

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER

THE CHURCH AND THE SCHOOL

The endeavor to bring the public school system of England under the supervision of the church of England is causing considerable friction, and amounts to a modern persecution for conscience' sake that reminds of the persecutions of the long ago. Good people, whose consciences are perhaps not backed by proper knowledge of the Lord's teachings on the subject, and who therefore lack some measure of "the wisdom that cometh from above," are refusing to pay school taxes because such taxes would support schools which they disapprove. They thereby bring upon them the regular penalties: their goods are sold to meet the debt and some, in default of the money, have been imprisoned.

In Canada the same question is up in another form—the division of moneys raised by school taxes amongst sectarian schools. Many Canadians see in this an attack on the public school system that would favor Romanism. They see correctly; but those who see that "the time is short," after voicing a reasonable protest may safely and quietly leave all in the hands of the Lord.

The "Churchman" (Episcopalian) makes some sensible comments on the subject. We quote:

"Does not the endeavor to ally the church and Christianity with the public school place the church in just as false a position as would the endeavor to ally it with the state? The church represents Christ infinitely more than through a mere code of laws or a system of education. She is in the world to convert, to inspire, and to furnish the enabling power for the life of men and of society in its entirety.

"Definite religious teaching should be left where it belongs, to the church and to the home. State officials could not teach even the Ten Commandments in other than a perfunctory way without arousing controversy. It is because the church and Christian parents have failed to give the religious instruction, that they ought to have given, that the demand is made for such instruction in the public schools. With anxiety, it seems sometimes almost with desperation, they ask that the state shall do what the church has failed to do. The state cannot do what they ask, but the church can. With renewed zeal and the best educational methods she must supply the religious instruction that the state and its schools cannot give."

CHURCH UNION IN THE MAY CONVENTIONS

A marked tendency toward church union characterized the May meetings of the various denominations this year. Among the definite steps taken were the organizing by the Northern and Southern Baptists of a permanent body to be known as the General Convention of the Baptists of North America; the agreement of the United Brethren, at their quadrennial conference in Kansas City, to accept the plan of federation with the Congregationalists and the Methodist Protestants, looking to a complete consolidation in the future; and the action of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church toward completing organic union with the Cumberland Presbyterians. The vote approving the latter merger was taken on May 22. Says a correspondent of the *New York Herald* in reference to this vote:

"It was the final action of the General Assembly on one of the greatest questions which have come before it since the Civil War, and brings back into that organization a branch which went out during the war because of differences over negro slavery.

"If the opposition to the union has made any fight it has been chiefly at the secret meetings of the special canvassing committee appointed last Saturday, but there were today no signs of such a contest. The special committee in its report canvassed the votes taken by presbyteries on the question of union. It showed 144 yeas to 39 noes. Two took no action, one gave conditional assent and five made no report."

The same correspondent gives the following further details:

"The special committee in its recommendations asked that the proposition be referred to the Committee on Coöperation and Union; that the committee be increased in membership to twenty-one; that it have power to confer with a committee from the Cumberland church; that it find what details must be worked out to consummate the union, and that a report be made to the General Assembly next year.

"This committee is to consider the corporate and legal rights of both general assemblies. The purpose is to keep the consolidation within legal limits, that all civil suits and injunctions may be avoided."

THE RELIGIONS OF NEW YORK

A journal styled *Federation* has gathered statistics of religious conditions in New York City. Its conclusions is that (243-244)

"the greatest home missionary field in the United States is New York City, and the sooner the churches realize it, the better it will be for our city and our land." The *Sun*, reviewing the report, says:

"At present the aggregate of the distinctively Christian population of the town is only two-fifths of the whole. This includes the whole of the Roman Catholic population and the total number of Protestant communicants. Besides these the *Federation* estimates a total of about half a million Protestants who attend church more or less regularly, and more than a million Protestants who are 'churchless,' or outside of any religious faith.

"New York, therefore, cannot now be called a Christian city. Jews and infidels and the religiously indifferent or unattached constitute a majority of the inhabitants. The Protestant percentage is becoming less, the vast preponderance of the additions to the population being of Roman Catholics and Jews. The total of Protestant communicants and church attendants, as estimated by the *Federation*, is only about as great as that of the Jews alone, and by 1910 it is likely to be much less. By that time there will be more Jews here than natives of native parentage. The Jewish population has increased from only about 3 per cent of the whole in 1880 to nearly 20 per cent in 1905."

NOMINAL CHRISTIANS DESCRIBED

We hear boasts of the progress of Christianity in connection with the project of converting the world. We see the estimate of four hundred millions of Christians. It is well that we examine the following picture of some of this number—the great mass of them. We quote from the *New York Herald* a description of the emigrants now coming to our shores. Alas! the name Christian has come to be a byword by reason of the attempt to count large numbers, and to stimulate the hope that some day the heathen world will be converted to as good conditions as is Christendom now. Alas! Christendom is "Babylon" in God's esteem (Rev. 18:4) and really worse than heathendom—more excusable because of its grosser darkness, denser blindness. If the 400,000,000 of Christendom commit more and greater crimes and are every way more profane than the 1,100,000,000 heathen, which most needs converting?

The *Herald* says:

"They are barbarians most of them. Subtracting a certain small percentage of fairly intelligent—a percentage drawn for the most part from the better class of Scandinavians, Scotch and Germans—the great residuum are to all appearances so densely ignorant, so utterly alien to all our preconceived notions of what constitutes civilization, that it is only with great difficulty that we force ourselves to remember that most of them have been born and bred in the very strongholds of Christendom."

REV. A. BEET, D. D.

Some time ago we called attention to Professor Beet's acceptance of the Bible teaching of man's mortality: that eternal life is God's gift through Christ to those only who become his followers.

The following, clipped from the *London Daily News*, explains the present situation. Professor Beet's fidelity to the truth he has already seen has led him to renounce his honorable position and good salary for conscience' sake. May he be abundantly blessed and led into the still deeper truths now due to the household of faith. We quote as follows:

When a man loves truth better than dignities and emoluments, he is a man to be noted. Such a man is Dr. Agar Beet, Theological Professor at Richmond Wesleyan College, England. For eight years he has been under a cloud and an object of suspicion in certain Methodist circles on account of his Eschatological views. Under pressure he withdrew his book, "Last Things," from circulation, and gave reluctantly a promise not to issue another edition, "in order to avoid danger to the peace of the church," and generally to keep silent on the dark question of the doom of the lost until the Wesleyan Conference gave permission for the book to be published.

To an earnest seeker after truth the position became intolerable and impossible. It was not a matter of surprise that after the last Conference had refused to unseal his lips he promptly announced his intention to vacate his chair this year and claim freedom of thought and action. It was the only course possible. Better cease to be a Professor than be placed under an embargo of silence.

Rev. Dr. Beet said to a reporter:

"What has brought about this crisis is that I can no longer withhold from the world a book that has already brought light

and comfort to many readers. Even in its present form it has lifted the gloom from many hearts. Not less than a hundred ministers and many laymen have thanked me for blessings received from its perusal. I owe it to the church, to Christ, and to conscience to place the results of my study of this solemn subject in the hands of readers, many of whom are groping in the darkness. The opinion of Methodists on the doom of the lost has completely changed during the last half century. They have discarded the traditional belief in the literalness of hell-fire and the eternity of future punishment, but they have been without guidance as to a positive article of faith to put in its place. The overthrow of the dogma has been carefully hidden. Godly ministers have nursed their doubts in silence, some under a sense of guilt for concealing their change of view, until the need of concealment has become to them a humiliating and intolerable bondage."

