

THE SEED OF ABRAHAM AND ITS WORK

Divine foreknowledge is one of the great lessons which God will impress. God would have us know that every feature of his plan was premeditated, forearranged from before the foundation of the world. He would have us recognize the fact that he is working all things according to the counsel of his own will, according to fixed rules, and principles which are unchangeable. This lesson is one of the principal objects served by a divine revelation; a secondary object is the blessing of a certain class in sympathetic accord with God by giving them in advance such information respecting divine purposes as would enable them to rejoice therein and to co-operate therewith.

THE SCROLL IN THE DIVINE HAND

A beautiful word-picture of this divine foreknowledge and prearrangement is given us in the fifth chapter of Revelation. There Jehovah, the Emperor of the Universe, is pictured upon the throne, and in his hand a written scroll, sealed with seven seals. That sealed scroll represents the divine plan which God purposed in himself from before the foundation of the world, but which he had revealed to no one, no, not to the angels, neither to the Son. (Matt. 24:36) In a word, all that has occurred since creation—the permission of sin, the fall, the Covenant with Abraham, the Law Covenant with Israel, the coming of Jesus, the Pentecostal blessing, the gathering of members of the church—all these things were foreknown to the Father and provided for. Additionally, that scroll contains a record of all that is happening now, and all that will occur throughout the Millennial age, down to its very close—down to the time when every creature in heaven and in earth and under the earth shall ascribe praise, honor, glory and dominion to him that sitteth upon the throne and to the Lamb forever.—Rev. 5:13.

In the picture John notes a proclamation made throughout heaven and earth, inquiring for anyone worthy of the great honor of having this scroll of the Divine purpose committed to his care—to be opened, to be executed in harmony with the divine purpose. He looked to see who the worthy one might be, but none was found worthy. Then he wept. It seemed to John too bad that God should have some great, wonderful purposes which might come to naught because no one was worthy to be the divine executor in respect to the plan. But his tears were checked by the angel, who said, "Weep not: Behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof." And John said, "And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne. . . stood a Lamb as it had been slain." And to the Lamb was given the scroll. Then all the angels of God worshipped the Lamb, saying, Thou art worthy to receive glory, and honor, and dominion, and might, and power, etc.

Applying the picture, we see the signification. Until our Lord was slain, until he had given his life as man's redemption price, there was no being in all the universe worthy to be the executor of the divine purposes. By our Lord's loving obedience to the Father's will—even unto death, even the death of the cross—he proved himself loyal to the last degree. Him the Father raised from the dead, and when he had ascended up on high the proclamation went forth, Let all the angels of God worship him. He is the Lamb of God who was slain, and by his death redeemed a condemned world of mankind, and merited the Father's confidence that to him might be entrusted every feature of the divine program. "He is worthy." From that time on, every feature of the program would be under his supervision and he would open the seals and see to the execution of every feature of God's gracious purposes. He had promised his church that whatsoever things the Father would reveal to him, he, in turn, through the holy Spirit and by his providences, would reveal to his faithful ones, to those walking in his footsteps of full consecration.

THE GOSPEL BEFOREHAND

St. Paul speaks of the Gospel's having been preached beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Here was a vague statement of the divine purpose, relating to the blessing itself as an acorn would be related to an oak tree. Similarly, seed-thoughts respecting coming blessings had previously been given, though with much less definiteness. Directly after the fall God had declared that the Seed of the woman should yet bruise the Serpent's head. In other words, he foretold that evil should not always triumph. Again, through the Prophet Enoch a seed-thought had been given in his prophecy, "Behold, the Lord cometh with his holy myriads, to execute judgment." But to Abraham the message was so much more explicit as to make it worthy to be termed a part of the Gospel, a part of the good tidings now more fully made known unto us who are in Christ Jesus.

Abraham no doubt expected that Isaac, the son of promise, would be "the seed," or the offspring, through whom the blessings would come; but when Isaac was grown and nothing wonderful was accomplished through him, God confirmed to him, and subsequently to Jacob, his son, the same Abrahamic promise, assuring them that "the seed" was still future, and implied that the promise meant a nation instead of an individual—a nation of Abraham's seed, Abraham's children. And this feature of the divine arrangement was made manifest at Jacob's death, when the blessing was passed on from him, not to only one of his children, but to all of them collectively. There he pronounced them a nation of twelve tribes, and indicated that to them as a whole descended this Abrahamic promise—that they, as the seed of Abraham, inherited the promise, "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

This promise held that nation together for all the centuries down to Christ—yea, it still holds them together as a peculiar people, separate from all the other nations of the world. St. Paul and the other Apostles refer to this repeatedly. St. Paul says, Our twelve tribes instantly (incessantly) serving God, hope to come to the fulfilment of this Abrahamic promise—the blessing of all the families of the earth through them.—Acts 26:7.

THE LAW COVENANT WAS ADDED

As St. Paul points out, the Law Covenant was added to the Abrahamic Covenant so far as the nation of Israel was concerned—to continue until the promised seed should come. He is particular to add that the Law Covenant itself did not disannul or make invalid the original covenant, which was of Grace and not of Law. (Gal. 3:17) He was particular also that we should see that the Law Covenant "made nothing perfect"—it accomplished no real reformation or restitution. It did, however, set forth in types and allegories some wonderful lessons illustrative of great divine principles of truth and righteousness—lessons which were beneficial to the Jewish nation, natural Israel, and also to the Gospel church, which constitutes spiritual Israel.

During the period from the death of Jacob to Christ, while the law made nothing perfect, a few of that nation, exercising faith above and beyond the Law Covenant, were blessed by the underlying Abrahamic Covenant. These the Apostle enumerates in Hebrews 11. They had testimony, that they died in faith, and that thus "they pleased God," although they did not by obedience to the Law Covenant secure the blessing which it proposed. Those faithful ones will get through Christ what the Law Covenant could not give them, for, because of inherited weaknesses, they were unable to fulfil the requirements of the Law Covenant.

THE PROMISED SEED

Let us keep in mind that the Law Covenant was added to the Abrahamic Covenant because of transgression—to show to the Israelites and to all the impossibility of an imperfect man's keeping the divine law, and also to manifest in due time our Lord Jesus, who, born under the Law Covenant, kept its provisions faithfully. By so doing, says the Apostle, Christ "magnified the Law Covenant and made it honorable." Previously it might have been claimed that the divine law was too rigorous and that nobody could possibly keep it; that it would be impossible for a man to love God with all his heart, all his mind, all his being, all his strength, and his neighbor as himself. But when Jesus did this, and did more in sacrificing himself, the just for the unjust, it demonstrated the fact that God had not given an impossible law; it demonstrated that the fault lay with mankind; that they had lost the original perfection with which the Creator had endowed them.

We read that our Lord was born under the Law Covenant "that he might redeem those who were under the Law" Covenant. So far as other peoples were concerned, he might have been of any other nation and redeemed Adam and the remainder of the world, but in order to preserve equitably to Israel the special blessing of God's Covenant with Abraham it was necessary that Christ should be of that nation, "born under the law, that he might redeem those who were under the law." That nation had been separated from the other nations of the world for the very purpose of giving the illustrations already referred to, and God would see to it that they should not be disadvantaged by reason of his having used them thus. The blessed opportunities offered them under the Law Covenant through the typical sacrifices, etc., lifted them above the other nations and gave them, as it were, a second trial for eternal life. In common with the remainder of mankind as children of Adam they

had one trial and one condemnation through him; and then, under the Law Covenant arrangement and its mediator, Moses, another trial for eternal life was granted to that nation; but it was lost because none of them did keep or could fulfil the requirements of that Law Covenant. The day was saved for that nation as respects that Law Covenant, by which they were bound, by the fact that Christ became a Jew and by obedience to the Law Covenant gained all of the rights which it held out.

The rights gained were earthly rights—human perfection, an Eden home, fellowship with God and the dominion of earth; as recited by the Prophet, "Dominion over the beasts of the field, the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air." Had Christ kept these rights, which were properly his through obedience to the Law, he could indeed have brought a great blessing to the Jews, instructing them along the lines of health and morals; and through Israel these blessings and instructions might have been imparted to all other nations. But as the race was under divine sentence of death, it would not have been possible for Jesus to give mankind perfection of mind or body. The blessings of the seed of Abraham in that event would have been very limited indeed, and then only to such as would exercise faith and obedience similar to the faith and obedience which Abraham exercised.

