

impulse to call at once upon our dear Lord for relief, remembering the promise of 1 Corinthians 10:13.

He has answered my prayer, has granted me release, and has given me that peace of mind which those only can know who dwell "in the secret place of the Most High."

Although this has been a very severe test, the one which I had soon after making consecration was more so. It began in thoughts of hatred toward every one I met. This continued about two days, when I commenced continually repeating the sentence, "I LOVE EVERYBODY!"

Having a very sensitive nature and an abhorrence of evil which is highly developed, it is possible that my self-examination is too critical. My daily and oft-repeated prayer is that everything not in harmony with the divine will may be rooted out of my heart, making it a fit temple of the holy Spirit.

I have never let slip an opportunity to witness for the truth, either by handing out literature or by word of mouth. This activity has resulted in my business being boycotted. I was notified that this would result if I persisted. But I rejoice in the persecution, which I experience also in my own home. It only stimulates me to further zeal for the Lord.

Again thanking you for your sympathy and brotherly love, which I appreciate more than words can express, with much love, I remain

Your brother and fellow-servant, H. C. KEITH.—*Ind.*

BRITAIN'S SOLDIERS STUDYING THE TRUTH

WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY:—

I have a brother who has been twice wounded in the war. I wrote and told him some truth and sent some tracts while he was in England. (He is still there at Belfield Park, Weymouth, County Dorset.) He wrote and told me that to forgive your enemies is not in a soldier's creed, and that they must take revenge on the Germans.

I received a letter again a day or two ago, and he said he was pleased with the tracts I sent, and that he was beginning to realize the truth. He says he got some of the men to read them, and now they have a class of fourteen, and their officer has allowed them a tent for study. They sent for

books to the London Tabernacle, and received them. He says their officer drops in occasionally. He asked for more tracts on the PHOTO-DRAMA OF CREATION, so I sent some, together with other tracts. I ask your prayers for these poor men, should any have the qualifications for the truth. I told my brother to write again to London Tabernacle to see if they could not get somebody to go down to teach them. It would, indeed, be well if this could be done. I pray that your good work will bring forth fruit. Pray for me!

Yours very sincerely in Christ,

EDWARD H. CLAY.—*Toronto, Can.*

FAR-OFF TASMANIA HEARD FROM

DEAR FRIEND:—

I must tell you what a blessing the STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES have been to me, and what joy and peace they have given me! Although a believer for years past, yet I was dissatisfied and unwilling to consecrate myself. But now the Lord has seemed to meet me as he met the Prodigal in our Lord's parable.

The "vow unto the Lord" I have recently taken, and I would like to be baptized; I suppose, however, that none of the pilgrims visit this place, as it is isolated and the people are generally indifferent to spiritual matters. I have met but one interested person—a humble, simple woman—grieving over the loss of a child, the sorrow opening her heart to the things of God. Talking with her, she begged me to come again; she is eager to know more. I think others like her can be found here.

I should like to tell Pastor Russell fully what his books have done for me; but although I cannot do this, I do pray for him and his coworkers.

I hope soon to send a contribution for the work; I hope also that a pilgrim will make his appearance up this way. I occasionally attend a monthly religious service and would like some withdrawal letters if you will kindly send them.

Your Sister in Christ,

MRS. BLANCHE JOHNSON.—*Tasmania.*

VOL. XXXVI

BROOKLYN, N. Y., SEPTEMBER 15, 1915

No. 18

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER

REV. DR. GORDON'S WAR VIEWS

The "Toronto Globe" publishes the following stirring article from the pen of Rev. Charles W. Gordon, D. D., widely known under the pen-name of Ralph Connor. Rev. Gordon, as Chaplain of the Forty-third Battalion Cameron Highlanders, has returned to Canada, bringing back his wounded brother, Lieutenant A. R. Gordon. His article in the "Globe" follows:

BRITAIN SEES SPECTRE OF DEFEAT

"Every one has been dutifully saying that this war is a serious business, but no man living, not even Kitchener himself, knew till three months ago just how serious it was. Kitchener knows now. Asquith knows. Lloyd-George knows. Bonar Law knows. The labor leaders of Britain and the labor unions know just how serious, how deadly serious, this war is. And on London streets and in London offices, in the drawing rooms and at 'week-ends,' men are asking each other in whispers, questions they would not dare to ask aloud, and are getting answers that sometimes give a queer feeling at their British hearts.

"A serious business indeed is this war. The issue of it the cheerful and irresponsible optimist, with his eye on the past, when wars were waged by men and not by machines, and when valor, not explosives, won fights, declares to be assured—only one issue is possible—victory to our arms. A pleasant man this cheerful optimist, till you notice that his eye is upon the back trail or in the clouds. When you know him, you damn him for being a misleading fool. Every man in the empire that ought to be listened to sees no hope of victory, absolutely none, and little hope of a drawn battle, unless conditions be changed, so as to be utterly different from those under which the war has been hitherto waged.

"The first impression one got on reaching London, about two months ago, was that the traditional British cocksureness had been shattered and had been replaced by a paralyzing sense of uncertainty. You caught it everywhere; on the streets, in the hotels, at dinners, in the House of Commons and in the press—even in the press! It was not so much what people said, but what they refused to say. It was the determined and obvious effort to be cheerful that depressed and disturbed one. Everybody was saying to his neighbor, 'Cheer up, things will improve.'

"BLAMES WAR OFFICE FOR STATE OF THINGS

"But everybody, when by himself, refused to cheer up. He was mostly engaged during those lonely moments in blaming in his own particular way, something or somebody, and not the Germans either, but very largely those in the War Office.

"What was wrong? The fact was simply this: That the British people were standing and looking with newly-opened eyes at the spectre of defeat looming up through the channel mists; a spectre unlike the traditions of our dreams, sleeping or waking, in that it refused to disappear, and wore a shiny helmet. That spectre, unless conditions were changed, could not be laid, but would take on a reality of hideousness and permanency for their children to contemplate for successive generations. There are people doubtless reading this line who pause to say 'Rot.' But the British people are not saying 'Rot' any more, and did not say 'Rot' when their eyes were opened some two months and a half ago. Then the British people sat up broad awake, and with that superb cool courage that faces men up to unpleasant and terrible facts, looked the situation in the eye and began forthwith to change things.

"ASQUITH MET THINGS IN CHARACTERISTIC WAY

"The government showed the way. With that fine power of sacrifice which is the characteristic of the British statesman Asquith met the crisis, for crisis it was. It was a bitter, hard day for the Premier, the bitterest and hardest day of his whole career, but he was equal to the demand made upon his patriotism. A coalition government was formed. Then the housecleaning began. Among other things the War Office was reorganized. A new department was created with Lloyd-George, that wonderful, great, little man at its head. Up to this time the call had been for men, and more men. Now to the nation's ears came a new cry: "Munitions, munitions and more munitions." That 'wonder-working little Welshman' was onto his job.

"One question still remains to be answered: 'What is to be the issue of this serious war?' The answer is plain, so plain that even the erstwhile cheerful optimist can see it. And the answer is this: If the change in conditions so splendidly initiated be not continued, and with ever-increasing acceleration, the issue is, defeat.

"APPEAL FOR MUNITIONS

"What then is the immediate duty of Canadians? To raise large sums of money? Not so much. Old John Bull may be safely trusted to look after the financing of this war. But for Canada two things lie in her hand. Listen to the insistent iteration of Lloyd-George: 'Munitions and machine guns, munitions and machine guns! Let every Canadian wheel that can turn on a shell be set a-going. Let every Canadian workman and workwoman that can get to a munition factory or gun factory get there and with all speed. Shells and more shells! Machine guns and more machine guns!'

"Where British soldiers have two machine guns Germans have forty. Shells spent with prodigality—even wasted—mean battalions saved. We have tried fighting machine guns with men, and have learned our bitter lesson. Canadian shells and Canadian machine guns mean the saving of Canadian men. Seriously, soberly, solemnly let it be said, that unless the Empire can furnish in overwhelming quantities munitions of war, and in overwhelming numbers men of war, the bitterness and humiliation of defeat will be our portion, and the shame and slavery of an infamous and tyrannous militarism will be the portion of our children."

