

seek to keep God's commandments, and do so willingly, not feeling them "grievous." Thus we see that he is speaking only of the consecrated class; and since we know that there were none righteous,—no, not one,—of all of Adam's race, and since we know also that the unrighteous could not be accepted as joint-sacrificers with Christ, we know assuredly that the Apostle John had in mind a class of consecrated and spirit-begotten ones, who previously had been prepared by a knowledge of Christ and by a faith in him unto justification.

That "new creature" represented by the new mind which is now begotten of the holy spirit when the justified believer reaches that point where he sacrifices the human will and presents himself unreservedly to the Lord, is merely "begotten." The present life is the formative period during which there is no independent life, but merely the reckoned one of our "mother," the Abrahamic Covenant. (Gal. 4:23-31) Our birth will be in the first resurrection, when we shall be "born from the dead." Then we shall have life and our mother covenant will be dead, having borne the promised seed that shall bless all nations. Compare Col. 1:18; Rev. 1:5.

HOW WILL THE DEAD HEAR?

Question.—What is implied by the expression, "The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of Man and they that hear shall live?"—John 5:25.

Answer.—The Greek text seems to be in full harmony with the English, and neither can be understood logically and in harmony with other Scriptures, except by understanding this to mean that the dead of mankind shall be awakened to such a condition as will permit them to hear, comprehend, understand, tho they will still be dead from the divine standpoint—dead in trespasses and sins—dead in the sense of being still under divine sentence of death. Then after hearing, comprehending, if they respond to the hearing, if they obey the voice, the command, the instruction, of that day of judgment, they shall eventually attain to perfection of life—being raised to the living-point gradually by the processes of restitution or resurrection, by (through) judgments, during the Millennium.

The fact is simply this, that a fall took place, a fall from a certain standing or condition of perfection and life and a redemption was provided at Calvary, on account of which there may be extended to all who fell an opportunity to rise again. The rising, be it never so insignificant in its begin-

ning, must go on to completion—until the subject shall have been raised out of death into life. This raising up is necessarily up to the point or condition from which the fall occurred, and anything short of that would not be in the proper sense of the word a raising out of death and to perfection of life.

When considering the word *anastasis* it is proper that we should interpret it along this line, which is its only true and logical meaning, and if it were in any place used in a less comprehensive sense, it would evidently be the exceptional use of it, and should not militate against its full meaning.

But let us look for a moment at the resurrection of the just ones and the resurrection of unjust ones. There will be no question as to the resurrection of just ones, that to them *anastasis* means a perfect raising up to perfect conditions in the first resurrection. Likewise, we claim, is its meaning in respect to unjust ones. It does not say that all of the unjust ones will be raised up, and other Scriptures show that this will not be the case, but that only such of the unjust ones as will conform themselves to the laws of the kingdom, will thus be raised up and that others will fall back when but partly raised up and suffer second death;—those who refuse to hear (obey) their Lord in that day. Compare Acts 3:23.

JOINING TRADE UNIONS

Question.—Can I consistently join a Trade Union? I prefer to be free, but am threatened with loss of employment unless I join one.

Answer.—The Lord's injunctions are specifically along the lines of religion, and hence our separateness from unions should be specially along this line. A trade union has nothing of a religious worship connected with it, as have the churches and some of the secret orders. Of course, as those who are free indeed in Christ, we would prefer not to incur any obligation except to the Lord, but if obliged to join a Trade Union to obtain employment, I think you would do right to join one. I would, however, state to them that I preferred not to join them (not for the sake of the dues, being quite willing to pay my share of maintaining the proper price of labor), but from a desire to be free, lest at some time the Union might wish to dictate to my conscience what would not agree with it. I would therefore give them notice at once that I would be obedient to the demands of the Union so far as my conscience agreed, and that only.

ONLY A FEW MORE YEARS

—FRANCES C. SHORE.—

Only a few more years to learn our part.
Just a few more miles the race to run;
So gather courage fresh, O fainting heart!
O weary "feet," thy journey soon is done.

Only a few more months, but full of toil,
For in the "field" are hungry souls to feed,
Then struggle on, O weary, burdened one!
For thou shalt find a strength in time of need.

Only a few more days of willing sacrifice,
Of patient standing when our work is done;
Soon in his radiant presence we'll rejoice,
And praise him in our everlasting home.

Only a few more days to fill with love—
Love for all God's creatures, friend and foe,
Love which shall cover every human fault,
And bring a balm for every earthly woe.

Only a few more hours, we know, for some,
Who in this life have fought a goodly fight,
Henceforth for them remains a glorious crown,
A rest within the radius of God's light.

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER

A ZIONIST LEADER'S VIEW OF JESUS

Dr. Max Nordau, a widely known Hebrew leader, not long since in reply to a question concerning his view of Jesus, wrote the following:—

"The picture of Jesus as we have it given by the synoptic gospels is a vague outline and is a typical and ideal Jewish character. He observed the law; he taught the morality of Hillel—love thy neighbor as thyself—he constantly occupied himself with matters of eternity; he felt himself in spiritual communion with God; he despised that which was mortal in his being and all the accidental things of this life on earth. All these are characteristic peculiarities of the best Jews of the time of the Roman supremacy, especially of the Essenes. And as to his origin and ethical physiognomy, there, too, the language of Jesus was throughout Jewish. For all of his parables, parallels can be found in greater or less abundance

in the Talmud. His prayer, the most beautiful that a believer ever formulated, is the quintessence of Jewish ideas concerning the relations between man and his Creator. The Sermon on the Mount is the substance of rabbinical ethics; its figures and comparisons are common among the rabbis.

"Jesus is soul of our soul, as he is flesh of our flesh, and who, then, could think of excluding him from the people of Israel? St. Peter will continue to be the only Jew who will say of this descendant of David: I know not the man! If the Jews have not to the present time paid that tribute of public honor to the exalted moral beauty of the character of Jesus, the ground for this is to be sought in the fact that those who tormented them did so in his name. The Jews concluded what the Master was from the doings of the disciples. This was a wrong, but it was pardonable on the part

of those who were eternally the objects of the never-ending hatred of so-called Christians. But every time that a Jew went back to the original sources concerning Jesus and learned to study Christ without regard to his followers, he was compelled to exclaim in amazement: Without accepting his Messianic claims, this man is of us! He honors our race and we claim him as our own, as we also claim the synoptic gospels as examples of genuine Jewish literature.

"And the revision of this trial? This had been done long since. The most learned specialists in the department of Jewish legal procedure have proved beyond the shadow of a doubt that the trial of Jesus, as tradition reports it, could never have taken place before a Jewish court of law. If Jesus was condemned to death, it was done by the Roman judge, and no Jew, faithful to his law, had the least thing to do with it.

"Jesus would never have been condemned to death on the cross before a Jewish court, as this method of punishing criminals was not allowed by the Jewish law; and it never could have taken place on a Friday, the evening before the Passover, as the law stringently forbade any execution on that day. If the Jews had condemned Jesus after the manner reported by tradition, then they would have committed a series of crimes, each of which would have been severely punished by the Jewish law. It is accordingly certain that the whole story of the trial of Jesus can be nothing but an act of vengeance intended to punish the Jews for not having recognized the divine mission of Christ."

This is interesting as showing the change that has come over the people who cried, "His blood be upon us and upon our children!" The Doctor's expression is falling into line with the Prophet's declaration of what must soon be the attitude of the Jews as a people, viz., "They shall look on him whom they have pierced, and shall mourn for him as one mourneth for an exceptional son."

Undoubtedly the best reading matter for the Jew is the New Testament, whose simple Gospel narrative and whose masterful Pauline arguments refer him freely to the Old Testament and show prophecy and fulfilment, type and anti-type. However, we are not to expect Israel's blindness to fully depart before the divinely appointed time;—when the elect Gospel church shall have been completed and glorified. Nor are we then to expect their blessing and enlightenment except through the great trouble in which they will share with all others, and out of which they shall be saved and blest by the glorified spiritual Israel.—Rom. 11:25-27, 31.

