

THE PRESENT CRISIS

"Ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that ye be not troubled, for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet."—Matthew 24:6.

The Scriptures speak of a great time of trouble in the conclusion of this Gospel age. Our Lord in the prophecy recorded in Matthew 24 mentions this great time of trouble. Under a figure of the distress of earth and the shaking of the heavens, etc., he tells of the momentous events of our day. In connection with it he says, "When ye see these things begin to come to pass, then lift up your heads and rejoice; for your redemption draweth nigh"—linking this great climax to the deliverance of the church, their change from earthly nature to heavenly nature.

It is in this connection that our Lord says, "Ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars; all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet." These continued all through the age. We are not to think of wars as being the particular thing that the Master had in mind when he referred to the great trouble with which this age will close. That trouble is pictured in Daniel's prophecy as "a time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation."—Daniel 12:1.

Our Lord speaks of this same time of trouble and says that Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. (Luke 21:24) These "times of the Gentiles" represent a period during which the world was to be ruled by Gentile nations. The Gentiles were to show their skill in giving the world a government. This giving of the world into the hand of Gentile governments followed the taking away of the typical kingdom from typical Israel. With Zedekiah's fall and the taking away of the crown from him, the Lord declared an overturning of his government until the establishment of Messiah's kingdom.—Ezekiel 21:25-27.

Simultaneously, King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream, which portrayed the Gentile rule of earth during the interregnum of God's kingdom. Daniel showed the king the dream, which the monarch had forgotten, and gave him the interpretation. The king had dreamed of a great image, the head of which represented the Babylonian kingdom; the breast of silver, the Medo-Persian kingdom; the belly and thighs of brass, the Grecian kingdom; the legs of iron, the Roman Empire. The Holy Roman Empire was represented in the feet, part of clay and part of iron. A stone was to smite the image upon the feet, which were iron and clay, and break them to pieces. This crushing of the feet of the image was to come in the end of the age, and would be the preparatory step to the establishment of Messiah's kingdom.—Daniel 2:31-45.

So long as these governments would be here, they and Messiah's kingdom could not co-operate. The Gentile governments are based on selfishness and coercion; Christ's kingdom will be based on justice, love, mercy, under the Prince of Peace. The two could not rule at the same time. Hence it was foretold that Messiah at his second coming will first bind the "strong man" of Gentile supremacy, and on the ruins of earthly dominions establish a righteous Government.

The present terrible war is not the great time of trouble in the fullest sense of the word, but merely its forerunner. The great time of trouble of the Scriptures will be brought on by anarchy—the general uprising of the people; as the Prophet says, "every man's hand against his neighbor, no peace to him that goeth out or to him that cometh in."—Zechariah 8:10.

FRUIT OF THE VINE OF THE EARTH

The Lord declares that he has a hand in these matters that are a natural outcome of human selfishness, aggressiveness and greed. The Lord has to do with all this, in that at the appropriate time he granted to the world the knowledge which is stirring them up. In other words, men with sin and selfishness in their hearts are not in a position to use knowledge wisely, rightly. Without reflecting upon any person or class we can see that if the knowledge that is in the world should continue to increase, a certain few, by that increase of knowledge, would get far ahead of the others—until finally the wealth would be massed in the hands of the very few, and the whole world would become the serfs of these few. The money in the hands of the wealthy increases rapidly. On the other hand the population doubles in a century. Who cannot see that under present conditions there would eventually be nothing but slavery for the masses, governed by an autocracy?

As long as governments are strong, their overthrow will be impossible. Our thought, often presented in these columns, is that a great war will weaken the nations, preparatory to the period of anarchy. Such a great war, crippling the world

financially and discrediting the rulers in the eyes of their peoples, will open the way for the anarchy. The people of former times looked upon their rulers as demi-gods. This veneration for authority still obtains to some extent, especially in Russia, where the people almost worship the Czar—except those who are anarchists. The present war is the one we have expected. It will drain the world of blood and treasure. Then the nations, sick, weak, faint, will fall a prey to Socialism, which will become anarchy. Thus in accord with the Bible predictions earth will be prepared to welcome Messiah's kingdom as "the desire of all peoples."—Hag. 2:7.

"Wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until that day when I rise up to the prey; for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may bring the nations together to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger; for the whole [social] earth shall be devoured by the fire of mine anger. And then will I turn unto the people a pure message."—Zephaniah 3:8, 9.

What did Jehovah mean by "wait ye?" He meant that we are to wait for his time. He told us of the general leveling of the things of this world; he declared that all the kingdoms will be submerged in general anarchy. There will be a fervency of heat, discussion, tumult, strife, and at this time the nations of the world will "melt"—go down quickly. We believe this. We are not thinking of Christians as contending with the sword; for those who take the sword are to perish by it, our Lord said. God's people are to stand aloof, recognizing that "the powers that be are ordained of God," in that he permits them, while he has full power to make changes. If he permits them, it is not for us to seek to overthrow them.

This symbolic burning of the world is sometimes referred to by secular writers. In the newspapers we frequently read about "the great conflagration"—speaking of this fire of trouble, strife, confusion. The elements that will "melt with fervent heat" will be the labor element, the artisan element, the capitalistic element, the religious element, etc. The Lord has been gathering the nations, as he said he would in this "day"—within the last forty years. This gathering means the drawing of the nations together. All the nations of Europe—and even China—are nearer to us today than Chicago was seventy years ago. The nations are drawn closely together by the Atlantic and Pacific cables, so that China and Japan are within a few hours' communication with us, and a financial panic affects the whole world within twenty-four hours.

While the Lord has been doing this work, we are not to think that he is pitting these nations against each other. He has permitted them to work out their selfish propensities, and the result is strife. Knowledge is doing this—bringing on the restless social condition.

THE FINAL OUTLOOK

We see that this war has been brought on by very peculiar circumstances. Russia and Austria have each long been anxious to have an opening to the Mediterranean; but they have been fearful that a great war would result from any attempt to secure it. They have more or less "egged on" the smaller states—the Balkan States. They have done everything that they could to weaken each other's influence in these states—the "Buffer States," as they are called. Paid agents have been sent into that region by one nation to create antagonism against the other.

Austria thought that she had a good excuse for war against Serbia on account of the assassination of the heir to the Austrian throne by a Servian. She hoped that this excuse would seem to be sufficient. She hoped that Russia would say nothing; or that, otherwise, Germany's shaken fist would deter her. But this time it did not work. Russia determined to support the Servians, who are her kinsfolk; and this has brought in the other nations.

Apparently the great European kings and emperors realize that their own thrones are tottering, and also that this war may unify their people. The willingness of the people is an important factor in connection with any war. A war with another nation is preferable to the civil strife of a social upheaval. Their judgment is approved by facts. A Socialist in Paris the other day said something against the war, and he was assassinated immediately.

