

ing the meat to the household of faith at that time. But unfaithfulness on his part, and a disposition to tyrannize the household, would be sure to result in his being cut off from further opportunities for serving the household, and lead to his having a severe experience with the unbelievers in the time of trouble then to come upon the world. And altho it is not stated, it is fairly inferable that such an one being deposed from stewardship, another would take his place, subject to similar terms and conditions as to faithfulness.

In certain senses of the word, and in certain respects, every child of God is a steward—a steward of his own talents, opportunities, privileges, abilities in the Lord's service; and each one is to recognize that his responsibilities as a steward in these respects is toward the Master who gave him the talents, and who will require at his hands an account thereof—an increase by reason of proper use. We are not, therefore, to understand our Lord's answer to Peter to imply that none of the household but the one are in any sense of the word regarded as stewards. Such an interpretation would be in conflict with numerous Scriptures. We are to notice that the stewardship mentioned is not a stewardship of talents and opportunities, but a stewardship of spiritual food merely.

Neither does it imply that in the end of this age, and at the time of our Lord's presence and the sending forth of meat in due season that the special steward alone will have to do with the dispensing of the food for the household, for, as

shown in Matthew's account of this parable (Matt. 24:45-51), there are "fellow-servants" whose duty and privilege it will be to co-operate with this steward in the dispensing of the viands, the feeding of the household of faith. The thought would seem to be that in the interest of the household and for its comfort and joy and blessing the Master at an appropriate time would furnish to some one of his servants a key to the precious things of his Word, thus providing bountifully "things new and old" for the sustenance and joy of the household, and minister these through numerous fellow-servants, as well as through the one to whom the key of this stewardship would be specially entrusted.

In this connection we are to remember that every stewardship brings with it weighty responsibilities, and while such responsibilities are not to be shirked, neither are any of them to be undertaken lightly, without appreciating the fact that every one who becomes a servant of the household of faith has thereby a larger degree of responsibility, not only toward the household, but toward the Master of the house, from whom comes every commission. And every servant is to remember that unfaithfulness would surely lead to his removal, even as every manifestation of humble faithfulness on his part will endear him to the Master and to every faithful member of the household, and imply his continuance in the service until the Master shall say, "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter into the joys of thy Lord."

REVIEW OF THIRD QUARTER

SEPTEMBER 30.

"Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."—James 1:22.

Reviews are frequently profitable, and especially so when conducted in the light of this Golden Text; with a view to noting to what extent we have heard the voice of the Son of Man, and to what extent we have been obedient to his messages. To fancy ourselves as making spiritual progress merely by gaining information respecting the Lord, his miracles, his teachings, etc., is to get the nut and crack it and drop the kernel, the thing of real value.

It is in harmony with this thought that our Lord declared, "The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and they that hear shall live." The dead are the entire human family, all of whom must hear the voice, the teaching of this great Prophet, whom the Father has sent, not only to redeem, but also restore so many of the human family as will accept

his favors upon his terms. All must hear eventually but comparatively few have the hearing ears at the present time. The prince of this world blinds the mind, closes and stupefies the ear, or makes what may be heard of no effect through traditions of men, or through hardness and selfishness of the hearer's own heart. Blessed are our eyes if, seeing and hearing of the Lord's grace and goodness toward us and toward all of his creatures, we at once fall into obedience to the spirit of the great Teacher's instructions. In so doing we will have passed from death unto life—gradually, until, under the ministry of the great Prophet, as sharers in the first resurrection, we shall be perfected and possess life in perfection, yea, life more abundantly—immortality—the divine nature.

VOL. XXI

ALLEGHENY, PA., SEPTEMBER 15, 1900

No. 18

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER

[The following, author unknown, came from India, from a Christian Missionary. It is excellent.]

WHAT IS THE END OF LIFE?

The end of life is not to do good, although so many of us think so. It is not to win souls—although I once thought so. *The end of life is—to do the will of God.* That may be the line of doing good or winning souls or it may not. For the individual, the answer to the question, "What is the end of my life?" is *"To do the will of God, whatever that may be."*

Spurgeon replied to an invitation to preach to an exceptionally large audience, "I have no ambition to preach to 10,000 people, but to do the will of God"—and he declined.

If we could have no ambition past the will of God, our lives would be successful. If we could say, "I have no ambition to go to the heathen; I have no ambition to win souls; my ambition is to do the will of God, whatever that may be," that would make all lives equally great or equally small, because the only great thing in a life is what of God's will there is in it. *The maximum achievement of any man's life, after it is all over, is to have done the will of God.*

No man or woman can have done any more with a life—no Luther, no Spurgeon, no Wesley, no Melancthon can have done any more with their lives; and a dairymaid or a scavenger can do as much.

Therefore, the supreme principle upon which we have to run our lives is to adhere, through good report and ill, through temptation and prosperity and adversity, to the will of God, wherever that may lead us. It may take you to China, or you who are going to Africa may have to stay where you are; you who are going to be an evangelist may have to go into business; and you who are going into business may have to become an evangelist. But there is no happiness or success in any life till that principle is taken possession of. And the highest service is first, moment by moment, to be in the will

of God. It may be to work or to wait; to stand fast or to lay still. 'Tis he, our blessed Lord, who will keep us in his will, if our eyes are fixed on him.

How can you build up a life on that principle? Let me give you an outline of a little Bible reading:—

The definition of an ideal life:

Acts 13:22—"A man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will."

The object of life:

Heb. 10:7—"I come to do thy will, O God."

The first thing you need after life, is food:

John 4:34—"My meat is to do the will of him that sent me."

The next thing you need after food is society:

Mark 3:35—"Whosoever shall do the will of my Father in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

You want education:

Psa. 143:10—"Teach me to do thy will, O my God."

You want pleasure:

Psa. 40:8—"I delight to do thy will, O my God." A whole life can be built up on that vertebral column, and then, when all is over,

1 John 2:17—"He that doeth the will of God abideth forever."

THE SPREAD OF MOHAMMEDANISM

If reports are to be believed Mohammedanism is spreading in Asia and Africa much more rapidly than is Christianity. This is credited to three reasons. (1) Its simplicity of doctrine, which makes it commendable to persons of low intellectual capacity—Believe in Mohammed and obey his simple law and have an eternity of sensuous bliss. (2) Its permission of polygamy, common throughout those countries. (3)

Its uniform requirement of total abstinence from intoxicants.

Recognizing the fact that Christianity makes few proselytes from Mohammedanism, and that the latter is growing rapidly in numbers and influence, the British Government has of late years been attempting to gain the confidence and support of her Mohammedan subjects, whose number is estimated at one hundred and fifty millions—*fifty millions more than all denominations of Protestant Christians in the whole world.*

Doubtless this change of attitude toward the very religion against which all the Crusades of medieval times were waged, though due to political policy, is backed by the changed religious sentiment of our day;—which under the lead of the higher critics has declared,—

"The hope of the race lies in a deeper study of the great, inspired writers of the past, such as Shakespeare, Homer, Dante and a few others, whose works have charmed the minds of people of culture. The Bible, also, though a little out-of-date, has been recognized, in the past, as a work of inspiration, and you may find it helpful to include it in your course of reading."