MESSIAH THE REDEEMER

Instead of keeping the earthly rights which his special birth and obedience to the law made possible to him, Jesus, in harmony with the Father's program, sacrificed these earthly rights at once—as soon as he reached manhood's estate, 30 years. He gave up all earthly rights and interests and privileges. His consecration was complete; he symbolized it by a water immersion at Jordan. The Father accepted it, and forthwith gave him the begetting of the holy Spirit to a new nature. For the three and one half years of his earthly ministry our Lord persistently sacrificed his earthly life and every earthly interest, finishing the sacrifice at Calvary when he cried, "It is finished." On the third day thereafter the Father raised him from the dead to a newness of life—again on the spirit plane of being. This was the reward for his obedience to the Father's will in the sacrificing of his earthly rights and privileges as the perfect man.

So, then, as the glorified one in his resurrection, Messiah was a spirit being, "partaker of the divine nature," and had at his command all those earthly rights and privileges which he had sacrificed, which he laid down in death in obedience to the Father's will. He had these now as a possession, as an asset which he might dispense, which he might give to others.

Let us not lose the thread of the thought: The Law Covenant promised earthly life and earthly blessings and earthly dominion—those which Adam had lost. Whoever would keep the Law should have these. Christ Jesus, as the keeper of the law, had the right to these and laid them down. And now, being exalted, it is these earthly blessings and earthly rights which he has to dispense—to the Jew, or to all mankind, or to such an elect or select number of mankind as he may please, and as will be in accord with the Father's program outlined in the scroll sealed with seven seals.

When the Israelites found that Moses could not give them eternal life, and that even under David and Solomon they did not reach the pinnacle of power and influence in the world to bless mankind, they might well have been discouraged. Hence God, through the prophets, sent them further enlightenment to the effect that they could never accomplish the Divine purpose of blessing the world except as he would send them a Messiah, an Anointed One, a King and Priest after the order of Melchizedek. When Messiah should come as the great Priest, and the great King, he would be able to do for them under a New [Law] Covenant what Moses and Aaron had not been able to do for them under the old Law Covenant.

It was in connection with this promise of Messiah that God told his covenanted people that he would replace the Law Covenant under Moses by a new and better Law Covenant under Messiah, the antitype of Moses. He said: "It shall come to pass, saith the Lord, after those days, that I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; not according to the [Law] Covenant which I made with them when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, but I will make a New Covenant with them, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more, and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and I will give them a heart of flesh, and I will write my law in their inward parts."—Jer. 31:31.

Israel was looking for this glorious Messiah greater than Moses, who would introduce to them and put them under a better, a New (Law) Covenant, and under more favorable conditions by which they would more fully accomplish the divine purposes in their own hearts, and be prepared, qualified, to introduce those blessings to all the families of the earth, as they had been expecting to do from the beginning.

THE HIDDEN MYSTERY

We can see a reason why the Lord kept secret from the Jews in general his identity; for, as the Apostle Peter says, "had they known they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." They did it in ignorance (Acts 3:17). We can see it was necessary that Christ should die; that he should lay down his earthly rights and earthly life and receive of the Father the higher life, and a spiritual realm, in order that he might have the earthly blessings to give, to dispense to Israel and to the world. We can see that otherwise no blessings of a permanent and eternal character would have been possible; hence, as our Lord explained to the disciples after his resurrection, "It was necessary that Christ should suffer and (then) enter into his glory."

Now the question arises, What disposition will the risen and glorified Jesus make of these earthly rights which in his death he had secured by his sacrifice of them? The most reasonable, the most natural thought to us would be: Surely having consecrated the earthly rights he will confer these upon Natural Israel: He will at once become King and Priest to that nation, and in harmony with their hopes cherished for more than sixteen centuries he will exalt Israel as a nation. He will open their eyes. As the prophets have declared, "They shall see out of obscurity"; and "They also that pierced him shall mourn," and he will "pour upon them the spirit of prayer and supplication."—Zech. 12:10.

But Jesus did nothing of the kind. Instead of so doing, he cast off the nation of Israel, saying, "Your house is left unto you desolate." He did not establish for them the New Covenant; he did not bless them at all. They have been the most outcast nation of the world for the nearly nineteen centuries since they crucified him. No wonder the Apostle asks, Has God cast away his people whom he foreknew?—the people to whom he made the promises and covenants?—the people whom he encouraged in every way to believe that they were his special people and would be specially used by him in carrying the blessings of the divine law and instruction to all nations? Has God set aside all his promises?

We shall see presently that God has not in any degree abandoned his original program as respects the nation of Israel—"the seed of Abraham" according to the flesh and according to the Law Covenant. Here comes in "a mystery," as St. Paul explains. This mystery he declares was hidden from previous ages and dispensations, and is now made manifest only to the saints, to the holy ones taught of God. It is still a mystery to Israel after the flesh. It is still a mystery to the world of mankind in general; for the world knoweth us not, even as it knew not the Master. The world does not perceive that God is selecting a "little flock" to be with Christ, members of his mystical body—members of the spiritual seed of Abraham.

THE MYSTERY SHALL BE FINISHED

In his last symbolic message to the church, the Lion of Judah, who received the scroll of the divine purpose, informs the saints, to whom it is "given to know the mystery of the kingdom of heaven," that the mystery shall be finished; but not until the days of the voice or sounding of the seventh trumpet—in the end or close of this Gospel Age and the dawn of the Millennial age. Whoever is interested may profitably search the Word respecting this mystery class, its calling, its selection, its testing, its completion, its glorification; but only those who are begotten of the holy Spirit will be able to understand in the sense of fully appreciating these "deep things of God" which "God has revealed unto us (the mystery class) by his Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God."—1 Cor. 2:10.

This mystery class is composed of such as have the faith of Abraham and the obedience of Abraham—beginning with our Lord and continuing from Pentecost down to the close of this Gospel age. It is upon these that Christ's blessing of forgiveness, reconciliation, and earthly favors lost by Adam and redeemed by himself were conferred.

Call to mind that he has something to give away—earthly rights and privileges which were his by virtue of his keeping the Law Covenant. Those were not spiritual rights and privileges which he secured through keeping the Law, but earthly ones only. He got his spiritual and higher privileges and honors as a reward for the sacrifice of himself. What he had to give to us therefore is not spiritual life and honors and dominion, but the earthly. These come to us in the nature of a bequest. The earthly life and the earthly rights which Jesus sacrificed are willed or bequeathed to all those of the faith and obedience of Abraham. But here comes another feature of this mystery. It is not enough that we have the faith of Abraham and his loyalty to righteousness; an additional matter is necessary. All who would become sharers of this gift of Christ must now, in addition to faith and obedience to righteousness, take up their cross and follow Christ as the Captain of their

salvation; they must walk in his footsteps in the narrow way of self-sacrifice, even unto death. Any who do not thus will and thus covenant cannot be his disciples now, whatever blessing they may obtain by his grace later on. He is now, during this Gospel age, making a special selection of a special class, "elect, precious." These he styles his bride, members of his body, the royal priesthood, his jewels. These various names indicate his high appreciation of this specially called class.

THROUGH THE SPIRITUAL TO THE NATURAL

Let us keep in memory the Apostle's words that "God hath not cast off natural Israel whom he foreknew" and to whom pertained the promises, the giving of the law, etc.; he has merely turned them aside temporarily during this Gospel age, that in the interim he may develop a spiritual Israel, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, to be the bride of Messiah, or otherwise his "members." This "mystery" is working no disadvantage to the Jew, but really is a further step in the divine program in fullest accord with the original covenant made with Abraham. The seed of Abraham was to be of two parts: (1) As the stars of heaven and (2) as the sands of the seashore. The mystery class developed during this Gospel age are the spiritual seed, symbolically pictured as the stars of heaven, while the natural seed of Abraham is yet to become as the sand of the seashore. The Apostle refers to both of these seeds (Rom. 4:16)—"Not to that only which is of the Law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all." The old Law Covenant brought not forth the seed of Abraham, but the New (Law) Covenant will bring forth many children—as the sand of the seashore. The only children of Abraham thus far developed are those who are the Seed of Abraham according to faith.

As we have already seen, all of Christ's blessing goes to this faith class, the "mystery" class, according to a program which the world does not understand, but with certain conditions attached which obligate all who receive this blessing to become dead to earthly aims and hopes and ambitions, and thus as members of the body of Christ to have fellowship in his sacrifice of the earthly things that they may have fellowship and share with him in the heavenly part of the blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant. "If we suffer with him we shall also reign with him; if we be dead with him we shall also live with him." "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne."—2 Tim. 2:11; Rev. 3:21.