SORRY PLIGHT OF THE CLERGY

Ministers of the nominal churches are finding themselves in a tight place. They are expected to be faithful to their country, right or wrong. They are expected to preach the war as the will of God and the going to war as a meritorious matter that will have divine reward and blessing. They must encourage recruiting, in obedience to the commands of their earthly king, and in violation of the commands of the heavenly King, who has directed them to be peacemakers, and to follow peace with all men and to do no murder, either under legal sanction or otherwise.

WHEN THE MISTAKE WAS MADE

Long centuries ago a wrong step was taken by the bishops of the church in claiming that they were apostolic bishops—with apostolic powers, the same as the original twelve. Later these self-styled "apostolic bishops" (Revelation 2:2) concluded that the people need not have the Bible, and that they could simplify matters for the masses by giving them the creeds. They made their first creed in A. D. 325, and afterwards they continued to make "worse and more of it," until the Sixteenth Century. Meantime the Bible was tabooed. At one time it was almost a sure sign of heresy to be found reading the Bible; for this implied that the reader was not fully satisfied with the creeds which the "apostolic bishops" had made for the world. It was during this time that the horrible doctrines of the dark ages were introduced by our great adversary.

Then came a change, when the people began to demand the Bible and to doubt the infallibility of the "apostolic bishops" and their creeds. Early editions of the Bible were burned publicly, by both Protestant bishops and Catholic bishops, until the Bible triumphed and became too thoroughly entrenched in the minds of the people for this. The period of darkness lasted over twelve hundred years, the lamp of God's Word being absent. Then came various attempts at Bible Study, all more or less handicapped by the insistence of the bishops that the Bible must be interpreted by the creeds they had made. Nor are many out of the darkness yet. We all feel like saying, with Cardinal Newman:

"Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,
Lead thou me on;
The night is dark and I am far from home,
Lead thou me on!"

Only within the past forty years are Bible students really ignoring all creeds and going straight to the Bible itself for the light of divine truth; and correspondingly their blessing is increasing. The present great war, as everybody knows, has been held back for forty years. The Lord's object in holding it back in the past has been to favor Bible study. Thus we read: "I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth . . . and another angel . . . cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of God in their foreheads."—Rev. 7:1-3.

It was during that long period of darkness, when the Lamp of Truth was hidden from the people, that the "apostolic bishops" exalted themselves and separated from the remainder of the church—calling themselves the church, the hierarchy, the clergy, and denominating the masses the laity, contrary to the Master's words, "All ye are brethren," and to St. Peter's words to the whole church, "Ye are a royal priesthood."

The clergy, having exalted themselves, took another step, claiming power as well as authority. The claim went forth that the time had come for the church to reign. Accordingly, a chief bishop was named Pontiff, or Pope, and he and all of his successors were decreed to be Christ's vice-gerents—reigning over the kingdoms of the world as Christ's representatives. As such, they commissioned the various kings to rule their people in Christ's name, thus identifying the various governments of the world with the church and making a combined reign, spiritual and temporal—two parts of God's empire on earth, they claimed.

For centuries the Popes had such power that kings dared not dissent, but found it to their advantage to uphold the claim of Papacy, submitting everything to Papal direction. A king might not divorce a wife and marry another without a special dispensation from the Pope. The Pope did not respond quickly enough to the wishes of King Henry VIII. of England in respect to approval of his marriage to his second wife. Then the king broke off relations with the Papacy and started a church of his own—himself the head—authorizing and sanctioning his bishops, and giving them places in the House of Lords; they authorizing and sanctioning him, in return, as the head of the church of England. Luther did a similar work for German kings and princes, for the Swedish, Danish, Finnish, etc. The Greek Catholics, also dissenting from the Papacy, sanctioned the Russian government.

Thus we have the fact that present governments of Europe have been told by the religious systems that they are God's kingdoms—sanctioned by the Almighty through his earthly representatives—in some cases the Papacy; in some, Lutheranism; in some, the church of England; in some, the Greek church.

WHAT A TERRIBLE MUDDLE!

"But," we are told, "that is ancient history. No educated people believe those things now!" We agree to this. We doubt if King George really thinks of himself as the head of Christ's church on earth and the divinely-appointed defender of the faith. We doubt if Kaiser Wilhelm seriously thinks that he is God's special representative to Lutherans. We doubt if the Czar takes seriously his claimed relationship to Messiah's kingdom. We doubt if Francis Joseph of Hungary takes seriously the thought that he is the representative of Christ's kingdom under Papal appointment. Nevertheless the theory is there. It is in the mind of the people.

The preachers of all denominations, in tacitly accepting these conditions and not reproving them and not denying them, have in fact approved them; and they have not told the people that a great mistake was made—that Christ's kingdom has never been established in the earth, but that it is the next thing in order to be expected. Hence the people are in perplexity. German Christians are fighting as a part of Christ's kingdom against Russian Christians as a part of Christ's kingdom and against British Christians as a part of Christ's kingdom. What a terrible muddle! And who is responsible, if the preachers are not, for such ignorance, blindness, superstition?

Meantime, God's kingdom is coming, just as the Bible has foretold. The great time of trouble is about to inaugurate the new reign—Messiah's reign of righteousness. But is not this latter coming as a thief and as a snare upon the whole world? Is it not true that as the Apostle foretold, only "Ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief"?

Meantime also, are not the preachers of the world, Catholic and Protestant, in a terrible plight? Their forefathers told humanity that the present governments are Christ's kingdoms. These learned men, knowing well the fallacy of that teaching, have not corrected it. Now they are in the position of hypocrites. These earthly kingdoms call upon them to raise the money and the troops to defend what they have told the people is Christ's kingdom. But the Word of God calls upon them to be peacemakers instead, and to so teach the people.

The people themselves are perplexed. But we may be sure that when they come to their senses—and they soon will, in the terrible trouble coming—they will not only feel incensed against the earthly princes who got them into the war, but they will doubtless also feel incensed against the spiritual princes who deceived them into thinking that they were fighting for Messiah's kingdom—when in point of fact, they are opposing it.

The spirit of war and contention seems to be in the very air that we breathe. The attitude of all Christian people, and especially of all Bible students, should be that of peacemakers, in the home, in the shop, in the store. Let us keep our own heads cool, and thus be able to assist others to think and act coolly, calmly, in accord with the Lord's Word. Everything akin to wrath, anger, evil-speaking and bitterness should, as

the Apostle says, be put far away from us who seek to be followers of the Lamb. These same principles apply in very marked degree to our relationship with brethren in the church of Christ. With the brethren, especially, we should be very long-suffering and willing to surrender our preferences in the interests of peace, particularly where no vital principles are involved.

RESULTS OF ONE YEAR OF WAR

In the "New York American" (August 2nd) B. C. Forbes summarizes the effects of the present European War as follows:

"Look on these two pictures—what one year of war has done for Europe and what one year of peace has done for the United States:

"One year of war has cost Europe 2,600,000 of her best human stock, has maimed over 5,000,000 more and has entailed over 10,000,000 casualties among the men in the field—the 'casualties' among homes are beyond computation.

"One year of war has added \$18,900,000,000 to national debts, actually, though not admittedly, bankrupting every belligerent.

"One year of war has paralyzed Europe's trade and turned some twenty millions of productive workers into twenty millions of destructive workers, while the greater part of each warring population is engaged in catering directly or indirectly to the war gods—devils, rather.

"EUROPE PROSTRATED

"One year of war has laid waste vast territories of Europe and ruined and rendered homeless perhaps fifty million human beings, to say nothing of the destruction of much of the world's most hallowed architecture.

"One year of war, in short, has prostrated and bankrupted Europe.

"One year of domestic peace amid the horrors of Europe's war has raised the United States to the forefront of the nations of the earth.

"One year of peace has won for us first place in moral influence.

"One year of peace has won for us first place in financial power.

"One year of peace has won for us first place among the industrial nations of the world.

"One year of peace has transformed us from a borrowing into a lending nation.

"One year of peace has sped us along the path toward becoming the financial center of the world.