"What is your view, the view to which strong objection has been taken?"

"I hold that the New Testament represents Jesus Christ as declaring that for those who reject his Gospel there is nothing in the future for them but ruin, hopeless, utter, and final ruin, but he does not say implicitly what will become of the lost, or in what that final ruin consists. The references to the doom of the impenitent are too uncertain for us to dogmatise upon them. The traditional view is that those who reject Christ will think and feel for ever and will suffer endlessly. That dogma I reject unhesitatingly.

"That there are some passages in the Scriptures that seem to suggest conscious suffering I admit, but there are other passages which contradict that view, and in the absence of distinct and definite teaching on the subject why should we dogmatise? As to the natural immortality of the soul, that is not a Christian doctrine at all. It has been incorporated in Christian theology from the Platonic philosophers, but no proof of its truth is to be found in Scripture."

Rev. Robert Ker contributes the following to the *Toronto Globe*:—

FATE OF THE THEOLOGICAL STUDENT

On behalf of the modern apostasy known as "higher criticism," a plea is set up on the ground of liberty so-called. But there is no interference with anybody's liberty, than an ordinary mind can see, and the Bishops rightly say to those wonderfully learned men—professors in colleges and holders of church endowments in various forms—there is a "wide open door" through which you can pass, and through which as honorable men, you ought to go, and not stand on the manner of your going. We may say to those who take this consistent course that we shall be very sorry to see them go, particularly so, as they modestly tell us that they carry with them all the scholarship and enlightenment of the church. But it can't be helped, and we shall struggle on in our own feeble way, wrest-

ling with "the traditional view," while they, freed from its oppressive trammels, shall have added to their manifold gifts and graces the homely virtue of honesty. A man who can deliberately recite a creed without believing it, and draws pay for doing so, is as little worthy of respect as the man who forges a check, because they are both "getting money under false pretences."

The theological student, as matters are going, will soon be as extinct as the Dodo. And need we wonder at it? Let the Bible be the hodgepodge which these wonderful learned people represent, a mass of fiction and folly, and every honest man will see just one of two courses open before him—either plain and unvarnished infidelity, or absorption into the Papal obedience. It is astonishing how men pledged to honor and honorable dealing can bind themselves to the position that they must of necessity occupy in the sight of honest men. And what is it all about? Who is the great high priest of the new cult? The higher criticism had its birth and growth in licentiousness and infidelity. Its ostentatious claim to unprecedented scholarship is now ridiculed as little more and nothing better than hyper-criticism.

But there is a side to this question which is less considered than it ought to be. I refer to the prevailing and widespread indifference of the laity. There was a time in the history of the church when things were very different from what they are today. I think it was last Christmas a clergyman of the city of Montreal sent around a Christmas card to the members of his congregation, on which, instead of a quotation from holy Scripture, he treated them to a quotation from Harnack. Next year it will likely be a quotation from Tom Paine, Bolingbroke or Voltaire. There's really no difference. But will it evoke any protest from the laity? Do they see that this new apostasy strikes at the root of revealed religion? Do they stop to think that this new "doctrine of devils" leaves them without Christ and without God in the world? "How sweet the name of Jesus sounds," has no music for the man who has no faith in the resurrection or whose views respecting it, as a college professor avowed, were in a state of suspense. It is God-dishonoring to have such men in our pulpits leading men and women into the deeper condemnation.

Then what are we to say about the colossal folly of the men who, having eliminated the incarnation and the resurrection, talk about "a revival of religion?" Better far to call things by their proper name and pray for a revival of Paganism and the re-introduction of its licentious worship.

We are reproducing with extraordinary exactitude the conditions that prevailed in ancient Rome before she sank into the pit of her own digging. It behooves those who are sincerely on the Lord's side in these days of alarming apostasy to stand fast in the faith.

CONVENTION OF THE JOYFUL PEOPLE

"Blessed are the people who do know the joyful sound." (Psa. 89:15) No Convention yet held by us better illustrated this text than the Niagara Convention. It was a joyful meeting of happy people. Not merely did the association conduce to happiness, but nearly all in attendance were happy before they came, and merely increased their joys by their fellowship there with the Lord and with one another.

The Boston railway agent remarked to the brother who secured the arrangements for the sixty brethren and sisters from that quarter,—"You all seem to be anticipating a good time. Every face is happy—not a frown, not a vexed or cross word." He was the more surprised because the people were of no sect or party—merely Christians—and en route for a Bible Students' Convention. He became interested in "the happy people," and says he wants to read "DAWN" to find the secret. A similar experience attended another party.

The watchman at the Conservatory had not expected arrivals before 10 a. m. Sunday and refused to open the building, but finally did open it, inquiring, "What is it that makes you all so happy?" He was informed that the people were happy because they loved and trusted the Lord and his Word. He thought he would attend some of the meetings and learn why those people were so happy in coming long distances at their own expense. He attended, declared it was a different Gospel from any he ever before heard, and got the DAWN to study further.

The janitor of the building not only noted the joy of the Lord in the faces and conversation, but remarked also that this was the only Convention ever held in the Conservatory, attended by men, that did not litter the carpets, etc., with cigar ashes and stumps and tobacco quids. A number of the em-

ployes, we learn, are now reading DAWN as a result of their having read the "living epistles" of the Lord's "people who do know the joyful sound."

THE CITY, THE AUDITORIUM, THE PEOPLE

Niagara Falls, N. Y., is a quiet, clean and beautiful city, all that could be desired. Its citizens let us alone, and we let them alone; except that the 1,100 conveners got their lodgings with them at not unreasonable rates. We did not advertise this Convention to the public, preferring to have it chiefly a gathering of those already deeply interested in present truth. No doubt this contributed to the general sentiment that this was the best Convention yet held under our Society's auspices. Hereafter we prefer to follow this plan in respect to the "General Convention" (except perhaps one discourse for the public) leaving to the "one day Conventions" more particular appeals to the local public.

The Natural Food Co., manufacturers of "Shredded Wheat Biscuit," granted us the free use of the fine auditorium in their extensive buildings. It was scrupulously clean, well lighted, well ventilated and seats 1,000 persons. It was more than full on two occasions, on Sunday. The Convention voted its thanks to the management and their courteous employees.

EAST, WEST, NORTH AND SOUTH

Some in attendance came from long distances—two from Florida, one from Tennessee, some from Nebraska, but the majority, of course, from the more central districts. Boston, Chicago and Allegheny churches seem to have been most liberally represented—about 60 from each.

From the opening of the Convention to its close the keynote was loving gratitude to God and love and sympathy to the brethren and the entire groaning creation. About a dozen

brethren took part in the public services. More than a dozen others present would have been quite competent for service had there been opportunity for them. No doubt the discourses did good by stimulating faith and zeal, but after all the great feature of the Convention surely was the heart-fellowship of the occasion. No earthly family reunion compared with the gathering of the Lord's family and their loving interest in each other's welfare. Introductions were not waited for—each knew the other's heart and soon reached it.