Our thought is that this war will so weaken all the nations, so impoverish them, as to make them ready for the anarchy which the Bible portrays. The disbanding of the troops and the returning of them to their homes, disappointed, dissatisfied

and angry with the kings, rulers, nobles, will result in the anarchy which will doubtless prevail throughout Europe—and extend to every nation, as the Bible predicts. We understand that Christ's kingdom is associated with this in the sense that Christ is about to take to himself his great power and reign. The Lord speaks of the anarchists as "his great army" in a figurative way, just as he speaks of the caterpillars, which are used figuratively to represent his army. The saints will not be in that army at all. The Lord has used even the devil as his agent, and "the wrath of man to praise him." Anarchists may be part of the Lord's great army in that he will supervise their campaign.

Eventually, the United States will become involved, and so fall with the other nations; not necessarily because the United States will engage in this war, however. To do so would be very foolish indeed. Our government is strong because the people govern themselves; they have their own government and their own liberties, and can change their own laws. We believe that they are doing this more and more, and are preparing to do so still further, so that finally our Government will come down to a socialistic basis. But before this shall happen, the wealthy, seeking to protect themselves, will doubtless bring things to pass in violation of the laws, and will thus precipitate trouble, believing that they are resisting injustice. Wise would it be for all to accept as gracefully as possible the inevitable leveling; but will they be wise?

It is human nature to make the streets run with blood rather than to suffer defeat and surrender "vested rights." The people are being led on by hatred, and an appeal to unreason. While certain truths are presented, the presentation is not truthful. But many are being inoculated, and are pre-

paring, as they think, for Socialism—we would say, for anarchism, here as easily as in Europe.

ARMAGEDDON STILL FUTURE

While it is possible that Armageddon may begin next Spring, yet it is purely speculation to attempt to say just when. We see, however, that there are parallels between the close of the Jewish age and this Gospel age. These parallels seem to point to the year just before us—particularly the early months.

The Scriptures indicate that the Gentile governments will receive from their own peoples their first notice that their lease of power has expired. The people will take note of the sign of the Son of Man in the heavens. The judgments of the Lord will begin to be manifest in the world, and will run counter to many of their interests. This manifestation of his presence is Scripturally called the epiphania, the shining forth, the revelation, of the King of Glory. "He shall be revealed in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thessalonians 1:7-10) As a result, the nations of earth will be broken to pieces like a potter's vessel.—Psalm 2:8, 9.

The prophetic forecast tells us that the trouble will begin in the ecclesiastical heavens, and later will proceed to the social element. The picture given of the end of Gentile times is that of a stone striking the image of Gentile supremacy in its feet. (Daniel 2:34, 35) The impact will be so sharp and so thorough as to leave nothing of them. Having had their day, they will cease to be—"become like the chaff of the summer threshing floor." The next event in order will be the Messianic kingdom, of which it is written, "The desire of all peoples shall come."

"MAN PROPOSES—GOD DISPOSES"

[Reprint from our issue of October 15, 1898, which please see.]

THE TRIED AND PROVEN PEOPLE

"The Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul."—Deut. 13:3.

God had entered into a covenant with the Children of Israel, in harmony with His promise made to Abraham their father. Four hundred and thirty years after his covenant with Abraham, the Lord had called Israel out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, and had made them a nation in the wilderness. He had proposed to them that if they would keep his law and his statutes he would make of them a great people, above all other peoples of the earth. They had entered into this covenant with the Lord, and had declared that they were very glad to accept this divine arrangement and to have the opportunity of carrying God's blessing eventually to all mankind. But now Israel was about to cross over Jordan and enter the land of promise. Before parting from them, Moses explained to them that it was not enough that they had accepted the conditions of the covenant and become the Lord's people: God would test them, would prove them.

Why should God prove them? As a people they had left Egypt under the leadership of the chosen servant of God. They had crossed the Red Sea, and sung their praises for deliverance. They had journeyed forty years in the wilderness. They had been refreshed with the water from the smitten rock. They had been fed with the bread from heaven. God knew all about them when he took them for his people. What more could he wish?

Ah! but their fathers had rebelled against God, and had fallen in the wilderness because of sin, because they had murmured against him whom they had covenanted to serve. And now Moses explained that God wished to prove to what extent the covenant would be kept by these their children. He said: You have entered into this agreement which God made with your fathers. You have made a consecration to be the servants of the Lord. Now, are you ready to perform the terms of your agreement? "The Lord your God doth prove you, to see whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul."—Deuteronomy 13:3.

GOD'S WONDERFUL CARE OVER ISRAEL

Do you appreciate God? was the query. Do you realize the value of his kindness? Do you truly love him with all your being—with all your powers, your strength? Are you fully surrendered to the Lord? For "thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God hath led thee these forty years in the wilderness—to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep his com-

mandments or no. He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know, that he might make thee to know that man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live. Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years. Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee. Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways and to fear him.

"For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness; thou shalt not lack anything in it. . . . When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which he hath given thee. Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping his commandments and his judgments and his statutes, which I command thee this day."—Deuteronomy 8:2-11.

SUPREME FAVORS TO SPIRITUAL ISRAEL

What an exhortation! What an incentive to faithfulness! Who would not worship and serve such a God! And what a wonderful application can spiritual Israel make of this Scripture! How marvelously has our God led us, his covenant people, through the wilderness of this world, and provided for our needs day by day! How the chastenings of his loving hand have kept our feet from wandering; or if we have turned at any time to the right hand, or to the left, how has his love drawn us back! And has he not brought us into a good and, a land of brooks of water, a land of fountains and depths, a land of oil olive and honey, a land wherein we eat bread, the bread of heaven, without scarceness? Truly, we have not lacked anything in it. If Israel of old had reason to prove their gratitude and love to God, how much more reason have we, spiritual Israel!

MOSES' DYING MESSAGE

After Moses has reminded Israel of all the loving kindnesses of the Lord on their behalf and of their solemn Covenant, he proclaimed to them the ordinances of the Lord by which they were to be governed, and then gave them most solemn warnings of the consequences of forgetting God and breaking their

covenant. This discourse, of which our text is a part, and which comprises the larger part of the book of Deuteronomy, was delivered to Israel just before Moses' death in Mount Nebo—the highest point of the ridge of Pisgah—whence the Lord showed him all the land of Canaan, and where he was buried. God had told Moses that he should not go over Jordan, because of his disobedience at the waters of Meribah, when he smote the rock contrary to the command of God. This discourse was his last message to Israel, and is very touching and impressive.

Moses finished his message with these words: "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Therefore choose life, that thou and thy seed mayest live, that thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest cleave unto him; for he is thy life, and the length of thy days, that thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them." Such words were very forceful at such a time; for Moses had told them that he was about to die, and that God would give them a new leader to go with them over Jordan.

