

(2) He gave the place a name, calling it Beth-el, the house of God, in commemoration of the blessing.

But this was not enough: he said to himself, Although I have been a follower of the Lord, and am even now here because of my faith in the divine promise to Abraham, yet now that God has personally favored me with these assurances of his presence with me, and his assistance along the journey of life and his ultimate fulfillment in me of all these promises, what should I render unto the Lord for all his benefits? He resolved that he would (3) make a vow, a covenant of fidelity to the Lord. It was this: Since God will be with me and will keep me in this way which I go, and provide me bread to eat and raiment to wear, so that I shall return hither again in peace, and in view of this promise he shall be my Lord, my God, which signifies that I shall be his servant, his creature. The stone set up as a monument served as a corroboration, a witness to the vow, and additionally Jacob vowed that of all that God gave him he would surely give a tenth part to the divine service.

We consider such a consecration of himself and of his income as the reasonable proper course on Jacob's part. The man or woman who receives blessings from the Lord or from anyone without thought, desire and wish to make returns according to his ability, shows thereby his degradation, because surely every noble-minded person would be prompted to consecration by a realization of the Lord's favors and privileges. So the Apostle declares respecting the spiritual Israelite, that we have received of the Lord exceedingly great and precious promises. Having come to this place where we are at the foot of the ladder and in touch therewith, and recipients of the blessings from heaven and the privilege of this association, we should consider it, he tells us, a reasonable service to present our bodies living sacrifices to him.—Rom. 12:1.

We should esteem it a great joy, a great privilege, to be the Lord's servants. We do not become his servants in order to get his blessings, but his blessings have been conferred upon us conditionally: we are pleased to present our bodies living sacrifices to his service. Jacob vowed one-tenth of his income to the Lord's service, and this proportion seems to have been in general recognized at that time and probably previously, as we know it was subsequently incorporated in the Mosaic Law. Abraham gave a tithe, one-tenth, of the spoils to Melchisedec, and the king of Sodom made a similar offering to Abraham, which the latter rejected, preferring to receive gifts from the Lord only.

Theoretically the Christian gives his all to the Lord, and theoretically the Lord accepts our all of time, talent, influence, money, all. But actually, when we consider the time necessary for rest and for the reasonable care of our earthly interests, we are fortunate indeed if we are able to give directly to the Lord one-tenth of our time. Similarly with all of our gifts, privileges and opportunities—so many of them are necessary to ourselves, our reasonable well being, the providing of things honest in the sight of all men, it is doubtful if very many, therefore, give to the Lord much more than one-tenth of all their substance. And surely if this was a command to natural men, we, as new creatures, would feel ashamed to proffer the Lord less. We certainly should set apart at least one-tenth for the Lord, and then add thereto as much as possible according to the Lord's blessing and the possibilities of the case. We, too, should set up pillars or memorials as marking this special blessing received of the Lord.

A provision has been made for us along this line by our Lord. Has he not provided the Memorial season, in which annually we are privileged to celebrate our Bethel?—that we are the house of God because with us is the Son of man, the ladder, the connecting way between earth and heaven, between us and the heavenly Father. How earnest we should be to perpetuate this Memorial, and how we should appreciate the fact that its recurring lessons are amongst the most helpful that could possibly be our experience. And did not our Lord provide for us another Memorial, and set us the example in the use of it, too, when he symbolized his consecration to death by baptism into water? How glad we are that we can set up this Memorial also, that it is our privilege to be symbolically buried and symbolically raised as a manifestation and expression of our faith and our hope and our joy. Whoever neglects the vow of consecration, and whoever neglects to set up this Memorial, is thereby to this extent evidencing a carelessness and a deficiency in the spirit that is pleasing to the Lord; and in the same degree he fails to have the witness that he pleases the Lord and is making his calling and election sure. Let us, then, like Jacob, arise early. We may set up these memorials and make these vows of consecration. Those who have done these things early in their Christian experience—early after coming to the foot of the cross, the foot of the ladder—have received proportionately the greater blessing as they have gone on in life's pathway.

VOL. XXVIII

ALLEGHENY, PA., APRIL 1, 1907

No. 7

## VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER

### WILL BAPTISTS AND CHRISTIANS UNITE?

With a proposition before it looking towards the merger of two great religious denominations, the ninth annual congress of the Disciples of Christ, which will meet at the Central Christian Church in Cincinnati the first week of April, will be of national importance and of great significance in the religious world. At the 1906 congress, held in Indianapolis, a committee of ten was appointed to make overtures and formulate a plan for "closer relations between the Baptists and the Disciples of Christ." This committee will report at the conclusion of the three-days' session of the congress in Cincinnati. Its report will advocate the merger of the two churches, and it is probable that an agreement will follow, which, within the next few years, will bring about consolidation.—*Cincinnati Times-Star*.

\* \* \*

These two great denominations claim to have "no creed but the Bible." They, however, advocate very different views of baptism, which is one of the cardinal doctrinal tests of both. Nevertheless, if the preachers can unite, undoubtedly their flocks will follow them, for they generally do not comprehend the doctrinal difference. The people of both would be quite ready for the clearer Bible teachings presented in ZION'S WATCH TOWER were it not for the power of their preachers, exercised to suppress thought and Bible study and liberty.

### SOCIAL SYSTEM DOOMED UNLESS IT IS REFORMED

Dr. Jacob Gould Schurman, president of Cornell University, in an address delivered recently in Old Trinity Church, New York, attacked the present industrial system and declared that, unless something was done for the wage-earner by the big capitalists, the end would be social revolution. Dr. Schurman's remarks created a sensation. He said in part:

"Steam, electricity and consolidated capital are in our own days eliminating the small producer and the small trader.

The chance of young men becoming independent producers and traders, when business is conducted on the scale of millions, instead of thousands or hundreds of dollars, is vastly less than it was in the time of our fathers.

"The wage-earner, feeling himself and his children doomed to poverty, rises in rebellion against the economic system which makes such things possible. He protests that capital gets too large a share of the product which laboring men create. His remedy, when he has a remedy, is confiscation of private capital in the public interests and the establishment of a socialistic State, in which all such workers shall receive compensation in proportion to their deserts.

"Somehow—I know not how, but somehow—the organizers and financiers and managers of our modern establishments of production and transportation must devise a method whereby the men whose labor builds them up shall become shareholders in the enterprises. The present discontent and rankling sense of injustice must be got rid of, if our economic and industrial system is to survive."

\* \* \*

Thus we note from time to time that some see what is coming, even though they follow not with us and are ignorant of the Bible's teaching on this subject. They "fear for looking after those things coming upon the earth." Our Lord says that his followers, better instructed, may lift up their heads and rejoice, knowing that their redemption draweth nigh.

### INSANITY IN CHICAGO

A newspaper dispatch from Chicago says:—"The State Board of Charities, in an official report to the Governor, declares one in every ninety Chicagoans is insane and needs watching, and that 58,000 persons in the State are unfit to be at large."

