

## VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER

## VARYING DEGREES OF UNBELIEF

The "higher critics" differ considerably. It would be amusing, were it not so serious a subject, to note how the one class upbraids the other for "destructive criticism of the Word of God," and then in the same article proceeds along the same lines,—only a little less destructive of the faith. For instance, note the following from the *Presbyterian Standard*:—

"On Sunday last Dr. Josiah Penniman, dean of the University of Pennsylvania, delivered an exceedingly interesting address or lay sermon from the pulpit of the Asheville Presbyterian church at the morning hour, in which he told of the remarkable revelations made by pick and shovel in excavating the site of the ancient city of Chalneh in the valley of the Euphrates. This city is mentioned in Gen. 10:10, and the work of digging it out has been done by the University of Pennsylvania during the last thirteen years. The destructive critics say that the art of writing was not known at the time of Abraham. But the University of Pennsylvania has exhumed more than forty thousand burnt clay tablets full of written records dating back 4,000 years before the Christian era, and so 2,000 years before the time of Abraham. The destructive critics say that the war of the kings as recorded in Gen. 14 is all a myth, as at that early age of the world such armies could not have been collected. But on some of the 40,000 tablets in the possession of the University of Pennsylvania taken from the site of this ancient city, the names of the very kings who carried on this war are given just as they are recorded in Gen. 14, and some of the spoils which they carried off from Chalneh have been found in excavating the ancient city of Susa.

"These excavations have upset the already tottering chronology of Usher and have put the existence of man on the earth back some 10,000 years before the Christian era, and they show the existence of a high civilization at that early period. The work of exhuming Chalneh began on what seemed to be merely a mound of sand in a desert of drifting sand. The dome of a building was soon reached, which proved to be a magnificent temple of Baal, of whose worship this city was the center. The temple had been covered to the depth of more than forty feet from its base by the drifting sands. Among other curiosities found in adjacent buildings was the strong room of a real estate and banking house, containing certificates of deposit, title deeds, tax receipts and the like, all on baked clay tablets and beautifully written in cuneiform characters, and they read very much like similar 'papers' in a modern real estate dealer's office.

"Dr. Penniman had beautiful photographs of the buildings in the city, which were strong, massive and imposing, and very much like the best buildings in our modern cities. The names of the various kings and dynasties are given, with the dates of each, which extend back to a period 2,000 years before Abraham, or to the time of Adam, according to our common chronology.

"But the pick and the shovel went deeper, and the very surprising discovery was made that this ancient city of Chalneh was built on the site of a still more ancient city beneath it, of which there seems to have been no memory or tradition at the founding of the city of Chalneh. This city dated back at least 4,000 years more, or to a period 8,000 years before the Christian era. Its inhabitants, whoever they were, were very skilled builders, and had massive stone houses and temples several stories high, in which the arch is freely used. The arch was unknown to the Egyptians or to the Greeks or to any of the peoples whom we call 'the ancients,' and is considered a Roman invention. But the modern pick and shovel unearths it where the sands of the desert had buried it so deep that all memory and tradition of the mighty builders who invented it and used it some 8,000 to 10,000 years before Christ had passed away from among men; and what has been considered an invention of the Romans was really one of the 'lost arts' of a highly civilized people who lived and built and wrote and thought and perished, and the record of them and of their doings has lain for probably a hundred centuries so deep beneath the sands that their burial place was used by other men as a place for their building; and these in turn were buried in the sand, the removal of which shows that the Bible record is accurately true in its minute details, for while man must come and man must go, the Word of God abideth forever."

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All should recognize clearly and distinctly what is implied by the foregoing. It means that the lecturer wholly disagrees with that open form of infidelity which denies the Bible *in toto*, claiming that the books of Moses, as well as the books of the prophets of the Old Testament, were written only a short time

before Christ—after the return of the Israelites from the Babylonian captivity. The claim is that these books are pious frauds, having little, if any, foundation in truth. Dr. Penniman, the lecturer, was not in sympathy with such open infidelity. He was glad, therefore, when the excavations he mentioned disclosed certain outside information, corroborative of some of the statements of Genesis. We are glad that the Doctor is with us thus far; but we regret to note that he is so tinctured with the spirit of higher criticism that the researches which he mentions have not convinced him that the Bible is of divine origin, and, therefore, unqualifiedly true. He merely admits that it is not unqualifiedly false—that these findings prove that there is some reliability in the Scriptural account;—but he evidently is as far from accepting the Bible narrative as it stands, as are the most destructive of the higher critics.

The chronology of the Bible is so thoroughly interwoven with its narrative that the two are bound up together as web and woof: to destroy the one destroys the other; to invalidate the one invalidates the other; to corroborate the one corroborates the other.

There is no question whatever that the Bible contains a chronological chain down to the Babylonian captivity—even the captious find it impossible to disagree more than 128 years with what we have presented as the chronology of the Bible;—and then they must make that period *shorter* than we do instead of longer. No kind of reasoning or figuring based on the Bible statements of chronology can extend the period from the creation to the birth of our Lord beyond 4,128 years which we have assigned to the period. Dr. Penniman, as the dean of a university, and a lecturer upon this subject, is of course thoroughly aware of these facts. Yet how strange it is that he should address an audience as a champion of the Bible, and at the same time discredit the Bible by asserting, as he does, that man had been on the earth some ten thousand years prior to the Christian era! If this gentleman is a friend of the Bible, the latter has good reason to cry out, "Save me from my friends!"

If the Doctor is a disbeliever in the Bible, and is posing as its friend and champion, he is occupying a dishonest and dishonorable position. In any event, the Bible is far better off without such friends and such champions. Whether intentionally or unintentionally, they are serving the cause of infidelity—they are overthrowing faith in the Word of God. True, we are to expect just such things at this particular time, for the Apostle assures us that every man's faith-structure shall be tried so as by fire; and that all the wood, hay and stubble shall be destroyed. We are, of course, sure that those who have built their faith according to the direction of the Lord's Word, upon the proper foundation, and with the proper materials, the gold, silver, precious stones of divine truth, the Word of God,—these will never fail, will never be stumbled, but will come off conquerors. But we also know that this class is a remarkably small one, out of the millions of Christendom. Let us not be surprised, then, that the "fire of this day shall try *every man's* work, of what sort it is." Let us, on the contrary, take the more earnest heed and the more firmly hold on to the things which we have received of the Lord, which in the end will shine forth gloriously bright and convincing to the whole world of mankind.