ONLY "ISRAELITES INDEED" ARE SOUGHT

As a matter of fact, we know that Israel did not live up to their engagement, as God had assured Moses would be the case. They were like unto their fathers who died in the wilderness. During the centuries of their dwelling in Canaan, however, there were quite a large number who individually proved worthy of the blessing and favor of the Lord. St Paul refers to these in Hebrews 11, and declares their loyalty to God. These are to have a "better resurrection" than their brethren or than mankind in general. The Apostle mentions such characters as Moses, Samuel, David, and many of the prophets and others who were not so honored and prominent as these in an earthly way, but who had the honor of having pleased God.

Their serving the Lord with all their heart and soul could not justify them legally; for they were imperfect and blemished through the fall. But all the powers they had were devoted to the Lord. These became heirs of God—not heirs in the highest sense, because this opportunity was not open in their time. No one could gain this highest position until the Redeemer had come and opened the way. So all these worthy ones who live prior to the Christian era, died in faith, not having received the promise, i. e., its fulfilment. But "they looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." And soon these faithful servants of the Lord will "stand up for their portion."

But we, the church, must all first be perfected. In this class our Lord Jesus holds the highest place, and by the sacrifice of himself he opened the door of opportunity to his brethren of the elect class. "Israelites indeed" were honored with this invitation to become joint-heirs with Christ, sons of God. Only those who love God with all their heart and soul are "Israelites indeed." The average Israelite of our Lord's day was not fit to be of this select company; only "Israelites indeed" accepted the invitation. Throughout this Gospel age these true Israelites have been entering into this wonderful favor with all their heart and with all their soul.

It is not because we are more nearly perfect in the flesh that we have obtained this great favor, but because the Lord opened the way, and because we had a love for righteousness and an honesty of heart. Those who lived before our time, during the Law Covenant dispensation and prior to it, needed justification also; and the same Redeemer who has purchased us has through his sacrifice provided justification for them, that they too may ultimately come into the blessed relationship of sons of God.

IS GOD'S KNOWLEDGE LIMITED?

The way in which this expression of our text is put might give the impression that God does not know the hearts of men. The Scriptures assure us that God can fully read the heart, "that all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do"—no thought or purpose of our heart is hidden from him. But when we think of the Almighty—what he knows or what he does not know—we are at a loss to form an opinion. So far as our experience goes, there is no one who could know just what he himself would do under any given condition in the future. We may think what we would probably do, but we are not sure. And if we are not

sure that we ourselves know what we would do, we cannot see how any one else could know what we would do. We cannot by any mental process understand how it would be possible for God to know what we might do tomorrow, unless he coerced our mind or hedged up our way, so that we could do only one certain thing.

In the matter of the Gentile times, God permitted various governments—Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Grecia and Rome—to rule the world successively. We can understand how he could say: "Thus far shalt thou go and no farther." The tendency of sin in the fallen race would lead people to go to any length, if not restrained. In such ways, we can understand how God would know in advance. He knows, too, when the church will be selected, as he has a definite plan concerning this selection. He knew that Satan would have the disposition to raise up an anti-christ system—a counterfeit of the true church. He knew how many saints within a given time could be developed under those conditions, and how much time would thus be necessary to gather his predestinated number; for he purposed to permit Satan to operate within certain bounds for the testing of his professed people.

It would not be wise for us to say that there are some things that God could not know, that He does not know—or that there is anything that God does not know—but we can say that we are not able to understand how God could know what we shall think tomorrow, or next week. God made man a free moral agent; and he always respects this free agency, and gives us the opportunity of exercising our own wills. He is not pleased to have people who would work automatically. He permits us to make our own decisions. He has given us his Word, he gives us all needed assistance, and he will help all who are seeking to walk in his way. But these questions, we trust, will all be solved for us ere long. We know that God proves his professed people and demonstrates their heart attitude just as if he did not know—perhaps only as a proof to angels and men.

WHAT WILL THE ISSUE BE?

God is proving the church now. There are many of the professed church of Christ who have never made a covenant with God at all. But he is testing all those who have made a covenant, as to whether or not it is a heart-consecration—whether it is self first or God first—whether it is success in life or the honor of God and the doing of his will. He is trying us because he wishes to find out who will be worthy of a place with his Son on the throne, who will be worthy to reign with him in the kingdom, and who of the remainder will be worthy of a place in the company of antitypical Levites, and finally, who will be deserving of the second death.

Ours, therefore, is not only the high honor of being sons of God during this Gospel age, but also of being proved for the lasting rewards. The Jews that knowingly lived in violation of their law lost merely their temporal life, but did not forfeit their opportunity for the eternal life. But if any of us do likewise, we shall forfeit the life eternal. Therefore, the dealing of God with us goes beyond his dealing with natural Israel. Our responsibility, then, is so much the greater, and the issue is final.

The kingdom is designed only for those who by the grace of God shall in heart, in character, become like the Master, in that they will love the Lord with all their heart, with all their soul (all their present capacity), and be able to say: "Not my will, but thine, O Lord, be done." No other heart condition than this of entire submission to God in Christ can make us acceptable for the kingdom; for no other condition represents full loyalty and full love to God. Let us not forget that all the heavenly glories and blessings, which "eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man," God has prepared only for them who love him supremely—and who prove this love. But his grace will be sufficient for our every need.

"Then let us bid each doubt remove—

Those doubts that fain would rise—

And view the Canaan that we love

With unclouded eyes!

Could we but climb where Moses stood,

And view the landscape o'er,

Not Jordan's stream, nor death's cold flood,

Should fright us from the shore!"

WHAT IS EVIL SPEAKING?

"Speak evil of no man."—Titus 3:2.

The Apostle's injunction is very positive; we are to speak evil of none. The question then arises, What does St. Paul mean here? Does he mean that we should speak nothing of

any man with an evil intention toward him? Or does he mean, Speak no evil, whatever the intention? We answer, We surely know that to speak evil with a wrong motive, a wrong

intention, would be a heinous crime, especially in a child of God. But we think the Apostle meant, No matter what your motive, speak evil about nobody. If that be the Apostle's thought—and we believe it hardly controvertible—it places a very stringent requirement upon all of the Lord's people. If the motive for speaking evil were bad, all the worse; but good or bad, speak evil of no man.

Now another question comes up, What is evil-speaking? We answer, This subject has various sides. To speak evil is to speak that which is injurious; therefore one should say nothing that would injure any man. It is very easy to perceive the justice and the reasonableness of this requirement if we apply the Golden Rule. Would we wish any one to do us evil? Would we wish any to speak slightly of us, to comment on our faults, or on what the speaker considered faults, and thus lower us in the eyes of others? If the Lord's people would learn to apply the Golden Rule to every affair of life, it would surely be very helpful.

Some of the most conscientious Christians have difficulty along this line. In considering this matter of evil-speaking, some think, Is my motive right? They forget that their motive in speaking derogatively of others has nothing to do with the Apostle's injunction. No matter what the motive, we are not to speak evil. The question is not, Did I have a good intention or a bad one? but, Am I speaking evil? Am I saying anything contrary to the Golden Rule—something that I would not wish to have said of me? We would that we could instil this thought into the hearts and minds of every reader of this journal.