\* \* \*

Insanity is greatly on the increase, proving that this is not the "brain age," in a good sense of the term. New



**"METHOD" OF SELLING DAILY HEAVENLY MANNA**

"Good morning! If you are at all interested in religious matters, I would like to show you what some have styled 'Heavenly Breakfast Food.' It will cost you *nothing* to see it, and only take a few moments of your time, for I am in haste myself. (If now asked into the house, take from your pocket your sample MANNA and continue.) This volume contains a Scripture text on a practical topic for every day in the year, with a very brief remark on its salient features—entirely unsectarian. To start each day in the year under such helpful influences results in untellable blessings. It is

good for ten years, and all that blessing you may enjoy for 50c, or only 5c per year. The Bible and Tract Society believes that in circulating this 'Heavenly Manna' it is helping people to both physical and spiritual health: food digests better under good influences.

"Another feature is this (pointing to lined pages): An Autograph and Birthday Record of your friends, which by the end of ten years would make it priceless to you. May I take your order? I will deliver next—day: you pay then. Perhaps you would want more than one copy—for friends near or afar. You could scarcely present a more suitable gift, nor one which they would more appreciate."

**THE PASSOVER DATE THIS YEAR**

When the new moon comes a little before the Spring Equinox it starts the Jewish ecclesiastical year;—provided the full moon be not before the Equinox. It was so this

year: our reckoning March 28, evening, as the beginning of the 14th of Nisan was in exact accord with Jewish observances.

**DISCUSSING A RENOVATED EARTH**

REV. J. A. SEISS, D.D., LUTHERAN (DECEASED) WROTE:

These words occur in connection with the Apostle's endeavor to impress his Jewish brethren with a sense of the greatness and glory of the Lord Jesus and of the salvation which is preached in His name. He begins the epistle by announcing the Savior to them as the Son of God—the appointed Heir of all things—the Maker and Upholder of the worlds—the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person, who has been exalted to the right hand of the Majesty on high. These were sublime statements, and needing to be well substantiated to be made acceptable. He therefore instituted various lines of argument, adapted to the Jewish mind and founded upon the Scriptures, which all held to be divinely inspired. And as the Jews regarded angels as the highest created orders, and as standing next in the scale to the eternal Father himself, Paul's first effort was to prove from prophecy that

**CHRIST IS SUPERIOR TO THE ANGELS**

He introduces three points in which the super-angelic dignity is shown. The first is that Christ is assigned a higher name than the angels. The second is that he is clothed with a sublimer honor than the angels, and the third is that Christ is invested with a sublimer office than the angels, they being only ministering spirits, while he is spoken of as a divine King, whose throne is forever and ever, and the sceptre of whose kingdom is a sceptre of righteousness. The princely investiture and reign of the Messiah is thus distinctly deduced from the Old Testament, and used by the Apostle as the sublimest demonstration of the Savior's personal dignity. And this Messianic dominion he applies particularly to what is hereafter to grow out of the gospel economy. He tells us that it is peculiarly "the world to come" over which the Messiah's reign is to be exercised. "For unto the angels hath he not put into subjection the world to come, whereof we speak," thus proceeding upon the implied assumption that it has been by promise put into

**SUBJECTION TO CHRIST**

and that all those allusions to the Savior as a king have their chief application and ultimate fulfilment in that "world to come." The Messiah's reign and this world to come accordingly belong together and coexist in the same period and locality. By determining, then, what is meant by this "world to come," we may form an idea of what is included in the Messianic kingdom; or, if we already know what the consummated Messianic reign is, and where it is to be, we have it already decided what we are to understand by this "world to come."

If any stress is, therefore, to be laid upon the conclusion evolved in the preceding discourses, there is no alternative left but to understand this "world to come" as the Millennial world, or the world as it shall be when Christ shall have restored the throne of David and entered upon his glorious dominion as the Sovereign of the nations and Lord of the whole earth. And to this agrees exactly the original word, *oikoumene*, which means the habitable earth—the domiciliated globe on which we dwell—and not some remote supernal region, as we sometimes imagine. The world to come, then, is nothing more nor less than this self-same world of ours in its final or Millennial condition. The earth is not to be annihilated.

**GOD NEVER OBLITERATES**

His own creations. The dissolving fires of which Peter speaks are for "the perdition of ungodly men," and not for the utter depopulation and destruction of the whole world. They may consume cities, destroy armies and effect some important meteorological and geological changes; but men and nations will survive them and still continue to live in the flesh. The earth is to be renovated and restored from its present depression and dilapidation, and thus become "the new earth" of which the Bible speaks. It is to pass through a "regeneration" analogous to that through which a man must pass to see the kingdom of God; but there will be a continuity of its elements and existence, just as a regenerated man is constitutionally the same being that he was before his renewal. It will not be another earth, but the same earth under another condition of things. It is now laboring under the curse; but then the curse will have been lifted off and all its wounds healed. At present, it is hardly habitable—no one being able to live in it longer than a few brief years; but then men shall dwell in it forever without knowing what death is. It is now the home of rebellion, injustice and guilt; it will then be

**THE HOME OF RIGHTEOUSNESS**

It is now under the domination of Satan; it will then come under the blessed rule of the Prince of Peace. Such, at any rate, is the hope set before us in the Word of God, and this I hold to be "the world to come," of which the text speaks. It cannot be anything else. It cannot be what is commonly called heaven, for the world *oikoumene* cannot apply to heaven. It is everywhere else used exclusively with reference to our world. Neither can it be the present gospel dispensation, as some have thought, for that began long before this epistle was written and could not, therefore, have been spoken of by Paul as yet "to come." We are consequently compelled to understand it to mean our own habitable world in its Millennial glory. And as the prophecies concerning the Messiah's eternal kingship are here referred to as having their fulfilment in the subjection of the Millennial world to his dominion, we are furnished with another powerful argument of Scripture in favor of the doctrine of Christ's personal reign as a great Prince in this world. Indeed, the Bible is so full of this subject, and its inspired writers are so constantly and enthusiastically alluding to it that I am amazed to find so many pious and Bible-loving people entirely losing sight of it. Ever and anon the Scriptures return to it as

**THE GREAT AND ANIMATING HOPE**

of the church in all her adversities and depressions, and it does seem to me that we are depriving ourselves of much true Christian comfort by the manner in which we have been neglecting and thrusting aside that glorious doctrine. My present object is to show, from the Scriptures, and by just inferences from them, what sort of a world this "world to come" is, and to describe, as far as I can, what we are to look for when once this earth has been fully subjected to that divine King whose throne is forever and ever, and the sceptre of whose kingdom is a sceptre of righteousness.

That "the world to come" is a highly blessed world, and a vast improvement upon the present scene of things, will be inferred on all hands without argument. It could

not be a subject of hope if it were not. The Savior himself exhibited a model of it when in the Mount of Transfiguration,—from which, perhaps, we may obtain as deep an insight of its glories as from any other portion of Scripture. That he designed

#### THAT SCENE AS A MINIATURE MODEL

of what his future coming and kingdom is to be, is obvious. A week before it occurred he told his disciples that "the Son of man shall come in the glory of the Father, with his angels or messengers with him"; and that there were some standing there when he made the declaration who should not taste of death till they saw the Son of man coming in his kingdom." This coming in his kingdom, which some of the disciples were to live to see, is not the final advent, for the disciples are all dead, and the final advent is still future. Neither is it the destruction of Jerusalem, for but one of the apostles lived to see that catastrophe, and the Son of man did not then come in his kingdom. And yet some of the apostles were to have ocular demonstration of the Son of man's coming in his kingdom before tasting of death. Search through apostolic history as we will we shall find nothing but the transfiguration to which the Savior's words will apply. That, then, was in some sense the coming of the Son of man in his kingdom. It was

#### NOT, INDEED, THE COMING ITSELF

but it was an earnest and picture of it. It was the coming of the Son of man in his kingdom, as the bread and wine in the eucharist are Christ's body and blood.