THE DEATH OF THE TESTATOR

The Apostle explains that no will or testament or bequest is of validity so long as the testator liveth. Whatever covenant of agreement may be had, it awaits a final sealing or completion by the death of the testator. The Apostle applies this to Christ. By his death Jesus passed on to us, the church, the benefit of his merit; namely, the earthly rights of "justification" to all that was lost in Adam and redeemed by the precious merit of Christ's sacrifice finished at Calvary. In accepting these earthly blessings we, as his members, agreed to the terms; namely, that we also surrender our rights to these as servants or "ministers of the New (Law) Covenant"—that these earthly blessings secured by our Lord's obedience and death should thus pass through us and still be the Redeemer's asset to be given to Israel, under Israel's New (Law) Covenant.

The fact that Israel is still outcast from God's favor is merely an evidence that the body of Christ is not yet completely sacrificed, for bear in mind that the covenant is of no validity until the death of the testator. The Lord Jesus, the primary testator, has accepted believers, as "members of his body," and he is working in them by his holy Spirit to will and to do the Father's good pleasure—that they may lay down their lives in sacrifice, filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Messiah. As soon as the last member of the church shall have died as a member of his body, the New (Law) Covenant with Israel will be sealed—sealed with the blood of the testator, the death of the testator, the death of the Christ, head and members.

Meantime the resurrection change of the church as the body of Christ will have brought the Testator as a whole to the plane of glory, honor and immortality. On this plane the Christ, Jesus the Head, and the church, his mystic body, will be in anti-type the great Prophet, the great Priest, the great King, the great Judge, the great Mediator between God and mankind in general. Then will come the time promised in the Scriptures when this Great One, this Glorified One, the Seed of Abraham on the spiritual plane, will begin the work of blessing all the families of the earth, under the conditions of the New (Law) Covenant, to be made with Israel first.

THE BLOOD OF THE NEW COVENANT

Our Lord when discussing his sacrificial sufferings, referred to them as his "cup." In the Last Supper, the memorial of his death, referring to this cup symbolically, he said. "This is the blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the re-

mission of sins: drink ye all of it." (Matt. 26:27, 28) That cup, which symbolized our Lord's death, our Lord's sacrifice of his earthly rights, was sufficient of itself to have sealed the New Covenant. He needed not to ask the Apostles, or us, or anybody, to become his disciples and to share his sufferings, to share his cup, and to share the rewards of these—his glory, honor and immortality. But he passed the cup along, passed the merit to us, or, rather, passed the merit of his sacrifice through us, his disciples, his followers. He did this because it was a part of the Divine program; for, as St. Peter declares, "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ hath begotten us." He who foreknew Jesus foreknew us also by Jesus. This was no change of the divine program. It was surprising to us merely because it was a mystery not previously made known—that we should be made fellow-heirs with Christ in the sufferings of this present time and in the glory that shall follow.

However some may oppose this and claim that we do not drink, do not partake of the sufferings of Christ, the Scriptures leave no doubt about the matter. They declare of the symbolic cup that Jesus, after he had supped, gave it to his disciples, saying, "Drink ye all of it"—not only must all partake of my cup who would be my disciples, but drink all of it, leave none of it. The drinking of the Lord's cup, the sharing of his sacrifice, must all be accomplished during this Gospel age; none of it is to be left for the future. There will be no sufferings of Christ during the Millennium; there will be no drinking of this cup. By that time "the glory to follow" will have been ushered in, and under the reign of righteousness thus instituted there will be no sufferings for righteousness' sake, but only for evil doing, because the reign of righteousness will have commenced.

Let us remember, moreover, the Lord's words to the other disciples who made special request that they might sit with him in his throne, the one on his right hand and the other on his left. He said, "Ye know not what ye ask; can ye drink of the cup that I drink of?" Only those who drink of his cup may sit with him in his throne; only those who share in the sufferings of Christ will share in his glory, honor and immortality; only those who are thus partakers with him are members of the Spiritual seed of Abraham, through which the blessings will pass to the natural seed in due time, and through them to all the families of the earth. "If ye be Christ's (his disciples indeed), then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise"—according to the highest feature of that promise, the spiritual feature.—Gal. 3:29.

"MERCY THROUGH YOUR MERCY"

We have already shown from the Scriptures that it is part of the divine program that the natural seed of Abraham shall receive its blessings through the spiritual seed—Messiah the Head, the church his body. We have already shown that this Great One is to be the Mediator of the New (Law) Covenant, which will bring to Israel actually the blessings hoped for under the old Law Covenant, of which Moses was the mediator. We have seen how and why this spiritual Messiah, Head and body, will be able to do for Israel and all who come under that New (Law) Covenant far better things than Moses, mediator of the old Law Covenant, could do. We have seen that the New Mediator has something to present to justice on behalf of Israel—something to give to Israel; namely, earthly blessings, earthly rights, earthly restitution to all that was lost in Adam. We see that these were secured by Jesus through keeping the law; that he surrendered them, or sacrificed them in his obedient death, and that he gave them to the household of faith during this Gospel age on condition that these earthly blessings should not be retained but sacrificed by all whom he would accept as his members. Now we see that it is these same earthly blessings that are to be dispensed during the Millennial age, first to Israel and, secondly, to all people under the New (Law) Covenant.

Notice how the Apostle Paul states this matter clearly and concisely in few words in Romans 11:25-36. There he tells us that we should think not of Israel as being cast off forever, but merely disfavored of God for a limited period—during the time of the calling and approving and acceptance of the elect number of spiritual Israel, whose first members were gathered from the Jewish nation and whose completeness is to be made up from amongst the Gentiles. He tells us that when this elect number of spiritual Israel is complete God's favor will return to natural Israel, "Jacob," and then "All Israel shall be saved"—recovered from the blindness and stumbling which came upon them when God thrust them aside until first spiritual Israel should be gathered. The Apostle explains that then God will fulfil his promise to Israel: "For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins." Thus the Apostle shows that the New (Law) Covenant promised to Israel, in which their sins will be cancelled and remembered no more, comes at the close of the Gospel age and not at its beginning.

THE DELIVERER MUST BE BORN

The Apostle explains (vs. 26) that before the New (Law) Covenant with Israel could become effective the Deliverer must come out of Zion; for it will be he that shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. Zion is another name for the New Jerusalem, of which the Apostle says, She is the mother of us all. Zion was typically represented in Sarah, Abraham's wife, who was the mother of Isaac. Isaac was a type of Christ—of Jesus the Head and the church his body; as the Apostle declared, "We, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise"—the seed of Abraham. (Gal. 4:28) Zion was again typified by Rachel, Jacob's wife, and the two classes of the church were represented in her two sons, the first of whom, Joseph, was a child of promise, the second the child of tribulation—Benjamin, Joseph, who came to the throne of Egypt through much tribulation, typified the Christ, Head and body. Benjamin, his brother, born of the same mother, the same covenant, did not reach the throne, but typified the "great company" class, who will have a special relationship and nearness to the Deliverer. Benjamin's name, "Son of my pain," (Benoni), shows his identity with the "great company"; his mother died in the travail of his birth.

This is again expressed by the prophecy which says, Before she (Zion) travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child. Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children. Shall I bring to birth (the Head) and not cause to bring forth? (the body).—Isa. 66:7-9.

Zion brought forth the Lord, the Head of the church, the Head of the Great Deliverer, eighteen centuries ago. Very shortly all the members of his body will come forth, similarly born from the dead in the "first resurrection." Thus shall a nation be born at once to the spirit plane, "a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people"—distinctly separate from all others of God's creatures, partakers of the divine nature, higher than angels and men. Then in a great time of trouble the "great company" will be born to the spirit plane, though not to the throne and not to the divine nature. Thus the spiritual children of Zion will be complete, and the blessing will turn to natural Israel.

The Deliverer born out of Zion, the Christ, with the "great company" as servants or ministers of the great God, shall begin the work of blessing "Jacob"—natural Israel. Discerning these things, it is for all who have named the name of Christ, for all who have been accepted as members of his body and inducted into this "mystery," to be earnest, to be zealous, in making their calling and election sure, that they may not only come into the body of Christ, but by obedience to the instructions of the Head they may abide in him and grow in grace and in his character likeness, and be prepared for birth to the plane of glory, that they may have a share in the work of the kingdom, making effective to Israel and to the world the New (Law) Covenant for the blessing of all the families of the earth.

