

PLAN OF THE AGES. The verse on the front page caught my attention at once: "To make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery," etc.

I felt, This is something I want. I started to read and never rested till I had read it through; looking up all the references, with growing joy and wonder over every chapter. Oh, how precious it was at once! I said to my neighbor, I would not give away the knowledge this book has given me for a thousand pounds. In six weeks I had all the STUDIES, and soon I had all of your literature that I could get.

THE DIVINE PLAN OF THE AGES had been in the house for four years and I had not seen it. That day it was lying where I had put the Swedenborg book; I do not know how it got there. It seems it had been sent to my father four years previous. But the most remarkable thing I have not yet told you: A few days previous to finding your book I had gone to my room and on my knees told my heavenly Father that I was unsatisfied. I was not being "persecuted for righteousness sake"; most people appeared to love me. I told Him I wanted, like Paul, a share in Christ's suffering: I was ready to die, if only I might attain. I wanted nothing less than the best. In a few days I found THE DIVINE PLAN OF THE AGES, as I have told you. Then I was short of time to read, and I fell and sprained my ankle very severely, and so had plenty of time to read.

Oh, how thankful I am for my heavenly Father's mercy and loving kindness and condescension in allowing me to have a place in his little flock! My heart is full of Christ, and "longs its glorious matter to declare"; but so few will hear—especially because I have come out of the Wesleyan church and all the offices I had there. My old friends fight shy of me; some have told me they would rather not hear if it would convince them they must come out.

I am only a woman keeping house for my dear old father, and now that I have no offices in any church, I feel I am feeding and not passing the food on to others. I do not wish to be like the servant who buried his talent. I speak to all as I have opportunity, and some listen with great interest; but I do not know that I have succeeded in bringing any into the truth. Two persons have bought full sets of THE STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, but are not reading them.

I have never looked back and feel I never shall. I feel consumed day by day to know my God, and do his will. Though a Wesleyan I was baptised (immersed) eleven years ago into Christ's death, understandingly, though not so fully as I understand today. Do you think I need to be baptised again? Please excuse me for taking your valuable time.

Yours very gratefully and lovingly in His service,

GRACE E. ROWSE.—Eng.

A WORD TO THE WISE

Dear Pastor Russell:—

While the closing hymn was being sung at The Temple recently, I noticed that rather more than a few of the ladies were apparently more interested in getting together their loose articles of attire and assuming their wraps than giving their respectful, if not devout, attention to the solemn and beautiful words that closed the day of praise and worship. The same people were in no particular haste to leave the building, as evinced by the greetings and adieux to their friends.

Perhaps you might consider it would help in realizing our duties as the Lord's people, to wait quietly and orderly until the final words of the service are uttered, followed by a few moments of quiet thought and prayer before plunging into the cares of our daily life. A few words from you in THE WATCH TOWER, and occasionally an admonition, might remind the whole church of the great privileges which we enjoy, and for which we should be grateful.

Yours in the service of the Lord,

ROBERT E. BRAY.

RE PROMPTNESS AT MEETINGS

Dear Brother Russell:—

It seems to me that a word of encouragement to some of the dear friends in respect to greater promptness at meeting hours would be helpful. Apparently some do not realize the necessity for reverence in this respect. If we do not preserve order in regard to our meetings we are not observing heaven's first law. We must lack reverence for our heavenly Father and for our Master, if we are less prompt in the Lord's affairs than we are in our own.

Some of the dear friends come to the meetings as much as from thirty to forty-five minutes late. The same dear friends are very prompt in observing other appointments. How can we expect the Lord to be pleased with us if we give him the inferior things? How can we expect to receive the chief promises if we do not put forth as much effort for our everlasting welfare as we do for the temporal?

If we set a certain time for meeting and very seldom get there on time, we are not to be depended upon; our word is broken. How can we expect the Lord's approval in such a condition as that? He was so prompt and precise, doing the Father's will to the dot.

These same dear friends are very noble in other respects; and how they can be so indifferent about coming into the meetings on time I cannot understand, except it be that they have gotten into this bad habit and do not know how to get out of it. I am sure I would like to lend them a helping hand in this direction.

Yours in the one hope of all saints,

FRED OTTI.

NECESSITY OF SELF-CONTROL

"He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down and without walls."—Proverbs 25:28.

In olden times cities were particularly places of refuge, where the inhabitants of the country congregated for protection. When the earth was less populous and the necessity for government was less appreciated than now, any marauding band was likely to take possession of whatever was open to their attack. So the cities of ancient times had strong walls. This was true, we remember, of Jerusalem and Jericho. It was true of ancient Troy, and also true of cities in Europe. In Vienna, the old wall of the city still stands; and so with other walled cities.

But as improved forms of government were adopted, cities no longer needed protecting walls. The police nowadays constitute a wall of protection. Our text is referring to a wall such as was formerly used, and to a city which had become dilapidated and the wall broken down. King Solomon gives this as a picture of a human being who has no rule over his own spirit. He is unable to protect himself against evil influences from within or without, as a result of having suffered his will to be broken down.

All mankind are born with more or less of determination. Some have this in a very marked degree; others in a lesser degree; no one, we believe, is wholly without this quality of will, purpose. But we find that whether our wills are strong or weak they need direction. Lessons in the directing of our wills come from various quarters; for instance, we have the laws of the city, laws of the state, laws of the country, which direct the individual as to what he may do and may not do—particularly what he may not do. As one looks into the source and history of these laws, he finds that they represent the ac-

cumulated will of a long period. Mankind now have very good laws. We have often thought it strange that fallen men have produced such just laws as we find on the statute books today.

But although very good laws may be made, yet people may ignore the law. A jury may set aside all law. A judge may pervert the law. Thus things that are unlawful may become a practise of an individual or a town or a city. To cultivate in one's self a lawless disposition is to cultivate the spirit of anarchy—a spirit of indifference to the rights and interests of others. There are some who manifest reasonable respect for the laws of man because necessity or public opinion makes it impossible or inadvisable to do otherwise, who may at heart be anarchists as regards the law of God, the great Law-giver of the Universe.

SAD PERVERSION OF SOUND JUDGMENT

To yield ourselves to passion, to allow it to sweep over us and master us, is disastrous, whether we are weak-minded or strong-minded. The weak-minded have their limitations; the strong-minded have the excess of power, and are more potent for evil. We hear a great many say, when they have lost control of their temper, or have been petulant or morose or ill-natured or discourteous, Well, that's my way; I do not mean any harm. They acknowledge the matter, and seek to justify themselves by saying that it is natural to them. But no human being should live according to what is natural to his or her fallen nature. A being created in the image of God, and still retaining some traces of his original Godlikeness, should live above the plane of the lower animals, which follow merely their natural instincts and passions.

Some seem to glory in what they are pleased to term their high spirit, which will always stand up for their "rights." They are not so weak and childish as to let anybody run over them! If they do not like what others do or say, they will tell just what they think of the others. They have some force of character! Oh, how the great adversary and his hosts, together with the perverse fallen nature, can deceive and mislead and blind the judgment that is not guided and instructed by the only true guide—the Word of God! How they can make that which is noble, and truly strong and Godlike appear weak and puerile—and make that which is weak, base, selfish and animal appear strong and manly!

ALL NEED REGULATION BY SOME STANDARD

All should recognize that the inclinations, the impulses and the preferences of the fallen nature of man are often contrary to that which is right, noble, truly desirable. All should be regulated by some standard, either the civil standard by which the world is governed, or the standard of God. But one might live up to the letter of a law and yet be violating its spirit. The Law of God is the very highest standard of law. And the spirit of God's law is embodied in the Golden Rule. This standard the whole world recognizes as right; and surely the Lord's people should measure all their conduct and their words, yea, their very thoughts, by this standard. Thus they will be rulers over their own spirit.

The word spirit in the text under consideration represents the mind, the impulses of one's nature. We are to rule our mind, our natural impulses. This means that if a thought present itself to the mind, or if we feel a certain impulse, we should be quick to perceive the nature of the thought or impulse; and if it is not in harmony with the principles of righteousness or with our covenant as children of God, we should at once resist it. If we are unable to do this successfully of ourselves, as is often the case, the heart should be promptly lifted to the Lord for His promised grace to help in time of need. If we feel an impulse toward a certain action or course, we should carefully weigh the matter, and decide as to its righteousness or propriety in the circumstances, looking to our unfailing source of help for guidance.

The world would say that this is too exacting—that they would have more pleasure in doing their own will. But we know that in doing their own will they frequently get into difficulty. A Christian has covenanted not to follow his own will; he has given up his own will, and has taken the will of God instead. The more advanced the Christian, the more should we expect that he would be able to rule his spirit—"casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought" to the will of God in Christ. And if we rule our mind, our thoughts, we shall rule our tongue. If the thought were not in the mind, the tongue would not utter it.