Peter says: "The power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" are not "cunningly devised fables." He declares that he was certified of their reality by the testimony of his own senses. We were "eye-witnesses," says he, "when we were with him in the holy mount." We thus have clear, inspired testimony that the scene of the transfiguration was a demonstrative exhibition of the coming of Jesus in his kingdom. Hence, whatever we find in the descriptions of that scene, we may confidently expect to be realized in that "world to come whereof we speak." As Christ appeared in that glorious scene, so he will appear when he returns to this world. As he was then personally present as the Son of man, so he will be personally present in the Millennial kingdom. And as he was there attended by different classes of persons, so will his glorious kingdom consist of similar classes.

Let us, then, endeavor to draw out before us some of the more striking features of "the world to come," and, by the contemplation of its attractiveness, endeavor to school our hearts into more ardent thirst to participate in its blissful scenes.

I do not wish to depreciate in the least those gracious arrangements of heaven under which we now live. It is a blessed thing to have the Bible and to attend properly on the means of grace and to enjoy the renewing and comforting influences of the holy Spirit. In giving to us these things God has endowed us with mercies for which we never can be sufficiently thankful. But he authorizes us to look for greater things than these. The present economy is only preparatory to something higher and more blessed.

## A NEW NAME—GOD-GIVEN

Genesis 32:9-12, 22-30.—APRIL 14.

*Golden Text*—"Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."—Luke 10:20.

Our last lesson saw Jacob en route for his Uncle Laban's home, a journey of about 500 miles. His subsequent experiences in the service of his uncle, and how he became a wealthy owner of flocks and herds, and the father of a large family, belong to the interim. The present lesson finds him nearing his old home. Remembering the anger of his brother Esau when they parted 20 years before, he sent at the hands of servants several valuable presents of cattle, sheep, etc., with the message that he was coming on in peace. In reply he learned that Esau with 400 mounted men was coming forth to meet him, and he feared that this meant an unkind reception. Our present lesson opens with Jacob's prayer to the Lord at this time when he was in fear of his brother. It is

#### THE FIRST RECORDED PRAYER OF THE BIBLE

Scholars have pronounced this a perfect prayer as measured by the standard of the Lord's prayer; for it seems to follow the same general lines: (1) Adoration to the Almighty; (2) humiliation and self-effacement in the presence of the Lord; (3) petition for divine care and protection; (4) repetition of the divine promises as the ground for faith and hope. The various parts of the prayer thus indicated are: (1) "O God of my Father Abraham, and God of my Father Isaac, the Lord which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country and to thy kindred, and I will do thee good: (2) I am unworthy of the least of all the mercies and all the truth which thou hast showed unto thy servant; for with my staff [without other possessions] I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two companies [referring to his large possessions of flocks and herds and herdsmen, etc., which he had divided into two bands or companies]: (3) Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him lest he come and smite me and the mother with the children [i. e. root and branch]: (4) And thou saidst I will surely be with thee, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude."

It cannot be claimed for Jacob nor for any of the ancient worthies (nor for anyone else for that matter) that they were perfect and that therefore the Lord favored them. The one thing that stands out sharply, distinctly, above any other thing in the character of Jacob, as in that of Abraham and of Isaac, is his faith. Let us remember that he did not live under the favored conditions which we enjoy of fellowship with the Lord through the Scriptures, through the holy Spirit and through communion with the brethren—that on the contrary he was alone in his faith. Nor had anything in particular been explained to him respecting the grand ultimate consummation of the divine plan as it is our privilege now to see this through the telescope of the divine Word

and the illumination of the spirit of truth. He merely knew that a promise had been made to Abraham that seemed to imply the ultimate blessing of the world through his posterity, and his faith had grasped this promise, so that to him it had become a reality, the predominant power and influence in his life. For that promise he had endured and was still enduring, and confident even in the face of hostility, even though he trembled in fear of his greater antagonist—for by this time Esau, the possessor of Isaac's wealth and the lord over his servants, was known as the "prince of Edom."

#### CONFIRMED BY BETTER PROMISES

The lesson to us is that a still greater promise being left to us—that is to say, the same promise having further developed and divided into two parts, and the higher or spiritual feature having been bestowed upon the church of Christ—we who realize ourselves to be heirs of this same promise, and who now see its spiritual force and significance, have still more reason than had Jacob to humble ourselves before the Lord, to acknowledge our dependence upon him, to ask him for deliverance from the great enemy and from every foe to our best interests, and to plead his gracious promise, confirmed unto us in the death of Jesus our Lord. Ah, yes! the Apostle clearly indicates this when he says to us, "If ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise."—Gal. 3:29.

Jacob indeed will come in as one of the heirs of the earthly phase of the blessing, but the distinguished honor of sitting in the throne has passed to the spiritual Israel, and we who are now called according to the divine purpose should be very alert to make our calling and election sure; and still more intelligently and more fervently should we, who have now been brought nigh by the blood of Christ, glorify our Father in heaven in respect to the riches of his grace, to which he assures us we are welcome upon a manifestation of the necessary faith and obedience. Shall we not cry day and night unto the Lord respecting the exceeding great and precious promises given unto us, and our expectation of realizing them—that we may have grace and strength to overcome, to come off conquerors through him who loved us and bought us with his precious blood?

#### WRESTLING IN PRAYER

Jacob was not content merely to pray; he labored also, and set his affairs in the best possible order for the ordeal of the morrow and in arranging his company into two great bands. Then the prayer probably was continued, only a synoptical statement being given us. The particulars are not recorded, but apparently an angel of the Lord appeared to him in human form with some communication respecting his prayers and his fears. In his earnestness to have the

divine blessing Jacob laid personal hold upon the angel, urging a blessing—feeling that it was a matter of imperative need, that he could not be fit for the events of the morrow unless he had this blessing.

Jacob's experience here reminds us of our dear Redeemer's experiences in the garden of Gethsemane, when he wrestled with strong cryings and tears, pleading with him who was able to save him out of death, out of the hands of the great enemy. Our Lord agonized for long hours and finally got the blessing. And so it was also previously in Jacob's case here narrated: he urged, he pleaded, he wrestled with the Lord for the thing which he knew the Lord had promised him—the divine blessing upon his home-coming and in respect to his future as a servant of God and an heir of the oath-bound promise. The entire procedure of the night is briefly summed up in a few words in our lesson, "They wrestled until the breaking of the day"—the angel apparently endeavoring to avoid giving him the blessing, and Jacob determined so much the more that the blessing was necessary and that he must have it. It was then that the angel touched Jacob's thigh, wrested the sinew. But in spite of all Jacob held on and got the blessing with the break of day.