"One year of peace has enabled us to feed and succor millions and millions of innocent, helpless victims of the war—this last not the least notable of America's achievements during the blackest year the earth has ever known. One year of peace, in short, has brought the United States an infinity of blessings, just as one year of war has brought Europe an infinity of horrors and disasters."

WILL THE UNITED STATES BECOME INVOLVED?

The article proceeds to query the future and the possibility of the United States becoming involved. How strange that such a possibility should be even considered in the light of the fact that all of the nations now at war would be glad to get out of it honorably at almost any price! The danger is seen along the lines of international laws and the rights of neutrals. Armed air craft and submarines have brought new factors into this war not considered in the laying down of rules of warfare, not dealt with in the international laws. International law provides that neutral nations and their commerce shall not be disturbed, except in the case of blockaded ports. Any ship entering such a port may be examined. If owned by the enemy, the vessel and cargo are subject to confiscation. If owned by a neutral nation, they should be exempt except as respects munitions of war.

Great Britain has violated the rights of the United States and other neutral nations in respect to these matters. She has not blockaded the ports actually, but has declared them blockaded and has seized neutral vessels anywhere on the high seas and taken them into British ports, regardless of their cargo not being contraband of war. American shippers have complained greatly of detention and loss. They are sure, however, that ultimately they will get justice—probably when the war is ended.

Great Britain excuses these violations of international law and agreement by declaring that conditions have changed, and that it is to her interest to change her mode of operation. When in the arrangement of international law she agreed to the provision that food-stuffs would be free, she had in mind the fact that she needed to import food-stuffs herself. But

later, perceiving that the Germans might be starved if free shipments were not permitted, she concluded that her warfare against the Germans might be more effective if food supplies were stopped and the Germans were partly starved.

In the international agreement, cotton is not included as war material and is not subject to seizure as such. Great Britain and Germany both agreed to this, because neither produces cotton. Both purchase it from America for manufacture of clothing, hosiery, etc. However, conditions have changed to such an extent that a large portion of the ammunition used in this war is made of cotton. Hence the British refuse to allow American shipments of cotton to go to Germany, either directly or through neutral countries, and have seized cargoes of it—contrary to international law, claiming the right to do this because she has the might—the most powerful navy—and because she considers it to be necessary to her speedier crushing of Germany.

The Germans also have violated international law, to which they agreed. They have announced a blockade of British ports without having their navy blockading these ports. This is called a "paper blockade," in the sense that it is merely announced in print, just as the British have announced the German blockade in print, without having vessels actually blockading the German ports. Germany declares that new conditions (submarines and air-craft) justify her in violating the laws of nations and destroying vessels which her submarines cannot take as prizes into her ports. Her attention has been called to the fact that this jeopardizes the lives of non-combatants and neutrals and their proper pursuits. She has been asked by the United States Government to desist from this violation of law.

Germany declares that circumstances have altered cases; that it is necessary for her success and self-preservation that she shall establish a blockade against Great Britain as nearly parallel as possible to the one Great Britain has established against her; and that her only means of accomplishing this end is in the destruction of British vessels, which are carrying volunteers, arms and war munitions of various kinds to Great Britain, intended for the destruction of Germans and their homes. Germany regrets her inability under the circumstances, to follow international law, to which she has agreed, and claims justification in the fact that the British have violated the same law. Germany has agreed, however, to respect the vessels of neutrals, if assured that they do not carry munitions of war. She calls attention to the fact that she notified vessels of neutrals (in her paper blockade) to keep out of the war zone; and says that if neutrals travel on ships of the Allies their lives and property must be at their own risk.

PROPER COURSE OF UNITED STATES

Regardless of where our sympathies would naturally rest, either by our parentage or by association in life, all must admit that both parties in this great struggle are in dire straits, and therefore under great temptation to violate, as they have done, international law. But how should the United States meet the situation? Would it be the wise, the proper, thing to get into an altercation with any of these nations because of their violation of the law? If not, how can we protect effectively?

We reply that a dignified and proper course would be to refuse to have any commercial dealings with the nations at war so long as they violate the international law to which they have agreed. We believe that this would bring both of the great powers to time and put a stop to the interference with neutrals and their affairs. Why should the portion of the world that is at peace be upset and inconvenienced by those at war? It would be permitted only because the nations at war are powerful. If the breaking off of commercial dealings with the entire war zone were accomplished, and Americans and their goods were kept outside those zones, trouble would be saved, even if the warring nations did not acquiesce and give guarantee of the observance of international laws.

Business interests cry out against such a dignified course, such a fair policy. They exclaim, "This would spoil the whole business!" We have orders for hundreds of millions of dollars worth of war materials at splendid prices, and we would lose all this. Therefore the suggested policy would never do."

We admit that according to international law the people of a neutral country may privately manufacture for warring nations. We admit that such trade is profitable. Nevertheless it is a permission, and not an obligation, that subjects of neutral nations may, according to international law, thus deal with belligerent nations. But that there is no compulsion in the matter is evident from the fact that our Government has already exercised its discretion in stopping the sale of war

materials to Mexico, for instance. It has the same right, and without infringing neutrality, to stop the sale of war materials to every nation at war. Such a penalty upon the violation of international law would be, apparently, the only way of bringing belligerents to time.

Besides, our overtures to the warring nations and the prayers of many on their behalf and the sending of supplies, physicians, nurses, etc., to assist in caring for their wounded, all have the appearance of pitiable mockery in the light of the assistance we are rendering for the continuation of the war through permitting American manufacturers to sell war munitions to the warring nations, which are interfering with the rights of all neutrals and violating international law.

In any event, how foolish it would be that these United States should get into a controversy with any of the warring powers, when the whole world is witness to their folly and when they themselves are wishing most earnestly that they had kept out of the war.

We cannot appeal to our nation as a nation of Christians, along the lines of the commands of Jesus; but all consecrated children of God should remember that there are but two sides,

two banners, two captains. Christians have enlisted under the banner of the Prince of Peace, who is opposing the prince of darkness, whose fall will be accomplished in the great time of revolution and anarchy which the Bible predicts will follow this war, and which, thank God! will be the doorway to the Millennial kingdom and the great blessing which will then come to the world through it. "For the elect's sake, those days [of strife and anarchy] shall be shortened"—interrupted (Matthew 24:22); for when men shall have learned the great lesson of what the outcome of selfishness would be without divine interposition, God's power through Messiah's kingdom will promptly take control; and the blessing of the Lord will cause the winds of strife to cease, as did the Master's words on Galilee cause a great calm when the storm was at its height.

Meantime, regardless of the course of the world, it is the duty of the Lord's consecrated people to preserve unbiased, neutral minds—to look at matters from God's viewpoint, as far as possible—to sympathize with all and to join with none—to stand for peace in action, in word, in thought. "Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God."

THE MIRACULOUS BIRTH OF JESUS

It is not strange that men should question the teaching of the Bible respecting the miraculous birth of Jesus. Voltaire, Paine, Ingersoll and others have denied it. Nor do we question the right of Rev. Dr. Aked and others of today to take up the same arguments. We live in a free country. Candor in our day need not lead anybody to the stake. We rejoice in these liberties.

But we are surprised that Dr. Aked should still claim to be a Christian, and still retain the pastorate of a Christian church, while denying the very foundation of the Christian religion. Our amazement grows when we learn that after he had frankly acknowledged his unbelief he was elected to be the head of the Church Federation in San Francisco.

Think of the meaning of the votes of more than three-fourths of that Federation (78), agreeing that Jesus was not supernaturally born! Less than one-fourth of these Federationists (22) believe the fundamental doctrine of Christianity!

We can hear these learned gentlemen remonstrate, saying, Pastor Russell, you should realize that there are two Christianities in our day. We belong to the newer and larger one, which has the backing of all the colleges. We therefore have first right to the name Christian. The old view, which you uphold, has doctrines of human depravity—of a divine sentence, which must be met by the death of a perfect, sinless Savior. We "modernists" still hold to Christ, but as a great Teacher—not a Redeemer. Your old view deals with personal sin. Our newer, broader view deals with national and civic sins and their cure and a gradual evolution of the race to perfection and everlasting life—only the fittest surviving.