IS REPORTING VIOLATION OF RULES EVIL-SPEAKING?

Now comes another question, How should we apply the injunction of our text in the case of the home, for instance, or the office? Suppose that we are connected with an office or a home where certain rules are laid down for the government of that office or home. Would it in such a case be evil-speaking on our part to report any violation of those rules? We do not consider this evil-speaking. If we were ourselves violating those rules, the person who would report us would be doing right—not doing us evil or wrong or injury. By not reporting the misdemeanor or violation of rules, the person would be encouraging in us a continuation of the wrong course.

God's people are supposed always to have no other than good motives for any course pursued. To have any but a good motive in dealing with others would be to have a murderous motive. We are not, therefore, to take the motive into consideration. But a person who accepts a position in an office, a home or an institution accepts also the conditions and sundry rules connected with such a position. Doubtless nearly all rules and regulations in an office or home are made, not with the view of injuring any one, but for the general welfare of the business or the family or whatever it may be. Hence the observance of all these obligations should be considered a serious responsibility. One should not report an infraction of rules in an evil way, but merely as a fact.

It is not necessary for the one who informs to judge the heart of the one reported. It is not a question of a bad heart. If one has a foolish brain, or is forgetful or inattentive and violates important rules, it is not judging the heart to report such a case—and especially where there is a rule that such cases be reported. It is merely a matter of duty—a thing that is required, and is both necessary and proper. We see this principle laid down in God's workmanship in our bodies. If something occurs in the body—for instance, if a finger is being pinched—the nerves immediately telegraph to the brain. If a foot is hurt, the fact is telegraphed to the brain at once. Suppose there were no means of communicating the injury of a member of the body to the brain. Suppose there were no nerves of sensation to convey the message. One might not know whether or not he had lost a finger or a toe. He would not know when he had lost a foot, until he stumbled and fell.

SUBJECT NOT TO BE DISCUSSED WITH THE OFFENDER

We should not be always looking to see if our own personal matters are being impinged. We know that we, as well as others, have imperfections. If others inadvertently tread upon our toes, we know that we are likely to sometimes tread on others' toes. But personal matters are different from those that belong to the family or to the office. It is not busyboding to report violations of the rules of the house or of the office. It is to be the interest of every member of a family or an institution that the interests of whole body be looked after, in a proper and reasonable way.

It would not be proper for any one in an office to attempt to set straight every one else in the office. It is not for any one to go around and correct others; this is not his business. But if another is breaking rules, it is his business to report the facts—the facts, without any coloring whatever. If we

would do otherwise, if each one who notes an infraction would go to the one who violated the rules, and thus attempt to settle all the affairs of the office or the family, there would be continual confusion. The one who broke the rule would be disposed to defend himself and to say, "My course was all right, and it is none of your affair whether that gate was left open or shut." etc. But if that gate is left open, it is your duty to report the matter to the proper authority, and thus you are relieved of the responsibility of the affair. This is not a personal matter, such as to be dealt with according to Matthew 18:15-17. It would not be our duty to tell Tom, Dick, Harry, Mary or Jane about the matter. There is just one person to whom we should tell it; and the report should be made with all kindly feeling.

One would soon get himself into trouble if he were to try to run an entire house or office by going to various ones to endeavor to set them right. But if there were a new-comer, and he were unintentionally violating a rule, it might be well to say, It is a rule of the house to do thus and so. But it would not be proper to mention this fact to him more than once. A second violation should be reported, though in a loving spirit.

MISCELLANEOUS CASES

Applying the question to our proper course in the church, in matters relating to ourselves personally, we see where our individual responsibility lies. "If thy brother trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone." Our Lord does not refer to what he does against some one else, but against "thee." "Well," some one may object, "I think he was doing something against so-and-so." We have heard some one say: "I think Brother So-and-so does not treat his wife right." We reply, "That is his business and his wife's business; it is not your business. Your business is to look after your own wife or husband, your own parents, your own children, and let other people alone. We advise that you practise on yourself. Do your duty in respect to your own affairs, and refrain from comments on those of others."

But suppose we saw something radically wrong, suppose we were going along the street and saw a man cruelly beating a horse, should we say nothing? In such a case, if we saw a policeman, we might say, "Will you take notice of how that man is abusing that horse?" Or it might be reported to the Humane Society, if there were one in the locality. If a parent were brutally beating a child, or something of that kind, it would be proper to report the matter to the authorities. But it is not the business of every one to go about attempting to straighten out matters in general. The world is full of evil, and will be until the kingdom shall take control.

We think that as far as the church is concerned the number of difficulties we see in the world would better be let alone as a rule; for if we should start out to right everything that is wrong, we would not have any time left for serving the King of kings and Lord of lords. Our time is limited enough, at best. People already misjudge us; therefore we do well not to add unnecessarily to the opposition. If the time ever came when we were through with all our duties to the church and to our families, then we might see to some of these outside matters. But we have very little time, and it leaves us very small opportunity to attend to any other matters except our necessary duties and our service for the Lord and the brethren. And for this we should be very thankful; for then if there is opposition against us, it will be only because we have been faithful to our heavenly King.

Our King has not given us authority as yet to set the matters of the world straight. But we are instructed that we should, as we have opportunity, make known the principles of righteousness, without getting into any dispute. When our King comes in and begins his reign, and we are exalted with him, we will show the world what a government should be! But, indeed, it seems surprising how good the laws are even now. We are simply amazed as we think of the good laws of the State of New York, for instance. It is wonderful how the State tries to take care of the interests of the majority, and how much is done for the people; we are glad that the poor world has been able to do so well. We admire what they have done under such adverse conditions. What a grand time it will be, and what a grand world it will be, when everything is under the law of righteousness!

ANOTHER PHASE OF THE QUESTION

But coming back to this matter of evil-speaking in the church; suppose that a brother has been nominated for the position of elder or deacon, and suppose that in our judgment he is unfit for such an office, for certain reasons known to us, but not known to the rest of the Ecclesia. What should be our course in the matter? We are admonished to speak evil of no man. Should we then get up and say, "Brethren,

I consider Brother A. wholly unfit to be an elder; I know that he did thus-and-so; that he cheated a woman out of a sum of money"—or whatever the charge might be. Shall we say this? No, indeed! Is it our duty to speak evil in the interests of the church, to do evil that good may come? Certainly not! But the old creature always wants a chance to speak evil; give him half a chance and he will soon tell all that he knows!

