

in the event of a murder—to determine, as we do today, whether or not the death were manslaughter, accidental killing, or in the second degree—murder unpremeditated or incited by anger or fear—or, third, if it were murder in the first degree, intended, premeditated. Similarly they were to discern which offences were against the common law, which against the divine law, and which against the usages of society, and were to see that justice would be meted out to all. As we think over those conditions of olden time, we wonder how such matters as these—such evidences that people of thousands of years ago were just, noble, thoughtful, reverential—are regarded by our evolutionist friends. They seem inclined to think that at that time mankind must have been near the monkey scale of intelligence,

but the facts are against them. Here was a king in whose empire justice was no doubt dispensed equally as well as it is with us today in this most favored land at this most favored period.

The closing words of the lesson constitute our Golden Text—"Deal courageously, and the Lord shall be with the good." We commend these words to the Lord's faithful people. Whoever has a duty to perform let him not fear, and while seeking to do unpleasant tasks in a kindly manner, both justly and lovingly, let us fear not man, but rather fear the Lord and be intent on pleasing him. May the words of our mouths as well as the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, our strength and our redeemer!

REPORT OF THE BRITISH CONVENTION

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:—

Our first British General Convention has come and gone! It brought us much joy in the Lord, and left us with a greater desire to "spend and be spent" in the Master's service. With general consent it is acknowledged that the meetings have been the best we have had in this country. But this was according to expectation, for the convention brought together a larger number of friends than has hitherto been the case, and because all should have more of the holy Spirit now than ever before. The predominant feeling was the love of the brethren for each and all, and with it was the appreciation of the grace of God which produced such a grand result. Each of the meetings added its quota to the good derived from the convention: the Praise and Testimony, and the Colporteurs' and Workers' meetings being specially helpful. Already we have heard of fresh or renewed efforts as a result of these talks with each other. On the Monday morning forty-three brothers and sisters signified by immersion their consecration to the Lord, and their desire to be accounted worthy to suffer with him. It was a most impressive time as we reviewed with each other our privilege of suffering with the Lord, as well as believing on him. And we rejoiced in anticipation of the "glory to follow."

All the meetings were well attended, and there was the usual eagerness to get as much as possible of the food the Lord provided. The largest contingent of friends came from Glasgow, the most distant place represented. Ireland was represented by Bro. Walker, while England was represented by friends from all parts. We were glad to have Bro. Koetitz with us. It was hard to part, but we all realized that the Lord had given a work to our charge, and that the King's message demanded haste. A good proportion of the colporteurs were with us also, and to these we bade "God-speed," commending them to the grace of God. We felt the shortness of the time, and the coming of the kingdom for which we work and wait, and there was a greater determination to do all possible for the accomplishment of the work committed to the hands of those who know the Lord.

You and your work were specially remembered. We would have been glad to have had you with us, but we shall hope that, in the Lord's providence, you may be permitted and we may be privileged to have you with us in our next convention. The friends desired me to express on their behalf the gratitude they felt towards the Society.

Your brother in the Lord,

J. HEMERY.

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VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER

JAPAN A CHRISTIAN NATION

The Japanese are such valiant fighters on sea and land that few any longer doubt that they must be "Christians" (?). They are very desirous of ranking with Europeans and Americans, and feel that to the prowess they have shown in war they now merely need to avow themselves a "Christian nation" in order to be all that any "Christian nation" could be expected to be.

The Japs are a very practical people in this as in other respects. They are quite right; they are a "Christian nation" as truly as is any other nation, for there are no "Christian nations" in the proper use of that term. The "holy nation" is only in embryo, only being formed, and will not assume its power and place as God's kingdom under the whole heavens until the number of the "very elect" is completed and glorified. The best of earthly kingdoms are only "kingdoms of this world," as the Scriptures designate them.

The Emperor of Japan is expected to make his nation Christian by proclamation, and as a preparation to this end public meetings have been held in Japan to arouse public sentiment on the subject, and in these great enthusiasm was developed. We must not sneer at the Japanese misconception of the subject: rather we must remember that some very prominent people in these United States have for years been petitioning Congress that the constitution be changed so as to have in it somehow *the name of God*, and thus to imply at least that this is a "Christian nation." The whole matter shows how gross is the blindness prevalent even among the civilized.

Let no one get the idea that the Japanese are converted to Christ: they are merely bent on getting a good name among the nations; for patriotism is the chief "religion" of the Japs. Various religious journals are commenting on the situation. The Methodist Protestant Conference received a report on the subject from its Board of Foreign Missions, which said: "The opinion held by some that Japan has become a Christian nation is far from correct. Idolatry, superstition and atheism largely prevail. The great mass of the population has not become impressed with Christian teaching."

The Globe, New York, says:—

"Travelers, listing the peculiarities of the Sunrise Kingdom, have often noted that the Japanese were not so much irreligious as non-religious. The habit of personal devotion, as we understand that state, seems almost altogether absent. The

Shintoism and Buddhism which exist are secular rather than sacred. Hence it is that the Christian missionaries, although the Government and the people are tolerant, have made little progress, the number of converts being pitifully small. Hence it also is (religion being deemed a public rather than a private thing and one form being thought about as good as another) that the majority of the population would probably loyally obey the edict if the Emperor, for secular or other reasons, should proclaim Christianity as the state religion. The clew to the Japanese character is patriotism. To the demands, or supposed demands, of this everything else is subordinate."

The *Boston Watchman* (Baptist) says editorially:—

"Of course, there is no spiritual element in this movement. It does not indicate an adoption of the Christian life, or even an intellectual acceptance of the truths of Christianity. What is proposed is merely a formal adoption of the Christian name, so that Japan may be called a Christian nation and rank with England, Germany and the United States. The Japanese hate the name pagan; they have now no national religion, and there would be nothing strange in their adopting the name Christian; but how much it would really advance the interests of pure and personal faith in Christ is doubtful."

TOWARD CHURCH UNITY

"With the Methodist Protestant church conference enthusiastic for union with the United Brethren and Congregationalist denominations and gravely considering amalgamation with the Methodist Episcopal; with the Methodist Episcopal, south, discussing consolidation with the same denomination, north; with the Presbyterian assembly considering absorption of the United and Cumberland Presbyterians, and with a movement toward the adoption of rituals, one may well believe the churches have caught the spirit of combination so marked in the industrial world. It is no less true of the churches than of the commercial corporations that in union there is strength and in combination there is economy of operation. . . .

"Universal church union has been broached by bold theologians. The time is not ripe for that. It may never come. But the tendency is yearly toward greater tolerance and closer fraternal relations. The time is favorable for wiping out minor distinctions and organizing upon broader lines. The signs are altogether favorable for larger conceptions of religious duty and for more concentrated effort in spreading the gospel. The

war of the creeds is a waste of energy that might better be devoted to the conversion of the heathen at home and abroad."—*Pittsburg Gazette*. * * *

The above editorial fairly represents the usual worldlywise view of this question—the view entertained by the majority of church members. All are dissatisfied with their creeds, made in or shortly after the dark ages. All, or nearly all, regard their creeds as fair expositions of the Bible's teachings—and in thus dropping these creeds as no longer serviceable in this twentieth century they are also practically discarding the Bible. The Lord, foretelling their present discomfiture and disgust with what were once their spiritual delicacies, says, "All their tables are full of vomit"—full of matters and doctrines they have rejected.—Isa. 28:8.