General sentiment, therefore, resolves itself into this,—Since our wise men tell us that the Bible is unreliable, and that the death of Christ Jesus no more redeemed the world than did the death of other reformers; and since they tell us that future happiness depends upon the cultivation of our mental and moral qualities, and that Shakespeare's and other writings are quite as good or better than the Bible for such culture, how do we know but that the Mohammedan's Bible—the Koran—is as good or better than our own, and they as right as we or more so? Therefore let us not any longer say with the Bible that there is no other name than that of Jesus given under heaven or among men whereby we must be saved; but let us say, Get morality and education in the name of Mohammed or Jesus or Confucius or whomsoever you please.

Such would be the logical outcome of such teachings; and thereby we are reminded of our Lord's words respecting these times—"When the Son of Man cometh shall he find the faith on the earth?"—Luke 18:8.

WHAT GREAT BRITAIN IS DOING FOR MOHAMMEDANISM

Shortly after the capture of Khartoum by General Lord Kitchener, and at his instance, a Mohammedan college was founded, known as Gordon College, and more recently another Mohammedan school was founded at Sierra Leone, on the west coast of Africa. This latter institution was opened with considerable ceremony under the auspices of the acting-governor, Major Nathan, and of it the New York *Sun* says editorially:—

"The ceremony began with a prayer in Arabic offered up by the Imaum of the mosque, Alfa Omaru, who afterward gave a short account of the efforts to promote education made by the Sierra Leone Moslems. He referred to the years 1839 and 1841, when the Mohammedan religion was considered as a danger to the colony, when Moslems were persecuted and their mosques pulled down by excited mobs. Thanks, however, to an enlightened policy, matters were set right, and for more than fifty years the Moslems have enjoyed full toleration and the protection of the British Government. In 1872 the festival of the Lesser Bairam had been attended by the governor, Sir John Pope Hennessy, with a military escort, and in 1879 another governor, Sir Samuel Rowe, had entertained seven hundred Moslems at Government House on the occasion of the Bairam Festival of that year. In 1891 Governor Hay handed over a fine property with commodious buildings to the Moslem community for educational purposes, accompanied by a grant for the payment of the teachers. These successive events were important epochs in the history of Islamism in West Africa, and the Imaum looked forward to the day when the present elementary school would become the stepping-stone to a college."

In his reply Major Nathan cited examples of Mohammedans occupying official positions in Indian and in Egypt, and added that,—

"He wished them to perfect themselves in Arabic in order that they might know what real Mohammedanism is. When they understood the Koran, he said, they would see that their religion was one telling them how to live, and not a religion of charms and gewgaws. Knowing English, they would have the literature and wisdom of the white man open to them: and with Arabic, they would be able to read not only the Koran, but the 'Makamat' of El Hariri, known already to some of them, and the 'Alif Lailat wa Lailah,' the translation of which English people read with pleasure. In concluding, Major Nathan urged them not to rest content until they had in Sierra Leone a Moslem college whence wisdom and knowledge might go forth over the whole of West Africa."

The *Sun* believes that the importance of the incident can hardly be overestimated. It says:—

"The news of the official encouragement given to the Mohammedan religion and the culture of its sacred language, Arabic, will in a very short time spread from the Atlantic to the Red Sea, and the wisdom of the policy that dictated it will be justified by the resulting spread of British influence among the Moslem populations of North Africa. In all probability it will lead to a corresponding rivalry on the part of the French, whose hold on the Arabs of Algeria is none too strong, owing to mistakes in policy and the want of character of many of those appointed to office.

"The next century no doubt has many surprises in store; but whatever they may be, not the least strange will be the spectacle of the two Western nations that led in the crusades promoting, for political and territorial reasons, the creed they then tried to crush."

However peculiar all this may appear from the standpoint of nominal "Christendom," it is perfectly clear to all of the "royal priesthood." We see the fallacy of the claim that European kingdoms are *Christ's* kingdoms—that the Word of God never did recognize them as anything but "kingdoms of this world" ruled by "the prince of this world." We see that the nominal churches are not the one true Church of "saints," whose names are written in heaven. We see that the Crusades, Inquisitions, and all similar attacks upon human beings and their moral and religious liberties were never authorized by the Lord; but were wholly contrary to his Word and spirit. We see that it is perfectly proper and consistent for worldly people and governments (English, French, German or what not) to favor *any* system or all systems of education and religion that will in any degree counteract vice and immorality, and preserve peace.

True, we who have had the eyes of our understanding opened to see matters *clearly* from the Bible standpoint could do nothing against the truth and in favor of error—nothing to foster and encourage the error or even to apparently bid it Godspeed. But we are not in official positions where such questions could come to us: because we are "not of this world" even as our Redeemer was not (John 17:16), therefore the world disrespects us (John 17:14), and offers us no places of public influence. Fidelity to our Lord's principles thus saves his faithful from perplexities: they have died to worldly politics and its aims and duties and methods, and have been "translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son," and are thus members of the "holy nation" which has not yet come into power and ruling authority—waiting for their King to exalt or set them up in power and great glory at the time when his kingdom shall be *revealed* to the world as the supplanter of all kingdoms of this world.

METHODISM AND HIGHER CRITICISM

"The 'heresy' case of Professor Mitchell (see *The Literary Digest*, January 27), has been effectively disposed of for, at least, some years to come. By the recent General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church at Chicago it was referred to the bishops, who, apparently finding it as embarrassing a subject to handle as did the Conference, referred the matter of Dr. Mitchell's retention to the trustees of Boston University, by making him eligible to re-election for five years—until, conveniently, after the next meeting of the General Conference. The fact that the trustees of one of the leading Methodist theological seminaries have now unanimously re-elected Dr. Mitchell, who is *one of the most prominent American exponents of the higher criticism*, and has been accused of deviating widely from the traditional view as to the authorship of certain Old Testament books, is regarded as an event of significance. *The largest Protestant denomination in America thus tacitly votes to retain an upholder of the higher criticism as official instructor of her young clerics.*"—*Literary Digest*.

PRESBYTERIANS BEING SIFTED

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church recently in session in St. Louis, in reply to overtures for a revision of its Westminster Confession of Faith, referred the matter to a committee, whose business it shall be to learn the opinion of the local Presbyters and to report to the Assembly of 1901. The Presbyterian weekly journals give the best clue to the results, for they are generally under the care of the leaders amongst the ministry, who generally "try to be on the winning side."

