

## VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER

### HERMOGENES TO TITUS

Perhaps the best article which has yet appeared in the religious press bearing upon the higher criticism, came out in the last number of *The Wesleyan Christian Advocate* over the title of "The Epistle of Hermogenes to Titus," written in archaic style, belonging to the apostolic days and purporting to explain many passages of Scriptures which have furnished the bones of contention in recent controversies. Every Bible student will enjoy reading it. In part, the article reads as follows:

"Hermogenes, a servant of God, and a minister of Christ, and a teacher of the true faith of the Gospel, according to the ripe judgment of the present age; to Titus, mine own brother, whom I greatly love in the truth: Grace, mercy and peace be unto thee.

"Thou hast heard, beloved, of our aged brother Paul, that he hath written epistles to Timotheus; and I hear, also to thee; in the which he hath set forth many things in exhortations unto each one of you. In some of these he hath sought to hinder my usefulness with thee, and with many others. Remember, brother, that he is old and hath divers infirmities, and hath little knowledge of sound philosophy which edifieth. Therefore, I bear no malice toward him. But I write to set in order for thine instruction a more reasonable Gospel, which will make thee wise and will enable thee to instruct others also.

"Thou hast heard how our brother Demas hath written Timotheus, to teach him how he may gain favor with them that be somewhat in authority above us; and, moreover, with high esteem among them that will not endure the hard doctrines declared by Paul in his preaching and epistles. I know thee, thy promise and great talent, and earnestly desire that thou mayest rise above this Timotheus. Thou hast gifts many, and I would that thou mightest be a bishop over the church. Give heed, therefore, to my counsel.

"This Paul hath a lively imagination, such as maketh him exceedingly superstitious concerning the Scriptures, and an unsafe guide for such as would be wise; whilst I am yet young and have had long training in the schools of men skilled in reasoning concerning divine things, being in their company no less than sixty and seven days. Those great men instructed me fully in the approved laws, by the which we may know of the things which cannot be taken; wherefore, I think myself able to lead thee in a broad way. I will now set in order unto thee that which I have learned.

"The fathers did teach that Moses hath written how God made the heaven and the earth, having been instructed in this of God. Know thou, therefore, that Moses did beguile them. He obtained many accounts of a tradition of creation among several ancient peoples, and did patch them together for the Hebrews. That Paul accepteth this book of Moses as true history, doth show him to lack sound judgment.

"Thou knowest also that it hath been taught that the law and the prophets were given by inspiration of God. Herein is grievous error. The priests of the people of Israel, greatly desiring to lead our fathers into righteousness and to make of them a great nation, devised those great books. It is true, I cannot make known unto thee by which way this is proved; but beware of questioning my knowledge in this thing; thou wilt show thyself ignorant shouldst thou at all call in question our judgment. None but the instructed can fully understand these matters. The simple and unlearned must needs believe what we teach. If they fail to hearken, they are blind and cannot see into the deep things of our wisdom.

"We now conclude that at the least one thousand scribes were required to devise the law and the prophets; and peradventure, if that number doth not appear sufficient we can enlarge it to be even five thousand. It was a great work of imagination, and God must needs have many men to imagine each a little. Moreover, in these books the wise find many things contrary to sound reason. I will inform thee concerning some of them, in order that thou mayest be able to explain them to thy people. The writing which beareth the name of Moses doth declare that God did feed our fathers in the wilderness with manna from heaven. It is most confidently taught among us who are wise that they did lick with their tongues a honey, which is found on the leaves of the trees in the wilderness, and named it manna. The rock which gave forth water when this Moses did strike it flowed from a deep well, which he and his servants bored through a great rock by night while the people slept. The great pillar of cloud by day and fire by night which followed the people was produced by cunningly mixed powders. Moreover, this Moses was a wise magician, and did charm these people into a deep sleep, and while they slept, with his chosen helpers, he prepared many vessels into which, when full of water; they did cast a fine powder. After this they soaked the garments of all the people in the vessels of water, and it was so that they could no more wear out. Give heed concerning what we declare to be the truth of the record of the walls of Jericho, how they fell. They that be searchers after truth set forth that the horns and trumpets which the men of Israel did blow, mightily made a great commotion in the air, insomuch that the walls began to tremble greatly, which continuing many days they were shaken down and did fall. Know thou also that Joshua did, by cunning magic, cause the ignorant people to imagine that the sun obeyed him to stand still. They were deceived, for their own good, that it might profit them withal. Joshua did cause their memory to stand still. But we are wiser than to teach men that reason that this record is more than a fable.

"I will instruct thee, moreover, concerning the book which beareth the name of Esaias. The learned now show unto us that many men did bear that name, and every one a little part hath written; how many it doth not yet appear. When the searching in the matter hath ended, it may be shown that peradventure a score of scribes had part in making the book as it now is. We are now assured that Esaias prophesied nothing concerning the sufferings and glory of Christ. He spake only of the sufferings of all Israel for the sins of King Ahaz. (Why Israel should be called to suffer because of wicked Ahaz's sins, or why Esaias did write of this, it doth not concern us.) The book speaketh nothing of Jesus Christ. Then we say, and if any teach otherwise, he is thereby shown to be in ignorant company, with Paul and Peter and John, who have fallen into error, and teach old wives' fables, which the instructed reject.

"We have, also, a deep knowledge of the truth of Daniel and his prophecy, which will greatly edify thee, and will satisfy those who doubt concerning the miracles. Daniel was a man acquainted with many strange secrets. He knew how to charm the lions that they should not devour him when he should be cast into their den. So he feared not to pray; and when he was thrown to the lions, he cast a spell over them, that they could not bite or hurt him. Thou seest he saved himself, and gave God the praise. The record of the three Hebrew children and their trial in the fiery furnace hath also been shown to be according to reason. It hath been made known unto us by the teachers of science at whom Paul doth only sneer, that at the center of the hottest fire there doth always remain a cool place which will neither burn nor scorch garments, nor flesh. These Hebrew children were aforetime instructed regarding this; and therefore they feared not the wrath or power of the king; and when cast into the fire they knew immediately the place of safety and so were protected. See how reason doth make clear things hard to be believed, brother . . .

"Finally, I declare unto thee the true explanation of the record of Jonah. He fled before the Lord that he might not perish at Ninevah. He had not sought that appointment and rebelled against going. When he took ship, the Lord ordered a vessel bearing the name "Great Fish" to follow Jonah's ship. So when the sailors did throw Jonah overboard he was picked up by the crew of the "Great Fish" and tarried with them three days. These earnestly persuaded him to accept his appointment, and had such weight with him that he consented, and so went to Ninevah.

"Thou seest, brother, how our views do appeal to reason and sound judgment. I am assured that thou wilt gladly accept them, and assist us in spreading them, especially since Paul hath proven himself unable to lead the thinking classes of this great age. Thou mayest now be a leader in our school and get unto thyself a great name, for much learning, if thou dost act with us in this great warfare of the wise against the dull and ignorant. Paul hath had the help of Peter, John, James and Jude in this contention against us, but we faint not and continue to teach the people everywhere this doctrine, which maketh faith an easy matter. Meditate on these things I have written, and thy profiting will appear to all. When thou hast fully understood this, I will instruct thee in the correct knowledge of the gospel of Jesus Christ in another epistle. The salutation of me, Hermogenes, by mine own hand. Farewell."