## HOW SHALL WE UNDERSTAND THEM?

The question naturally arises, if honorable men, students "learned in all the learning of the Egyptians," find in the ruins of ancient civilization evidences satisfactory to them that man has been on the earth at least six thousand years longer than the Bible records teach, how shall the average person of medium ability and intelligence and opportunities determine what is the truth on this subject? If he cannot rely upon the savants, upon whom or upon what can he rely?

We answer, that the savants base their estimates on their guesses,—and their guesses vary according to their mental makeup. Many of them guess that man has been on the earth for millions of years; others, like Dr. Penniman, congratulate themselves upon getting their faith down to a difference of only six thousand years from the Bible standpoint; but the humble child of God, who has made a proper use of the opportunities now within his reach, has learned to have little confidence in the guesses of the savants and higher critics, in proportion as he has learned to have great confidence in the Bible as a divine revelation. Those who will be easily moved to doubt the reliability of the Scriptures, under the instructions of its inju-

rious friends (?), will generally be those who have never come to a clear appreciation of the divine plan of the ages, revealed in that wonderful Book and in it alone. Those who have been for any considerable time in the school of Christ, and have been faithful to the instructions there received, have learned that the Bible contains a plan so wonderful that it is not possible that *man* could have conceived or originated it;—a plan which fits into all the features of past history, and is as fully in accord with the declarations of the Old Testament as with those of the New Testament,—though in many things out of accord with the teachings of churchianity.

As we open the Old Book, which some one has said is an anvil upon which numerous hammers of infidelity have worn themselves out, we find its declaration respecting our day,—“The wisdom of their wise men shall perish; the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.” (Isa. 29:14) Dr. Peniman and other D. Ds. and LL. Ds. and Professors corroborate and fulfil this divine testimony today. Their difficulty is not so much a dishonesty of mind which hinders them from receiving the truth, but rather that they approach the subject from the wrong standpoint. Instead of approaching geology and scientific research from the standpoint of faith in the Bible, and a desire to find and prove it correct, they approach these from the reverse standpoint, with a conviction that the Bible is certainly wrong in some measure, great or small. Imbued considerably with the spirit of higher criticism, even when resisting its conclusions, they approach their investigations with a view merely to reduce the discrepancy between the Bible statements and the extreme position of infidelity. And it is needless to say that in such matters, where it is the mind that is concerned, and opinions that are to be formed, one usually finds corroboration in line with the sentiment of his search.

“Common people,” in reading such statements as the foregoing by the Doctor, should not forget to take them with the proverbial “grain of salt.” It is natural that the Dean of a college which has spent several thousand dollars in scientific research—partly with the laudable object of securing information, and partly with another laudable object of advertising itself—should feel disposed to inflate the results of these investigations and expenditures, and to parade them just a little.

Surely it is neither ungenerous nor unwise to conclude that Dr. Peniman's statements magnify considerably the service accomplished for the world by his college. The evidences of this, in the foregoing account, are numerous. For instance, it is not beyond the province of reasonable judgment to believe that the exploration committee found something of the ancient city of Chalneh. It is not beyond conception that this was buried as much as forty feet below the surface. It is quite believable that a palace and a temple were found, and that under the temple was found the ruins of a structure somewhat older still. But this is as far as reasonable judgment can follow the Doctor's narrative. We cannot take as literally true the statement that a whole city has been unearthed, or even any considerable portion of it, nor that another whole city under it was found—built, buried and forgotten thousands of years before the upper one was built, and yet the upper one *accidentally* built exactly on top of it—one temple over the other, etc. Neither can we take literally the statement that the buildings in these cities were “strong, massive and imposing, and very much like the best buildings in our modern cities.” There are numerous reasons why we should not take these statements literally;—unless prepared to write ourselves down as credulous simpletons.—“common people” of the dark ages. The most forceful of these objections is the financial one. Any one of experience in the cost of grading, excavating, etc., can see at a glance that the few thousand dollars and the few representatives of the Pennsylvania University could accomplish practically nothing under such conditions as are *implied*. It would require millions of dollars to accomplish anything like what may be understood from taking the foregoing *too literally*.

If we analyze the above report, on this literal basis, we find that it contradicts itself. It declares that the principal building was the temple, whose dome, covered by sand, evidently constituted the chief eminence of the sand-hill excavated. How deep the sand may have been on the top of this dome, completely obscuring it, we can only surmise. We will suppose it to have been covered to a depth of five feet only, for the report declares that it was “soon reached.” When, then, we read that the top of this sand mound was “*more than forty feet*” above the foundation of the temple, we will allow an extra foot, and say forty-one feet, and then deducting the five feet above the dome we find that the entire height of the temple, dome and all, was about thirty-six feet. And this was the principal edifice in the city—far out-topping the other buildings, evidently, according to the description given. How, now, does the statement appear that the buildings were “massive and

imposing, and very much like the *best* buildings of our *modern* cities?” The best buildings in our modern cities range in height from fifty to four hundred feet or more, while in this city the chief building, dome and all, was about thirty-six feet high. We have need to keep well before our minds such evidences as these that the language is not literal, but highly figurative, hyperbolic, and then we need to flavor the remainder of the Doctor's statements with the same kind of salt of reason and cool judgment if we would not allow them to interfere with the process of our mental digestion, when studying God's Word. “Salt is good!”

When we come to examine the findings in the libraries of these buildings, we are to appreciate them for what they are worth. We do appreciate them highly. They give evidence most conclusively that evolutionists are entirely wrong in their theory that man evolved from a monkey, and that present-day civilization is proof of this. These findings corroborate the Scriptural statement that there was a civilization in the past, though of a somewhat different kind from that of the present—that there were wise men in the past without present-day advantages, which belong to the period called “the time of the end,” which we hold are incidentals of this day of preparation for the Millennium. That those people had some knowledge of justice, equity, business regulations, etc., is evident from the records found in these rooms. But nothing has been found in conflict with the Bible, nor in conflict with the chronology of the Bible. The conflict is wholly in the minds of the learned gentlemen whose wisdom in such matters has perished, as the Scriptures declare—because they have abandoned the true foundation, and are no longer seeking to harmonize archaeological findings with the declarations of the Bible—especially as respects chronology.