Then what shall we do? Well, if we were ourself a member of that congregation, we think we would go over and speak to the brother thus nominated, and say, "Brother A., there are certain matters which I have learned about you which I do not wish to mention to anybody. I would not wish to speak evil of you at all, dear brother. But I believe that this feature of your life is wrong, and that it would not be right for this congregation to elect you. I do not wish to tell them about this matter. I wish to ask you if you will refuse to serve. If you promise that you will decline to be elected, that is all that is necessary. Or if you think that my point is not well taken, just state the matter publicly to them. If you do not do this, and do not refuse to be elected, then I must state the matter publicly—I will have to tell what I know; for you know it is as I state it. I have come to you in kindness and have no desire to injure you."

If the brother answers, "Well, Brother —, I will decline the nomination; and as regards the matter you mention, I am trying to get the better of it"—then we would tell him we are very glad. We believe that we would in this way do that brother good. We would also be preserving the class from what would be hurtful or contentious, and would be keeping the peace. If, on the other hand, the brother should be disputatious, we would say to him, "You may be sure that I will explain this matter to the church, if you do not decline the nomination; for thereby you are saying that you approve your course in life and are standing by it."

But if the matter were something that occurred in the brother's life long ago, he might be entirely changed by now—in the matter of a year, or two years, or five years, or whatever. We would be glad if he were changed from the old course. Then we might go to the brother and say, "Brother, I notice that you stood for election. Is your life entirely changed?" If he replied, "Yes, Brother; it is changed entirely," then we would be glad. But if he got angry and told us it was none of our business, we would say, "Now, Brother, I must make a report of this to the church. You are indicating by your manner that you are advocating the same course

that you took before. If I had done such a wrong, and continued to do wrong, I would wish to have my course checked. So I shall report this matter, that the class may consider again whether they will have you for an elder (or a deacon)." But suppose that the brother should not be nominated for office in the church? Then we would consider that his past was none of our affair.

A CONCLUDING WORD OF EXHORTATION

Anything injurious to the real interests of another should never be spoken. We cannot be too careful of our words concerning others. There seems to be a tendency with some of the Lord's children to indulge in confidences with others of the brethren and to relate incidents that reflect upon another brother or sister, show up certain manifestations of weakness in that one. The disposition that thus exposes the imperfections of the brethren is surely not the love that covers. (1 Peter 4:8) We know some who have been long in the narrow way, who do not seem even yet to have overcome this disposition. Do they forget that they themselves have weaknesses perhaps as pronounced as the brother or sister whom they criticize? The very fact that they ignore the Master's injunction along the line of our text proves their own lack of development. Yet these would probably resent the implication that they are guilty of evil-speaking.

The sooner every follower of Christ comes to see that all this is slander, that it is besmirching the good name of a brother or sister, that it is a direct violation of the repeated injunction of the Word of God, and that defamation is theft of another's reputation, the sooner they will see this subject as it really is, in all its hideousness—as it must appear in the sight of the Lord. Once seeing the matter from the divine standpoint, the only true standpoint, the child of God must surely awaken to the greatest possible energy in overcoming such works of the flesh and of the devil. Let each one who reads these words search his or her own heart and think over his or her own conduct, and then ask the question, "Is it I?"

Let every one who hopes to be accounted worthy of a place in the kingdom, so soon to come, purge out the old leaven of malice, envy, backbiting and strife, if any yet remain, that he or she may become indeed a copy of God's dear Son. The flesh is very seductive, and is inclined to make all manner of excuses for itself. Let each one make this a matter of personal heart-searching. There is, we believe, only a very little while remaining in which to perfect our characters. Let us pray more earnestly than ever, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth! Keep thou the door of my lips!"

JUDGMENT OF THE NATIONS

SEPTEMBER 20.—Matthew 25:31-46.

"Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of the least of these, ye did it not unto me."—Verse 45.

Having given his disciples many parables illustrating the experiences of the church, the kingdom class, in their development and preparation for kingdom honor, it was eminently proper that Jesus should give the parable of this lesson to illustrate the work of this kingdom after its establishment—to show its purpose, and its effect upon the world of mankind.

Many of us have in the past read the Bible too carelessly. Our minds were sluggish respecting spiritual things. For instance, today's lesson was at one time applied to the church. We failed altogether to notice that it says not a word respecting the church, but is entirely applied to the world, to the nations, the heathen. For centuries the Jews had been accustomed to think of themselves as God's nation, God's people. All others they styled heathen. Gentiles, the people, the nations; and in the prophecies God treated the matter from this standpoint. So when spiritual Israel was received into divine favor as the royal priesthood, the holy nation, the peculiar people, all the remainder of mankind were properly enough to be thought of and described as "the nations," "the Gentiles."

In line with this, our Lord in this parable tells what is to befall after his kingdom shall have been set up—after the selection of the true church class to be the bride, the Lamb's wife and joint-heir in his kingdom, in his throne. This, we notice, is very clearly stated by the Master, saying "When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory." Who, after proper consideration, will say that this is a matter of the past? Who will dispute that this is a description of Messiah's kingdom following his parousia and his epiphania at his second advent?

APPLICATION OF THIS PARABLE

Then follows a description of the work of the Millennial age. "Before him shall be gathered all nations." This means

all the people of the world outside of the Lord's holy nation, his peculiar people, the church. Everybody except the church will be before his great white throne of justice, mercy and love; that will be their judgment time.

Six thousand years ago, Adam and his entire race were judged in Eden, and the sentence was death. None of the race are worthy of everlasting life. They are all sinners. In due time God sent his Son to die for Adam's sin, in order that, "as by a man came death [of the entire race], by a man [Jesus] also will come the resurrection of the dead" [the entire race]. "For as all in Adam die, even so all in Christ shall be made alive"—"every man in his own order."—1 Corinthians 15:21, 22.

The first order to be made alive in Christ is the church, called out of the world, separated, "begotten again" of the holy Spirit. These pass their judgment, their trial, for life everlasting or death everlasting in the present time. Hence the worthy ones, with characters formed pleasing and acceptable to God, will be quite ready to be Messiah's bride class, joint-heirs with him in his kingdom and in his work of judging the world. He has promised that all the faithful shall sit with him in his throne—the very throne pictured in the words of our text—the throne before which all the nations, all the people outside of the church, will be gathered.

The gathering of the world will be the result of knowledge. The time of trouble will lead on to great enlightenment, in which all the blind eyes will be opened, all the deaf ears will be unstopped, and the knowledge of the glory of God will fill the whole earth. Some there will be who, resisting this knowledge, will decline to accept Christ and will not come into this judgment; but after a hundred years of resistance these will be destroyed.

Those in the parable are such as have accepted Christ's terms and desire to be on judgment, or on trial, for everlasting life. This will include all in their graves, who, the

Master tells us, will come forth, not all at once, but gradually. Messiah's kingdom will exercise its power and disseminate the knowledge of God and of righteousness, with a view to encouraging, helping and uplifting all the willing and obedient. All such may rise more and more out of sin and death conditions—out of imperfection of mind and body and out of immoral conduct to the full image of God, as possessed by father Adam in the beginning.