METHODISM MORE DEMOCRATIC

The basis of the Methodist Episcopal church is hierarchical, exclusive, all power and authority being vested in the hands of the "clergy." But for some years public sentiment has been growing in favor of a more democratic arrangement, culminating in a demand that the "laity" be granted equal representation and voice with the ministers and bishops in the regulation of the M. E. church's affairs.

The ministers were loth to part with any measure of their "authority" and power, but finding the "laity" persistent they have with as good grace as possible finally yielded the point, as the following dispatch from the General Conference at Chicago shows:—

"CHICAGO, May 2.—The pulpit and the pew will hereafter share equally in the highest governmental body of the Methodist Episcopal church. Without a dissenting vote the General Conference, which opened at the Auditorium to-day, ratified the action of the annual conferences in extending equal representation to the laity. The 157 provisional delegates were admitted without a contest.

"The step taken makes the Methodist church a democratic body, and the rule of the preacher passes with the century. As the roll was made up to-day there are 356 preachers and 236 laymen on the regular list. At least 50 reserve laymen will close some of the breaches in the delegation."

Radical as this step is, it has little meaning and will have little effect in the affairs of Methodism, and it is because the preachers realize this that they yield the point without special contest. They well know that the *name* and *form* of liberty and power are all that their "laity" care for or know how to appreciate. So long as the preachers can keep "their people" in ignorance on the subject of hell, etc., they can manipulate them just as well in conference as elsewhere.

A memorial has been drafted for presentation to this General M. E. Conference requesting that the strictures of the Methodist discipline against dancing, theatre-going, etc., be expunged.

The Methodist "tares" know that they have just as much right to such things as the Presbyterian "tares" and the Baptist "tares;" and though they have been enjoying the interdicted amusements for years and intend to continue so to do whether the conference cancels the prohibition or not, yet somehow they would feel just a little more free if the words were not there. Not that their consciences are very tender on the subject, but that it gives some of the "wheat" class an opportunity to upbraid them and seems a curtailment of their "tare" privileges and pleasures.

And why should not the General Conference grant the request and expunge the article so obnoxious to the "tare" element? The Methodist "wheat" need no such restrictions even as the Presbyterian and Baptist and other "wheat" need them not. After all, the "tares" are not "the children of the kingdom" and why should such restrictions give some of them more of a deceptive appearance of being "wheat?" Let them do what they will—the wider the difference between "wheat" and "tares" the better, and the more speedy the separation, now that the harvest time of separation has come.

PRESBYTERIANISM STANDS "BEFORE GOD AND MAN WITH A LIE IN ITS RIGHT HAND"

Says One of its Ordained Ministers

"Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee," saith the Lord. And they gnawed their tongues [chewed their words] in pain, but continued to blaspheme [slander, misrepresent] the God of heaven.

The commotion amongst Presbyterians continues—some standing firm for their church creed, others repudiating it and begging to be released from it, but not noble-minded enough to step out into liberty in Christ (as they might so readily do) because of the cost of that liberty in name, salary, etc. Many thus indirectly confess that they despise the chain wherewith they are bound, and have despised it for years, and have realized it to be a lie and a blasphemy against God, and after confessing to this acting and confessing a lie for years they beg to be released without cost or loss either of human or divine favor, and especially without loss of bread and butter.

Note the expression of Rev. Samuel T. Carter in a Presbyterian journal—*The Evangelist*. He says:—

"It must be admitted that if a church is honest, that which stands in its Confession is its faith. It must be acknowledged that what is contained in its Confession is the faith of any honest church. The Westminster Confession of Faith is still the unquestioned Confession of the Presbyterian church. Is the Presbyterian church honest in its zeal for purity first and peace afterward?

"Be it known, then, to all the world that the Presbyterian church by its Confession declares that all the heathen perish, that many men are hopelessly lost from all eternity by the decree of God, and that there are infants in hell. . . . In reality the church does not believe these dreadful doctrines. Then it stands before God and man with a lie in its right hand."

The Independent, a high-class religious journal of Westminster proclivities, makes some very sensible remarks on the situation as follows:—

"The time for removal of error is always; and now revision of some sort begins to be exigent. The Presbyterian church is suffering for it. The arguments for it are those of truth and charity; the argument against it is that it will destroy union with the Southern Presbyterian church, which is not yet ready for revision. But we doubt very much if revision is the best course to be pursued. Let the old Confession remain as a historical document. It expressed the views of the Westminster Assembly. It answered its purpose then. It was a noble but faulty document. It gave forth all the light its makers had. Put it where it belongs, as an expression, not of what we must believe, but of what its makers believed. They did grandly express their own faith, but they had no right to enslave our faith, any more than God has a right to enslave our will. There is no nobler intellectual work that a man can do than to formulate what he believes about God. Theology is the noblest of the sciences—a man of intelligence ought never to tire of making creeds for himself. He ought to revise his creed every year. A man's conduct, and so his religion, depends on what he believes about the relation between God and man. More evidence, more discovery, more study, more enlightenment from the Holy Spirit, will change his belief, his creed, and so affect his religious duty. We would leave the formulation of a creed to each man's own conscientious study."

We are surprised and gratified to have so able a journal as *The Independent* come forward thus boldly in advocacy of a

view we have been seeking to promulgate for years; namely, that each individual Christian should have *his own* creed, his own faith or belief respecting the things which God has revealed to his people by his spirit through his Word;—and that each Christian should keep adding to his knowledge and his faith daily from the inspired record, the Bible, using all the helps obtainable to this end. This is the thought of the Apostle when he speaks of *growth* in grace and knowledge and approach to the stature of manhood in Christ. He suggests that the beginner in the Christian way is but a “babe” who needs “the sincere milk of the Word that he may grow thereby,” and that when further advanced he will need the “strong meat” of truth which is for the more matured.

With such an arrangement there is no room for the methods in vogue among Christians of all denominations which just now is causing Presbyterianism so much trouble—namely, the fixing by the Doctors of Divinity of each denomination of a creed (claimed to contain all the “milk” as well as all the “strong meat” of God’s Word) which each “babe” as it is received is required to swallow, and which it is instructed will supply all the spiritual nutriment proper for it to receive to the end of life. Such doses or pills are administered by every sect—some sugar-coated to conceal the real contents from the “babe,” and some like the Presbyterian creed, plain, honest and terribly bitter.

A gentleman in Allegheny related to us his conversation with a Presbyterian pastor before his withdrawal from that church. The gentleman said, “Pastor, I find many things in our Confession of Faith which upon now more mature consideration I cannot endorse nor continue to be identified with, unless you can help me to reason them out.” The pastor replied, “My dear brother, you are getting at this matter from the wrong standpoint; our Confession must be swallowed whole or not at all. It is like a Brandreth pill; if you attempt to chew it [reason it out] you can never swallow it.”

THE VOLUNTEER SERVICE

This work is now nobly started and just in time, we trust, to see it well accomplished before July, when so many church attendants are apt to absent themselves for the summer. The brethren and sisters engaging in this service seems to be profiting by it spiritually themselves and it is difficult to conceive of any other form of preaching present truth that could be more effective. The fact that this matter is handed out by Christian gentlemen and ladies adds to the weight and force

How strange that the simple and rational way of feeding “milk” and then “meat,” which affords both pleasure and nourishment, should have been discarded for the wickedly injurious practice of imposing upon the “babes” doctrinal pills which not only afford no nourishment but which hinder all growth, and as a result has filled Churchianity with “babes” who as respects spiritual things have never had their senses exercised to discern the true from the false and are utterly unable to follow the Apostle’s counsel to “rightly divide the word of truth” and to “try the spirits” (doctrines) whether they be of God or are human fabrications.