#### Misled By Their Evolution Theories

They predetermine that because there are these good evidences of so pronounced a civilization in Abraham's time, there must have been long, long periods preceding that for the *development of man from a monkey condition up to that degree of intelligence*. Thus, in supporting their theories respecting evolution, they have an incentive to make the records as favorable as possible to a long period prior to Abraham. They find names of kings and dynasties, and attempt to separate them out in chronological sequence, but seem entirely to overlook the fact that conditions which prevail today in Europe may also have prevailed to some extent in Egypt, and in Babylonian times. For instance, suppose that some city in Bavaria, Germany, had been buried today from the world, and that the civilization of the present time in all other cities of Europe were completely blotted out. Suppose, too, that general world histories of the present time were not kept, but that, as in ancient times, every nation and city kept records and a chronology of its own, paying no attention to the year of the world, A. M., B. C. or A. D., or any other arrangement but simply reckoning by its own dynasties? Suppose also that some one should uncover the Bavarian city mentioned, and should there find records of the Bavarian line of kings, and in connection with it a record of the German emperors, and references to the many other lines of German kings and princes. He would there find records of the Napoleonic dynasty, and of the present Bavarian dynasty, and of the present imperial dynasty. How much likelihood there would be that, with nothing to guide him except Frederick I., William I., William II., William III., he would become all confused, and fail to realize that there are kings in Bavaria at the same time that others reign as emperors of the whole German empire. Thus he might allow so many years for the emperors, and so many years for the kings, and be doubling his count every time. Our savants look over a pile of ancient clay tablets, written in a language they do not *fully* comprehend; they see in them names of hundreds of kings, princes, etc., and string them out to support their theory of a long and slow development from monkey-man to the degree of intelligence witnessed in our day.

This seems to fairly represent the tangled and unsatisfactory records of these ancient civilizations unearthed by explorers. They give some evidence, but nothing in a chronological order that will in any sense of the word compare with the Bible record. The Bible gives us the only chronological record from Adam down to the Babylonian captivity that is worthy of calling history or chronology. Our wise men in universities, colleges, theological seminaries, etc., in passing by this only reliable record, and attempting to construct chronology from other sources, are doing the impossible thing, as well as the unwise thing. The Christian who recognizes the Bible as the Word of God, because of its internal evidences, and who harmonizes its statements *with themselves*, accepting the conclusions with implicit faith, is the only one who will stand the shakings and siftings of this present time. Such will be found

to be right when that which is perfect is come, and when all matters will be fully revealed.

"How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,  
Is laid for your faith in his excellent Word!"

The Southwestern *Presbyterian* of March 27 quotes Rev. J. P. Peters, director of the Nippur Expedition, as follows:—

"An immense mass of inscribed material has been secured from Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria and Persia. We have a very fair picture of the advanced civilization prevailing in the ancient civilized world in and from the latter half of the third millennium B. C.

"These records discredit the extravagant claims of China

and India in regard to the antiquity of the civilization claimed by them. It was only in the latter half of the third millennium B. C. that civilization spread to China, and shortly after this India was occupied by a civilized race.

"These records, so far discovered, confirm the statements and the historical representations of Samuel, Kings and the Prophets. Hebrew history, as recorded in these books, is proved by the comparison to be honest and trustworthy.

"The statements of the earlier books of the Old Testament in regard to a high civilization, advanced religious development, and literary activities, which but a little while ago were held up as a proof of the inaccuracy and untruthfulness of the Bible record, are now proved to be literally true."

## "LORD, WHAT WILT THOU HAVE ME TO DO?"

ACTS 9:6.

Anxious soul, dost thou inquire  
How thou mayst thy fealty prove?  
In this day of "thine espousal,"  
In the dawn of thy "first love,"  
While thy heart is now o'erflowing  
With a new-found peace and joy;  
Where wilt thou, a willing servant,  
In his service find employ?

Listen! Wouldst thou tell the story  
Of the Father's wondrous plan,  
And its consummation-glory  
Now appearing unto man?  
Wouldst thou be a faithful witness  
To the truth thou hast received?  
Seek "his fulness" for thy portion;  
Empty souls have naught to give.

Thus in trials that await thee,  
In the way, so rugged, steep,  
God's own peace which passeth knowledge  
Shall thy heart through Jesus keep.  
Then thou mayst go forth and comfort  
Those beneath affliction's rod,  
With the comfort wherewith thyself  
Hast been comforted of God.

Hear the Master's voice directing,  
As to him thou drawest nigh,  
"Till thou art endued with power  
Of the spirit from on high."  
Learning first, thyself, the lesson  
Which thou wouldst have others know;  
Eating daily at his table,  
Thus in "grace and knowledge grow."

Following close in Jesus' footsteps.  
That whate'er you say or do,  
It shall be "your Father's spirit"  
That shall speak and act through you.  
Seeking the divine direction,  
Blessings rich thou mayst expect;  
As thou dost his ways acknowledge,  
He thy pathway shall direct.

—John La Dow.

## SAMUEL'S FAREWELL ADDRESS

1 SAM. 12:13-25.—JULY 19.

GOLDEN TEXT:—"Only fear the Lord and serve him in truth with all your hearts."

Samuel the Prophet stands out on the pages of sacred history a very noble character—very similar in many respects to Moses. He had served the Lord and the people faithfully for a long period, and then, at the urgent request of the people and with God's assent, he had anointed Saul their king. The latter had been received rather half-heartedly, but the battle with the Ammonites and the great victory which the Lord granted to his people on that occasion united their hearts to him who had been the visible leader in that victory, and Samuel perceived that the right time had come for a public coronation of the king, and the formal transfer of allegiance to him as the Lord's representative in the temporal affairs of the nation. Accordingly, a general convocation of the people was called to meet at Gilgal—one of the several prominent places for public gatherings—one of the places at which Samuel was in the habit of holding court when, as a kind of supreme judge, he went at different seasons of the year to various parts of the territory of Israel to hear and to decide causes and differences which the elders of the tribes could not adjudicate satisfactorily.