A RESPONSIBILITY UPON THE MINISTRY

Were numbers and influence the sole criterion by which Christianity is to be discerned, we might be forced to concede the point. But they are not. Christianity was established by Jesus and his apostles. The unbelief of few or many cannot change Christianity. If we shall prove our points, we shall hope that the seventy-eight believers in the Christianity (?) of the colleges will realize that in retaining the names of Christian and holding pastorates in Christian churches, they are sailing under false colors; and they should resign or induce their congregations to unite with them in some new name, such as "Humanitarians."

Merely to endorse a few of Jesus' teachings such as the Golden Rule, while rejecting his other teachings, would not give any one the right to the name Christian. Plato, Confucius and other sages uttered some teachings which we approve. Why not adopt their names? Is it because they are less popular in our day?

* * *

Dr. Aked admits that St. Matthew gives the line of Joseph, who adopted Jesus as his foster-child—the son of his virgin wife by divine power. He admits that St. Luke gives the genealogy of Mary, the mother of Jesus. He admits, also, that St. John's Gospel tells of the prehuman existence of Jesus.

But Dr. Aked challenges proof that Jesus himself claimed a supernatural birth. He boldly declares that St. Peter never refers to it. He exultingly points us to the Epistles of St. Paul, as not teaching that Jesus was a supernatural Person. One might suppose, when reading Dr. Aked's statement, that he fully believes and endorses all the teachings of Jesus. St. Peter and St. Paul and that if they had told of the miraculous birth he would be a hearty believer in it and an advocate of

it. Let us see! Let us give Dr. Aked and his seventy-eight supporters the proof of their error and accept the Bible. "Charity hopeth all things!"

The Bible stands or falls as a whole. Its plan of salvation, made up of the teachings of Jesus, the apostles and the prophets, cannot be accepted in part and rejected in part. If Jesus and his apostles taught that he had a special birth for a special purpose, and this were not true, they were wicked deceivers. Then not one word of theirs should be accepted or trusted. To call Jesus the Great Teacher and then to say that the basis of his teaching is falsehood, is inconsistent, would imply sympathy with falsehood.

ST. PETER'S TESTIMONY

The teaching of Jesus was chiefly by induction. He had been with his disciples working miracles for probably two years before he asked them, "Whom say ye that I am?" When St. Peter declared, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus replied, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."—Matthew 16:15-17.

Did not St. Peter thus declare his faith that Jesus was the Son of God—not the son of Joseph? And did not Jesus approve this, and refer to the heavenly and not to an earthly father?

What did Jesus mean when he declared, "Before Abraham was, I am?" By induction he told of a pre-human existence—or he deceived! Similarly he prayed to the Father, "Glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." (John 8:58; 17:5) If he had no previous existence, but was born like others, his words were deceptive. Was the great Teacher the great deceiver?

Again Jesus told his disciples about his ascending up where he was before. If he had no previous existence, if he had not a special birth, how could we understand these words except as deceptive? Similarly Jesus referred to himself as "the bread which came down from heaven."—John 6:62; 32-35, 41.

Surely Jesus was miraculously born, or else he was the greatest and most successful of all deceivers, and therefore the worst of all deceivers. Let each take his choice. There is no middle ground.

ST. PAUL'S VIEW OF THE SUBJECT

Having heard from Jesus and from St. Peter, let us hear from St. Paul. What is the force, or significance of St. Paul's statement that Jesus is "the first-born of every creature," and that "by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible . . . all things were created by him and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist"? (Colossians 1:15-17) These words by the Apostle are surely not in accord with the theory that Jesus began his existence the same as others—that he was the son of Joseph.

Again St. Paul writes, "Our Lord Jesus, though he was rich, for our sakes became poor." (2 Corinthians 8:9) Again he declares, "Who, existing in a form of God, counted not equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men."—Philippians 2:6, 7.

Again, what is the meaning of St. Paul's declaration that Jesus was "holy, guileless, undefiled and separate from sinners"? (Hebrews 7:26) If Jesus was the son of Joseph, he

was not separate from sinners, but belonged to the same stock with all others and would also have needed a redeemer.

ST. JOHN'S STATEMENTS

The early church all believed Jesus' declaration that he was the Son of God, whom the Father had sent into the world to be the Savior of men. (John 3:17) Indeed, this feature of the Master's teachings especially angered the Jews; for they declared that in claiming to be the Son of God he was establishing himself upon a pedestal of honor, dignity, glory, in competition with Jehovah. To this Jesus replied, "Say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest! because I said, I am the Son of God?"—John 10:36.

The Gospel by St. John was written later than the other Gospels, hence it was not necessary that the writer should take up the miraculous birth of Jesus. But it was eminently proper that through him God should give us a glimpse into the pre-human condition of the Savior. Mark well the particularity of the Apostle's words: "In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with the God, and the Logos was a God. The same was in the beginning with the God. All things were made by him, and without him was not one thing made that was made . . . And the Logos was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."—John 1:1-14.

BASIS OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE RANSOM

Separated from the doctrine of the virgin birth of Jesus, the theology of the Bible would not hold together for one moment. Its claim is that the divine sentence following Adam's sin was a death sentence. The basis of that divine judgment is that no sinner is worthy of life everlasting. The six thousand years of the world's history, from Adam's time until now, demonstrate that man is unable to regain perfection, and unable to resist the curse of sin and the sentence of death—"Dying, thou shalt die."—Genesis 2:17, margin.

The teaching of the Bible is that God arranged this death sentence purposely, so as to make necessary the death of Jesus. St. Paul so declares, saying, "As by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead; for as all in Adam die, even so all in Christ shall be made alive, every man in his own order." (1 Corinthians 15:21-23) In other words, if God had not provided a sinless Redeemer, and if that Redeemer had not died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

and risen from the dead for our justification, then there would have been no future life for humanity—the death of mankind would have been like that of the brute, a hopeless one. There would have been no resurrection. Death would have been an eternal sleep.

St. Paul emphasizes this thought, declaring that if there be no resurrection of the dead, then all faith is vain, all hope is vain, all preaching, is vain. (1 Corinthians 15:13, 14) No one will question the declaration of the Scriptures that all humanity are mis-shapen in iniquity, and that in sin did our mothers conceive us. Father Adam and Mother Eve gave us, as their children, a legacy of imperfection of mind and body and of sinful tendencies. God's provision is that Christ shall make good for the transgression of the first Adam, and that eventually he shall be the second Adam, who will be successful, who will give life everlasting to all those who will exercise obedient faith in him.

BASIS OF THE DOCTRINE OF RESTITUTION

The first offer of everlasting life through Christ has been going out for nineteen centuries; but few have hearing ears and understanding hearts. It is to these few that the call now comes to leave the world and to become associates with Jesus in the glory, honor and immortality to which he had attained. He attained the glorious station which he now occupies, "far above angels, principalities and powers," at the right hand of the Majesty on high, as a reward for his obedience to the Father's will—obedience in coming into the world, in enduring faithfully the trials of his earthly ministry, and finally in dying a sacrificial death. St. Paul writes of him, "Who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hebrews 12:2) The invitation of this Gospel age to all who have the hearing ear is to follow in the steps of Jesus, to become joint-sacrificers with him, and to be sharers of his heavenly glory and his Messianic kingdom.

When the church shall all have been gathered, then Messiah's kingdom will be established, for which we pray, "Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." For a thousand years Christ and his glorified church will bless mankind, uplifting them to human perfection, mental, moral, physical. Whosoever will may then attain to the everlasting life secured for all by the sacrificial death of him who was "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners," by virtue of his special birth.

APOSTOLIC INJUNCTION NEVER SO SIGNIFICANT

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

From a careful study of Bible chronology it seems very evident that each of the six great Days in which Jehovah prepared the earth for man, ending with man's own creation, was a period of seven thousand years. After man was created, God "rested from all his work"—as related to the earth. His rest period began with the commencement of the great seventh day, and has continued ever since. This seventh day is also to be a period of seven thousand years, ushering in at its close the glorious Jubilee of Earth, 4,000 years after the beginning of the ordering of earth.