How different is the condition of those whom the Lord is now specially feeding with "meat in due season," "things new and old." Of this our table it is written, "My table thou hast furnished [supplied] in the presence [sight] of mine enemies." They see our bounties and feel jealous, but refuse to accept the good things we would so freely share with them.—Psalm 23.

Well, soon we will have their "Union" or "Confederacy" (Isa. 8:12), and the bitter fruits of union in error will speedily manifest themselves in tyranny, as during the dark ages, though perhaps affairs will never grow quite so black as then.

FRANCE AND GERMANY IN OPPOSITE COURSES

It seems peculiar that France and Germany are doing opposite things for the same reason. In France the government realizes that the Roman Catholic religious orders (Jesuits and others) are the active agents of the monarchists, who seek the overthrow of the French Republic and the restoration of the Empire. For this reason—to secure the stability of the Republic—the religious orders are forbidden longer to teach in French schools, and, cut off from this revenue, many of the monks and nuns are expected to seek other homes. The strain between the Government and the Papacy is seriously increased, and the threat is made that about the beginning of next year the government will cease to be Roman Catholic—will cease to pay salaries to Romish priests and leave to the people the support or non-support of their clerical advisers, as is the uniform custom in these United States.

Germany, on the other hand, for similar reasons banished the Jesuits and other orders in A. D., 1872: in 1894 some orders were permitted to return, but not the Jesuits. This action was forced upon the German government in its endeavor to secure votes for naval extensions—the price of the Catholic party's vote.

Now the Emperor makes the final concession—permitting the return of the Jesuits—in the following terms:—

"We, William, by the grace of God, Emperor of Germany and king of Prussia, order in the name of the Empire and in accordance with the decision of the Bundesrath and of the Reichstag, as follows: 'Paragraph 2 of the law of the 4th of July, 1872, concerning the order of the Society of Jesus, is abolished.' Given at the Palace of Berlin the 8th of March, 1904."

Why this concession, do we ask? It is wrong from the Protestant government of Germany as the price of the aid of the Catholic party in legislation. Furthermore, the Jesuits will be expected to work secretly against the Socialists and in favor of the Emperor. The Socialist gains in late years have been enormous, and their ultimate control of the German Parliament is feared.

EFFECTS OF PRESENT WAR FAR REACHING

"A dispatch from India a few days ago said that the people of India are taking a keen interest in the Russo-Japanese war and that the victories of the Japanese are hailed with delight simply because they are Asiatics and the Russians are Europeans. This suggests the possibility that the day may come when the people of India will try to throw off the British yoke. In this connection it is interesting to learn that for eight years past, the Hindus have taken great interest in the de-

velopment of Japan. Since the wonderful victory of the Japanese over the Chinese in 1894, some of the Hindu papers have maintained correspondents in Japan.

"The London correspondent of the *Novoe Vremya*, St. Petersburg, says that the people of India were further interested in the Japanese by the hundred-tongued rumor that in the operations against the Boxers the Japanese army proved superior in courage and in humane treatment of the conquered to all the European armies. 'From this time on,' says the correspondent, 'the whole Hindu mass began to be fascinated by Japan and to place upon her hopes of deliverance. Hindus began to travel in Japan, to reside in Japan and to study in her schools. At present the fashion among well-to-do Hindus is to send their boys to Japan, where they formerly sent them to England. On the other hand the Japanese began to travel through India and to stay months and even years in its cities. The English observed and rejoiced at the sympathy of the Hindus for the opponents of her rival in Asia. The Japs they thought would serve them in good capacity for the estrangement of the people of India from sympathizing with Russia. But recently the English were thunderstruck by some sufficiently eloquent facts. An article on Japan, written by an Englishman returning from travels there, evoked a whole mailbag of letters to him from editors of other gazettes, nabobs, rajahs, etc. They had taken him for a Japanese and expressed their delight that at least one of the future liberators of their country had arrived. Some even sent presents, and offered subscriptions for the prosecution of the secret propaganda. The whole correspondence fell into the hands of the Anglo-Indian government, which could not contain itself in its astonishment. Lord Curzon viewed the affair seriously, but smothered it in order to prevent its dissemination. But there is a plan afoot to prohibit Hindus from attending Japanese schools, and principally the University of Tokyo.'—*Exchange*.

THE GERMAN WAR IN SOUTH-WEST AFRICA

Germany has on hand a small war with some of her dependent and subject peoples in South-West Africa, in a territory twice the size of her home country in Europe. She already has soldiers on the spot who are unable to hold their own, and they are to be reinforced by 2000 soldiers and 2400 horses, which are expected to arrive at the scene of action about the middle of July.

A visitor from another planet might suppose the white race most noble, most generous, to impose upon itself "the white man's burden" of ruling the darker races. Doubtless the results will bring valuable lessons to all concerned, and prepare the way for Messiah's kingdom, which will bless the world with an unselfish reign of righteousness, which shall "bless all the families of the earth." "The desire of all nations shall come."

ORIENTAL VIEWS OF MODERN CHURCHIANITY Wealthy Japanese on a Tour of Inspection

Associated Press dispatch.—"A party of wealthy Japanese have arrived to visit the principal centers of the United States, inspect rolling mills and factories of all kinds, look into the condition of the poor, examine the practical working of the laws, and ascertain, if possible, whether religion enters to any appreciable extent into the actual daily life of the people.

"One of the party, a graduate of Tokyo University, said that after most careful examination, absolutely unprejudiced and free of preconception, the Japanese had unanimously and unhesitatingly rejected the religion of the Europeans as something they did not want and did not need."

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY PREPARES FOR WAR

Without claiming to anticipate any war near at hand, but evidently determined to be better prepared for war should it come than was Russia, Austria has decided that she should devote \$75,000,000 (seventy-five million dollars) to war preparations—chiefly for naval reinforcements. As the Scriptures say, "Let all the men of war draw near. Wake up the mighty men." (Joel 3:9) Anyway, it will increase the demand for labor—skilled and unskilled.

THE BIBLE AND CRITICISM: IS THE BATTLE ENDED?

THE PRESENT STATE OF THE QUESTION

Much is said at the present time of the overthrow of traditional beliefs, and of the necessity under which every intelligent man now lies of adapting himself to the new condition of things. But has criticism already and finally won the battle, and has the time really come to divide the spoil? That is a question which should not fail to be asked by those who are seeking to adjust their theological bearings. If the last word has indeed been spoken, and if that word has confirmed the critical verdict, the outlook is one which we can hardly con-

template with a light heart. The Bible has made our country. The best manhood and womanhood in it have been awed, warmed, changed and cheered by its words. It has repressed what we thought was baser in us, and strengthened what we thought was nobler. It has humanized us. It has laid upon us the bands of brotherhood. It has done all this because it was received as God's Book, and because we felt that conviction of its sacred character deepened the more we studied its pages. If it is to be to our children all that it has been to us and to our ancestors, we may count upon the same national strength

and honor, the same quiet reserve of power, the same hatred of wrong, the same endurance for right. But, if that belief in the Bible is to pass away like a dream, there is little to reassure us in the usual lofty talk. The ancient world has its philosophies and its culture. But the multitude was dropped as a weight which no philosophy or culture was able to carry; and the best efforts could not save the cultured classes themselves from sinking down into pollution which placed the civilization of the time infinitely beneath its barbarism.