There is a grave danger of saying things, or of doing things, under a momentary impulse, that our heart, our consecrated judgment, would not approve; hence the necessity of bringing our thoughts and impulses into subjection. We are to consider, What would be the effect of my words or my action upon another? Would it bring harm? Would it be an injury, or cause needless pain, for me to say or do this thing, or would it do good? By thus scrutinizing himself, by thus taking himself in hand, and ruling his spirit, the child of God is showing his earnest desire of heart to be pleasing to the Lord and true to his covenant. And those who learn to rule their own spirit according to the will of the Father are the ones whom he will be pleased to make joint-heirs with his Son in his kingdom.

HOW TO ATTAIN STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

In what way can a Christian cultivate this control of his own spirit? At first the individual has not the power to control himself in everything; but as he learns to exercise self-control in the little things, more and more doing what he can in this direction, in thought and word and deed, he will gain in strength of character. We should remember the story of the man who wished to develop his muscles, and who for this reason began to practise each day in lifting a calf. He commenced when the calf was very young, and he lifted it day by day for weeks and months. In due time the calf had become an ox, and he was then able to lift the ox. His daily practise had gradually strengthened his muscles; they increased in strength with the increase in the weight of the animal, until he was strong enough to lift the full-grown ox.

And so with the Christian in his character-development: If we daily practise self-control, we shall gradually attain a strong character along this line, which will be of inestimable advantage to us in our Christian warfare. The cultivation of self-control should properly begin in one before birth, yea, at the time of conception. The mother should practise self-control, that this disposition might be impressed upon the

mind of her unborn child, that thus it might enter the world in a much more favorable condition in this direction. And this spirit of self-control will grow in the child after birth, under the proper training of the parent, so that the child, approaching manhood's estate, will be able to exercise more natural self-control. Such a one, if he become a child of God, will make a very noble Christian indeed; he will be strong in the Lord and be helpful to others. But all have not had this natural advantage, and must battle the more determinedly for this reason.

MORAL STRENGTH MORE DESIRABLE THAN PHYSICAL

There is no place where the proof of our ability to rule our spirit is better shown than in our own home. With husband and wife, with parent and child, with brother and sister, this is an important matter. The battle with self is the greatest battle we have to fight; and the Word of God declares that "he that ruleth his own spirit is greater than he that taketh a city." He is greater because he has learned to exercise the will, the determination, of a true character in the right direction, in the direction of control of self.

Moral strength is infinitely nobler and more to be desired than the greatest degree of physical strength or the keenest strategy. And it is only after we have conquered ourselves, only after we have become master of our own flesh, only after we have cast out the beam from our own eyes, have subdued anger, malice, hatred and strife in our own hearts, that we are able, by means of these severe battles with our own weaknesses, to assist the brethren, to assist our neighbors, to aid them—by our example—in overcoming their besetments and infirmities.

WE MUST FIGHT TO THE END

To rule one's own spirit, mind, disposition, implies a conflict similar in some respects to that of taking a city; for no matter where we begin, we find entrenched within us many armed and opposing powers. They have possession by heredity—they are there as the result of the fall. And if we have passed the days of youth they are the more strongly entrenched, and it requires the greater skill and generalship to rout them. But whether one has begun early or late, he that would succeed in ruling his own spirit must "war a good warfare." He must "fight the good fight of faith," down to the very end of the present existence.

If the child of God would be the victor in this fight, he must not only storm all the fortresses of inherited evils, which seem to be a part of his very nature, but having gained possession and taken his seat upon the throne of this symbolic city (his will), he must thereafter be continually on the defensive; for the old enemies are constantly on the alert, and ever and anon seek to regain possession, so that he who continues to rule his own spirit is one who has not only routed the enemy, Sin, from the throne of his being, but is continuing to keep him at bay.

This ruling of one's spirit is by no means an easy task; and, as in the illustration, it cannot be done single-handed and alone. Consequently, the wise "general" will invoke all the assistance at his command, remembering the words of the Apostle—"We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in high places." (Ephesians 6:12) These powers of the world, the flesh and the devil are closely allied, and therefore he who plans for conquest and an established reign thereafter, must seek alliance with another and stronger power. This power is tendered to all who earnestly undertake this great work. It is none other than the almighty arm of our God, who says to those who accept his strength, Greater is he that is with you—that is for you—than all they that be against you; gird yourselves like men, be strong, fear not.—See 1 John 4:4; Isaiah 35:4.

The ruling of this symbolic city—one's own spirit—will never be accomplished until first the "commanding general," the Will, has positively decided to change his allegiance from Sin to God, and to rout the rebels who resist the change. But, in the words of a trite saying, "Where there's a will, there's a way"—for good or for evil. God will assist, through various agencies, toward good; Satan, through various agencies, toward evil. If the Will says, "It must be done," it calls in the needed, available help; and forthwith it sets all the other faculties of the mind at work, first to subjugate, and then to rule and regulate the entire being. Conscience is commanded to keep a vigilant watch over all the mental operations. Judgment, under the influence of Conscience, must decide as to the righteousness or the unrighteousness of any matter, and report to the Will, which is under the same moral influence.

THREE DEPARTMENTS OF MENTAL GOVERNMENT

Thus we have three departments of government established—the legislative, which should always be the Conscience; the judicial, the Judgment; and the executive, the Will. In every well-regulated and righteously-ruled mind, all the other facul-

ties must make their appeal to this Congress and, as the Will insists, in due and proper order. Their appeal to the Will to execute their desires before submitting them first to Conscience, and then to Judgment, should never be tolerated; but when approved there, they may freely urge their claims upon the executive power, the Will. The Will governs; and if the Will be weak, the government is slack, and the appetites, passions and unholy ambitions take advantage of the situation. They seek to overbalance Judgment and to silence Conscience, and loudly clamor to the Will to have their own wild way.

If the Will be weak, but strive to keep itself under the influence of Conscience and sound Judgment, it will be fitful and irregular in its rulings; and the government will be unstable and ultimately wholly at the mercy of the fallen appetites, passions and ambitions. The condition of such a soul is one of anarchy which, unless its wild course be speedily arrested, will hurriedly sweep the whole being toward destruction. It is all-important, therefore, that the Will be entirely consecrated to God and righteousness; and that it strengthen

itself in the Lord, and in his name and strength rule with a firm hand, cultivating as its assistants Conscience and Judgment, in determining the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, as expressed in his Word.—Romans 12:2.

The Will has the most difficult office to fill; and the Lord's commendation will be to the man of resolute Will, instructed by an enlightened Conscience and Judgment. Blessed is the Christian who sets his house in order, and who maintains that order to the end of his days. The thorns and thistles of his old nature have been exterminated; the beautiful flowers of peace, righteousness and love have been cultivated; and now they flourish and adorn his character. The warring elements of his old nature have been brought into subjection to his new Will. As the poet Whittier has beautifully expressed it:

"All the jarring notes of life
Seem blending in a psalm;
And all the angles of the strife
Now rounding into calm."

OUR RESPONSIBILITY CONCERNING PRESENT TRUTH

"His Word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay."—Jeremiah 20:9.

The Prophet Jeremiah is here using a very forceful comparison. He had a burning zeal in his heart, a consuming sense of the importance of the message given him to deliver. His previous declaration of the Word of God concerning Israel had been so despised and rejected that he had become disheartened. He himself declared, "The Word of the Lord, was made a reproach unto me, and a derision, daily. Then I said: I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his Word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary of forbearing, and I could not stay!" His message had to be spoken. The Lord had instructed him to tell Israel that they were about to be given over into the hands of their enemies.

This Word of the Lord to the Prophet Jeremiah was given prior to the seventy years' captivity of the Jews. There were false prophets among them who declared that the King of Judah was to gain a victory over their enemies. The people were glad to hear this assurance; and they despised the true Prophet of the Lord, who gave them the real Message from God. Jeremiah told them that they had failed to keep their covenant with the Lord; that they had failed in their responsibilities to Jehovah, whose people they professed to be, and whom they had promised to serve faithfully; that it was not too late even then for any to be delivered, who would repent; but that the nation was surely to be delivered to their enemies and carried away into captivity.

JEREMIAH'S CRUCIAL TEST

Jeremiah knew that the false prophets would encourage the king, and that he himself would bring the king's wrath upon his own head by reiterating the message which Jehovah had commissioned him to deliver. He shrank from the infamy, the reproach and the persecution which by experience he knew would result from loyalty to the Lord. But he overcame the temptation to hold his peace. He would speak as God commanded him, let the cost be what it would. He would tell Israel again the words which had been given him. He would give them a further warning.