This great rest day of Jehovah has been man's work week, each day of which has been a thousand years long. When the Apostle Paul wrote the words of our text, more than four of these thousand-year days were in the past; they were then in the fifth day. Practically all of this time had been a reign of sin, darkness and death, due to man's fall. So St. Paul could truly say, as he looked back, that this great night of darkness was then far spent and the day was at hand. From the Old Testament prophecies and from the wonderful revelations which he himself had received from the Lord he was assured that, through the sacrifice for man which had been made by the Lord Jesus Christ, a glorious day of emancipation from the bondage of Sin and Death was to come—the seventh day of man's great week. It is of this glorious Sabbath day that the Apostle here speaks.

For one-half of the long period since the fall of our first parents, there had been but a very obscure light as regarded any deliverance of man from the curse of death pronounced upon the father of the race for his disobedience. There was the mere glimmer of a promise that God would at some future time do something for mankind. First there had been a declaration to the serpent who had brought about man's downfall, that the seed of the woman should bruise, or crush, his head, while he would but bruise the heel of this seed. Then the clothing by the Lord of the nakedness of Adam and Eve with

the skins of slain animals suggested a future covering provided by the death of some unknown Redeemer—the seed of the woman. Later, God manifested his acceptance of the animal-sacrifice of Abel. A little later came a suggestion of Enoch (Jude 14-16), and still later, a promise to Abraham, that God would yet bless all the families of the earth through his seed.

Then came a gradual working out of a feature of that Promise to Abraham, through the Hebrew people, to make of them, if they would prove worthy, a nation who would be light-bearers to all other nations and peoples. Still with all the disciplinary experiences which Israel received, when our Lord Jesus came, those who had been under such special divine instruction were, as a nation, totally unready to receive him as the Messiah of God. And they crucified him. Yet they were in advance of other nations. God had not given instructions to other nations, but had given Prophets, laws, etc., to the people of Israel. (Amos 3:2) But while this especially favored nation was quite unready for the light, as represented in the Lord Jesus and his teachings, there were some among them who were ready to receive him as the Sent of God, Israel's long-looked-for Messiah. These were the "Israelites indeed."

THE CALL OF THE "BRIDE" CLASS

"He came unto his own [nation], and his own received him not." At the time of the crucifixion of Christ, after John the Baptist had done his work and after our Lord's three and a half years of ministry among them, only a little more than five hundred had become Jesus' disciples and had remained true. Yet at Pentecost and onward a considerable number were awakened, and came into the light of truth and accepted the Gospel message and received the holy Spirit. About twenty-five thousand, so far as we are able to estimate, received this transformation of heart. It is a wonderful thing that so many of that little nation were found to accept Messiah! No other nation would have made so good a showing. As history has

proven, more than 1800 years have been required to select the remainder of the 144,000 elect from among the Gentiles.

At that time the message was given forth that the Gospel call was designed to select a "bride" class, to be associated with the Messiah in his glorious kingdom. It was not designed for all, but only for those who had the ears to hear and the heart to respond. If we place ourselves back in the days of the apostles, we can think of them as preparing themselves for their great coming glory and as thinking that the foreordained number to constitute this honored company would soon be completed. They probably thought that these thousands gathered from all the Jews in Palestine and other countries, and especially when augmented by some from the Gentiles whom they perceived were later received, would make up the "little flock" which would compose the "bride" of Christ. Hence the Apostles were continually speaking as if the kingdom was at hand. They thought it imminent—were expecting it every day.

NO CLEAR CHRONOLOGY UNTIL OUR DAY

But the Apostle Paul pointed out that certain Scriptures had not yet been fulfilled, and that there must be a great falling away in the church before the great day of the Lord could come. The early church probably had no particular method in which they could have reckoned definitely the number of years since Adam. The matter of counting years, as we have it, is comparatively a modern affair. In olden times each nation had its own chronology. They merely reckoned that it was so many years since this dynasty or that dynasty began; so many years from a certain notable event to the first year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, of Cyrus, etc.

And so with the Israelites. They would say, In such a year of the reign of David, or of Hezekiah, etc., such and such an event took place. But it was not easy to get these things connected up so as to have any accurate chain of chronology. There were certain broken links, which our Lord has since supplied for us in the New Testament, to be noted and connected up "in due time." Today we have more advantage every way than they had. The Hebrew Scriptures were written on parchment and kept in certain places. And it was difficult to handle them because they were written on great rolls. One had to roll the parchment this way and that way to get to the place where he wished to read certain prophecies, etc. Today, not only have we Bibles neatly printed, but many of them have convenient marks of reference by which we can turn from page to page. We have suggestions, also, as to chronology which enable us to get a clear, connected chain from the creation of Adam to the present year.

It is true also that the Jews have a chronology that is called Anno Mundi—the year of the world. But it was not arranged until long after the days of the Apostles. They thought it was a long, long way back to the time of Adam. The Apostle Peter declares that a day with the Lord is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day. The Jews had no means by which they could accurately reckon chronology from the beginning; no means for availing themselves of information on the subject. It is not surprising, then, that they were not clearly informed. The Lord, undoubtedly by design, left matters in this uncertain condition until his own "due time" for their revelation.

THE DAY OF CHRIST NOW ON HAND

In the days of the apostles it was truly declared by them that the day of the Lord was "at hand." The apostles perceived that a great Light had come into the world, that a turning-point in the history of the world had arrived. But it was not the shining of the Sunlight of the great Millennial day. St. Paul declared that the darkness still covered the earth and gross darkness the people. The Lord Jesus himself had explained that the light that then shone from him was not the great "Sun of Righteousness," which would later shine out upon the whole world. Neither did the disciples of Christ shed a light as the light of the sun upon the world of mankind. Our Lord told his disciples that they should put their light upon a candlestick, that it might give light to those in the house.—Matthew 5:14-16.

But it would require the light of the "Sun of Righteousness" to enlighten the whole world—Christ and his church in glory. Our Lord pointed out that this would come at the conclusion of the age then just begun—the Gospel age, as it is generally called, the Christian dispensation. At the beginning of this age he sowed the seed which would produce the "bride" class, the class which was to reign with him over the world in the age to follow. But he forewarned the enemy, Satan, would sow the seeds of error in the Lord's wheat-field, and that he would be successful in producing a large crop of tares. Our Lord also declared that at the end of this Gospel age he would himself be present and would, as the great Chief Reaper,

gather the tares in bundles to be burned, and would gather the wheat into the garner. Speaking of that time the Master says, "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."—Matthew 13:43.

That time has not yet fully come. But this glorious day is now breaking. The majority of the members of Christ are now with their Lord on the other side of the veil, and the dawning light is increasing, and the day will soon be here in all its glorious effulgence. This dawning light draws our attention more particularly to the chronology and helps us to see mistakes that were made in the past by those who attempted to arrange a chronology before the time was ripe for it to be seen clearly. It shows us that a mistake of a hundred and twenty years was made, and still later lesser mistakes.

Tracing the Scriptural chronology down to our day, we find that we are now living in the very dawn of the great seventh day of man's great week. This is abundantly corroborated by the events now taking place about us on every hand. The Millennial age has already begun, the day of the Lord is now on hand—now present. So we should not sleep, but should be wide awake. Some terrible things were to occur as the day of Christ drew on, before the full shining forth of the Sun. For instance, this present mighty war, which is truly a terrible thing, was long ago foretold. (Jeremiah 25:15-38; Joel 3:2, 9-16) Daily is it increasing in volume and intensity, and will soon merge into revolution, to be swiftly followed by the chaos of anarchy. The great adversary is able to put darkness for light—and these warring nations verily think they are doing God service by killing one another.

Now the question is, Will the United States become involved? This may come, or this country may receive its share of retribution in the coming revolution and anarchy. We attribute all this terrible condition to the darkness that is upon the world through the adversary's blinding delusions. But God will overrule human affairs to his own glory and to the ultimate good of man in the overthrow of the rule of selfishness and the establishment of his glorious kingdom of righteousness and love.

"Cast off the works of darkness," urges the Apostle. This injunction was appropriate in St. Paul's day. Those who saw Jesus to be the Light of the world, those who became enlightened with his Light, and themselves became burning and shining lights, were able to realize that the great darkness prevailing around them was largely the result of ignorance, superstition, misunderstanding. The whole heathen world were in gross darkness. The Jewish nation were in darkness, except the minority who received the light. What darkness were the Jews in? They were in darkness in respect to God's plan and the meaning of the promise to Abraham and his seed respecting the blessing of the world.