A SIMPLE CONFESSION NECESSARY

However, a simple public confession is necessary to demonstrate who are “babes” in Christ—to distinguish such from “children of this world.” But this confession should be very simple—so that the merest “babe” in Christ could comprehend and fully endorse it as his own. (1) It should declare faith in Christ as a personal Saviour; that he was sent of the Father and gave his life a *ransom* for all mankind. (2) A personal acceptance of him as a personal Saviour and a determination to forsake sin. (3) A full consecration to be a follower of Jesus in every respect and to lay down life itself in his service. Whoever could not confess these should, not be esteemed a “babe” in Christ at all—nor be fed as such, nor expected to grow up into Christ in all things.

May we expect the church nominal to follow this program—or that the voice of the *Independent* will be more potent than our own in bringing to pass such conditions? By no means. Churchianity contains too many “tares” and not enough “wheat” for such suggestions to be impressive. She will soon go down in the great time of trouble; and not until the kingdom has been set up need we expect a better general arrangement. Then it will apply not to the elect church, which will then be completed and glorified, but to the restitution class, then being developed.—Acts 3:19-21.

of the matter circulated. The results cannot be even approximated this side the veil.

Order more “ammunition” as you find you will need it. We have a good supply now. But be careful, please, not to order more than you will faithfully and promptly use—for it is expensive. Letters on this subject should have the word “*Volunteer*” at the head, and “Order No. 2” or “Order No. 3” as the case may be. Initial orders should invariably be made out along the line mentioned in March 1st Tower.

CONGRATULATIONS TO BRITISH FRIENDS

We have pleasure in announcing to the friends in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales that our London branch office is open at the address given above. It is or will shortly be well stocked with DAWNS, booklets, tracts and WATCH TOWERS. This will greatly convenience you all, we are sure, not only saving time but also postage, and permitting you to use domestic instead of foreign Money Orders.

Volunteer orders will be filled from there also and we hope

to hear of many fresh enlistments in this branch of the service

Any who feel disposed to enter the Colporteur work in Great Britain are invited to write *there* for full instructions how to work, where to work, terms, etc., etc.

Friends there desirous of visits from “Pilgrims” to hold public and parlor meetings in Great Britain are also invited to write. Address all such letters to

WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY,
131 Gipsy Lane, Forest Gate, London E., England.

PROGRESS OF THE TRUTH IN CHINA

Our dear Brother Randle, formerly a Baptist missionary in China, has been with us at Allegheny for about a month, and we have learned to love him dearly as one of the Lord’s “brethren.” He has written for the TOWER a little sketch of his recent experiences in receiving the truth and of his efforts to let it shine forth in turn to others. We know it will be appreciated. The brother’s depth of interest is well attested by his long journey of 16,000 miles to Allegheny. He proposes spending the remainder of his earthly life in sounding the Jubilee Trumpet—the Gospel of the kingdom. He will probably select Great Britain, his former home, as his future field for harvest work—preaching, and colporteur-ing the DAWNS.

Before leaving this country he has consented to do some “Pilgrim” work. He is now visiting a number of little gatherings in Ohio and western Pennsylvania, and later on will meet with the churches at Washington, Baltimore, Richmond, Philadelphia, New York City, etc., including some on the Hudson River. We confidently assure him a most hearty welcome from all WATCH TOWER readers he may be permitted to meet. His article follows:—

PRESENT TRUTH IN THE FAR EAST

There has been in China for years one solitary witness for the present truth, Miss Downing, of Chefoo. This lady was formerly a missionary of the Presbyterian Board and she chanced to meet with a stray WATCH TOWER, about the year 1883, in which she read an article on restitution, and at once decided to subscribe for the paper. She was the means of leading Mr. Fuller (whose letter is published at the end of VOL. III.) to study the DAWNS which proved so great a blessing to him. He died in 1894.

Amongst the missionaries of Shantung I am afraid Sister Downing was considered a queer old lady having some odd notions. She prevailed on me, however, to subscribe in 1892 for the WATCH TOWER and to get the *Diaglott*. The latter I much wanted. I read a little here and there in the TOWER, but too rashly concluded that it was the organ of some kind of universalism, which I did not want to corrupt my orthodoxy, so threw them aside.

I was too much afraid of the word “Universalism.” Now I know that some things *are* universal. God’s sunshine is universal; it shines from pole to pole, upon both the just and

the unjust. So is his love. (John 3:16) Light and truth are yet to be universal (John 1:9; Isaiah 11:9), and so is the testimony of the ransom. (1 Tim. 2:6; John 12:32) Because of my prejudice then I continued four years longer in darkness.

Toward the end of that time I saw MILLENNIAL DAWN advertised in the *London Times*, and having been interested for years in the Lord's return, I had a growing desire to read that book. In the summer of 1896 Miss Downing lent me VOL. I., but a day or two later I received another copy from England, sent to me (without my request) by my dear mother. I returned Miss Downing her copy, and starting for my mission station, four days journey from Chefoo, I first read the PLAN OF THE AGES in a mule-litter. It wonderfully opened my eyes, and I became more and more astonished at the beautiful Bible exegesis it revealed. Later on I received VOLS II. and III., and continued to read with admiration. In November of the same year I wrote my first letter to Allegheny, asking for the TOWER, and more information of any kind along the same lines. After reading the three volumes myself, I read them again with my wife, and afterwards with my children, and God has been graciously pleased to lead both my wife and my eldest daughter into a joyous reception of the present truth.

In 1897 I began to speak with my missionary colleagues about the character of the Judgment Day, for I was rejoicing in the strong consolation it gave me to see that God's purposes regarding the heathen—to give them a gracious and full opportunity to enter into life—were infinitely more grand and beneficent than I had ever dreamed.

When the question of the Trinity loomed up it gave me a temporary shock, but I soon saw that I should neither honor the Father nor the Son by making the Lord Jesus more than the Bible clearly teaches, when examined without prejudice; and I recognized not only that all men should "honor the Son even as they honor the Father," but also that it was the supreme will of the Father to have it so.

In 1898, being persuaded that this testimony is from God, and is in conflict with nominal Christianity, I did not consider it necessary to confer with flesh and blood, but resigned my connection with both the Baptist church, and the Mission Board with which I was connected. Being now free from the creeds and traditions of men my first desire was to tell to others the truth that had given me such comfort and joy.

I was able to hold about a dozen meetings among missionaries in several stations, but my principal effort to reach the missionaries of the far East had to be done by correspondence, for they are scattered over thousands of miles of country, in some 500 different stations. For this purpose I had a circular letter printed (a copy of which appeared in the TOWER, June 15, 1899, page 157). To each of these letters we added something further in writing, and enclosing one or more tracts, sent them all out by letter post, which we considered to be much more likely to command a reading than if the whole thing had been printed and sent out as printed matter. In all we despatched the following:—1847 to missionaries in China; 385 to missionaries in Japan; 72 to missionaries in Corea; 20 to missionaries in Siam, etc.; making a total of 2324. The number of tracts sent out was about 5,000.

The vast majority ignored our appeal. This we fully expected, for we know that many are much too full of work for the Lord to hear him speaking to them. Still many replies were received, varying much in tone and spirit. No less than four accused me of blasphemy. One Doctor of Divinity thought I had lost my head; one predicted that I had begun to drift toward infidelity. Some deplored my departure from the faith, while yet others, more kindly in intention, begged me to return to the simplicity of the Gospel; but none of them knew the pearl of great price I had found.

