

be without employment—not only the actual residents of the stricken city, but those who resided in the cities around the Bay, and what will result from it remains only to be seen by waiting and exercising patience and faith in God. It is impossible for any but those who have witnessed the effects of this catastrophe to conceive how complete was the destruction of what every one must confess was a wicked city. Brother Owen and myself viewed the ruined city from an eminence that gave us a complete view of both the burned and unburned districts. My estimate is that two-thirds of the city was destroyed, while Brother Owen thinks four-fifths was destroyed; but in either estimate it is very bad. What the suffering and inconvenience of many have been and will be for a time can only be surmised.

We can, all of us here, thank God for this object lesson, and the strengthening effect it has upon each one of us, as does every experience in life, and, as you say, assists us in recognizing in this the near approach of the kingdom which shall forever end such calamities and afflictions.

Your brother and servant in Christ,

H. M. FITCH, California.

PILGRIM VISITS OF BRO. B. H. BARTON

London,	Eng. June	2-4	Uddingston, Scot.	June	22
Luton,	" "	6,7	Motherwell, "	" "	23
Wing, Leighton,	" "	8	Glasgow, "	" "	24
Birmingham, "	" "	9,10	Dundee, "	" "	25,26
Sheffield, "	" "	11,12	Kirkcaldy, "	" "	27
Leeds, "	" "	13,14	Hawick, "	" "	28,29
Barnoldswick, Scot.	" "	15	Edinburgh, "	" "	'30-Jul.2
Glasgow, "	" "	16-18	Bedlington, Northumb'	ndJul.3	
Greenock, "	" "	19	Newcastle, Eng.	July	4
Gourock, "	" "	20	Stockton, "	" "	5
Rothsay, "	" "	21	Eston, "	" "	6-8

VOL. III. DAWN IN DANO-NORWEGIAN

We have just issued the above, in cloth binding only. Uniform in style with English edition. Price, 25c., postpaid.

CLIPPINGS FOR THE EDITOR

Friends are requested to send us clippings unfavorable to the interests of the Truth, as well as special news items, writing on same the name of the journal and date of publication.

VOL. XXVII

ALLEGHENY, PA., JUNE 1, 1906

No. 11

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER

THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION AGAIN

No doubt our Presbyterian friends thought they had buried the Westminster Confession of Faith so deeply under their *new statement* of Presbyterian faith, that they would never have further trouble from its bad odor. Rev. Samuel T. Carter, D. D., was one of those who warred for its burial at that time. Satisfied for the time, apparently, Dr. Carter now realizes that the Westminster Confession is still the creed of the Presbyterian church and the newer statement a mere blind. His honest soul now charges into the battle afresh for its complete repudiation. He recently wrote to the Presbyterian General Assembly on the subject, and we quote from his letter as follows:—

"Fathers and Brethren:—Many years ago, when I was ordained to the ministry of the gospel, I declared in the most solemn manner I believed the Westminster Confession to be the truth of God. I now in an equally solemn manner declare I don't believe it to be the truth of God; that I utterly reject it as a setting forth of the character of the heavenly Father. There never was, there is not now, and there never will be such a God as the God of the Westminster Confession.

"It is an idol of man's invention, as truly as any worshipped in Delhi, Pekin or Africa. I believe the great and true God is infinitely and exquisitely good and gracious; that the one thing that we can neither fully receive nor declare is the boundless love of God; that all the noblest exhibitions of human love are but bright and beautiful sparks from that intense and divine flame—the love that through ages and generations has been leading men by the fullest wisdom and most tender providence to heights of knowledge, love and boundless hope that far transcend all human thought. I lift up this overwhelming divine love before my fellow-men, believing that this alone will draw all men unto Him.

"I believe that the Westminster Confession darkens and denies this great love of God and should not be retained as a Confession by any church today, and that our church is false to its greatest duty of being a true witness for God so long as it retains this Confession."

* * *

Brother Carter's experiences encourage us to hope and wait patiently for further awakenings amongst the theological "dry bones." For years and years Dr. Carter preached under the Confession which he did not believe. For years he lent his name and voice and influence for God-dishonoring error until he got strong enough and courageous enough to protest and cry for *liberty* from his slavery. The partial liberty *granted* was doubtless appreciated; but now he longs and cries for more, *more liberty to think*. He desires to be set free. His conscience longs and cries out that it can stand the galling errors no longer.

Poor Brother Carter does not see the inconsistency of his position. He should not have entered the Presbyterian house of bondage! He should never have confessed the Confession which his head and his heart repudiated. Or, if he did believe the errors at the beginning of his Christian life and ministry, and learned of them later, he should

have been *prompt* to obey conscience, and should have stepped out of Presbyterianism into the liberty wherewith Christ makes free indeed. Presbyterians who honestly and truly believe the statements of the Confession have a right to hold it and to tell it abroad. It is the others who are at fault. If all who disagree with the Westminster Confession would promptly and decidedly withdraw from the denomination into liberty, explaining their reasons for withdrawing, the effect would be a hundred times more satisfactory.

"Actions speak louder than words." Dr. Carter's words say that he is an honest, bold, advocate of truth at any cost; but his actions speak the reverse. They tell us, "The Westminster Confession has ties and emoluments which I love more than I love the truth and the liberty which Christ offers. I prefer the bondage, and to be amongst those who misrepresent my God, than to forsake all and follow the Redeemer and his 'little flock' whom the world counts 'fools' for Christ's sake and too conscientious."

We hope that Brother Carter and many others will ultimately grow stronger in the Lord and still more devoted to the truth, so that ultimately they will take gladly the spoiling of their goods—worldly prospects, etc.—for Christ's sake, the truth's sake, hoping for the "better resurrection" as "more than conquerors."

EPWORTH LEAGUE FACING A CRISIS

Throughout the entire Methodist church, we are informed, "mutterings of uncertainty and dissatisfaction" are being heard in regard to the future of the Epworth League, the young people's organization, which has a membership of about 2,000,000. Indeed, the crisis has become so serious that *The Epworth Herald* (Chicago), official organ of the League, is publishing a series of articles about it from the pen of Dr. Wentworth F. Stewart, author of the "Evangelistic Awakening." Dr. Stewart says it is his observation that "the League in many places is lacking in vigorous, self-sustaining life; in others, is a problem in itself; and only rarely is it measuring up to reasonable expectation in spiritual culture, evangelistic zeal, and a missionary enterprise; . . . it is not a reviving and recruiting force, and is not saving to any reasonable degree the young people within its reach." He says:—

A GENERAL CRITICISM

"Our whole church has been for years committed to the numerical ideal of quantity instead of quality. Anything to secure a crowd, multiply numbers, increase the membership roll. Some churches and some leagues double their membership while the same pews hold the congregation, the same chairs seat the people at the mid-week prayer service and the devotional meeting of the League, and only the same prayers and testimonies are heard because there is not leaven enough to permeate their entire following.

"To gain our membership one by one, seeking their conversion first, and relation after, through a slower process, is infinitely more valuable than a red-and-blue contest with no significance attached; the same amount of energy thoroughly spiritualized and spent in evangelistic activities

would add permanent strength to the League and not give the impression that religion is secondary to membership."—*Literary Digest*.

RELIGIOUS STRIFE IN GERMANY

Berlin, May 15.—The question of the divinity of Christ now threatens to rend German Protestantism into two great parties, the liberal and the orthodox.

The revolt in liberal churches against the narrow limits of orthodoxy has been fanned into a flame by the refusal of the State Church Consistory and the Prussian Supreme Court to sanction the selection of Rev. Rowen as pastor of the church at Rhemscheid in Westphalia.

His offense was that he preached sermons in which he repudiated the divine parentage of Christ, characterizing it as a myth inspired by Græco-Pagan influences.

FLOCK IS OBDDURATE

The church at Rhemscheid refused to select another pastor, and its pulpit remains unoccupied.

More than 1,300 mass meetings have been held to discuss the religious situation. Taken together they form an astonishing revelation of the enormous extent of the growth of the so-called higher criticism doctrines.