Ninety-four brethren and sisters symbolized their consecration as being "even unto death." It was a beautiful and solemn witnessing. The pastor of the Baptist church, which so kindly granted us the free use of their baptistry, was present at the service, we learn, and is now reading DAWN. An Episcopal minister and his wife, also a Baptist minister and his

wife, were conventioners with us, having come considerable distances. We believe they were favorably impressed and blessed. We hope to hear from them further, ere long.

THE ABSENT ONES REMEMBERED

We reminded the dear friends that we surely had the prayers and blessed wishes of others of "the happy people," "the truth people," all over the world, thousands of whom would have been with us had the Lord's providence permitted. We remembered you all earnestly in our prayers that the Lord would compensate your unwilling absence by pouring upon you a portion of our blessing; and we exhorted all of the dear friends present to endeavor to carry back to their homes some of the precious words and experiences of the Convention. We doubt not some of them will talk about their experiences for a year to come.

"THE CHURCH OF TODAY"

BY REV. JOSEPH A. SEISS, D.D., LATE LUTHERAN MINISTER IN PHILADELPHIA, PA.

There is nothing in the history of the world hitherto, and especially nothing in the present status of its affairs, to favor the doctrine of our Modern Millennialists, or to make us think it likely, if at all possible, that the church in this dispensation, by any human activities or improvements, will ever be able to bring about a condition of universal conversion, righteousness and peace, such as some say will and must come "before" Christ comes. As no preaching of the Gospel, or efforts of evangelical workers, the holiest and most efficient in all these many centuries, have succeeded in making converts and saints of the entire population of any city or locality on this earth, it would seem to be sheer folly to expect these agencies and endeavors to do for the whole earth what they have never done for any part of it, however small. In all the ages . . . whithersoever it has come it has taken out a people for the Lord, who will live and shine with him in immortal glory, . . . whilst . . . the majority have everywhere been on the outside . . . and how can we suppose that it will ever be different in the present order of things? And when we examine the condition in which nearly two thousand years of the Gospel have left the most favored nations, not to speak of the regions beyond, we look in vain for solid evidences that another two thousand years of the same would bring the world any nearer the fancied Millennial state [before Christ comes] than Christendom is at present. . . . Some hold up their hands in holy horror at the idea that "Christendom," as it now exists—"this chaos of intermingled divisions, antagonistic communions and interminable contentions, jealousies and strifes"—is to remain. They cannot think that the Greek church, the Papal church, the disagreeing Protestant churches, together with the many sects and heretical coteries which "disgrace" the Christian profession, are to continue to the end of time.

But this state of things is exactly what has developed under "eighteen hundred years of the Gospel proclamations," and what has been is that which shall be, unless radical changes come, by the intervention of some new power and method of administration, such as the coming again of the Lord Jesus to judge and rectify will bring. . . .

When we look at the evils and the tares that have all the while been growing, at the sad estate into which "Christendom has been brought" by the spirit of sect, human ambition, self-seeking hypocrisy, unbelief, misbelief and the super-exaltation of humanitarian goodness, "which makes nought of doctrine, it seems next thing to absurdity to say that "this" is the instrument and agency to convert "the world" to truth and genuine godliness.

People say, "Oh, yes; but only set the church aright. Put it to work to do as it should; bring it up to what it 'ought to be' in enterprise and liberality, and there can be no question that it will soon conquer and sway the world to Christ and salvation." Be it so; but who is to convert Christendom and put it in condition to convert the world? Reform, Reform! That is the watch-word. The whole church and the whole earth are full of reformers laboring at reforms. But the sad fact remains: "That which is crooked, cannot be made straight; and that which is wanting cannot be numbered," while the doctoring is often worse than the disease. . . . To convert the world there must first be a conversion of the church, and that can never be until Christ the Judge shall come.

Yet another thing to be noted in connection with our subject, is the character of the times in which we live. The Scriptures abound in allusions to the moral aspect of the world in its "last" period—the period bordering on the time when Christ shall come with power and great glory, and everywhere those times are represented as full of unbelief, lawlessness; outbreathing sin, rampant lust, blasphemous mockery, and reviling of sa-

cred things,—a very carnival of bad passions and God-defiant crimes.

The question, therefore, arises, whether our times are not of the character thus divinely described and fore-intimated. . . . Have "we" not withal fallen upon a time of extraordinary degeneracy and wickedness? Has there not come a grievous falling away from the faith, a giving of heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies? Have not people become lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, haughty, railers, disobedient to law and rightful authority, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, implacable, slanderous, without self-control, fierce, traitors, headstrong, puffed up, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, "holding certain forms of godliness," but failing to show the power of godliness in their lives? Have "we" not plentiful examples of those mockers who were to come, walking after their own lusts and likes, and saying, "Where is the promise of his coming?" [Parousia, presence, Diaglott translation.]

Think of the startling multiplication of divorces, the breaking down of the sacredness of marriage, the shameless prevalence of licentiousness, and the commonness of infanticide, and secret blood-guiltiness of which physicians tell. Note the growing indifference to the solemnity of oaths, to sacred promises, to moral obligations, to the laws of God, and to all holy things. Observe the rapid accumulations of colossal robberies, swindles, defalcations, embezzlements, rascalities and false dealings, which disgrace our civilization, much of it also in high places, by people of social rank, education and refinement. Estimate the increasing killings, murders, incendiarisms and lawless and malicious misdoings of men and women, and the trampling under foot of right and justice in political, commercial and banking circles.

Observe the awful increase of suicides, which, within the past few years, have exceeded the number of 200,000 per annum! Lusts and crimes and fiendish passions seem to have reached flood tide, blossoming like trees in springtime, filling our "daily journals with their stench," and yet, treated and familiarly talked of as ordinary and trivial things! And when we consider that all this is within the realm of so-called Christendom, we may well wonder that we should have Christian people singing over it, and telling us that we are on the march to a glorious Millennium [before Christ comes]. What this state of things betokens is not Millennial glory, but "the day of Judgment, on the margin of which the world of today is reading." . . .

The question whether there is to be a glorious Millennium on this earth before the return of Christ is not to be decided by what is most agreeable to our reason and fancy, nor yet by what we imagine the most effective to stir zeal in effort to benefit the world lying in sin, but by what the Word of God says. What does not accord with that Word must go under, without regard to human likes, reasonings or opinions. . . . That many good and sensible people have need to examine the question with more thoroughness than they yet have done, is abundantly evident; and that what we have thus written may help some to right conclusions, is our earnest wish. . . . or can we leave the subject without solemnly laying it on the consciences of all whom we can reach, not to rest satisfied with notions which flatter and please a rationalistic fancy, but which they have never critically examined; and to beware of giving sanction to a modern popular persuasion, which they may find without just foundation in Scripture. . . .

It is indeed a fact for all to consider, that the side which we take on the question will and must make serious difference in the whole system of our theological thinking. There is

scarcely a doctrine which is not more or less affected by the ground we take upon this question. Our decision will and must affect our views of the resurrection—of the kingdom of God—of the second coming itself—of the nature and purpose of the present dispensation—particularly of the judgment, and what is to come after it, and the whole condition and life of the finally redeemed. . . .