Upon the assembling of the people, the prophet Samuel opened his address (vss. 1-5) by calling upon God and the people to witness to his own rectitude of character in all of his dealings with them for the many years in which he had served them: to his justice in seeking to decide their various questions righteously; to his honesty, in that he never received even the smallest bribe, nor permitted anything to vitiate his judgment; neither had he been an oppressor of his people, but had always sought their good. With united voice the people concurred in the excellence and purity of his administration—a wonderful tribute, one which would be almost inconceivable in our day, in which we find that even the best and noblest officials are sure to have enemies, traducers, backbiters, slanderers. We are not to suppose that Samuel was merely eulogizing his own administration, but are, rather, to attri-

bute to such a noble character a nobler object. He wished to make a lasting impression with this address and this transfer of authority to King Saul; and, to make his words more impressive and more effective in the interests of his successor and in the interests of the Lord's people, he impressed upon his hearers the fact that his entire life had been one of devotion, and that they might well understand that his words now were in full accord with all the course of his previous life. They would thus realize that he had their best interests at heart, that he was thoroughly loyal to the Lord, and that his example, as well as his advice, would be beneficial to them. Perhaps, too, he would thus set before the people a standard of what they might look for and hope for from their new king, and before the king a standard of the ideal after which he should pattern his rule.

Next, he called attention to God's faithfulness to them in the centuries past, from the time that he adopted them as his people and made a covenant with them through Moses and became their heavenly King. He recounted to the people the many deliverances which the Lord had wrought for them through various agents whom he had raised up. He would not wish them to think of the recent victory over the Ammonites as being the only one; but he desired that they recognize it, in common with all previous victories, as from the Lord, by whatsoever hand they were effected. He would have them discern that they exercised great ingratitude in forgetting that the Lord had all this time been their King, and in preferring an earthly king to the government he had established. Nevertheless, now that God had granted their request and given them an earthly king, they must not fail to recognize that he was only the representative of their real King, the heavenly One. Otherwise, their condition would be deplorable in every way. They had the king of their choice and God had set him over them: let the matter thus stand, and from this new standpoint they should go on to make the best of their

condition; and to do this, would be to give close attention to the commandments of the Lord.

Obedience to the Lord would bring blessings both to the people and their king, and disobedience and rebellion or any measure of irreverence toward the Lord and his commandments would bring upon them divine disfavor and injury. Not that the Lord would vindictively render evil for evil, but the hand of the Lord would be against them in the same sense that the current of the river is against the persons who attempt to go contrary to it. Divine justice has its steady flow. It is irrepressible; it opposes anything that comes against it, and favors anything that goes in harmony with it. We can recognize something of this principle in various laws of nature; as, for instance, gravitation. Let us also recognize that the principles of divine government operate in a very similar manner. As fire burns the evil or the good when they come in contact with it, and as the law of gravitation operates in respect to all, whether good or bad, who come into the line of its influence, so the principles of divine justice operate automatically.

The correctness of the foregoing statement may be questioned by some, who may say that in the majority of cases justice does not seem to operate; that those who tempt God are set up, and those who work wickedness and deceit often prosper. We reply that in order to understand our position it must be remembered that God's government has never been established in the world except over the one nation of Israel; and, hence, only in that one nation should we expect to find the laws of retribution operating automatically. The Lord said of Israel, "You only have I known [recognized] of all the families of the earth." (Amos 3:2) Again, the Apostle asks, "What advantage hath the Jew?" and, answering, declares, "Much every way; chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God." God entered into obligations with Israel that if they, as a people, would obey his laws and keep his statutes, they would be blessed in proportion to their faithfulness and obedience; and if they should fail of obedience, they would be correspondingly punished; that he would permit to come upon them various chastisements—diseases, etc.—as the natural results of the violations of the principles of his government. But such an arrangement has not been made with other nations at any time in the world's history. With spiritual Israel God's blessings and chastisements are spiritual, and do not extend to temporal affairs. In proportion to their faithfulness they grow spiritually strong and beautiful; and in proportion to their unfaithfulness they grow spiritually weak and receive chastisements and lose divine favor. It is not true with the spiritual Israelite as it was with the natural Israelite, that by obeying the Lord he would be blessed temporally in all his undertakings. On the contrary, to the spiritual Israelite the Lord gives the express declaration and encouragement: "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall [in this life] suffer persecution"; "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you": "Ye know that it hated me before it hated you"; "Blessed are ye when men shall say all manner of evil against you for my sake: rejoice and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven"—in spiritual things, not in temporal matters.—2 Tim. 3:12; 1 Jno. 3:13; John 15:18; Matt. 5:11, 12.

When the Millennial kingdom shall be established, and, in harmony with the petition of our Lord's prayer, God's kingdom shall come, and his will be done on earth as in heaven—then the laws of righteousness will work automatically again, and "every transgression shall receive its just recompense of reward," and every proper endeavor will bring its meed of blessing and uplifting influence—restitution. The divine regulations operating toward fleshly Israel in the days of Samuel differ from those to operate toward the whole world in the Millennial age, in that the latter will have a greater prophet than Moses, a greater priest than Aaron, a greater king than Saul. The Lord's Anointed will include all the graces, powers and qualities represented in these types, but on a perfect scale and backed by divine wisdom, justice, love and power, and will put down all insubordination and permanently establish righteousness upon a proper basis throughout the world, eventually destroying all who will not come into accord with its principles.

Samuel proceeded to do a miracle before the people—to cause a thunder shower in the middle of harvest. In Palestine they have the early and the latter rains. The spring rains usually end in April, and the fall rains begin in October or November. A writer on the subject says, "In ordinary seasons, from the cessation of the showers in spring until their commencement in October or November, rain never falls, and the sky is usually serene." The wheat harvest which the prophet pointed out to them as just in order, must have been the first of June and, hence, nothing could have been further

from the expectation of the people than a thunder-shower at that time. The bringing of it at the prophet's announcement, was to remind the people how completely their affairs and interests were in divine power. They were to discern that the recent victory need not have been theirs except as the Lord had been pleased to favor them and grant them the victory; and that simply by bringing unfavorable showers upon their harvest the entire fruitage of their labors of many months might be quickly spoiled and they be reduced to starvation, and in that way become more thoroughly subdued than by any foreign invasion. The prophet calls their attention to the wickedness of their course in the rejection of God as their King, and to this power of God, which could easily be exercised did he wish to requite them according to their dealings with him.

The people saw the point. They discerned that if it were to rain a few days they would lose their all; they recognized that they were wholly in the power of God, and entreated Samuel to pray for them, confessing not only the wrongs they had done in seeking a king, but also their sins; "We have added unto our sins."