From the trend of comments by these journals (*The Interior* and *The Herald* and *Presbyter* alone seem to urge revision) we opine that the Confession will probably not be revised but reaffirmed. The result of this course would be to sift out the honest but deluded souls in pulpit and pew who for years have burdened their consciences (and in many instances hardened them) with slander against the divine character and deceit toward all mankind in professing the West-

minster Confession. These have for years consoled themselves with the thought that (1) the Confession is a dead letter anyway, which today nobody believes, and (2) that it would soon be changed. "perhaps next year,—and my conscience can stand the strain that much longer." If now that Confession is reaffirmed by the denomination these will be thereby forced out to maintain even a vestige of peace with God and a good conscience toward God and man. The pity is that their consciences are not more tender and their hearts more loyal to God and his truth that they should act more promptly.

"The children of this world [the "tares"] are wiser in their generation than the children of light [the "wheat"]," said our Lord. And so in this case undoubtedly the reaffirming of the Westminster Confession is the wisest course so far as the preservation of the "tare" organization is concerned. For though, as above suggested, this will drive out some of the most conscientious, it will be found that they all told are but few. On the other hand were the Confession revised or repudiated it would mean to the rank and file of Presbyterianism. "We have lost our gods! We have admitted that we were all wrong in respect to our faith—blind men who for centuries have attempted to lead the confessedly blind world into truth, and now confess ourselves bewildered, yea totally blind as respects the divine plan!" Every Presbyterian would feel abashed at such a confession, and hence it is that such a revision of creed is improbable; and if it were seen to be inevitable many would transfer their "good names" and titles to other denominations before the funeral.

"THE PRESBYTERIAN" ARGUES AGAINST REVISION THUS.—

"Too much has been said recently to weaken the force of our doctrinal statements. Many who never thought of calling them in question are wondering what they really teach."

The people would have little difficulty in deciding the meaning of that very explicit and carefully worded "Westminster Confession." were it not that the theologians having told them. "These be thy gods, O Presbyterians!" are fearful that the pews (more honest than the pulpits) shall discover how terribly homely, yea, devilish, are these gods which they have so long worshipped and served.

Continuing. *The Presbyterian* says, "Others who regard the false constructions put on them as the work of adversaries, now find that even Presbyterian ministers are declaring them legitimate inferences. Damage is being done by the outgivings of radical revisionists. The church is suffering, and will continue to suffer in name and in accomplishment, with years of revision agitation. *Her interests would be far more advanced, in our judgment, by standing by the old standards of faith and by their reaffirmation by our Presbyteries and General Assembly.*"

What does this language mean in plain English? Is not the following construction a reasonable one?

For a long time now our ministers and religious editors have presented a solid front to the world, and by claiming that black in the creed is white they have succeeded in convincing Presbyterians, at least, that the black parts are at very most not darker than grey or mist and fog color. But now this discussion is in danger of disillusionizing the people. Already it is giving us great trouble and is likely to cause more disturbance and dissatisfaction, not only with our Diana, but also toward us, the well-paid and honored shrine-makers and servers. We are not thinking about the truth and its service, nor about the interests of the true church, whose names are written in heaven; we are merely considering the interests of our sect, the Presbyterian church, and how these matters will affect her interests and worldly prosperity. We feel provoked that Presbyterian ministers who have stifled their consciences for years should be so weak, so pusillanimous, as now to show the white feather and confess that they and we all have for years been hoodwinking and deceiving the Lord's flock who gave us liberally of their golden fleece to lead them into pastures of truth. As for us, we are committed to the prosperity of Presbyterianism—all of our name and title and earthly hopes are attached to it, and hence, false though the Confession be to every instinct of justice and love, we must stick to it—sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish!

Does the foregoing seem to be an uncharitable paraphrase of the *Presbyterian's* position? Let those who so think read carefully the following extract from the Confession and decide then whether anything better or nobler than policy leads it to defend and call for a reaffirmation of those sentiments of a darker period. We have too much respect for the *Presbyterian's* brains to suppose that it does not comprehend the language and too much respect for its heart to suppose that it at heart endorses the presentation as true and just: hence we can only conclude that its advocacy is insincere and for

policy's sake. The policy, as already suggested, is worldly-wise and will serve to keep together a little longer one of the most respected of the human organizations falsely styled churches; but the end of all such is not far distant, as clearly shown in God's Word and pointed out in *MILLENNIAL DAWN*. VOL. III., Chaps. 4 to 7, and VOL. IV., Chaps. 11 to 13.

The following is the referred to—

EXTRACT FROM THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSIO OF FAITH

"By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life and others foreordained to everlasting death. These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite that it can not be either increased or diminished."

"Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose and the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of His mere free grace and love, *without any foresight of faith or good works or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions or causes moving Him thereto*; and all to the praise of His glorious grace.

"As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath He, by the eternal and free purpose of His will, foreordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ by his Spirit working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by His power through faith unto salvation. *Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified and saved, but THE ELECT ONLY.*

"The rest of mankind God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of His own will, whereby He extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice."

DEFECTIVE EDUCATION OF MINISTERS

Rev. D. S. Gregory, D. D., says:—

"In a ministerial body of say seven thousand there are perhaps several thousands of us that nobody will hear preach; many more that are heard by good people under stress of duty; and comparatively few that are heard gladly. . . .

"The psychology of the average educator is fundamentally defective, and hence his pedagogics must be fatally false. He recognizes the existence of a *cognitive faculty*, the power of acquiring the simple elements or raw materials, so to speak, of knowledge, in perception external and internal; of a *conservative faculty*, or memory, the power of keeping knowledge so acquired for future use; of a *comparative faculty*, the power of thought for working up the knowledge acquired and conserved into conceptions, judgments, and reasonings. But just there his psychology of the intellect strikes a dead wall which it seems powerless to pass. He fails to recognize the existence of the supreme intellectual faculty, to which all the others are merely subordinates and for which alone they exist—the *constructive or systemizing faculty*. He does not find it in his text-books; it has been practically ignored in educational aims and methods. . . ."

This is too highflown language for the majority of readers; we give its sense in few words thus,—The average minister learns at college to collect certain facts and theories, and to memorize them; but he never learns how to *systemize* what he has learned.

We reply that this is true; nevertheless, it is the bulwark of Churchianity; for had honest ministers or laymen attempted to systemize their theology (the errors so largely predominating) they would have found long ago that all their theories are as irrational as they are unscriptural. No theology but the old theology of the Bible—the divine plan of the ages—can be systemized; and it is system and plan and order and beauty throughout, and thus bears the impressions of its divine Author. Jehovah.

EPISCOPAL HIGH CHURCH PERFORMANCES

The Christian Commonwealth (London) describes a mass recently performed in St. Michael's Church, London, as follows:—

"The mass 'for the repose of the soul' of the deceased was celebrated, and at the funeral service in the church all the accessories of Vatican mummery were observed. Each of the congregation of ten received a little candle, which was lighted before the Gospel was read, and blown out after the reading. The people's candles were rekindled at the Sanctus, after incense-burning. After mass the celebrant left the chair, and

at the sedilia changed his chasuble for a black cope with yellow orphreys and then headed a procession with a crucifix. The catafalque was sprinkled with holy water, and censed, while petitions were mumbled for the soul of the deceased. After the clergy were gone the people were invited to asperse the catafalque with the holy water."