**PROGRESS IN CHURCH FEDERATION ABROAD AND AT HOME**

English Journals are noting and commenting upon the unusual conduct of the Rev. R. C. Fillingham of the Episcopal church. He has recently been exchanging pulpits with Baptist and Congregational ministers. This is contrary, not only

to usage, but to Episcopal law on the subject, and the query is respecting what action may be taken by the Episcopal authorities,—whether his course will be ignored, and thus indirectly sanctioned as being in the interest of Christian unity and fellowship, or whether he will be reproved, or dismissed, and thus the separating fence be kept intact. In his sermon in the Carleton Hill Baptist church, Mr. Fillingham is reported by the English Journals, as follows:—

“Mr. Fillingham took his text from Revelation, 5th chapter, and part of the 10th verse: ‘And hast made us unto our God kings and priests.’ There had always, he said, been an ugly sound about priestcraft; it was a word of evil associations. It was connected with persecution and with human misery. If a number of men got hold of the idea that they alone had the truth, it was not unlikely but that they would persecute. But, again, it was an unwarrantable attempt to rule over the consciences of men. Every little curate, who had but just scraped through his theological college, claimed to have the keys of heaven and hell in his waistcoat pocket, whereas a Spurgeon and a Clifford were to be outside altogether.

“After dwelling on these points, Mr. Fillingham declared such claims to be contemptible as well as dangerous. The truth was their Orders were no better than those of the Nonconformists. Their claims were preposterous. The first Archbishop of the church of England was Archbishop Parker and he was consecrated by Barlow. But all the evidence went to show that Barlow himself was never a bishop at all. He was appointed in 1536 to the bishopric of St. Asaph, and then to St. David’s. But there was only one consecration of Bishops in that year—namely, on June 11th, and Barlow’s name did not appear among them. Still further, Cromwell, the Vicar-General, addressed him as Bishop-Elect. Henry VIII. therefore, apparently made Barlow a Bishop by his mere word. Therefore, even from a sacramentarian point of view, Ritualism was a mere imposture. Priestcraft must be fought, and one of the best ways of fighting it was a union of Protestants of all denominations.”

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Church federation is progressing in Great Britain. All the large Nonconformist bodies—all denominations of Protestants outside of the Episcopal church—have effected a general union or co-operative arrangement as respects mission work, etc. This is supposed to be the forerunner of a still closer federation of

interests. Local federations of Protestant denominations have been formed in this country, and seven or eight State Federations, but, so far as we are informed, the movement has not yet attained a general or national scope. Evidently the complete federation, which surely is to come, is still a few years in advance of us. The nearest approach to it, thus far, is represented in the “Second Annual Conference of the National Federation of churches and Christian Workers,” held in Washington, City, February 4 and 5, in Y. M. C. A. Hall.

#### MADAME GUYON'S FULL SURRENDER TO THE LORD

Madame Jeanne De La Mothe Guyon was educated in convents, saved at the foot of the cross in 1668, sanctified in Notre Dame, witnessed for Jesus in the Court of Louis XIV., in France, Switzerland, and Italy, to bishops, priests, nuns and common people; was imprisoned for seven years, and died.

Of her conversion day she said: “I bade farewell forever to assemblies which I had visited, to plays and diversions, dancing, unprofitable walks and parties of pleasure. The pleasures and amusements so much prized and esteemed by the world now appeared to me dull and insipid—so much so that I wondered how I ever could have enjoyed them.”

After making a full consecration she wrote: “I henceforth take Jesus Christ to be mine. I promise to receive him as a husband to me. And I give myself to him, unworthy though I am, to be his spouse. I ask of him, in this marriage of spirit, that I may be of the same mind with him—meek, pure, nothing in myself, and united in God’s will. And, pledged as I am to be his, I accept, as a part of my marriage portion, the temptations and sorrows, the crosses and contempt which fell to him.” Concerning her imprisonment, she wrote as follows: “I passed my time in great peace, content to spend the remainder of my life there, if such should be the will of God. I employed part of my time in writing religious songs. I and my maid, La Gautiere, who was with me in prison, committed them to heart as fast as I made them. Together we sang praises to Thee, O. our God! It sometimes seemed to me as if I were a little bird whom the Lord had placed in a cage, and that I had nothing to do now but to sing. The joy of my heart gave a brightness to the objects around me. The stones of my prison looked in my eyes like rubies. I esteemed them more than all the gaudy brilliancies of a vain world. My heart was full of that joy which thou givest to them who love Thee in the midst of their greatest crosses.”

## GOD'S PROVIDENCES COOPERATE

ACTS 8:29-39.—MARCH 16.

“With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”—Rom. 10:10.

Divine providences in our experiences as Christians should be sought for, if we would find them and enjoy their blessings to the full. But this requires faith, in a larger measure than we at first possess; and the increase of faith requires knowledge and experience. Our lesson illustrates God’s providential care over his people from two standpoints. (1) His care for those who are seeking the light of truth; his intention that their earnest longings for it shall be rewarded, and his provision that the truth shall reach them under favorable conditions. (2) The Lord’s willingness to use in his service, as instruments of his providence, those of his consecrated people who put themselves in the proper condition for his service.

Deacon Philip, the instrument of divine providence in starting the Ethiopian eunuch in the narrow way of discipleship—and through him possibly introducing the good tidings into Africa—we have already seen was just such a man as the Lord is pleased to use as his mouthpiece in the service of the truth. Having proven himself faithful in the inferior work of serving tables, he had been advanced, and been made an ambassador for God in the preaching of the Gospel at Samaria; and the present lesson shows him still further guided and used of the Lord in his blessed service. There is an encouraging lesson here for all who have the same spirit—the same desire to serve the Lord and his cause. Faithfulness in little things is sure to bring larger opportunities.

We are not informed by what means the Lord “spake to Philip,” sending him to the road in which he would find the eunuch’s chariot. We may be sure however, that the indication was sufficiently clear to Philip to be more than a mere guess or impression. We are to remember, too, that it was at a time when the Lord used miraculous means of communication, more than at present—doubtless for the very purpose of establishing the faith of his servants as well as their work. Today we walk more by faith, less by sight and miracle. Yet so bright is the light of truth now shining upon the divine plan and Word that we may safely say that we have much advan-

tage every way, even over those of that time. We are to remember that up to the time of this lesson there were no New Testament writings; nothing, therefore, aside from the Law and the Prophets to assist and guide the apostles and early evangelists except the more or less miraculous interpositions of God’s providence.

Even after we have learned of God’s particular care for all of his people, we are inclined to surprise that a solitary individual should be so particularly cared for as was this eunuch;—that a special messenger should be sent to him for his instruction in righteousness. Very evidently divine providence does not guard the going of all mankind to this same degree. Very evidently there was something in the character of this eunuch, something in his heart-attitude toward God, that was pleasing and acceptable to the Lord, and caused the working of this miracle on his behalf—that he might have needed instruction in the truth.

The eunuch belonged to the kingdom of Meroe, which lay on the right bank of the Nile River, from its junction with the Atbara—as far south as Khartoum, and thence to the east of the Blue Nile to the mountains of Abyssinia. He was a court officer, evidently deeply religious, who had come in contact with, and been impressed by, the Jewish religion; and in his religious fervor he had gone up to Jerusalem to worship, and to gain additional knowledge of the true God. His case, like that of the Samaritans and of Cornelius, indicates that this occurrence was after the close of Israel’s “seventy weeks,” of special favor, for this eunuch was not a Jew in the fullest sense,—eunuchs not being fully accepted as proselytes, nor granted the privileges of the congregation. (Deut. 23:1) Up to this time the eunuch, like Cornelius and the believing Samaritans, had been a part of the Lazarus class, lying at the gate of Dives, desiring to be fed with some of the crumbs from the bountiful table of blessing and promises which God had spread for Israel. Now the change had come. The house of Israel had been cast off; the end of Israel’s special favor as

respects the Gospel had come; and the time for receiving the Lazarus class to Abraham's bosom had arrived. Philip, as an angel or messenger of the Lord, was sent to carry this representative of the Lazarus class to the arms of father Abraham, as a true child of Abraham, through faith.