One wrote to me thus:—"I am very grieved that you should have been so led away by the wicked one, and would solemnly urge you not to become one of Satan's agents, and a 'seducing spirit.' . . . We are living in perilous times, and I would warn you to beware of him who not only goeth about as a roaring lion, but also as an angel of light." Another wrote:—"It is just as Paul told Timothy, evil men will wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. I am so sorry to think that you, Dr. Randle, are one who is being deceived by these evil men." These are both personal and esteemed friends, from whom, as from many more, I am now counted alienated. May the Lord deal very graciously with them.

Others wrote thankfully, and showed their readiness for the harvest message. A well-educated Chinese woman wrote—"I have been reading the tracts you so kindly left me, first with interest, then with delight, and I feel so much happier than I have been for a long time; the more I read the more I want to read and the more light I get, but there is still much I want to know. I would like to have MILLENNIAL DAWN and the pamphlet on *Hell*. If you tell me how to send the money I will be ever so much obliged."

In all we sold 90 DAWNS and 38 pamphlets on *Hell, Tabernacle Shadows*, etc. One missionary, a young man who bought the four volumes, and has learned to appreciate and love the precious truths therein expounded, came out from Brethrenism, and is now standing alone in North China, bearing his testimony for the present truth. Four other missionaries are reading and studying the DAWNS with joy and profit, but have not yet come out of Babylon, which is to them no easy thing. I was also able to leave 25 volumes in Shanghai for further sale, and will be able to send more out if required, so that I trust the harvest work in the far East may continue to develop, until all shall have received at least some testimony to the light of present truth.

How true it is that the vast majority of the household of faith have no ear to hear the harvest message! As it was in Christ's first presence, so it is now. Immersed in their own work, many are preaching in his name, and doing wonderful works for him (Matt. 7:22), and yet they are as blind and deaf as the Pharisees of old, neither knowing nor doing the will of their Father in heaven. It is a strait gate indeed, and a narrow way, and verily few are finding the life they lead to. May we never cease to humbly and diligently inquire what is the Father's will concerning us, and abiding in Christ, that we may receive his spirit, may we be enabled not only to do that will, but also to see the loving-kindness that is in it!

HORACE A. RANDLE.

PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM

MATT. 13:24-33.—MAY 27.

"The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the Kingdom."

Parables of the kingdom are really word-pictures of the kingdom. No one of these parables represents the complete view of the subject, but merely one phase of it. The attentive Bible student will notice that the theme of the Gospel from first to last is the kingdom. The message first given to Father Abraham was that his posterity would bless the world—that is to say, be a kingdom exercising control over the world, and for its benefit and uplifting. This hope was before the Jewish mind for over sixteen hundred years, their expectation being that they would be exalted by God to that kingdom position and bless all the families of the earth, reconciling them to God. Our Lord's proclamation and that of his apostles, at the first advent was, "The kingdom of God is at hand"—God is now ready to establish his kingdom if the people are ready to receive it. "But his own received him not," and the kingdom was taken from them as a nation, to be given to the holy nation, the peculiar people, the royal priesthood, whom the Lord would select,—choosing first from fleshly Israel so

many as were ready, and the remainder from amongst the Gentiles during this Gospel age.

Naturally enough, the Jews did not grasp the situation, but were looking for our Lord to establish a fleshly kingdom in their midst; and it was to counteract this erroneous thought that Jesus uttered these parables of the kingdom—about nine of them—three being embraced in this lesson. The series began with the parable of the sower, examined in our last issue, which showed that there was but one true seed or message of the kingdom, and that the fruitfulness of that seed would depend upon the character of heart into which it would fall. Next we have in order the parable of

THE WHEAT AND THE TARES

Here the good seed or the message of the kingdom which our Lord planted is represented as springing up in believers, and constituting them children or heirs of the kingdom. It is very proper here to note that there is no other method at

present of becoming a child of God, an heir of the kingdom, except through the acceptance of the kingdom message, with all that it implies of consecration to the Lord, even unto death—"if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" in his kingdom.—Rom. 8:17.

The object of these parables, then, was not to depict to our minds what the kingdom would be like after it has been established in the world, but rather to picture before our minds something respecting the processes of development by which the kingdom-class would be selected from amongst mankind and made ready for the kingdom which is to be set up at the second coming of Christ in power and great glory,—when he shall establish that Millennial kingdom for the very purpose of granting a judgment or trial to all the families of the earth—peradventure under the favorable opportunities of knowledge, etc., then granted unto them, many may choose life through obedience to God and attain it.

As in the preceding parable the Lord Jesus, himself was the sower of the good seed, so in this parable. It was Jesus who was sowing the seeds of truth, the promises, etc., which, springing up in the hearts of his disciples, transformed them to newness of life, making of them new creatures, and operating through them as his mouthpieces carried similar blessings wherever the message, the Gospel of the kingdom, has gone.

"While men slept" the enemy of the sower of the good seed, viz., Satan, came and sowed tares amongst the wheat. The Lord himself not only made possible the kingdom by redeeming mankind, but announced his willingness to receive some as joint-heirs of it, and then departed for the far country, even heaven itself, not to return until the time for his kingdom to be established in glory and power. (Mark 13:34) His chosen apostles faithfully guarded the field so long as they lived, but when they fell asleep in death, as the Lord has foreseen and here predicted, the adversary found good opportunity to bring in false doctrines, to sow error, and through the error to produce amongst the wheat a crop of tares—darnel. Tares have the peculiarity that while growing they very decidedly resemble wheat, so that it is almost impossible to tell them apart until a certain degree of maturity is reached; then the difference is clearly discernible to all of experience.

We see the fulfilment of this feature of the parable in Christendom to-day; the wheat was sown broadcast over a certain part of the field, the world of mankind, especially throughout Europe and America, and the tare-seed, the error and false doctrine, seems to have been sown still more liberally; and looking back we date that sowing as commencing as soon as the apostles were "fallen asleep." In consequence we find to-day Christians, true Christians, genuine Christians, begotten of the Word of God's promises, and fully in accord with it, and seeking to bring forth good fruit in their lives; and we also see an almost innumerable tare-class of imitation Christians, begotten not of the truth nor of the word of the kingdom, utterly ignorant of it indeed; begotten of excitement, begotten of fear of hell, begotten of hopes of worldly advantage by joining a nominal church, begotten of pride and a desire to be in good society, begotten of social and financial ambition, etc.

It is often very difficult to discern clearly between these wheat and tare classes; nor has it been necessary so to do down through the eighteen centuries of this age, for the Master declared that they were to be permitted to grow together until the harvest-time, when the ripening of both under the clearer light of the harvest-time would manifest each class thoroughly and distinctly, and then a separation would take place under his supervision.

To our understanding we are now in the "harvest" or end of this age, and the light of present truth, as it shines for the Lord's people walking in the path of the just, which shines more and more unto the perfect day, as well as the light of present truth as it is shining upon the world and its social and financial and scientific questions, is tending to ripen both the wheat and the tares. The tare class no longer seeks to hide itself, but rather seems to claim that it is the genuine article, the scientific class, evolutionists, higher-titles, and in general the worldly-wise. The wheat class is also becoming more and more discernible, as it ripens in the faith and hope and joy begotten of the Gospel of the kingdom. The separating work mentioned in the parable is not only at hand, but in progress; a cleavage and separation between nominal Christians (tares) and true Christians (wheat), as nearly every one who is awake discerns; and this separation will be more and more discernible year by year as the harvest work progresses, until its close.

To have attempted to root out all the tares, and to have thus cleansed the wheatfield, at any time in the past, would have meant, as the parable shows, a complete shaking throughout the entire field, a commotion which would not have served the best interests of the wheat; hence the Lord has permitted for all these centuries that the two classes should live side by side and co-operate in church work, and unitedly profess to be his people, intending the separation to be manifest in the end of the age. And surely when the separation does occur it will cause a wonderful commotion in nominal Zion—"Babylon."