THEY ARE NOT ALL ISRAELITES

The blessings of the New (Law) Covenant are distinctly shown to be Israelitish. But this will not hinder these blessings from extending to all nations and peoples and kindreds and tongues. By circumcision of the heart, all who will may come into the holy nation which Israel will then be. Thus it is written in the prophets, "The Law shall go forth of Zion (the heavenly kingdom), and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (the earthly phase of the kingdom). "And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths." (Micah 4:2) Thus all through the Millennial age Abraham's seed will be increasing, in harmony with the prophecy, "I have constituted thee a father of many nations."

But it would be a mistake for us to suppose that God's blessing under the New (Law) Covenant will come to the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, merely along fleshly lines. On the contrary, we are to suppose that the blessing of the New Covenant will apply first to Abraham and his natural seed who had his characteristics of faith and obedience, and who were developed or proved in the past. St. Paul refers to these, saying, "These all died in faith, without having received the things promised them, God having provided some better thing for us (the church, spiritual Israel), that they without us should not be made perfect."—Heb. 11:40.

"They shall obtain mercy through your mercy," as the Apostle explains. (Romans 11:31) It will, of course, be God's mercy, but through Jesus Christ, and it will of course be the mercy of Christ Jesus, but through the church—"your mercy." Thus will the blessings of God be passed on. The blessing coming to the ancient worthies will not be for themselves alone,

but be passed on by them in turn to all who will come to the faith and obedience of Abraham. Undoubtedly at first this class will consist chiefly of the natural Israelites, but later, as we have shown, it will consist of many people, of many tongues, and of many nationalities. All of these, enlightened by the great Sun of Righteousness, will be brought to know the great Messiah, and to understand the principles of righteousness involved in the laws of the great Jehovah. These the new Mediator will most clearly set forth, until every knee shall bow and every tongue confess, until "the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth as the waters cover the great deep, and until there shall be no need to say to the neighbor or to the brother, Know thou the Lord, because all shall know him from the least unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord."

THE NECESSITY FOR THE NEW COVENANT

If the Abrahamic Covenant was all-comprehensive, and included all the blessings which God intended, why was it necessary or expedient to add either the old Law Covenant or the New (Law) Covenant? We have already considered the value of the old Law Covenant as an addition to the Abrahamic Covenant, hence now we confine ourselves to the consideration of the advantage gained by the addition of the New (Law) Covenant.

When we read that "Without faith it is impossible to please God," and that Abraham pleased God by reason of his faith, we may know assuredly that none could be acceptable to God as Abraham's seed except such as had similar faith to his. Additionally, as God tested Abraham's faith, and obliged him to prove it by works of obedience, so we may be sure it would be with all who ever will be acceptable to God—that as Abraham's seed they also should have faith attested by works.

The comparatively few who exercised faith, and wrought righteousness in harmony therewith, up to the time of Christ, are reviewed by the Apostle in Hebrews 11. These were few indeed as compared with the millions of their time. These alone, therefore, could be counted as participants in God's favor because of Abrahamic faith and obedience. During the Gospel age a similarly small class has been gathered out of every nation, people, kindred and tongue—called by the Gospel message, and tried and proved by the narrowness of the way of obedience. These consecrated ones, and no others, of this age, could be acceptable to God for his blessing of eternal life, because these alone manifested the faith and the obedience exemplified in Abraham.

So, then, we see that if Christ, after redeeming the world, had merely sought out of it such as could exercise Abrahamic faith and obedience, and had blessed these with eternal life, the sum total of his work would have been comparatively small. He would have been on the spiritual plane and the others would have received from him the blessing of restitution, and nothing more.

LENGTH AND BREADTH

But note the breadth and length and height and depth of the divine wisdom and grace, which provided a more stupendous plan. Under its provisions the "little flock" become joint-heirs with Christ in the heavenly kingdom as the royal priesthood, and the "great company" become the spiritual assistants of that Priesthood—the antitypical Levites the great Prophet, Priest, King, Judge, becomes the Mediator between God and the world of mankind in general. He will not deal with them merely on the basis of faith, because in their fallen condition few indeed could be benefited thereby, because few could exercise the necessary faith and obedience. Indeed, as we have seen, the majority of those capable of exercising faith and obedience have already been found. The New Covenant takes over Israel through the ancient worthies and incidentally all of that nation and all of every nation willing, under the enlightening influences of the Millennial kingdom, to come into accord with the Mediator and to be taught of him. He will enforce obedience, to the intent that the fallen and degraded members of the race may learn what righteousness is and what justice and love are. He will exemplify to them the rewards of obedience and the penalties of disobedience, that they may learn the benefit of righteousness—and all come to a knowledge of God, not by faith merely, but by demonstrations. It will be after the Millennial kingdom shall have lifted mankind out of degradation and sin, out of imperfection of mind and morals, that their final testing will come.

God's law will stand forever. Only the willing and obedient will be partakers of the grace of life eternal; all others will die the "second death." But we have every reason to believe that as a result of the Millennial kingdom, the reign of righteousness, the restitution work, the enlightenment of mankind, the bringing of all to a knowledge of the truth, many will learn righteousness and become servants thereof, and in full accord with the divine law, come to love God with all their heart, with all their

mind, with all their being, with all their strength, and their neighbor as themselves.

Thus we see how much more can be accomplished by the Seed of Abraham, the Christ, Head and Body, through the method adopted by the sealing of the New (Law) Covenant, and the establishment of the kingdom, than could have been accomplished without the New Covenant, under the Abrahamic Covenant alone with its terms of faith and obedience.

Is it any wonder that after having pictured this matter of the rejection of natural Israel, the gathering of Spiritual Israel, and the subsequent giving of God's blessings through Spiritual Israel to reclaim natural Israel, the Apostle should become en-

thusiastic? Is it any wonder that he concludes with the exclamation, "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" Who knew of this wonderful, deep, hidden plan of Jehovah? Who counseled him to make it thus? The Apostle's conclusion is that such depths of wisdom and knowledge and grace prove that the plan of God is superhuman; that no man ever thought out this plan. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are God's ways higher than man's ways. Of him, and through him, and by him, are all things, and to him be glory forever!

OUR WESTERN CONVENTION TOUR

AT WASHINGTON CITY

Our first stop was Washington City. Several of the Baltimore friends joined our train as we passed through their city, while others preceded us on an earlier train—in all about twenty. We had a very enjoyable time and were very cordially greeted, not only by the Washington City friends, but by representatives from Alexandria, Annapolis, and various surrounding cities and towns. Our discourse was from the text, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." We endeavored to point out the importance of reverence to the Lord as an element of Christian character. We showed that it was necessary that we should reverence before we had a desire to come to the Lord, and that it is still necessary to us after we become acquainted with him. This reverence necessarily increased as our knowledge of God increased—as we accepted his gift of justification, through faith in the precious blood. Our reverence increased with every step of our progress, with every increase of our knowledge of our Heavenly Father's character. Thus reverence with each of us should have been in proportion to our progress in grace, until finally, overwhelmed with an appreciation of God's goodness to us, we were ready to hear with appreciation and to obey the Apostle's exhortation, "Present your bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God and your reasonable service."—Rom. 12:1.

We endeavored to point out that every failure on our part after reaching consecration and divine acceptance and begetting of the holy Spirit would be because of a loss of reverence or of a failure to continue to grow therein. We intimated, for instance, that neglect of Bible study and prayer implies a loss of reverence, or a deficiency of reverence. Likewise a failure to heed the divine Word, which is able to make us wise unto salvation, or a neglect to assemble ourselves as divinely exhorted would mean a lack of reverence for the divine wisdom which gave the exhortation. We admitted that carelessness on the part of the church in respect to the election of its servants, whereby sometimes unsuitable brethren were chosen to be the Lord's mouthpieces, was the result of a lack of reverence for the Lord, for had he been properly revered his instruction on the subject would have been more particularly sought and more carefully followed. We endeavored to show also that the various deflections from the Gospel message might be safely attributed to an insufficiency of reverence for the Lord's Word, which allowed self-seeking ambition to draw aside from the narrow way of humility and service and self-sacrifice. In a word, practically every difficulty with which God's people have to contend is the result of an insufficiency of reverence.

On the other hand, those who by nature have the mental qualities of reverence large have a difficulty in an opposite direction, namely, they are disposed to reverence persons and things unduly. Some reverence antiquities and, applying this along religious lines, they reverence too highly old religious systems. Some reverence wisdom and human ability and are in danger of "worshiping the creature more than the Creator," because the Creature is visible and near, while the Creator is unseen except by the eye of faith.

Thus we reached the conclusion that the naturally irreverent have much to study and develop in respect to reverence for God and his mighty works and his brethren and everything that is good. Reverence for the Lord can neither begin too soon nor ever be too great. It should discern divine wisdom and providences in all of our affairs, present and future. Reverence guides to the narrow way and keeps us therein and encourages us step by step to make our calling and election sure—to the glory, honor and immortality, which God hath in reservation for those that love him.