And it will and must make or unmake to us many most pregnant passages of Holy Writ, rendering them grandly luminous, or sealing them as meaningless and uncertain—mere rid-

dles for interpreters to guess at, without agreement as to their clear and certain import.

A decision so far-reaching and momentous in its consequences and effects cannot safely be treated with indifference, and certainly demands a very serious, candid and thorough examination, that the conclusion may be one solidly founded in the revelations given us in the sacred Scriptures.

For our part we are deeply convinced and satisfied that the doctrine of a glorious Millennium of Christianity triumphant throughout all the world before Christ comes, is "groundless" and damaging to the cause it would promote.

NOT HOLDING THE HEAD

—COLOSSIANS 2:18.—

The Apostle warns us all against a wrong attitude which at all times has more or less threatened the body of Christ, in its larger gatherings as well as in its little handfuls;—he warns us against the danger of looking too much to ourselves or to other men in the church and not enough toward the Lord, who is indeed "the Head of the church, which is his body." Some members he represents as taking a head position, forgetful of the fact that "one is the Head of the church, even Christ," and inclined in consequence of this forgetfulness to think too highly of themselves, to imagine that the whole weight and importance of the Lord's cause devolves upon them, and to assume too much leadership.

The Apostle warns other less prominent members of the church against a recognition and support of such a wrong position, assuring them that their condescension is extreme, prejudicial to themselves and to the interests they would serve; that the angels, that is the messengers, the representatives of the Church (Rev. 1:20; 2:1) are not to be worshipped, though they are to be highly esteemed in proportion to their faithfulness, good works and humility. He warns other members that such a humiliation as would ignore themselves entirely and cast all the weight and responsibility and influence upon these angels or elders would be improper, would indicate an unfaithfulness to Christ and a failure to rightly appreciate his arrangements.

DANGERS IN OPPOSITE EXTREMES

Thus, reproving two classes because of taking opposite extremes, the Apostle proceeds to explain that the difficulty with both parties is a failure to hold the Head in proper esteem—Christ, the only true Head of the church. Whether by exalting ourselves, usurping our Lord's place in the church, and ignoring his words and arrangements and being puffed up as his servants, or whether on the other hand quietly submitting to such things and doing reverence to those who usurp the Lord's place in his body, in either case the difficulty is the same—a failure to rightly recognize the true Head.

If we accept the fact that Christ is the Head of the church, let us rest every argument on that basis; let us not feel for a moment that everything will go to pieces unless we steady the ark—that we are main spokes in the divine program in any little quarter of Zion. (1 Chron. 13:10) All such self-conceited ideas are traitorous as respects the Captain of our Salvation, for he has told us—and we believe his word—"Without me ye can do nothing." Every member of the body of Christ, whom the Lord has in any sense of the word set in the church to serve his cause, should realize that he is not at all essential to the development of the divine plan, that it is favor pure and simple that he has been granted a share in connection with it, that his blessings day by day more than compensate any little service and sacrifice he may be able to render. So far from feeling heady he should feel humbled by the thought that he is permitted to have any part in the great plan of God as a servant amongst his brethren, and he should realize distinctly that, so surely as the Lord is the Head of his church, any who cease to occupy positions of trust in a humble manner will be debased, will lose the privileges and opportunities, perhaps with injury to themselves and to others.

Those humble brothers and sisters who quietly permit a brother to exalt himself amongst them and to speak of the gathering, large or small, as "my church," "my followers," etc., are not only doing the brother an injury and encouraging him in a wrong course, but they are disloyal to the real Head of the church. He who submits to such conditions and language demonstrates that he does not properly appreciate "the liberty wherewith Christ makes free"—demonstrates either that he is but a "babe in Christ" or that he has gone to sleep as respects a proper watchfulness for the honor of the church and of the Head of the church. It matters not that such things can be explained away at not having meant anything serious. The fact is that such language and claims indicate that something

serious has already taken place, for no truly humble elder of the church of Christ, loyal to the Head, would think of speaking of himself as instead of the Head of the church, nor think of speaking of the Lord's people as his church.

Such public offenses should be publicly apologized for, otherwise such leaders should be relegated to the back seats. No matter if they had all the oratory imaginable, no matter if none of the others had any talent for public service. The poorest and weakest and most insignificant member of the body is, in the Lord's estimation, better qualified to teach than is one who vaunteth and puffeth up himself and affects to take in the church the position of the Head. Mark the Apostle's words, "Vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind and not holding fast the Head, from whom all the body being supplied and knit together through the joints and bands, increaseth with the increase of God."—Col. 2:19.

SELF FIRST, GOD SECOND

In 2 Timothy 2:3 the Apostle assures us that, In the last days grievous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, haughty, railers, disobedient to parents [and higher authority in general], unthankful, unholy . . . traducers, heady, high-minded . . . having a form of godliness, but ignoring the power thereof.

This picture certainly fits well to our day throughout nominal Christendom, and it is not strange therefore that something of the same general spirit at times seeks to invade the camp of the saints—the little companies of the consecrated who are striving to be overcomers of the world and its spirit. The fact that the Apostle writes thus forcefully on this question does not prove any lack of sympathy on his part, and assuredly our reference to his words indicate no lack of sympathy on our part. But the trouble is a grievous one and especially injurious to the brethren who may yield to such headiness: nothing is surer to sap spiritual vitality and to lead us into darkness, both doctrinal and spiritual.

On the contrary the Apostle James warns us against this danger which besets the more talented of the Lord's people. He writes, Be not many of you teachers, brethren, knowing that a man shall receive the stronger testings. (Jas. 3:1) It is because of our love for the brethren, because of our high esteem for them, and because we appreciate their services and desire that they may be continued in the service of the Lord, not only now but also in the everlasting future, that we feel it necessary to press this point, not personally, not individually, but generally.

We urge upon all whom the Lord hath set in the body, either in a humble position or in a conspicuous place, that the Apostle's words be remembered—that as our Lord humbled himself and was subsequently exalted, it demonstrates a principle at work in the Father's program under which all of his royal priesthood must humble themselves if they would in due time be exalted; also the Apostle's concluding argument is, "Humble yourselves, therefore, brethren, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." Now is not the proper time for exaltation; to elevate ourselves or others under present conditions is to incur the greater danger of a fall. Hence all who are earnest and of humble heart should both watch and pray lest they enter into temptation along this line, which from the very beginning of the Gospel age has been the most serious stumbling block in the pathway of this class. We remember that it was amongst the apostles themselves that the argument took place as to which would be greatest in the kingdom. Let us also remember our Lord's words of reproof to them, "Except ye humble yourselves and become as little children ye can in no wise enter into the kingdom."

ONLY THE HUMBLE ARE SAFE

Thus our Lord marks humility as one of the prime essentials of a place in the kingdom. And we can see the importance, the reason for this. To exalt to the glory, honor and im-

mortality of the kingdom and divine nature one who had not thoroughly demonstrated his humility of spirit would be to place him in a position where he might become another Satan, another adversary, who in time under one delusion or another might wish to divide the divine honors even beyond the munificence of our heavenly Father's provision for all those who are truly his consecrated ones.