CALAMITIES—WHY PERMITTED

The inundation of the city of Galveston, Texas, accompanied by great loss of life and property, has shocked the world. And no wonder; it was surely a great calamity that five thousand human beings should so suddenly be swept into death—the grave. Yet the real horror, affecting many minds in connection with this matter, is never even hinted at in the great headlines of the daily press announcements. What a shock it would give if these papers were edited in so-called orthodox style, thus:—

JESUS CAME TO 5,000 GALVESTON PEOPLE.
OF THE NUMBER HE FOUND ONLY ABOUT 100 SAINTS FIT FOR
THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.
THE REMAINDER, 4,900,
HE BANISHED TO ETERNAL HOPELESS AGONY IN TORMENT,
PREPARED FOR THEM,
ACCORDING TO HIS FOREKNOWLEDGE AND
LOVING DESIGN.
BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD.

"ZION'S GLAD SONGS"

Our dear Brother McPhail, who has quite a talent for music, has collected a number of new and beautiful hymns,—the music to the majority being his own composition. These, fifty-four in number, are well printed, and appropriately bound in paper covers,—price 10 cents each, or \$1 per dozen, postage free.

This little book, entitled "Zion's Glad Songs," has another feature which we are sure will be appreciated by many, viz., the addition of the *music* for twenty-eight old tunes, long,

If our dear friends who profess to believe such blasphemous things respecting our Heavenly Father's plan would come out honestly and state their views thus plainly we should be glad of it. It would be a great service to the truth. It would act upon many as an *emetic*, and help them to get rid of the unhealthy mass of error which now sickens them and hinders their appetite for the true heavenly manna of the divine Word, which then would be to all the Lord's true people "sweeter than honey."

Tract No. 2, of the "Old Theology" series, treats this subject of "Calamities and Why God Permits Them." We recommend its liberal circulation at times like this when great calamities awaken thoughts respecting divine providences, etc. And we might here remark that we will not be surprised if the next fifteen years shall witness an increasingly large number of calamities. To our understanding there are physical changes necessary to the full introduction of Millennial conditions: these will probably come about gradually, and incidentally cause great trouble and losses. These we understand are so timed as to form a part of the great time of trouble with which our age is to end, which, however, the Lord designs shall prepare man as well as the earth for further, future blessings. "When the judgments of the Lord are abroad in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness."

short, common, and peculiar meters. These are inserted in the interest of our regular hymn book, "Poems and Hymns of Dawn," the tunes of the remainder being copyrighted.

It is not at all the thought that the new book will supplant the old one: for many of the grand old hymns cannot be equaled by any new ones, either in words or tunes. The thought is to make it supplementary. As such we recommend it to you all. Our first edition of 6,000 is now ready and orders will be filled as received.

THE VOLUNTEER WORK

This branch of the service has lagged a little during the hot weather, because of small attendance at church services. Now that cooler weather has come we expect that it will revive. Some who have finished their own cities are branch-

ing out—endeavoring to serve nearby towns. This is commendable. Every faithful soldier of the cross is sure to receive blessings both now and hereafter from "the Captain of our salvation." Let us be faithful.

THE DALLAS, TEXAS, CONVENTION

—SEPT. 29, 30 & OCT. 1.—

We do not expect many from outside the State of Texas at this Convention; for the special excursion rates are restricted to near-by territory. Oklahoma, Indian Territory, Arkansas and Louisiana we believe participate, in whole or in part. As Texas is a very large state we endeavored to arrange for two Conventions, but could not obtain the excursion rates except for Dallas.

Our Convention will take advantage of the cheap rates of fare granted on account of the "Dallas Fair," and such tickets should be called for. If you desire to attend, inquire of your ticket agent at once for rates, train time, etc., and as soon as possible let us know on which road and train you expect to arrive; and how many will be of your party, males and females; if colored, mention it. State if you desire room and board at one dollar per day. Those who cannot afford even this moderate expense will please say so, and some comfortable arrangement will be made for them also.

"WOODMEN'S HALL" has been secured for the use of the Convention. It is centrally located at No. 349 Main Street. It is an easy walk from all depots, but those who desire can use electric car direct from the depots to the hall.

A RECEPTION COMMITTEE will so far as possible meet all who arrive on the morning of Sept. 29th; but any failing to be recognized near the Ladies' Waiting Room door can readily find Woodmen's Hall as above and should proceed there at once.

We hope for a good attendance and warrant a warm welcome and a rich blessing to all true soldiers of the cross; and to those seeking to find and put on the whole armor of God Come, intent upon doing good unto all—especially to the household of faith, as well as praying a blessing upon your self, and you surely will not go away empty.

Arrangements for water baptism will be complete, robes, towels, etc. Yes, "Bro. Russell" will attend

THE CHRISTIAN'S COURSE DELINEATED

David, the Prophet, in the first Psalm, has significantly marked out the proper Christian course and its blessings and outcome. In the first verse he designates three classes from whom the Lord's people should stand aloof—three classes with whom if they have fellowship, it will be to their detriment. (1) The ungodly, or more properly, the wicked (margin, Leaser, Young). (2) Sinners. (3) The scornful. "Blessed is the man who walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful"—Psa. 1:1.

Applying this Psalm prophetically, it is proper that we should determine what classes of persons are meant by the *wicked*, the *sinners* and the *scornful*. We suggest that under the terms of the present Gospel age, not murderers and thieves,

etc., can be meant by the wicked, for such, generally at least, are deluded and "binds by the god of this world" so that they have never seen the true Gospel light; and not seeing it they have not had such responsibilities in connection with it as would properly brand them as wicked from the divine standpoint. The "wicked" are to be looked for in the church, and in harmony with this thought is our Lord's parable which, referring to the church, and the talents bestowed upon its members, declares respecting the one who received the talent of the Lord but failed to use it—"Thou wicked and slothful servant." The "wicked" of this age would seem to be those who have enjoyed the light of divine favor, who have come to a knowledge of the truth, been made partakers of the holy spirit, etc., and who then, despite all these favors and

blessings, and despite their covenant with the Lord to be his servants and to lay down their lives in his service, neglect the same

The Apostle also points out a certain class in the church as wicked, saying of them that if they fall away "it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance" (Heb. 6:6), "for it had been better for them that they had never known the way of righteousness, than that having known it they should turn from the holy commandment." (2 Pet. 2:21) The same class is again described as those who sin wilfully after receiving a knowledge of the truth, and for whom, consequently, no further share in the sacrifice for sins remains; and consequently no hope for them in the coming age. (Heb. 10:26) In a word, then, the wicked class of the present age would seem, from the Lord's standpoint, to be those in the church nominal who have received clear light and knowledge respecting the divine plan, and who have either sinned wilfully by turning away from a life of righteousness to a life of intentional sin, or those who repudiate the precious blood of Christ and the atonement made for them by the same, counting the blood of the covenant wherewith they were sanctified a common or ordinary thing.