I am quite aware that truth has its sacrifices, and that no regard for consequences can make us keep on believing that two and two make five. But regard for consequences has its place. It enforces caution. It commends sobriety and earnestness in judgment. Is it really true that science has discredited Scripture? I know that this is confidently asserted, and that it is oftener assumed as being as much beyond argument as the Copernican theory. But I happen, also, to know that the science which is supposed to have discredited the Bible is the science of sixty years ago. I know that its indictment of the creation history in Genesis cannot be sustained by the science of today; that authoritative geology has recently brought back the Flood and finds in it the great dividing line between paleolithic and neolithic man; that, in the brighter light shed by recent research, supposed differences between Scripture and science have disappeared, and left an agreement apparent which is one of the marvels of our time. The man who begins to settle his theological bearings under the belief that science has hopelessly discredited the Bible will, therefore, settle them under an unhappy delusion.

The higher criticism has worked along its own lines and has had its conclusions summarized for the reading public in a Bible Dictionary, in a couple of Encyclopædias, and in the Polychrome Bible. In this last, which is also the most important of the critical publications, we are presented, not with the results of a discussion, but with the demands of a revolutionary junta. This thing of many colors and shreds and patches, which is really the *reductio ad absurdum* of critical methods, is the only Bible which is now to be left to the churches, the Sunday-schools, the educational institutions, and the homes of our country. And this is no empty threat. This "Bible in Tatters" is being handed to ministers and teachers all over the land as the new critical Revelation. It is being presented and accepted as "the truth about the Bible." It has even entered the mission field. It is easy enough to calculate the results of this movement. When the teacher's place is taken, and the pulpit is filled, by honest men who have no longer faith in a God-given Bible, how long will that faith linger among the people?

An important decision is consequently forced upon us as a nation. What is to be our attitude toward the new propaganda? Is it to be tame submission or strict inquiry? It may be asked, however, whether a choice is possible? Have not these questions been threshed out by scholars in every way competent to deal with them? Is not the discussion closed, and does not the Polychrome Bible simply gather up the now unchallenged results of a prolonged controversy? No representation could be more misleading than that. There has been, properly speaking, no controversy. The critics have evaded discussion. There are works of undoubted scholarship which have traversed their findings, exposed their unproved assumptions, and triumphantly vindicated the universal convictions of the Christian church with regard to the Bible. But the critics have not replied to these assailants; they have ignored them. What need is there for argument when you can quench opposition by applying the extinguisher of authority?

The lay mind knows something of the Shakespeare controversy, and has a lively sense of its inherent absurdity. But ridicule has not killed that craze. It has increased in boldness, and now questions the reality of "William Shakespeare." "There is no such historical man," says one, "no individual known who bore that name." It is quite within the limits of possibility that this craze may become fashionable, and that the tradition of the Shakespearian authorship may be given to the winds. There is an infectious exhilaration in paradox: and this is not without a respectable show of literary research and seemingly forcible arguments. Let us suppose that one professor of English literature after another is won over to the new views; that by well-directed influence those chairs are all gradually captured; that the literary class is impregnated with the new notions, and that by editors and reviewers the question is regarded as closed. History would then have repeated itself. For such has been the story of the critical movement. It has won its supposed triumph, not by scholarship or argument, but by sheer audacity and adroit manœuvring.

Yet a temporary success of that kind is not a victory. If the views maintained rest upon solid fact, then the triumph,

however achieved, may be expected to endure; but if its basis is only empty theory and mere assumption, the triumph is but the illusion of a moment. How much the imagined victors of today have to fear the future the following pages will reveal even to the lay mind.

THE LIMITS OF CRITICAL ABILITY

The critics assume that they are able to dissect with accuracy manuscripts which are made up of the work of various writers. This is, in fact, their professed business; and it is in the exercise of it that they expect to benefit mankind. They are so conscious of their power in this matter that they assume the name of "experts." By attention to the subtleties of style, and to the peculiarities which distinguish the writing of one age and of one author from that of another, they tell us that they are able to say where the words which flowed from the pen of one writer stopped, and where the words of another writer began. It is this power which has enabled them, they say, to separate Isaiah, not merely into two, but into many portions; to break up the book of Genesis—the first of their achievements, and to partition the book of Revelation—among their last. In short, they fully confess that, without this power of what I may call literary divination, their work would never have been done, and the higher criticism could never have claimed the name of a science.

To see how unquestioningly they believe in this ability of theirs, we have only to open their "Polychrome Bible," Bacon's "Genesis of Genesis," or Addis on "The Documents of the Hexateuch." Here are some of the results gathered in this fierce light which beats upon the Bible. In a single page of "Joshua," by Prof. Bennett, besides the main divisions, I find the following instances of penetrating insight. The words: "And all Israel stoned him" (Joshua 7:25) are separated from the text, and are given to a writer who is supposed to have lived about 500 B. C. These three words, "Then Jehovah relented" (ver. 26) are similarly selected, and are said to be the work of an author who lived about fifty years earlier. This, it will be confessed, is delicate work; but it is only an illustration of the sharp decisiveness and the firm—I might call it the sublime—assurance which marks all the productions of this "expert" school. Bacon's work is equally astonishing. The passage, "In the day that the Lord—God made the earth and the heavens," (see Genesis 2:4) is dissected as follows. A stop is made after the word Lord, thus dividing the divine name in two. The words, "In the day that the Lord"—are assigned to a writer of 800 B. C. Those which precede are said to have been written three hundred and fifty years later; and those which follow, including the word "God," the second part of the amputated divine name, are alleged to be due to a third writer, an editor, about whose exact date there is still some difference of opinion among the "experts."

But to stop even here would give the general public no adequate conception of critical self-confidence. They are not only able to judge of what they see but they can with equal imaginary infallibility divine what they cannot see. We used to be told that, when the Genesis narrative was separated, the critical analysis justified itself in every unbiased mind. The two accounts were said to be so beautifully complete! That superstition still lingers in many quarters; but everybody has not read Bacon's Genesis. It needs some painful but pretty patching to make up "the two narratives." There we find that "The Judean Prophetic Narrative" opens thus: "When as yet there was neither earth nor heaven but only the limitless abyss, Yahweh set fast the foundations of the earth, and raised up its pillars in the midst of the waters. And over its surface he spread out the dome of the heaven, establishing there the courses of the sun and the moon and the stars; but upon the surface of the earth beneath there was neither motion nor life: all was yet a solitude."

The reader rubs his eyes. He thought he knew the opening chapters of Genesis. He casts his eye down to the foot of the page and finds that the above is a critical make-up! Here is the note which meets his glance: "Conjecturally restored from indications in the earlier literature . . . and by comparison with the Babylonian cosmogonic myths." One is able to comment upon many things. This is beyond me. It must be left in its naked effrontery. Let "CONJECTURALLY RESTORED" be its only inscription and its epitaph.

It will be clear, however, that everything is based upon the assumed possession of this marvelous power to say where one writer's works ends and another's begins. Without this there would have been no discrimination of "sources;" no partition of documents, and, in a word, no higher criticism. Let this supposed ability be successfully questioned, and the painfully piled-up edifice is not merely shaken to its foundation—it lies in irremediable ruin. But it is already demonstrated that there are, and can be, no "experts" of this sort. The assumed pos-

session of this power has been put to test again and again, and the results have made these pretensions utterly incredible.