The reapers are first to gather the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them. They do not burn them at once, but proceed to gather the wheat into the garner; and not until after the wheat is garnered does the fire consume the tares. We are to remember that this is a parable, and that the fire is as much a symbol as the tares, the wheat and the garner; hence we are not to expect a literal burning of the masses of Christendom in a literal fire, after the little flock, the faithful wheat class, the children of the kingdom, have been gathered into the barn, the garner, the heavenly condition.

The fire which will then come upon the wheatfield, from which the wheat has been gathered, and in which the tares are bundled, will be what the Scriptures elsewhere denominate "a time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation"—social trouble, financial trouble, religious trouble, accompanied by famine and pestilence, and the end of it will be the disruption of all law, order and religion and the prevalence of anarchy. In that trouble all the tares will be destroyed, in the sense that none of them thereafter will claim to be what they are not—none of them will claim to be God's consecrated people. The various inducements by which they were brought to claim themselves to be Christ's followers, when they were not, will then be at an end. No longer will such a claim gain for them social or financial or other standing or advantage, and no longer will they make the false claim.

Explaining the parable privately to his disciples, our Lord showed them that the gathering of the wheat into the garner meant the completion of the work of this Gospel age—the completion of the kingdom class that shall bless the world, and he says, "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." Thus the Sun of Righteousness that is to arise in the Millennial morning, and which is to bless the whole world with the light of the knowledge of the goodness of God in Christ, is to be composed, not only of our Lord Jesus himself, the great light, but also of those chosen to be his joint-heirs in the kingdom, his associates in the shining forth of the light of truth.

This was a totally different conception of the kingdom from what had come to the minds of the Jewish people; and altho an explanation of the parable was given to the apostles and they answered that they understood it, we may well doubt if they grasped the subject comprehensively until after the day of Pentecost, when, as our Lord promised, the holy spirit brought them enlightenment of understanding.

THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED

The third parable-picture of the kingdom in its present embryonic condition of development is intended to show that from a very small beginning the nominal church of this Gospel age would attain to quite considerable proportions. Its start is likened to the small mustard-seed, which attains to the largest size of its class of herbs. Yet this large development does not necessarily signify advantage or anything specially desirable, but on the contrary it becomes a disadvantage, in that the fowls of the air come and lodge in its branches, and defile it. The "fowls of the air" in the preceding parable of the sower represented Satan and his agents, and we are, we think, justified in making a similar application here, and interpreting this to mean that the church planted by the Lord Jesus flourished rapidly and exceedingly, and that because of its attainments, strength, etc., Satan through his agents, came and lodged in the various branches of the church. They have been lodging in the branches of this Gospel church for these many centuries, and are still to be found in her, a defiling element. They come in, not for the benefit of the mustard-seed tree or shrub but for their own convenience and benefit. It is in harmony with this that in the present time the Lord speaks of Babylon, nominal Christendom, as "the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird."—Rev. 18:2.

This contamination of the original good planting, by the adversary and his agents, is as prominent in this parable as in the parable of the tares, merely showing it from a different standpoint.

THE PARABLE OF THE LEAVEN

Here again we have a word-picture of the Lord's church during this Gospel age of her development and preparation for the kingdom glory to follow.

In this parable we have brought to our attention the Lord's provision for the necessities of his people during this Gospel age—he did not leave them without a proper supply of food. The three measures of meal, equivalent to one ephah, constituted a good, liberal household supply. Like all of the Lord's provisions, it was good and pure, but as in the other parables the adversary introduced impurity, falsity, etc., so in this one leaven is introduced into the meal. Leaven represents corruption throughout the Scriptures: in every other instance of its Scriptural use it is represented as an evil, an impurity, something that is defiling. For instance, the Israelites were to put away all leaven, all impurity, at the time of the Passover, that they might come the nearer to the Lord in holiness, etc. Again, our Lord Jesus refers to leaven as a corruption, bidding his disciples "Beware of the leaven of the scribes and Pharisees"—beware of the false doctrines, the corrupt influence, proceeding from the scribes and Pharisees. Again, the Apostle Paul represents the leaven as an evil thing, saying, "Purge out the old leaven."—Exod. 13:7; Luke 12:1; 1 Cor. 5:7.

It would not seem reasonable that our Lord should use the word leaven here as Christian people generally suppose, in a good sense, as implying some grace of the holy spirit. On the contrary, we recognize consistency in all of his teachings, and we may be as sure that he would not use leaven as a

symbol of righteousness as that he would not use leprosy as a symbol of holiness.

How then shall we apply this parable? We answer, that the grace of God given to his people in the beginning of this age, (1) the faith once delivered to the saints, (2) the hope set before us in the Gospel, (3) love, the bond of perfectness, summed up the three measures of the Lord's provision for his people,—in partaking of which they were to become strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. But gradually a woman arose, a false woman, represented in Revelation as a harlot, and as "that woman Jezebel." This Roman Catholic system obtained great power over the three measures of meal provided for God's household, and proceeded to mix therewith the leaven of her own impurity. The result was that all the family food, all the holy doctrines were contaminated with her false doctrines—nothing was left pure and clean, as handed to us originally by the apostles. The faith once delivered to the saints was distorted out of all semblance to its original simplicity; the hope set before us in the Gospel was changed to another hope entirely, unlike the original; the spirit of the Lord, love, was perverted to a selfish love of creeds of men and human institutions. Alas! no wonder all Christendom is spiritually sick, because of this adulteration in its food supply.

From this standpoint we readily see the force and meaning of the Master's declaration, that at his return he would gird himself, and come forth and serve his people, and that he would send forth at the hands of his servants things both new and old from the storehouse of his grace, "meat in due season."

THE HARVEST PLENTIEUS—THE LABORERS FEW

MATT. 9:35-10:8.—JUNE 3.

"It is not ye that speak, but the spirit of your Father that speaketh in you."—Matt. 10:20.

It is a great tribute to the spirit of liberty which prevailed amongst the Jews, that our Lord could and did preach the Gospel of the kingdom from city to city in their synagogues without molestation. In contrast, we may feel sure that were he to attempt to teach in any of the churches of to-day, of any denomination, he would be refused the privilege—no matter how faithfully he should adhere to the Scriptural declaration, and the more explicit his teachings the more unsatisfactory would they be to those now in charge, who have a theory of their own respecting the kingdom, which will not stand investigation, and whose weakness they would not wish to have exposed. And this loss of liberty amongst Christians, as compared with the Jews, in religious matters, is to their injury—making it that much the more difficult for them to hear the joyful sound of the present harvest message.

Notwithstanding all the healing of disease which our Lord accomplished, there were still multitudes of sick who flocked from various directions to him, in hope of relief, and when we read that he was moved with compassion for the distressed sheep of Israel, it gives us a deeper appreciation of his kindness, his love, his mercy, and we do not feel that it was strange that he who had left the glory of the Father and the holy angels, and had humbled himself to man's estate, should now feel compassion for the weak and sinful, the degraded, depraved and pained. Rather, we say, It was just like him! Without such a spirit of compassion how would he have become our Redeemer, how would he have left the heavenly glory on our behalf! And when we think of him as being still the same it gives us fresh confidence, that notwithstanding our weaknesses and imperfections, and the imperfections and weaknesses of the whole world, "the groaning creation," this same Jesus has compassion, not only upon his people, but in a large sense in due time will have compassion upon all the families of the earth, and grant to all a full opportunity of recovery from the blights of sin, mental, moral and physical. Surely he only waits for the due time—the time appointed of the Father; then with his faithful, his kingdom-class, as the Seed of Abraham, he shall indeed, in times of restitution, bless all the families of the earth with a full opportunity of reconciliation to God, and thus of the attainment of life eternal.