If then we have found a class denominated "the wicked," let us consider what can be meant by the injunction that the blessed of the Lord should not walk in the counsel of these wicked ones—should not follow their guidance, their suggestions, their instructions, their leading.

Every man and every woman has more or less of an influence which attracts others to walk in his way. And all who repudiate the ransom, all who deny original sin and its sentence of death, and the necessity for our redemption from sin and death,—all who thus deny the foundation of the Gospel, the "wicked" above described, seem to make it their special business to endeavor to seduce the minds of others—to lead others astray by their evil counsel. If they cannot secure prompt attention, they invariably suggest.—Walk with us awhile, keep our company, and see whether you will not *gradually come to believe as we do, that we were not bought with a price, even the precious blood of Christ—that man needed not to be bought; that he did not fall from perfection; that he was not sold under sin by our first parents; and, hence, that he needed not a redemption in any sense of the word, and therefore the Scriptures are false and misleading in making this the centre and pith of the Gospel.*

Their false suggestion is that our only need was a good and holy *example*. They are blind to the fact that all through the past there were many noble examples, and that there are many today, far beyond the ability of the average natural man to follow, and that we needed something decidedly more helpful and efficacious than an *example*. They seem blind to the fact that an example would never justify to life one who was justly condemned to death. They do not seem to realize that God was just in pronouncing the penalty against our race, and that he could by no means clear the guilty through any process of injustice; and that, therefore, it was necessary that a ransom, a corresponding price, should be paid before the resurrection and reconciliation were possibilities. (Rom. 3:26) But they say, Walk with us in our counsels and see; and, as the Apostle suggests, many follow their pernicious ways, denying the Lord having bought them.—2 Pet. 2:1, 2.

Those who would be of the class pronounced "blessed" of the Lord, in our text, must not follow the counsel of these "wicked," but, on the contrary, should stand firmly by the Gospel of the redemption and seek no other. Let all who desire to be blessed of the Lord mark well this counsel and follow it, and have no fellowship whatever with the "wicked," nor in any degree walk after their counsels.

"Sinners" are mentioned as another class, separate and distinct from the "wicked" above referred to, and they are evidently a class whose transgressions are much less heinous in the sight of the Lord: these sinners we must look for in the church also not in the world. Since the world is not yet on trial there is nothing to demonstrate the standing of any of its people. The "sinners" of our text we would understand to be those who, without repudiating the covenant, without denying the Lord that bought them, and thus falling utterly from divine favor, are nevertheless failing to live according to the terms of their covenant, their consecration. These would seem to be sinners against the covenant they have made—those who fail to carry out the covenant of self-sacrifice. This class possibly includes some who are described by the Lord as "overcharged with the cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches," and who for these reasons are sinners against their covenant, violators of it. The Lord's people who would be of the "blessed" of the Lord, and receive his ultimate "Well done," are not to stand with these covenant-

violators even. To stand with them might imply to treat them as companions, to enter into their plans and schemes; and surely all who would thus do would be likely to become partakers of their spirit, and to become careless of their consecration vows, and overcharged with earthly cares and ambitions.

The "scorners" are designated as a still different class, and might possibly represent some not of the church, but possessing more or less knowledge of holy things and rejecting them, speaking of them lightly and scornfully. The Lord's people are not to be intimately associated with such, nor make them their companions and friends. They cannot have fellowship with such without receiving injury, hence, so far as possible the Christian is to avoid this class, in business partnerships, in society, and especially in marriage. No one who could speak lightly or scornfully of our Heavenly Father or of our Lord Jesus or of the exceeding great and precious things set before the Lord's people in his promises, could be other than a hindrance to those who are seeking to gain the prize of our high calling. He therefore who would be blessed of the Lord, and who would attain that for which he was "called," should take heed to the instructions and avoid the scornful.

This does not signify, however, as the Apostle points out, that we are to have no dealings in the world with any but saints, for, as he tells us, in that event we would needs go out of the world (1 Cor. 5:10); but it does imply a recognition of the principle that evil is contagious, and that the Lord's people cannot be too careful to avoid every contact with evil. They should separate themselves to the Lord, to holiness, and seek to place themselves under influences in harmony with their holy and true and pure aspirations, begotten by the holy Spirit.

The Prophet implies that those who have fellowship with the scornful and with covenant-breakers and with the wicked who deny the precious blood of the covenant, cannot be blessed of the Lord, because they are in a wrong attitude of heart; for, as his words imply, those who are in the right attitude of heart to be blessed of the Lord can readily find something much better, much more interesting, much more profitable, than fellowship with any of these classes; "Their delight is in the Law of the Lord, and they meditate in his Law by day and by night."

This does not imply a reading over of the Ten Commandments, nor of the Mosaic ritual, but to the Christian it implies a delight in the law of righteousness, which law is briefly comprehended in the word "love." The right-minded Christian who is in the line of heavenly blessing now, and of heavenly glory by and by, has found and will continually find in the great law of love something well worthy of his time and his study. He finds this law applicable to every relationship between the heavenly Father and himself; he sees that all of his conduct, his every service toward God as a son, adopted into his family, must be the result of love. He sees also that love is the law which must govern all of his conduct toward the brethren in Christ and toward all men; and he finds in this abundant and satisfactory food for reflection in his leisure hours, so that he is interested neither in the speculations and quibblings of the "scoffers," nor in the worldly matters which overcharge the "sinners," nor in the false Gospel which engages the attention of the "wicked," who deny the ransom.

He finds that this Law of God contains, or is related to, every feature of the divine plan; and hence his meditations and studies of its various ramifications lead his thoughts hither and thither, in contact with all the exceeding great and precious promises which God has bestowed upon them that love him, both as respects the life that now is and also that which is to come. And the more this is his attitude the more is he blessed of the Lord; and the more blessed he is of the Lord the more surely will this be his attitude and experience.

Such an one, the Lord declares through the Prophet, will be like a tree planted near rivulets of water, which will always be abundantly refreshed and never fail in his yield of the fruits of the spirit, which under such circumstances must grow and flourish exceedingly. And as his fruit will be abundant, so his leaf (his hopes) will be ever green; he can and will have faith in him who promised the coming blessings, and whose riches of grace he comes to appreciate more and more daily.