The eunuch had been to the head centre of the religion which he esteemed to be the true one. He had come away from Jerusalem with a manuscript copy of one of the holy prophets—Isaiah—a treasure in those times, costly. That his manuscript was written in the Greek language, and not in the Hebrew, seems to be indicated by the word *Esaias*, which is the Greek form of Isaiah. He was hungering and thirsting for the truth, and making his best possible endeavor to obtain it, as is evidenced by his purchase of the manuscript, and his long journey, and his reading. That he was doing more than simply reading,—that he was studying, is evidenced by his language to Philip. Can we wonder that God's special providences would be manifested toward such an one—toward a person in such a condition of heart, hungering and thirsting for the truth? We cannot wonder at it. It is in full accord with the Lord's promise, that such shall be filled; that such seekers shall find; that such knockers shall have the door of truth opened to them. Let us remember that we are under the care of the same God, and that he changes not; and let us learn the lesson that he is as well able today as ever to assist the sincere truth-seeker.

Another lesson connected with this matter pertains to times and seasons. God could have directed the eunuch to the meeting of the Church at Jerusalem, and to the instructions of the apostles there. But this probably would not have been so favorable for the eunuch. After receiving the apostolic instruction he might have referred the matter to the scribes and Pharisees, and have received in return explanations more or less confusing. In the Lord's providence he quite likely heard something of the Christians, and their claims that Messiah had come and had been crucified, and he quite probably knew the other side of the story, that the chief priests and teachers claimed that the whole matter was a fraud, an imposition. Possibly these very thoughts had led him to procure the manuscript he was reading, and had brought him into the attitude of mind favorable for the reception of the truth when Philip expounded it.

Let us learn from this, not only in respect to our own affairs, but also in respect to the general service of the truth, to trust implicitly in divine wisdom and power—to remember that the Lord knoweth them that are his, and that he knoweth how best to bring them in contact with the truth. Properly learned, his lesson will not slack our hands in the divine service; for true servants will still be anxious and ready to serve, as was Philip; but it will serve to strengthen our hearts and to take from us that fearfulness that is a hindrance to the peace of many of God's children. Let us not fear for the Lord's Word, but remember his declaration, through the Prophet, "My word, that goeth forth out of my mouth, shall not return unto me void; it shall accomplish that which, I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."—Isa. 55:11.

The chariot probably overtook and passed Philip in the road, the eunuch driving leisurely, in order that he might read. He was reading aloud, after the custom of that time and country, and according to the injunctions laid upon the people by the Jewish teachers. Indeed, it was one of the Jewish rules that the faithful, in traveling, should read if they had no companionship. We are not informed how the spirit told Philip to hail the eunuch; possibly in the same miraculous way in which he was sent to this road, or possibly having been sent to this road he was on the look-out for the object of his mission, and hearing the eunuch reading from the prophecy, Philip may have understood at once that this was the favored person, and a favorable time for delivering the message to the service of which his life had been consecrated. This gives us a suggestion—all of the Lord's people, in proportion as they desire to be the servants of the truth, should be continually on the alert to note opportunities for service, and should expect to be guided and used of the Lord. All of the Lord's people are ministers, servants, of the truth; and each should seek to use every opportunity presenting itself, knowing not which may be specially prospered of the Lord. Wherever we see evidences of devotion to the Lord and to his Word, we should be on the alert to extend a helping hand. We should, as Philip, did, seek an opportunity for conversing with such, with a view to giving them the help which they need, the very assistance which the Lord has extended to us through some channel. We are to be on the alert to pass along the blessing which we have received, and to esteem that this is the chief business of life with those who have consecrated themselves to the service of the King of kings.

Philip's inquiry, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" may not always be well received; but it was a very direct way

of approaching his errand. It is well to use tact, but we have the thought that many of the Lord's people are inclined to use rather too much tact, and are not sufficiently direct in their endeavors to present the Gospel message. Had Philip been too much under the control of this wrong sentiment respecting tact, he might have talked to the eunuch quite a while about the weather and the crops; about his home in Ethiopia; the peace and prosperity of that country: its exports and imports; and the religious status of the people; and might thus gradually have gotten his hearer's mind quite off the most important of all subjects. Considering that he heard him and knew the subject of his study, we cannot think of a better introduction to his message than the method and language which Philip adopted: "Understandest thou what thou readest?"

This was a test question, so to speak. If the eunuch did have an understanding of what he was reading he would take no offense at this, but would gladly have said, "Yes, friend, I thank God that I do, and the knowledge is very precious to me. Do you also understand it?" But had he been of the wrong condition of heart his answer might have been, with more or less manifestation of offence, "What is that to you? Mind your own business." Or had he been of a hypocritical cast of mind, like the Pharisees to whom Jesus spoke, he would have professed a knowledge of the subject, and then, to cover his own ignorance of it, he would have made some general remarks and have turned the subject into another channel. We are not to expect those who are in the Pharisaical condition to receive the truth from us, any more than from the Lord. We are to know, according to the Lord's Word, that the truth is purposely hidden from all not in the right attitude of heart to receive it—it is indefinite, indistinct, unintelligible to them. This is one difficulty with the teachers of churchianity today; like the Pharisees and scribes and chief priests of old, they say, "Are we blind also?" They claim to know; but we know that they know that they don't know. Therefore, as our Lord said to their prototypes, their blindness continues; for no one can expect to be taught of God while in that self-sufficient and dishonest condition of mind which boasts of knowledge and the faith which it lacks.—John 5:40, 41.

All those to whom the Lord specially sends the message of his grace during this Gospel age are in considerable degree like this eunuch of our lesson—earnest, honest, truth-seekers, not afraid to acknowledge that they do not know, and not afraid nor ashamed to receive whatever assistance the Lord may provide. The eunuch did not stop to inquire of Philip, "Are you a priest? or or Pharisee? or a Doctor of the Law?" It was sufficient to him that he held in his hand what he believed to be a message from God, and that he knew it contained various statements, promises, etc., which he did not understand. He believed that the God who gave this prophecy was both able and willing to furnish an interpretation of it, and he was seeking that interpretation; and whoever could give such an interpretation as would shed light upon his questions would by that means be proven a teacher of God, a servant of the truth, a light-bearer.

The eunuch's answer implied this, when he said, "How can I understand, unless some man should guide me?" So earnest was he in his quest of the truth that the bare suggestion of assistance implied in Philip's question was sufficient to arouse fully his interest; and he entreated Philip to have a seat with him in his chariot, and thus grant him the benefit of whatever information could be given. We are not surprised that a heart so noble, and yet so humble and teachable, should be specially favored of the Lord, and have a messenger sent specially to him for his instruction, while others by the million were passed by—not esteemed worthy. It is the same today: and while the Lord does not generally direct his people in the miraculous manner in which he directed Philip to the eunuch, we nevertheless have general instructions along the same line; viz., "Preach the Gospel to the meek." "He that hath an ear, let him hear."—Isa. 61:1; Matt. 13:9; Rev. 2:7.

Our message, as the Prophet declares, is to bind up broken hearts, and not to break hearts: we are to preach to the meek, and not to the froward, the Gospel of Christ. The hard hearts, and the froward, God will deal with in another way. He will break them upon the anvil of affliction and trouble and discipline in his own due time and manner. Meantime, in this Gospel age, he is seeking for the bride amongst those who are already broken, and already to some extent meek and teachable. We should not waste our time in futile efforts, contrary to this Scriptural rule. Let those who have not the Gospel, but who have merely a message of reformation, preach political reforms, social reforms, moral reforms. The Lord's Word to his consecrated servants, the royal priesthood, is, "Preach the good tidings to the meek, bind up the broken hearted!"