It will be the work of the entire Millennial age to bring this about. Righteousness will reign then, as sin reigns now. That is to say, it will be in control, in the ascendancy; and whosoever will sin then will suffer promptly. Hence all the nations will be avoiding sin. Then the world in general will be a grand place, where "nothing shall hurt or destroy"; where "the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick"; where the curse shall be gradually rolled away, and there shall be no more crying, no more sighing, no more dying; and where the blessing of God, bringing perfection, will prevail. "O happy day!" we exclaim. And surely it will be such; for all who live through those thousand years will have a great blessing.

THE LAW OF RETRIBUTION OPERATIVE

But, some inquire, what about the sins of the world? Will there be no chastisements, no punishments, for these? We answer that it will be equally as just for God to forgive the sins of the world for Christ's sake as it has been just for him to forgive the sins of the church for Christ's sake. If the one is just, so will be the other; for God is no respecter of persons, and is equally as willing to forgive the sins of the world as the sins of the church, when the world, repenting of sin, will turn from it, accepting Christ as their Redeemer.

This does not mean, however, that justice is to be ignored. In the case of the church, note how the sins of youth may leave their scar and sting to the end of life. And so we may reasonably assume that certain strifes, or punishments, will be permitted to follow the world in just the same manner. It will be from these weaknesses and frailties that they will be gradually raised up to perfection during those blessed thousand years of Christ's kingdom, when Satan will be bound and not be permitted to deceive any during that period.

But what about heart condition? If conformity to the divine law in an outward way will bring blessings to all, will there not still be a difference between the people—some coming heartily into accord with the Father, and others merely outwardly into harmony, because this outward harmony will be the way to restitution, perfection?

Undoubtedly this is correct reasoning. It is along this line that the parable before us teaches; namely, that outwardly the "sheep" and the "goats" will have much the same appearance and demeanor, except to the Judge, the King, who will read the heart and ultimately will manifest to all that there has been a real heart-difference between the two classes, all of whom will have been on trial for a thousand years, receiving blessings from the kingdom.

THE BASIS OF JUDGMENT

All the while each individual will be making character. This character will be fully appreciated by the great Judge, and the individual will be rated either as a "sheep" or as a "goat." All the sheep-class will thus be received at the right hand of the great Jehovah; and all of the goat-class will be rated as out of favor with him, even though all the while they will be receiving the blessings of the Millennial kingdom and outwardly rendering obedience to its laws.

Not until the conclusion of the Millennium will the decision of the Judge be manifested. Then great surprise will be shown at his decision—by both parties. To the "sheep" at his right hand he will say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father [the kind that my Father is pleased to bless and to grant everlasting life! Come,] inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." When God laid the foundation of the earth and planned its human habitation, it was his design to give it to you. Now the time has come for you to enter into this kingdom and to possess it.

This is not the same kingdom as the Messianic kingdom. On the contrary, it is the kingdom which God gave to Adam, which Adam lost through his disobedience and which Christ redeemed by the sacrifice of himself. It will be given only to those who will have developed the God-like character—those who will have become the Lord's "sheep" during the Millennium.

Then the other class, the goats of the parable, will be sentenced: "Depart, ye accursed ones [doomed ones], into everlasting punishment." Granted all the privileges, blessings and experiences of a thousand years of contact with righteousness, truth and the spirit of God, you indeed render an outward obedience, but at heart you have not come into harmony with God. I cannot recognize you as my sheep. I cannot pre-

sent you to the Father blameless and irrevocable. You must be destroyed; the punishment is the second death, "everlasting destruction." The penalty upon you is an everlasting one because there will be no further provision made for your redemption or for your resurrection from the second death. You will be as though you had never been. You have failed utterly to appreciate the goodness of God and to copy his character-likeness. Eternal life is only for those who have God's likeness and God's spirit. "The Father seeketh such to worship him as worship him in spirit and in truth."

Both classes, the "sheep" and the "goats," were surprised at what the King, the Judge, declared to be the basis of his judgment. To the sheep he said, "I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me." To the goat-class he said, "I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty and ye gave me no drink; was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick and in prison, and ye visited me not."

Both "sheep" and "goats" claimed that they had no knowledge of any such experiences. When did we minister unto thee? When did we fail to minister unto thee? The answer was, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of my brethren, or did it not unto him, ye did it, or did it not, unto me.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SHEEP CLASS

Now, who are these respecting whom there will be a test upon the sheep-class and upon the goat-class? Will there be people sick, hungry and in prison during the Millennium? Does the Lord wish us to understand that there will be such? We have, on the contrary, always assumed that sickness, poverty, hunger and prisons will then be gone forever. What does it all mean?

The meaning is plain. With the establishment of the Millennial kingdom all who come into harmony with it will have the great privilege of doing something to help others. The world is blind and starved now, for lack of spiritual food and the anointing eye-salve of the truth. While the Millennial blessings will be showered upon those who accept the Lord's terms, there will be others who will need assistance. Those who have the spirit of God, the spirit of love, will be glad to carry the heavenly message of reconciliation to all humanity, glad to apply the eye-salve to the blind, glad to unstop the ears of the deaf, glad to help the sin-sick back into harmony with God—to the blessings of Messiah's kingdom, to the way in which these may be obtained—helping them to cover their nakedness with the merit of Christ.

All who will take pleasure in this work will thus be manifesting that they have God's spirit and are co-laborers with him. All these will be the sheep. On the other hand, those who will be careless in respect to their vow, and merely enjoy the Millennial blessings themselves, will be of the goat-class and will thus be marking themselves as "goat," and correspondingly will be out of favor with the great King of kings, their Judge, the Lord of Glory.

THE WORLD'S RESURRECTION

The prison referred to in the parable is undoubtedly the great prison-house of death, into which approximately twenty thousand millions already have gone. All these are to come forth. But the Scriptures declare that they will not all come forth at once, but "every man in his own order." Only the church will be in the first resurrection.

During the Millennium the awakening from the sleep of death, the prison-house, will come about by divine power, of course, but we believe in answer to prayer. Each family circle, as it can prepare for another and another member, will be glad to do so, and will make request for his return. Thus the race will come out of the "prison-house" in reverse order to that in which they entered, and will be acquainted with, identified by, and prepared for by their friends, their relatives.

While the blessing of the Lord will provide an abundance for all, nevertheless we may safely assume that the provision will be in the hands of their fellows. It will be the "sheep" that will be especially interested in, praying for and preparing for, those who are in the great prison-house of death. And by so engaging their time and energy these "sheep" will be manifesting a purpose, a will, in harmony with that of the Creator. God has willed that all who are in their graves shall come forth at the command of Jesus (John 5:28, 29), and those in sympathy with God and Christ will be co-laborers with God in accomplishing the work for which Christ died. Any not interested in that work will be lacking in God's spirit; and this is exactly what is charged against the goat-class.