"All that he doeth shall prosper." This is literally true, though not, perhaps, in the way in which the world might view the subject. But what is it that such a child of God doeth? What is his aim? What is his object in life? Wealth, fame, worldly honors? No, none of these. His aim, that which he doeth, that which he seeketh, is to glorify his Heavenly Father and eventually to attain to the glory, honor

and immortality which God has promised to them that love him. (Rom. 2:7) If then the Christian but attain these his objects, surely all his experiences will have been prosperous, and that abundantly. What matters it to him if under divine providence he was permitted to err in judgment respecting some business venture, so that instead of earthly prosperity it brought financial loss, if it worked out spiritual gain? To this blessed man the loss was prosperity, and he proved the truth of the divine promise, that all things shall work together for his good. Under such a promise, under such guidance of divine wisdom in his affairs, guaranteeing him just such experiences, trials, difficulties, earthly disappointments and disadvantages as will, under the Lord's providence, bring him richest blessing in the attainment of the great prize of the future which he seeks, and for which every other thing, interest, hope and aim has been sacrificed, how could any be

considered otherwise than prospered? (Rom. 8:28) Surely indeed, all that he doeth shall prosper—not because of his own wisdom, not because of infallibility in the management of his affairs, but because his infallible Lord is supervising his interests, and outworking them for good to him.

It is this same class of blessed ones that our Lord addresses, saying, "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake"—things may seem to be going contrary to your welfare, and hence to be working out incalculable harm; but have faith—"Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven:" and it is this heavenly reward for which you have been called, and for which you have entered the race, and the attainment of which will be exceedingly abundant above all that you could ask or think.—Matt. 5:11, 12; Eph. 3:20.

TIMES OF REFRESHING

The gathering at Saratoga Springs, N. Y., was not expected to be a large one; because the railroad excursion rates extended over only a very limited area. It was therefore a *local* rather than a *general* meeting; but as such it served its purpose grandly, and brought to many clearer views of the divine plan, and fresh energy in its service, because of renewed consecration to the great Giver of all good.

About one hundred were in attendance, and these were nearly all visitors from abroad, as only about three WATCH TOWER subscribers reside there, and few outsiders attended. The Lord was with the Convention and blessed the two days of its session greatly; and we believe that the grace there experienced will not only be a lasting blessing to those in attendance, but that its overflow upon others not privileged to attend, will be a lasting joy and benefit.

En route we spent Sunday at Toronto, Canada, where another local Convention of about one hundred had gathered. This also was a feast to our souls. We thanked God for the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love—and realized afresh that—

"The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above."

The home route permitted a meeting between trains with some of the dear friends at Washington, D. C., where about

thirty were hastily convened, to whom we spoke on "Pressing toward the mark for the prize of our high calling." Departing, we thanked God for the fulfilment of Mark 10:30; and felt that if faithfulness to the truth had gained us many bitter enemies, it had also brought us such devoted friends as very few in this world could boast of.

We arrived home, at Allegheny, in good season for Sunday services (Sept. 9), where our joy further abounded in addressing about two hundred of the home congregation, and in receiving their hearty welcome back after an absence of two Sundays. We can only wish and hope that each of the one thousand dear brethren and sisters "scattered abroad," with whom we communed and shook hands during the past two weeks (beginning with the Chicago Convention and ending at Allegheny), experienced one-half the blessing that has come to your pastor. He most heartily thanks you all for your many kindnesses and expressions of Christian love extended to him and the associated "Pilgrims;" and he thanks God for the privileges enjoyed in serving his flock, in Jesus' name.

"A table God has furnished me
In presence of my foes;
My head he doth with oil anoint,
And my cup overflows."

SABBATH DINNERS AND HOW TO UTILIZE THEM

LUKE 14:1-14.—OCT. 7.

GOLDEN TEXT:—"Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

So far as we know, our Lord Jesus never refused an invitation to feasts, banquets, etc., to which he was asked, with his disciples. The present lesson tells us of such a banquet, probably specially arranged in Jesus' honor, by a Pharisee high in social position as a ruler in the synagogue. The feast was appointed for the Sabbath day, as was frequently the case, many of the Sabbath feasts being quite sumptuous; but the viands were always served cold, it being a part of the Jewish code that fires should not be kindled nor vituals cooked on the Sabbath day. And although we, as Christians, are entirely free from the Jewish law, including the fourth commandment as well as all the other commandments of the Decalogue, but are under a new commandment, the perfect law of love, to God and to man; nevertheless, we concede that considerable blessing might be experienced, and additional opportunities for spiritual development enjoyed, if Christian people were to cook a double portion on Saturday, and thus leave themselves freer from domestic responsibilities on the day which, according to the laws of the land (tho not according to any law of the Scriptures) we appropriately observe by abstinence from the ordinary business of life, utilizing the leisure for worship, study and spiritual communion.

Evidently before entering the dining room, probably in the court-yard, our Lord, while surrounded by many notables of the scribes and Pharisees, noticed a man afflicted with dropsy; and it would appear that our dear Redeemer was so full of love and sympathy that he had a desire to bless and to heal every such person with whom he came directly in contact. The loving character thus manifested gives us assurance that when the kingdom comes and our Lord shall take unto himself his great power and reign, he will assuredly bless and uplift so many as will accept his favors in a proper manner—so many as really desire to be blessed by him. Thus our Lord's general character fully substantiates and corroborates all the prophetic statements made respecting him and the character of his Millennial work of blessing all the families of the earth.

Our Lord well knew the extreme of fanaticism to which the Jews had gone, especially the outwardly pious and formal ones, representatives of whom were now gathered about him. He knew that they would regard the healing of the dropsical person as a violation of the Sabbath. Indeed, as illustrating the sanctity of the Sabbath, the Jewish Talmud tells of an instance in which a house took fire, and three young girls were burned to death, simply because their friends and neighbors interpreted the law against making a fire as implying also that it would be wrong to quench a fire on the Sabbath day, and when expostulated with respecting the matter, the answer was that it was "a sacrifice acceptable to God, who would reward them for having allowed their dear ones to perish rather than break his commandment!"

Jesus wished not only to correct such a false interpretation of the law, but also, in harmony with his custom, to do a large proportion of his miracles on the Sabbath day; because that day typified the coming Millennial day, the great seventh thousandth-year day in which, his Millennial kingdom being established, he will scatter blessings of healing, mental, moral and physical, amongst all the people. By way of instructing his disciples and the Pharisees respecting the improper view of the Sabbath generally entertained then by religious teachers, our Lord enquired of the Pharisees what they had to say on the subject: Is it or is it not lawful to heal on the Sabbath day? They made no reply; no doubt feeling themselves somewhat incompetent to discuss any question with one whom they had all learned to recognize as a great Teacher, however much they rejected his Messiahship.

Then Jesus, as showing his own understanding of the matter, that it would be right, that it would be in full harmony with the spirit of the Law to heal a man on the Sabbath day, touched the dropsical man and healed him. Then, by way of pointing out to his auditors the inconsistency of their line of thought on this subject, he reminded them that it was a recognized privilege and duty of every Jew to deliver his ox or his ass, fallen into some pit or difficulty, and to consider this a

work of necessity and mercy, not forbidden by the fourth commandment of the Jewish law. He allowed his auditors to draw the inference from this illustration, that as it could not be wrong to assist a dumb animal out of difficulty on the Sabbath, much less could it be wrong to relieve the distress of a human being made in the image of God. Thus he would show that God's laws are not arbitrary, but that it is always proper to do good.