It was evidently not of chance, but of providence that the eunuch had under consideration the particular part of Isaiah's prophecy which refers to our Lord as the Lamb before his shearers opening not his mouth in protest; telling about his humiliation, and how his life would be taken from the earth; and instituting a query respecting his posterity. No wonder the poor eunuch was mystified; no wonder the Jews were all mystified. Unquestionably this prophecy, like the majority of prophecies, could be but imperfectly comprehended until fulfilled—could be understood only in the light of its fulfilment, and then only by those in a proper attitude of heart and under the instruction, the guidance, of the holy Spirit.

We should notice in this connection, (1) that while the Scriptures are "the sword of the spirit, the Word of God," able to make wise, they cannot be understood until the Lord's due time. (2) They can only be understood under the leading and instruction of the holy spirit, and yet (3) the holy Spirit was not exercised upon the truth-seeker either through the Scriptures nor through any mental process, but through the living representative of the spirit,—through the Gospel message, delivered by a fellow-servant. The true child of God, the real truth-seeker, following the proper lines, and properly trusting to the Lord, according to his Word, will neither ignore nor reject the assistance which God has been pleased to render through teachers in the church. He will merely seek to find such teachers as God shall raise up, and the distinction between these and sectarian teachers; and one of his best, safest and surest methods of knowing the teachers whom the Lord will raise up, will be by their ability to make simple, clear, plain, the Word of God,—*"written aforetime for our admonition."* This was the only credential offered by Philip in his ministry of the truth. He had been taught of God through the apostles, and was now able, in turn, to communicate to the hearing ear of the eunuch the simple story of how Christ had come into the world to redeem the world, had died for man's sins, had arisen, and ascended up to glory: that now, meantime, before blessing the world through Christ according to promise, God was calling out an elect "little flock" to be joint-heirs with Jesus in the kingdom; and that as soon as this election should be completed the Messiah (Jesus, the Head, and the church, his body) would be manifested in glory and in ruling and blessing power to the world of mankind.—the long looked-for Messiah, whose work had been foretold by all the holy prophets since the world began.

Philip undoubtedly further explained to the eunuch, that those who accepted Christ as their Savior, and who desired to become his disciples, taking up their cross to follow him, should give their assent to this matter by baptism. Apparently it did not take the eunuch long to decide what his course should be, and his readiness of heart to follow the Lamb, whithersoever he would lead, is indicated by his promptness to be baptized.

Philip was ready to receive him as a fellow-member of the church of Christ, and ready to give him the symbol of introduction into the body of Christ—baptism—as soon as he gave evi-

dence of having accepted the Lord, and having made consecration to him. He made no request that the eunuch learn the catechism, nor that he confess something else such as well-meaning but mistaken men in the dark ages promulgated as necessary, and as explanatory of the Bible. Neither did he say, "Now I will write your name, and you will be considered a member of the church on that account, and I will procure for you some authority to preach the Gospel in Ethiopia." No; at that time the subject had not been confused and befogged as now. Philip preached the Gospel in its simplicity, and the eunuch received it in like manner; and with the Gospel itself went the right and authority to declare it. "He that hath my word let him speak my word." (Jer. 23:28) All who have received the anointing of the spirit, the unction from the holy one, are thus recognized as members of the "royal priesthood," and fully commissioned to tell forth the good tidings.

This is in full accord with our Golden Text which does not say, "With the mouth a creed is confessed," which is neither understood by the head nor believed in the heart, and thus a membership is gained in a nominal church of human establishment, and without divine sanction or authority as to name or methods. It does state, on the contrary, most simply and beautifully, that whatever is believed that has any force or weight in the Lord's estimation is that which is believed by the individual himself, in his own heart, and he can believe nothing in his heart that he does not to some extent comprehend. It is not a belief of mysteries, but a belief of facts, and subsequently coming to a comprehension of things which are still mysteries to "those that are without,"—outside the true church.

The second part of the text is evidently as important as the first part: "With the mouth confession is made unto salvation." This implies that a dumb believer will never make his calling and his election sure. We do not refer to those who are naturally dumb; but understand the word "mouth" in the same sense that we speak of the "ears" of our heart, and the "eyes of our understanding." A heart that sees and hears the grace of God, and that truly accepts the same, must in due time become so enthused with the things heard and seen, that it cannot refrain from some outward manifestation of its joy and peace and hope and trust and thankfulness. As the apostles declared, "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." All Christians who, having received the light of truth, having seen the grace of God in the divine plan, having tasted that the Lord is gracious, having heard the wonders of "so great salvation, which began to be spoken by our Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him"—these must not, cannot, keep silence nor put their light under a bushel. If they do, it means the extinguishment of their light, the stoppage of their growth; and persevered in this would ultimately mean to them destruction in the second death;—for those who are ashamed of the Lord and of his Word, after they have discerned clearly, not only are not fit for the kingdom, but of such the Lord would be ashamed under any and all conditions.—Luke 9:26.

## AWAKE THOU THAT SLEEPEST, AND ARISE

EPH. 5:11-21.—MARCH 23.

*"Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the spirit."*

Our lesson inculcates the transforming tendency of the truth. Like all of the New Testament epistles, it is addressed, not to the wicked, not to the worldly, but to Christians. The Lord's spirit, the spirit of truth and of righteousness, received as a result of faith in the Redeemer and consecration to him as a follower, a pupil, is the beginning of a new life, which starting in the will, should grow, develop, increase, until it permeates and fills all the avenues of life—its affections, its ambitions, its cravings.

Today, as in the Apostle's day, those who have become the Lord's people through faith and consecration need to be informed respecting the possibilities of their new life, else they may permit it to lie comparatively dormant—permit it to be covered up, and finally to be extinguished, smothered by the old nature—the will of the flesh, its affections, its ambitions, its cravings. While, therefore, it is important that conversion should take place—a turning of the will, the intention, from sin to holiness, from self to God,—it is very important that conversion be not esteemed to be the end, but merely the beginning of the Christian's course. It is, of course, important that the begetting should be of the truth, and not of error, so that the new mind may be of the proper kind; but even when properly begotten of the truth, as a child of the kingdom, it is essential that the new creature shall be nourished first with the "milk," subsequently with the "meat" of the truth, which God has provided for this very purpose.

New converts, like new-born babes, are much inclined to sleep; but while this in nature is profitable, in grace it is dangerous; for the new creature to sleep in self-satisfaction means death; the begetting of the spirit has been for the very purpose of energizing; and hence, the Apostle here calls upon such "babes in Christ," fallen asleep under the spirit of the world and of the nominal church, and thus in danger of complete failure in the way of character development, saying,—*"Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee."* (R. V.) The "new creature" is to recognize the fact, that the whole world is dead;—not merely under a death sentence, nor merely figuratively dead—but in a death condition, as respects the highest and noblest things of righteousness and truth. Our begetting of the holy Spirit of truth gives us merely a first suggestion of our own condition by nature, and the condition of the whole world, in trespasses and sin—in thought, word, and deed. It is necessary that the mind should first be awakened to seek for other things; it is necessary that the ear should hear the voice of him who now speaks unto us from above—the anointed Head of the anointed body; it is necessary that the eyes of our understanding should be opened that we may see the true situation of things; and all this is well represented in the Apostle's figure of *awakening*.