If Jeremiah had allowed his fears to overwhelm him, and had withheld the message, undoubtedly he would have been set aside as the mouthpiece of God, and another would have been commissioned to deliver the message. The burning within the heart of the Prophet would have grown feebler and would ultimately have died out. When a fire is kept shut off from a draft for some length of time, it will become extinguished. This is as true in the realm of moral and spiritual forces as in that of physical nature. This is why the Apostle Paul urged: "Quench not the Spirit." We might let the holy Spirit of God die out in our hearts by a failure to do our duty, a failure to keep our covenant faithfully. The light within us, the holy fire, would smolder for a time, and finally become extinct. The Prophet Jeremiah could not withhold that which God had commanded him to speak; he could not quench the fire within his soul without losing his relationship with Jehovah.

GOD'S MESSAGE GIVEN US TODAY

Thus it is with us today. God has let us into the secret of his counsels. He has granted us a wonderful spiritual illumination. He has given us a message of the utmost importance to deliver to his professed people. We have been informed by the Lord that a great change is impending—that the lease of power to the Gentile nations is about to expire. We are instructed that the present religious systems of Christendom

are to go down, that the rule of the present order is about to end, and that the dominion is about to be given "to him whose right it is" to reign. The kingdoms of this world are about to "become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever."

This message is not to be stated in a rude manner. But it is to be stated, nevertheless. The great King whom God hath appointed is about to come in. In Jeremiah's time, the message was that the kingdom of God, His typical kingdom, was about to be overthrown. The lease of power to the Gentiles, under the domination of the Prince of this world was about to be inaugurated. This order of things was to be permitted to run for an appointed time. That time is now about to run out. The King's Son is soon to receive his long-promised inheritance. (Psalm 2:7-9) We are glad that our message is not now the overthrow of God's kingdom, but the very opposite of this—the overthrow of the kingdom of darkness and the establishment of the kingdom of God.

So we are to tell forth this glorious message. We are to tell it in our actions, in our words, by the printed page, by pictorial presentations to the eye, and in every way that the Lord shall give us the opportunity. If through fear of persecution, of losing prestige in the eyes of men, for love of ease, or for any reason whatever, we should fail to give forth the Message of God, it will be taken from us and given to one who is worthy. The Lord is seeking those who are valiant for Him, for righteousness, for truth. If we prove ourselves weak, we are not fit for the kingdom.

ARE WE FULFILLING OUR COMMISSION?

Is this wonderful message, this message the like of which was never before granted to men or angels to tell, burning within us? And are we speaking it forth, that its inspiration may cause other hearts to take fire? Can we sing with the poet:

"I love to tell the Story,
It did so much for me!
And that is just the reason
I tell it now to thee!"

If we refrain from telling the glad tidings, the result will be that the fire of God's holy Spirit will become extinguished within us. And if the light that is within us becomes darkness, how great will be that darkness! The possession of the truth—God's message—brings with it great responsibility. Shall we prove faithful to it? Shall we show to our God our deep appreciation of his loving kindness in granting us the knowledge of his wonderful message of salvation, his glorious plan, with its times and seasons?

There is a difference between the operation of the Lord's Spirit in his children now and its operation in the days of the Prophet Jeremiah, and the other holy prophets. During the Jewish age the holy Spirit acted upon the servants and mouthpieces of God in a mechanical manner. Now the people of the Lord have both his message in his written Word and the begetting of the Spirit, which gives us a spiritual understanding impossible to his people of past ages. The mysteries of God are now opened up to his faithful children, the watchers; and we are granted a clear understanding of "the deep things of God," some features of which were never revealed until the present time, even to the most faithful of the Lord's saints.—1 Thessalonians 5:1-6.

"THE DAY IS AT HAND!"

We are also told by the Apostle Paul that the things which were written of the servants of the Lord in past dispensations were written for our admonition and instruction and comfort, "upon whom the ends of the ages are come." (1 Corinthians 10:11) Seeing all these things, dearly beloved, "What manner of persons ought we to be, in all holy conversation and godliness?" How earnestly, with what painstaking care, should we give heed to the Word spoken unto us! Let us be faithful in proclaiming the message of our Lord, now due. Let us tell forth the words which he has put into our mouths, whether others hear or whether they forbear—whether our faithfulness bring us the favor or the disfavor of the world

and of nominal spiritual Israel. But let us speak his Word in meekness and love, leaving the results with our great Chief Reaper. "The day is at hand!"

"He cometh to his own—our glorious King!

Can human tongue or pen show forth such glory?
Through earth and sky let our glad praises ring!

O saints of God, tell forth the wondrous Story!

"He cometh now to reign. What wealth of joy.

To all the world! Thy matchless name confessing,

O Son of God, we sound thy glory forth

O'er land and sea—thy promised Reign of Blessing!"

THE GREAT SHEPHERD AND HIS SHEEP

"The Lord is my Shepherd."—Psalm 23:1.

Throughout the Old Testament the word rendered Lord is in the Hebrew Jehovah, and therefore applies to the heavenly Father and not to the heavenly Son. The thought presented in our text—as in other Scriptures—is that the great Over-Shepherd appointed his Son to be the Under-Shepherd of the sheep, even as the Son has appointed under-shepherds in the church subject to him. The work of shepherding is not exercised toward the world. The great Under-Shepherd does not shepherd goats or wolves. The only ones who are shepherded are the sheep; and special care is taken of the flock of God. The great Over-Shepherd looks out for the interests of his sheep, provides for them, leads them into green pastures, as the Psalmist tells us. He also protects them from wolves and other ravenous beasts.

If we would inquire, Who are these sheep? we find that the Scriptures give us good evidence that originally the Jewish nation constituted this flock, and that King David recognized himself as one of the sheep. Israel was not chosen by the Lord because they were better than the rest of mankind; but God made an exception of that people on account of Father Abraham, for whose sake he became the "Shepherd of Israel." Because of Abraham's great faith in God and his implicit obedience under the most crucial tests, the Lord promised to make of his seed a peculiar people above all the peoples of the earth. He promised to bless them, to assume a particular care over their affairs, and eventually to use them in blessing all other nations. So God made the Hebrews his chosen people. In proportion as they were obedient to his commands, he blessed them; and whenever they went astray, he chastised them and brought them back again under his care.

But Abraham was to have another seed, a spiritual seed, who were to reign over the natural seed, and to bless all nations and kindreds through the natural seed. The special application of this text, then, we understand to be to spiritual Israel, just as all the chiefest of God's promises are to spiritual Israel. Natural Israel were the children of Abraham according to the flesh; but the spiritual children of Abraham are those begotten of the holy Spirit to a new nature—the spiritual nature. So while the Lord had a care over the affairs of natural Israel, and still has a care, he has a still more particular care over the affairs of spiritual Israel.

Hence, we understand that the speaker of this text, viewed from the prophetic standpoint, is primarily the Lord Jesus; and that all his consecrated followers throughout this Gospel age, all the members of his body, are also represented in the speaker. All these are likewise privileged to use these words: "Jehovah is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake."

BEWARE OF WOLVES

In this 23d Psalm there is a distinction implied between sheep and wolves. The world likes to be considered strong and well able to defend themselves and their rights. On their escutcheons we never see a sheep portrayed. We see lions; we see the eagle, with its outspread wings and its sharp claws and beak; we see dragons and bears and serpents—everything to indicate ferocity, rapacity, cunning, desire for conquest. The Lord passes by all these strong, fierce nations—the lion, the eagle, the bear, etc., and has called out a new nation, altogether distinct from any of these.

God has chosen for the members of this nation those—few in number—who are sheeplike in disposition and who desire to come into his fold. For these he has provided a particular way in which to enter this fold. He does not have bears in his fold, nor tigers nor wolves nor birds of prey. God does not recognize such; they are not to be fed and cared for as he cares for his sheep. He is the Shepherd only of the sheep.

If, therefore, we would claim the promise of this beauti-

ful Psalm, we must make sure that we are of sheeplike disposition and desirous of being led of the true shepherd. We are to be careful to note that there is only one Shepherd who is able to care for our interests and who can be safely entrusted with them. A strange shepherd would lead the sheep astray, would lead them into difficulties, dangers and disaster. For this reason we do not trust everybody who wears the garb of a shepherd. There is but one Shepherd that we can trust.

THE TENDER SHEPHERD'S CARE

The great Over-Shepherd is willing to receive all the straying sheep that long to come back to the fold. He has appointed as the Under-Shepherd the one who died for us, that he might fully deliver all the sheep from the evil one—the roaring lion who walketh about seeking whom he may devour. Our gracious Savior left the courts of glory and came down to earth, and for thirty-three years he traversed with weary feet this vale of tears. He mingled with the poor and lowly; he wept with the sorrowing and the sinful; he had no place to lay his head. He bore the griefs and sicknesses of those about him. He suffered and sorrowed; he bore shame and ignominy—and all this even unto death! And why? It was that he might save the "lost sheep." His blessed fellowship with the shining hosts of heaven was all relinquished during these years of earthly pilgrimage, that the wandering sheep might be found and brought back to the fold of God.