The ferment is increasing, daily, hourly. The liberal pastors and their congregations threaten secession unless the bounds of the creed are widened by the elimination of what they call the Supernatural Articles.

The correspondent, in conversation with a leading theologian who occupies a university chair, was advised that out of 8,000 German Protestant pastors in active service at the present time not over one-quarter are believers in the literal text of the Apostles' Creed, and only one-tenth hold to the inspiration of the Bible.

LEADERS OF THE MOVEMENT

Men like Prof. Harnack and Prof. Delitzsch, author of "Babel and Bible," lights of the liberal school of theology,

propose that the Kaiser, as head of the church, call a general council of the adherents of all theological schools to recast the creed and *formulate some neutral body of doctrine which men of all opinions can subscribe to*.

Should the Kaiser do this, the cataclysm may be prevented. Otherwise it is predicted on all sides the Reformed church of Germany will soon be split upon warring factions.

* * *

Only those who have some knowledge of the "divine plan of the ages" can comprehend such difficulties and appreciate the outcome. This is not a strife between the true church and the false one; but between two sections of the false or nominal system. Money is at the bottom of it. The German Government pays the preachers of all denominations; so now when one is pushed away from the public teat there is a howl of rage, not only from the ousted one, but also from others in sympathy with him, who foresee that their turn may come next.

It is not time yet to judge the hearts to determine which are honest and which dishonest, but there is no mistake about it that if neither honor of men nor financial considerations played a part there would be few to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. But those few would be the honest and true on both sides of the discussions.

The Lord's people, who have renounced worldly and political methods, and who are seeking chiefly, solely the kingdom of heaven, will do well to possess their souls in peace and go right along proclaiming the "good tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people." They need not look for worldly help, but, as in our Lord's time, should persevere, self-sacrificingly preaching without money and without price, seeking out the few who "have an ear to hear," even as many as the Father shall draw to the truth.

BEREAN BIBLE STUDY FOR JUNE

FOR EXPLANATION SEE PREFACE OF WATCH TOWER BIBLES, AND WATCH TOWER, MARCH 1, 1905.

EVIL SPEAKING AND EVIL SURMISING

20. Might telling the truth be evil speaking? Z. '99-70 (1st col. ¶ 3 to 2nd col. ¶ 2).
21. Is it always necessary to tell all we know about every affair? Z. '00-71 (2nd col. ¶ 3).
22. Is an uncomplimentary remark evil speaking? Z. '02-188 (2nd col. ¶ 3); F. 406, ¶ 1.
23. Would it be evil speaking to criticize doctrines publicly uttered? Z. '02-219 (2nd col. ¶ 2).
24. What is a slanderer? Z. '05-215 (2nd col. ¶ 1); Z. '99-70 (2nd col. ¶ 1 to 3).
25. What is "false witness," and is it possible to bear false witness without uttering a word? Z. '02-219 (1st col. ¶ 2, 3).
26. How should we deal with a brother or sister who begins to relate an evil report? Z. '05-215 (1st col. ¶ 4, 5).
27. How should we deal with persons of the world who do evil speaking? Eph. 5:11, 12; Z. '99-70 (1st col. ¶ 1, 2); Z. '02-74 (1st col. ¶ 1); Z. '98-368 (1st col. ¶ 1).
28. Is evil speaking against a brother in Christ more culpable than against one of the world? T. S. 62, ¶ 3; Z. '03-426 (1st col. ¶ 1, 2).
29. In order to avoid gossip, slander and evil speaking, what is the only proper and Scriptural way of redress for grievances, actual or imaginary? Matt. 18:15-17. Z. '05-214 (1st col. ¶ 4) to 215 (1st col. ¶ 3); F. 414-417.
30. How should we deal in a matter of evil speaking against an Elder? 1 Tim. 5:19. F. 293, 294, 418 (¶ 1, 2).
31. Why is "a bridled tongue" a chief essential in an Elder? Jas. 3:2. Z. '99-75 (2nd col. ¶ 2); Z. '97-156 (2nd col. ¶ 2); F. 249, ¶ 2.
32. How may we ask advice and not do evil speaking? F. 292, top of page.
33. What is the relation between "busyboding" and evil speaking? F. 583, ¶ 1, to 586; F. 408, ¶ 1 to 3.
34. How should the Golden Rule help us to overcome evil speaking and evil surmising? F. 407; Z. '02-188 (2nd col.) to 189 (1st col. ¶ 2); Z. '00-262 (1st col. ¶ 1, 2).
35. What is the sole exception to this rule, "Speak evil of no man"? Z. '99-71 (2nd col. ¶ 2).
36. What inspiration should we receive from Jesus' example? 1 Pet. 2:23. Z. '01-298 (1st col. ¶ 1, 2); *Manna*, Dec. 7; Z. '02-310 (2nd col. ¶ 1).
37. How can we overcome evil surmisings and evil speaking?
 - (a) By purifying the heart. Prov. 4:23. F. 409, ¶ 2.
 - (b) By prayer. Psa. 141:3. Psa. 19:12-14. Z. '98-23 (2nd col. ¶ 1).
 - (c) By keeping the mind filled with pure and holy thoughts. Phil. 4:8. Z. '01-324 (1st col.). Z. '03-8 (2nd col. ¶ 3) to 9 (1st col. ¶ 3); Z. '05-216 (1st col. ¶ 3 and 2nd col. ¶ 3); Z. '00-72 (1st col. ¶ 1, 2).
38. What additional thoughts are found in index of *Heavenly Manna* under "Evil"?
39. What special experiences and practices have helped you to overcome evil surmisings to some extent?
40. As we realize how insidious this foe of the "new creature," what should be our daily prayer? Psa. 19:12-14.

IN DUE TIME

Time is one of the most important factors in God's plan. The days of creation were long periods of time; the time of man's experience with evil has been six days of a thousand years each; the day of redemption and of the development of the church has been nearly two thousand years. Time has been necessary for the accomplishment of God's great work; and it has also been necessary in proving to man the righteousness of God's character. Only time could prove to men his invincible justice. Six thousand years ago his sentence of death passed

upon mankind, and during all that time he has permitted generation after generation to go down into the grave in the midst of agony, blood and tears. And though he loved men so, even while they were yet sinners, that he spared not his own Son, but freely gave him up for us all, yet he has never for a moment relented so as to interpose his power for the relief or release of the groaning creation: nor will he do so until his "due time"—the time which his wisdom appointed, which will be the very best time for the securing of the largest possible

results to the race, both of knowledge and of advantageous experience. as well as for the development of several of the most important features of his plan. But as time only can develop God's plan, so time only can manifest his love as well as his wisdom, his grace, his power and his justice.

Time will fully manifest the divine wisdom in what seems to short-sighted humanity like pitiless delay. Already those who are privileged to view by faith the divine plan see the necessity of time for its full accomplishment. It is in view of such necessity that the children of God are frequently exhorted to patience. God has kindly brought us to his standpoint of view and bidden us look into the glorious future—to the outcome of his plan; and in proportion as we are able to comprehend and believe it, we may rest and rejoice in it. But in the meantime, being thus graciously refreshed by the cheering prospect, we must patiently wait for the end, however painful the waiting season may be.

Patience is a virtue which our heavenly Father desires to cultivate in us; and he manifests in himself the grandest example of it. Through all the centuries past he has patiently endured the reproaches of those who, failing to understand the course of his wisdom in executing justice and in working out the deep designs of his abounding grace, attributed evil, and only evil, to his truly glorious and holy character. He knows that "*in due time*" his character will be fully vindicated, and so he patiently waits and works and endures. So also our Lord Jesus waits and endures. He endured great humiliation in coming to our low estate. Then as a man he patiently endured the contradictions of sinners against himself and ungrateful persecution, even unto death, from those he came to save. And, like his heavenly Father, through it all he was cheered in consideration of that "*due time*," though then in the far distant future, when his character, and also the Father's character, would be fully vindicated and manifested to every creature in heaven and in earth. And still our blessed

Lord Jesus and our adorable heavenly Father await with patience the grand consummation. So, in similar attitude of mind, we must wait; for the servant is not above his Lord, and our rejoicing in view of the future will, if we have the mind of Christ, be not only because of our own prospective vindication and glory, but also in prospect of the vindication and glory of God and of our Lord Jesus, and of the prospective everlasting triumph of truth and righteousness.