We regret to say that the general tendency in Christendom is not to awaken the sleepers, but rather to lull them to sleep. This, however, is not always, nor generally, done with a view



to serving the adversary, and permitting the new life to become extinct, just as not many nurses and mothers wilfully contribute to the weaknesses, diseases, and death of the infants under their charge. In both cases good intentions are often thwarted by ignorance of the governing laws. Those who occupy the position of teachers in the various denominations, while not devoid of good intentions as respects the babe in Christ, lack the theoretical and practical knowledge which they should inculcate—they are babes in spiritual matters themselves, as the Apostle wrote in one of his epistles,—“For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles [rudiments] of the oracles of God.—Heb. 5:12.

When the believing, converted, consecrated, begotten, sleeping, “new creature” has been awakened—when the eyes and ears of his understanding have been opened, as above suggested, to see the true conditions of the world, and to realize himself as a “new creature” in Christ,—his next duty is to *arise*. His arising from the dead signifies the activity of the new mind, the new will, in directing and controlling his mortal body. This implies effort; the putting forth of all the energy of the new creature. It requires no effort to sleep, or to lie after one gets awake; but to rise requires the exercise of every muscle. Arising is not an instantaneous act, but a process requiring one movement after another, until it is fully accomplished; so also is the arising of the “new creature” from the dead conditions of sin and trespass against the laws of righteousness and truth and purity; it requires his every effort, and is a work of time. Indeed all experienced Christians who have followed the Apostle's injunction to arise from the dead, have found that it requires days, months, years, of energetic effort to rise up above, superior to the fallen tendencies of his own flesh,—common to the world of mankind. He finds that even after he has risen fully up, so that he does not wilfully practice sin, nor countenance it in any sense or degree, he still must be on his guard lest he be entrapped by the weaknesses of his mortal body; or by the allurements of the world; or by the temptations of the adversary; and thus stumble again over some of the things of sin and death from which he had arisen by the Lord's grace.

The Apostle in the previous verses has explained some of these things of sin and death to which the Lord's people should become thoroughly awake, and from which they should arise completely. In verse 3, he mentions some evils which should be “not so much as *named* among you—as becometh saints.” In vs. 4, he mentions, “foolish talking” as among the things of sin and death from which the Lord's people must arise. While we believe that the saints will make most progress themselves, and be most helpful to others, by avoiding all kinds of light and unedifying conversation, and while we strongly recommend this course to all, nevertheless, we do not understand the Apostle here to refer to what might be designated as harmless jokes or levity. From the text we understand him to refer to coarse, *lascivious* talking, and to a more refined jesting with half-suggestions of profanity or vice, sometimes practiced by the educated and witty.

We are to arise from all such low conditions of thought, word, and deed as we find prevalent about us; because as children of God, begotten by his spirit, we can have no fellowship with these things. We must regard them as the Apostle suggests, as “unfruitful works of darkness.” The Apostle by this word, unfruitful, no doubt intended to give us the thought that sin is *destructive* instead of *productive*—that its tendency is toward death. On the contrary, the tendency of the new mind of Christ is toward fruit-bearing, development, blessing, uplifting, refreshment. Not only is this true in the individual Christian, but as our Lord's words suggest, the individual Christian exercises a preservative influence on others; wherever he may live he is a shining light dispelling the darkness of sin; he is the salt of the earth, preserving the mass from corruption. The moral standing of the civilized world today, is unquestionably largely due to the indirect influence of the holy Spirit in God's people;—which as the Apostle declares, reproves the world. Our reproof of sin may always be through the living epistles of our daily lives which, as bright and shining lights, should ever reprove by manner, look, act and tone, everything tending toward darkness and sin,—“Let your light so shine before men that they seeing your good works may glorify your Father in Heaven.” Occasionally it may be proper and still more occasionally it may be duty, for us to speak or to act in opposition to darkness, but the light of a godly life, testifying for the truth and exhibiting the holy Spirit, is certainly one of the most forceful reproofs of sin that can be administered.

While passing, we might have in mind the Apostle's words, “unfruitful works of darkness,” laying emphasis upon the last word. Sin is figuratively represented by darkness; and, addi-

tionally, it generally prefers literal darkness for the accomplishment of its purposes. The Lord's children are children of the light, and are to walk in the light of truth; they are to have their hearts enlightened and their minds so illuminated as to make them burning and shining lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, blinded and darkened by the prince of darkness. And all such while endeavoring to arise from the dead and to live separate from the World are recommended to walk in the light of truth; and so far as possible to live in the light actually,—to see that their homes are well lighted,—recognizing that even the natural light is a foe to the darkness of sin.

The Apostle suggests the necessity of taking the various steps above outlined, before the Christian will get fully into the light himself. It is after he has arisen from the dead by the Lord's help, by the help of the brethren, by the assistance of the exceeding great and precious promises of the Word, by the indwelling spirit of the Word;—after he has arisen from the dead and indeed while he is arising from the state of sin and death, while he is attempting to bring his members into subjection to the new life, a new light is shining upon him—his light is increasing, his knowledge of the Lord, his knowledge of sin, his knowledge of righteousness, his appreciation of truth and righteousness “in the inward parts,” as the prophet expresses it. The light shining upon him, and deep into the recesses of his heart, may sometimes cause distress, as he finds that his own natural weaknesses and imperfections are even greater than he had at first been aware of; nevertheless, as a child of the light, begotten by the Father of lights, he loves the right, and hates the sin; and the more clearly the light shines upon him and shows him the blemishes of his own mortal body, the more he runs for and strives for the perfection which the Lord assures him he shall attain to in the actual resurrection—of which the present “rising to walk in newness of life,” is but the figure.

The Apostle, progressing with the thought before us, declares that the one who thus arises from the dead is not even then to stand still. He must walk—not after or toward the flesh and its standard, but after and toward the spirit and its standard. And he will need to walk circumspectly—with careful scrutiny of each footstep. The Apostle suggests that any other course than this would be foolish. We are to remember that our adversary was more disposed to let us alone while we were asleep, but that now, when we are awake and seeking to walk after the spirit, he will be on the alert to ensnare and entrap us;—hence the need of our circumspection. The Lord gives us light, not only on our own characters, and upon sin and righteousness in general, but, additionally, he gives us light upon the road we are to travel. This light upon our pathway is the light shining from the Scriptures of which the Prophet declares, “Thy Word is a lamp to my feet, a lantern to my footsteps.” He who neglects the lamp, neglects one of the very important means of walking circumspectly. And alas, how many Christian people today, with the Bible in their homes, are neglecting to trim and use it as a lamp;—if not standing in the dark they are walking in the darkness, stumbling, or in danger of stumbling continually. Let us remember the importance of this lamp and use it; to the intent that ours may be the “path of the just, shining more and more unto the perfect day.”

Thus we are to redeem the time—to purchase opportunities for the new creature and its interests and concerns, at the expense of the old nature. We as new creatures are to exchange the things of darkness for the things of light; the opportunities for sowing to the flesh for the opportunities of sowing to the spirit. The opportunities must be thus purchased else we will have none: if we give way to the inclinations of the flesh, its appetites and desires, it will consume all there is of time and opportunity, strength and influence, and leave nothing for the new creature,—“because the days are evil;” that is because they are unfavorable to spiritual progress. They present thousands of temptations for worldly pleasure and worldly ease and worldly fame and worldly progress; and thus they multiply the tests which come upon us as “new creatures.” We must remember that the Lord desires that these tests shall demonstrate the *degree* of our love, the *degree* of our sincerity, the *degree* of our consecration to him: the more our love for the Lord and for righteousness, the greater will be our zeal in snatching time, opportunity, influence from the flesh and consecrating it to spiritual things. In so doing we will not be unwise, but will display our understanding of the Lord's will.—Verses 16, 17. Unless we are awake we cannot arise to present newness of life; and unless this arising to newness of life is accomplished we cannot share in the first resurrection.