"There were ninety and nine that safely lay

In the shelter of the fold;

But one was out on the hills away,

Far off in the dark and cold—

Away on the mountains wild and bare,
Away from the tender Shepherd's care.

* * *

"But none of the ransomed ever knew

How deep were the waters crossed;

Nor how dark was the night that the Lord passed through,

Eere he found his sheep that was lost.

Out in the desert he heard its cry—

Sick and helpless, and ready to die.

* * *

"Then all through the mountains, thunder-riven,

And up from the rocky steep,

There arose a glad cry to the gates of heaven,

'Rejoice! I have found my sheep!'

And the angels echoed around the throne,

'Rejoice, for the Lord brings back his own!'

* * *

How grateful we should be for such a Shepherd! How can we sufficiently show forth his praise! Truly we can never know this side the veil, "how dark was the night that the Lord passed through," that he might redeem us to God. And from the time we become his sheep he tenderly cares for all our interests, shielding us from every foe and the dangerous pitfalls that lie in our path.

MANKIND THE STRAYING SHEEP

All of the race of Adam are this "lost sheep." Soon the great heavenly Shepherd will have gathered his sheep of the present age into the fold beyond the veil, and then he will have another flock—the world in general. "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring," said the Master. Ultimately, all who become godly indeed will be glad to be counted among the Lord's sheep. They will understand God's great plan for the salvation of men, and will appreciate the marvelous blessing conferred upon the world by the great Over-Shepherd, in sending his Son to die for all mankind, that they through him might live.

All who will accept the gracious arrangements and obey the rules and regulations of the Lord's kingdom, doing their best, will be brought into the sheep-fold. In proportion as they

are obedient they will be raised out of degradation up to perfection. Thus all who become sheep in the next age will be cared for—nothing shall offend or injure them. The Lord will not permit anything to harm them. They shall feed in green pastures and drink of the pure, refreshing waters of truth. They shall have a goodly heritage.

But the sheep of the present age, who are to be exalted, and are to do a shepherding work for these sheep of the incoming age, are given a distinct and peculiar training, to fit them for their future great work. From the time they are accepted to this higher plane, they are dealt with accordingly. This means that they must have certain trials and afflictions, according to the flesh. And if these sheep recognize that these difficult experiences of the way are necessary, they can well rejoice. If they have full confidence in the Shepherd, they know that he will permit them to have no needless experiences, and none which will be to their injury; but that he will overrule all their affairs, and will cause all things to work together for their good, because they love him, because they are the called according to God's purpose.

These are the little flock, sheep of the highest order. They represent only a small portion of mankind—those who have the special qualities of earnestness, humility and love of righteousness. Having come into this fold of God, we have every reason for confidence in the great Shepherd, and should recognize his constant care over us, His supreme interest in our

"HE THAT IS BEGOTTEN OF GOD DOES NOT PRACTICE SIN"

"My little children, these things write I unto you that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous."—1 John 2:1.

According to history the Apostle John at the time of writing this Epistle was quite an aged man. He was the last of the apostles to die, according to tradition. In his ripe age he had naturally a tender, fatherly feeling toward all the church; he had become very mellow in character through his experiences. According to the original, our text would more properly read: "My darlings, these things write I unto you." The translators have taken the liberty of saying "little children" instead. A little child is always considered a darling.

St. John was especially spoken of as "the disciple whom Jesus loved"; this is the Apostle's own testimony. He seemed to be of a peculiarly loving disposition, combined with great force of character. And now as his pilgrimage neared its close, his heart went out in loving solicitude toward God's "little children." He had, in the chapter preceding our text, been pointing out that sin is a trait or quality of perversity which affects all. The Apostle declared that if any man say that he has no sin, he deceives himself—he is a liar, and makes God a liar. We are all sinners, as facts and Scripture testify. St. John thus impresses upon us that if we say we have no sin, we are displeasing to God, who is pleased to have us acknowledge our sins and apply for cleansing, seeking to put away sin so far as possible.

The Apostle says: "These things I write unto you that ye sin not." He does not say: Yes, we are all sinners—we cannot help it—and must continue in sin. No! But he says: Realizing that you commit trespasses which are contrary to the desire of your heart, remember that there is a place to go, a mercy seat, where you may confess your sins and obtain forgiveness. Remember that "we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous." Remember that he gave himself a ransom-price for all, and that the merit of this price was applied by imputation on our behalf. Remember that all the sins of the flesh are forgivable through faith in his blood. Bear this in mind, too, that he knows that with our imperfect flesh we cannot as new creatures do perfectly, and it is because of this that God has constituted him our Advocate and Head over all things.

OUR HIGH PRIEST GRANTS ABSOLUTION

Our Father knows that we all come short on account of the weaknesses of the flesh. Jesus laid down his life to absolve us from sin and to restore us to the Father, and he has appeared in the presence of God as the Advocate for all those who, during this Gospel age, turn away from sin and consecrate their lives to his service. Thus we see that the righteousness of Christ, through the great offering for sin which he made (his own body of flesh), is the basis for the forgiveness of our sins. And the blessing and privilege of going to the throne of grace for mercy and pardon for daily shortcomings is ours because we are the children of God, because we have come into the relationship of sons. We have a standing with the Father through the imputed merit of Jesus. Jesus does not advocate for others than the people of God. It is not the Father's purpose that he shall advocate for the world; God's dealing with the world will be quite different.

spiritual welfare. Let us be good sheep! Let us not stray from the fold, to the right hand or to the left, nor be attracted away from the green pastures and pure waters to go browsing on the thistles and poisonous weeds of some by-path, or to drink of the muddy, polluted waters of human speculation and delusive theories of men.

THE SHEEP CHARACTERISTICS

"My sheep hear my voice and follow me," said the Master. If we are the Lord's true sheep, we shall know his voice. We shall not make a mistake. A stranger will we not follow, but will flee from him; for we know not the voice of strangers. (John 10:27, 5) In designating his people "The sheep of my pasture" (Jeremiah 23:1), the heavenly Father chose a very significant and fitting emblem of the kind of characters he is now seeking. The special characteristics of the sheep are meekness, docility, lack of self-confidence, and the obedience to the shepherd in whom they fully trust. The true sheep will listen intently for the faintest sound of the shepherd's voice. It will respond quickly to his call; it will watch for his guidance. Let us manifest all these most desirable traits of character, and ever keep close to our heavenly Shepherd and Guide, dwelling under his loving care and watchful eye. Those who thus abide in Christ are safe.

"Trusting him, they cannot stray;
They can never, never lose their way."

The one who is now our Advocate will soon take the church class to himself. As the great Priest after the order of Melchizedek, He will then reign over the world for a thousand years—not as Advocate, but as Mediator between God and fallen man. He will do a work of restitution for the world during this reign of a thousand years, and will bring up to perfection all who will avail themselves of the privileges and blessings granted during that period. At the close of the Millennium, when mankind are perfected, Messiah will turn them over to the Father: they will not need a Mediator after they have become perfect. So we see the difference between the advocacy of Christ for the church and his future work as Mediator for the world for mankind.

SEEMING CONTRADICTIONS HARMONIZED

The Apostle John in this same Epistle says: "He that is begotten of God sinneth not." How can this be true? Is the Apostle contradicting himself? Does he here say that "he that is begotten of God sinneth not," and does he say in our text that there is danger of our sinning? And again, that we would be lying if we denied that we have sin? What does he mean by the statement, "He that is begotten of God sinneth not"?

We reply that that which is begotten of God is the new creature—the holy will, the new soul. But this new creature has only the mortal body in which to operate; God promises to give a new body to the new creature in the resurrection. In the meantime, however, he is required to live under the present imperfections of the human body, and by his good fight against the weaknesses and sins which are entrenched in his flesh he will show either his loyalty to God and to the principles of righteousness or his disloyalty. If he be overtaken in a fault, either through ignorance or through temptation which he cannot control, it will not be sin on the part of the new creature, but an infirmity of the flesh. Nevertheless, he must go to God for forgiveness for these trespasses.

But the new creature sinneth not—he "does not practise sin"—as the Emphatic Diaglott translates this passage. He who loves sin will sin; he who does not love sin will not sin wilfully. He might be entrapped through his weak flesh, or fall into a snare of the adversary, but this would be unintentional on his part. And Jesus, our Advocate, will intercede for such sins, but not for deliberate sin. Jesus did not die for wilful sins of the new creature, but for sins due to the fall—Adamic sin. So if any sin wilfully as a new creature, he perishes thereby. Our first life was in Adam; our first death was the Adamic death. When we accepted Christ and the new creature was begotten, our second life was begun. Now if such a one should be guilty of wilful sin, he would no longer have any standing whatever before God; he would again come under the sentence of death—the second death.