The waiting time is by no means a time of rejoicing, except in hope. This is a time when truth and righteousness are being humbled in the dust, when they that live godly must suffer persecution, when our eyes must look upon scenes of sorrow and mourning, when our ears must hear the wails of distress, and when our feeble flesh must experience the pangs of death. But, oh, there is a glorious release to come "*in due time*!" Wait for it patiently; "Let patience have her perfect work." Submit to the humbling process. The church's pathway of present humiliation leads to the future glory.

"Humble yourselves," says the Apostle, "under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you *in due time*." Do not make the great mistake of seeking present exaltation at the expense of that which is to come "*in due time*" to those who patiently endure to the end. It is only in proportion as any turn their eyes away from the glory to follow "*in due time*," and thus lose faith in it, that they begin to prize the trifling recompenses which the world offers for the sacrifice of their birthright. Let us, therefore, dearly beloved, keep the eye of faith fixed upon the hope set before us in the gospel; and, forgetting those things that are behind—all worldly ambitions, etc.—let us press toward the mark for the prize of our high calling, which shall indeed be realized by the faithful—"*in due time*;" for "Faithful is he that hath called you, who also will do it." His purposes cannot fail, nor his word return unto him void.

BINDING THE STRONG MAN

"No man can come into a strong man's house and spoil his goods except he will first bind the strong man, and then he will spoil his house."—Mark 3:27.

These words were spoken in answer to the charge of the Pharisees that Jesus was casting out devils by the power of Satan, the prince of demons. Our Lord first showed how unreasonable was the charge that Satan had taken to opposing himself. His argument is that if that be true it would imply that Satan's power was tottering to a fall, if it was necessary for him to thus work against his own plans and arrangements, associates, etc. This does not imply that Satan will never be so cornered as to find it necessary to do good works in order to deceive if it were possible the very elect, but it does imply that when that time shall come, and the adversary shall favor good works, the healing of diseases, casting out of devils, etc., it will be a sure indication that his kingdom is tottering. We believe that this is the case to some extent at the present time—that Satan has much to do with various faith healings that are done by Christian Science, Spiritualism, Hypnotism, etc.

But our Lord's argument was to the contrary of all this—that he was not casting out devils as the minion of Satan, but on the contrary that he was opposing Satan. Then he used the words of our text, which imply that he was already binding Satan, already spoiling his goods. Satan's control of mankind was certainly interfered with when our Lord cast out the demons and gave power and authority to his disciples to do the same throughout Palestine. This our Lord declared was a sign that a stronger one than Satan was at work. Satan was indeed powerful and had taken possession of the world and was exercising a great influence therein, and the fact that now he was interfered with to any extent and demons were cast out proved that he had met one more powerful than himself, and that the time of the complete overthrow of his dominion would come.

This text then is analogous to and in harmony with another which declared, "Now is the prince of this world cast out." Our Lord again declared, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." Our Lord had come into the world for the very purpose of mastering Satan, and in order to vanquish him he had consecrated his life even unto death, that by means of death he might destroy death and him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. God had accepted the consecration, the sacrifice, and had granted our Lord the anointing of the Spirit at his baptism, and it was under the power and influence of this Spirit that he declared that as the Finger

of God he cast out demons. However, the work of destroying Satan's house was not intended to go on to a rapid completion, but rather that merely the power of the Anointed One should be demonstrated for our comfort and joy and faith, and that he should be permitted to control the world for a time further, until the full end of this Gospel age, when his binding will be gradually accomplished and will be followed by the liberating of the whole world from his chains of error with which he has deceived all nations.

In Matthew 24:43 our Lord uses somewhat similar language, but applies it not to his own day but to the end of the age. He speaks of his second advent as being unknown to the world and therefore to them as a thief in the night, unexpected. He intimates that such a secrecy respecting the time is essential; that if it were generally known to the world the divine plan and arrangement in respect to the end of the age would be foiled. To the church it would be given to know the times and seasons, through the holy Spirit enlightening their understanding respecting the Word of truth uttered through the apostles and prophets of old for our admonition. But none of the wicked would understand, only the wise, the truly wise with the wisdom that cometh from above, the consecrated. So far as the world would be concerned, its great ones, its master minds in church and in state, in business, in finances, would all be surprised in the end of this age. The Master would be present as a thief in the night to take, first of all, his "jewels," his bride, his saints, and then to utterly spoil, overthrow, the affairs of this present time, that on the ruins thereof he might speedily set up his everlasting kingdom of righteousness.

"Ye brethren are not in darkness"—that day has not overtaken you as a thief, though it will thus overtake all the world. (1 Thess. 5:3, 4.) The thief-like work of taking the church is already in progress; by and by it will be all completed, and shortly thereafter—1915—the kingdoms of this world, with all of their associated institutions, will go down in a climax of trouble such as the world has never known, because after gathering his bride class the Lord will execute judgments upon Babylon.

At that time Satan will be bound that he should deceive the nations no more until the thousand years are finished.—Rev. 20:3.

THE ANGEL OF GETHSEMANE

'Twas midnight, and the Man of Sorrows took his chosen three,
And sought with weary step the shelter of Gethsemane
To pray, his soul exceeding sorrowful, e'en unto death,
And heavy laden with the sin and woe of all the world.
In agony of bloody sweat he fell upon his face,
And cried, with tears, "My God, my Father, if it be thy will,
Oh, let this cup of shame and numbering with transgressors
pass,—
If it be possible! Yet, not my will, but thine be done!"
And then his thoughts turned to the sacrifice,—a fear bore
down
With agonizing weight upon his heart, lest to comply
With every jot and tittle of the Law, he might have failed!
He saw the priestly type, he knew eternal death awaited,
Should he seek to pass the second vail unworthily.
Eternal death! Oh, anguish inexpressible,—to see
No more his Father's face! He sought his well-beloved
three,
Perchance they might refresh his fainting heart with some
sure word
Of prophecy. Alas, their eyes were heavy and they slept.
Three times he sought them, and three times in vain! Yet
he was heard
In that he feared. The Father sent a heavenly comforter
To touch with tender, strengthening hand that dear, devoted
head,
And whisper, "'I the Lord in righteousness have called
thee, I

Will hold thine hand and keep thee, neither shalt thou fail
nor be
discouraged.' Lo, thou art 'a priest forever, and a king
Upon thy throne, like to Melchizedek.' And thou shalt see
The travail of thy soul, and shalt be satisfied." His heart
Revived, he knew his Father's faithful word could never fail;
He knew it would accomplish that whereunto it was sent.
He rose, and from that hour went forth to trial and to death,
In peace,—a calmness born of perfect confidence in God.

How oft, throughout the many-centuried "night" of this
dark age,
The Father's "little ones" have knelt in sad Gethsemane
To pray! E'en now the Garden's shade re-echoes with the
cry
Of God's elect, "How long, oh Lord, how long until we see
The travail of our soul? How long until thou shalt avenge
Thine own elect, who cry to thee, with tears, both night and
day!"

* * * * *
Dear Lord, oh, use me as the angel in Gethsemane!
Oh, fill me with thy holy Spirit of divinest love!
Oh, make me sympathetic, wise, that every anguished heart
May come, nor seek in vain for consolation from thy Word,
And strengthened, comforted, go forth to prison and to death,
To suffer patiently the cruel mockings of the tongue;
To bear the cross unto the bitter end, then calmly say,
"'Tis finished," and with faith unflinching pass beneath
"the veil!"

—G. W. Sibert, May 6, 1906.

"MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE"

JOHN 10:27.