He who sits upon the throne, having redeemed the world of mankind and having provided for the resurrection of all these redeemed ones, counts them as in a certain sense representing himself—as he says in the parable: “I was an hungered, and ye fed me; I was sick and in prison, and ye visited me,” ministered unto me and helped me.

Likewise the reproof to the goat-class: to these he said, You were not interested in the things of God. Your interest was merely personal, a selfish one. You have enjoyed the blessings of these glorious thousand years, and that is all that

God has provided for you. You are not of the kind to whom he is pleased to grant everlasting life. You will therefore die. You have more or less of the selfish spirit, which is the spirit of Satan, and as God’s provision for all who will not be in fellowship with him in spirit is destruction, this is to be your portion—the second death.

The eternal fire is the fire of God’s jealousy or anger, which burns against and destroys everything antagonistic to his righteousness. (Zephaniah 1:18; 3:8) It is, of course, merely a figurative expression representing complete destruction.

NO CROSS, NO CROWN

“The purple grape must be crushed
To make the sweet, red wine,
And furnace fires must fiercely burn
The drossy gold to refine;
The wheel must cruelly grind,
Else where the jewel’s light?
And the steel submit to the polishing,
Or how would the sword grow bright?”

“How then, my soul, wilt thou
The Spirit’s fruits possess,
Except thou lovingly yield thyself
To the Hand that wounds to bless?
Then patiently let the fire
Consume all earthly dross—
Thou canst not hope to wear the crown,
If thou refuse the cross!”

“LET NO ONE TAKE THY CROWN”

SEPTEMBER 27.—QUARTERLY REVIEW.

“I come quickly. Hold fast that which thou hast, that no one take thy crown.”—Revelation 3:11.

The text of today’s study is a prophecy by Jesus himself. Picturing the seven stages of his church, the Master used these words in addressing one of them. There is, nevertheless, an appropriateness in all of the Lord’s counsel at any time. So we now, as well as those who were particularly addressed, may find instruction in our text.

It teaches, in harmony with the entire Bible, that there can be no remedy for the reign of sin and death, except that which God has provided, to be applied at the second coming of the Redeemer, when he will set up his kingdom. Meantime, the delay in the fulfilment of our prayer, “Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven,” does not indicate any carelessness on the part of the Father or of the Redeemer in respect to the world and its terrible reign of sin and death. It does, however, indicate great composure on God’s part and on the part of the Master. It indicates that the plan of God is working, and that it will ultimately bring a blessing to the whole world, the blessing which God has promised since the days of Abraham—the blessing of all the families of the earth.

God has from the beginning foreseen how the six great days of the reign of sin and death could be wisely permitted, in view of the power to be exercised by Messiah’s kingdom. Messiah will be quite competent, backed by power divine, to cope with sin, sorrow, pain, death—everything that is now troubling humanity. The time appointed of the Father, a thousand years, will be abundantly long. And when the church shall have been selected from the world as the bride, the Lamb’s wife and joint-heir in his kingdom, everything will be ready for the blessed work of restitution, restoration, resurrection, regeneration of mankind—to bring the willing and obedient back to the image and likeness of the Creator, lost through Adam’s sin and gained through the willing obedience of Christ, even unto death—even the ignominious death of the cross.

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE CHURCH

Our text addresses not the world, not the nominal church—but the true church. The true church, having turned away from sin, having accepted Christ, having given their hearts to God, through Christ having been accepted of the Father and begotten of the holy Spirit, are children of God; and, as the Apostle says, “If children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ” our Lord. (Romans 8:17) A crown of glory is set apart for each son thus received of the Father, and the name of each is recorded in the Lamb’s book of life.

So far as God is concerned, the whole matter is settled. But so far as the church is concerned, it still remains for them to fulfill their covenant. Having presented their bodies a living sacrifice to God, acceptable through Christ, they are to continue in that attitude—day by day gladly presenting their bodies, willing to endure, to suffer, to be anything and everything that God would be pleased to have them be. All who do this continue to grow in character-likeness to the Lord Jesus; and all such will thereby make their calling and election sure.

But should any of these neglect this covenant of sacrifice, and through fear of death be subject to bondage either to sin or to sectarian errors, or in any other manner fail to be responsive and loyal to their covenant, they will thereby fail to maintain their election and make it sure. After a time of test-

ing they will be relegated to a secondary place; they will be no longer counted part of the royal priesthood, even though they might still maintain their standing as Levites, servants of the priests.

This is the thought of the text; namely, Be of good courage. It will not be long until I will come to receive you to myself. Let the thought of the kingdom and of the divine blessing connected with it cheer, strengthen, comfort you, and make you strong to do God’s will faithfully, nobly, courageously, loyally. “Hold fast that which thou hast.” Do not let slip from you the blessed relationship which was entered into, which was established for you by me, your Master, when I made you acceptable on the basis of your covenant to be dead with me, to suffer with me, to give up all earthly ambitions and to strive daily for the great prize which I set before you—a joint-heirship in my kingdom.

“The crown is yours now, by virtue of the arrangement which I have made with you as your Advocate, and by virtue of the covenant of sacrifice which you have made with me. Hold fast your crown! Do not allow it to pass to another. If any one of you is unfaithful, God will not permit you to have a share in that kingdom, but will enroll another name than yours, will apportion another name instead of yours as a new covenanter.”

THE NUMBER OF THE ELECT

This Scripture, with others, shows us definitely that the church is to be composed of a definite, fixed number—not one more, not one less. This is also illustrated in the body of the Jewish high priest. The head of the priest represented Jesus; the body of the priest represented the church. As the Apostle says, “Now are ye the body of Christ, and members in particular.” “For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ.” “God hath set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.” “There are many members, but one body.”—1 Corinthians 12:27, 12, 18, 20.

According to the Law, no one could serve in the office of high priest unless he had the full number of members—fingers, toes, etc. (Leviticus 21:17-21) No one could serve who had a superfluous member—an extra finger, an extra toe. Thus the Lord indicated the completeness of the antitypical priesthood, The Christ.

In Revelation, Chapter 7, we have a picture of the church, the antitypical royal priesthood. Then following that picture we have one of the antitype of the Levite class. The first shows a definite number, one hundred and forty-four thousand—twelve thousand for each of the tribes of Israel. Thus God indicates that he is following out a definite purpose. Israel was first invited to be this royal priesthood. (Exodus 19:5, 6) At Pentecost a few out of the different tribes responded, and became the nucleus, or earliest members, of the church. Then the door of opportunity was opened to the Gentiles; and all coming in are assigned to places in the twelve tribes to fill up the vacancies. This the Apostle Paul pictures in Romans 11—the wild olive branches being grafted into the olive tree to take the places of the branches broken off because of unbelief.

Those loyal to the Lord, yet not sufficiently loyal to be of the bride class, after having been tested as to their loyalty

and proven worthy, will constitute a great company, an innumerable company, a company whose number no man knows—a company whose number is not fore-ordained. The discipline through which these will be put is pictorially stated. They will come through great tribulation, and wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. They must in the end be faithful; else they will not have any part or lot with Christ in his work.