At the time of our lesson his work had not yet taken this broad sweep; nor has it yet, altho it has advanced beyond the confines of that time. Then his message of reconciliation and his help were extended only to the lost sheep of the household of natural Israel—not to the Samaritans nor to the Gentiles. Since then the blessing of reconciliation

has been extended so that whosoever has an ear to hear, amongst the Gentiles or amongst the Samaritans, has the privilege of reconciliation during this Gospel age; but the great time of opening deaf ears and causing all to know the Lord, from the least to the greatest, will be in the Millennial age to follow this one.

Compassion, however, will be an element of the Lord's character so long as there are any who need help, and desire it; and this will be until the close of the Millennial age when all willing to receive the help will have received it, and the only ones not blessed thereby will be those who shall have deliberately rejected his help. Then, and not until then, will his compassion cease to be exercised, for then there will be no need of compassion, that which is perfect having come through the grace of God in Christ.

Our Lord's compassion for the multitude suggested the sending forth of representatives, clothed with the power to heal the sick, etc., and in order to bring his disciples into line with his thought he told them that the harvest was plenteous, but the laborers were few, and that they should offer prayer on this subject. The substance of their prayer would necessarily be,—Lord of the harvest, send forth me as a reaper in the harvest. Jesus himself was the Lord of the harvest; the whole matter was in his hands, and evidently the twelve apostles quickly caught his thought and spirit respecting the increase of the harvest work, and in consequence he sent them forth two and two; yet he restricted their going, even as he had restricted his own ministry, to fleshly Israel, because all of God's covenants and promises were still confined to that nation, and would not be open to others until a due time which the Father had fixed, and specified through the Prophet Daniel—viz., the end of Israel's seventy weeks of favor—three and a half years beyond our Lord's crucifixion.

"And he gave them power [authority] over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of disease and sickness." This power was holy Spirit power, the same and yet different from that which they received later on at Pentecost from the Father. It was the same, in that the holy spirit or power of God is always the same power even tho it have differences of manifestation. It was holy, in that it was the spirit of our Lord Jesus, the holy Spirit or power which was granted without measure unto him,—which he at this time communicated to these apostles, that they might, as his representatives, do a work in his name.

Indeed, we may surmise that as the curing of disease caused vitality to go out of our Lord Jesus, to effect the cure, and that thus every cure meant the robbing of himself

of his own life-powers, his own vitality, so in this case we should understand that the power for the healing of the sick was Jesus' power, that the disciples did not use their own vitality, but merely his, which he communicated to them, and authorized them to use, saying, "Freely ye have received, freely give." They were giving what cost them nothing, but which was costing Jesus much daily and hourly. It is when we get this thought of our Lord's yielding up his life daily in doing good to others that we can best appreciate how his perfect life was so thoroughly used up in the short space of three and a half years.

The healing of the sick and the casting out of devils were but parts and incidents of their mission. In connection with it they were to preach the Gospel of the kingdom—the good news that the kingdom of God was nigh at hand; and the influence of the miracles should properly attract attention to the message, and make the people ready, yea, anxious, for the kingdom. But so far as the record shows, the people were anxious for the miracles, the healing, but very indifferent respecting the kingdom. They would take the cures from Jesus and his disciples, but if they wanted information respecting how and when the kingdom of God would come they would follow their blind guides as usual.

Nevertheless we may presume that the influence of this mission work throughout Israel was not entirely lost, and that after our Lord's crucifixion, and after the holy Spirit had come upon the disciples at Pentecost, and they preached the Gospel of the kingdom from a different standpoint, inviting all true Israelites to unite with Christ, and thus become joint-heirs of the kingdom with him—then it was that many, no doubt, of these who had heard previously and witnessed the miracles, were that much better prepared to enter the embryotic kingdom, the church through consecration of themselves to the Lord. And the conversion of several thousands within a few days after Pentecost corroborates this.

The harvest in the end of the Jewish age foreshadowed or typified the harvest of this Gospel age. And now, as then, Jesus is the Lord of the harvest, and his disciples, his messengers, are his agents in the gathering work. Now, as then,

he seems to speak to these, saying that the harvest is great and that the laborers are few, and that if we have his spirit in the matter, and entreat him to send us forth in his service, he will be pleased to do so. And many are thus praying from day to day, and seeking to see what more their hands can find to do in the harvest work. And the Lord is graciously with such to guide their service and to bless the results to their own good as well as to the good of others. As all of the disciples then prayed this prayer, and got opportunity to engage in some part of the harvest work, so now all true disciples should be praying this prayer, and should be expecting and utilizing opportunities for service.

The methods of the harvest work then and now may be slightly different, and yet they are considerably alike. This is not the fleshly Israel, and the blessings sent at the hands of the harvest reapers are not temporal blessings—not the healings of physical disease; but they are better than these—the opening of eyes of understanding, a far greater blessing than the opening of natural eyes, the removal of deafness as respects the Lord's great plan, a far more precious boon than the restoration of natural hearing, etc. Likewise, the offering of the kingdom now is much more tangible and can be demonstrated much more clearly than was possible then, for it is nigh, even at the doors, and even the world can see the shakings of the present institutions, preparatory to their removal, that those things of truth and grace which cannot be shaken may remain, may be established, under the Lord's reign of righteousness.

As the harvest laborers going forth now seek the ripe wheat of this Gospel age, each should remember the words addressed to the laborers in the Jewish harvest, "It is not ye that speak, but the spirit of your Father that speaketh in you." Not that we are to expect to have miraculous powers of speech granted us, but that we are to be filled with the truth and its spirit, and then indeed it will be true that it will not be our own wisdom that we shall speak, nor our own plan that we shall declare, but the wisdom that cometh from above, and the plan of the Lord our God.

A WICKED WOMAN AND A WEAK MAN

MARK 6:14-29.—JUNE 10.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"*Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be ye filled with the spirit.*"—Eph. 5:18.

Herodias, a young woman, closely related to the reigning family of the Herods, was ambitious to become a queen; her uncle Philip, being the eldest son of Herod the Great, was presumptively his heir, and accordingly she pressed her suit, and with such success that she was accepted as Philip's wife. But at the death of Herod the Great it was found that he had disinherited his eldest son, Philip, and that Herod Antipas was made successor to the kingdom.

It was necessary that Herod Antipas should go to Rome to be invested with regal authority, and while there he was the guest of his brother Philip and of Herodias, his wife and his niece, who of course was chagrined that she had failed of her ambition. However, ambitions know no bounds, especially selfish ones, and she seems at once to have set herself to captivate her younger uncle Antipas. Her cunning seems to have succeeded without scruple of any kind, and remarkably successful. She so wrought upon Herod Antipas that he dismissed his wife, the daughter of the king of Arabia, and then Herodias, with her own child, a girl of probably fourteen, left her husband Philip, to become the wife of Herod Antipas, and thus to attain the position of queen, which she had coveted.

The shortcomings and failure of others should become to us valuable lessons. In the case of Herodias before us we see illustrated the power of ambition, and how important it is that our ambitions be noble and true and pure. Nearly all there is of good accomplished in the world is somehow or other connected with good ambitions, and likewise nearly all the evil in the world is somehow or other associated with wrong ambitions. How important that we should learn to guard our ambitions, our desires, our hopes, our aims: we cannot accomplish anything without hopes and aims and ambitions; hence the necessity for securing good ones. And here let us note the fact that the majority of mankind have little or no ambition, and therefore are passing through life in a kind of maze, accomplishing comparatively little for themselves or others. This is a wrong condition; every man, woman and child should have a noble ambition, and should labor constantly for the attainment of that ambition.

Others of the world have such ambitions as had Herodias—they are ambitions for wealth, or for social position and display, or for title and honor amongst men. These are all selfish ambitions, yet they are the powers that are moving politics and business and society every day—and we are sorry to say these are the ambitions which are moving many in the pulpits and many in various religious works. These are all wrong ambitions, and tho they may not all result as evilly as did that of Herodias they are all selfish, and all tend at least in the same general direction toward evil, and many are seduced by their selfish ambitions into doing those things which their consciences do not approve, and many such become seducers of others into evil deeds and reprehensible schemes.