It will not be very long, dear brethren—let us have patience. Let us have faith, too, not be doubters. Much of the endeavor to grasp and wield authority in the church is at first undertaken with the best of intentions, with the desire to do and be in the highest interests of the church. In such cases faith is not strong enough to realize how unnecessary we are to the divine plan and how able the Lord is to overrule every incident and circumstance according to the divine will. More faith in the Lord's power to regulate the affairs of the church will counteract largely the efforts of some of his people to run the church's interests along lines of their own wisdom and ability. Let us remember that he is able, he is willing, to work all things according to the counsel of his own will. Let us re-

member that our highest place is lying low, that the greatest mastery is self-mastery, and that whatever success we might have in usurping the place and authority of our Lord and his Word would undoubtedly react unfavorably to us in the end. Hence in self-preservation as well as in the interest of the church and in honor of the Lord, we need to keep self under. Let us remember the words of the poet and apply them daily:

"O! to be nothing, nothing,
Painful the humbling may be;
Yet low in the dust I'd lay me
That the world my Savior might see.
Rather be nothing, nothing—
To him let their voices be raised;
He is the fountain of blessing,
Yes, worthy is he to be praised."

Let us keep ever in memory the Apostle's example and words: "We preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus our Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."—2 Cor. 4:5.

BURNING THE WORD OF GOD

JEREMIAH 36:21-32.—AUGUST 20.

GOLDEN TEXT:—"Amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the Lord your God."—Jer. 26:13.

King Josiah, of our last lesson, dying in battle, made no arrangement respecting his successor on the throne, and the elders of the people chose his youngest son to be the king of Judah. The king of Egypt, on his victorious return from war with Assyria, exercised a suzerainty over the kingdom of Judah, and took the king a prisoner to Egypt, and exalted to the throne his eldest brother, Jehoiakim, who proved to be a thoroughly bold and bad man. Under his guidance of the kingdom evil of every kind seemed to prosper, and the good reforms instituted by his father gave way to fresh idolatry.

This was at the time when Jeremiah was one of the principal prophets in the land, who had been hindered for some time from prophesying publicly, but under the Lord's guidance he wrote out his prophecy respecting the coming judgments and chastisements upon the people of Judea, his scribe being Baruch. When it was finished it was read before certain prominent people of Jerusalem, and so deeply impressed them that they desired that the matter should be brought to the king's attention. Apparently they were friendly to the prophet and the scribe, and suggested the necessity for their concealment, lest the king should be angry with the prophecy and should seek to do them injury. King Jehoiakim, not satisfied with the general report given him respecting Jeremiah's prophecy, demanded to see the document itself, and had his own scribe read it before him. The king was unmoved by the message, and after hearing the contents of three of the columns of the manuscript he took his scribe's penknife and cut them off and cast them into the fire before him, and so he continued to do with the remainder until the entire manuscript was read and destroyed. Thus he emphasized his determination to take no counsel from the Lord, or we might say that he evidenced his lack of faith in the Lord and his disregard for his Word.

THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH

The king ordered the arrest of Jeremiah and his scribe, but, in harmony with the Lord's providences, they had already secreted themselves and were not found. In their seclusion they learned of the destruction of the manuscript, and prepared another statement of the prophecy, which we are informed had certain further additions, and this constitutes the book of Jeremiah as found in our Bibles. This gives us a little view of the manner in which the Bible came into existence piece by piece under the Lord's supervision. Doubtless the first manuscript delivered to the king was more particularly in respect to his own time and affairs. This served its purpose, and then the larger and fuller book of Jeremiah's prophecy, as we now have it, was prepared—not especially for the people of that time, but, as the Apostle Peter points out, it was designed for the instruction and edification of the Gospel church. (Rom. 15:4; 1 Pet. 1:12) Even those things which were applicable in some measure to Jeremiah's day and to Jehoiakim and to the king of Babylon were, as we have seen, of two-fold significance—applying not only to the literal Babylon of that time but also to the mystic Babylon of this Gospel age.

The Lord declares, "My Word that goeth forth out of my mouth shall not return unto me void, but shall accomplish that which I please, and shall prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it." (Isa. 55:11) We see this not only in the narrative foregoing—that the Lord's plans were not frustrated by the king—but we see it also in all the various steps of the Lord's providences in connection with the giving to us of his Word. Much

of that Word for centuries has seemed dark and meaningless to the Lord's people, but in the light of the Millennial dawn it is becoming luminous. Not that we should consider that every little item and detail of the prophecies of old would contain great value and great instruction, for this we do not find. Our understanding is that the pearls of truth are scattered throughout the Word, here a little and there a little, and that in this manner our Lord has hidden the beauties of his plan from the casual reader, while his spirit draws the attention of the new creation to these pearls of thought so valuable to us in our spiritual upbuilding, in giving us knowledge of the divine plan. It is with this as with everything in nature: diamonds are not found in a heap together, but scattered here and there in the peculiar soil in which they are secreted. Gold is not found in large blocks, but usually in very minute grains intermingled with tons of sand and dirt and rocks. In the wheat field there is much larger bulk of straw and of chaff than of clean grain.

We have doubtless all noticed this in the quotations made in the New Testament from the prophecies of the Old Testament, that only a fragment here and there is quoted and applied. We have all doubtless noted also that frequently the context seems very irrelevant, without connection with the part quoted. In other words, the Lord and the apostles selected for our nourishment the grains of wheat without specially referring to the chaff and straw of the connections. And so at the present time, as the spirit of the Lord opens the Old Testament before his people more and more, and we see in it wonderful things, we need not expect to find every item and every verse of every chapter full of meaning and spiritual nourishment. We must expect that a considerable portion of it will be like the straw and the chaff, not suited to our spiritual nourishment though necessary to the presentation of the meat in due season—necessary and proper in connection with the giving of the same, while at the same time hiding it from the world in general, especially until the due time. Thus the chaff hides the grain.

Our figure is still more complete when we remember that even if we have found the grain it needs a certain preparation of grinding or bruising, etc., before it is ready for our nourishment. So even after we have separated wheat from chaff, spiritual things pertaining to our time from other features pertaining to the time in which the Scriptures were written, we still require the assistances of the holy Spirit and agencies used of the Lord for the grinding and preparation of the meat in due season. By whatever means it is provided it is necessarily of the Lord's provision, and to him we render the thanks and praises and appreciation for all that has been done under the various instrumentalities of the Lord, the apostles and others.

FIGHTING AGAINST GOD

As Jehoiakim found it in the end vain to fight against God, and that burning the words of Jeremiah did not destroy nor render null and void his prophecy, so others are finding the matter to this day. Roman Catholics have apparently long been opponents of the Word of God, the Bible, and under their direction considerable Bible burning has been done. History tells us that the first edition of Tyndale's translation of the New Testament was bought up in the book-stores of London, etc., and burned. Indeed in very recent years we have heard of similar proceedings in Spain and less than three years ago in

Brazil. The Bible may be set down as the strongest foe of ignorance, superstition and every wrong doing: it is no wonder, therefore, that many hate the book.