Considering the mental imperfections, the unbalance of
mind, prevalent in the world, we sometimes wonder that
our differences of understanding are not greater than they
are. The secret of the measure of unity amongst mankind
on various subjects undoubtedly is that the majority are
in almost total ignorance on such subjects, and hence make
no claim of intelligent reasoning thereon, but merely fol-
low some leader of thought. Just as soon as people begin
to use their own thinking apparatus they begin to differ,
and sound minds being in the minority the wonder is that
more mistakes do not result. In the ordinary affairs of
the world, in the ordinary affairs of life, there is no test
as respects the soundness of theorizing, reasoning, except
such as comes from the pages of history, showing the out-
working of various theories, or such as are demonstrated
by the mistakes of those about us. On these various sub-
jects of life, each must do the best he knows how.

Only on subjects dealt with in the Scriptures have we
a positive basis of information and positive lines along
which to use our reasoning faculties. Hence the Apostle
declares that those who follow strictly, implicitly, the di-
vine instructions possess more than others "the spirit of a
sound mind." (2 Tim. 1:7.) Yet even amongst those who
are seeking to follow the guidance of the Word there is
some room for differences, misunderstandings, false reason-
ing, etc. Hence the Apostle Paul urged Timothy, who was
an elder in the church and who had been reared under the
teachings of the holy Scriptures, that he should still con-
tinue to search and to rightly divide the Word of truth,
that thus he might be a workman in the Lord's cause who
would not need to be ashamed. (2 Tim. 2:15.) What was
true of Timothy is true respecting all who endeavor to
honor the Word of God. It behooves us all to be very care-
ful, very circumspect, to look carefully on all sides of every
important question, to endeavor to get the proper bearings
and not be led off in any specious or false reasoning or
sophistry which would entangle ourselves and others in er-
ror. Even with our best strivings for the truth, with our
greatest care, there is still danger, especially amongst those
who are awake and using their brains.

"KNOWLEDGE PUFFETH UP, LOVE BUILDETH UP"

It is safe to say that no other class of religious people
in the world do as much thinking, studying and reasoning
on the Scriptures as do the forty or fifty thousand readers
of ZION'S WATCH TOWER. Their senses have been awakened
by reason of use; they are earnestly desirous of knowing
the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth; they
find the promises of the Lord's Word assuring them that
he will guide them into all truth, and hence they go for-
ward with the greater sense of rest and security that they
shall know the truth and that the truth shall make them
free.

Nevertheless, there is a danger point in connection with

the study of the truth. It was along this point that the
Apostle cautioned some in his day, saying, Be not many
of you teachers, brethren, knowing that a man shall re-
ceive the greater testing—the severer trial of his faith, etc.
The spirit of meekness is very essential to all of us. We
need to realize that of ourselves we know nothing, that our
own judgment and reasoning are not to be depended upon,
that we must be continually looking to the Lord for the
help which cometh from him alone. We have learned not
to look to human institutions of learning, Doctors of Di-
vinity, etc., but to the Word of God. We must learn also
that, even with the Word of God in our hands, we need the
Spirit of God to direct us in its use, that we may under-
stand it aright. We are to remember, too, that God's peo-
ple have had the Bible in their hands for lo, these many
years, yet have generally failed to understand it. Let the
thought, then, make and keep us very humble, very de-
pendent upon the great Teacher, the Head of the church—
the church which is his body.

"ALL TAUGHT OF GOD"

We remember the story of Philip and the eunuch. The
eunuch had the Scriptures and was reading them at the
very time, yet he did not understand them until the Lord
specially sent Philip to expound them to him. We remem-
ber Philip's question, "Understandest thou what thou read-
est?" We remember the eunuch's reply, "How can I un-
less it be interpreted to me?" We remember that the in-
terpretation was sent by the Lord and accepted as from
the Lord and that the blessing followed. We remember the
Apostle's discourse along similar lines saying, How shall the
heathen hear without a preacher? How shall any teach un-
less he be sent? How can any really interpret the Word
of God and make it plain without divine assistance and guid-
ance? This assistance apparently comes in two ways: first,
a preparation of the heart, as the Lord denominated it, a
hearing ear; and, second, a message sent of the Lord, an
exposition of his Word for the hearing ears and for them
alone. Humility is everywhere necessary, not only essen-
tial to the hearing ear but also essential to the tongue that
would be the Lord's representative and ambassador and the
exponent of his truth.

We remember the narrative of Peter and Cornelius, as
illustrating the above. Cornelius was already devout; he
reverenced God, was benevolent, gave much alms, was a
good man in general, and he had a hearing ear, and yet
in the Lord's providence it was necessary to send Peter to
tell him the words by which himself and his house might
be saved—might come into harmony with the Lord. It
was not sufficient merely to send Cornelius a copy of the
Scriptures; but necessary to expound to him the way of the
Lord. Let us not forget these things: let us not become
self-conscious, boastful, proud, heady, highminded, for such
conditions of heart would surely interfere with our learn-

ing further lessons in the school of Christ; and not only so, but some of the lessons already learned would speedily begin to fade away, and if the light which is in us become darkness how great will be that darkness—it will be greater than it is in those who never saw the light of present truth.—Matt. 6:23.

The Apostle tells us that the ox knoweth its owner and the ass his master's crib—although brute beasts they learn where to go for their nourishment. The same is true of barnyard fowls and all domestic animals—they not only

have an appetite for food but soon learn the incidents connected with their feeding. The Lord seems to intimate that some of his people are less wise in these respects than are the dumb animals—they forget how, when and where they got their previous food. This is not true, however, of the Lord's flock. The true sheep know the green pastures and still waters and the Shepherd's voice, and a stranger will they not follow because they recognize not the voice of strangers—"My sheep hear my voice and they follow me."

FAITH INDISPENSABLE TO SUCCESS

Mark 7:24-30.—JUNE 3.

Golden Text—"Great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt."—Matt. 15:28.

With the whole of Galilee awakened, with the people discussing the wisdom and propriety of taking him by force and making him a king, with Herod's boldness manifested in the beheading of John the Baptist, and with the realization that his time for death had not yet come, our Lord left the parts where he was so well known and journeyed about forty-five miles toward the Mediterranean. This brought him to what in our lesson is called the "borders of Tyre and Sidon," more properly the provinces of Tyre and Sidon—within the boundary of the land called Phoenicia, of which the cities of Tyre and Sidon had been the centers of wealth, influence and business. We are not informed that Jesus went to either of those cities: apparently he merely crossed the borders of Galilee, and was thus for a time free from the authority of Herod. He would rest a little from his labors, and allow the truths which he had taught to penetrate into the hearts of his hearers. He would let the froth work off and the real essence of the truth abide in the hearts which were in condition of righteousness for it. He knew well that these would be but few.

The more his work increased and his fame spread abroad the more did the adversary raise up opponents and hindrances. After the feeding of the five thousand and his return to Galilee he had discussions with the Pharisees, who, jealous of his growing popularity with the people, sought to oppose him. They would indeed have been glad to have recognized him as a Pharisee and to have had him do his mighty works in the name of Pharisaism. But his attitude was that of an independent—the Pharisees had sins that needed to be rebuked as well as others. Outwardly they were professing full consecration to God, but our Lord, who was able to read the heart, knew that a great deal of this was mere pretense, outward form and ceremony, show-religion.

These Pharisees, posing as the leaders of religious thought in that day, were made very angry by our Lord's plainness of speech, and the fact that he pointed out to the common people the general rules and principles by which a tree may be known by its fruits—that the Pharisees were not to be esteemed according to their professions, but to be measured by their deeds. They prided themselves upon their strict observances of the law, but he showed that many of the things which they did were not really the law of God, but the commandments of men, and that the very essence of the divine law, love, justice, they largely ignored, not only in their teachings but also in their practices. The Pharisees feared, therefore, that the high station which they had previously held in the estimation of non-professors was being shaken, and their pride antagonized this—hence they hated him without a cause. They should have been glad to have had their attention called to their errors that they might have corrected the same, but this is not the attitude of the unregenerate heart: it rejoiceth in iniquity and rejoiceth not in the truth; it rejoiceth in whatever upholds its pride and gives color to its boastings of success. To them Pharisaism meant everything, and the fall of Pharisaism meant the fall of all religion.