As the Lord's mouthpiece, the prophet assured the people that they need not fear God's taking vengeance upon them, notwithstanding their wrong course. On the contrary, they should more fully than ever determine to turn to the Lord whole-heartedly, and let their mistake and the trials and difficulties that would come to them as a result of it prove a blessing to them in drawing their hearts nearer and nearer to the Lord, their true King, who never sought anything but their highest welfare. So it should be with us. If at any time we find that we have taken a wrong course which is irretrievable, we may expect it to bring the disappointments as the Lord foretold; but he may permit it to bring, as well, some blessings in the way of contrition of heart, and humility toward the Lord, and greater zeal, watchfulness and faithfulness for the future. Thus, even some of the blunders of life may become stepping-stones to higher planes of grace and truth.

The sentiment of verse 22 is very beautiful, and, doubtless, was very encouraging to the Israelites in assuring them of God's continued love and favor toward them because of his having adopted them as his people. Applying this verse to spiritual Israel, we may take great comfort from it, too. If it was a favor to natural Israel to be adopted as the Lord's peculiar people, as the house of servants, how much greater is the blessing to spiritual Israel, adopted of the Lord as the house of sons under the chief Son, Jesus; "whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end!" (Heb. 3:6) It is well that the Lord's people be called upon to fear, to reverence, the Lord; but if the Scriptures were entirely made up of commands and reproofs, the Lord's people would all surely have been discouraged long ago. On the contrary, with the reproofs and corrections, the Lord gives us very precious testimonies respecting his love and mercy, his goodness and long-suffering kindness, to encourage us. All the members of the body of Christ laboring against the course of this world and against public opinion and against the weaknesses of their own flesh and against the great adversary Satan, need spiritual encouragement—assurances that the Lord is for them. The Apostle points this out, saying, "If God be for us who can be against us?"—what will all the opposition against us amount to if God be on our side? He again encourages us with precious words, reminding us of the unchangeableness of God and of the fact that he has already done great things for us and is preparing to do still greater things. If while we were yet sinners Christ died for the ungodly, much more shall his favor be with us now that we are adopted into his family and are seeking to walk in his ways as members of the body of Christ.

The grandeur of the Prophet's character shines out in the twenty-third verse again: he seems to have none of the petty animosities which some smaller creatures might have under the circumstances, and was a patriot to the core of his heart, as well as a faithful representative and ambassador of the Lord and mediator of his people. He says, practically: "Nothing that you have done toward me—rejecting me in choosing King Saul—shall in any manner or degree hinder my love for you and my prayers on your behalf. God forbid that it should! I should consider this a sin against the Lord who has placed me as a kind of representative of him to you, and of you to him; and I certainly would be failing of my duty and privilege did I neglect this important office of mediator. You may rely upon it that I not only will refrain from pleading against you with the Lord, but that I will petition him on your behalf."

The nobility of Samuel's course may well be copied by the Lord's people under various circumstances in life. When those who are near and dear to us flag in their love and devotion, they need all the more our sympathy and our prayers; and, as

our dear Master showed us, even our enemies are to be prayed for and have our good wishes—that the Lord would grant them in his providence such opening of understanding, such experiences as in divine wisdom would be for their highest welfare to bring them into full accord with himself, and thus back into harmony with us and all who are in harmony with him. The prophet indicates that, although he was ceasing to be their judge and ruler, he would not cease to be their instructor in the good and right way so long as the Lord's providences might permit him to serve them, and so long as they would accept his aid.

Recurring, however, to the principal point of his instructions, he points out that reverence for the Lord, serving him in truth with all their heart, was not only a proper course, but

a course which would bring them the Lord's blessing. And as a help to our flagging zeal, we should continually remind ourselves of the Lord's great blessings to us. As we learn to appreciate the goodness of the Lord, if rightly disposed at all, the influences will be to strengthen us and to make us more and more loyal to him. Failing to seek with our whole heart the Lord's service after we have become his people and entered into covenant relationship with him, receiving of his favors and blessings in this life, and also, by promise, in the life to come, would mean wickedness which, persevered in, will surely bring destruction. Faithfulness to God should be the key-note of all our desires. "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer."—Psa. 19:14.

## "TO OBEY IS BETTER THAN SACRIFICE"

1 SAM. 15:13-23.—JULY 26.

The words of our caption, the Golden Text of this lesson, are the Lord's rebuke to King Saul by the prophet Samuel, in connection with the announcement that Saul, by disobedience to the heavenly King, had forfeited his privilege of representing him on the throne of Israel. The rending of the kingdom from the hands of Saul meant more than his own displacement: it meant that his son and successive heirs should not continue the Lord's representatives in the kingdom.

For a number of years Saul seems to have prospered fairly on the throne, and the people of Israel prospered with him. It was several years after his coronation, noted in our last lesson, that his first severe testing in respect to his obedience to the heavenly king came to him. At that time a war was instituted against the Philistines, who had been encroaching upon the Israelites to the east. Saul waited several days for Samuel to come to offer the sacrifices of the Lord previous to the beginning of the battle. Samuel was providentially hindered, and Saul, after waiting for a time, offered the sacrifices to the Lord himself, contrary to the arrangement, and then proceeded to battle, the result being a considerable defeat to his forces. Apparently he was not evilly intentioned, but lacked proper respect and reverence for the Lord and his arrangements. This may be said to have been the beginning of Saul's rejection by the Lord. Samuel's words were, "Thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord . . . now thy kingdom shall not continue. The Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart."