It would not do for Roman Catholics to ignore the Bible altogether, since in considerable measure their religious system is based upon its teachings; hence they have from time to time issued various editions of the Bible, various translations, though none of these were ever issued by the authority of the Roman Catholic church as a whole, but merely by local Bishops. It would not be claimed by any that there is a wide discrepancy between the Bible used by Roman Catholics and the common English version of the same books. The Catholic version is supplied with elaborate notes on the Scriptures, supposed to safeguard the latter from heresies, while the Protestant version is usually published without note or comment except the marginal readings respecting the translation.

In our day a peculiar anomaly is presented: the Roman Catholic church, which through her popes has denounced Bible Societies as being of the devil, has within the last few years through its councils at Baltimore, and also more recently through the pope's encyclical letter to the bishops of America, advocated the reading of the Scriptures by its people, and urged that the priesthood shall encourage the reading. Probably this is merely for effect, merely to counteract the past tendencies of the church, and to seem to imply that papacy is loyal to the Scriptures. As a matter of fact Roman Catholics tell us that the priests do not urge the reading of the Scriptures, but when inquired of on the subject treat the matter lightly and rather discourage it. Of course only a Douay version is permitted at all, and it only to the educated, whom it would be unwise to refuse. Furthermore, the price of the Catholic edition is rather prohibitive so far as the poor are concerned.

THE BIBLE-BURNING SPIRIT

Those whose eyes of understanding are open have doubtless noticed a peculiar change of sentiment amongst Protestants respecting the Bible. The division is into three main classes: one repudiates the Bible except as a work of literature. These are known as higher critics, who consider their own judgments respecting all Biblical matters to be far superior to the opinions and testimonials of the Lord, the apostles and the prophecies. Egotistical and self-confident, they assume to be much wiser than is written, yet hold that it is not well to break entirely with the Bible because it still has a considerable hold upon many good people, and by rejecting it in toto they would not only lose the respect of these good people but also lose their support. The second class still holds to the Bible as a fetish, a charm, a book of good luck, which they like to have upon their parlor tables and without which in the house they would not feel entirely safe; they regard it as the Word of God, but do not understand it themselves nor do they believe others understand it. They have a special interest in and regard for churchianity, especially for the branch of it to which they have given adherence, and they somehow realize that an investigation of the Bible might undermine the influence of churchianity and make its students independent of those systems of man which have grown so grandly influential in social and financial circles. These would not burn the Bible itself, but would be in full sympathy with the burning of MILLENNIAL DAWN or any other book which would remove the dust and smoke of superstition from the Word of God and let its true light and beauty shine forth. They would not hesitate to burn these, because they feel instinctively that such a shining forth of the Word of God means a proportionate decline in the luster of their earthly systems of churchianity.

Thus do we account for the burning of the WATCH TOWER publications. In one or two cases the burning was done in public; in many instances, on the advice of this class of people, timid ones of the Lord's sheep have burned their books privately. One sister who attended a Canadian Convention not long since, as she shook hands with the Editor remarked: "Brother Russell, the Lord in his providence sent me MILLENNIAL DAWN several years ago, but I hearkened to the voice of those whom I supposed to be my religious superiors and proper Christian guides and I burned the book. Still gracious to me, the Lord sent me another copy: again I listened to the voices of darkness and burned the book. The Lord in great mercy sent me a third copy, and this time I was ready for it—it burned me; it has set me free, and I am here today rejoicing in the favor of God and in the light upon his Word." Her husband at her side spoke up, saying, "Yes, and it has burned me, too,"—burned the old self-will and sectarianism and opposition to the Way, the Truth and the Life, which God has revealed to us through his Word, to which Jesus and his redemptive work are the key.

Let us, dear friends, realize more and more that we cannot turn aside the divine plan by our puny oppositions if we were

so disposed, and let us get into such heart harmony with the Lord, let us exercise such faith toward him, that nothing will be farther from our thoughts than to substitute a plan of our own for his, or in any wise to alter, change, or amend the gracious plan which, rightly seen, includes all the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of love and wisdom divine. Let us not fight against God, and be overwhelmed and suffer loss of position if not loss of life eternal. Let us on the contrary receive the great blessing which comes to all those who are children of the light, who receive it into good and honest hearts, and who rejoice in it.

THE GREATEST OF BOOKS

Many of the world's best and noblest characters have acknowledged the grandeur of God's Book, even those who, like Presidents Lincoln and Grant, were not themselves professedly consecrated Christians. We are all familiar with General Grant's declaration that he esteemed the Bible to be the corner-stone of the liberties enjoyed in the United States. President Lincoln said, "Take all of this book upon reason that you can, and the balance on faith, and you will live and die a better man." Coleridge said, "The words of the Bible find me at greater depths of my being than all other books put together." John Ruskin said, "Whatever I have done in my life has simply been due to the fact that when I was a child my mother daily read with me a part of the Bible, and daily made me learn a part of it by heart." Huxley, the agnostic scientist, declared, "The Bible has been the Magna Charter of the poor and the distressed." Gladstone declared, "What crisis, what trouble, what perplexity of life has failed or can fail to draw from this inexhaustible treasure-house its proper supply?" President Roosevelt said, recently, "If we read the Bible right, we read a book which teaches us to try to make things better in this world."

These testimonies come to us from the outside rather than from the inside—mainly from those who understood very little of the true divine plan of the ages. How much deeper and more meaningful is the testimony of our hearts to the value of this book as we come, step by step, to a proper appreciation of the glorious and wonderful words of life which it contains and the true meaning of its exceeding great and precious promises, by which in the Lord's plan it is designed that a little flock may become partakers of the divine nature and be prepared to be the Lord's instruments for the blessing eventually of all the families of the earth.

THE BIBLE INDESTRUCTIBLE

In an early edition of Wycliff's Bible there was a frontispiece representing a fire of true Christianity against which its enemies, Satan, the pope, and infidelity, were blowing with all their might, trying to put it out; but the more they put themselves out of breath the more brightly did the fire burn. This is still true. The enemies of the Lord's Word, whether great or small, those who are doing their utmost against the spread of the Truth and to oppose the helps for Bible study which the Lord is now sending forth, are really in some respects at least spreading the flame of the truth. We may be sure that eventually the object, the purpose, of the divine Word will be accomplished—the elect church will be called, schooled, prepared for the kingdom and gathered into it to do the work promised, the blessing of all the families of the earth.

As illustrating that the Bible has stood the test of time where other books have failed, we note the fact that while other books have no particular opposition, no attempts having been made to destroy them, nevertheless they sink out of sight—while the Bible, with all the opposition which has been brought against it for centuries, is more widely circulated today than ever. It is estimated that "there are more than a million volumes in the imperial library at Paris gathered in since the fourteenth century; yet of this immense catalogue, 700,000 are out of print. . . . Mere fragments of all the literary wealth of Greece and Rome have made their way down the centuries, while the riches of Solomon and David and Moses, prophets, scribes, have held their steady place." "Not a manuscript of the classics is a thousand years old, but at least fifty manuscripts of the Greek New Testament are more than one thousand years old."

Our experiences in the study of the Word in this harvest time, the new beauties and rich depths of the divine wisdom, love and power which our wondering hearts behold, are illustrated well by the experiences of the French electrician, Ampere. He was shortsighted without being aware of it. When he became conscious of his defect of vision, through the casual use of a friend's eye-glasses, he burst into tears as he realized how much he had missed throughout his life of the wonderful beauty of the world around him.