It is much the same today. Many highly-esteemed people today occupy the position of the Pharisees of that time. They make an outward show, they boast of their success, they delight in the honor of men, especially in the honor of the world; they multiply forms and ceremonies and meetings and make a fair show in the flesh. They draw near to God with their lips, but give evidence that their heart sentiments are not in harmony with their lip professions, because when the truth is presented to them they hate it instead of loving it, and they hate the light-bearers because the light makes manifest their own weaknesses, hypocrisies, dissemblings in doctrines and practice.

The improper spirit exemplified in the priests and Pharisees and Scribes in our Lord's day finds a parallel today in the anger, malice, hatred, bitter words, which, like arrows, are shot forth at those who serve the truth, who seek to lift up the standard to the people, who seek to show up the errors of the "dark ages," and through the truth to make known the real character of our heavenly Father and the real meaning of his Word. Persecutors always claim that they are in support of a principle of righteousness; only in this way can they deceive some whom they enlist upon their side—some of better heart and conscience than their own. As the Israelites considered that anything that would undermine them would be to the injury of the Lord's cause, so today every section of Babylon, every sect of Christendom, seems to be fully persuaded that anything which would undermine the errors of their systems would be injurious to the cause of the Lord; hence they feel that in supporting sectarianism in any of its branches they are fighting for God. There is a part of the blindness which comes from the god of this world, the prince of this world, Satan, who has all the heathen thoroughly under his control, thoroughly blind to the goodness of God and his message.

Our duty, nevertheless, is to be bold and courageous for the truth, not with the hope of convincing all of our gain-sayers, nor with the thought of destroying sectarianism, but with the thought of gathering to the Lord his jewels from every quarter of Babylon, "Those who have made a covenant with me by sacrifice." (Psa. 50:5.) This was Jesus' work in the end of the Jewish age. He was gathering the jewels. His work was a success, although it seemed otherwise to his opponents. Similarly our work under God will be a success, even though others may see it differently. Even our Lord's crucifixion was a part of the success of God's plan, favorable not only to the believers but to all the families of the earth.

So with us: "God will turn what seems to harm us into everlasting joy;" he will so overrule that all things shall work together for good to those who love him, to those who are on his side and are faithful in holding up his standard. Faith is the lesson here: our Lord had faith in the Father's plan and followed it through good report and through evil report. The apostles had faith in him, and when others said, "It is a hard saying," they said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." Similarly with us faith is necessary: if we have faith in the Lord and in his Word we cannot doubt what the results will be, and will be prepared for all the experiences of life as they will be permitted to come to us, and will get blessings from them all.

THE SYROPHOENICIAN WOMAN

The country of Tyre and Sidon was called Phoenicia, and its population was made up largely of Carthaginians and Syrians. The woman of our lesson was of Syrian ancestors, and by education and language was a Greek. In a word she represented quite a mixture of nationalities; she was therefore a Gentile out and out. She had a little daughter possessed of an evil spirit, and her mother-love awakened her sensibilities as well as her faith. Although Jesus had entered the village without ostentation, in a semi-private manner, some one had known him, and the word some way reached the ears of this poor, afflicted woman. She hastened to the place where Jesus was, and prostrated herself before him. Matthew says that her cry was, "Have mercy upon me, O Lord! Lord, help me!"

The American consul at Jerusalem, Honorable Selah Merrill, mentions the importunity of the people of the East, saying, "To one who has ever held a prominent or official position in the East the persistency of pleading women is a fact one will never forget. They will not be driven from their purpose by a rough manner. Severe language does not deter them. They are not wearied by delays. They

will sit and wait hour after hour, and come day by day, ignoring all kinds of refusals. They are importunate beyond anything that I ever experienced in our western life."

The case is just such a one as we know the Master would have promptly attended to under ordinary circumstances. The faith was there, hence the persistency of the request. But on this occasion Jesus simply ignored the woman, "He answered her not a word." (Matt. 15:23.) It would even appear that he left the house, and that the woman importuned the disciples that they would intercede for her with their Master, for we read that the disciples subsequently came to Jesus entreating him to "send her away." Evidently they had first tried to discourage the woman themselves, and told her that their Master was a Jew and that his mission was to Jews; that she could not have much hope for favor, and that his refusal was indicated by his silence to her first request. But the woman's faith in the Lord and love for her child led her to stay to importune.

Apparently while the disciples were speaking with Jesus the woman again approached him, pleading her own cause. This time he answered her, but unsatisfactorily. He said, "Let the children first be filled: for it is not proper to take the children's bread and cast it unto dogs." Had there been pride in the heart this response would have been sufficient to have put the woman upon her dignity, so that she would have ceased her importunity and have openly tiraded against the Lord and against all Jews as ecclesiastical bigots. But she was humble as well as full of faith, and so far from taking offense at being told that she as a Gentile was classed with the dogs, she seized upon our Lord's own words as a basis for a further plea, that as the little house-dogs ate of the fragments from the family table thrown them by the children, so she as a Gentile, as one of the dogs, might be granted her request for the relief of her daughter from the power of the devil without hindering the real spirit of the Lord's argument, without saying that she was as worthy as a Jew of his mercy and favors.

Our Lord was astonished as well as pleased by this demonstration of the woman's faith. Matthew says he exclaimed, "O woman, great is thy faith!" Her request was granted, her daughter was healed, and her further faith was shown in that she accepted the Master's word and went to her house, there to find that indeed the demon was gone out, and that in leaving he had thrown the child in a fit upon the bed. A prominent writer remarks, "It is impossible for us to realize the tone in which Jesus uttered these words or the love which beamed in full glory from his eyes. Nothing ever drew from our Lord such commendation as the exercise of a supreme faith."

LESSONS IN FAITH—PRAYERS OF FAITH

It is proper that we should draw analogies from our Lord's conduct and that we should suppose that the illustrations of Scripture, showing the trials and tests of faith, should teach us something respecting the Lord's plan of dealing with those who approach him in prayer. During this Gospel age the Lord is seeking for those who can and will exercise faith. Some undoubtedly are so constituted mentally that they cannot do this—not that God created us without the ability so to do in him, but that the fall has distorted the original creation so that many today are unable to exercise faith in a proper and full degree. It is not for us to denounce such, but rather to learn from God's Word that he has a gracious plan, which is broad enough to include this class as well as all others in the mercy and forgiveness provided through the redemption at Calvary.

After the present age shall have selected out those who can exercise faith, who will exercise faith, and who will become faith-full, obedient to faith, then will be ushered in the great Millennial age, in which light, knowledge, will be granted to the remainder of mankind, to the intent that they may cultivate faith as well as all the elements of a proper character, and by restitution processes come to the attainment of all that was lost in Adam, or, failing to do so, be cut off in the second death. Let us hope that when the Millennial age shall be ushered in many in the world will be found ready to accept our Redeemer even without the special chastisements and judgments of that time to impress upon them the advantages of obedience to the Lord. As this Gentile woman could and did exercise faith in the Lord, so, doubtless, there are others in the world today who, if they knew our Savior as we know him, would be no less faithful than ourselves—some amongst the heathen, perhaps, would manifest much greater faith than some in Christendom today.

"BE PATIENT, BRETHREN"

As in dealing with this woman our Lord deferred the bestowment of the blessing he desired to give her, so doubtless he does with us at times. With us, too, he may see that it will be better if he should for a time ignore our petitions on some certain subject, that thus we may become more earnest, and perhaps increase our faith and our appreciation of the blessing we desire, just as this poor woman might not have appreciated so highly the Lord's favor if he had given it to her at once. With us also the Lord sometimes makes a test of humility before he responds to our requests. Are we of humble enough mind? Have we faith enough to come to the Lord at all? Can we trust him for his grace? Are we humble enough to accept his mercies on his conditions, on his terms, acknowledging ourselves nothing, that we have no merit to plead with him, that by grace we are saved and not according to any works that we could accomplish? If so we may be sure that the Lord will appreciate our demonstrations of such faith by our holding on to his loving hand, to his gracious promises—by our confessions that we are nothing except as he shall give us of his mercy.