The lesson of this incident is as applicable to spiritual Israel today as it was to Saul and natural Israel in their day—"Obedience is better than sacrifice." In how many ways we may see expressions of this same condition amongst many who profess the Lord's name today! Many are "workers" in the Lord's cause in the various denominations of Christendom, and many are their sacrifices of time and money; but inasmuch as they are not obedient to the Lord, they fail of the blessing they would have, and, indeed, in a considerable measure cut themselves off from greater privileges and opportunities. Yea, many of them, we fear, are cutting themselves off from the kingdom, from glory, and from joint-heirship with the Lord in that kingdom. We should learn from this lesson, given us in Saul's experience, that our heavenly Father wishes us to be very attentive to his Word, and not to think for a moment that we can improve thereon, or that times and circumstances will alter the propriety of our obedience to him. Had Saul been obedient and the results disastrous, he would at least have had a clear conscience; he could have said that he had been obedient to God and was not responsible for the results. But if he had been obedient God would have been responsible for the results, and we know that divine power would have brought about the proper results. Let us apply the lesson to ourselves in respect to our daily conduct in every matter of life: let us hearken to the Word of the Lord and keep close to it, not fearing the results, but having faith that he who keeps us never slumbers nor sleeps and is too wise to err, as well as competent to meet every emergency that could possibly come upon us as a result of our obedience. How many of the Lord's people in Babylon would be blessed by following the instructions of this lesson. They have said to themselves, time and again, "I see that present institutions and arrangements are contrary to the simplicity of the Gospel of Christ and the practice of the early church, but what can I do? I am identified with this system and am engaged in sacrificing for its up-building; if now I withdraw my hand it will mean more or less disaster. I wish I were free from human institutions and that I had my hands filled with the Lord's work along the lines of his Word, but I cannot let go, for necessity seems to be upon me. I must perform a sacrifice and this seems to be

my most convenient place for so doing." The Lord is not pleased with such argument. His message to us is that to obey is better than sacrifice: leave the matter of your sacrifice in my hands;—it will amount to nothing anyway unless I accept it, and I accept sacrifices only from those who are first obedient. "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and receive not of her plagues."

Although the Lord announced the rejection of Saul, the prediction was evidently not executed for several years after; perhaps ten years the decree stood, as it were a dead letter, for quite possibly Saul was properly exercised by the rejection and became more attentive and more obedient to the divine will, and David, who was probably anointed about this time, was not yet sufficiently developed to be the Lord's representative in Saul's stead.

Saul's next severe trial was in connection with the Amalekites—a nomadic and fierce people who, on several occasions, had done injury to the people of Israel. In sending the message the Lord gave special instructions that the Amalekites should be destroyed, saying, "Utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not, but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." Without mentioning other of Amalek's transgressions, he specifies here that the destruction is on account of Amalek's opposition to Israel in the way when they came up out of the land of Egypt several centuries previously.

This narrative is seized upon by sceptics to prove either one or the other of two things: (1) That God sent no such message; that it was either the imagination of Samuel or Saul or of some one writing fictitiously in their names. (2) If it were accepted as being the command of the Lord, it would prove him to be a monster—lacking in justice, pity, sympathy and love—that he should thus command the wholesale slaughter of human creatures and dumb animals. There is but one answer to make to this matter, and it should be and is satisfactory to all who understand it. It is this:—

First, the slaughter of the Amalekites did not mean, as is usually inferred, that they, being admittedly wicked, went forth to eternal torture. Death had the same meaning to the Amalekites that it had to their cattle—a termination of whatever was desirable in the present life, and the desirable things in the present life were probably not more to the Amalekites than to their herds. The Amalekites suffered far less, slaughtered by the sword, than if they had been made the subjects of famine or a pestilence, and had died of hunger or disease—the ending of life with little pain to themselves or trouble to others—the ending of comparatively uneventful lives anyway. They all went down to the great prison-house of death—*sheol*, *hades*—the tomb. God foreknew and had already arranged a great redemption not only for them but for all mankind, and that redemption, secured by the great sacrifice of Christ centuries after their death—will by and by secure to them release from their imprisonment, an awakening from the sleep of death. They will be amongst the class mentioned by our Lord, saying, "All that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man and shall come forth." They will come forth under much more favorable conditions, to learn of the grace of God in Christ and to be amongst the families of the earth who shall be blessed by the seed of Abraham, spiritual Israel. They will not be in the chief or life resurrection, but will be awakened unto the privileges of restitution by judgments, corrections in righteousness.

Saul's next severe trial was in connection with the Amalekites the Amorites, that they would have been cut off sooner but that their iniquity was not yet come to the full. One lesson to be learned from this is that even though those nations may not be under special covenant relationship with God, there is a



certain divine supervision—that their iniquities go not too far, and that, when they have reached their full, punishment is to be expected. We know not the particulars respecting the Amalekites, but, knowing the character of God and his justice and mercy, we may be sure that, in some particular sense of the word, their iniquities had come to the full and running-over measure before this order for their execution was committed to King Saul.

Saul's error in this trial was his failure to carry out the command of the Lord explicitly. He slew all the Amalekites, old and young, except the king, whom he kept alive, possibly thinking to exhibit him in some kind of a triumphal display; but as for the flocks and herds, he consented with his people to spare all that were goodly and desirable—"The best of the sheep and of the oxen and of the fatlings and of the lambs, and all that was good, . . . but everything that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly." (Vs. 9)

It is at this juncture that the Prophet Samuel came to him and the colloquy of our lesson ensued. The general narrative—the indignation of Samuel and the Lord's positive announcement—clearly indicates that Saul had not misunderstood his instructions, but had with considerable deliberation violated them. Consequently we must understand his words addressed to Samuel to have been to a considerable extent hypocritical. He first salutes the Prophet with blessings, and assurances that he had performed the commandment of the Lord successfully. But immediately the Prophet replies, "What means, then, this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" The prophet understood at once that the work of destruction had not been complete, that Saul and the people of Israel were anxious to take a spoil. This was wholly contrary to the Lord's direction. They were not to destroy their enemies to their own advantage, but simply to act as the agents of the Lord in thus executing his decree, the sentence of justice. They were not to take booty and thus to become like the nations about them—a robber nation, profiting by the troubles they inflicted upon the enemies of the Lord. This is in full accord with the Lord's character and the foregoing explanation of it.

Saul, seeing that the prophet was not likely to sympathize in any measure with his violation of the command, began hypocritically to represent that all those fine sheep and oxen had been captured from the enemy to be sacrificed to the Lord, and incidentally this would have meant a great feast for the Israelites, because the flesh of animals so sacrificed was eaten by them. Samuel stopped the king in his explanation and told him of the Lord's words of the night preceding (which, in Jewish counting, would be "this night," because their day began in the evening). The message of the Lord calls attention to the fact that Saul was humble when he was chosen as the Lord's representative upon the throne, and at that time he was very willing to give strict obedience to the heavenly voice, but the intimation is that now he had grown more self-confident and therefore less reliant upon the Lord and less attentive to the Lord's commands; getting into the wrong attitude of heart, he had failed to properly execute a very plain specific direction. Knowingly and in violation of the Lord's command he had the spoil separated, and spared the best when the Lord had commanded the reverse.