"THE WHOLE WORLD LIETH IN THE WICKED ONE"

All those who became children of the light, who received the light from the Master's teachings or from his chosen Apostles and came into covenant relationship with God through the begetting of the holy Spirit, became members of the special seed of Abraham, who are to bless the world during the incoming age. But the nation of Israel was set aside, as respects the chief favor. In the year 70 A. D., their national polity was entirely destroyed, and the Jews were scattered far and wide. What was the condition of other nations at that time? We perceive that while Israel had been in darkness, the other nations were in still deeper darkness, though many of them were "feeling after God, if haply they might find him." The god of this world has blinded the minds of those who see not. Consequently he has blinded the minds of the majority of all nations with ignorance, superstition and "doctrines of devils."

The devil has men in such a condition that they cannot think of God as being good. "The whole world lieth in the wicked one." The only ones who are not in the wicked one are the true church of God, the church of Christ. The children of the light are the only exceptions. It is from the Word of God that his true people get their light. They are to have oil in themselves—the oil of the holy Spirit. But many of these have not been faithful to the light and are in confusion; some are merely babes in Christ; some are weak in various ways for lack of the spiritual food which the Lord has provided.

It is God's people who have been addressed in the Scriptures all the way down these nineteen hundred years. We come down to our day and see that the light of the Word is fully corroborated by the work of the new dispensation now beginning. The light of the dawn is fully corroborating the Bible. St. Paul says that we should "cast off the works of darkness" and "put on the armor of light." The works of darkness are those things which are done in the dark. The works of darkness are the works of sin. These works are not

done out in the open, as a rule. They generally hide away from the revelation which the light brings. If they are done in the open, it is when they are posing as works of light. Wherever the true light of Jesus Christ comes it reproves these works of darkness.

The scribes and the Pharisees of Jesus' day were money-lovers. Jesus condemned their works because these were mere pretense. While they prayed in street corners, etc., they privately devoured widows' houses—took advantage of widows and swallowed up their property. But it was true of the public in general—of the Gentiles as well as the Jews. The apostles enumerated a number of the evils that were generally practised in his day—adultery, lasciviousness, covetousness, witchcraft, hatred, wrath, strife, heresies, evil-speaking, idolatry, etc. All these things are works of darkness, works of the flesh and of the devil; and they are still practised everywhere today.

THE ARMOR OVER THE ROBE

We are to put on the "armor of light." Consider the light you have now received—the light of the knowledge of God, of his will, of what to live for, and of what kind of characters they are to whom the Lord will be pleased to grant the reward of eternal life, even the highest form of life. Having all this knowledge, put it on as an armor to protect you. Knowing what God requires, put all this on, not as a robe, but as an armor over the robe. Put on the breastplate of righteousness covering the heart. Realize that nothing but heart-purity and absolute loyalty to God may be considered. Realize that God is for us. Take the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, and all the various pieces enumerated by the Apostle. These constitute the "armor of light," so called because it is obtained from the light of truth.

In this our day it is surely as important that we should put on this armor and should put off the works of darkness as for the church of the Apostle's day. Surely if ever the whole armor was needed, it is needed now. The Lord's dealing with us is individual—both as to the putting off of the works of darkness and as to the putting on of the armor of light. All who put on this armor will find themselves in accord with the Lord and with those who are truly his. As God's faithful children get farther and farther into this day of the Lord, more and more will they see eye to eye. We believe there never was a time when so many of the Lord's people have seen eye to eye regarding the things to put off and the things to put on. We believe there never was a time when so many of the children of the light were wearing the whole armor of light. Therefore we have so much the more responsibility to "walk as children of light" and not as of the night.

DANGER TO EVEN THE FULLY CONSECRATED

It is possible that some, even of the fully consecrated children of God, surrounded with the cares of this life, or weary of the struggle against sin and evil, or somewhat beguiled by the present things of time and sense, may have become more or less drowsy, and so stand in special need of the stirring exhortation which the Apostle in this connection gives to the church—particularly appropriate today: "It is now high time to awake out of sleep!" It is time for earnest, searching self-examination, for a more diligent watching to see that we do not allow the things of this "present evil world" to absorb our thoughts and energies to the imperiling of our heavenly hopes, so soon to be realized if we remain wholly faithful to the end. It is highly important that we seek for a still closer walk with God, a more intimate fellowship with him, a more thorough self-abnegation, a more diligent cross-bearing, a more faithful conformity in every respect to the whole will of the

Lord concerning us. And this will of the Lord, we know, is not unreasonable, and his grace sufficient is promised for every day, every hour, every moment!

A careful, prayerful searching of our hearts will make plain wherein we lack in conformity to the perfect will of God. And if we discover in ourselves any perverse way, we shall correct it. Thus we more and more "put on the Lord Jesus Christ"—the mind or disposition of Christ, the spirit of love and loyalty which characterized him. How important it is, in the very short time which yet remains to us, that we fully awake and apply ourselves most diligently to the cultivation of the Godlike, Christlike disposition of love, the love which seeks above all else the glory of God, which is kindly-affectioned toward the brethren, which rests in the precious promises, which trusts fully in the dark as well as in the light, and which has no shadow of doubt that all the good things promised in God's Word shall be fulfilled!

LET US "WALK AS BECOMETH SAINTS"

In the context St. Paul urges, "Let us walk honestly, as in the day." He was speaking of certain vile practices then common—drunkenness, rioting, chambering, wantonness. We are not necessarily to suppose that he meant this as a reproof to the Christian believers at Rome, but as a pastoral exhortation that they should be on guard against these sins, and as a reminder that the principles which they had adopted as Christians were in direct contrast to those which generally prevailed. Very different standards of morality were current among the heathen. Quite a large number of the believers at Rome had been heathen and accustomed to immoralities. Hence the Apostle's words were words of caution; for we would not suppose that saints would be guilty of these things.

The Apostle's words above shed a warning light in saying, "Let us walk honestly, as in the day." Most of the rioting and drunkenness is done at night—such is the custom even to this day. Works of darkness and sin thrive best at night for some reason. People have other things to attend to in the day-time, and evil-doers take the night for frivolity or carousing or crime. Vice then stalks abroad. Darkness seems to favor such works, by hiding them more or less. The Apostle points out that this is the great night of darkness, sin, but that those in Christ are not in darkness; for they have been brought into the light of God. We are looking for the full dawning of the Morning of the new dispensation—we are seeking to live in harmony with it. So here he says, Let us walk honestly, above-board, so that everybody will see and know our lives—let us be honest in every way, not be preaching one thing and practising another.

Considering the day here mentioned to be the Millennial day, we may well say that nothing in the nature of sin will then be allowed. "For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." (Micah 4:2) "Judgment also will I lay to the line," says Jehovah, "and righteousness to the plummet; and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the water shall overflow the hiding-place." (Isaiah 28:17) Whoever in that day shall attempt to live riotously and in drunkenness or in any sin will be promptly punished. The Apostle's exhortation is that we, as saints of the Lord, should live as those will be living when the day shall have fully come—when the Sun of Righteousness will be shedding its beams over the whole earth.

It is a part of our overcoming to live as though the day were fully ushered in, as though everything had been fully manifested. Whoever will take the Apostle's advice in this matter will certainly have a rich blessing. In fact any other course would be sure to be disastrous to us as new creatures in Christ.

AHAB'S SIN—COVETOUSNESS, MURDER

OCTOBER 3.—1 KINGS 21.

KING AHAB'S IVORY PALACE—HE COVETED LARGER GARDENS—NABOTH REFUSED LARGE MONEY—AHAB WAS VEXED—HIS QUEEN EFFECTED NABOTH'S MURDER—GOD THROUGH ELIJAH REPROVED KING AHAB, PROMISING PUNISHMENT—MODERN APPLICATIONS AND LESSONS.

"Be sure your sin will find you out."—Numbers 32:23.