As all the various experiences of the Gentile woman worked out for good to her, helping her in the development of a proper and acceptable faith and a spirit of humility, so, we may be sure, all of the delays to answers of our prayers that may come to us as the Lord's people are for our advantage if we will be exercised thereby—that we may grow in his grace, grow in his wisdom, grow in his love, grow in faith, grow in obedience, grow in humility.

The more we study this subject of faith, the more we are convinced that in God's sight faith is not only indispensable but "very precious." We cannot come to God without faith, we cannot abide in his love without faith, we cannot receive day by day his mercies and blessings and leadings except by faith in his promises. We cannot realize ourselves as his children, begotten of the holy Spirit, and heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord, except as we exercise faith in his Word of promise to this effect. We cannot go on day by day following the Lord except as we are willing to walk by faith and not by sight, for this is the test which he puts upon all of his followers. We cannot see how the oppositions of the world, flesh and devil, which seem so baneful to us, are blessings in disguise except as we exercise faith in God's promises that it will be so. We cannot therefore be prepared for the heavenly kingdom in its glories and blessings and privileges except as we now have and exercise the faith which will enable us to profit by various lessons given us in the school of Christ.

"WAIT PATIENTLY FOR HIM"

An illustration along this line comes to our mind. A sister living some distance from Allegheny, deeply interested in the truth herself, informed us that she was earnestly praying for her husband that the Lord would graciously grant him the opening of the eyes of understanding. Having some acquaintance with the husband it was our opinion that his was rather a hopeless case. Not that he was a bad man, but that he seemed to be thoroughly worldly, his hours filled with business or hunting or lodge work, etc. And so we said to the sister, by way of preventing her from having too keen a disappointment in the matter: "Dear sister, remember that the Lord is making his own selection of those who will constitute his spiritual bride of many members. It is not for us to dictate to the Lord in prayer or otherwise whom he shall select—it is for us to feel thankful and grateful that in his providence his truth has reached our ears and brought us the blessing of an invitation to the nuptial feast. We advise that you do not set your heart upon your husband's acceptance of the truth, and that you do not particularly pray along that line, but rather give thanks to the Lord that he is as noble a man as you know him to be, and, by your own life, your own conduct, your own example everywhere of what constitutes righteousness and discipleship to Christ, set him as good an example as possible, hoping that this may profit him as respects the present life and also the future life, even though he should never come to the point of making a full consecration of himself to the Lord and his service."

The sister's answer was, "I am trying to do all this, Brother Russell, but still I feel that the Lord will not be offended if I ask special blessings upon John—if I ask him to graciously grant him the opening of the eyes of his understanding. I am not so much requesting a miracle upon my husband to turn him against his will, but rather request-

ing that the Lord in his providence will be favorable to him, and make the way before him as smooth as possible consistent with divine wisdom." We uttered a few deprecatory words, thinking to ourself how sadly the poor woman would be disappointed as the days and years would go by, yet appreciating her wifely devotion and also her faith in the Lord's goodness. Judge of our great surprise when, about a year later, that husband became interested in the truth, and followed up that interest by a full consecration of his heart and life to the Lord and in his serv-

ice. We got a lesson from this similar to the one we got from the lesson today. The lesson is that God greatly appreciates faith, trust in his goodness, and that barring some interference with his plan he does, so far as possible, answer such petitions offered in an importunity of faith. Let us each, then, endeavor, more and more, to cultivate this important fruit of the Spirit, and correspondingly we will abound in the love and joy and peace, service and blessings which come from him who says, "According to thy faith be it unto thee."

GOOD CONFESSIONS AND LATER TRIALS

Matthew 16:13-28.—JUNE 10.

Golden Text—"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

In the vicinity of Caesarea Philippi, on our Lord's most northerly journey in Palestine, just at the headwaters of the river Jordan, where it issues in great volume from a cave, our Lord put a question to his disciples which was full of meaning to them. This has been a weighty one ever since wherever his Word has gone. More than this, throughout the coming age, the Millennium, it will still be the all-important question.

"WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?"

Our Lord had been teaching the apostles and the public for about three years, and although he had frequently referred to himself as the "Son of Man," a title recognized among the Jews as appropriate to the Messiah, a title applied to Messiah by Daniel the Prophet (Dan. 7:13, 14); our Lord had never positively declared himself to be the Messiah. He had allowed his words, "such as never man spake," and his works, such as never man performed, to testify for him. He merely declared that he had come forth from the Father to be the Savior of men, that in due time he would ascend up on high where he was before, that through faith in him eternal life was obtainable, etc. He had talked about his kingdom, too, and taught the apostles to pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." Still, as already stated, he had never positively declared that he was the Messiah—he had left it to inference; if his character and works would not testify to the hearts of his disciples any words on the subject would be vain, empty, powerless.

By way of bringing the matter gradually before their minds, assisting them to see the general confusion prevailing, our Lord first asked the apostles respecting the general opinions of the people regarding him—whom they thought him to be. The answer was that there was confusion, some claiming that he was Elijah, others that he was John the Baptist returned with greater power, others that he was one of the ancient prophets who had reappeared. With this leading of the mind up to the central thought our Lord put the important question directly, "Whom say ye that I am?" What view of me is entertained by you who are my followers, you who know me most intimately, you who have heard my teachings and seen my daily life? At once came a noble confession from the Apostle Peter, who, while expressing his own sentiments, evidently expressed the minds of the entire discipleship, for there was no protest on the part of any and their silence gave assent.

"THOU ART THE CHRIST THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD"

It should be noticed that the Scriptures are consistent with themselves throughout, that nowhere is the Lord Jesus spoken of as his own Father, the Almighty, Jehovah, but appropriately he is recognized as in his own statements as being the Son of God—the offspring of the Almighty, full of the Father's spirit, grace and power—God manifest in the flesh—the best possible manifestation of the Father amongst men, of that heavenly Father of whom it is declared, "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen or can see." (1 Tim. 6:16.) The Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, represent him and the glorious qualities of his character to humanity. The apostles discerned this, and honored the Son accordingly as the Father had already honored him.

Our Lord promptly acknowledged Peter's confession as being appropriate, correct, truthful, and he added a blessing, saying, "Blessed art thou, Simon, son of Jonas, because flesh hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." Here again our Lord disclaims being the Father, and declares that the Father is in heaven—was not on earth except representatively. The same thought our Master gave to Mary after his resurrection, saying, "I ascend to my Father and to your Father, to my God and to your God." (John

20:17.) We honor the Lord most and have clearest views of the meaning of his words when we accept them simply and truthfully, without attempting to be wise above what is written or to add to the divine revelation or the honor of our Lord by inconsistent claims contradictory to the revelation which has been given us.

"THOU ART THE CHRIST"

This was a part of Peter's reply—"Thou art the Messiah. We accept you as being the one in whom center all the promises—the one who is to redeem and to bless the world." How we wish that all of the Lord's professed people might clearly discern what is implied by Peter's good confession! It implies faith in Jesus, not merely as the Savior of the church which is his body, his bride, but as the Savior of the world—the great Messiah, the seed of Abraham, through whom with his elect bride all the families of the earth will be blessed with gracious opportunities for escape from the thralldom of sin and death to the liberties of the sons of God.

"What think ye of Christ?" This question, which came to Peter and his fellow-apostles, has been rung down through the centuries from that time until now, wherever the knowledge of the Lord Jesus has gone. It is a question which each one must eventually answer for himself. Thank God for this: the benighted heathen shall not be left in darkness, in ignorance of the only name given under heaven and amongst men whereby we must be saved. (Acts 4:12.) In due time this true Light shall lighten every man that cometh into the world. (John 1:9.) And with the question and with the light which makes possible an answer to the question comes a responsibility which none may shirk. Eventually every son and daughter of Adam must decide respecting the great Savior whom God has provided—each must accept or reject him as his Redeemer, his Savior, his Teacher, Priest and King, if he would enter into life; or, rejecting him intelligently and wilfully, must die the second death—utter destruction.