If, in applying the principles of this to the Lord's people of today, we think of the Amalekites as representing sins and of how the Lord's command comes to us to put away sin entirely, utterly destroying everything that is related to it, we may get a good lesson. Like Saul, many are disposed to destroy the vilest things connected with sin, but to save alive the king sin, merely making him a prisoner. Many are disposed, too, to

seek out the things which they realize to be condemned of the Lord to destruction—such things as would be choice and desirable to their taste—and frequently, like Saul, they claim that even these sins of the less obnoxious kind are held on to for the purpose of sacrificing them and thus honoring God. How deceitful above all things is the heart! How necessary it is that all who would be in accord with the Lord should be thoroughly true-hearted, thoroughly sincere, and that under the Lord's direction we should seek to take away the life of every sinful principle, evil teaching, evil doctrines, evil engagements, unholy words and thoughts and deeds.

Saul sought to defend his course, to put as good a face upon the matter as possible and to lay the responsibility for the saving of the spoil for the sacrifice upon the hosts of Israel, who, with himself, were so desirous of offering sacrifices to the Lord. Samuel's answer is the pith of this lesson and contains its Golden Text. He clearly points out to Saul what the latter should have known, and what all should recognize, namely, that offering sacrifices is far less pleasing to the Lord than obedience to his Word. No one could offer an acceptable sacrifice to the Lord unless obedient in his heart and unless the sacrifice represented that obedience. So with the Lord's people today. It is not so much of ill-gotten wealth that we may sacrifice to the Lord; it is not so much the proceeds acquired directly or indirectly by wrong doing that we may sacrifice acceptably. Our sacrifice must be from the heart, and, first of all, must be the will. He who gives his will, his heart, to the Lord, gives all; he who gives not his will, who comes not in obedience of heart unto the Lord, can offer no sacrifice to the Lord that could be acceptable. "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice," is a lesson which should be deeply engraved upon the hearts of all the sanctified in Christ Jesus. To have the spirit of obedience is necessary, too, and whoever has the spirit of obedience will not only obey the divine will, but will seek to know the divine will more and more that he may obey it. It is of this class that the Scriptures declare, "His word was found and I did eat it;" and again, in the words of our Lord, "I delight to do thy will, oh my God; thy law is written in my heart."

Saul had been very diligent in his opposition to witchcraft and idolatry throughout the land of Israel, and in so doing was accomplishing a good work in accord with the divine plan, the divine will; but the prophet calls his attention to the fact that his energy in such matters would not prove an offset to his deliberate wilful neglect of the divine injunction. The Lord's commands against sin and every evil thing are to be executed to the very letter, no matter how highly exalted the sin may be in dignity and place, and no matter how precious or valuable or desirable or toothsome the sin may be to our fallen natures. Though it be as dear as a right hand or as a right eye, there is no course open to the Lord's followers but to be obedient—even unto death.

Although fully rejected, Saul's removal was not yet due. Samuel associated himself with him in a public sacrifice, commemorating the victory over the Amalekites, and on this occasion he slew Agag with his own hand—departing then to his own home. He never afterward saw Saul, yet the Scriptures declare, "Nevertheless, Samuel mourned for Saul"—thus again showing us the beauty and strength of his character. He was ready to do the command of the Lord in any and every particular, yet was not without a feeling of compassion for those who were out of the way;—not a compassion which would make them his friends and lead him to coöperate with them in their wrong course, but a compassion which would have been glad to have coöperated with them at any time in a righteous course.

## THE LORD LOOKETH ON THE HEART

1 SAM. 16:4-13.—AUG. 2.

GOLDEN TEXT:—"Man looketh on the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart."

Saul's rejection by the Lord because of disobedience meant not only his own ultimate removal from the kingdom, but that his family, his sons, should not succeed him in it. It meant, also, the Lord's selection of another man, another family, for the office of ruler in Israel and representative of the Lord upon the throne. The Lord's choice was David, to whom Samuel indirectly referred, saying, "The Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou [Saul] hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee." (1 Sam. 13:14) David, at the time of this lesson, was about twenty years old; consequently, the words of the prophet just quoted must have been uttered about the time of David's birth. Thus we have another illustration of God's foreknowledge and design, in respect to those whom he specially uses in his service,

from their very earliest moments. Similarly, God's choice of Jacob was declared before he was born; and similarly, the Apostle Paul tells us that he (Paul) was chosen of God from his mother's womb. We are to separate from this declaration any false thought respecting the divine choice, and note that none of these were chosen to eternal life, but each of them, all of them, chosen and fitted for special service. It gives us a suggestion of the possibility of paternal and maternal influences affecting the natural disposition of a human being from before his birth. He still has a will, and even though favorably endowed, it remains with himself to determine, to will, whether or not he will walk in the Lord's ways, and to what extent he will be obedient. There is no coercion of the will, for the Lord seeks such to worship [serve] him in spirit—willingly, heartily—and in truth.

David's grandmother was the gentle Ruth, who gleaned grain probably in the very fields with which David was familiar. His grandfather's name was Boaz, a page of whose history is recorded in the book of Ruth. His father Jesse, like his grandfather, was doubtless one of the elders of the city of Bethlehem, respected and honored as a noble man. Of his mother we know little, except that he mentioned her twice as "a handmaid of God."

Samuel mourned and prayed for Saul, and was apparently disappointed that this man, of whom he had expected such great things and under whose guidance he had anticipated great prosperity for Israel, should be rejected. Quite probably fearful forebodings of a civil war to result from the installation of a new king perturbed the prophet's mind. He knew that Saul would not quietly submit to lay down the scepter which he had taken up with so great modesty in obedience to the Lord's arrangement; his mental eye could see the probability of civil strife which might rupture the nation and cause great trouble. He should have had greater trust in the wisdom and power of the Almighty, but his trouble was more or less like that which assails all of the Lord's people even today. The lesson from this to our hearts should be that we will implicitly trust the Lord to manage his own affairs: that we will trust him where we cannot trace him, and be obedient to his directions, and, so far from mourning at the execution of his plans, will rejoice, knowing that all things are working together for good to them that love God—that all things will ultimately work blessings for those who are in accord with the Lord—blessings for the future life if not for the present.