THE PROPER KIND OF TABLE TALKS

Every Christian family should utilize the excellent opportunities afforded for social converse at meal-times. Not only does pleasant and profitable conversation assist digestion, and thus prove physically helpful, but, additionally, these regular family gatherings should be recognized as opportunities for mental profit and for growth in knowledge respecting both temporal and spiritual things. Particularly for the last fourteen years this has been the custom of the Bible House family at Allegheny,—and a very profitable one. Our topics are usually propounded in the question form, the privilege of questioning being open to all at the table. Answers to the questions are sought from each one present, thus stimulating thought and a proper expression of it, very helpful to all, as subsequently they may be called upon to answer such a question before others in public or in private. We commend the plan to all of our readers, suggesting that in such a gathering the one supposed to be most conversant with such matters reserve his reply for the last.

Where the family is composed wholly of "new creatures" the question would properly differ somewhat in general character from what they would be if it were a mixed company: nevertheless, appropriate subjects should not be refused from anyone present; as, for instance, questions respecting table etiquette, good breeding, proper language, the events of the day that do not partake of the nature of gossip, etc. It is a shame that Christian people, even in the humblest walks of life, and when perhaps surrounded by poverty, have no thought of what valuable opportunities are afforded at such times of breaking of bread—to break to their families mental or spiritual food also, strengthening and elevating.

In proportion as Christian people realize their privileges and duties in such matters they will find that coarseness and rudeness at the table will disappear, refinement and intellectuality gradually displacing them. And one of the features most conducive to true table etiquette, and the drawing together of hearts and minds in true fellowship and intellectual enjoyment at the times of physical repast, will be found to be the giving of thanks to God—the recognition that every good and every perfect gift cometh down from our Father. The family which at table neglects to return acknowledgement to the Giver of every good, will scarcely succeed in properly recognizing each other and having intellectual fellowship one with the other.

That our Lord was prompt to avail himself of all such table-talk opportunities, is very manifest. On each occasion of his attendance at a banquet we find him utilizing the opportunity for the inculcation of some truth—natural or spiritual. In the present instance he evidently did not consider his hearers to be in a favorable condition for high spiritual teachings, and hence his table-talk was on a lower plane, adapted to the natural man, yet nevertheless inculcating lessons which, if learned, would prepare the learners for the heavenly things. And this should be the thought in every family circle,—that the tendency of all conversation should be ennobling as well as instructive—leading upward as well as outward.

The guests had been invited to the table, and our Lord noticed how they were each seeking the seats of chief honor, thus showing the pride and ambition of their hearts. We may safely assume that our Lord and his disciples took the less distinguished seats, in harmony with the Scriptural injunction, "In honor preferring one another."

A favorable opportunity offering, our Lord indirectly called attention to the wrong self-seeking course,—not by saying anything against the action in this particular case, but by suggesting a propriety of conduct in a general way; he based his illustration upon a marriage feast, at which, more than any other, distinctions as to title, honor and position, received much consideration. As was his custom, he taught by a parable, permitting his hearers to draw the inference and make the application in some measure to the banquet to which they were then gathered; and he wound it up by making this a great lesson on a general principle; viz., that "Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted"—a lesson of vital importance to all who would be ready for and enter the kingdom.

This is a great lesson applicable, not only to the natural

man, seeking progress back to fellowship and harmony with God, but there is in it also a lesson to the "new creature" all through life's journey,—that if divine favor is desired and to be expected it must be sought; not in pride, not in self-sufficiency, but in humility. The Lord resisteth the proud, the self-sufficient, the boastful, and showeth his favors unto the humble. The Apostle James likewise calls attention to the importance of this grace of humility, assuring us that no true progress can be made in the way to God, except by the humble. (James 4:10) And the Apostle Peter, after exhorting to humility, saying, "Yea, all of you, be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility," adds, "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time."—1 Pet. 5:5, 6.

If the hearers had received the message and been corrected by it, it might indeed have worked considerable difference in their standing amongst their brethren, the Pharisees, but it would also have worked a considerable difference in their favor with God. By receiving such a spirit of humility they would be coming into that relationship with God and the truth which would have divine approval, and be thus the stepping-stone to further favor, by preparing their hearts to receive the good things which God has to give, but which cannot be received by any except the humble-hearted. Indeed, we know of nothing today that is so great a stumbling-block to the majority in nominal Christendom as the prevalent spirit of self-seeking. It is a great barrier before the minds of many, in and out of the pulpit, continually hindering them from seeing, hearing and obeying present truth—they love the approval of men rather than that of God.

The table-talk later turned in another direction, probably considerable being said in the interim that is not recorded, not pertinent; but before the feast was ended an appropriate opportunity came for the Lord to present some words of counsel to his host, and this was done in so kind and so wise a manner that it surely could give no offence, but, on the contrary, must have led the thoughts of all the hearers to higher and heavenly things. He advised that the banquets of the well-to-do in this world's goods be extended to their poorer, less fortunate neighbors and friends; assuring his hearers that such a course would bring the greatest blessing, as every good deed brings its blessings, forthwith—in the consciousness of having done good; and in the reactionary effect upon one's own heart of every good deed, every benevolence. And, in addition to these blessings, our Lord pointed out that for such an one there would be a blessing in the future also—a reward that would fully compensate every such benefaction.

Our Lord's words were in part a commendation of the course pursued by his host in inviting himself and his apostles to dinner, for they were poor. Indirectly his remarks meant that if that very feast were given with a proper sentiment of heart, as we have every reason to presume was the case, his host might expect a reward for his conduct in the future—besides the blessing that had already come to his house through our Lord's presence and words of instruction.

Sunday School lesson comments will be found to misinterpret the blessing which our Lord declared would come to those who received the poor. One of these commentaries says on this point, that "Our Lord refers to the first resurrection, mentioned in Rev. 20:4, 5, assuring him that he would be raised in that resurrection as one of that glorious class. He would have the rewards that God gives, and can give only, to those who are righteous."

This is a grievous mistake, a misapprehension of our Lord's meaning. The first resurrection is not to be attained merely by the doing of kind acts to either the worthy or the unworthy poor. As explained in the connection (Rev. 20:4) none will have part in the first resurrection except those who have been "beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God." And, although this beheading is figurative and not literal, it nevertheless has a deep significance, implying much more than making a feast to the poor. It signifies, not only death to *self-will*, but also to be cut off from all other heads, governments and law-givers, and to recognize no "head" but Jesus, whom God hath appointed to be the Head of the church which is his body—the head of every member of it.

It means, not only to be cut off from institutional heads and authorities, but also to cease to have heads and wills of our own, and to accept, instead, the headship, the will, of our Lord Jesus. It is the same thought that is drawn to our attention by the Apostle in Romans 6:3, where he declares that we are baptized into the *body* of Christ, as members of that body, under the one Head, Christ, by being baptized into his death,—a full consecration of our wills, and ultimately a full laying down of our lives, faithfully unto death. The attainment of this first resurrection and its joint-heirship with

Christ in the Millennial kingdom was clearly understood by the Apostle Paul, and was his aim: and respecting it he said, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ. . . . That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection." (Phil. 3:8, 10) Had St. Paul understood our Lord's words as the above quoted Sunday School lesson commentator did, he would have chosen the easy and pleasant plan of feasting the poor, rather than the years of privation and self-sacrifice in the narrow way which he pursued. And to this, St. Paul's words on another occasion agree. "Through much tribulation shall ye enter the kingdom."