SLACKNESS IN THE NEW CREATURE

We might remark here, incidentally, that sometimes there is a kind of mixed condition; the new creature has been slack in guarding against temptation, and has yielded with some degree of culpability. To the extent that the new creature has been derelict, neglected, the face of the Lord will be

darkened to him. If the flesh start to do wrong, the new will is not to consent to, or allow the wrong. The new creature is to mortify, put to death, the flesh. To whatever extent he is slack in this matter, to that extent it is sin. A full sin would be a full consent of the new will, a full turning away from God.

But the flesh might have certain desires and temptations, and there might occur a partially wilful sin. In such a case stripes would be administered in proportion to the wilfulness. Such an individual might get into a place where he would be spiritually sick, so that the Lord would entirely shut him off from the light of his countenance. The Apostle James points out that the only proper action then would be for the individual to apply to the elders of the church, the seniors of the church, the spiritually minded ones, that they go with him to the throne of grace in order that he might obtain mercy and be reinstated.

Seniors, spiritually minded ones not elders, might do this service for the one who is sick, but preferably it should be the chosen elders of the congregation. This course would be a very humiliating one for the sin-sick brother, but such action might save that soul from death by a proper humbling of self "under the mighty hand of God." Thus such a one might be recovered and become again a true child of God.

FAITHFULNESS TO OPPORTUNITIES

JULY 26.—Luke 19:11-27.

"Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."—Matthew 25:21.

We are not to confound the parable of the pounds with the parable of the talents. They teach totally different lessons. In the case of the talents, the amount given to each of the servants differed. In the case of the pounds, it was the same—each servant received one pound—approximately sixteen dollars. This parable, therefore, deals with something that is common to all of the class to which reference is made.

The object in the giving of the parable is stated in the lesson. The Lord and his disciples were approaching Jerusalem, where shortly he was to be crucified. The disciples had supposed, on the contrary, that the Messianic kingdom would immediately be established in power and great honor. This parable was intended to inform them that a considerable period of time would elapse before the kingdom would be established.

The disciples knew that the kings of Palestine were appointed by the Roman Emperor, and they had recently had an experience along this line, when one of the Herods went to Rome, seeking an appointment to a kingdom. Some who hated him sent a message to Rome, discrediting him and declaring their preference for another king. Jesus seized this circumstance as an illustration in his own case. He was the appointee for the Messianic kingdom of the world; but he would go to heaven itself and there appear in the presence of the heavenly Father, the great Overlord or Emperor of the universe. He would be invested by the Father with the ruling authority, and later return to earth and exercise his dominion.

This is exactly the presentation of the matter given us prophetically. (Psalm 2:8) The divine regulation is that Messiah, after finishing his work, shall in heaven itself make application for a kingdom which divine providence has already arranged for and which divine prophecy has already foretold. "Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession."

"OCCUPY TILL I COME"

During the interim of the Master's absence—in heaven, waiting for divine investiture with the government of earth—he has committed to his disciples, his servants, otherwise styled his brethren, one pound each. He has left them with full liberty to use their best judgment and to show their love and their zeal in his service. At his return, all these servants will be reckoned with, and the degree of their zeal and efficiency as servants will be manifested by the results; and the rewards given them will be proportionate.

The parable distinguishes between these consecrated servants of God and the masses of the people. It shows that nothing is committed to the masses of the people; and that no judgment, reward, is made in their case at the return of the Master as King. Only to his servants did he give the pounds—only his servants had the responsibility of those pounds, and only those servants will be reckoned with or held responsible, either for reward or for punishment in respect to the matter.

CHRISTIAN, WALK CAREFULLY!

If we realize that through lack of proper watchfulness, or through some infirmity of the flesh, we have taken a wrong step, contrary to the Lord's will and to our interests as new creatures in Christ, let us lose no time in retracing the step and in calling upon the Father for forgiveness. "We have an altar whereof they have no right to partake who serve the [typical] tabernacle"; an altar not sanctified by the blood of bulls and goats, but by the precious blood of Christ; and we are urged to "come boldly [with holy courage and confident faith] to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." (Hebrews 13:10; 4:16) How blessed this throne of grace, this mercy seat, provided by our Father's love! How undone we should be without it! Yet, beloved, let us walk with great carefulness—let us never presume upon the mercy of our God by being careless of our steps. Let us, instead, with earnest prayer and watchfulness, "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling," while our Father "worketh in us both to will and to do his good pleasure."—Philippians 2:12, 13.

"Christian, walk carefully! oft wilt thou fall,

If thou forget on thy Savior to call.

Safe shalt thou walk through each trial and snare,

If thou art clad in the armor of prayer!"

In considering what is signified, or symbolized, by the pound, we must keep in memory the fact that as the same amount was given to each, the fulfilment must show some blessing or responsibility given in each case alike to all of God's consecrated people—all who are his servants. There is but one thing that we can think of that is given to all of the Lord's people in exactly the same measure. They have not talents and opportunities alike, but, on the contrary, very unlike. Some have more and some less wealth; some more and some less mental capacity; some more and some less of favorable or unfavorable environment. None of these varied talents belong to this parable of the pounds.

The pound is the same to all; it represents justification. The one thing which the Redeemer does for all who become his followers is to justify them freely from all things. This leaves them all on exactly an even footing; for justification makes up to each individual in proportion as he is deficient—in proportion as he by nature is short of perfection, the divine standard.

"BE THOU FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH"

All who in the present time become children of God, servants of God, followers of Christ, must receive from the Lord, as a basis for his relationship, the pound—the free forgiveness of sins—justification. On this basis he has a standing with God, and whatever he may do or endeavor to do will be to his credit. Because all are alike qualified by justification, the results will show the degree of loving zeal controlling each servant. Those who love much will serve much. Those who love little will neglect to use their opportunities. As one in the parable gained ten pounds, so such noble characters as St. Peter, St. Paul, St. John and others, sacrificed themselves over and over again in the divine service. In their zeal they counted all earthly things but as loss and dross, that they might be pleasing to their Master, the coming King.

These, and such as these, who have gladly spent themselves zealously in the service of the Lord, are to have the highest rewards, as represented by the Lord's words, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant! Because thou wast faithful in a very little have thou authority over ten cities." In the parable another came, reporting a gain of five pounds. He had not done so well as did the first, but he had done well. He received the same commendation: he had been faithful, although less faithful than the first. He received his master's "Well done," however; but the reward was less—dominion over five cities. This will mean a less influential place in the Messianic kingdom.

Then came a servant saying, "Lord, here is the pound that you gave me; I have kept it carefully laid up in a napkin." This represents a class that say, "I endeavored to maintain my justification. I endeavored to live justly and honorably, but I did not sacrifice myself. I am glad to be able to say that I have lost nothing. I was really afraid to use my opportunity, to use my privilege; for I realized that

you would be expecting considerable return from the amount which you gave me."

The master in the parable addresses this one still as a servant, but a wicked servant, who knew his master's will, who had undertaken his service, but who had been found unfaithful in respect to it. Had he not professed to be a servant, he would have received no pound and would have had no responsibility for it. He should have made use of his privilege and opportunity. He should have lived for his master. If not so actively and so directly as did the others, he should have made at least some use of the pound entrusted to him, so that he would have had some results to show.

We may assume that this one represents a considerable class of those who have entered into a covenant with the Lord to be his servants, and who have received justification at his hands, but who have neglected to comply with their engagements for self-sacrifice in his service. This neglect indicates their lack of loving zeal; and all this means that they will not be fit for a share in the kingdom. This class is referred to on several occasions by the Lord; for instance, they are represented in the foolish virgins, who failed to enter in to the wedding; and so these will fail to become members of the bride, the Lamb's wife.

"SAVED SO AS BY FIRE"

The same class seems to be pictured by St. Paul when, speaking of the same testing of the church in the end of this age, he declares, "The fire of that day shall try every man's work of what sort it is." He proceeds to say that those who build with gold, silver and precious stones will suffer no loss, but will receive a full reward; while others building upon the same Rock, Christ Jesus—the same justification by faith—will suffer the loss of all their time and opportunity. He adds, however, that they themselves shall be saved, yet so as by fire.

This we understand to mean that this class of servants who maintain their justification, seeking to live harmless, honest lives, but who fail to sacrifice as they have covenanted to do, will not be lost, in the worst sense of that word. They will indeed lose the great prize—the highest blessing—the kingdom; but because they still remain servants and have a love for righteousness they will be saved so as by fire; that is, through tribulations. They will ultimately gain everlasting life on the spirit plane, but will be quite inferior to the bride class. They seem to be represented in the Scriptures as the virgins, the bride's companions, who follow her.—Psalm 45:14.