The dear friends bade us a hearty adieu, giving many expressions of their love, and of their interest in the convention tour, and in all the dear friends whom we would meet en route and who they hoped would be greatly blessed, comforted and cheered. A good night's rest at the home of Brother and Sister Pyle prepared us for our journey to Piedmont, Ala. A number

gathered at the depot to bid us adieu and one colporteur, having concluded to take advantage of the Piedmont Convention, accompanied us on the same train

PIEDMONT, ALABAMA

At Atlanta, Ga., several friends joined us en route for Piedmont. We had a delightful season of refreshment and fellowship and arrived in due course at Piedmont. The Convention had already been opened. Considerable rain had fallen, but the friends reported that there had been no dampening of their ardor; that the convention already had been a most delightful season of Christian fellowship and that some of the testimonies given had been amongst the richest they had ever heard. Our stay was for the day only, but the convention continued four days. Brothers Wright, Senor and Stevens with others serving spiritual refreshment.

About two hundred, gathered from various parts of Alabama, Georgia, Florida, and Tennessee, were in attendance. Our address to the friends of the truth was an exhortation to a proper appreciation of the divine guidance of the harvest work, in its every particular. We pointed out that those who cannot recognize anything special in the harvest work and the harvest message were distinctly at a disadvantage and would not be likely to hold out to the end. On the other hand those are specially blessed whose faith enables them to realize that we are now in the harvest time and that the harvest message which we have received into good and honest hearts is the divinely appointed "meat in due season" intended for our strengthening. Our realization of the Lord's supervision of his own work helps to keep us humble in mind and in conduct. It also helps to keep us trustful, and looking to the Lord, and waiting on him for direction in respect to the future. It hinders us from feeling that a great amount of responsibility rests upon us. It thus deters us from rushing in where angels fear to tread. Instead of feeling like Uzzah of old, that we must steady the Ark or otherwise everything would go wrong, we may have fullest confidence in God and his still greater interest in his work, and his wisdom as to how it should be conducted and his omnipotent power in making all things work together for the accomplishment of his own good purposes. Twenty-four symbolized their consecration by water baptism.

The session for the public crowded the auditorium beyond its capacity. Piedmont is a small city, about two thousand population, including children. We must have had nearly all of the adult population, therefore, in our attendance of about seven hundred. We were glad of the assurances of the friends of the truth that they had been refreshed and encouraged, and hoped that some impression was made upon the public also.

As we boarded the evening train for Memphis a large crowd of the dear friends, gathered at the station, sang "God be with you till we meet again."

THE MEMPHIS CONVENTION

We had a grand time at Memphis. Here we were met by Dr. Jones and party in two Tourist Sleeping Cars, the party numbering about fifty. One of the sleepers had a kitchen served by a proficient culinary chef. We joined the party, a reservation having been already made.

To this convention came friends of the truth from a considerable area. It was certainly a very enjoyable convention and one long to be remembered. Our stay was for only one day. Brother Rutherford remained, with others, to serve the spiritual food on the following day. Our addresses here were along the same line as at Piedmont and here also there was a good turnout of the public, to the number of about five hundred. The dear friends were extremely cordial in welcoming us. A general dinner for all was served at noon and a luncheon in the evening. The chicken roasts must have suffered a considerable depletion in providing the bountiful repast. Everything that could be thought of was done for our comfort, and we trust and believe that correspondingly the dear Memphis friends received from the Lord a rich blessing upon their own hearts.

Our farewells brought tears to many eyes, and many requests to be remembered, at the Throne of Grace, and reassurances that we were remembered, yea, many times a day, in their petitions. Our night's journey brought us to New Orleans on Sunday morning.

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

A prayer and testimony meeting of the friends in the local church had preceded our arrival, and many of the friends were at the depot and gave us a very warm reception. They apologized for the heat of the weather, reminding us, however, that they with us had experienced a more intense heat at the St. Paul convention. We assured them that to have received a cool reception would have been a disappointment to us anyway.

Our discourse to the interested, many of you already have read in the public prints, although certain matter of special interest to the local congregation was added. The evening topic, for the public, was, "Where are the Dead?" We had a fine, cool auditorium and the attendance was excellent, the season of the year and the aristocratic character of the city being considered. About six hundred were present. Our topics received the closest attention and, we trust, proved timely and helpful to some. In any event we committed the results to the Lord with prayer that the effort might be blessed to the good of those who were fully his in that city.

HOUSTON, TEXAS

A night's ride brought us to Houston, Texas, our next stopping place. Our party numbered about fifty, and we were met by a Houston delegation of about the same number, who stood in line and greeted us with hearty hand-shakes and expressions of welcome as our party passed in review before them the full length of the station room and out into the street. Soon we were at the auditorium, where still others awaited and greeted us. A praise, prayer and testimony meeting proved very refreshing to us spiritually until one o'clock, when all were invited by the Houston friends to a generous dinner, a sumptuous repast indeed, most bountifully provided and most entertainingly served.

At 3 p. m. we addressed the household of faith, particularly seeking to make clear "the mystery hidden from past ages and dispensations, but now made known unto the saints," namely, the fellowship of the church, the "members of the body of Christ," the "bride class" in the sufferings, the sacrifices and the death of Christ the world's Redeemer;—the world's great Prophet, Priest, King, Mediator and Judge. We sought to prove that only by sharing in our Lord's sufferings have we any hope of sharing in his glorious reign of blessing for the uplifting of the world.

Our evening topic for the public was the "Thief in Paradise, the Rich Man in Hell and Lazarus in Abraham's Bosom." We had an excellent attendance, very attentive, numbering about six hundred. At the conclusion of the service, there were indications that some had been deeply impressed with certain features of the divine plan. The friends had the magazine edition of "Scripture Studies," Series First, for sale at 5 cents per copy. The public were invited to take them and to hand the price to the ushers at the door. About one hundred copies were thus placed in the hands of readers, besides hundreds of free copies of the "Hell Tower."

Once more we bade adieu to loving hearts, with mutual good wishes and prayers for divine blessing, taking the midnight train for San Antonio. Brother Rutherford followed us at Houston, no doubt with good effect.

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

Our train arrived in good season. We were most cordially received by the local friends and some who had come to meet us from the surrounding country. One brother and his wife came a distance of seventy-five miles by wagon; another a distance of six hundred miles by rail, and so on. Our personal comforts were carefully attended to at the home of Sister Frost. We did not attend the morning service for prayer and testimony, but sought to conserve our strength for the afternoon and evening meetings. Through others we learned that the morning session was one of great profit, many of the dear friends overflowing with praise and gratitude and love to God for his merciful providence in granting to them a knowledge of the present truth. We met them in the afternoon and surely their faces and their words of greeting manifested as strongly as could be done the intensity of their love to the Lord and their high appreciation of his merciful provision for us as his people in this harvest time.

Our afternoon discourse was from the words of our Lord to the disciples who asked him that they might sit, the one on his right hand and the other on his left hand in his kingdom, to which request he replied, "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am

baptized with?" We endeavored to show the value of the glorious offer now being made to the Lord's people of sharing his throne and his glorious work of the Millennial as his members, as his "bride," and joint-heirs of his glory, honor and immortality. Then we pointed out the meaning of the Lord's expression, "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of?" We showed that it was the same cup that our Lord drank of, no other that we must share; and that we must drink all of it, and that thus we must "fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ." We pointed out that this is the same as the Lord meant by the sacramental cup—which we must share if we would share with him in the blessed of all the families of the earth. In other words, this cup of self-denial and self-sacrifice with Jesus signifies our participation in the blood of the New Covenant—in providing the wherewithal for the sealing of the New Covenant. We pointed out, however, that the value of the "cup" was in our Lord's merit, that it is his cup, and that we are merely favored with the privilege of participation with him in his sacrifice, which has all the merit, all the blessing power.

Then we looked at the other features or conditions and saw that it did not refer to water baptism, but to the real baptism in Christ's death. We examined the difference between his death, in which we were to share, and the Adamic death, in which all mankind share. We pointed out that Adamic death was a penalty for sin, but that Christ's death was a sacrifice for sin. We pointed out that by being children of Adam we were sharers in his penalty, death, and that we must be justified or freed from that before we could accept a proposition to become dead with Christ. We showed that we were freed from our share in Adamic death by faith in the blood of Christ, so that thus being justified we should present our bodies living sacrifices and become dead with Christ, for only "if we suffer with him shall we also reign with him."