When sent to anoint David, Samuel exhibited a power not elsewhere noticeable in his character. He did not hesitate to perform the Lord's bidding, but intimated that he clearly understood that it meant the risk of his own life—that Saul would kill him as a traitor if he should anoint a successor to the kingdom. The Lord made it clear to him that it was not the intention to make the matter known at once, and directed him that he should go to Bethlehem and make a sacrifice there, and, incidentally, improve the opportunity of finding and anointing the one who, in due time, would be made known and exalted to the throne. At the time, he was merely to perform the initial work, which David's father and brethren would not understand, thinking, perhaps, that the anointing meant special blessing or a commission from the Lord to engage as one of the members of the school of the prophets or something else of this kind. Quite probably, however, the Prophet privately informed David of the meaning of the anointing, just as he had privately informed Saul when he secretly anointed him to the office of king.

The lesson takes hold of the subject at the point when Samuel had arrived at the town of Bethlehem. The Elders were in fear, thinking that his presence signified some sin on their part or on the part of some of their fellow-citizens which God had sent him to reprove and to punish; hence, their inquiry whether or not he came peaceably—whether or not his presence meant a blessing or the infliction of a penalty. Their fears were allayed when they heard that his mission was a peaceable one—to offer a sacrifice there unto the Lord. Some time before this the ark had been captured by the Philistines, and the tabernacle services thus discontinued had not yet been reestablished; for this reason this sacrificing was performed by the Lord's specially appointed prophet. The command to the people of Bethlehem to sanctify themselves if they would be participants in the blessings of the sacrifice, signified that they should wash their persons and put on clean clothes and draw nigh to the Lord with their hearts. Thus they typically represented that justification and sanctification which the church of this Gospel age enjoys. Samuel seems to have taken supervision of the family of Jesse to the intent that he might without public display find the man whom the Lord had chosen and anoint him to the office and give him the divine blessing in preparation for it. Jesse properly introduced his sons to the prophet, according to the order of their birth, his eldest, first; and as he was of fine appearance Samuel naturally assumed that he was the Lord's choice! but as he looked to the Lord for direction in the matter he got the response (in what manner we know not) which constitutes the Golden Text of this lesson. Judging from the human standpoint of appearance, age, ability, etc., Eliab was the most suitable person in Jesse's family to be the king over the nation; but not so in the Lord's sight. The Lord was looking at the heart and had already selected David as a man after his own heart, although at this time being under age, etc., his father had not thought worth while to send for him to be present at the feast. As one after another appeared, and the prophet found not him whom the Lord's spirit indicated as the one to be anointed, he inquired, "Are all thy children here?" when Jesse suddenly re-

membered that he had another boy, his youngest, in the field with his sheep.

Our Golden Text appeals to all in connection with the high calling of this Gospel age, and year by year experience shows us its general applicability. We, too, as the Lord's messengers, are seeking for those to be anointed with the oil of gladness, the holy spirit, that they may be kings and priests unto God in the kingdom he is about to establish, which will supersede present kingdoms. We too, like Samuel, might feel afraid to proceed with this work of anointing the successors of present institutions, did we not realize that the work of sealing the elect of the Lord, which is now in progress, is a secret work which the world cannot understand. Indeed, none understand this matter of the sealing, the anointing of the holy spirit, except those who have received it, and they are all of the David class. The name David signifies "beloved," and as it applied specially to our Lord and Master, of whom it was said by Jehovah, "This is my beloved Son," so also it applies to all the members of his body, each one of whom must be beloved, else he cannot be acceptable as a member. The Head says of such, "The Father himself loveth you," and again he says that we should love one another as he has loved us. It is not too much to say that all who receive this anointing of the Lord must ultimately be of this David, or beloved, character—the spirit of love must be in them, love for the Lord and love one for the other, else they are none of his.

In seeking for the Lord's anointed who shall by and by reign in Millennial glory for the blessing of the world, as antitypes of David, we notice that as he was counted by his brethren too insignificant to be considered in this connection, so also are those whom the Lord is choosing and anointing for his heavenly kingdom. Our Lord Jesus was disesteemed of his brethren, and when the suggestion was made that he should be the Lord's anointed, his people hid, as it were, their faces from him—disdained him, despised him, and considered him hopeless in respect to anything great or glorious,—"as a root out of dry ground." The same has been true respecting the members of his body, the true elect church; they also have been despised and rejected of men, and of them the Apostle declares, We are counted the filth and offscouring of the world; we are counted fools all the day long for Christ's sake.—1 Cor. 4:13.

Again he declares that "not many great, not many wise, not many learned, hath God chosen; but chiefly the poor of this world, rich in faith, to be heirs of the kingdom." And this principle of the divine selection of things that are not [esteemed amongst men], to bring to naught the things that are [esteemed by men], is noticeable all throughout this Gospel age. Often have we, like Samuel, looked about us amongst men seemingly eligible to a place in the kingdom—upon those who are high in position,—socially, intellectually, morally, educationally,—and in the esteem of men, and expect that surely the Lord would sanction their anointing with the oil of gladness, and grant them a knowledge of the truth pertaining to the kingdom, etc., only to find ourselves mistaken, and to get a fresh lesson that God looketh not on the outward appearance but upon the heart. We concede that we are unable to read the heart, but we are fully satisfied to accept the divine decision in such matters, and to trust that when in due time all the secrets of this present time shall be disclosed, we then shall be able to understand the meaning of the Lord's selections more completely than we do now—we shall then be able to see what a difference there was between the hearts of those the Lord accepted and the hearts of those outwardly humble, whom he did not so highly favor in respect to the kingdom call. Meantime, we must simply wait and trust the Lord and accept his decisions, as expressed by our dear Redeemer when he said, "I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemeth good in thy sight."—Luke 10:21.

Instructed respecting the Lord's methods, we are not to despise the least, the most ignoble or illiterate of those who give evidence of a purity and honesty of heart toward God, and to whom he seems to give the anointing of his spirit and the "ear to hear." Rather, while making known the message to all as we have opportunity, we are to rejoice specially with those upon whom the Lord's favor is manifested, regardless of their earthly surroundings, etc. The Lord knoweth them that are his, and it is for us to recognize, to honor and to coöperate with all such, as the ambassadors and representatives of our Lord and Master.

Often have we thought as we have looked over a congregation of the Lord's people and beheld some not prepossessing in personal appearance, some not well educated or refined, some ignoble, but, nevertheless, bearing the marks of the