These seem again to be pictured in Revelation, Chapters 14 and 7. Here the elect church are referred to as 144,000, who will stand on Mount Zion, because they followed the Lamb whithersoever he went. Then a great multitude is pictured as coming through great tribulation, washing their robes and attaining a place before the throne, instead of on the throne. To these are given palm branches, instead of crowns. They are victors, but not "more than conquerors." In this respect they are not wholly copies of God's dear Son, and are not esteemed worthy of being members of his bride class, who are to share with him the honors and glories and services in his kingdom, as set forth in this parable.

The fear expressed by this servant, saying, "For I feared thee," reminds us of the Apostle's words respecting this same class. He declares that Christ at his second coming will deliver those who all their lifetime were subject to bondage through fear of death. The consecration of the Lord's servants is unto death, and those who fear death are fearful of performing their covenant vow. They will not be worthy of the Lord's approval as faithful servants. Nevertheless, there are many vessels in the house of the King—some to more honor and some to less honor.—2 Timothy 2:20, 21.

"THOSE MINE ENEMIES"

Not until first he shall have finished dealing with his own servants at his second coming will the glorious Messiah begin to deal with the world, and especially with his enemies. This is the statement of the parable, and it is borne out by numerous Scriptures. When Jesus prayed on the night before his crucifixion, he said: "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; . . . for all those which shall believe on me through thy word." (John 17:9, 20) Thus we see the work of the Gospel age outlined by our Lord. It is merely for the selection of his servants, and the testing and

proving of these. It is with a view to determining which of them will be found worthy of association with himself in the great Millennial kingdom which God has decreed, and whose work will be for the blessing and uplifting of the whole world of mankind.

So the second Psalm points out that the Redeemer will not pray for, ask for, the world until, at his second advent, he is ready to establish his kingdom, his church having first been gathered to glory. Then he will ask for the heathen. By the term heathen, or Gentile, is signified all out of fellowship with God, "enemies through wicked works." The Psalm proceeds to say that Messiah will deal rudely with the heathen. "He will dash them in pieces as a potter's vessel," etc. This, interpreted by other Scriptures, means that the inauguration of Messiah's kingdom will bring a great time of trouble, symbolically styled fire, or fiery judgments. "He shall be revealed in flaming fire, taking vengeance." Everything appertaining to present institutions contrary to the divine standards of justice will be rudely shaken and eventually destroyed.

However, the Lord wounds that he may heal. The lessons of the time of trouble will be salutary; as we read, "When the judgments of the Lord are abroad in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." These judgments will not in any sense continue upon all throughout the thousand years of Messiah's kingdom, but will be inflicted only upon those deserving them. Hence the judgments will be especially severe at the beginning. All who learn righteousness will thereby deliver themselves; and as they come into harmony with the King of kings and Lord of lords, blessings will be their portion, uplifting them gradually to human perfection.

"SLAY THEM BEFORE ME"

At first thought, we might gather that these words signify that the King of Glory will be implacable, ferocious, unsympathetic, with his enemies. We might wonder how this shows sympathy! He admonishes us to love our enemies and to do good to them that despitefully use us. Gradually we come to see that this will indeed be the policy which the great King will pursue. He will be doing the greatest good for his enemies in bringing upon them punishments for their wrong course—shame, publicity, contempt. These things will be necessary to arouse them to an appreciation of their true condition and show them their privileges.

We are not to forget that during this age the Lord's dealings with his faithful servants has been in permitting fiery trials to try them and to instruct them. It should not be a wonder to us therefore that fiery judgments upon the world are the Master's design, not for the world's injury, but for its blessings. We read that as a result of St. Peter's preaching at Pentecost the truths struck home to the hearts of his hearers—"They were cut to the heart." But we realize that this was a great blessing, in that it prepared them for the message of divine mercy. So here we read of the Lord's slaying his enemies; they will be cut to the heart. A picture of this slaughter is given us in Revelation, where the Lord is represented in glorious majesty, with a sword proceeding out of his mouth, that with it he should smite the nations. (Revelation 19:15) Blessed smiting! The sooner it begins, the better for the world, we might say; and yet we remember that God's time is best for everything.

Another similar picture of the progress of Messiah's kingdom is given us in figurative language, as follows: "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O thou most Mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. Thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Thine arrows shall be sharp in the hearts of the King's enemies; whereby the people shall fall under thee."—Psalm 45:3-5.

Here the establishment of Messiah's kingdom with power, great glory and majesty, is presented in pictorial imagery; and the sharp arrows of divine truth are represented as slaughtering the hosts of error. This terrible carnage will mean a great blessing; for the Lord smites to heal, and when his Word cuts to the heart the effect is to destroy the enemy. Unless the enemies of the Lord be thus brought into subjection to him, nothing will remain for them but the final extinction mentioned by St. Peter: "It shall come to pass that the soul that will not hear that Prophet shall be destroyed from amongst the people."—Acts 3:23.

THE IMPORTANCE OF EXAMPLE

"Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity [love], in spirit, in faith, in purity."—1 Timothy 4:12.

We remember that Timothy was an elder in the church, though young in years. Therefore, it was appropriate that St. Paul should impress upon his mind that he should be an

example of the believers, an example to all the church; and such instruction is implied in other parts of the Epistle. But note that the Apostle, in our text, does not say: Be thou an ex-

ample to the believers, but, "Be thou an example of the believers." How different!

Being an example of believers means that one should show forth not only to his fellow-workers in the Gospel, but especially to the world, what believers stand for—what they believe, what they teach, how they live. We should see to it that we are setting such an example in word, as the Apostle enjoins, in the character of our language when declaring the message of truth. We are not to be merely smooth-tongued and unctuous; we are not merely to use kind words; but the kindness and interest manifested should be genuine—from the heart. All of the Lord's people are thus to be examples, striving to show forth the praises of our Master.

St. Paul further urges: "Be thou an example in conversation." This word conversation does not refer merely to language, as it is now used: the original meaning of this word is conduct. Our conduct relates to our manner, to the way we walk, to the way we act, to our general deportment, and not to our words alone. We are to be an example in our gentleness of demeanor. We should not slam doors, nor be boisterous, nor uncouth, nor thoughtless of others. In every way we are to be gentle and kind and considerate, and not rude.

"LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE"

Those who are begotten to the new nature should strive to be examples to everybody of what Christians ought to be. The kind of work we are engaged in should be honest. It may be secular work, yet it should be done as unto the Lord, carefully, faithfully, not merely as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, as servants of God; "for we serve the Lord Christ." The walk of the Christian should be in charity—love—in sympathy, in benevolence, in kindness of word and conduct. A generally sympathetic spirit should pervade his words and deeds, his entire behavior. The heavenly Father loved mankind; while they were yet sinners he so loved the race that he gave the choicest treasure of his heart for man's recovery. And he still loves the world, and is fitting the church to be the blessers of the world in the future. So any begotten of the Lord's Spirit should have a transforming influence at work in life—an influence that will manifest itself even to those who are out of the way, those who have not yet been blessed with the light of God.

Our text also reads: "Be thou an example in spirit." This phrase, "in spirit," is not found in the original, but the thought seems proper enough: we are to show kindness of spirit, of disposition, to all. The spirit that animates us at all times should be the spirit, the mind of the Lord.

We are exhorted to be examples "in faith." The Apostle's exhortation applies to us all. The Christian's faith is also manifested to others in his conduct, his words, his course in life. If he is full of faith, he will not be murmuring against the experiences of life as they come, against the providences of

the Lord. The Almighty has accepted us as his children; we should have continual and implicit confidence in him, and whoever has true faith has this confidence. If any of us lack faith in God we shall not manifest faith to others, nor inspire faith in them.

We are to be examples "in purity." There is a purity that goes with all that pertains to God and to His Word—a loftiness of standard, which is not to be found elsewhere. There are people in heathen lands who live more or less chaste lives, but there is nowhere so high a standard as in the Christian religion. Everything impure is contrary to God. Purity is one of the component elements of Christian character. As the Apostle said on another occasion, we are to be "first pure, then peaceable, gentle."

LIVING EPISTLES, KNOWN AND READ

In all these ways each of God's people should be living lessons, living epistles, wherever they go; they should be examples to the world. Whether the world believes what we preach or not, we should manifest these qualities which they cannot but approve and respect. This example will bear fruitage in due time, if not now. Every elder, like Timothy, should be especially careful of his conduct, his words, his example. The church has declared by choosing such a one elder that they believe him to be an example of the fruitage of the grace of God in the heart.

The Apostle's counsel to Timothy: "Let no man despise thy youth," should be looked upon as advice not only to Timothy, both to all elders of the church who are young in years, that they so conduct themselves as to be examples of the flock, that their deportment and ability to "rightly divide the Word of truth" be such that none will have cause to slight the message they bring, or to think of them as immature and unfit to lead the flock of God.