Here we saw the wonderful divine privilege granted to the church in this Gospel age, and to her alone, namely, a share in this "mystery," this hidden thing that the world knoweth not and which only the saints know. The appreciation of this mystery even the saints will lose unless their hearts are loyal and obedient to the Lord; for obedience is still better than sacrifice in God's sight. At the conclusion of the service an opportunity was offered for water baptism to those who had already made a consecration to the Lord by a baptism into his death through consecration, and who were striving to carry out that consecration by loyalty to the Lord. Thirteen responded and later were buried in the likeness of his death and raised in the likeness of his resurrection.

We started next morning for Los Angeles, leaving to Brother Rutherford and others the carrying on of the San Antonio Convention another day—praying for the dear friends a rich blessing from the Giver of every good.

More friends joined us here and a third car was added to the equipage, the party in all numbering sixty. How much the dear friends enjoyed the fellowship with each other in this journey may better be imagined than described. They are not all wealthy. Indeed, few of them have more than the necessities of life with merest comfort. Some in one manner and some in another, however, had succeeded in raising the money for this convention tour in the hope that the fellowship of so many and the refreshment, temporal and spiritual, of the journey itself might compensate them. Wednesday, Wednesday night and Thursday were consumed in the journey from San Antonio to Los Angeles. The ride was a hot and dusty one, though less so than on the occasion of our previous tour. The friends apparently made good use of the time in Christian fellowship, discussing the Word, singing songs of praise, etc., while the Editor and stenographer in the end of one of the cars made ready this report, answered letters and prepared "Watch Tower" matter.

LOS ANGELES, CAL., CONVENTION

Our train was nearly four hours late, so that we missed the afternoon meeting of July 16th. We were in good season, however, for the well-advertised meeting for the public in the evening. The auditorium was crowded, about thirteen hundred being present. We had excellent attention, our topic being, "Where are the Dead?" So large an attendance was surprising, because at the same time a remarkable parade was in progress and apparently engrossed the attention of everybody. It should be remembered that the convention had already been in session for a day with Brother Sullivan, one of the principal speakers. The convention attendance was good, about 300, including some from nearby towns. The meetings of the 17th began at 9 o'clock with a testimony meeting. From 10:30 until 12:15 the Editor held a Question Meeting. The questions were remarkably good and, we trust, satisfactorily answered. A free luncheon was provided for all who remained to it and appar-

ently it was much enjoyed, not only for the good things upon the table, but also for the fellowship afforded.

At 3 p. m. we addressed another goodly audience of the interested, numbering about three hundred. Excellent attention was given to our remarks, based upon Romans 11:29-32.

We pointed out from our text that the mercy which the Apostle assures us is yet to come to natural Israel under their covenant—the New (Law) Covenant—is to be not only God's mercy and through Christ, but also the church's mercy—"your mercy." We traced the hopes of Israel and their disappointment in connection with the development of spiritual Israel and showed how, eventually, the New (Law) Covenant will bring them all the blessings and honor originally anticipated. We showed also the high honor conferred upon the church in becoming the members of the body of the great Mediator of the New Covenant—sharers with our Redeemer in his great work of sealing and executing the New Covenant for the blessing of natural Israel, and through them "all the families of the earth."

We called attention to the fact that only by drinking of our Lord's cup and sharing his baptism, his death, could we have shared with him in his great and glorious work. Opportunity was then offered to any who had made full consecration of their lives to the Lord, "even unto death," to symbolize their consecration by water baptism. Eighteen responded and several subsequently declared they had almost reached the point, but concluded to wait a little longer and still more thoroughly count the cost before taking the step, which they realized to be a great privilege.

Our party numbered about seventy as we left Los Angeles in three tourist cars. While waiting for a start the crowd on the platform and those in the cars sang hymns of praise to the Giver of all good and bade each other Good-bye, again and again. Quite a number had moist eyes as they thought of the pleasure enjoyed during the Convention, and that while we might not meet again on earth we have the glorious prospect of the heavenly reunion in the General Assembly.

THE OAKLAND CONVENTION

We arrived at Oakland just in time for the Sunday afternoon service. About fifty of the dear friends met us at the station. We had most hearty greetings and repeated expressions of Christian love.

The afternoon meeting for the public was held in the First Presbyterian church. It was crowded, the audience being estimated at eighteen hundred or more. We had most profound attention, our topic being, "Where are the Dead?" We were told that at least twenty ministers of the city were in attendance. The depth of interest may be gauged by the fact that nearly one thousand were present at the night service, which was very little advertised except by announcement at the afternoon meeting. The evening service was a question meeting for the public, and brought out an interpretation of our Lord's words to the thief on the cross, the rich man and Lazarus, etc., apparently to the satisfaction of the hearers.

On Monday morning we gave a discourse on the privileges of the harvest work—colportage, volunteering, sharp-shooting, etc. In the afternoon following the praise service we discoursed on baptism from the text, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits? I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord." A deep solemnity pervaded the audience and many eyes were moist. At the conclusion of the discourse opportunity was given for a symbolization of baptism and thirty-four responded, all adults, males and females in about equal numbers. At 7:30 p. m., after a few remarks, we had a Love Feast. It was a most inspiring occasion. About six hundred participated. As they filed past and shook hands with us many were the expressions of faithfulness to the Lord for our privileges and the determinations to be faithful and loyal to him to the end of the journey, and to meet with him in the kingdom to part no more. Many with tears in their eyes asked to be remembered in prayer and said that they had special trials, special difficulties and special besetments in the narrow way. We sought to assure all that the Lord exercises a protecting care of the sheep, and hence that our success lay in our own hands, because he is faithful to do all that he has promised.

An automobile took us rapidly to the station, while the congregation waited to hear Brother Rutherford, whose discourse was to complete the convention. We remarked that the convention began the day before our arrival, with a Testimony Meeting, followed with a discourse by Brother Sullivan. Our party in the special cars left later at midnight. We hastened ahead, so as to give an entire day at Portland and for fear the train might be delayed, because of the heavy traffic towards Seattle.

PORTLAND, OREGON

A journey of two nights and a day brought us to Portland on Wednesday morning, July 21st. At the station we met a goodly number of the friends of the truth. After breakfast with them we repaired to the auditorium and soon a most interesting praise and testimony meeting was under way. Our testimonies unitedly were to the goodness of God in all of life's affairs and especially in respect to the truth—that we had been favored with the knowledge of it. Next came dinner. In the afternoon by request we had a question meeting which lasted for about two hours and developed some very interesting subjects which, we trust, were profitable to us all. After another intermission for refreshments we had an evening service for the public. The house was crowded to its capacity with an audience which gave us the closest attention for two hours, while we discoursed on the "Past, Present and Future of Mankind in the Light of the Bible." Then came our leave-taking and we resumed our journey. The total number in our special cars was now increased to eighty-nine. Nearly all of the Portland friends went to the Seattle convention, because it afforded opportunities for meeting larger numbers of the friends and for spending several days in spiritual fellowship. They did not join our party because our accommodations were already full. The Portland one-day convention will long be remembered by many of us as a season of refreshment.

OUR GREETING

To all aboard the Gospel train,
And all the friends along the road,
Who gather in convention halls,
Beloved! Greetings in the Lord!
Our loving wishes follow you;
Our spirits rise with yours in prayer,
We pray, "God speed the Gospel train,"
And leave you in our Father's care.

For in his holy Word, we read,
His angels minister to men,
Those who shall heirs of glory be:
Oh, what a shining escort, then,
Attends your way, by day, by night;
Defending you from every foe!
Lie down, and sleep in perfect peace,
While guardian angels come and go.

And as you view God's mighty works,
Think of the perfect earth to come;
When in its robes of living green
It stands, man's everlasting home.
In that blest restitution time,
Eden shall reach from pole to pole;
While everything with breath, will praise
Our God, while endless ages roll.

There's one convention, brethren dear,
Which we have set our hearts upon.
No lack of time, or means, or ways,
Shall keep us from that final one;

When in the New Jerusalem,
The first-borns of the kingdom come,
From north, and south, and east, and west;
And Christ shall bid them "Welcome home."

If we have on the wedding robe,
That wondrous robe of shining white;
If we've embroidered it with care,
In all the colors of the light;
If we've been faithful to our vows,
To sacrifice our little all;
Then, we shall be of those who meet
In heaven's grand convention hall.

Oh, brethren! let us faithful be!
The time is short; let us press on.
Oh, we would not be left behind,
When all the Sons are gathered home!
We know not how we'll travel yet,
By water, fire, or by air:
We only know, if we're approved,
When that time comes we'll all meet there.