There exists, for example, a confessedly composite work in Finnish literature. Dr. Lonnrot, the collector of the Finnish Folk-poetry, formed a great epic, the Kalevala—by fusing together a large collection of those ancient songs. He bequeathed his manuscripts to the Society of Finnish Literature, so that what he borrowed and what he added are made perfectly clear. This work afforded too good a test of this imaginary critical power to be left unused. The critics were set to work; and with lamentable results. "While ignorant of the actual facts of the surviving songs," says Andrew Lang, "critical ingenuity could only give us, at many hands and from many sides, its usual widely discrepant results." And he adds: "We cannot trust it when the tests of facts, of documents, cannot be applied."

Not very long ago, an enthusiastic admirer of Thackeray (every characteristic and trick of whose pen he believed he knew) engaged in a search for papers which had not been embraced in that writer's collected works. He at last discovered

a number in some early volumes of *Punch*. He had no doubt whatever as to the authorship. The mark of the master hand was everywhere; and he was certain that, to any man who knew Thackeray's style, doubt was impossible. Arrangements were made for the re-issue of the newly-discovered writings in a leading literary organ in America. Some of the papers had already appeared, when a communication was received from the *Punch* office, saying that the treasurer's books made it plain that the articles were not Thackeray's. The re-publication was immediately stopped, and the editor retired from an ignominious position with as much grace as the circumstances permitted. The history of literature abounds with such facts. Critics, who can be trusted to divine the authorship of documents, have never existed. They do not exist now: and a "science" built upon that assumption rests upon what is considerably less substantial than air. I say nothing of the professed ability to furnish verbatim copies of manuscripts which no man has ever seen. I believe that the records of the higher criticism contain the only example of such a pretension outside the annals of a lunatic asylum.—*Rev. John Urquhart, Scotland.*

A HELPFUL SERVICE

Realizing that bereavement prepares the mind for the Truth, some dear friends watch the death notices of their city papers and send tracts which thus reach the relatives of the deceased—sometimes opportunely. In our judgment the best tracts for such service would be two, No. 54, "A Dark Cloud with a Sil-

ver Lining," and No. 49, "Which is the True Gospel?" We commend the plan to you all. Confer together; and in large cities take weekly or monthly turns at it. If the names are written the "long way" on wrappers 6½x7½ inches, they may be mailed to us and we will wrap the tracts and paste them.

"MILLENNIAL DAWN READERS MEET," ETC.

The Cleveland friends inform us that in their announcements of meetings in the daily papers they have long been in doubt as to how to mention their meetings. Lately they have adopted the above style with good results.

We can see the advantage in it. (1) Those who have read

the DAWNS will know at once what it means. (2) Some who have the DAWNS but have neglected reading them may be aroused to investigate them. People like to go where others are going and to read what others are reading.

HEATHEN IN HEAVEN

At Chester Heights camp meeting Dr. Johnson [Methodist, of Philadelphia] on Thursday preached a notable sermon, in which he said: "There will be all denominations and kinds of people in heaven—even the heathen! All that is necessary to be done is to follow the true light."

We call the attention of our esteemed contemporaries to the fact that the above is true Pauline doctrine, readily provable by his epistle to the Romans. If that was sound doctrine for the Jews and converts at Rome it ought to be good, practical doctrine for us Americans of the present time. If the heathen has within himself a law of righteousness, revealed from the Creator, whereby they accuse and excuse one another, and so living up to their truest light are admissible to heaven, why may not a man of this age, living up to the light of the gospel revealed in the life of Jesus have an equal chance for salvation and eternal life!—*Atlanta Constitution.*

* * *

It is remarkable that so many people of ordinary mental discernment so completely misunderstand the Apostle Paul's argument above referred to.—Romans 2:15.

What is the gist of the Apostle's logic? He was arguing with Jews who claimed that because God made a Law Covenant with their nation only, *therefore* they were acceptable to God and other peoples were not. The Apostle seeks to break up all such self-assurance, and to convince them that a Jew needs God's mercy in Christ the same as other nationalities. His argument is that their being the recipients of the Law Covenant could bring them no blessing (no hope for everlasting life) unless they could keep that Law Covenant perfectly. This they did not claim to be able to do. As the Apostle again declares, "by the deeds of the Law [Covenant] shall no flesh be justified before God."

The Apostle pursues the argument, and supposes that they would claim that, while none could keep the law perfectly, they kept it much more nearly, much more fully than the heathen.

The Apostle challenges that claim, and argues that some heathen people could properly claim to be doing the best they knew how and a Jew could claim no more. He shows that this is the case by saying that the heathen sometimes try to *excuse* themselves (thus acknowledging wrong-doing) and sometimes to *accuse* themselves (again acknowledging wrong-doing). What does this prove? asks the Apostle. It proves that while the Jew had considerable light of conscience and the written law, the heathen, though not having the latter, had the former.

The Apostle nowhere in the argument claims that the Jews were *justified* by the law, nor that the heathen were *justified* by their light of conscience. All were *imperfect*, and hence unworthy of everlasting life under the divine arrangement. The heathen, with his *light of conscience ONLY*, could not dispute this. The Jew, with his additional light from the written law, having all the more enlightenment should all the more realize his condemnation.

The Apostle's argument with the Jews then resolves itself into this statement: You are not justified to life because God gave you the law any more than are the heathen to whom he never gave any special favors. Mark the continuation of the argument (Rom. 3:9), "What, then, Are we [Jews] better than they [the heathen]? No; in no wise: for we have *before proved* both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin. As it is written, "There is none righteous, no not one," etc.

After quoting the Scriptural summing up of the general depravity of mankind down to verse 18, the Apostle adds:—

"Now we know that what things soever the law saith it saith to them that are under the law: that EVERY MOUTH MAY BE STOPPED and all the world may become [or realize that they are] GUILTY before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin."—Vss. 19, 20.

Thus the Apostle proves to his Jewish hearers that all are sinners (Jews and Gentiles), and that all need salvation, which can be procured only through Jesus—"through faith in his blood"—faith in his atonement sacrifice. Where, then, is the argument for the fitness of the heathen for heaven? Where does the logical Apostle Paul so teach? When we remember that the Apostle Peter declared that David the prophet, one of the most prominent Jews, did not go to heaven (Acts 2:34), it would, indeed, have astonished us if we had found the Apostle Paul teaching that the heathen had passports. We have only to remember our Lord's words to the effect that up to his time "no man hath ascended up to heaven."—John 3:13.

What a peculiar place some people must fancy heaven to be, anyway: full of infants, idiots and heathens, with an occasional "saint" from civilized lands. Thank God for the light upon his Word which frees us from such absurdities.

Well, where are the heathen, idiots, etc., if not in heaven? Should they be in torment because ignorant or *non compos mentis*? By no means. They are under the curse or sentence of death,—they are dead, in the great prison-house, the *tomb*,

—in *sheol*,—in *hades*—the very place in which Peter declared David to be. But Christ has died for all of Adam's race, and the blessing of an opportunity or trial for life shall yet be granted to all—by Jesus as King on account of his redemptive work, his death for our sins.

