs 22:3.

Let no one suppose that it will be possible to escape the difficulties and trials of the great time of trouble, whose shadow is now clouding the earth. The most and the best that could be hoped for in this direction would be an amelioration of the conditions by the exercise of that wisdom which cometh from above, described by the Apostle, who says that it is "first pure, then peaceable, easy of entreatment, full of mercy and good fruits." To whatever extent any individual, anywhere, shall follow this prescription of heavenly wisdom, to that extent we may be sure he will have God's favor. And that favor guarantees to the recipient that "all things shall work together for his good."

The most valuable lessons that any parent or counselor can give to those subject to his direction would be, first, the Golden Rule—inculcating absolute justice—nothing less; secondly, in addition to justice as represented by the Golden Rule, should be the lesson of mercy, compassion, sympathy, the spirit of helpfulness. The third lesson in the series should be meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering. The fourth lesson should be economy in everything—avoidance of waste—the realization that what he does not need, some one else does need.

In suggesting the foregoing lessons, we are presupposing a Christian basis—that our readers are themselves children of God, who have been feeding at the Lord's table upon spiritual, heavenly food; and that they have been seeking to bless their families by training them in harmony with the Lord's Word.

For the dire distress which we see nearing, such character preparation is the best heritage that any parent could leave to his child. Bonds and stocks will be unavailable for food; bank accounts may become uncertain, and the possession of money may become a temptation to the vicious to rob and to murder; but a good character cannot be taken away. Its possession will give a measure of peace and security and confidence in the Lord that is beyond all price.

We recommend that none be urged unduly to make a full consecration of their hearts, their lives, their all, to the Lord and to his service. The lives of God's people should in every case be "living epistles, known and read of all men"—especially by their own families. Those lives should testify not only to the completeness of the consecration to the Lord, but also to the peace and joy and comfort resulting. "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts; and be ye thankful." (Colos-

sians 3:15) Your being a living epistle, without a single word of exhortation, will be powerful in its lessons to all those directly under your influence. Additionally, at a suitable time, it would be proper to intimate to your family, friends and neighbors the comfort and joy, peace and blessing, which you have received through a full acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ and the message of his Word, and what pleasure it would be to you to see your dear ones similarly blessed, comforted and spiritually healed.

It is better, however, that your children and friends should refrain from any profession of consecration to the Lord which would be a mere hypocrisy. There are too many hypocritical professors already. They are doing harm to the cause of Christ as well as harming themselves; for hypocrisy seems to be especially disdained of the Lord, and an insurmountable wall of hindrance to the hypocrite himself. Our influence, therefore, should always be on the side of honesty, not only in matters financial and social, but also, and particularly, in respect to God and religion.

ALSO PROVIDE THINGS HONEST

The Apostle urges God's people to provide for their own—for their own families—their necessities, and he urges that such provision shall be honestly made—if not honestly, then not at all. Again he exhorts the Lord's people to "labor with their hands," that they may have to give to others who may be in need. These exhortations are not to be understood as recommendations to lay up earthly treasure—an earthly fortune. The Lord's people are to live in harmony with their faith—to lay up their treasure in heaven. These suggestions, therefore, respecting temporalities, are not recommendations to hoard wealth, but merely to "use this world as not abusing it."

In harmony with the text at the head of this article, and in accordance with our views of the possibilities of the future, we have some recommendations to offer to our readers. While we are not certain that all the dire calamities of the day of the Lord will befall the earth within the next eleven months, nevertheless, there seems to be a sufficient possibility of this to warrant us in making certain provisions against the distress of that time—in the interest of our families, our friends and our neighbors.

We recommend to those having dry, clean cellars, or other

places suitable and well-ventilated, to lay in a good stock of life's necessities; for instance, a large supply of coal, of rice, dried peas, dried beans, rolled oats, wheat, barley, sugar, molasses, fish, etc. Have in mind the keeping qualities and nutritive values of foods—especially the fact that soups are economical and nourishing. Do not be afraid of having too much of such commodities as will keep well until the heat of next summer begins, even if it were necessary to sell then, at a loss, to prevent spoiling. Think of this hoard to eat, not too selfishly, but as being a provision for any who may be in need, and who, in the Lord's providence, may come your way—"that you may have to give to those who lack."—Eph. 4:28.