What, then, did our Lord intend to promise as a reward for a good deed—done without hope of reward in the present life? We answer, that he meant to promise the same thing

that he promised to anybody who would give even so much as a cup of cold water to one of his disciples. He wished to assure them that all such would by no means lose their reward. (Matt. 10:42) Not a reward of glory, honor, immortality and joint-heirship in the kingdom of God, but a good reward, more than compensating for the kindness they performed. This rewarding of everyone who has done good, either to the poor of this world or especially to the Lord and his faithful brethren walking in his footsteps, will come to them, not in the first resurrection, but *at* that time;—after the first resurrection shall have glorified the church and inaugurated the kingdom, then Millennial blessings and the reign of righteousness beginning will bring rewards to everyone who has done kindnesses, helping them forward and abundantly rewarding them; while all who have done evil shall have some measure of "stripes" in compensation and retribution

A ROYAL BANQUET DECLINED

LUKE 14:15-24.—OCT. 14.

"Come, for all things are now ready."

Jesus continued his table-talk of our last lesson at the Pharisee's dinner. Our Lord had led the attention of his associates, not only to the proprieties of life, but to future things, by the suggestion that feasts should be given in the interest of the poor, whose inability to return the favor would insure a divine blessing more than compensating in the future—in the kingdom. This led one of the company to a remark which we loosely paraphrase, thus,—Ah, yes! that kingdom, for which we hope, will be a blessed time. How blessed it will be to share the bounties which God has promised in the great feast which he shall spread! The speaker probably was well acquainted with Isaiah's prophecy respecting the kingdom (Isa. 25:6) in which God's mercies and blessings to the world are figuratively represented as a feast, in the words, "In this mountain [kingdom] shall the Lord of hosts make unto all the people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow."

Thus gradually the minds of the company present had been led from earthly things and from commonplace matters and social chit-chat, which might have occupied their attention, to the consideration of the gracious promises of God. And undoubtedly this was our Lord's very object in accepting the Pharisee's invitation, and in leading the conversation gradually in this direction. Now he had an opportunity to teach something respecting this kingdom and its blessings and the call to share it; and he improved it. His hearers, if they had in mind Isaiah's prophecy and God's promise to Abraham, would understand that the kingdom or mountain of the Lord would be the house of Israel, in some glorious and exalted condition under Messiah, and that it was in and through his kingdom that the *feast* of divine blessings, for all nations, was to be spread. Our Lord now, by a parable, drew attention to the Gospel call of great blessings and privileges, and would have his hearers note the fact that while in a general way they would all assent to the statement that the kingdom would be a blessed one, and the feast there something to be greatly desired, nevertheless when the offer of that kingdom would be made them temporal things closer to their hearts would make it of no effect to the majority.

The parable represents a great feast, with a large number of friends of the host invited in advance, that they might be ready at such a time as the feast would be ready and announced. God himself is the host in this parable, and the Jewish nation were his friends to whom, as a people, he had given much advantage every way, chiefly in that to them were committed the oracles of God,—much knowledge of the divine plan for human salvation and the promises that if they, as the seed of Abraham, were faithful, they should have the invitation and privilege and opportunities of this great feast. The Lord addresses them through the Prophet, saying, "You only have I known [recognized] of all the families of the earth." (Amos 3:2) Israel only was invited to this feast; but the feast was not ready until our Lord's day, and hence the invitation to partake of it did not go forth until then. Finally, however, the time had come; Christ, as represented in the bullock of the sin-offering, had already given himself,—the sacrifice being counted as accomplished from the time of its offering, when our Lord presented himself to John at Jordan, making a full consecration of his entire being, even unto death. In view of this sacrifice for sins, God could begin at once to call the already promised guests to the great feast of blessing and manifestation of divine favor toward those to whom he had promised it so long before, through their father Abraham.

And thus it was that when Jesus came and called his disciples and sent them forth, the message was, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand;" the great feast of fat things for this nation, that God has so long promised, is ready; and whosoever wills may come and be received and participate in it. The message of Jesus and the twelve, and later the seventy, throughout all Judea, was the invitation of that favored people to come and enjoy the great feast for which they had impatiently waited and hoped and prayed for over sixteen centuries,—the great privileges and opportunities of the kingdom.

But as the parable shows, when the offer of the kingdom was really made, when the invitation to partake of the blessings of the great feast was really put before them, it proved that they loved the kingdom and the future things far less than they and others might have supposed. On the contrary, the unanimity with which the invitation to the kingdom was rejected made it appear almost as though the rejectors had acted in concert in the matter. Their excuses for so little interest in the things which God had promised and which they claimed to be eagerly longing for, were the apparent pressure of other duties which they *must* attend to, and which left no time for responding to the divine invitation to the kingdom. With one the pressure came in the direction of seeing to his farm, and thus being not slothful in business; another felt that it might do very well for people who had nothing else to do to give attention to a spiritual feast, but as for him, his time was fully occupied with his property, his oxen, sheep, store-business, and what not. Another felt that his duties, social ties, wife, children, etc., demanded all of his attention, and that therefore he could not accept the kingdom privileges.

And this, which was the sentiment of fleshly Israel, is largely that of spiritual Israel, also, now that the spiritual kingdom is announced. Many seem to feel that *what* they would call the real and practical things of life need all of their attention. They want to "get along" in this world's affairs, and to be somebodies in it, and they find such interest in social and material matters a great hindrance to any response to the divine invitation to a share in the glorious Millennial kingdom, as joint-heirs with Christ,—the great feast, the high calling which has come to us. Well, in one sense of the word this is all right, for it merely keeps out of the kingdom a class which the Lord does not desire should be in it, and which if it did come in would need to be sifted out, later. Although God has bidden many, he is seeking for this feast only such as will highly appreciate it above all other privileges—those who would be willing to sacrifice any and every other thing in order to share it.

The first invitation to the feast, recounted in the parable, represents the first years of our Lord's ministry, which were specially directed toward interesting the scribes and Pharisees and Doctors of the Law, who, as the leading men of that nation, and as our Lord said, occupying Moses' seat, really represented that nation as a whole; and the rejection of the invitation by these meant the rejection of it by that nation as a whole. Thus our Lord was careful to bring before the priestly class of that time the evidences of his Messiahship, so that when, for instance, he healed the ten lepers, he charged them to tell no man, but go and show themselves to the priests. Thus the priestly class was informed respecting the miraculous work of our Lord, perhaps more particularly than others. They therefore had the invitation to the feast more particularly than others. However, the fact that the chief