King Ahab had concluded a great war victoriously, defeating the Syrians, who had attempted an invasion of Israel's land. The fame of the king had gone abroad. He was feeling his own greatness, perhaps. Indeed, Ahab is rated as one of the great kings of Israel. Although not truly great, he had certain progressive elements of character. While King Solomon had the distinction of being the first king to have a throne of ivory, for King Ahab has been claimed the distinction of having a palace of ivory. His gorgeous palace needed a large and handsome garden. His neighbor Naboth had a vineyard adjoining, which would make the surroundings of the palace ideal.

Messengers were sent to Naboth to negotiate the purchase; and a goodly sum of money was offered for the vineyard. Naboth, within his rights, refused to sell. As the sequel shows, however, he would have been the wiser not to have stood for his full rights. The Jewish law forbade, indeed, the selling of family inheritances; but he could have given a lease for a time to the king's pleasure and to his own profit.

The Bible suggests to Christians the wisdom of being accommodating in every manner not in violation of conscience. While they have as great rights as others (or greater, perhaps, on account of being God's children), nevertheless it is

part of their covenant with the Lord that they will not live for themselves merely, but chiefly for the service of the Lord and their fellows. They are forewarned also not to expect full justice—although always to seek to give justice, in harmony with the Golden Rule, full measure pressed down. They are to realize that in taking this course they will have more and more the Lord's blessing, and that the experiences of character development under such conditions will be helpful to them as respects the coming kingdom.

QUEEN JEZEBEL FEARED NOT GOD

Of all the characters on the pages of history Queen Jezebel, Ahab's wife, stands out prominently as one of the most conscienceless. Noting that King Ahab appeared despondent, she asked the cause. On learning it she promised the king that she would give him Naboth's vineyard, and advised that he should, therefore, cheer up. Immediately she wrote letters in King Ahab's name, using his royal seal. She instructed some of the officials that on an appointed fast-day, on which the people would be in mourning to the Lord for their sins, Naboth should be given a seat of great honor. Two men were to be bribed to rise up then, suddenly in the midst of the meeting, and denounce Naboth as a slanderer of God and of the king. The rulers thereupon were to hear the evidence and to put the penalty promptly into execution. The Jewish law provided that any blasphemy against God's name should be punished by stoning. The hired witnesses promptly denounced Naboth and corroborated each other's testimony. Forthwith a company arose, and stoned the man to death outside the city.

The hypocrisy of the proceedings astounds one. The proclaiming of the fast was seemingly in honor of God's laws and his justice. The Queen's perfidy matches anything on the pages of history. The servility of the governors to her behests evidences what a low state of morals prevailed.

King Ahab seems to have been the passive beneficiary of all this wickedness. He was, nevertheless, the accountable person. His course proves that he was not truly great. Riches and station cannot make greatness, but character only can do so. The king was very willing to profit by his wife's shameful course. Upon hearing through her that Naboth was dead, he went over to look at Naboth's vineyard and to consider how it might be adapted to his purposes as a part of the palace garden.

Just as he was entering the garden he was met by Elijah, who had been sent by the Lord with a message of reproof. The king saluted the Prophet, saying, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" Elijah answered, "I have found thee; because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord." Then he informed the king that divine judgment was that in the same place that the dogs had licked the blood of Naboth, dogs should also lick the king's blood, and that Queen Jezebel would have a similar fate.

PRESENT WAR RESULT OF SELFISHNESS

It should be remarked that at present, as in the past, God is not serving as a policeman to safeguard the world against its own fallen conditions, appetites, covetousness, etc. For six thousand years the Lord seems to have contented himself with letting mankind learn their own lessons, except so far as their course of sin might interfere with the outworking of God's great plans. In such cases the sentiment of the Lord seems to have been, "Thus far shalt thou go and no farther."

Undoubtedly the permission to mankind to do great injury to themselves is a very practical way of inculcating important

lessons. God seems to be bidding the angels to no longer restrain, but to let loose the four winds of heaven—to allow mankind to engage in universal strife—unhindered. The result is the most stupendous of wars, impoverishing all nations engaged therein, costing millions of lives in the flower of manhood, and entailing debts, to pay interest on which will impoverish the people for long years to come—debts which probably never can be paid. The Bible indicates that following the war will come a great revolution and that following it may be expected anarchy. The winds of strife, now let loose, may be expected to injure the world unrestrained by the Almighty until, in man's extremity, God's opportunity will come, and the kingdom of Messiah will be established for the blessing of the world.

With the establishment of God's kingdom everything will be changed. No longer will sins be permitted and the punishments follow; but instead, punishments will be inflicted upon those who attempt to do evil—before they shall have done the evil. For the Lord has promised, saying, "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain [kingdom]." (Isaiah 11:9) In that glorious time all good intentions and good endeavors will have God's blessing and will bring uplift mentally, morally and physically to those participating. Thus will be fulfilled a Scripture which declares, "When the judgments of the Lord are abroad in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness."—Isaiah 26:9.

THE SIN OF COVETOUSNESS

Sin and selfishness are, practically, synonymous terms. When Adam was perfect, in the image and likeness of God, he was unselfish, just, generous, kind, benevolent; for these are elements of the divine disposition, and man must have had these when in God's likeness. The first of all sins was committed by Satan. It was to forward his ambitions, selfish designs that he misrepresented the divine message, contradicted the Almighty, became the father of lies and the murderer of Adam and his race. Mother Eve's course also was prompted by an acquired selfishness. She thirsted for knowledge, which, the serpent told her, she could get by disobeying God. Father Adam's disobedience was not of ignorance, but because he believed that his life would be happier by disobeying and sharing Mother Eve's experiences.

Today, wherever we look, we can clearly trace all sin back to its fountain, selfishness. Covetousness is selfishness—sin. It is very prevalent because all are sinners. Our laws indeed seek to protect us in our just rights, yet how unsuccessful we often are in securing our rights, and in defending ourselves against those who would unjustly violate the Golden Rule.

The lesson for all is that nothing short of the Golden Rule is acceptable in God's sight from any professing to be of his children. A second lesson is that while we are to render justice and the Golden Rule's requirement to all, without exception, we are not always to demand justice, the Golden Rule, etc., from others. Rather, God's people are to consider themselves his representatives and ambassadors in a land and amongst people alienated from him and his government. The Lord's children, always just, are to be also generous and to "show forth the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvelous light." As their heavenly Father is generous as well as just, so are his children to be partakers of his character-likeness and to be helpers in everything that makes for righteousness.

ELIJAH'S FIERY CHARIOT

OCTOBER 10.—2 KINGS 2:1-12.

ELIJAH, ELISHA AND SCHOOLS OF PROPHETS—ELIJAH'S CHARIOT AND ASCENT TYPICAL—ELIJAH AND ALL THE PROPHETS STILL SLEEP—THEY CANNOT RECEIVE THEIR REWARD UNTIL AFTER THE CHURCH HAS BEEN GLORIFIED IN THE FIRST RESURRECTION—THE TRANSFIGURATION SCENE—THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ELIJAH'S JOURNEY AND FOUR STOPS—THE TYPICAL LESSON INTERESTING, PROFITABLE.

"In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore."—Psalm 16:11.

Since Bible students have recognized that Elijah's life was a prophecy—that he typed, or represented, the entire church in his earthly experiences—his history has become the more interesting and the more intelligible. He was a faithful servant of God; but his greatest prophecy, that of his life, was not understood, even though the Lord declared, subsequently, "I will send you Elijah the Prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord." (Malachi 4:5) This antitypical Elijah, beginning with Jesus in the flesh, has been coming and giving his message to the world for now more than eighteen centuries. We believe that the taking away of Elijah in the chariot of fire, narrated in today's lesson, is about to be fulfilled as respects the church of Christ in the flesh. Soon

they shall be no more in the flesh; for the Lord will take them, will glorify them with himself. As the Apostle explains, they will meet the Lord in the air, in the realm of spiritual control of the earth—in kingdom power and great glory.—1 Thessalonians 4:17.