We are not to suppose that God was averse to the giving of this blessing and that Jacob prevailed to secure it in opposition to the divine will. On the contrary, we are to understand that it was God's good pleasure to give the blessing. He had already intimated this; but that the blessing might be valuable to Jacob it was withheld for a time until he would more and more feel his need of it and cry out and struggle to obtain it, that when obtained it might be the more highly esteemed, and effect thereby the greater influence upon his heart and faith and future course. And it is so with our prayers. "The Father himself loveth you," is the Master's word; nevertheless, Jesus said we should pray and not faint, not grow weary, not lose our interest in the things desired if they are the things that God has indicated to be in harmony with his will. If, for instance, we read in the Scriptures that the Lord is more pleased to give his holy Spirit to them that ask him than earthly parents are to give good gifts to their children, then it cannot be amiss for us to watch and pray with patience and continuance for this holy Spirit—that we might obtain this great blessing, the character-likeness of our Lord.

#### "THE TRIAL OF YOUR FAITH"

We have found that it was often by bringing us into severe trials, ordeals, putting us under crucial tests, that the Lord develops more and more our faith, our love, our trust, our hope in him. He would have us learn well our lesson, that without him we can do nothing, but that with his blessing and favor all things are ours, because we are Christ's and Christ is God's. Let us, then, in all the important junctures of life, be sure that we are seeking chiefly the divine will, as expressed in the divine promise, the Oath-Bound Covenant: let us seek it patiently, earnestly, persistently—let us wrestle with the Lord that thereby we may be made the stronger, that when the proper and advantageous experiences have been enjoyed the blessing will come—at the proper moment to do us the most good and in the manner that would be most helpful.

In some respects this return of Jacob to the promised land shadowed the coming return of his posterity, which is even now at hand. As a nation they are even now trembling for fear of extermination in all parts of the world; they know not when the blow will fall nor in what manner their interests will be injured, but those of them who are in the right attitude of heart toward God will, we believe, very soon come to this praying point. The Lord intimates this, saying respecting the day just before us, "I will pour upon them the spirit of prayer and of supplication, and they shall look upon me whom they pierced." (Zech. 12:10.) The result of this praying, supplicating, will be the blessing of the New Covenant under which, with the Lord's favor, they will go on to the grand fulfilment of the gracious things already declared more than 3,000 years ago.

#### THE NEW NAME—A PRINCE WITH GOD

As a part of the blessing granted by the angel in the name of the Lord, Jacob's name was changed to Israel, explained to signify that he was a prince with God, or had great power with God, as exemplified by the fact that he had secured this blessing by the demonstration of great faith and loyalty and zeal. This name, Israel, is the one by which all his followers prefer to be known—they are Israelites. As the Gospel church is termed in the Scriptures spiritual Israel, and as the head of the church is Christ, we see another parallel or foreshadowing by Jacob of Jesus—of

Jesus' struggle and our Lord's ignominy in the garden. It was because our Lord overcame, because he exercised faith and obedience, that he indeed is the great Prince of the Lord, appointed the great Prince and Savior for the people.

Already Christ is the Prince of the church, which in obedience to his call is seeking to walk in his steps, that they may be joint-heirs with him in the glorious Oath-Bound Covenant which he has inherited, just as the Israelites sought to follow Jacob and become heirs of the same promise. But as there were tests upon Jacob, so also there needed to be tests upon his people: and likewise as there were tests upon our Redeemer, so there must be tests upon all of his people, his followers, his Gospel church. Many of the people of natural Israel stumbled because of lack of faith—not holding on to the divine promise they were overcome by the spirit of the world, the spirit of selfishness, etc. Similarly today, in this harvest time of the Gospel age, we find the indications to be that many more have been called than will be chosen—than will be worthy of acceptance as footstep-followers of the Redeemer, the true Israel, the spiritual Prince with God. As Jesus was the prevailing Prince with God, so all of those whom he accepts as members of his body, his church, must also have the same spirit and be, in the language of the Scriptures, "overcomers."

#### THE CHURCH'S NEW NAME

By his faith Jacob obtained a rank, a standing, amongst his posterity with his father Isaac and his grandfather Abraham, and in olden times no Israelite would appropriate any of these three names—they were considered too sacred for others than the originals. The changing of Jacob's name reminds us of other similar changes: for instance, amongst our Lord's disciples Simon was renamed Peter, and again Saul of Tarsus was renamed Paul, and this gradually led to the custom prevalent throughout Christendom of giving to every convert a new name, a Christian name, and this principle was eventually applied to children of believers and ultimately to all children.

But God proposes a new name for his people—his church—the bride, the Lamb's wife. As Jesus was our Lord's name and he became the Christ, the Messiah, so all who become members of his body come under his new name, and are recognized of the Lord and may be recognized of each other as members of the Christ (Rev. 3:12); and again, the Lord, prophetically speaking of Christ, says, "This is the name whereby he shall be called, The Righteousness of Jehovah," (Jer. 23:6): and again, speaking of the bride of Christ, we read, "This is the name by which she shall be called, The Righteousness of Jehovah," (Jer. 33:16.) The name of the bridegroom is given to his bride—"They shall be mine, saith the Lord, in that day when I make up my jewels." (Mal. 3:17.) And those who will get this new name, we may be sure, will all be called upon to demonstrate that they will be overcomers. They must all pass approval before the Lord for their faith and their persistency in holding to him and his gracious promise—the Oath-Bound Covenant.

#### "DO IT NOT, WORSHIP GOD"

The answer of the angel, when Jacob in turn asked for his name, reminds us of the words of the poet,—

"O! to be nothing, nothing—  
To him let their voices be raised,  
He is the fountain of blessing,  
Yes, worthy is he to be praised."

The angel seemingly had no desire to flaunt his own name and have it handed down to posterity. He was content that he was the mouthpiece and representative of Jehovah God, and desirous that the Lord alone should have the honor and distinction of having conferred the blessing, and that the instrument through which the divine favor was extended might not be in evidence to detract from the glory of the Lord. Would that all of us who are the Lord's people could take exactly this unselfish view of our various opportunities to serve the Lord and his brethren—to be willing to be out of sight ourselves that all might the more clearly see that the blessings conferred are from the Lord alone. This thought is brought to our attention in Rev. 19:10, where John, as a representative of the church, having heard and seen wonderful things, fell at the feet of the angel to worship him who had showed him these things. The command was, "See that thou do it not, for I am thy fellow-servant—worship God." So if there come to any of us a thought of doing homage to the Lord's messengers or servants through whom his blessings has been bestowed upon us it will be proper for him to give the admonition, "Do it not, worship



God"; and in any event it would be our duty to fully recognize that our blessings come not from any human being but from God, however much he may use human instrumentalities

in conveying his blessings. He alone is to be honored and revered and appreciated as the Author and Giver of every good and perfect gift.—James 1:17.

## "HATED OF HIS BRETHREN"

Genesis 37:5-28.—APRIL 21.

"Where envying and strife are, there are confusion and every evil work."—Jas. 3:16.