The Christian has before him the only proper, legitimate and worthy ambition possible at the present time; nor does the average or nominal Christian have these correct ambitions but rather only such Christians as are taught of God, such as bear and heed the Word of the Lord. Before these are set the most noble, lofty ambitions; they are invited into the society, friendship and fellowship of the King of kings and Lord of lords. They are invited to become his companions, his brethren, co-workers together with him in the great work he is now accomplishing, and also to be joint-heirs with him in the great work of the Millennial kingdom which he is shortly to inaugurate. Could there be a higher ambition than this set before mortal man? Surely not. Moreover, it is an ambition which tends to develop all the higher qualities of mind and character, for the terms and conditions of this fellowship are based upon purity of heart, devotion to the Lord, etc., so that he that hath these ambitions and hopes in him purifieth himself even as he is pure with whom he has become associated. Let us have these true ambitions before us, that they may crowd out and trample down the inferior ambitions of earth and sensuality, that lead to sin, groveling and devilishness.

Herodias, having gained her point thus far, and finding herself in the coveted position of queen, undoubtedly felt greatly elated, flushed with her success; but in the midst of

this elation came the news respecting John the Baptist, and how he had had an interview with Herod the king, and in the presence of courtiers and others had declared that it was not lawful for him to have Herodias for his wife. This was a shock to Herodias. Who would have thought that any man would have been bold enough to have spoken to the king on such a subject; and who would have thought that the king would have heard him patiently, and even have seemed interested in him, and have considered him a prophet of the Lord God?

What wonder Herodias was angry with John the Baptist, and sought to wreck upon him her vengeance! Had she plotted and planned for years to reach her present position, and was she to be thwarted now, and to be cast out at the word of such a man as this? Moreover, if she were now cast out, it would mean a worse condition than ever, for of course she could not with decency go back to her husband Philip, and expect to be kindly received of him. Hence, if Herod should give ear to John the Baptist, and should permit his message to influence him, it might mean that Herodias would become an outcast. Can we wonder, then, that the evil ambition which had thus far ruled the woman's heart should now move her against the great prophet? We could only say that it would be the legitimate fruitage of such evil ambitions as she had for years been cultivating at the expense of every principle. It had not hesitated thus far at anything, and why should it hesitate even at murder, now in its greatest extremity?

So it is with all evil, selfish ambition—the tendency is always downward, going from evil to evil, from sin to sin, from crime to crime. On the contrary, the ambitions which are inspired of the Lord tend always upward and upward, higher and higher—whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are holy, whatsoever things are in harmony with God—this is the tendency and impulse of the ambition which God inspires, the wisdom which cometh down from above, which is first pure, then peaceable and easy of entreatment, full of mercy and good fruits.

THE KING OUTWITTER BY HIS WIFE

Herodias had sufficient influence over her husband to secure the arrest and imprisonment of John; but apparently she was chagrined that she could not accomplish her desires to the full in securing his death. This was not so much because Herod had a mind of his own, but rather, as the narrative declares, because of his fear. He knew John to be a righteous man and holy, and, as the Revised Version expresses it, "kept him safe"—possibly fearing that if John were set at liberty Herodias would find agents for his destruction. Apparently John was granted unusual liberties in prison, for his disciples had opportunity to come to him and to bear messages to and from him; and the intimation is that Herod was perplexed respecting how he should deal with him, and occasionally sent for him and heard him with interest.

Herodias concluded that this was a dangerous condition of things, and again her tact and shrewdness came to her assistance. Herod's birthday was approaching, and knowing that it was generally celebrated she proposed to make a special effort on that occasion to secure her ends. These birthday feasts were occasions of carousal; the king would be surrounded by the notable men of his realm; all would be considerably under the influence of wine, and then would be Herodias' opportunity for securing her wishes. She was crafty, however, and realized that John had an influence upon the king that to some extent at least off-set her own. She realized then that the king knew well her heart, and that he would hesitate to make a broad and liberal offer to her, and so she prepared her young daughter, educated in Rome, beautiful, attractive, that she should take the place before the king of the ordinary dancing girls who usually served on such occasions of revelry.

This was supposedly a rare treat, a high honor to the king, that his niece, a young lady of refinement, should take the position ordinarily occupied by one of a low class. The ruse was successful; the king and the court were charmed with the girl's beauty, and Herod's mind, inflamed with the wine, was generous and unselfish to the extreme. It was customary to remunerate the dancing girls liberally on such occasions, in proportion to the dignity of the entertainer and now how liberally should he treat this one, who had so bewitchingly pleased himself and the company, and who was his own niece and step-daughter? He would ask her what she would like to have, and in her natural hesitancy he would press the matter upon her, to mention whatever it might be, even to

the half of his kingdom; and then boastfully he would make oath to his liberality. The girl, no doubt, was instructed of her mother what to expect, and yet the crafty woman had kept the design wholly within her own grasp. Her daughter should not know in advance, lest she should make some error; she would merely first have the king's word that she would have her desire; then she was to come to her mother and receive instructions. Childlike, she seems not to have had great ambitions and wishes of her own, and hence she at once adopted her mother's wish, and asked for the head of John the Baptist on a platter.

How horrible it seems, that anyone should have such a desire, such a murderous condition of heart! How strange it seems that a refined, educated woman should have such sentiments as would prompt such a request! Yet it was but the natural operation of the evil in the fallen heart. As the Apostle James says, the beginning of temptation is to be drawn away of desire, of ambition—enticed thereby. Then, when desire (ambition) has conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death.—James 1:14, 15.

Even the weak and despicable Herod was shocked by the request. He had been trapped, and he saw it; he realized at once that this was a scheme on the part of his wife, and that now, as on former occasions, she had proven more than a match for him. What would he do? Would he resent such infamous conduct, and denounce his wife and her daughter as murderers, plotters against innocent blood of a righteous man? Would he take his stand for justice and for truth, and resolve that now, seeing the depth of wickedness into which he had been ensnared, he would strive to turn about in his course, and follow the advice of this prophet of the Lord, and reform?

EVIL RESULTS OF A WRONG STANDARD

No; he had not sufficient character for that; and from his wrong standpoint of view duty appeared to lie on the other side: First, had he not given his word, and should not the word of a king, given on his birthday, and at a feast, and in the presence of his chief generals and supporters, be inviolable? Moreover, in his maudlin condition he had riveted the matter with an oath, and now from his wrong standpoint pride asserted itself, and would not permit him to take the right course. Here again we see in an exaggerated form a principle which applies daily to worldly people in all of their affairs. They have a wrong standard before their minds. It is a standard of pride and self-esteem and love of approbation of others, and not a love for righteousness, for truth, and of deference for the Lord; and hence many have found themselves like Herod, led step by step, by what seems to them to be fate, and as they would say, beyond their control; but such matters are beyond the control of men because they are not under the proper control, because they are not the Lord's people; because they have not given their hearts to him. Therefore the affairs of life, instead of working for good to them and bringing them valuable lessons, helpful and elevating, are bringing them experiences which lead downward continually. The lesson here for the Lord's people is to make a proper start, to recognize the Lord, his will, his word, as the standard of justice and of truth, and to walk accordingly. A further lesson is, that wherever we may be, wherever the truth may find us, in a downward course, the only proper method is to at once recognize the voice of the Lord, the voice of right as paramount, and to obey that voice, regardless of how matters may seem or appear to fallen fellow men.