So once again we say, "God speed,"
In love, our hearts go out to you;
We pray, "The Father's will be done"
In all you say; in all you do.
As onward, then, you wend your way,
O'er mountain, valley, hill and plain,
May God bless you and all you meet,
While traveling on the Gospel train.

"TAKE HEED TO YOURSELVES AND THE FLOCK"

ACTS 20:2-38.—SEPTEMBER 5.

GOLDEN TEXT:—"I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me."—Phil. 4:13.

When St. Paul fled from Ephesus, after the rioting, he made a tour of the European churches which he had founded. Passing through Macedonia to the city of Corinth he came by vessel again to Miletus, about fifty miles south of Ephesus. He was accompanied by representatives of several of the churches of Asia Minor. He was en route for Jerusalem, for whose poor at his suggestion collections had been made in the four provinces in which he had been preaching. Seven delegates accompanied him, representatives of the church at Thessalonica, Berea, Derbe and Ephesus. These visits are supposed to have consumed several months of time, and now, at Miletus, he would have his final opportunity of bidding good-bye to the elders of the Ephesus church. The vessel on which the party were to go to the Jerusalem port was detained indefinitely at Miletus, so word was sent to the elders at Ephesus and they came to Miletus.

Our lesson specially calls to our attention the Apostle's address to these elders. We are not to understand this as a boastful statement, but rather as a plain rehearsal of matters which his hearers would fully concede and of which he boasted nothing. The rehearsal was given, not for his own sake, not as indicating personal vanity and self-praise, but with a view to quickening the recollection of his hearers and making the lesson of the hour more impressive upon them. He reminded them that for the space of three years they had known him intimately, the manner of his life, his devotion to the Lord, to the service of the truth and to the service of the brethren. He reminded them of his humility of mind; that he had not been with them as a boaster; that his conduct had not been haughty and overbearing; that he had not sought to "lord it" over the church, but on the contrary, he had endured amongst them many trials and difficulties with the Jews, with "false brethren."

They knew of his work, his endurance and of his holding back nothing from them that would be helpful to them; that he had taught them both publicly and privately as circumstances opened to him opportunities. He had testified both to Jews and to Greeks that there is only the one Gospel of Christ, to be accepted through faith and turning away from sin. By calling attention to these elements of his own character he was laying the foundation for his subsequent exhortation to them that they should copy his zeal, his fidelity. He had been a faithful overseer or bishop, watching over their interests. He had been a faithful pastor, guiding their welfare and seeing to their nourishment in spiritual things. Knowing the truthfulness of these presentations and having the whole situation in mind, they would be the better prepared to receive from such an one his parting exhortation—the great lesson which he had to give them.

"BOUND IN THE SPIRIT"

He informed the brethren that although possessed of his physical liberty he felt a bondage or restraint upon his mind that he could not shake off; that he must go to Jerusalem; that this was the Lord's providence for him; and that at the same time he received assurances from others through the "gifts" that bonds and imprisonment awaited him at Jerusalem. Then he adds these courageous words: "But none of these things move me; neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus to testify the Gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more." The Apostle had become apparently more intimately acquainted with the Ephesus church than with any of the others. Apparently it was one of the most flourishing of them all. He had, by the Lord's providence, spent more time with them, and evidently the results procured justified the prolonged stay. Partings between friends are always grievous. And parting with no hope of seeing each other again this side the veil is a doubly severe ordeal.

"PREACHING THE KINGDOM OF GOD"

Incidentally we note the message which the Apostle delivered and which he here particularly emphasizes as the Gospel of Christ—"preaching the kingdom of God." It is right that we should recognize that this is the same Gospel which we are preaching today, or, if not, that we are not preaching aright. The grace of God was manifested in the gift of his Son, that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man. The grace of God was further manifested in an outline of how the death of Christ was designed to bring blessings to our race:

(1) By ultimately establishing a kingdom under the whole heavens for the rule of mankind; for the suppression of sin and death; for the uplifting of those bound by these enemies.

(2) As a precedent to that general blessing to the world, for which we pray, "Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." the divine proclamation first calls out the "little flock" to be joint-heirs with their dear Redeemer

in that kingdom. Thank God that these precious truths, respecting the grace of God and the kingdom of God, so long covered and hidden from our sight by the traditions of the dark ages, are now coming forward, are now being revealed by the enlightenment of our eyes by the Spirit—that we might know the things that are freely given us of God, and that thus we might be assisted in making our calling and our election sure!

No wonder the Apostle could add the forceful words, "I testify unto you this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men; for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." What he preached to the church at Ephesus during his three years' stay amongst them is surely the same message which, by divine arrangement, has come down to us in his epistles addressed to the various churches. We note that St. Paul's message contained not one word respecting eternal torment, which is not part of the divine plan. Surely from these epistles we now assent that St. Paul was very patient in reproofing, instructing, encouraging the Lord's dear people. He was much used of the Lord because he had given himself so thoroughly to the Lord.

Herein we note the difference between the operation of the holy Spirit of God and the operation of the unholy spirits, the fallen angels. In both cases the control increases in proportion as the individual relinquishes his own will. Fortunately for humanity we all possess an inherent dread of self-surrender. Had it not been for this natural tendency, this natural self-will, doubtless the whole world today would be obsessed by the evil angels, or, at least, more largely under their control. Even amongst spirit mediums there is generally only a partial yielding of the will and an urging by the spirits toward a full self-surrender. Spirit mediums, however, are freely warned through their journals and books that there is great danger in a complete surrender of the will, lest an evil spirit gain full possession—obsess the medium. Alas! poor mediums! They know not that all of the spirits which communicate through them are evil spirits, demons, fallen angels, who, at times, personate human beings and represent themselves as our dead friends.

Not even husbands and wives dare fully to surrender to each other their wills without danger of injury. Nor should parents seek to coerce their children to a condition of entire willlessness. To whatever extent they do this they injure the child, detract from its personality and make it a more easy dupe for the fallen angels.

The One, the only One, to whom we dare submit our wills fully, completely, is the Lord. He invites this full submission of the will to him; and we, in his name and as his ambassadors, may freely invite our children, our friends, our neighbors, to this same full submission of their hearts to the Lord. The more fully consecrated the will the greater the submission, the more blessed should be the experience—the greater the usefulness in the Lord's service. This is the substance of St. Paul's exhortation, "Be ye filled with the Spirit," sanctified, set apart wholly unto the Lord. In proportion as this condition of consecration or will submission is attained—in such proportion we may be used of the Lord as his mouthpieces, his instruments, ready for his service, the service of the truth, the service of the flock. St. Paul was a noble example of such a full self-consecration to the Lord; of such a filling with the Spirit; of such an emptying of self-will; of such a deadness to the world, its will, its plans, its service.

No wonder the Apostle was able to assure the brethren that they might follow him, as he was following Christ. Christ was filled with the Father's Spirit. St. Paul, a loyal follower in his footsteps, had a similar filling experience though of smaller capacity. And all who will live godly in Christ Jesus must similarly be filled with his Spirit, the will of Christ, the will of the Father—and be dead to earthly ambitions. The Apostle's thought in calling the elders was to impress upon them that, like himself, they not only were consecrated to the Lord, but, as teachers in the church, they had a double responsibility—in respect to themselves and in respect to the church of which the Lord had made them overseers.

Notice his words, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock in the which the holy Spirit hath made you overseers (bishops) to feed the church of God, which he purchased with the blood of his own (Son)."—V. 28.

Several points in this are worthy of careful attention. The revised version, quoted above, says, "In the which the holy Spirit hath made you bishops," thus agreeing that the general Scripture statement that the elders of the church are not over the church in the sense of a superior, or "clergy," class, but in the church—members of it—overseeing members, assisting members, by appointment of the Lord through the channel of the church. Note the two points:

(1) They needed to take heed to themselves and to take heed to the flock. Whoever attempts to do shepherding in the church will need, first of all, to watch himself lest he fall into temptation, for, as the Apostle declares, Those who accept the position of elders in the church, pastors, overseers, are exposed to special trials, special difficulties. They need primarily to take heed to themselves, lest, having preached to others, they themselves become castaways.