The question has come to us who are the Lord's followers, and we, like Peter and the apostles and all the faithful since, have accepted the Son of God as our Savior, realizing that he bought us with his precious blood, and that we have peace with God through a realization that the divine sentence against us has been met, so that God can now justly accept us to himself, forgiving our sins—not imputing them to us, but accepting satisfaction through our Surety and his precious sacrifice. On the strength of this faith that he was the Son of God, that he died for our sins, we have also accepted him as the great King of Glory, whose Millennial kingdom is surely to bless the world by establishing the reign of righteousness, by binding Satan and all the powers of evil, by causing the knowledge of the glory of God to fill the whole earth and by instituting a great reign of judgment, of justice, in the world, under which every unrighteous deed shall receive a just recompense of reward, and every good endeavor receive encouragement and blessing, and bring a corresponding uplift, mental, moral and physical, to the obedient.

By faith we now believe and accept the message that those who hear now in advance of the world have a special call to joint-heirship with their Redeemer in his glorious kingdom, and shall share with him in his grand work of blessing and restoring the willing and obedient of mankind. What joy follows in the wake of this knowledge and its good confession only the elect can fully appreciate. And in proportion as these confess their faith that same faith grows, and the blessings and privileges connected with it grow, and gradually their joys become full to the overflowing of their earthly vessels in the present life and to their preparing the more for the glorious fulness of joy into which they will be ushered in their glorious resurrection change, when the Master himself shall say to them, "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joys of thy Lord."—Matt. 25:21.

WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?

This same question confronts others who see with considerable clearness the mercy, the grace of God in Christ, and the glorious plan which centers in him, but who for the present are withholding a confession, who have not thus far taken their stand on the side of Christ, to confess him before men and to follow him in their daily life. To these we give a word of encouragement and a word of warning as well. They should be encouraged with the evidences they have of the Lord's favor, in that they have been permitted to come to their present position of knowledge of Christ and the gracious plan of God centering in him. They should realize that while they have already appreciated much, still there is more to follow of grace and joy and peace and blessing and knowledge to those who go on, who take the important step of public confession, who enter into a covenant of sacrifice to be followers in the footsteps of Jesus. They cannot go on to belong to his disciples unless they confess him; they cannot hope to share in the glories that belong to the faithful who walk in the narrow way unless they take up their cross to follow.

But they should know that while the cross of the Lord is not a light one, nevertheless his yoke is easy and his burden is light because he yokes himself with us in our trials and difficulties of life. With him as our companion and burden-bearer the cross is light, the burden is easy and the joys and peace resulting to his faithful are indescribable, even as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man the blessings by and by to be conferred on them. (1 Cor. 2:9.) The day of opportunity for accepting Christ under present conditions is rapidly speeding away. Soon the door of present privilege will close; and even though another door of gracious favor will open thereafter, its blessings and rewards cannot be considered with those which are now before us. Let us lay aside every weight and every besetting sin and enter the race and run patiently to its end, hoping for a share with our Redeemer in his glorious kingdom work.

ROCK-FOUNDED LIVING STONES

Peter, the mouthpiece of the disciples, was especially addressed by our Lord, although the blessing spoken to him was in a measure shared by the others also. Our Lord here gave Simon his surname, Peter, which signifies a stone, declaring, "Thou art Peter [a stone], and upon this rock [this great truth which you have enunciated] I will build my church." Peter subsequently writing refers to the matter in this manner, saying of all of the Lord's true followers, "Ye, also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. 2:5.) Peter and the other apostles are presented to us as foundation stones built upon this great truth, that Christ is the Redeemer, the Savior, the Messiah. Note how our Lord presents this matter in Revelation, in the picture of the New Jerusalem, representing its walls as having twelve foundations of precious stones, in which were written the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.—Rev. 21:14.

"What think ye of Christ? is the test
To try both your state and your scheme;
You cannot be right in the rest,
Unless you think rightly of him.
Some take him a creature to be,
A man or an angel at most;
Sure these have not feelings like me,
Nor know themselves wretched and lost.

"Some style him the pearl of great price,
And say he's the fountain of joys,
Yet feed upon folly and vice,
And cleave to the world and its toys.

"If asked what of Jesus I think,
Though still my best thoughts are but poor,
I say, He's my meat and my drink,
My life, and my strength, and my store;
My Shepherd, my Husband, my Friend,
My Savior from sin and from thrall,
My hope from beginning to end,
My portion, my Lord and my all."

Of this church whose foundation was laid by the Redeemer himself and which was to be built thereupon our Lord declares,—

"THE GATES OF HELL SHALL NOT PREVAIL"

This statement seems to some to favor the theory that eternal torment is the fate of all except the church: yet such

must view the text very superficially indeed, for with their view what picture would the words convey? In what sense would it be true that the gates of hell shall not prevail against the church? If we suppose a fiery hell such as many teach, and a barred gateway leading thereto, and the church on the outside of those gates, we would be obliged to imagine the church trying to break through the gates to get into the fire, and that the gates would not be strong enough to hinder the rash act. Or, on the other hand, we should be obliged to imagine the church on the fiery side of those gates and trying to burst them open and succeeding in so doing. Surely neither of these views represents properly the condition of the church as viewed from any standpoint.

But now note the reasonableness and beauty of the true interpretation of this language. The word hell here is in the Greek, *hades*, the same word that is elsewhere translated grave. For instance, in the Apostle's declaration respecting the resurrection and the deliverance of the church from the grave, he exclaims, "O *hades*, where is thy victory?" He pictures thus the church triumphing over *hades*, coming out of *hades*, out of the grave, out of the state of death. The same thought is connected with our Lord's resurrection, he is represented as bursting the bonds of death, bursting the restraints of *sheol*, of *hades*—by the Father's power. The gates of *hades*, the gates of the tomb, the strength of death which restrained him three days, was broken in his resurrection. This is the picture which our Lord presents. The church in common with the world would go down into death, and this was an assurance to the apostles of the abundant deliverance which will be granted to the church in the first resurrection to glory, honor and immortality, to the conditions where the second death will have no power.

THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM

A key implies a lock, and the thought here is that God's kingdom was locked that none could enter it. Our Lord alone was able to keep the divine law and to inherit the divine promise. To him alone, therefore, belonged entrance to the kingdom. He was recognized as the Anointed from the time he received the holy Spirit at his baptism, and in the fullest sense in his resurrection from the dead, a spirit being, "With all power in heaven and in earth."—Matt. 28:18.

But neither before his death nor during the forty days after his resurrection could our Savior open, unlock the kingdom to his followers, though he promised them ultimately a share with him therein. He put his Spirit upon them, by which they in his name performed many wonderful works, but they could not be recognized by the Father nor receive the begetting power of the holy Spirit, the anointing of the Father, at that time. They could not then be ushered into the kingdom privileges and relationship until Christ had ascended up on high and appeared in the presence of the Father on their behalf, presenting the merit of his own sacrifice as the condition upon which they might be accepted. It was after our Lord had done this that he permitted Peter to use the first key—to throw open the door of the kingdom to all of his truly consecrated followers.

The door thrown open at Pentecost was only to the Jews, not to the Gentiles. Peter preached only to the Jews and proselytes, inviting them and them only to become sharers in the kingdom of God's dear Son. When, three and a half years later, the Lord's due time had come for throwing open the other door into the kingdom—the door for the Gentiles—Peter again was given the key, the right, the authority, to open that door. He it was who was sent to Cornelius, the first Gentile convert, to explain to him the conditions of relationship to Christ in the kingdom and to initiate him that he might receive the holy Spirit. The two keys having been used there is nothing further to unlock respecting the kingdom, and the Jewish institutions having passed away there is now but the one door, and it, we are told, will be closed perpetually when all of the wise virgins shall have gone in to the wedding.—Matt. 25:1-10.