The Golden Text of the lesson is the 18th verse; in it the Apostle contrasts two spirits. Under present conditions men naturally look for something to exhilarate them, to refresh, to

revive—to counteract life's trials, burdens and sorrows: many of the dead in trespasses and sins find this stimulant and relief from care, in various intoxicating stimulants—wine, spirituous liquors, opium, etc.; but the child of God is to look in a totally different direction for his stimulant, his exhilaration, his relief from care and trouble—he is to be “filled with the Spirit” of the Lord. He is not merely to have a little of it, but is to become intoxicated with it to the extent that it will change the general appearance of all his surroundings and conditions in life. And cannot each advanced Christian, filled with the Lord's spirit, testify that this is true?—that all things are changed from the new standpoint and its new hopes, new ambitions, new relationships? Can he not say, “Old things have passed away, all things have become new?” What need has he for the wine cup to drown his troubles, or smother his sorrows? He knows from observation if not from experience that all such exhilaration and oblivion to sorrow brings an after effect of pain: he knows also from experience and observation that to be filled with the Lord's spirit need not be a temporary oblivion to sorrow, but a permanent one—that, “Earth has no sorrows that heaven cannot cure;”—that even the deepest pains and sorrows of the heart are more than counterbalanced and canceled by the joys of the Lord secured through the possession of a fullness of his spirit.

The lightheartedness of the intoxicated “dead in trespasses and sin” often leads to bacchanalian revelry and song, repulsive even to the same person when sober; but the filling of the Spirit of the Lord leads to songs and rejoicings, not only with the lips but with the heart,—refreshing, comforting and uplifting, not only to the singer but also to the hearer. It is this “new song” in the heart that constitutes the Christian a separate and distinct being from all others about him. “Thou hast put a new song in my mouth, even thy loving kindness, O Lord!” Because it is in the heart, therefore, it must be in the mouth also, and must influence all the affairs of life: for we cannot but speak the things which have so wonderfully uplifted and refreshed our souls. And the speaking of these things is the proclamation of the Gospel—“good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people.”

In our new attitude, figuratively risen from the dead and walking in newness of life with the Lord our Redeemer and Head, all of life's affairs have a new coloring. Not only can we sing—

“Sweet prospects, sweet birds and sweet flowers,  
Have all gained new sweetness to me”

but we can glory in tribulation also, and give thanks for these, as well as life's blessings, to the heavenly Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus; knowing, having the conviction, the assur-

ance, that life's disciplines are working out for us a “for more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” And not only so, but this dependence upon the Lord and filling with his spirit makes us humble; so that we do not think of ourselves above what we ought to think, but think soberly. It is in view of the humility of this class that the Apostle suggests that they submit themselves one to another in the reverence of the Lord. Those who have the Lord's spirit will have the brotherly kindness which is a part of it; and will be quite willing to defer to each other's preferences in many things—in all things not contrary to the principles of righteousness—in all things in harmony with reverence to the Lord, his Word, and the principles it inculcates.

It may not be amiss here to remind the brethren that the Scriptures show two kinds of symbolic or figurative intoxications: the one above described, filling with the spirit of the Lord and its joys, and peace, and comfort; the results of the fruitage of the vine which the heavenly Father planted, of which Christ is the central stock, and of which his followers are all “branches.” The other wine is a counterfeit, an illicit wine: it is not produced by the vine of the Father's planting, but from the grapes of the “vine of the earth.” It is of this wine that the Lord tells us Great Babylon has made all the nations drunken—the wine of her inconsistency, of her infidelity. This is the wine or spirit of the world—of churchianity.

Looking all about us we fear that many, who think they are filled with the holy Spirit of the truth, are really filled with this intoxication of churchianity. Those intoxicated with this wine will shortly be aroused to a realization that it was sadly adulterated, and the effects will be painful. Those who are intoxicated with this wine of churchianity are rejoicing not in the cup of the world and of devils, not in gross sins, but nevertheless not in the spiritual things. They glory each in the prosperity of his own sect, they are generally intoxicated with love for sectarianism, so that worldly persons, dead in trespasses and sins are often loved and brothered by those intoxicated with this adulterated spirit, while saints are spurned and treated as enemies because of faithfulness to God in rebuking sectarian churchianity and its doctrinal falsities.

Let us, dear brethren, beware of the natural wine and its drunkenness—of the cup of devils, gross sins and immoralities; let us beware of the still more deceptive wine of Babylon's cup of mixture which has a form of godliness, in which church and world and lodge combinations tend to stupefy and to give illicit joy; let us, however, having made sure of the Lord's cup, drink thereof and be filled with the spirit of our Master and with his joys.

## SANCTIFIED THROUGH A KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH

ACTS 9:1-20.—APRIL 6.

*“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you; whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.”—Acts 3:19-21.*

Conversion is a proper enough word to use respecting the change of course necessary for Jews to make in becoming Christians. The word is used in a totally different sense, however, today, when we refer to the conversion of the dissolute and unbelieving to faith and obedience as disciples of Christ. Any radical change or revolution of thought or conduct is not improperly called conversion. It is well that this point be clearly enunciated, because the misapprehension is so general. Paul's conversion, for instance, is likened to the conversion of sinners, strangers, aliens and foreigners from God; whereas it more nearly resembled the conversion of a Christian of today from opposition to present truth to its love and service. Such conversions today are quite frequent—many who once burned *Millennial Dawn* now love it, and are doing all in their power to spread abroad its teachings, its views of the divine character and plan, its presentation of Messiah and his work, past and future. The change, or conversion of such persons is acknowledged to be remarkable—things they once hated now they love—things they once loved now they abominate—old things are become new to them, from the new standpoint—the new light upon the divine plan which has shined into their hearts.

Saul of Tarsus, the bitter enemy of the Lord Jesus and his followers, was, at the same time, a zealous servant of God; and his persecutions of the truth, as he himself assures us, were undertaken and prosecuted with zeal, because he thought that thus he did God service. He was a good man according to his light—but that light was a dim one. It was because he was at heart honest, sincere, good, loyal to the Lord, that

a special miracle was wrought for the opening of the eyes of his understanding—that he might see the truth. His sincerity is amply attested by the promptness of his obedience as soon as his mental eyes were opened. He changed not as respected his zeal for God and his cause, but merely in the direction in which that zeal was exercised, and in the manner of its exercise, after it was subjected to the mind of Christ through the holy Spirit received. So today, while we have the Scriptural assurance that “None of the wicked shall understand,” we have also the assurance that “The wise shall understand.” The “wise” are not the “wicked,” and we esteem those who have manifested a bitter opposition toward present truth to be not “wicked” at heart, but deceived, blinded.

We confidently expect that many of this class will yet be found amongst the “wise” to whom it shall be granted to understand the glorious things of the divine plan now being revealed through the Scriptures. It will be revealed to them because they are not of the wicked; but are like Saul of Tarsus, true children of God, whose zeal for him has been misdirected, misguided, misused. Some may kick against the pricks of facts, evidence, conscience, etc., longer than others; but eventually the Lord will grant to each of them some experience, or trial, the bitter experience of which will prepare them to see the light, the truth, in the right direction. Thus many of them sing,—“E'en though it be a cross that raiseth me.”

Saul's father was a Roman citizen; probably a man of wealth and influence: he was a Jew of the holiness sect called Pharisees—the most exact and rigid in respect to the divine law. His son named after Saul, the first king of Israel, was

also given a Roman name, Paul, because of his father's Roman citizenship. The Apostle's reference to having suffered the loss of all things for Christ's sake, is understood to imply that he had been disinherited by his father because of his acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah. Quite evidently he was poor in the beginning of his ministry, as is evident from his laboring at tent-making while preaching. The fact that subsequently the record represents him as a man of considerable influence, and with one or more servants, is considered by many to justify the inference that at a later date he inherited property, possibly by reason of his father's death. In no other way can his "own hired house" in Rome, and his influence with officials, shipmasters, etc., be accounted for;—little attention and consideration are given to a pauper prisoner.