PERSECUTED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS' SAKE

JEREMIAH 38:1-13.—AUGUST 27.

GOLDEN TEXT:—"Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."—Matt. 5:10.

Incidents of our last lesson—the writing of his prophecy, etc.—brought the Prophet Jeremiah into special prominence. Our present lesson finds him in the reign of Zedekiah, the last king of the house of David to sit upon the throne: the one of whom it is written, "O thou profane and wicked prince of Israel, whose time is come, when iniquity shall have an end. Thus said the Lord God: Remove the diadem, and take off the crown. . . . I will overturn, overturn, overturn it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it unto him."—Ezek. 21:25, 26.

How accurately this prophecy has been fulfilled! With the captivity of Zedekiah the kingdom of David was overturned but not destroyed. To all human appearances it has been destroyed, for no heir of his has occupied the throne of Israel from Zedekiah's day to the present time—over twenty-five hundred years. If Israel were today exalted to place and power in the world, and desired to re-establish the kingdom of David, no Jew could prove his title to the throne as being of the lineage of David. All such records have long been lost. There is just one who could claim title to that throne, namely, he who was the man Christ Jesus. Born of Mary, he was of the seed of David, and adopted by Joseph who was of the same stock. Although he surrendered his life as a ransom for sinners, he was and still is heir of all the promises made to Abraham and to David, and soon, according to the Scriptures, will take to himself his power and great glory and reign as the antitypical David upon the throne of the kingdom of the Lord, to bless Israel and every nation, people and tongue.

The long interregnum of 2520 years, the "seven times" of Israel's disfavor and of Gentile rule, will soon be complete and usher in the glories of the kingdom of God. The overturning of the diadem was not to be perpetual, but "until he come whose right it is." This was not completely fulfilled in our Lord Jesus at his first advent. True, he came to be a King, but the great Prophet, Priest and King of the divine plan was not the man Christ Jesus, but the glorified Christ—Jesus the Head, and the church, the members of his body. He whose right it is by divine sanction is selecting from amongst his brethren a little flock to be his associates, and this Gospel age is the period of their testing and development.

THE REMOVAL OF THE DIADEM

The captivity of Judah was in two sections: the first included Daniel and others with the King Jehoiakim. The king of Babylon left Zedekiah in control as his vassal under tribute, but on account of the latter's treachery and league with Egypt, the Babylonian army came again against Jerusalem and besieged it. Famine and pestilence resulted, and ultimately the city of Jerusalem was captured and utterly destroyed, and King Zedekiah, with his eyes put out, was taken a prisoner to Babylon, with all the people except a few of the very poorest and least competent. Jeremiah, given his liberty, chose to remain with the poor of the land who subsequently went down into Egypt, so that Jerusalem and the country round about lay desolate without inhabitants for seventy years, according to the word of the Lord at the mouth of Jeremiah.—2 Chron. 36:21.

OBEYING GOD, OPPOSED BY MAN

Our lesson particularly relates to the period at the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar's army. Jeremiah had prophesied the success of the enemy and recommended the Israelites to surrender speedily and save themselves from the great trouble, famine, etc., which otherwise would surely come upon them. He pointed out that their troubles were the result of disobedience to God, and that the proper course now was to repent and accept the situation and learn the lesson and profit thereby.

Certain princes of the kingdom soon learned of the prophesying and appealed to the king that it must be stopped, as it had a demoralizing effect upon the defenders in proportion as the prophecy was believed. They requested the death of Jeremiah, and the king responded that the matter should be in their hands. But perhaps fearful of the consequences of the act, or perhaps deterred by the Lord's providence, instead of putting Jeremiah to death they put him into a dungeon, which was probably a water cistern. Its bottom was foul with accumulated mud, and the prophet sank into this and would soon have perished of hunger had it not been for the interposition of a colored man, an Ethiopian eunuch, one of the king's servants, who appealed to the king against the injustice and was commissioned to take Jeremiah out from the dungeon or cistern by means of cords, his tender heartedness and care for the prophet being indicated also by his supplying cast-off rags to keep the ropes from cutting the prophet's body.

Surely we may conclude that this Ethiopian of kindly heart was used of the Lord in this emergency; that whilst the Lord could have delivered his prophet with equal facility in some other manner, he was pleased to use a person of kindly heart who was at hand. And yet we have people of sufficient intelligence to write books who claim that the "Negro is a Beast," and that he is everywhere condemned in the Scriptures. This Ethiopian evidently had a cleaner heart than the majority of the chief men in Israel—a heart much nearer to the divine likeness than theirs. Similarly, an Ethiopian eunuch, a Jewish proselyte, was amongst the first to be established and blessed with the Gospel, under the special providence of God, through the ministries of Philip.—Acts 8:27-38.

Jeremiah's experiences illustrated a general principle, namely, that where the will of God and the plans of man conflict, those who are faithful to God are likely to be in the minority and to be considered public enemies, because out of accord with those who are out of harmony with the Lord and his plan. It was this that brought upon Jeremiah his imprisonment, as it has brought upon the Lord's people of every age the frowns and opposition and persecution of those who are not the Lord's faithful people, of those who are not guided by the divine counsel, but are walking in their own ways under the leadership of the prince of this world.

"IN IGNORANCE YE DID IT"

Since Satan is still the prince of this world it is reasonable to suppose that those who are in accord with him today will be found similarly opposed to God, opposed to all who are loyal to the teachings of his Word. It is for this reason that the Scriptures assure us that we must expect to suffer now, to be misunderstood, misrepresented—"Marvel not if the world hate you; ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world the world would love its own, but ye are not of the world, for I have chosen you out of the world."

Looking back all through the Gospel age, from the days of Jesus until now, we find that those who have been loyal and faithful to him in every time have been called upon to prove, to witness, to testify to their faithfulness to the Lord by the trials and difficulties which they would endure for his sake. And this expression, "for his sake," means much the same today as it did in the day of Jeremiah, namely, for the sake of the Word of the Lord. It was because Jeremiah was faithful to the Lord's message and the others unfaithful to it that they persecuted him. And this is still the case: the Word of the Lord is his representative in the world still. Our Lord places himself and his Word side by side when he said, "He who is ashamed of me and my Word, of him will I also be ashamed."

The test is upon us today as it has been upon the Lord's people in the past. Are we ashamed of him, of his message? All who are of the overcoming class, all who will constitute the "very elect," the kings and priests unto God," all who will be associated with Jesus as overcomers of the world and his joint-heirs in the kingdom will have these characteristics. They will be loyal to the message, not ashamed of it. The words of the Apostle well voice their sentiments, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ."

Not being ashamed of the Lord and his message implies that they will be faithful in the presentation of the same when convenient to themselves or when inconvenient. To the best of their knowledge and ability they will speak forth the words of truth and soberness—as wisely as possible, as inoffensively as possible, but they must speak. As the Apostle said, when forbidden to declare the good tidings, "We cannot be silent, for we have seen and heard." (Acts 4:20) But it is only those who have heard something and seen something who have any testimony to give; those who know nothing may as well keep quiet. Until by the Lord's grace the eyes of our understanding are opened, until we shall have seen something of his grace exhibited in his divine plan, we are not prepared, not qualified to tell others. We must first receive the living Bread before we can dispense it; we must first know the truth and be set free by it before we can become its bond servants, before it could be true of us as it was of the Apostle "Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel of Christ." That is to say, he would be unhappy if not permitted to tell the glorious message of God's redeeming love and mercy exhibited in his divine plan.