Let every child of God, the younger as well as the older, strive to be an example worthy of imitation—an example of earnest, faithful endeavor to copy the Master in his daily life, a pattern of active zeal in the service of our God. We shall not be able while in the flesh to be examples in the full sense of the ultimate glory and beauty of holiness which will be ours beyond the veil: we cannot expect this in the present life. Our Lord alone was such a pattern.

The Apostle Paul urged, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." (1 Corinthians 11:1) St. Paul was a noble example of earnest endeavor to attain the perfect likeness of Christ, and his love, his zeal, his intense earnestness in striving to copy the Master and to accomplish his will should be an inspiration to us all. Let each of the Lord's children, individually, realize his or her personal responsibility. We are as "a city set upon a hill." Let each ask himself the question: Am I "an example of the believers"?

CHRIST'S TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

AUGUST 2.—Mark 11:1-11.

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee."—Zechariah 9:9.

The message of John the Baptist was, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." This same message Jesus bade his disciples carry from village to village throughout Palestine. This same message was the burden of his preaching and the theme of his parables. Finally, at the close of his ministry, the kingdom came to the Jewish nation in the sense that it was offered to them—it was theirs for the accepting. Today's lesson tells of the formal offer of the kingdom by Jesus and of the neglect of the Jews as a people to accept it. Thus "he came unto his own, and his own received him not"—except a few. His own nation rejected him, and five days later crucified him. A little later, at Pentecost, a few who received him were begotten of the holy Spirit and became the nucleus of Spiritual Israel, in preparation for the glorious kingdom and the work which is to be accomplished at his second advent.

On the evening preceding the story of this lesson, Jesus and his disciples were at Bethany, the guests of Lazarus, Martha and Mary, who had prepared a special feast for Jesus, whom they loved so dearly. This was the Lazarus whom he had awakened from the sleep of death but a short time before. The feast took place at the close of the Jewish Sabbath day. The next morning corresponded to our Sunday, the first day of the week.

THE CRISIS OF ISRAEL'S EXPERIENCE

In preparation for presenting himself as King, Jesus sent two of his disciples for an ass's colt, telling them where they would find it, and instructing them to say that it would be returned after the Master had used it. By the time the colt arrived, a considerable multitude had gathered—people of the

village of Bethany and others who had come out from Jerusalem, about two miles distant, to see Jesus and to see Lazarus, upon whom the notable miracle had been wrought. It had long been the custom of the kings of Israel to ride to their coronation upon an ass; and the multitude seemed to enter into the spirit of this occasion and to realize what it meant that Jesus was about to ride into Jerusalem on this colt. It signified that finally he was ready to assume the office of King.

For some time the disciples had recognized him as the Messiah, the glories of whose reign they were to share; and the multitude in general had learned to so regard him, saying, "When Messiah cometh, will he do greater works than this man?"—could we expect anything more of Messiah than we see being accomplished by this man Jesus? But this was the first time Jesus had formally put himself forward. On previous occasions, when they had sought to take him by force to make him a king, he had withdrawn himself, realizing that the time was not yet come. Now, so far from withdrawing, he was taking the active part, sending for the colt, preparing for the triumphal ride to the capital of the nation as its King.

We may be sure that the hearts of the apostles thrilled with excitement as they thought of the nearness of their Master's glory and of their own share in it; for as yet they did not realize the full import of his words to the effect that he must be crucified and must depart to a "far country," even heaven itself, and be invested with authority, and later return to establish the kingdom which would bless the world.

Jesus, however, was fully aware that the presentation of himself as King was a formal matter, fulfilling the prophecy

and leaving the nation of Israel without excuse. If, when he entered the city, the people should rise en masse, acknowledge him and acclaim him, then indeed they would be in line with the divine requirements which would bring them the greatest of all blessings. But Jesus knew that prophecy had already declared that he would be despised and rejected, and that his own people would hide their faces from him in shame. (Isaiah 53:3) The journey and the preparation for it, therefore, meant something very different to Jesus from what it signified to the disciples and the multitudes.

"THE STONES WOULD CRY OUT"

When the ass arrived, some of the people put their garments upon it in lieu of a saddle; Jesus mounted, and the procession began. Some went before him, and some followed after. The people were familiar with the prophecy relating to Messiah's coming, which declared, "Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! behold, thy King cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass." They were familiar also with the "shout" the prophets had foretold and the responses—one party crying, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the King of Israel, that cometh in the name of the Lord!" Again came the cry, "Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord!" Then the response, "Hosanna in the highest!" These different expressions are recorded by the different evangelists.

But not all were enthusiastic acclamers of Jesus; a discordant note was heard. Some of those who had come from the city through curiosity criticised the shouting, and wondered why Jesus did not rebuke the people for ascribing so great honor to him. They sent word to this effect to Jesus through his disciples. Jesus made answer that a great prophecy was being fulfilled. The Prophet Zechariah had by inspiration said, "Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem!" and such a shout must be made. Jesus declared that if the multitudes had failed to shout, the prophecy would still have been fulfilled—the very stones would have cried out.

THE FIRST PALM SUNDAY

It is customary with some Christians in various parts of the world to commemorate especially that Sunday of the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. The record tells that on the journey many of the people strewed their garments in the way, as a mark of respect and honor, waiting until the little animal had passed over them, and then running on before and placing them again. Others brought ferns, flowers and grasses, and strewed them in the way. Still others, St. John's Gospel tells us, brought branches of palm trees.

It was a jubilant procession, fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah. Yet to Jesus it had the sad feature, as indicated by the account. When they had reached the turn of the Mount of Olives, which brought Jerusalem into view, the Master halted the procession while he looked over the city and wept, saying, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate; and verily I say unto you, Ye shall see me no more, until that day [nearly nineteen centuries later] when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of Jehovah!"

Jesus realized that that day was a turning point with the Jewish nation—that their rejection of him meant their rejection by the heavenly Father for a long time. It meant that they would be cast off from divine favor, except a few who would become his disciples. It meant that during those long centuries the highly favored people of Abraham's natural seed would be in distress. It meant that the favor of God, which had been with them for centuries, would instead be extended to the Gentiles, to gather out of the Gentiles a company of faithful, saintly ones to be associates and joint-heirs with Jesus and the faithful ones of the Jews in the heavenly kingdom. It meant that not until this elect, heavenly, spiritual kingdom class should be received to glory would the Jewish people be again received into fellowship with God.

St. Paul markedly calls our attention to this fact that the rejection of Israel is not permanent, but only for a time—only until the complete number of faithful saints be gathered out from amongst the Gentiles. Then God's favor will return to natural Israel, and subsequently extend to all the families of earth.—Romans 11:25-32.

JESUS, THE PRINCE OF PEACE

How different was this entry of Jesus, the Prince of Peace, from the triumphal marches of earthly conquerors and kings! In the excitement of human passion and the prejudice of human minds a special halo of glory has surrounded the world's conquerors. Heroic deeds, valiant conquests, as pictured by historians have a charm. The rising generation reads with

thrilling interest of the prowess of Alexander the Great, of the Spartans of Greece, of the Caesars of Rome, and in more modern times of Robert Bruce, of Napoleon and Wellington, of Generals Grant and Lee, Sherman and Johnson, Sheridan and Stewart. The home-comings of all of these were triumphal marches, in many cases rendering honor to whom honor was due.

Nevertheless, in every instance the mind's eye necessarily closes against scenes which led up to such triumphs. We try to forget the millions of slain and wounded, and other millions of mourning widows and orphans. We try to forget the smoking ruins of homes behind those victorious armies. However necessary war at times may seem to be for the maintenance of justice, nevertheless all must concede that the blessings purchased by the sword are procured at a terrible cost.

From this viewpoint Jesus, the Prince of Peace, followed by an army of saints who are walking in his foot-steps, presents a beautiful picture—even to the worldly. These victors—Leader and followers—conquer by dying. Thus Jesus said to his followers, "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the Gospel's shall find it." Thus viewed, all the followers of the Lamb are self-sacrificers, as the Bible declares: "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God—your reasonable service." (Romans 12:1) Such a victory—victory through death—is difficult for the majority of people to understand! What is the philosophy of it? Where is the victory?

VICTOR-KINGS THROUGH DYING

Well may it be asked, Wherein is the victory of Christ and his followers in laying down their lives for the brethren and in support of truth and righteousness? Only the Bible answers the question, and only those who exercise faith can understand the Bible answer. The Bible declares that the real victory of Christ and the church is over self. Their crowning day is future—their triumph will be then.