The Bible story of Joseph is one of the most interesting known to literature in any age and in any language. The portion which belongs to this lesson might easily be termed a tragedy. It illustrates human nature good and bad, and in its various types and incidents furnishes valuable lessons, prominent among which is the oft-repeated one referred to in the golden text—that envy is one of the principal roots of human depravity—selfishness—and that from this root have sprung some of the most injurious influences and experiences known to man—"every evil work." As we study the present lesson let us have this thought in mind, and apply each to himself the moral. If in our fallen condition envy can produce such terrible fruitage, how much on guard against it every true follower of the Lord should be. How each should realize that to permit the growth of even the smallest shoot of this root in his daily life might lead on to most disastrous consequences to him as a new creature.

Realizing this, each should be on guard for the extermination of this weed from the garden of his own heart. One writer has even said, "There is but one man who can believe himself free from envy, and it is he who has never examined his own heart." Undoubtedly this evil root of selfishness is to be found in every imperfect son and daughter of Adam, whether it is flourishing under favorable conditions or dormant for lack of them, or from the overmastering power of grace. Only the heart that is aflame with love for God supreme and for his neighbor as himself is in a condition so sterile as respects envy that the latter has no opportunity for development. With an abatement of our love for God and man comes a corresponding increase of favorable influence for the development of this root of envy and its concomitants of anger, hatred, strife and every evil work—yea, murder—all of which the Apostle tells us are works of the flesh and of the devil, and hence to be shunned by all those who now and by and by would have the Master's approval. Whatever may have been the natural tendency of our flesh, the new nature begotten of the holy Spirit of the Lord, the spirit of love, is expected by the Father to dominate and render sterile to envy all whom he recognizes as children of God. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."

### "JOSEPH, THE BELOVED SON"

At the time of our lesson Joseph was about seventeen years old, next to the youngest of Jacob's twelve sons, and his father's favorite. He was the son of the gentle Rachel, the specially loved wife of Jacob. Evidently he partook in large measure of his mother's gentleness as well as of his father's courage and faith, as all of his subsequent history shows. His elder brothers were of coarser type, so that all the circumstances and conditions justified Jacob in having a preference for Joseph, in considering him his specially beloved son. His father procured for him what in the common version is called a coat of many colors, and in the revised version a coat of extremes. It is presumed that the extremes were not of colors but of lengths—that the coat was long and had long sleeves, thus differing from the ordinary coats of the working people and corresponding to the style worn by the aristocratic. It is suggested, however, that the coat may have been of many colors, because upon some of the ancient monuments of Egypt such long coats are pictured as having been made of material of bright colors joined together in a kind of patchwork; thus it is possible that both translations are correct.

In any case the coat was a distinct one, and, in conjunction with Jacob's acknowledged preference for Joseph, it helped to fix the jealousy and bitterness of his brethren, who in it saw the suggestion that in their father's opinion Joseph would eventually be a ruler amongst his brethren—his father's successor as the chief of the household, the tribe. We need not here stop specially to criticize the unwisdom on the part of the father in manifesting so pronounced a favoritism. We can, however, realize that Joseph had such peculiarities as justified favoritism and special love. In this, as well as in many other respects, the Scriptures clearly indicate that Joseph was a type of Jesus. The latter was the heavenly Father's beloved Son, and he

similarly was rejected by his brethren, he similarly was sold for silver, he similarly was delivered, we are told, for envy. (Matt. 27:18; Mark 15:10.) More than this, Joseph typified the entire body of Christ, every member of which is to some extent represented in his experiences—to every member of which our Lord's words apply, "The Father himself loveth you."—John 16:27.

### THE VALUE OF DREAMS

Certain dreams which Joseph had and which evidently were in some manner inspired by the Lord, and prophetic, tended to further embitter his brethren, serving to fertilize the root of bitterness and envy which was in their hearts. One of these dreams represented a wheat-field in which were twelve sheaves, one of which arose and stood upright while the others fell before it, as though doing homage. Joseph without evil thought, apparently, told the dream to his brethren, and they, lacking faith in the Lord and submission to the divine will, were angered by the very suggestion that their younger brother should ever be their superior—"And they hated him the more for his dreams and for his words." The words referred to Joseph's report of misconduct on the part of some of his brethren. Righteousness, justice, seems to have been an integral part of Joseph's natural character, and his report of his brethren was not a slander but merely what he considered to be proper, that his father should know the manner in which his business was conducted. (v. 2.)

Another of Joseph's dreams enkindled the anger of his brethren, and even drew a protest from his father, as though Joseph's ambitions were the groundwork of his dreams. Nevertheless, Jacob pondered these things in his heart, and doubtless wondered how great his favorite boy might some day be. This second dream pictured the sun, the moon and the stars bowing to one star, and was interpreted to mean that the whole family would some day acknowledge Joseph as their superior. How preposterous this must have seemed to them all, including Joseph. Poor boy! His subsequent lessons in life doubtless taught him to be more secretive, not to tell every dream and hope, not to cast his pearls to those who could not appreciate them, but who would be angered thereby. How necessary to us all is the lesson of wisdom along the lines of secretiveness. Our Lord illustrates this, saying, "I have many things to tell you, but ye cannot bear them now." There is a time to tell and a time to refrain—we all need to watch and to pray, "Set a guard, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips."—Psa. 141:3.

### GOD'S WORD SUPERIOR TO DREAMS

With the Scriptural record of inspired dreams before us it would be folly to denounce them and to declare them unworthy of any consideration. We remember the other miraculous dreams that Joseph interpreted, also Jacob's, Peter's, Paul's, etc. On the other hand we need to guard ourselves lest dreams should be given undue importance. We are to remember that there was an appropriate necessity for dreams in the olden times which does not exist at the present time; because the Gospel church is expected to walk by faith and not by sight—is expected to listen to the voice behind them saying, "This is the way," rather than to expect a miracle or a dream to indicate the path of righteousness. The path beyond us is shown by the divine Word, and we are to cultivate the ears of our hearts that we may have the proper direction. In harmony with this the Scriptures say, "He that hath a dream let him tell a dream, but he that hath my Word let him speak my Word." (Jer. 23:28.) Here the Lord indicates that a dream might be told if we have nothing better to tell—nothing more direct, nothing more authoritative; but that the Lord's Word, his revelation, his inspired testimony is to be put far above all dreams of our own and of others. If a dream, therefore, corroborates some plain statement of the Word of God it may be used and appreciated in the same sense that we use and appreciate a type—not to teach a doctrine or duty, but to illustrate and call attention to the statements.

### "COME, LET US KILL HIM"

Joseph's faithfulness in reporting facts led Jacob to make him a kind of overseer, and it was probably in this capacity that he was again sent to his brethren to Shechem, a three

days' journey—to carry to them some delicacies and to bring word again to Jacob of the general conditions prevailing, the prosperity of the flocks, condition of the pasturage, etc. Not finding his brethren at Shechem Joseph followed directions to Dothan, manifesting in the whole procedure a considerable degree of courage and self-reliance, sleeping outdoors at night as was the custom of the time and braving the dangers of the way. This shows us, too, that Jacob's love for his favorite son did not lead him to spoil him entirely, and that that the boy himself was recognized as one who could be trusted in a general way to care for himself. Many parents today are less wise, and fail to cultivate courage, determination, etc., in the children they favor—sometimes shielding them from difficulties in a manner which proves ultimately very prejudicial to their interests.