As to Paul's personal appearance: An iron medal was recently found which purported to give a likeness. There is also a Roman tablet of about the fourth century, which shows Paul seated in a curule chair; both represent him as of fine appearance, somewhat bald, with beard, and a fine open countenance; about medium stature and weight. In the "*Acts of Paul and Thecla*," the first Christian romance, written about A. D. 150, there is a description of Paul which is probably the best, and a true tradition. In this he is described as "small in size, bald-headed, bandy-legged, well built, with eyebrows meeting; rather long nosed; with motion full of grace, for sometimes he seemed like a man, and sometimes like an angel. His manner was singularly winning." Very evidently his good education and contact with people in the higher walks of life gave him that grace and ease of manner and speech he manifested so conspicuously in the presence of the many high officials with whom he came in contact in various ways, as the representative of the Lord.

Our lesson connects with the narrative of Philip; while the latter was preaching Christ, Saul was breathing out threatenings against all of "this way," and doing all that he could to stamp out Christianity. In-as-much as the persecution had caused the scattering of believers, Saul was pursuing them—going even outside the province of Judea in his zeal to crush out that which he believed to be dangerous heresy. Some may wonder how he could be at heart loyal to the Lord, and yet in mind be so bitter against the Lord's faithful. Let us suggest how the matter probably appeared to Saul's mind: Doubtless he was full of the Jewish sentiment respecting Messiah, respecting his nation, Israel; he considered it a certain and unquestionable fact that the Pharisees represented God and all the glorious prophecies and traditions of the nation; and that as Jehovah had favored this nation for now these many centuries, his favor, undoubtedly must still be with it; so that if he had any further revelations to make they would undoubtedly come through the scribes and Pharisees who "sit in Moses' seat"—as representatives of God and of the Law. He expected a Messiah of dignity and wealth and social standing in the nation;—if born in the natural way at all to be of one of the best families. He expected him to establish the dignity of Israel upon a plane similar to, but higher than that of Solomon;—that he would be a great leader and commander to his people, who would successfully carry them through every difficulty and opposition like as did Moses, Joshua, David,—but still greater, still grander, still more successful.

It is surely difficult for us to imagine how absurd would be the claims of Jesus, to a mind filled with such expectations. Jesus had neither wealth nor social standing nor influence amongst his own people; he was despised and rejected by the religious chiefs and elders of the nation Moses represented; he could have no power or influence whatever with the Roman Emperor or others—in the way of establishing Israel as the chief nation of the world, whose laws should ultimately extend to every nation, carrying with them the foretold Messianic blessings. No, from Paul's standpoint Jesus was a fraud, a deceiver, a false Messiah, his disciples were crack-brained dupes, and their doctrines were calculated to bring odium upon the religious rulers, who represented Moses in the nation,—calculated to stir up strife and division amongst the people and to mislead them and turn their minds entirely away from Moses and the Law and the hopes of Israel; and thus to hinder the good cause of God which had been gradually developing for centuries.

It was Paul's zeal for God and his cause that made him a persecutor, and not his love for persecution itself,—nor any brutal desires that gloried in the sufferings of others. His impulse was duty—toward God and toward his nation; for if the false doctrines spread it meant to him a spreading of opposition to both, and temporarily, at least, a frustration of the hopes of Israel—putting further off the glorious day of blessing for which all Israel had longed and hoped. Similarly we find today noble Christian people opposing the present truth

in the very same spirit. It is not that they love or appreciate persecution, but that they believe they are doing God service,—that the promulgation of present truth means the shaking if not the overthrow of all religious systems in which they trust—which they believe to be of divine origin, and through which they are hoping to bring about the kingdom of God condition through missionary efforts, and the conversion of the world. Present truth declares all these efforts to be misdirected and futile; it points out the fall of Babylon and everything pertaining to her; it declares the establishing of God's kingdom, and the exaltation of the royal priesthood outside of sectarian lines; ignoring sect membership, it acknowledges only "Israelites indeed," personally attached to the Redeemer. The revolution of thought, the conversion necessary now, is almost as great, and almost as difficult as was that which came to Paul and other sectarians of his nation. Let us rejoice then, if by the Lord's grace our eyes are opening to the truth; and let us have more of compassion for others who are still in the condition in which Saul of Tarsus was when he persecuted those of "this way."

The light which shone about Saul and those who went with him, was evidently a supernatural one, because the time of the manifestation was about noon (Acts 22:6) and the light was far brighter than that of the sun which at the same time, no doubt, was shining with great brightness, as is general in that country. The phenomenon was seen by the entire band, but its special features were known only to Saul; and others saw something of the light but they saw not the vision which Saul saw representing the Son of Man in his glorified condition. The others heard a sound but did not distinguish the words which Saul heard. All fell to the ground, but all apparently were able to rise again and to stand wondering, except Saul whose eyes were seriously injured so that he was blind. Similarly Stephen saw a vision while those who were near him saw nothing: similarly John saw the dove descending upon Jesus while the others about saw nothing: similarly Jesus heard certain words of the Father while the multitude said it thundered. It is even mentioned here that the voice spoke in the Hebrew tongue: whereas those who were with Saul probably spoke in the Syriac or the Greek language.

Saul's astonished answer was, "Who art thou, Lord?" This was the entire difficulty, he did not know the Lord; and as our Master himself declared, this lack of knowledge of the Son implied a lack of correct knowledge of the Father. We have his further explanation that however others in the past might have known something about God, they could never really know him, in the sense of personal acquaintance and appreciation of his character and spirit, except through the Son—a part of whose object in coming was to reveal the Father. So we might say of all who have persecuted the body of Christ, even when they did it ignorantly, it was because they did not know Jesus—because they had not received of his spirit in sufficient measure. Let us beware that no such spirit of persecution finds any sympathy or lodgment in our hearts, or any expression in our words or deeds. This will not mean, however, that we shall never offer criticism either of persons or doctrines; nor that we shall never reprove or rebuke and that publicly (2 Tim. 4:2); but it surely does mean that our reproofing and rebuking, of teachings and of teachers, shall be done from a Scriptural standpoint—giving reasons, giving them plainly but without bitterness, without harshness, without unkindness in any degree.

The statement, "And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" quite probably well explains Paul's condition of body and mind at the time; but these words are not found in the ancient Greek manuscripts: likewise the words, "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks," are omitted.

For three days Saul neither ate nor drank, and was totally blind. What a season for reflection! What a humiliation to think that he had fought against the truth! What prayers for forgiveness, and what pledges of consecration to Jesus we may imagine filled his heart during those days! Unquestionably it was a time of good resolution as respected the future, if per-adventure, the Lord would graciously forgive him and grant an opportunity to retrieve the past. He had a dream, too, and in it he beheld a man anointing his eyes, restoring his sight. On the fourth day a man, a poor and humble disciple of Jesus, named Ananias, came, not without fear, to visit Saul;—knowing him by reputation, as an enemy of all who believed in "this way;" knowing that he was lodged in the house of one who was not a friend of the truth, but assured of the Lord that Saul was praying and would welcome him, having been informed in a vision: Ananias when sent of the Lord courageously did his part.