The triumphal entry of Jesus on the ass was only typical. The antitype will be glorious—beyond the veil. As Jesus after his resurrection was "received up into glory," so also he has promised his church that their resurrection shall change them from imperfect human beings to perfect spirit beings, joint-heirs with their Master, their Redeemer, in the glorious Millennial kingdom which is to bless the world.

After Jesus had risen from the dead, he explained to his perplexed disciples what his death signified, saying, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things [death] and to enter into his glory?" (Luke 24:26) So St. Paul has declared in respect to all who will be Jesus' associates in the kingdom—they must suffer with him if they would reign with him; they must be dead with him if they would live with him. (2 Timothy 2:12) Christ and his church die to human hopes and interests, present and everlasting—laying down their lives, suffering for righteousness' sake. Their reward is two-fold: (1) Their own personal exaltation to a heavenly, spirit glory, like unto the angels, and yet more glorious—"far above angels, principalities and powers and every name that is named." (2) The kingdom glory—the joy of being the divine agents for human restoration.

From this, the Bible viewpoint, the Christian warfare is different from every other warfare known to the world. It is a fight against sin, a fight against self-will, a full submission to the divine will, a victory through death. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Revelation 2:10) "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." (Revelation 3:21) No wonder that a proposition of this kind is but imperfectly understood by the world! "The world knoweth us not, even as it knew him not." And this is one of the requirements of the Gospel, that Jesus and his followers shall submit themselves to be misunderstood by the world. We are counted fools for Christ's sake.—1 Corinthians 4:10.

It requires some stamina to be a loyal follower in the foot-steps of Jesus, misunderstood as he was misunderstood by those of his day, reviled as he was reviled. "They shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake." It is only when we understand through God's promises that in these trying experiences of Christ and his followers there is a glorious purpose, that we are able to endure them with any measure of rejoicing. Only these are granted of the Lord the eye of faith which can clearly discern things beyond the veil—the glory, honor and immortality, and the kingdom which the Lord has promised to his faithful followers.

"THE WRATH OF THE LAMB"

Since Jesus is the Prince of Peace, how shall we understand various passages of Scripture which refer to him as a mighty Conqueror in blood-stained garments, takingvenge-

ance on his foes? But especially, how shall we understand the declaration that, at his coming in the clouds of heaven, all the tribes of the earth shall wail because of him?

Of this Prince of Peace it may be said that he will wound to heal, that whatever disasters he may bring or permit to come upon the world will be so overruled as to make of them blessings in disguise. Undoubtedly much that is said respecting our Lord is highly symbolic. For instance, he is to smite the nations with the sword that proceedeth out of his mouth—the Word, or message, of truth. Such a smiting is in full conformity with the declaration that when St. Peter preached the Gospel at Pentecost, some of his hearers were “cut to the heart”—not with St. Peter’s literal sword, but with “the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.” Eventually, that sword will smite all opponents of righteousness for their good. Only the wilfully wicked will eventually be destroyed in the second death.

We are not to forget, however, that the inauguration of the

Arm me with thy whole armor, Lord;
Support my weakness with thy might;
Gird on thy thigh thy conquering sword,
And shield me in the threatening fight.

Messianic kingdom is to be in the midst of the time of trouble, and that Christ will have to do with the bringing, or at least the permitting, of that trouble. Apparently mankind will be permitted to bring the great trouble at the end of this age upon themselves. There are forces of evil, Satan and his angels, ready to do us harm and, through human forces, sin—forces entrenched in human nature, ready to do harm to the social fabric. The Bible represents that divine power holds these in check—the four angels holding the four winds—that they shall not blow upon the earth to its injury until the appointed time, until all of God’s elect church shall have been sealed in their foreheads—their intellect—with the truth.

At the appropriate time those “winds” of strife will be let loose, and great will be the trouble, until in due time the King of kings and Lord of lords shall intervene to rescue the race from itself and from the adversary. Then Satan shall be bound for a thousand years, and Messiah’s kingdom shall be established for the blessings of all the families of the earth.

From faith to faith, from grace to grace,
So in thy strength shall I go on,
Till I appear before thy face,
And glory end what grace begun.

SOME INTERESTING LETTERS

QUERIES OF A COLPORTEUR

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:—

How shall we do respecting the STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES after October, 1914? Will the Society continue to publish them? Will the colporteurs and others continue to circulate them? Is it right to circulate them now, since you have some doubt respecting the full accomplishment of all expected by or before October, 1914? With Christian love,

Your brother,

M. F. C.

IN REPLY

MY DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST:—

Yours of May 20th has reached me. Thanks! I think that you are not taking a right view of the matter treated in STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, Vol. II. It is our thought that these books will be on sale and read for years in the future, provided the Gospel age and its work continue.

So far as the features are concerned, we have merely set forth the Scriptures and our view respecting their application and significance. We have not attempted to say that these views are infallible, but have stated the processes of reasoning and figuring, leaving to each reader the duty and privilege of reading, thinking and figuring for himself. That will be an interesting matter a hundred years from now; and if he can figure or reason better, he will still be interested in what we have presented. In any event, we think that the consummation cannot be long deferred.

To cease to print and circulate the STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES because everything suggested therein has not been, apparently, fulfilled, would be like rejecting our Common Version of the Bible because the chronology given in the margin throughout is known to be incorrect to the extent of a number of years. Usher’s chronology is used in our Common Version, and shows the birth of Christ in the year 4004. Scholars are agreed that the event varied at least two years from that date—some say four years. And STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES show from the Bible that the date was actually 4128. Nobody thinks of throwing away his Bible on this account. No more need any one think of throwing away his STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES or failing to circulate them on account of the fact that October, 1914, may not witness all that we had expected and in the manner expected. With much Christian love,

Your brother and servant in the Lord.

A SIGNIFICANT MESSAGE

DEAR FRIEND:—

As one who believes in “the present truth” as presented in STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, I venture to write to you for a word of advice and comfort. I am in deep distress and have suffered intense mental agony during the last few months through being careless of the privileges connected with present truth.

I came, through God’s favor, into touch with the truth ten years ago, and had great rejoicing in it. My fatal mistake was a lack of decisiveness and a consequent failure to act according to my conscience. I became timid and avoided my fellowmen because of my failure to speak out. Added to this I stumbled, time and again, through weakness of the flesh, and gradually settled down to the thought that success in the “narrow way” was not for me.

At the end of last year my interest in Volume One was revived and I argued that if it is true why should I fear to come out of Babylon? Acting upon this I sent for withdrawal letters. I had a talk with our minister here, but at the critical moment I gave way to fear. This plunged me into a blackness which I cannot describe; I imagined all sorts of things, chief amongst which was that I had committed the sin unto death. The thought of this made me worse, and I gave way to careless living.

Dear friend, I would give anything for a word of comfort! I have striven hard to find peace of mind. I would not trouble you, as I know you are fully occupied; but somehow my unhappiness compels me to write you, as I know you are in close fellowship with the Lord. I hope that you can help me. My soul is sadly diseased. I cannot express the gratitude I shall feel. God bless you! Yours sincerely,

T. H. HUGHES.—N. Wales.

OUR REPLY

DEAR BROTHER:—

Yours of the 28th ult, has come duly to hand and contents are noted. Frequently, “earth-born clouds arise” to obscure the Lord’s face from us when we neglect to do those things which he indicates would be pleasing to him. Faithfulness to the Lord will restore a sense of his favor. My suggestion, therefore, is that you start anew, doing faithfully everything which you find to be his will for you.

The very fact that you are penitent and feel the separation is a good sign. Those who have sinned the sin unto death are not usually penitent. A rereading of the Six Volumes, laying hold upon the promise quoted therein, should be of help to you. May the Lord’s guidance and blessing be with you as you seek to return to a condition of favor with him. With much Christian love, we remain,

Yours in the Master’s service.

THE CORRESPONDENCY SEEMS CLEAR

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:—

Have often thought of writing you as to how far the type and antitype extend in the harvest of the Jewish and Gospel ages; particularly as to whether the time that the Roman army under Titus besieged Jerusalem and the length of the siege are types of the trouble coming on the world?

To my understanding the harvest of the Jewish age commenced in the fall of 29 A.D., and, being a period of forty years, ended in the fall of 69 A.D. In the spring of 70 A.D., at the time of the Passover, the Roman army besieged Jerusalem. The siege lasted about six months and ended in the fall of 70 A.D. Thus the great calamity that our Lord foretold to Jerusalem did not reach its worst until six months after the end of the Jewish harvest, and continued about six months thereafter, or one whole year after the end of the Jewish harvest. This same period in antitype, if antitype it is, would seem to be from April, 1915, to October, 1915. If there is any significance in this it would seem that the burning of the “tares” in the time of trouble will not take place until the harvest is entirely ended.

This may be reaching after types where none are intended. Will be thankful for any suggestion along this line.

Yours in the one hope,

S. W. PENNOCK.