The present work, the work of this Gospel age, is to gather from among men "a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for a purpose." This offer went first to *natural Israel*, but after a time was thrown open to Gentiles as well,—"the middle wall of partition being broken down." It was this that the

Jews denied—that after God's favors had been to their nation only for over 1,600 years outsiders were granted just the same privilege as they to become "Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise." (Gal. 3:29) It was this that the Apostle combated, and showed that Jew and Gentile could become sons of God and joint-heirs with Christ—not by the Law Covenant, nor by heathen ignorance, but by faith in the only name given under heaven and among men whereby we must be saved.—Acts 4:12.

THE DOWNWARD COURSE OF SIN

I KINGS 16:23-33.—JULY 31.

GOLDEN TEXT:—"Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people."—Prov. 14:34.

A previous lesson showed us the start of the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel under Jeroboam as a split-off from the king of Judah. We noted Jeroboam's changes of the religious customs, so as the more effectually to separate the two peoples and thus to establish himself in power. We notice that although at first the holy places he established and the images he set up were to represent the true God, nevertheless these symbols led the people more and more to the general idolatry of the surrounding heathen nations. Jeroboam reigned twenty-two years, and was succeeded by his son Nadab, who reigned only two years and was assassinated. The assassin, a general named Baasha, became king and reigned twenty-four years, continuing in the course of Jeroboam and warring with the king of Judah. He was succeeded by his son Elah, who in turn was assassinated, after two years' reign, by Zimri, one of his generals. The latter ruled for only a week and suicided, chagrined that he did not have the support of his army. A civil war ensued, as the result of which Omri came to the throne, as stated in the first verse of our lesson.

Omri was evidently a shrewd king, and unscrupulous respecting the divine will and the covenant obligations of the nation to Jehovah. He followed the course of Jeroboam in seeking to alienate the people from the true religion, and went still further in the matter of introducing idolatry and licentious practices connected therewith. He was, nevertheless, what would be termed a successful king from the worldly standpoint: he strengthened his hold upon the people by the building of a new capital city, Samaria, and was generally reputed amongst the outside nations as a powerful king. Had his executive abilities been combined with reverence for the Lord and a consecration to do his will, Omri would have been a great ruler in the true sense of the word. But, instead, he led Israel into what our lesson terms displeasing "vanities"—vain religious ceremonies, that not only amounted to nothing good, but on the contrary were provocative of greater evils.

"HE SLEPT WITH HIS FATHERS"

Omri died after eight years' reign, the record being that "he slept with his fathers." This was the common form of expression in noting the death of all prominent people, whether good or bad. The Grecian theory, that when people die they become more alive than ever before, had not yet been introduced. The Israelites held the matter in its true and simple form—that death is a cessation of being, but that God had intimated a future re-living by a resurrection. In view of this hope those who died were figuratively spoken of as falling asleep—to await the resurrection morning. Abraham slept with his fathers as did Omri; and so the Scriptures teach that, when the awakening time shall come at the Second Advent of the Redeemer, all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man and shall come forth—those approved of God and those disapproved of him, the just and the unjust. Omri will evidently be amongst the latter class, of whom the Prophet declares that they shall come forth to "shame and lasting contempt." (Dan. 12:2) Abraham as evidently belongs to the former class, and will be amongst those who will come forth unto the resurrection of life.

Abraham's trial is past, and we have the testimony that he pleased God. Omri, on the contrary, has the record that God was not pleased with him; but since Christ has redeemed all, Omri is to have a full and impartial knowledge of God's grace that he may thereby be tested and proven—whether, with a clear knowledge of the divine character and will, he will accept the opportunity and come into harmony with the Lord, and during the Millennial age will by obedience gain life everlasting or whether he will, with full light, still choose an evil way. If so, "the end of that way is death"—the second death—extinction. The measure of Omri's knowledge of right and his perversion of that knowledge will proportionately measure disadvantage to him when he comes to trial during the Millennial age; and so it is with every human being. In proportion as right and conscience are obeyed, character for good is formed

that some day will be helpful; and in proportion as sin and wilfulness in wrong doing have control, in that same proportion will character be undermined and the course of repentance and reformation in the future be difficult.

JEZEBEL AND HER HUSBAND

Omri was succeeded in his kingdom by his son Ahab, the notorious. He also was an able man, skilled in statecraft and unscrupulous. He was helped along in the downward way of his father and predecessors by marrying the daughter of the king of Tyre, Jezebel, who in the Scriptures is noted as a desperate character, and in the book of Revelation is used to symbolize the great mystery of iniquity which persecuted spiritual Israel during the dark ages. Jezebel's father was a priest of Baal, who murdered his father, the king of Tyre, and then succeeded him. Thus Jezebel inherited in a natural way her perverse and idolatrous disposition, and in marrying her Ahab secured an able accomplice in evil. Indeed, the woman may be said to have been the prime mover and instigator of much of the evil later developed in that kingdom.

Ahab built a temple to Baal at Samaria, and established in it an altar where sacrificing was done. Four hundred and fifty priests of Baal attended the altar and services, clothed in special priestly vestments. Thus was the true Temple at Jerusalem, the true altar of God, and the true priesthood appointed of God in connection with the same, counterfeited by Ahab at the instigation of Jezebel. Similarly we have in nominal spiritual Israel a great counterfeit system misrepresenting the true on a gorgeous scale. We shall say more along this line in succeeding lessons.

The Golden Text is the pith of this lesson, illustrated on all the pages of history. The kingdoms of this world are not the kingdoms of our Lord—he is not their ruler; nevertheless the general principle expressed in the Golden Text prevails. In proportion as any nation conforms to principles of righteousness, justice, in that same proportion the nation is exalted; while in proportion to the prevalence of sin in any nation will be its tendency to downwardness in every respect.

When we look about us in the world and perceive that national policies are shaped by absolute selfishness, and that the rulers amongst men are very generally consecrated to doing their own wills so far as possible, we may well be astonished to see to what extent the influence of the righteous, the salt of the earth, exercises a preservative effect upon them. So far from wondering why the kings of earth are not better than they are, we are inclined to wonder that the laws and regulations of Christendom are anything like as good as they are. Undoubtedly there is in the great majority of the human family, at the bottom of their hearts, a respect for righteousness and truth and goodness; and were it not that this is overbalanced at the present time by prevalent selfishness and evil influence from every quarter, we might have hope for such reforms as many seem to expect, but which the Scriptures do not warrant us in expecting. Our hope, on the contrary, is that the Lord, according to promise, will establish his own kingdom in power, superhuman power; that the great King Emmanuel will subdue all things unto himself; that thus released from present bonds of selfishness, evil surroundings and Satanic deceptions, the great majority of mankind will choose righteousness—choose obedience to the Lord—that their experiences under the blessings of the kingdom shall, in the majority of cases, fix character in accord with the principles of righteousness.

All of the Lord's people, in proportion as they see the downward and degrading influence of sin, become more and more strong in their determination to uphold righteousness in their every thought, word and act, and to throw their influence upon that side of every question in every appropriate manner. In so doing they will be seeking first, primarily, the kingdom of God and its righteousness, and be in process of training for the great privileges of the kingdom time, that they may be associated with the Lord in the bestowment of the blessings of that Millennial kingdom upon all the families of the earth.

"HE CARETH FOR YOU"

I KINGS 17:1-16.—AUG. 7.