The brethren as shepherds were accustomed to keep a sharp look-out for wild beasts likely to injure the flock, and discerned their brother at a distance. Forthwith the circumstances and conditions tended to a rapid germination of their root of envy and bitterness, and in a few moments had sprouted and brought forth in their hearts the spirit of murder. Nine of the ten at once agreed to kill their brother. The only one to object, and he covertly, was Reuben, who knew too well the bitterness of his brethren to venture to oppose them, and as a counter suggestion he urged that they do not murder him but put him into one of the dry cisterns of those parts, intending in his heart to subsequently return and secretly deliver his brother.

In these brethren we see illustrated the heart of the natural man, which might at one moment fight for justice and shortly thereafter violate every principle of justice. Was it not these same men who now, in violation of all brotherly love, were planning their brother's murder, who only a short time before had avenged the dishonor of their sister by slaying the population of a whole village—in what they considered a righteous indignation against sin? The transforming influence of the holy Spirit is necessary to correct these violent extremes of the fallen flesh; hence the Scriptures tell us that those who are begotten again of the holy Spirit alone have the "spirit of a

sound mind." (2 Tim. 1:7.) Truly in the natural man pride is an important factor, and often leads to murders and lynchings, ostensibly in the defense of righteousness—really in the gratification of an element of selfishness. It was then similarly pride, one of the roots of selfishness, that led to that wholesale murdering; and it was envy, another root of selfishness, which now led them to attempt to murder their brother.

#### "STRONG CRYINGS AND TEARS"

Reuben's plea was effective. Joseph was put into a pit and the brethren sat down to eat bread, doubtless consuming some of the very delicacies that Joseph had brought to them from home, while the poor boy's cries and entreaties and appeals rang in their ears. They were stony-hearted, unmerciful, as well as unjust: and indeed the natural heart is usually unmerciful. Mercy is often extended through shame or fear or policy amongst worldly people, but mercy in itself is an element of love which, although it originally belonged to human nature, has very generally been lost, and is principally an evidence amongst those who have been begotten again in heart-likeness to their Lord.

Our lesson does not mention the cries and entreaties and pleadings of the imprisoned Joseph, but another Scripture does when later these same brethren were forced by the famine in Canaan to go to Egypt to buy wheat. Their brother Joseph was governor there, and he, affecting to consider them spies, put them in jail three days. It was while they were there that their minds were more or less awakened to the wrong doings of previous years, and they said one to another, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother in that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us." Reuben's reply to them was, "Spake I not unto you saying, Do no sin against the child; and ye would not hear? Therefore, behold, also his blood is required." Apparently Reuben departed from that vicinity after Joseph was imprisoned, intending to return later for his deliverance, but upon his return he found that his brethren had sold him to a company of merchantmen who had taken him as a slave into Egypt.

## PATIENT ENDURANCE IN ADVERSITY

Genesis 39:20-23; 40:1-15.—APRIL 28.

*Golden Text*—"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."—Rev. 2:10.

The story of Joseph's trials and difficulties is a most pathetic one: yet we see that in all these things the blessing of the Lord was with him, and he, faithfully responding, his experiences, instead of doing him injury, were on the contrary greatly to his advantage. Although Joseph lived long before the Pentecostal blessing as we experience it—long before the bringing to light of the exceeding great and precious promises of the heavenly nature and kingdom glories and invitation to the elect to share therein—though Joseph had only the indefinite revelation of God's mercy contained in the great Oath-Bound Covenant given to Abraham, nevertheless his faithfulness and patient endurance constitute a wonderful lesson to the household of the spirit-begotten sons of God of this Gospel age. If he could endure so patiently and so faithfully, what should not we, so much more highly favored, be able to endure? The secret of his success and ours is the same, namely, a fast hold by faith to the Abrahamic Covenant, which, as the Apostle says, we have as an anchor to our souls, sure and steadfast, entering into that which is beyond the veil. (Heb. 6:19.) The consideration of this lesson should nerve, energize, every one of the Lord's consecrated people to still further endurance and faithfulness under the circumstances and conditions that the Lord's providence may mark out for them.

#### JOSEPH A SLAVE IN EGYPT

The Ishmaelitic traders, to whom Joseph's brethren sold him for twenty pieces of silver, took him to Egypt, where he was exposed for sale in the open market, as was the custom of the time. We can well imagine the anguish of the poor boy. Delivered from the pit in which his brethren had put him to die he soon realized that they had not repented at heart, but merely changed the form of their murderous envy. Passing not many miles distant from his father's abode the dejection of the boy of seventeen can be better imagined than described, and arriving in the Egyptian metropolis, the center of civilization at that time, and beholding there wonderful things entirely new to him as a shepherd's son, his heart must have been full of suspense and wonder as to who would purchase him and what would be his future lot in life. There was plenty of room in all of these experiences he had recently passed through for him to lose faith in God—to wonder why he should be left to the mercy of his pitiless brethren, why he should be allowed to become a slave, separated from his father's

home. Yet we have no intimation that his faith forsook him.

In the Lord's providence he was purchased by a wealthy official of Egypt named Potiphar. As a servant in this man's house he was faithful to his duties small and great, and grew in his master's confidence and esteem until, at the age of twenty-two, he was made manager of his entire estate. When twenty-seven years of age—ten years after coming to Egypt, in the prime of young manhood, he unwittingly attracted to himself the love of his master's wife, but when it manifested itself he persistently resisted it on the lofty grounds of faithfulness to God and faithfulness to his master. Dr. Blake pointedly remarks of this

#### TRIAL OF JOSEPH'S VIRTUE

"We may believe that it was no ordinary temptation when, day after day, the mistress of the house, expert in amorous arts, came to spread the net, with every allurements which her skill and her passion could devise. We may conceive how even Joseph might be moved by the thought that, slave as he was, he had attracted the admiration of a woman of such rank, and how the vision might flit before him that through her influence he might recover his liberty and in a bright career realize his dreams after all."

The conduct of Potiphar's wife well illustrates how love may be changed to bitterest hate. In her determination she grasped Joseph by the coat, but he slipped out of it, and then her rage and resentment became bitter. She kept the coat and told her husband that his favorite servant had endeavored to entice her to do evil, and that when she made outcry he fled, leaving his coat in her possession. What a turn this was in Joseph's affairs! Why should the Lord permit him to be thus scandalized, not only in the eyes of his master, but amongst all those with whom he had formed an acquaintance in the ten years of his residence there? Why should the Lord permit his virtue to be so evil spoken of?

This probably seemed to Joseph a mysterious providence, yet in the light of the subsequent story we can see how the Lord's providence had not forsaken him, but was ready to make even this experience work out to his further instruction in righteousness, patience, experience, faithfulness, and to prepare him for still greater blessings by and by—on the throne. The lesson for us of this spirit dispensation is most evident and most striking: as it was not because of Joseph's

unfaithfulness that the Lord permitted this trial to come upon him, so it does not speak unfaithfulness on our part and retribution from the Lord if trials and difficulties may be permitted to come upon us. Are we not learning every day more and more to trust the Lord where we cannot trace him in his providences, when we cannot see the end of the way? If we could see the end would it be faith at all? Is it not our lack of knowledge of the future that constitutes the very virtue of faith in the present time?