There is a lesson here for all of us; the Lord did not send

one of the Apostles from Jerusalem, nor was Ananias one of the elders or deacons, as far as we know; but he was a plain, humble, obedient disciple, "A broken and emptied vessel, for the Master's use made meet." Let all of the Lord's dear people be similarly filled with the Lord's spirit, and on the alert; emptied of self, feeling their own brokenness and littleness, let them be ready and anxious to do God's service; that they may be used of him as opportunity shall occur. What a blessing must have come to Ananias in connection with his service! Ever afterward he could think how he had been a humble instrument in the Lord's hands in carrying a blessing to one who subsequently became such a noble servant of the cross of Christ. Likewise some of the Lord's faithful ones in recent times have taken the Lord's message either by word or tract or pamphlet, and have opened the eyes of some who subsequently have become mighty for the truth and for the pulling down of the strongholds of error. What a rejoicing such have had in the privileges of their service! We know not which will prosper, this or that, therefore let us diligently use every opportunity as it may come to us; praying the while for much wisdom and grace and many opportunities for service.

The Lord's foreknowledge is clearly displayed in verses 15; 16; he knew Saul—knew of his honesty and of his zeal;—he knew that this honesty and zeal as soon as they should be rightly directed would make just such an instrument for his service as he desired to use. The Apostle Paul recognized this himself, and even traces divine providence so far back as his birth, declaring that the Lord had chosen him from his mother's womb. He could see in the light of subsequent events how all of his affairs, from earliest childhood, had been tending in a favorable direction to prepare him for his work of ministry, as an apostle;—and even his experiences as a persecutor proved profitable, for they humbled his estimate of himself and undoubtedly gave him a larger degree of sympathy for those suffering from a similar blindness, increasing his helpfulness toward them. This does not signify, however, that God had predetermined that Paul should have a place in the kingdom: that he determined for himself,—making his calling and election sure by faith and obedience. The Lord providentially guided his steps in childhood and youth, so that he learned certain lessons, and gained certain preparations which might be useful in due time; and in due time he opened the eyes of his understanding, knowing well what would be his own choice thereafter. Nevertheless, this same Apostle declares that even after having preached the gospel to others, he, himself, might have become a castaway:—having borne the Lord's name before the Gentiles and Israelites and kings, and having suffered great things for the Lord's sake, he might still fail to maintain, faithfully to the end, the character of an overcomer, and thus fail to become a joint-heir with his Lord.

Ananias coming to Saul introduced himself beautifully—he had the Lord's spirit: he was glad to know Saul as a brother; glad to forget that he had been a persecutor of the church; he did not upbraid him; he did not say, You deserve eternal torment; nor You deserve a cowhiding;—he made no unkind allusion to the past, but addressed him on the contrary in the light of the information the Lord had given him, saying, "*Brother Saul.*" There is a beautiful lesson here for many of the Lord's people who seem more disposed to chide and upbraid than to commend and rejoice with former persecutors: this is one of the necessary lessons to be learned by all—it is an evidence of the indwelling of the spirit of Christ, the spirit of love, parts of which are brotherly kindness, gentleness, meekness.

Great scales fell from Saul's eyes, and a measure of nat-

ural sight was restored; but oh, how much greater was the spiritual sight which he received,—the illumination of his heart, his mind! The darkness and obscurity of tradition upon the Law and the Prophets were now largely dissipated, because he saw Jesus—Jesus as the Redeemer suffering death for the sins of the whole world;—Jesus glorified, directing the election of the Church, his members, his body, his joint-heirs, —and who were, by and by, to be with Jesus the Messiah in glory and majesty to bless, to restore, to uplift Israel and all the families of the earth. True, the evidences are that Paul never fully recovered his eyesight; and he likewise testifies that his spiritual sight never reached perfection, saying, "Now, we see through a glass obscurely, then, face to face."

Having taken his stand for Christ, he acknowledged him in the usual way, by baptism, and not by joining a sectarian system. He joined the body of Christ, and thus became a fellow-member with *all* who are joined to Christ, the one Head of the one body. Immediately he met with the Lord's people; he was no longer ashamed of them; he could not now do too much for them; any honor and dignity which were his by virtue of his birth, and wealth, and Roman citizenship, were none too good to be sacrificed for the Lord, and having learned that in persecuting the Lord's people he persecuted the Lord himself, so he now understood that in meeting with the Lord's people and honoring them, he was meeting with and honoring the Lord. Forthwith he preached Jesus. He preached him as the Son of God, the one in whom the prophecies of the past were being fulfilled, the Messiah who had redeemed, and who in God's due time would deliver Israel and the world from the bondage of Satan—sin and death.

#### OUR GOLDEN TEXT

This is from Peter's discourse shortly after the day of Pentecost; his words were doubtless in some degree prophecies; they point down to the second coming of our Lord—though Peter may not have comprehended how far distant that event would be. The exhortation to be converted to the Lord was delivered to the Jews who were already his typical people, in covenant relationship, but who needed now to accept the conditions of the New Covenant and to make a corresponding change in their lives—from membership in the house of servants, to membership in the house of sons—from being amongst those for whom atonement sacrifices were made year by year continually, which could never take away sin, to be of those accepting the one sacrifice of Christ and its redeeming merit, —to trust for a present covering for their sins, through faith in the precious blood, and to hope for an ultimate *blotting out* of them at the second coming of the Lord, as the text declares.

So long as the believer is blemished physically, mentally, morally, by sin, so long he has the evidence that his sins are not *blotted out*. He may, nevertheless, rejoice greatly as the prophet indicates, saying "Blessed is the man whose sins are *covered*," but he should look forward longingly to the time when every evidence of the sin, every mark of guilt, will be so completely *blotted out* as to need no further covering. This to the saints of the Gospel age will occur at the second coming of Christ, when they shall be "changed," in an instant, receiving the new spiritual bodies which the Lord has promised them in the first resurrection. To the world this blotting out of sins will come gradually, during the Millennial age. In proportion as each being comes into full harmony with the great Prophet, Priest and King then reigning, each will gradually experience the blessings of restitution—eliminating all traces of evil and sin, and restoring gradually to the original perfection lost in Adam, redeemed by Jesus, and restored by the blotting out of sins under the ministry of his Kingdom.

## LETTERS OF INTEREST

Dear Editor:—

For some time I have been somewhat puzzled over the present and future problem of the Children of Ham. Our progenitors paid but little or no attention to the study of the "Times of Restitution of all Things" and a "Ransom for all to be testified in due time." And looking at the matter as I do, past, present and future, I must with sorrow confess that the problem, as it now stands, presents one of the darkest pictures known to the Children of Ham. The sons of Japheth have sent out their pilgrim sons all over the United States and in portions of Great Britain. But the poor African race of the United States takes no part in that precious work of trying to set forth or send out her colored pilgrims to work among their own race.

What would be the chance of putting a few colored pilgrims in the field to travel in Texas and other states? It is the opinion of several of my colored brethren of Texas that such a plan if rightly carried into effect, would do much good in opening the blinded eyes of our colored brethren and friends.

Now Brother, I do not wish to be misunderstood in my request as advocating a division or color line between the white and colored brethren: we want no color division; but, what we do want is to stand together to work up some plan that they may be an aid in this good work of harvest and present truth.

My Dear Brother, I have read the five volumes of *Millennial Dawn*, and have been studying them for nearly three years with their charts, etc. I have been a minister many years. Pray for us all.

Yours in Christian love,  
J. J. H. DOZIER,—Texas.

[We are not aware that there are many groups of negro brethren, interested in present truth, altho we have had four offers like the above quite recently. If there are such, they are as welcome as the whites—proportionately to their numbers and intelligent interest—and they should send the Pilgrim-request postal cards mentioned in Jan. 15 issue, page 2, stating that they are colored. Thus we will know and be able to judge—Ed.]