During the period of Ahab's prosperity in his wicked course, leading the people of Israel further than ever into idolatry, the Lord sent him and the whole nation a rebuke and chastisement through Elijah the prophet. In order to thoroughly appreciate the Lord's interposition in the affairs of Israel—the sending of famines, etc.—we must remember that he entered into a special covenant with that nation at Mount Sinai when the law was given them. According to that covenant, the obedience of the nation to the Lord guaranteed it earthly blessing and prosperity, while disobedience, idolatry, etc., insured it tribulation, chastisement, famine, etc. It is necessary to remember this special relationship of Israel to God, that we be not confused in supposing that every famine in the world's history, every pestilence, every war, etc., has been similarly of special divine imposition in chastisement, etc. God's relationship to that one nation was peculiar, as expressed by the Prophet, "You only have I known [recognized] of all the families of the earth."—Amos 3:2.

THE DROUTH PROPHESED

Elijah went to the capital city, Samaria, and presented himself in the presence of the king as the Lord's mouthpiece, as expressed in the first verse of our lesson by the words, "before whom I stand"—or whose representative I am. The announcement was respecting the dearth of rain, which, to people in that part of the world, meant famine and death; and this dearth of rain and dew was to last for years. The Lord might have withheld rain without using Elijah as his mouthpiece in the matter, but in that event the lesson would have been measurably lost upon the people. By sending the message in advance of the drouth it would be evident to Ahab and to all who should ever come to know of the circumstances that the drouth was a judgment from the Lord, a punishment for sin. The drouth and the consequent famine lasted three and a half years, and it is difficult to imagine how the people could have subsisted for that length of time had no rain whatever fallen, as would seem to be implied by the language of the Prophet. However, it is remarked that of the four Hebrew words used to represent rain, the one here used is the one which is generally understood and translated to mean the early rain, the principal rain, which usually came in the fall of the year.

After the delivery of his message the Lord directed his Prophet to go eastward beyond the river Jordan to a brook which cannot now be accurately located. The Prophet was to hide himself—to keep his identity secret, his whereabouts unknown to the king. This was probably for two reasons: (1) To preserve him from special persecution as the one who had brought the trouble, and the one who, if he would, could remove it. (2) The inability of the king to find the Prophet, whose word alone could, under the Lord's arrangement, revoke the drouth and famine, should cause the king and the people to appreciate the matter as a judgment of the Lord and lead them to look to the Lord for relief from their chastisements.

RAVENS GOD'S MESSENGERS

It is estimated that the Prophet spent about a year in the vicinity of the brook Cherith—miraculously supplied with food by ravens and with water from the brook until it dried up. There have been various speculations respecting these "ravens"—whether or not the word raven is here used in a figurative sense to represent various assistances, or whether ravens literally fed the Prophet. It is a matter of fact that the highland country to the east of the Jordan is just such a place as the ravens usually inhabit, and that bird is noted as "the most highly developed of all birds, quick-sighted, sagacious and bold." In defense of the thought that the Prophet was supplied by ravens, just as the account reads, the following stories are told as illustrating not only the sagacity of this bird and its natural disposition, but also as illustrating the Lord's providences in respect to other persons than Elijah.

A missionary writes to the *S. S. Times* respecting ravens that they had frequently snatched food from his children while they were eating. He tells the following story: "Our nurse one day prepared a fowl to be grilled, and, standing in the doorway, plate in hand, called the cook to come for the fowl. When the man came the nurse discovered that her plate was empty. A kite or crow had carried away the fowl without her knowledge." The same journal relates a story of an English nobleman, imprisoned and nearly starved, fed by a cat which "appeared at the window grating every day with a pigeon from a neighboring dovecote, and dropped it there for his benefit; this act was repeated day by day during his imprisonment." Stanley's History of Birds tells of an injured Newfoundland dog which was visited at his kennel constantly by a pet raven that brought him bones.

The child of God will have no difficulty whatever in accepting the fact that our heavenly Father was quite able to use the

ravens in supplying the needs of his servant. The lesson to the Lord's people in this connection is expressed in the inspired words, "He careth for you" (1 Pet. 5:7), "My God shall supply all your needs." (Phil. 4:19) The Lord did not supply Elijah with luxuries, but with the absolute necessities. And so it may be at times with us. We may not have the superfluity and delicacies of the king upon our tables nor in our wardrobes, yet it may be well with us because of our relationship with the Lord, our realization that we are his servants and that he careth for us, and is making trials and disciplines of present experiences to work out for us much advantage every way for the future, as well as rest and peace of heart for the present. Let us remember in this connection the words of the Apostle, "Be content with such things as ye have." (Heb. 13:5) We would not be understood as meaning that we should not note and avail ourselves of any providential doors that the Lord might open before us for a betterment of our condition, but we would impress the thought that contentment with godliness is great gain, and should always be the portion of the Lord's faithful people, as expressed by the poet, "Content whatever lot I see, since 'tis my God that leadeth me."

HEATHEN FAITH HONORED

Those who neglect thus to look for the Lord's leading and guidance in their affairs are not only missing a blessing to their hearts in the present time, but are failing to be prepared for the glorious things which the Lord has in reservation for his people in the future. The Lord could have continued the miracle wrought in Elijah's case—supplying the water and the food indefinitely had he so chosen—but in due time he permitted the drying up of the brook and sent his servant elsewhere, and the facts show and the words of our Lord Jesus prove that he was specially sent to the other location in the interest of a poor widow. This widow lived at Zarephath, near the sea coast, in about the same locality as the Syrophenician woman whose daughter our Lord healed. Zarephath was outside the kingdom of Israel, and the widow was evidently not an Israelite, but a godly Gentile—like the Syrophenician woman, of greater faith than many in Israel. Our Lord's miracle, giving some of the crumbs of divine favor to the "dogs," Gentiles, indicates to us the Lord's appreciation of well-intentioned people outside of Israel, although under his covenant with that nation they were considered strangers, aliens, foreigners from God and not heirs of the promise made to the children of Abraham.

The widow to whom Elijah was sent had a little son, and the famine, which was heavy upon the land of Israel, naturally extended also to the land of Sidon, which lay along the Mediterranean seacoast. Doubtless the wealthy, both in the land of Israel and in the land Sidon, could procure the necessities of life, and the burden doubtless fell specially upon the very poor. The widow in question was gathering some firewood when the Prophet met her and requested a little water. The streams of that vicinity from the mountains of Lebanon had evidently not completely dried up, as had the brook from which the Prophet had just come, and the widow was able to supply him refreshment; but when he asked her for bread she was compelled to tell him the truth, that she was nearly as poor as himself—that the earthen pot in which she kept her store of meal (called in our text a barrel) was nearly empty, and that she was just preparing to cook the last of it, expecting thereafter that herself and her child would die of famine. The Prophet suggested that she first of all make a little cake for him, and that afterward he would guarantee as a prophet of the Lord that her meal should not decrease nor her bottle of oil diminish until the Lord would send rain upon the earth, which would break the famine. It required great faith on the woman's part to accept this statement and give to the Prophet of her little store of food. No wonder the Lord was pleased to bless such an one—pleased to send his servant to her, though in going to her he passed by many widows in Israel, as our Lord indicates. No wonder her faith is mentioned as a memorial of her.