The declaration respecting Peter's authority to bind and loose was a common form of expression in those days, to indicate forbidding and permitting. One writer declares, "No other terms were in so constant use in Rabbinic Canon Law as those of binding and loosing. They represented the legislative and judicial powers of the Rabbinic office." This authority was shared by all the apostles (Matt. 18:18, 19), and it is because of our belief in this that we hold to the exact presentations of the apostles as representing the divine will, and allow no testimony by subsequent followers of the Lord to have the same weight or influence. Respecting the apostles alone we have the assurance that they were divinely supervised—that whatever they forbade or allowed was under heavenly guidance and sanction.

"THEY SHOULD TELL NO MAN"

Our Lord enjoined upon the disciples a measure of secrecy respecting his Messiahship because it was not yet due time for this to be made generally known. Its publication by Jesus and his disciples would have stirred up the public mind and have interfered to some extent with the divine program respecting his crucifixion—either by hastening it or by hindering it. But after our Lord's death and resurrection this was the entire theme of all of his representatives, his messengers—Jesus the Redeemer of the world, the Messiah, whose coming at the end of this Gospel age shall bring in times of refreshing and restitution for the uplift of the groaning creation.

Our Lord did not even pointedly draw this to the attention of his disciples, as we have seen, until the due time—until the approaching end of his career made it necessary for them to be forewarned that they might not be deceived, that they might know how his death was a part of the divine program. It was from this time on that Jesus began to explain to his close followers that he was to suffer death at Jerusalem at the hands of the religionists of that day, and that he would be raised from the dead on the third day thereafter.

BLESSINGS BEING TRIALS

The noble Peter had scored a great success in faithful and prompt acknowledgement of the Master, and he received special favors and blessings and promises as a result. Perhaps this helped to make him somewhat heady and self-opinionated. It is so with many of the Peter class (a noble class) from that time until now. Many admitted to the Lord's favor and privileged to confess him before men have stumbled over their own honor and exaltation. No wonder then the Apostle admonished, Be not many of you teachers, brethren, knowing that a man who is a teacher has severer trials, temptations. —Jas. 3:1.

Peter, in his love for the Master, and intoxicated somewhat by the honors bestowed upon him already, undertook to be the teacher—"not holding the Head" in proper reverence. Alas, how many treat the Lord's Word in the same manner today—ignoring his own statements and distorting his words in a manner which they are pleased to consider better than his, more honoring to him and to the Father. What a great mistake! Let us, dear fellow students, always recognize the headship of our Lord, and always remember that we are to listen to his Word and not to attempt to correct him or to substitute ideas of our own as being either better or as good. If we consider him worthy of the Father's honor and confidence, let us also consider him worthy to be our teacher, and from this standpoint let us take his every word seriously, carefully, implicitly.

Although Peter did not so intend the matter, his efforts were in the direction of turning the Lord aside from the fulfillment of his covenant. And so we think it is with some who, Peter-like, do not give sufficient heed to the Master's teaching—their influence at times upon their brethren and the church is to hinder the sacrificing rather than to assist the sacrificers in the good way. They are stumbling-blocks instead of stepping-stones, and it is the duty of all who would be faithful footstep-followers of Jesus to kindly but emphatically treat the advice of such as our Master did, to ignore it and to press along the line according to our covenant. Our Lord declared Peter to be an adversary [Satan] a hinderer of the work.

Thus we see how those who are good and well intentioned may unwisely become hinderers of that they desire to assist. Let us be on our guard as respects ourselves and our influence upon others. Peter reasoned from the human standpoint, not from the divine. Happy would it have been for him if he had taken this lesson very thoroughly to heart; but through failure so to do he was unprepared for the later testing, when he denied his Lord and brought upon himself bitter weeping. Our Lord's life was an illustration, and put emphasis upon the words which he then addressed to the apostles, "If any man will come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it." Discipleship meant the very reverse of what the apostles had naturally expected. They thought of the kingdom glory and honor, and were desirous of attaining those blessings.

The disciples were now learning that their attainment meant severe testings, disciplines, trials, which would demonstrate their worthiness or unworthiness of a place in the kingdom. Self love and earthly loves, outweighing devotion to the Lord, would mean unfitness for a share with him in the kingdom. On the contrary, such a love for the Lord and the truth and the privileges of service as would lead to self-denials, earthly

sacrifices, etc., even unto death, would imply the possession of the character which our Lord sought in those whom he would make his joint-heirs in the kingdom.

GAIN THE WORLD, LOSE HIS BEING

Our Lord stated a general truth when he declared that a selfish love of life under present sinful conditions would signify the loss of life eternal—would signify ultimately the second death. This applies to the church in the present time. We have covenanted with the Lord to leave all and follow him; we have exchanged our earthly hopes and aims for heavenly ones; and now, if we fail of the heavenly, all will be gone. Yes! it is a case of losing our earthly lives and gaining the heavenly, and no amount of earthly gain can compensate us for the loss of the life eternal hoped for.

Somewhat similar principles will apply to the world during the Millennial age, for they also will be required to break away from sin and cultivate righteousness if they would attain to life; and those who will not forego the sins and not battle against the weaknesses will never attain to the restitution perfections and everlasting life. The matter then resolves itself into this, for us now and for them by and by: Do we prefer everlasting life in harmony with the divine law and righteous requirements, or do we choose the contrary, with the penalty, second death?

"THY KINGDOM COME"

All this, respecting the necessity of suffering and death on the part of those who would be sharers with the Lord in his kingdom, was evidently a new thought to the disciples. It had been partially stated previously, but in dark sayings which they did not comprehend. Evidently even yet they did not grasp the situation clearly, but our Lord proceeded to clinch the matter in their minds by assuring them that they would not get the kingdom inheritance until some period in the future—when the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall render unto every man according to his deeds. To those who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory, honor and immortality he will render the reward of eternal life on the spirit plane; but chastisements, punishments, corrective in their nature, and purgatorial to all others whose evil deeds, preferences for sin, unfaithfulness to light and knowledge and truth, mark them as out of accord with the great principles of righteousness. To these will be given experiences in the time of trouble which will mean sorrow, disappointment, grief, etc. We are glad to have the assurance from other Scriptures that these corrective judgments of the Lord as they come upon the world will mean blessings in disguise, for, "When the judgments of the Lord are abroad in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness."—Isa. 26:9.

The statement of verse 28 has been the cause of considerable confusion. It reads, "There be some standing here who shall not taste of death until they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." This is what might be termed a "dark saying," an obscure statement. The key to it is found in the first nine verses of the succeeding chapter. The chapter division, which was not of inspiration but was made centuries after Matthew was dead, has served to separate the Lord's words from the explanation of them.

Connecting the matter we see that our Lord meant that some who were there with him would see a demonstration of his statement about his second coming in power and great glory in a vision, and that vision was given a little later on in the Mount of Transfiguration, when the entire kingdom was represented in tableaux to Peter, James and John, three of those who were with him at the time he uttered the words of our lesson. In that panoramic vision our Lord was transfigured so that the disciples saw him radiant with glory, and as nearly identical as would be possible to show them the glories of the kingdom; and with the Lord in the vision were seen Moses, a representative of Israel, and Elijah, a representative of the church. St. Peter, one of the three who witnessed this exhibit of the kingdom glory in vision, mentions it in his epistle, saying, "For we were eyewitnesses of his majesty . . . when we were with him in the holy mount." —2 Pet. 1:16-18.

If that vision was such a testimony to the Apostle Peter and his associates, and through them was applied to all of the early church as an assurance of the blessing of the Lord which would ultimately come at the second advent of Christ in his kingdom, how much more assurance have we now in the fact that we by the grace of God have been enabled to see the spiritual glories of the Lord through the opening of the divine Word, the breaking of the seals upon the scroll of divine revelation! "Wonderful things in the Bible we see." Wonderful love and exceeding great and precious promises for the church, wonderful love and an ancient covenant for