#### "ABANDON US NOT IN TEMPTATION"

The great Spurgeon once remarked, "In contending with certain sins there remains no mode of victory but by flight. The ancient naturalists wrote much of basilisks, whose eyes fascinated their victims and rendered them easy victims; so the moral gaze of wickedness puts us in solemn danger." In harmony with this thought the Apostle wrote to Timothy, "Flee youthful lusts." (2 Tim. 2:22.) Jesus' example in this matter is a wonderful lesson to us all respecting loyalty to the principles of righteousness even to the extent of hazarding the brightest hopes and prospects of an earthly kind. And if we may well copy this lesson of fleeing from temptation, we may also note with the prophet another lesson in this connection, for when Joseph's master Potiphar was very angry with him, so far as the evidence shows, Joseph contented himself with merely denying the allegation without attempting to demean Potiphar's wife by relating the facts of the case. What a noble example is here given us of avoiding evil speaking, even when that would be the truth!

Joseph's noble heart probably reasoned that while it would have been no more than justice to have revealed the wickedness of the woman, such a course would not only have damaged the wife but have dealt an irreparable blow to Potiphar's affection for her, thus destroying his master's confidence and breaking up his home. Willingness to endure under such conditions is a marvelous illustration of high and noble integrity—character. Such a man was indeed fit for a throne—but not yet; God had other experiences for him before he would be ready for the exaltation intended. So with us: God has called us to the throne of the Millennial kingdom to be associated with our Lord and Redeemer in his great work; but first we must be made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, and trials and buffetings and testings of patient endurance are essential to the development of such character as the Lord seeks.

#### THE STRENGTHENING OF CHARACTER

A lump of rock candy is pure carbon and a diamond is pure carbon, yet there is a difference between them which consists mainly in the fact that the diamond has been crystallized to an extreme degree of hardness, firmness, solidity. So there is a difference between the states and conditions of the new creatures in Christ. At one time we are mere "babes in Christ," but if faithful through patient endurance and the Lord's instructions and disciplines of providence we are to become strong in the Lord and in the power of his might—the "babe in Christ" corresponds then to the pure carbon in the form of rock candy, while the mature Christian, developed in the furnace of affliction, etc., corresponds to the diamond. We remember in this connection the Lord's assurance that at the close of our trial time in the end of the Gospel age, at his second coming, he will make up his "jewels."

At that time undoubtedly an official of Potiphar's rank would have been permitted to kill his slave under such a charge, and the fact that, instead, Joseph was imprisoned, may therefore be taken as an intimation that Potiphar was not fully convinced of the treachery of the man who had served him faithfully for ten years. But a prison in olden times differed greatly from a modern prison in civilized lands. Joseph, in mentioning the prison, "dungeon" (v. 15) in the Hebrew calls it a "hole," and a minister familiar with oriental prisons of today says:—

"We have visited many a prison in the Levant; we have seen . . . intolerable filth and want of ventilation, the excess of vermin, the unmerciful stocks in which the feet are made fast. We may well pity virtuous Joseph, who was indeed, as claimed by tradition, put into the prison dungeon of the present city of Cairo, which is composed of dark, loathsome and pestilential passages where the prisoners are chained to the wall."

Joseph's experiences in prison are referred to by the Psalmist (Psa. 105:18), saying, "Whose feet they hurt with fetters; he was laid in irons."

What was the effect of this new experience upon Joseph? Was he discouraged, cast down, embittered in soul? Did he say to himself or to others, If this be the reward of virtue,

give me vice? Did he repine against the Lord's providences in permitting this experience, or was he patiently submissive, trustful? Joseph was in all these experiences the most wonderful, model example of the proper course of a true Christian and saint. And again we suggest that if he could be faithful with as little light as he enjoyed respecting the Lord's permission of this evil, what might not the Lord reasonably expect of us who have been blest with so much greater light and instruction, and with the noble example of Joseph and scores of others in the Scriptures and in our own experiences—what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy living and godliness and faith in God?

For very shame's sake we should strive at least to come up to the standard of Joseph—we who have the exceeding great and precious promises—we who have the explanation of why our trials and difficulties are permitted and how they are to prepare us for the kingdom and its glorious work. Can we not readily see how Joseph's trials and difficulties developed character in him? and how, as he overcame in one instance after another, he was becoming stronger—his character was crystallizing? Ah! no wonder he will be amongst the "ancient worthies" who, in the future, after the glorification of the church, will be made princes in all the earth for the ruling and blessing and uplifting of the entire human family, under the guidance and direction of the Christ, head and body. Most evidently the Lord knows how, not only to select the wonderful characters for his service, but also to develop these characters and prove and test them, and make them strong for his service and their blessing.

#### "THE LORD WAS WITH HIM"

Joseph's experience in the stocks was a limited one. Evidently the prison-keeper discerned that he had a prisoner of no ordinary character and ability, whatever might be charged against him. His reverence for the Lord and his faithfulness to duty made him a marked man, and the keeper of the prison was glad to give over one responsibility after another into Joseph's hands. According to the story, Joseph's own experiences made him tender-hearted toward the other prisoners, whose degradations and sorrows he was enabled to enter into by reason of his own experiences. He was learning noble lessons, which would fit and prepare him for higher usefulness as the governor of Egypt. The secret of the whole matter is told in the lesson in a few words, "The Lord was with him, and that which he did the Lord made to prosper."

Whoever has reverence for the Lord in any degree will be proportionately blessed; much faith, much reverence, much obedience will surely lead to much blessing in heart and life—to much supporting and steadying of character, whatever it may have been by nature—to much of the spirit of a sound mind, however erratic the person may have been naturally to begin with. In all these respects we who have the instructions of the Lord's Word or the encouragement of his promises and the guidance of the spirit of a sound mind are greatly blessed. In proportion as we make use of them and develop the proper character we shall have the ultimate reward and hear the Master's voice, saying, It is enough, come up higher. Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

We should never forget, as "new creatures in Christ Jesus," the exhortation of the golden text to faithfulness—to the Lord (which includes faithfulness to the brethren, to the truth, to righteousness in every sense of the word). This faithfulness must be tried, tested, proven, clear down to the end of life's journey—until we go into the prison-house of death. "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life." The Lord whom we serve is able and willing to open the prison-doors and bring us forth in the first resurrection to a share in the glory, honor and immortality of his own kingdom. Hallelujah, what a Savior! what a salvation! and for what a peculiar people these are intended! Such thoughts incite us—as was the divine intention—to strive to make our calling and election sure.

#### PROSPERING IN PRISON

Well might the chief jailor be content to leave the care of the prison in Joseph's hands. We may well imagine the cleaning up of the dungeon effected under his direction, and that a measure of peace would reign within those dark walls quite in contrast with the bedlam that had previously prevailed. Wisdom, mercy, gentleness, patience, were all, we may be sure, needed and exercised; and the model prison not only effected a blessing upon those who were incarcerated, but brought a blessing also to Joseph in his own heart—development, and additionally in that our own joy and peace



are always ministered to when we endeavor to solace the woes of others.