"GOD KINDLY VAILS OUR EYES"

As the poet has declared, "We know not what awaits us." That is, we know not with distinctiveness what to expect. In a general way we are informed by the Lord's Word that a great time of trouble is impending. It is not our duty to make this our central theme. Rather the good tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people, secured through the precious blood of

Christ, is our central theme; and in connection with this is the proclamation of the terms and conditions upon which we hope to be accepted of the Father as joint-heirs with Christ—members of his body. Occasionally, and only occasionally, need we enter upon the role of Jeremiah to be announcers of the evil conditions coming upon the world. Perhaps as we get down in the stream of time, nearer to the actual trouble, we may see it to be our duty to call attention to it more particularly, and to urge the people to take the course which would save them from the severity of that trouble—the course of harmony and accord with the Lord. When that time shall come such advice will doubtless run counter to the wishes and ambitions of some who will then be in power, and it may be that we shall be imprisoned or otherwise maltreated, after the example of Jeremiah. The Lord knoweth what is necessary for us to know. It is sufficient that we have the gracious promise that all things

shall work together for good to those who love him, and that we should be able to trust him, come what may.

Our Golden Text is especially appropriate and should always be remembered, not only in severe persecutions but also in the lesser ones, when our names are cast out as evil, "when men shall separate you from their company," when they make all kinds of misrepresentations against you falsely because of your faithfulness to the Lord and to his Word and to the principles of righteousness. Then remember this Golden Text, and assure your heart in harmony with it and with other statements of the Lord's Word, that all these experiences of opposition the Lord is willing to overrule for your highest welfare, causing them to work out for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. All who will be of the kingdom of heaven class must pass through some such experiences for the development and testing of their characters.

TWO INTERESTING QUESTIONS ANSWERED

ABOUT HOLY THURSDAY

Question.—Your suggestion that we might celebrate our Lord's Last Supper on the Thursday nearest to present calculations pleased some of us, but we have heard nothing further. What is your thought?

Answer.—We have no thought of making any change in the method of calculating the Memorial date. There would always be some who would prefer the present method anyway, and we would needlessly endanger hurting their feelings; and there will be but few celebrations more if our expectations are happily realized.

We suggest to all the dear friends that the main thing to contend for is the annual celebration. We are not Jews bound by the law nor are we bound by any word of the New Testament on the subject to an exact day and hour; but let us continue to celebrate our Memorial in harmony with the Jewish calendar, and when the date happens to fall on a Thursday we

will merely have that much more complete a celebration. Still let us not forget that we must daily partake of the bread from heaven and drink of our Lord's cup to accomplish the real celebration.

ABOUT THE AMMUNITION

Question.—We note marginal comments on the margin of this season's volunteer matter. Whose comments are these supposed to be?

Answer.—We got the idea from a colporteur who was laboriously writing such comments on all the tracts he distributed; because he found that they had the better attention. Assuming that all volunteers would be glad to write such comments, we did it for them. We assumed also that colporteurs going in every direction would like to be announced as coming, and therefore so stated. But by error the latter got P— for pilgrim instead of C— for colporteur.

ENCOURAGING WORDS FROM FAITHFUL WORKERS

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:—

For some time I have intended writing you with respect to my recent experiences in re-reading DAWN. It has been my custom for several years past to devote my private study more especially to the TOWERS, but during this year I have been studying DAWN more closely and I can assure you I have been much surprised and chagrined, as well as edified by my reading. Although I have read Vol. I. probably six times, Vols. V. and VI. at least four times, yet I have been mortified to see how much I had forgotten. In fact many passages seemed entirely new, as though I had never seen them before. I fully realized the force of the Apostle's remarks about this "earthen vessel," and how "we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip," or as the margin puts it, "run out as leaking vessels."—Heb. 2:1.

And that I am not alone in this experience of having let some of these things "slip," I was convinced by an incident which occurred in one of our congregations not long ago. A brother had preached a funeral sermon, and at the close of the service a sister came to him and said, "I wish my husband could have heard your remarks, they were fine." Several others made similar remarks, and were much surprised when the brother told them he had done "little more than read the few thoughts given by Bro. R. in Vol. VI."

My experience has led me to the determination that, by the Lord's grace, I will make it the rule of my life to read as many of the DAWNS every year as possible, more especially Vol. I., so that every detail of the "Divine Plan of the Ages" may be made more and more clear to my mind year by year, and kept so.

Praying the Lord's continued blessing upon your efforts to serve him and his people, I remain with Christian regards,

Yours in the love and service of the King,
G. W. S.—Pa.

DEAR BROTHER:—

I feel so thankful for the question lessons which we received in last number of TOWER that I thought I must write and tell you of it.

As our little company have chosen me for leader for several terms it seemed as though it was hard for me to work out a lesson where all could take active part, and, as you said in TOWER, either I did not have the time or the talent to do so, but now as these splendid questions came I quickly passed them around, and you do not know how glad I was yesterday

when we had our meeting. Nearly everybody took such interest and had studied their questions so well that we had a most interesting and blessed hour of study and seemed to enjoy it so much.

I also want to express my thanks and appreciation of the little "Heavenly Manna" book. We consider it so helpful in keeping our thoughts more on spiritual things and feel so much more enabled to avoid things displeasing to our Father.

Although our secretary had already sent in report of our meetings while our dear Brother McPhail was here last I feel that I must tell you that it was one of the grandest feasts I ever enjoyed and I know that was the sentiment of all present. How we always look forward to the good times when a Pilgrim comes our way and how thankful we feel that we may have such dear Brethren so able to present everything clearly and harmoniously. Wishing you and all the dear co-workers in the TOWER Office the Father's richest blessing.

I remain, your brother in our Dear Redeemer,

J. P. ESKELSEN,—Iowa.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:—

A little more than a year ago I was very nearly an infidel. I was brought up by strictly religious parents, and when 16 or 18 years of age, I was the teacher of a Bible Class in a Sunday School in Michigan. The more I studied the Bible under the light in which I was supposed to teach it, the more perplexed I became, until at last I was nearly ready to say that the Bible was a farce. A year ago I got hold of a book which explained some points in the Bible so clearly that it set me to thinking that perhaps that some man of reason that was not bound down by his little 2x4 church might explain the whole thing in a rational manner. Six months ago a cousin came here on a visit from Ohio. When the station agent gave him several of your publications, and he gave them to me, I became very much interested in them, for I at once saw that the explanation was on the lines of reason, not put up for fame or money. I wrote to ask you to send me the WATCH TOWER, which you kindly did. You also sent me some tracts which I read, and then gave out where I thought they would do the most good.

As soon as I read the WATCH TOWER I send it to some one that I think will read it. Through your instrumentality I am a believer and will try to let my light shine, so that others will see that there is a reality in the Bible.

Wishing you much success, I remain yours truly,

H. B. TALBERT,—Texas.