THE LORD LOVETH THE CHEERFUL GIVER

There are several lessons in this connection for the Lord's people. First, the spirit of generosity—readiness to give to those who are worthy and are in need. We are not attempting to hold up the case as one having a parallel every day. We are to remember, on the contrary, the famine stress of the times, for, had it been otherwise, quite probably the woman would have been justified in asking the Prophet why he did not labor for his own food instead of asking to share her bite. It was, however, a time of distress, of general lack of employment, etc., and the woman showed forth a noble sentiment of heart. Neither would we advise that the word of every stranger be taken so implicitly as this widow accepted the Prophet's word. Nevertheless, faith in humanity and faith in God and gener-

osity of heart—willingness to divide our little all with those whom we believe to be the Lord's people and in need—will surely today as then bring a divine blessing, and we hold that it is better to err on the generous side than the reverse. Our heavenly Father is generous, giving continually of his substance to us all, and we are exhorted to be like unto our Father in heaven—kind even to the unthankful—generous to those who are not generous to us. Whoever cultivates this spirit cultivates the God-like quality, and thus is drawn nearer to the Lord and closely into fellowship with him, and is prepared for greater blessings to come.

It is estimated that Elijah's stay at the home of the widow, and their mutual participation in her little store of meal and oil, lasted about two to two and a half years. The Lord continually worked a miracle for their sustenance, and he is equally able to work such a miracle today in our interest if in his judgment it were necessary. But such miracles are unnecessary today and under present conditions, and should not be expected. Rather the hearts of the Lord's people should look for divine interposition in their interests as new creatures in Christ Jesus. How often has the Lord used figurative ravens

and wolves to bring to his children needed spiritual nourishment! How often have the trials and difficulties and persecutions of the evil one and his blinded followers been overruled of the Lord for good to those who trust in his name. This thought is expressed by the Psalmist in that beautiful twenty-third psalm, in which he represents the Lord's consecrated ones as his sheep, led by green pastures and still waters: then changing the figure he says: "Thou preparest for me a table in the presence of mine enemies—my cup [of joy, spiritual refreshment] runneth over."

The Prophet's experience at Zarephath also represents spiritual experiences of the Lord's people today. How often has the Lord provided his people with spiritual refreshments, encouragements, etc., through those who are not his children! As such experiences bring blessings to the Lord's people, they also bring blessings to those who are used to minister them, and thus the same lessons of experience today are continually ours as they were those of the Prophet twenty-five centuries ago. The lesson for us is the Lord's care and the propriety of confidence in him, and the realization that he is able to use any means he may desire in sending us his favors.

COURAGEOUS AND TIMID SERVANTS OF GOD

I KINGS 18:1-16.—AUG. 14.

"I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth."

In the third year of Elijah's sojourn at Zarephath—the fourth year without rain—really three and a half years after Elijah's pronouncement to King Ahab (Luke 4:25; James 5:17)—the Lord sent his Prophet back into the land of Israel to Ahab. A less courageous man than Elijah might have hesitated, for he doubtless had knowledge of the fact that the king had instituted a search for him in every direction, probably with the intention of securing his revocation respecting the cessation of rain—of having him break the spell upon the weather and bringing rain—or to put him to death in the event he did not do so, or both. Elijah seems to have been a most courageous servant of the Lord in executing whatever commands he received from the great King, and in the present instance he would be encouraged with the thought that his mission to Ahab would be a most acceptable one, since the Lord had assured him that the due time had come for the sending of rain. Doubtless the Prophet, too, as a lover of humanity and particularly of his nation, would have both a humane and appropriate sentiment that he would be pleased to serve in such a manner.

The famine, which was over all the land of Israel, was keenly felt at the capital city, Samaria. The king was finally aroused to an appreciation of the fact that something must be done or soon all the cattle would die of thirst. Apparently he was more solicitous for his beasts than for the poor of the people. The dying of his herds and the dying of his horses and mules would impair his power and dignity as a king as well as his wealth. Hence the proposition to seek for springs or brooks not yet dried up, where water could be found for the king's beasts. He sent the chief servant of his palace, one in whom he had absolute confidence, in one direction, while he himself, probably with a good retinue of servants, etc., went in another direction.

OBADIAH, THE TIMID SERVANT

Obadiah, who was intrusted with this service, we are informed, was a true worshiper of the Lord—not only so, but one who at the risk of his own life had protected the lives of a hundred of the prophets of the Lord on an occasion when Queen Jezebel had ordered the slaughter of all such. Obadiah, therefore, should be reckoned not only as a true and noble, but also as a courageous servant of God in some respects, and yet we note a wide difference between his disposition and courage and that of Elijah. That he maintained his position in the king's family not only implies that his loyalty to the Lord made him a trusted and useful man in the king's service, but it implies also that in a household so given up to idolatry he must have in large measure put his light under a bushel and avoided the advocacy of the truth, else he never would have been acceptable and retained his position. We may be sure that the king, and specially the queen, never knew that their chief servant had negated the commanded death of one hundred prophets.

Comparing the characters of these two servants of the Lord, Elijah and Obadiah, we can find items to commend in both, but especially in Elijah. It is not for us to condemn Obadiah, and indeed we have no doubt that the Lord gave him in his lifetime a blessing or reward for his service to his cause, and that he will give him a still further blessing and reward in the future. But if we would have before our minds the proper example to be followed, the proper courage to be exercised, our pattern would be Elijah, whose loyalty to God was so thoroughly attested on every possible occasion. There are Chris-

tians of both of these types today, but Elijah stands for or represents the little flock with whom the Lord is specially pleased and who will with the Redeemer constitute the kingdom class by and by. We rejoice also with the believers, the partially consecrated ones, represented by Obadiah, yet we could sincerely wish for them the blessing of greater zeal in the Lord's service—less care for the friendship of those who are God's enemies and greater boldness in the advocacy of the Lord's cause and in proclaiming themselves in every proper manner his servants. We fear for such that being ashamed of the Lord to some extent, preferring advantages as respects the present life—to be in a prominent position, in good society, and surrounded by luxury maintained at the expense of a failure to properly confess the Lord—will mean to such eventually the loss of the great prize for which we are called to run in this present life. As already intimated, our expectation would be that such a class would eventually get a blessing from the Lord and a good position; but such a class surely, unless they turn about and become more courageous, will lose the great prize for which we have been called to run—joint-heirship with God's dear Son in the kingdom.

ELIJAH, THE COURAGEOUS

While en route in quest of the springs, etc., Obadiah met Elijah and at once recognized him as the special servant of the Lord and prostrated himself at his feet, saying, "Is it thou, my lord, Elijah?" and he answered, "It is I. Go tell thy lord Ahab that I am here." Immediately Obadiah's fear and caution came upon him as he thought of how Ahab would be anxious to find Elijah, and he surmised that Elijah would in some manner disappear during his absence and that in consequence the king's anger would be against his servant Obadiah, believing that he had deceived him in the matter or because he had not insisted on bringing Elijah as a captive to the king, knowing that he was searching for him. He feared that Elijah was thus inclined to do him injury, and related to the prophet that he was a servant of the true God and not an idolater, and that he had protected one hundred young men of the school of the prophets, delivering them from death because of reverence for the Lord. Elijah assured him that this was not his intention, and that he would without question meet Ahab. His word was believed and the meeting of the king and the Prophet resulted.