GOD'S MUCH DIVERSIFIED WISDOM AND MERCY

“For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? For if the first-fruit be holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches.”—Romans 11:15, 16.

The Jewish nation was reconciled to God in a typical way, and thus became his peculiar people. All his promises belonged to them—no such promises were made to the Gentiles. The relationship of the Jews to God was through their covenant. But after eighteen hundred and forty-five years of special favor, their rejection of Messiah demonstrated their unworthiness of a continuance of their special privileges. In the time of testing they were found wanting, and were given over to blindness and disruption until their “double”—eighteen hundred and forty-five years of disfavor—should be accomplished.

All, however, were not thus rejected from favor. A faithful remnant were gathered into the Gospel fold, while the remainder were “scattered and peeled.” This faithful remnant were the first-fruits class of the church of Christ. God then sent his message out to the whole world. Romans, Greeks, British, French, Germans, Swedes, Norwegians, Danes, etc.—all nations—have had the same opportunity. This does not mean that all individuals of all nations have been given this opportunity; but that the Lord has selected here and there one of suitable character, who gladly responded to the message—those who, hungering and thirsting for righteousness, had the hearing ear. God gave to these the message of reconciliation, and sent them forth to bear the glad tidings to others of the same class.

All who believed that message were reconciled to God through the death of his Son. They have been a company of sacrificers, gladly laying down their lives as followers in the Master's steps. The message of this great salvation has gone forth through all the years of this present age, and some from every nation have responded and come into the Body of Christ. This could not have been if the Jews had not proven unfaithful as a nation and been turned aside from favor. The Gentiles have known this. They saw that the favor of God, the blessing of God, turned to them at the same time that it was withdrawn from the Jews.

“LIFE FROM THE DEAD”

The natural Israelites, even after their rejection from favor as a people, had still an opportunity as individuals of coming into Christ, but no special favor as a nation. Indeed, their rejection of Jesus as their Messiah, and their bitter prejudice and blindness have acted as a great gulf to separate them as a people from the Gospel message; and but very few of them have ever accepted God's message in Christ. As the Apostle here declares, their blindness as a nation is not to be removed until “the fulness of the Gentiles [to complete the Gospel church] be come in.” This time is now about here; the Gospel church is about complete.

Do we remember how the restoration of natural Israel is to be accomplished? Yes. The Scriptures declare that it is to be brought about through the New Covenant—“This is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.” It will be at the establishment of Messiah's kingdom; Messiah is then to inaugurate this covenant. What will this mean to the Jews? It will mean that their “double” is fulfilled, that “their appointed time is accomplished, that their iniquity is pardoned.” [See STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, Vol. 2, Study 7.] It will mean their resurrection from the dead—both nationally and individually, both symbolically and literally. “For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world [in the receiving of the Gentile ‘wild olive branches’ into the ‘olive tree,’ from which the majority of the Jews were broken off], what shall the receiving [back] of them be, but life from the dead?”—Romans 11:15.

But since this testing needed to come upon them as a judgment, because they did not voluntarily and full-souledly keep their covenant of sacrifice, therefore they cannot be of the elect body of Christ. They will miss the throne. They miss the glorious crown of the divine nature—immortality. But they receive palm branches, signifying victory, and we have the assurance that they will be permitted to serve God in and through his temple, the church, which is the body of Christ.

Here we have another Scriptural teaching of the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead. The promises are to be fulfilled which were made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, the prophets and others. Though God cast the nation off for a time, he will regather them, according to his promise, when their period of chastisement shall be ended—their “seven times.” [See Vol. 2, Study 4.] Extending the thought, we see that the promise of God to Abraham of the blessing of all the nations and kindreds and families of the earth through his seed—the heavenly and the earthly, “the stars of heaven” class and “the sands upon the seashore” class—must yet be fulfilled. (Genesis 22:15-18) The fulfilment of this promise will necessitate the awakening of the entire human race from the tomb. Thus the munificence of God's wonderful provision for his human creatures is soon to be manifested to angels and men—to the living and the dead—to all the human family.

FIRST-FRUIT AND AFTER-FRUIT—ALL HOLY

In verse 16 the Apostle is showing that as the first-fruit of this great “olive tree” growing out of the root of the Abrahamic Covenant is holy, so is the entire fruitage. Although this promise to Abraham was given directly to his earthly seed, nevertheless God, who knew the end from the beginning, knew that the first-fruit of this promise would be Abraham's spiritual seed—the Christ, Head and body. And yet this breaking off of many of the natural branches, and the grafting in of “wild olive branches” to take their place, which has been going on during this Gospel age, was not the limit of God's great plan. It was his purpose to have a holy seed. Abraham was first tested, and all who were to constitute this seed were to be likewise tested; but these were to be used as agents in the hands of Jehovah for the carrying out of his plan of salvation.

As this first-fruit class is holy, the Apostle declares, “the lump is also holy.” The word lump here would better be translated mass, for he is speaking of people. The root is holy—the covenant of Jehovah, confirmed by His oath to Abraham. So all who become joined to this root, and receive their life and their privileges and blessings from it, will also be holy.

Abraham typically represented Jehovah God; Isaac represented the Son, our Lord Jesus; and Rebecca, the wife of Isaac, represented the bride of Christ, the members of his body. All these together—Father, Son and bride—will bring forth a holy, earthly Israel. This will eventually include all mankind who shall come under the terms of the New Covenant. So Israel restored, and the entire world—all of the race of Adam who will return to harmony with God—will constitute the “holy lump,” or mass—the after-fruit.

Looking at the deep workings of God's plan thus, in the light of what he tells us is future, as well as of what is past, how wonderful it is! Oh, the rich depths of God's wisdom and knowledge! How useless for us to try to discover his dealings except as he is pleased to reveal his plans to us. His doings are all mysteries to us except as we are enlightened by his Spirit. Who knew this gracious plan, so much beyond human conception? Who helped the Lord to arrange such a plan, think you? This is not human wisdom. God only could be its author. A Jew would never have planned to graft in Gentiles to share the chief blessings of the promise. A Gentile never would have arranged the original stock and branches Jewish and himself a favored graft. No, the plan is clearly of God, and well illustrates both his goodness and his just severity. Of him is all the plan; through his power it is all brought to pass, and to him be the glory forever.

INTERESTING LETTERS

LIGHT IN “DARKEST AFRICA”

Dear Brother:—

The Harvest work is growing stronger than in past days. Our friends who were much against the truth are now attending privately, and we are surely showing them the way of our Lord Jesus through his Holy Scriptures, and many

are trusting in the truth. I can say that they have some reason for believing the truth now.

Surely we are living in the Time of the End, according to the Scriptures. We are seeing the clergy-people turning the Word of God into fables. They think they can stop the Christian people from sinning—as they call it—by whipping and