A picture of how Joseph dealt with the prisoners is given in the lesson: instead of treating them rudely and roughly, he looked after their interests to such an extent that he noticed one morning that two of the prisoners were of peculiarly sad countenance, and he tenderly inquired, "Wherefore look ye so sadly today?" They had dreamed, and they were in trouble lest their dreams boded further adversity. Joseph said unto them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell me them, I pray you." How evidently the secret of Joseph's faithfulness and strength of character lay in the fact that he had faith in God—that he believed in the great Oath-Bound Covenant that God had made with his great-grandfather Abraham, confirmed to his grandfather Isaac, and again to his father Jacob, and of which he was an heir. What a power faith has in life to hold it steady in every storm and cloudy trouble!

One of the dreams bore a most favorable interpretation, and Joseph requested the one who would so shortly be set at liberty and restored to the king's favor that he would remember him and his kind attentions to him while in the prison, and speak a good word to the king on his behalf, that he might be relieved from the dungeon. And in explaining the matter let us not overlook the fact that he neither incriminated his brethren nor Potiphar's wife, but merely said as an excuse for his being in prison, "For indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews, and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon." It was not necessary that he should speak evil of any in order to plead his cause, and he abstained. What an evidence we here have that our race 3,000 years ago were neither monkeys nor savages. On the contrary, this natural

man, not begotten of the holy Spirit (which did not come upon any until the Gospel dispensation—Pentecost), had such a marvelous development of generosity, love, that he seems not even to have been severely tempted along the lines of evil speaking—and that without any instruction, either oral or written.

How this story should shame many who have named the name of Christ and have professed to turn their backs upon sin and every evil work and who well know that evil speaking is closely related to the works of the flesh and of the devil. Joseph had not the instructions of our Lord and the apostles to the effect that love is the principal thing, that love thinketh no evil, suffereth long and is kind, is not easily provoked, etc.; and that this love is not only appropriate amongst the Lord's people, who should love one another as he has loved us, but must be extended also to our neighbors, that we may love our neighbors as ourselves—yea, beyond this, to our enemies, who are to be fed and clothed by us if they need our assistance. Thank God for the lesson of Joseph—enduring affliction, yet full of faith, mercy, gentleness, patience, kindness. How evidently the mind had to do with all this character-development. Without the hopes set before him in the Abrahamic promise, Joseph might have been as dispirited and characterless as the majority of mankind. Remember, too, that it is the same promise that we are heirs to, as the Apostle declares—Christ is the heir, and if we be Christ's then are we Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise.—Gal. 3:16, 29.

"Virtue may be assailed but never hurt;  
Surprised by unjust force, but not enthralled;  
Yea, even that, which mischief meant most harm,  
Shall in the happy trial prove most glory."

## ENCOURAGING WORDS FROM FAITHFUL WORKERS

Dear Brother Russell:—

I received a letter a short time ago that was so very encouraging to me that I feel I must tell you about it in order that you may be encouraged also. While canvassing last summer I met a man who when I told him that I was introducing *STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES*, remarked that I had perhaps stopped at the wrong house, as he did not or could not believe the Bible. He said he was very sorry that the Bible taught eternal torment, that only for that he might be able to believe it. When I assured him that the Bible did not teach the doctrine of eternal torment he seemed very much surprised that I would make such a statement and said, "It surely does teach it." I told him that the Bible teaches that the wages of sin is death, that the soul that sinneth shall die, and that the wicked shall be destroyed, etc. I then briefly told him what a loving heavenly Father we have, and how far he would be from torturing any one, and that the books which I was selling clear up these false accusations which people have been making against our heavenly Father, and that they would also strengthen his faith in the Bible. When I had finished he asked me when I expected to deliver. When I told him he said he would like to have them sooner if possible, as he was getting old and might not have much longer to read. So I promised to deliver his books the next day and did so. I was in the town only about two weeks afterward, but called a number of times to see him and always found him with either *DAWN* or Bible in hand. I gave his name to the friends in the town so that they might keep in touch with him. The letter above referred to is from one of the brethren there, who says that this man, once an infidel, is now one of the happiest men in the world, that he is now fully in the truth and has four of his friends interested also, two of whom have subscribed for the *TOWER*. They are all rejoicing together and we rejoice with them, not only because we are being so greatly blessed but because the time for the establishment of the kingdom is so near, when all the families of the earth are to be blessed.

Sister D— joins me in much love to yourself and all of the Bible House friends.

Yours in the one good hope,

H. W. DICKERSON,—Colporteur.

Dear Brother Russell:—

It is with a rejoicing heart that I am writing to you to tell you of the deep things of God that I am enjoying. My dear husband and I have only been in the truth three months. What great joy the reading of the *DAWNS* has given us! So many questions arise and all seem to be answered in the *DAWNS*. We did so wonder whether we be of

the true wheat, since learning that the call ended in 1881; but we have just finished Vol. 3 of the *DAWNS* and found the answer. The dear Lord would not give us a taste of these things if he did not mean that we should fully attain them. How good and gracious he is to those that try to follow in his steps! But how many tumbles we do have! Then I get up and start afresh. I wish I could express in words what the *DAWNS* have done for us. We now feel more contented about the at present unsaved. It did seem such a terrible thing for those that did not believe to be eternally tortured. How such teaching has blasphemed God's character, the one who is all love. How beautifully his character is set forth in his marvelous plan! It seems so wonderful that everything in the plan had been arranged in the beginning and also how grandly all is being carried out! My mind seems too small to grasp such wonderful truths.

My husband and I came out from the Brethren and they think us among those false prophets who are to arise. Little do they realize of the deep, deep joy to be had in knowing our dear Lord and to be led by his loving hand. I have in this little time realized to some extent the steepness and narrowness of the way which leadeth unto life. But I do so much long for that Christ-like character and to shine for his sake, to shine for him who has done so much for all mankind.

We are having the *WATCH TOWERS* now. How helpful they are. I do thank our dear heavenly Father for raising you up to give us this meat in due season. The Lord has provided all that is needful for his church. It seems to me to be like a great big feast and the more you eat the more you want. My husband joins in sending Christian love and may God bless you in your labors is the prayer of us both.

Yours in our dear Redeemer,

G. & M. HINE,—Eng.

Dear Brother Russell:—

May the Lord, guide, uphold and bless you through all the coming year, and, dear Brother, I ask your prayers that he may be with me and keep me safe from evil, toward which I am so prone. I am learning to distrust myself more each day and I want to learn to trust him more for the grace and strength to overcome my many weaknesses and failings.

Would say that I am learning to love the Colporteur work more each day and while at first it was somewhat unpleasant work, to which I had to force myself, owing partly, however, to much natural timidity and backwardness in approaching strangers, it is now a pleasure, especially as I often meet persons who appear to be hungering for something better than they have.

At present I devote the first four days of the week and Friday morning to the Colporteur work. I have other duties