Do not sound a trumpet before you, telling of your provisions, intentions, etc. "Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself before God." Only your own family should know of this storing of food, and they should be under strict injunctions not to tell it to others. At most, suggest to your friends or neighbors the wisdom of keeping a stock of staple foods ahead in view of the possibilities of storms and strikes, etc., during the winter. Do not attempt to go into too great details respecting the time of trouble; for the majority of people are blind and deaf anyway on this subject.

Do not make these purchases on credit if you have not the money. Leave the matter, and exercise the more faith; but remember that the Golden Rule is the very lowest standard that can be recognized by the Lord's people and that it comes in advance of any kind of charity.

"Though troubles assail and dangers affright
Though friends should all fail, and foes all unite,
Yet one thing secures us, whatever betide;
The promise assures us, 'The Lord will provide.'"

"When Satan appears to stop up our path,
And fills us with fears, we triumph by faith;
He cannot take from us, though oft he has tried,
The heart-cheering promise, 'The Lord will provide.'"

"When life sinks apace, and death is in view,
The word of his grace shall comfort us through;
Not fearing nor doubting with Christ on our side,
We're sure to die feeling, 'The Lord will provide.'"

"IN EVERYTHING GIVE THANKS"

We thank thee, Lord, for raiment, and we thank thee for our food,
We thank thee for our shelter, O, thou Giver of all good;
We thank thee for the day on which our eyes first saw the light.
We give thee thanks for every sense, for hearing and for sight.

We thank thee for the sunshine, and we thank thee for the rain,
We thank thee for the pleasure and we thank thee for the pain.
We thank thee for the friends we've won, and for the friends we've lost,
We thank thee for the heart-aches which these separations cost.
We thank thee for the tender love which makes us clearly see
That every severed heart-string hath but drawn us nearer thee.
We thank thee for forgiveness when we fail in word or deed,
We praise thee for sufficient grace in every time of need.

We thank thee, blessed Father, for the gift of thy dear Son,
We thank thee and we praise thee for the victory he won.
We thank thee for his righteousness, his robe so pure and white,
We praise thee that, when clothed in it, we're blameless in thy sight.

We thank thee, oh, we praise thee for thy good and precious word,
We bless thee for the wondrous faith its promises have stirred.
We thank thee for the glorious hope of immortality—
Our hearts are longing, Lord, with thee to dwell eternally!

We thank thee for "that servant," for the love of each dear saint,
We bless thee for their fellowship when heart and strength grow faint.
And thus we give thee thanks, dear Lord, for each and every thing,
And pray that thou wilt keep us safe beneath thy sheltering wing!

INTERESTING LETTER

GREATER IS HE ON OUR PART

Dear Brethren:—

I wish to tell you of a strenuous experience I had soon after leaving Atlanta, Monday morning following the close of the Convention. Soon after the train started, I went to the rear of the coach to hand out literature; and nearly everyone accepted the papers until I had almost reached the end of the car. I offered a fine-looking man one; he refused, attacking me violently, saying he "wanted nothing whatever to do with Russell's devilish literature." Said he knew all about Russell, lived in Brooklyn, had read his books and THE WATCH TOWER, knew all about the libel suit. He spoke loudly enough for all around us to hear him. And I saw we had the attention of nearly all in the car. So, while he raged with slander against our dear Pastor and all his followers, I lifted my heart to God to direct me, and quietly waited until he had subsided

sufficiently for me to speak; and I said, "Sir, you are mistaken; all you have said about Brother Russell is as base and false as Satan himself, and you know it, and because you can't find fault with his teachings, or combat him with Scripture, you try to slander his character behind his back."

He replied, "I am a Baptist minister myself, and know all about Russell and his methods; and furthermore, you are paid \$125 to hand out this stuff; and I have been offered \$165 to do the same." I replied, "You are mistaken, sir, I am not paid a cent, have not been offered a cent, have not asked for a cent, and do not want a cent—as it is a glad and willing service for the Lord." "For Russell," he hotly and quickly replied.

I said, "Furthermore, sir, no member of the I. B. S. A. has ever made you any such offer as you claim, and if you will prove it to me, I will sign a check for a thousand dollars in your favor. All you have said about Pastor Russell is as