Elisha had the opportunity of becoming Elijah's successor, and appears to have been guided by a proper spirit of zeal in his desire to accompany Elijah and to serve him. When Elijah was taken in the fiery chariot, his mantle bequeathed to Elisha represented that the latter had become Elijah's successor, to receive a special blessing of the Elijah spirit. While we are certain that Elijah typed the church of God in the flesh, we may not be quite so positive that Elisha was also a type and

represented a secondary class of God's people, referred to in the Bible sometimes as the "foolish virgin" class, sometimes as the servants of the bride class who will follow her, sometimes as a great company whose number no man knows, who will come through great tribulation and attain a place before the throne, failing to attain with the Elijah class a place in the throne as joint-heirs of Christ.—Matthew 25:1-13; Psalm 45:14, 15; Revelation 7:9-17.

The sons of the prophets may also be types. If so, they would seem to represent a third class, acquainted with Elijah and Elisha, yet not particularly associated with them. The fact that the sons of the prophets discussed with Elisha the going of Elijah does not necessarily signify that they believed the matter. They knew that Elijah expected to go, but their own doubts on the subject are intimated by the fact that they subsequently made a search of the land to see if Elijah had not really fallen somewhere, dropped by the whirlwind. Their search and final conviction represent that for some time certain classes of Christian people may doubt that the church has really gone to glory, but that afterwards they are thoroughly convinced. Possibly the three days of search may be symbolic, representing three years.

ELIJAH NOT IN HEAVEN

Much of the Bible study of the past has been superficial. Certain teaching and creeds of the past being accepted as true, the Bible has been studied with a view to confirming the traditions of the past rather than to challenging their accuracy. Careful study now brings to light the fact that throughout the entire Old Testament not a word is said about anybody going to heaven—except in this case of Elijah and in the statement that "Enoch walked with God, and was not for God took him"—somewhere. The Bible indicates distinctly that no offer of heavenly life was possible until after Jesus had died as man's Redeemer. Thus the Scriptures assure us that life and immortality were brought to light through Jesus' message—nothing clear or definite was known on these subjects previously.—2 Timothy 1:10.

Jesus himself was the first to pass from earthly condition to heavenly condition by his resurrection change—"put to death in flesh, he was made alive in spirit." (1 Peter 3:18) The church has the promise of a similar glorious change, awaiting all the faithful who walk in the Master's footsteps. Their change is to come at Jesus' second advent. They as the wise virgins, as the Elijah class, will pass beyond the veil from earthly conditions to heavenly conditions. The change will be necessary to their entrance into the kingdom, for "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Corinthians 15:50) A little later, tribulations will develop the great company class, represented by Elisha. Later still, the blessing of the Lord will come upon all the human family through Messiah's kingdom.

While the Old Testament says nothing about any invitation for anybody to go to heaven, the New Testament does assure the church of a "high calling," a "heavenly calling." (Philippians 3:14; Hebrews 3:1) St. Paul points out that a different blessing has been provided by the Lord for the Gospel church than for others. Even the ancient worthies, including Abraham, the Prophet David, Elijah, Elisha, Moses, etc., cannot be of the church class, even as they could not follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Their loyalty to God and to righteousness is to be abundantly rewarded, but theirs is to be an earthly blessing in the paradise to be established by Messiah's kingdom throughout the entire earth.

St. Paul, after enumerating the worthy characters of the past, declares, "All these died in faith, not having received the things promised them, God having provided some better thing for us, that they apart from us should not be made perfect." (Heb. 11:38-40) In other words, the church must receive her heavenly inheritance first; for she, as St. James declares, is the first-fruits unto God of his creatures.—James 1:18.

ON MOUNT OF TRANSFIGURATION

Jesus very positively declares that Elijah did not go to heaven when he said, "No man hath ascended unto heaven." (John 3:13) St. Peter corroborates this, declaring that the Prophet David had not gone to heaven, but was still in his sepulchre at Jerusalem. St. Peter thus implied that none of the prophets had gone to heaven. (Acts 2:34) Our great interest, therefore, in Elijah's experiences, lies in the fact that his literal ascent into the skies was a part of his general typical career as a pre-figure of the church in the flesh.*

Jesus gave to three of his apostles, Peter, James and John, a special vision of his coming glory. What they saw was not actuality, but a vision, as Jesus subsequently declared. (Mat-

thew 17:9) The persons in glory were no more actual than the glories and voices and persons seen by John the Revelator. St. Peter, one of the three, declares that what they saw was a representation of Christ's coming glory. Nevertheless, he declares that the word of prophecy was still more sure than the vision. (2 Peter 1:16-21) In the vision Jesus was the central figure, Moses representing the law dispensation, which ended with Christ, and Elijah representing the Gospel dispensation, which began with Christ.

GILGAL, BETHEL, JERICHO, JORDAN

Elisha knew of Elijah's expectation of translation; and, with that in view, they had traveled to Gilgal. But the Lord did not take Elijah there, but sent him on to Bethel. Elijah's suggestion that Elisha should tarry at Gilgal implied that Elisha was discouraged and had lost faith in the journey. But no! he went on. The same thing occurred at Bethel, and they went on to Jericho. The same thing occurred at Jericho, and they went on to Jordan. Crossing the Jordan they still went on, but thereafter with no definite place in view. However, from the time they came to Jordan a multitude of the sons of the prophets, deeply interested, watched them.

Let us apply these matters antitypically to the church. Gilgal would seem to represent the beginning of the Harvest time—October, 1874. That date, prominently marked in the Bible (Daniel 12:12) was looked forward to by many Bible students with deep interest as the possible time when the church would be completed—although nothing in the Bible so declares. The inference was clearly deducible, but there was no positive statement as to the church's change being accomplished then. Some measure of disappointment was felt when expectations were not realized. Nevertheless, the Elijah class started to the next point, accompanied by so many others as were worthy of being accounted of the antitypical Elisha class.

The experiences at Bethel were very similar. The Spring of 1878 corresponded to Bethel. It was clearly seen to be the time parallel to the Lord's assuming his kingly office in the end of the Jewish age and saying to the Jewish nations, "Your house is left unto you desolate." (Luke 13:34, 35) It was not unreasonable to think of that Scripturally-marked date as the time for the church's glorification, although the Lord did not directly promise this. Nevertheless, a blessing came to all those who received their disappointment in a proper spirit.

On they went to the next date, which corresponded to Jericho; namely, 1881. Considerable interest attached to that date on the part of many Bible students because it was the parallel date to the time when the door was thrown open to the Gentiles, and Cornelius, the first Gentile convert, was received into the family of God. We assumed that this might mean a change of dispensation here, and that the glorification of the church was typed. We were mistaken in that supposition, but received great blessing and went on.

The next point of time Scripturally marked was October, 1914—the close of the Times of the Gentiles, corresponding to Jordan. Many Bible students are thoroughly convinced that the 2,520 years from Zedekiah's day to October, 1914, ended there—that that date marked the end of God's lease of world power to the Gentile nations. They are convinced that the present war is the result, and that its ultimate conclusion will be the complete overthrow of all the kingdoms of the world and the full establishment of Messiah's kingdom in the control of earth.

The Lord did not say that the church would be glorified before the conclusion of the Gentile times; yet such a thought was not an unreasonable one, in view of many Scriptures. Not disconcerted, Bible students are going on, even as Elijah and Elisha went on after crossing the Jordan. They are not, however, headed for any particular date, even as Elijah was not directed to go to any other place. Simply they went on, waiting for the Lord to fulfil his promise of taking Elijah in his own time and in his own way.

CHARIOT OF FIRE AND WHIRLWIND

It was while the two went on, with no knowledge of how far they would go, that Elijah said to Elisha, "What would you like as a reward for your faithfulness in journeying with me?" Elisha responded that he would most prefer a large measure of the Spirit of the Lord, which so notably was manifest in Elijah. The reply was that he could get this great blessing only under special conditions; namely, that he would continue faithful in co-operation until the last—until Elijah would be taken. This would be a hard matter; for, if Elisha's attention were permitted to wander, he would not get so rich a blessing.

As they two went on, behold, a chariot of fire parted them asunder! In symbolic language, this seems to signify that the Elijah class will be involved in very fiery trouble, persecu-

* For a detailed explanation of the Bible proofs that Elijah was a type of the church, address "Bible Students' Monthly, Brooklyn, N. Y."