When the king arrived where Elijah was he saluted the latter in a bold manner, implying that all the trouble that had come upon the nation was properly chargeable to him, and that he should feel guilty of it. The king ignored the Lord's hand in the matter and ignored his own responsibility. He was a very different type of man from either of the others discussed in this lesson. Elijah was courageous for the Lord and for the truth; Obadiah was less courageous and in some respects weak-kneed—lacking many of the qualities approved of the Lord; but Ahab was bold and defiant of the Lord and his prophet, and after all the experiences through which himself and his nation had passed for three and a half years, his salutation to Elijah was, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" Elijah met him on his own ground exactly and replied, No, it was the king who troubled Israel through the institution of idolatry. The king's boldness appears to have wilted in the presence of the Prophet's lance-like thrust of the truth, and the latter, assuming the place of command as the Lord's representative, ordered the gathering of the chiefest of the people of Israel from every

quarter and with them all of the prophets of Baal, to meet at Mount Carmel. This evidently was a challenge as between the forces of Baal, represented by the king and government and all the heads of the ten tribes and all the prophets of Baal, and the one Prophet representing Jehovah.

Evidently King Ahab was considerably humbled by the experiences through which he had passed, and was now hopeful that at last the difficulties were to reach a conclusion. Doubtless the Prophet had told him that this was his mission, to bring blessings and refreshment through rain. At all events, there seems to have been no parley on the king's part, but a prompt compliance with the Prophet's demands.

The principal lesson we see in this narrative is that of char-

acter and positiveness on the part of those who profess to be the Lord's people. It is not sufficient that we should not sympathize with Ahab's course of violence and opposition to the Lord and subserviency to his wife Jezebel, the head and leader of the idolatrous worship. It is not sufficient for us, either, to copy after Obadiah's course and to serve and fear the Lord in secret, even though in secret also we strive to do good to some of the Lord's people. Obadiah's course is very much more honorable than that of Ahab, but still it is not sufficient. We all want to copy the general courage and loyalty of Elijah, and in a subsequent lesson we shall see that he is particularly a type of all the Lord's favored ones of this Gospel age.

ENCOURAGING WORDS FROM FAITHFUL WORKERS

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:

I write to tell you an incident which lately took place and which shows the DAWNS are exercising more influence than appears on the surface. At one of our meetings a short time ago a lady came who had never before been amongst us. She told us she was a member of a missionary society in connection with the Baptist church. At a recent meeting she had asked the opinion of the other ladies present as to the future state of the heathen who had died without believing in Christ. All admitted that they had at one time believed they were lost, but now believed that in some way God would give them a future opportunity. On inquiring further as to what had caused them to change their opinions they said it was through reading Vol. I, MILLENNIAL DAWN. There were seventeen ladies present. Yours in the one Faith,

W. HOPE HAY, *Pilgrim*.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:

I am sending you five dollars for the Tract Fund—the money that I received for a pair of gold bracelets. I don't think that I could use it in a better way than to give it to the dear Lord, to be used in his service.

I am studying his plan and I want to know more and more day by day of his precious truth. I can fully appreciate what he has done for me, and all I am and have is consecrated to him. I am only twelve years old, but I know that he will take me under his care.

This small offering may help some in the Pilgrim service. With love,

Your little sister in the Lord,

A. V. B.—*New Jersey*.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:

Have great pleasure in thanking you for sending along the things asked for, especially the favor of receiving the sixth volume, "The New Creation." I have read it right through while most round here are hanging their tongues out, as it were, to get a taste, and the privilege is still in anticipation.

If commendation is allowable, should say that this your last labor of love will prove a most effective thirst quencher. The tenth chapter particularly interested me and think that you have dealt beautifully with the subjects in the entire book. God bless and keep you and all workers in Allegheny for the strengthening of the brethren, is my earnest prayer.

Yours very sincerely, ALEX. MILES.—*England*.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:

To the glory of God and his dear Son be it known to the participators in this harvest work for their encouragement that also here, far north in Norway, we have received the illuminating beams from the Sun of Righteousness through his Word by the instrumentality of the books, MILLENNIAL DAWN. We have now indeed tasted the sweet influence of a pure doctrine in Christ. Heartily and intelligently five of us (seven were present) partook of the emblems representing our Lord's broken body and considered the cost with our privileges as members to suffer with him and for each other.

Receive this as an expression of our praise to the Lord that we have received fruits from your ardent labor, love and defense for pure doctrine, in this evil day.

THE CONGREGATION IN T.—, *Norway*.

DEAR SIR AND BROTHER:

The sequel to the Eaton-Russell Debates, which you so kindly sent me, is carefully read, and has indeed proved "meat in due season" to me. Having been an active worker in Church and Sunday-school work, a sample copy of the WATCH TOWER, February edition, 1901, was handed me for examination, which I read in part and then threw away as poisonous stuff, con-

trary to Christian principles and detrimental to the Church. But thinking myself cowardly not to read it, I picked it up again and read it carefully, determined to give my decision when through. The themes being backed by so many Bible quotations, present phenomena and my own Christian experience, with so many blighted hopes for the future—eternity appearing at times synonymous with misery and woe to the majority—my decision was slow in coming, and the opposite of what I thought. I handed the same copy to Prof. W.— and told him of my experience with it. He approved of its Scriptural and logical reasoning. Brighter hopes began to animate my soul. I subscribed and my "poison" became a "light to my feet." But it cost me dearly. Naturally I told the "good news" to the most conscientious of the brethren. They "knew it all," and, of course, my sails were turned against the current. My church standing was threatened; they pitied me and denounced you. Finally I was considered on the verge of infidelity, and by some declared a free thinker. I pitied them, for I could appreciate their fears, but they could not or would not understand me. Feeling that I could do no good in the church, I left it. I am persuaded that some are meditating, and I would be obliged if you would send me more copies of the Sequel and any other literature you deem fit.

Fraternally yours, G. S.—*Pennsylvania*.

DEAR UNCLE:

I know that you will be glad to learn that I have consecrated my all to the Lord on my twenty-fourth birthday, June 12th. Believing on him as my Savior, having faith in his promises, knowing his grace will be sufficient in all times of trials, and truly repenting of my sins, I made my covenant with him and now wish to do only that which is his pleasure. I feel that he has already strengthened me and I rejoice to have been privileged to come and join in the grand forming of the "little stone" out of the mountain. I have almost finished the first volume of DAWN, and it is so grand! I think I will go over it again before taking up the second.

I feel that the convention here was such a help to me, and I praise the Lord that he has led me to a knowledge of my need of a Savior, and I will by his grace spend the remaining years of life for him.

I would ask an interest in your prayers and in those of all the Bible House friends, that I may grow in grace and patience and love. I am glad to say that I have received much contentment of heart already and I rejoice to be one of the brothers.

May the Lord abundantly bless and comfort you is my prayer.

With love, your nephew,

JOS. R. LAND,—*California*.

DEAR FRIENDS:

I greatly desire again to join in the blessed work of distributing tracts from house to house this summer. I believe this service has been the channel of bringing quite a few into the light of present truth.

We heard a few days ago of some results of our last year's service, in which a tract placed under a door was the means of leading a man and his wife to send to the TOWER office for five volumes of DAWN. And the fact that they were interested came to us in a very peculiar way.

One day last week a neighbor of ours—a woman of the world—asked Sister C. for some of the tracts that we give away. Sister C. inquired for what purpose she wished them. She replied that she was going out calling, and desired to take some to a friend. Sister C. then inquired if her friend was religiously inclined, and learning that she and her husband were both religious people, gave the neighbor three or four tracts for them.

When the tracts were handed the lady she said: "Why, we