That the king was sorry is indeed an indication that his heart was not utterly corrupt, but that he should yield to what he knew to be wrong, through pride, is an evidence of utter lack of character. History shows that a certain amount of retribution came upon these guilty people forthwith: the sending back of his first wife led to a war between Herod and his father-in-law, the king of Arabia, in which Herod's forces were worsted seriously. Later on Herodias prompted Herod to apply to Rome for an enlargement of his dignity and power, but his application was rejected, and instead he was dethroned, lost all his title, power and influence, and the only redeeming quality noted in the case of Herodias is that she shared Herod's loss and banishment. Poor woman! Perhaps finally she learned that earthly ambitions are much like the apples of Sodom; perhaps she learned the folly of the course she pursued, that it brought no true joy, no true blessing, but only excitement and one disappointment after another. Perhaps, too, King Herod learned some lessons. We read that

he heard of Jesus and his wonderful works, and that superstitiously he concluded that this must be John risen from the dead. Altho not a Jew, but of the family of Esau, he nevertheless had some knowledge of God and of the hopes set before the Israelites, and possibly his evil experiences brought him some valuable lessons.

So with many of the world in the present time: their experiences are bad and yet they impress lessons upon themselves, and upon others which ultimately may be of service, of value. As we look at their mistakes let us learn to profit

by avoiding them in our lives. Let us remember, too, that all ambitions and temptations are not on the large and terrible scale of this picture before us, yet that the same principles are involved. Let us learn to recognize principles, whether operating in little things or in great ones, and that he who is faithful to right principles in small things will be faithful in greater trials. Let us first of all learn that the proper course for us is to consecrate ourselves to the Lord, and then seek to have the lawful and laudable ambitions which he will inculcate through the Word.

FAITHFUL CO-LABORERS HEARD FROM

MR. C. T. RUSSELL,

DEAR SIR:—I take the opportunity to write to you, in manifestation of my sincere and heartfelt approval of your magnificent work, now in my hand. Your volumes of *MILLENNIAL DAWN* I must hold and confess to be a veritable Bible Key, justly deserving the appellation they bear—*Helps for Bible Students*. I have in my possession volumes one to five, in addition to *What Say the Scriptures About Hell?* and *Spiritism*. Sir, before offering any opinion or remarks, permit me to say first, that with regard to your little work on *What Say the Scriptures About Hell?* I do a little Greek reading. I know nothing of Hebrew, but I must confess that it puzzled me beyond measure to find out where our early interpreters of the Scriptures found the substance or foundation of that horrible doctrine. And gaining much, very much knowledge on the subject by reading that little work, I have to ask the question, "What was their motive for establishing this hell torment doctrine?" The only answer I can find is that it was from some selfish end to frighten men into Christianity, a plan the Almighty never intended, having made man a free agent to choose for himself. But these "devil doctrines" will soon have to give way to the light of present day truth. My profession being that of Christian work—a catechist and schoolmaster—in the latter position I sometimes, find it difficult indeed, after choosing a text, to know where to begin or where to end, not because words fail me but from the fact that the doctrines I have been brought up in were so twisted and distorted that I did not know where was solid ground. I am not ashamed to confess that many passages appeared so difficult that I preferred to leave them to themselves. But thanks to your invaluable helps, many such confounding passages are now as clear to me as daylight. Sir, I hold that Almighty God himself has raised you up to be the purveyor of heavenly food for his famishing children; so that I need not say anything more than wishing you a fair share of his divine blessing. I am still reading and studying my volumes. At first there were some things that seemed to conflict with my views and opinions, and where disagreement crept in, but that, I hold, was because I did not grasp the full purport of the subject, for no sooner than grasped, disagreement disappeared, leaving the approval to remain. I never quickly agree to a special subject or point, before I thoroughly sift and strain and pry into it to find its foundation and harmony. I came to this country in November, 1898, under the appointment of the Bishop of Jamaica. Before I left my island I once had the opportunity of seeing the first volume of *DAWN*, which a friend possessed, but partly destroyed—back and inside leaves were gone. I determined to find out the authorship and was gratified in having my wish supplied. Mr. A. M. Brownfield is the man from whom I obtained all. He is my constant visitor since. There is also another brother who has written me from Colon, after learning I was a reader of *DAWN*, Bro. Isaiah Richards. Sir, I am your disciple, I can assure you; and I hope one day to find myself where you are. This, I hope, is but the first of the many letters I expect to write. Yours in Christ,

H. E. WYNTER,—*Isthmus of Panama*.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:—Many thanks for the kindly words and token of your letter of Dec. 25th. The gracefulness of your action manifests an imitation of him who was the embodiment of grace. (Psalm 45:2) Oh, to get nearer to him in thought, word and deed! The Christ-like spirit is so very rare, but the genuine article so very precious. I trust you will always bear in mind how very much we treasure up your many labors of love, and how our unceasing desire and prayer is, that Jehovah's richest blessing may constantly rest upon you and the great work committed to your care.

In our work here we are striving to do what we can. We are not realizing all we desire, for our hearts are so

human, that, battle as one will, the prevailing spirit of indifference brings at times a keen sense of disappointment. The truth is so glorious that one is saddened at the reception it meets from the vast majority. But then, of course, God's "due time" is the grand refuge and sweetener; the "lamps" of the "ten virgins" are not intended to take the place of the sun, but to light their individual pathway. Each must have his own lamp and oil in it. The great bulwark of error is leaning upon others; true faith must be individual, endurance likewise. A mob of sheep rushing after a leader of their own nature is the general position; the Good Shepherd leads his sheep and calls them each by name. The body of Christ is to be one, as a collective number (John 14:21-23), but this oneness is contributed to by each individual.

How the truth isolates! It demands a strong individuality in each. Surely the life of Christ shows this most clearly. He was a reflex of the Father, he was the Father's great and perfect representative. "I seek not mine own will, but his that sent me." And yet what a wondrous *personality*! His was not a passive service, he was not a machine (holy Spirit does not destroy personality) but an active, willing, responsive being, God's "vessel unto honor." Christ's moral nature responded to the touch of God like a bud to the rays of the sun or a grand organ to the fingers of a musician, but he was alone, in the most complete sense, so far as this world was concerned. His motives, ideals and practices were so different. "He dwelt amongst us." Fellowship with God was his only source of companionship. "God was with him." Why? "Because I do always those things which please him." Surely this is our pattern: individual fellowship and service is the one means for individual strength. "Study to show thyself approved unto God." The bride of the Lamb when gathered into one is plural, but its building up is in the singular.

What a grand prospect the "truth" presents as the goal of this individual discipline! A perfect nature, "satisfied when I awake in thy likeness;" the goal of human creeds is paltry, absurd,—a future state of locality merely—going to heaven, missing "hell!"

There is beautiful scenery on earth, but it does not give rest or peace or happiness. Our restless nature is like a troubled sea, nothing outside can calm it; the trouble is in man; that is where it started, and that is where the reform must be made. The chief value of heaven is because of God's presence and nature, "it is his throne;" so with the earth: far greater planets roll in space, but Christ places this planet as next in importance to God's throne, not because of its intrinsic value, but because of God's promises, purpose and presence. "The earth is my footstool," hence Jesus says, "Swear not by it." "Forever with the Lord," in his nature, throne and work is the perfect goal.

But surely this perfect goal embraces even more; it is not merely for the individual believer and overcomer. "What shall they do, that are baptised for the dead?" etc. The joy set before Christ embraced more than his own perfect bliss. His glorified body is not only perfect, but it is a conquering one, "according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself." Preeminently this feature separates the "truth" from all human conceptions. Something to *do*, something to realize, "to show forth the praises of him who hath called us," etc. "The glory that shall be revealed in us." Service is the grandest law of God's universe. "My Father *worketh* hitherto, and I *work*." His angels are ministering spirits; perfect happiness and rest will only be realized by a perfect nature *performing* perfect service. May it be ours more and more to enter now into the true glory of service to see its lofty standard, its eternal basis, and by and by to see his face and enter into his joy.

Your brother in the one blessed hope,

ALFRED PEARSON — *New South Wales*.