(2) Those who accept the ministry or service of the church as elder-brothers under the divine regulation should realize that they have assumed a weighty responsibility respecting which they must "give an account to God." (Rom. 14:12) This does not mean fault-finding with the brethren. It does not mean merely preaching to them; nor merely visiting the sick and counseling the troubled. It means an oversight, a care of all the interests of the congregation and the individuals of it in their every detail. Those who are over-charged with the cares of this life are not in a condition, in any sense of the word, to accept the responsibilities of this service in the church of the living God and should not be invited to do so; should not be voted for as elders. Only those who seek first the interests of the Lord's kingdom and the righteousness which it represents are in any sense or degree properly suited to such service in the church. They should consider it a part of their responsibility to notice how the dear brethren and sisters are progressing, especially in their spiritual interests. They should feel it a part of their duty to warn, to encourage, to assist all of these, as opportunity may offer.

It is not the prerogative of all the brethren and sisters in the church to endeavor to set each other right, unless it be in some personal matter specially related to themselves; then Matt. 18:15 should be strictly followed. An elder, however, by his very election, has been asked to take an oversight of the affairs of the congregation, to give such advice, to give such reproofs, as the nature of the case may seem to demand—in meekness, remembering himself also, lest he should be tempted, if not along the same lines, then possibly along some other line of temptation. He, too, of course, should follow Matt. 18:15.

GRIEVOUS WOLVES AND PERVERSE TALKERS

The Apostle, by way of impressing this duty of oversight upon the elders, reminds them that the Lord purchased this flock with the precious blood of the Lamb of God and that this value in the Lord's sight should be so deeply impressed upon their minds that they would be willing to lay down their lives for the brethren in any service which they could render.

Emphasizing the caution already given, the Apostle prophetically declared that there would be great need of their taking heed to themselves, because of their own selves, of the flock itself, and especially amongst the elders, men would arise speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them; desirous of being leaders, they would not hesitate to produce a schism of division in the church to help along their ambition. The word perverse (here) in the original signifies distorted, twisted. The thought is that those who begin to lose the Spirit of the Lord, begin to lose their clearness of appreciation of the truth. As personal and selfish ambitions cloud their vision they see the Scriptures more vaguely and feel free to twist or distort them to make them support their ambitious sentiments. How true the Apostle's words; how great a danger there is along these lines, especially to the elders, the overseers of the flock! Evidently selfish ambition is one of the greatest of foes with which they must contend.

Nor do these ambitions suddenly germinate, bloom and bear fruit; the process is a gradual one and hence the more dangerous, the more deceptive, the less likely to have our notice. How important then that all of the Lord's flock, and especially the elders, take heed to themselves and scrutinize their conduct, and, above all, the motives lying behind their deeds! Let us remember that absolute purity of the will is essential. Every admixture of selfishness, however little, is a poisonous virus which, if unchecked, would lead to the second death. "Take heed to yourselves," is the admonition, for, the Apostle goes on to say, that of their own selves should men arise telling truths in a distorted fashion, for the purpose of drawing away disciples after them; for the purpose of being leaders in the flock; for the purpose of having praise and honor of men. Ah, how dear the price—the loss of divine favor and of eternal life!

"Grievous wolves" are ferocious wolves. For a time they may deceive the sheep by an outward manner and outward profession, covering their wolfish nature. They and the outward conduct by which they deceive are Scripturally designated, "Wolves in sheep's clothing." The Shepherd certainly knows their character before it becomes manifest to the sheep; but the docile, innocent sheep are deceived until these wolves begin biting and devouring and scattering the flock. The howls of anger, as "works of the flesh and of the devil"—not works of

righteousness and peace and love, the Spirit of the Lord. The wolf does injury with his mouth and so do these—slandering, backbiting and doing every evil work.

St. Paul warned the elders of the Ephesus ecclesia what to expect, and his words are true. Hymenaeus and Alexander, Phygellus and Hermogenes, and Philetus are mentioned by name. (1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 1:15; 2:17) The same principles are still at work. The same warning still needs to be heeded. Indeed, the Scriptures in general imply that the severest experience along these same lines are due to come upon the church in "the evil day" with which this Gospel dispensation will close.

"NIGHT AND DAY WITH TEARS"

"Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." Here are two points set before us: first, the duty of the elders of the church to watch against these evils so graphically portrayed; to watch for the interests of the flock as against the wolves; to watch to give the wolves as little opportunity as possible to tear the flock and backbite them, and to warn the sheep lest any of them, becoming inoculated with the rabies of the wolves, should display signs of hydrophobia and begin backbiting one another, with the usual symptoms of hydrophobia—with an apparent thirst for water (truth) yet a refusal to drink it.

Second, the elders are to watch also against those sure to arise "of your own selves." Proper watching will begin with our own hearts, saying, Lord, is it I? And proper watching will in time discern such characters as Hymenaeus and Philetus and, following the Apostle's example, will expose them—not from any feeling of bitterness towards them, but in the interests of and for the protection of the flock. St. Paul reminds the brethren that such was his own course—one of great watchfulness, interest, care, over them and over all the churches of Asia Minor. The expression, "Night and day with tears," shows us clearly that the great Apostle felt properly the weight of responsibility resting upon him as a servant of God and an ambassador of the King of kings and an over-shepherd and overseer of the Lord's flock—as a "minister of the New Covenant," delegated by the Great Head to assist in calling out those who will be the members of his body, for their instruction and building up in the "most holy faith," that eventually they might all come to the full measure of the stature of manhood in the body of Christ, as the great Mediator, Prophet, Priest and King of the world.

DIVINE ASSISTANCE PROVIDED

The exhortation closed thus, "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sacrificed." The Apostle's thought seems to have been that his words, his earnest exhortation, might not only awaken them, but have them to inquire as to what defences could be depended upon for the crisis thus pointed out. He draws attention to the fact that God, the great Center of all our blessings, from whom comes every good and perfect gift, is on our part, is on the part of all those who are seeking to co-operate with his arrangements. By way of further explanation he mentions the Scriptures, the Word of God's grace, the Gospel message. He tells them that they, and we also, may be assured that the Word of God is able to build us up, to give us the necessary development of character, of heart and head, and to give us ultimately a share in the great inheritance which God has in reservation for all those who are sanctified by this message.

Let us lay this well to heart: neglect of God's Word of grace, neglect of his promise means a deficiency of strength to bear the trial which is our portion. It means also the opening of the door for Satan to put light for darkness and darkness for light for our confusion. It means that those who will give strict heed in following might be unable to distinguish between the bleating of the sheep and "the midnight howl" of the wolf; might be unable to distinguish between those who are holding fast and blowing on the trumpets of the Lord's Word and those who are seeking to cause divisions amongst the sheep and speaking perverse things—misrepresenting facts, that they might divide the flock and draw some after themselves.

Let us make no mistake. It is a question of inheritance or no inheritance, amongst them which are sanctified. He who is faithful in that which is least, acknowledges the Lord and his provisions in connection with all of his blessings, temporal and spiritual, will be prepared to look forward with continued zeal and will receive the Shepherd's care accordingly. On the other hand, those who do not appreciate the "meat in due season" and the special provisions of this harvest time—these will not be prepared; these will quite likely be deceived by those who endeavor to deceive them and draw them aside to themselves.

AS AN EXAMPLE TO FLOCK

St. Paul had already pointed out that the lesson of the law was that the ox that threshed the corn should be allowed to have a share of it for his nourishment; and that similarly those who minister to the church in spiritual things legally, justly, should have a share in the temporal blessings of those whom they serve. He had also pointed out that if he had served the church spiritual things of immeasurably more value to them than earthly things, it would be a small thing indeed for the church to minister to his temporal needs. But, while noting these as points of equity, which should be observed by the church, he did not require these things of them. It would be to their advantage to see these matters in their proper light and to act accordingly. But if they did not see their privileges in serving him and other ministers of the truth in temporal matters, he perceived that this offered him a still larger opportunity for self-sacrifice, self-denial in the service of the truth. Their neglect he did not resent, saying, You have refused me temporal necessities, I will refuse you spiritual comforts. On the contrary, his reasoning was this: These dear sheep need the spiritual blessings and I am so glad that I am privileged by the Lord to be his servant in dispensing them. The more it may cost me in the way of self-sacrifice, self-denial, the more it will evidence to the Lord my love for him, for his truth, for his flock, and the more I will have of the Great Shepherd's favor, because I will be more like the great Redeemer, who bought the sheep by the sacrifice of himself.

On these lines the Apostle proceeds to call attention to his course—not boastingly, but for their advantage, that they

might be the better able to discern what would be the proper character of an under-shepherd of the Lord. He says, "I have coveted no man's silver or gold or apparel." He was not serving them for the accumulation of wealth, nor to secure the comforts of the present life. He coveted their hearts. He coveted the pleasure of bringing them into relationship with the great Head of the church as members of his body. He appreciated his privileges as a minister of the New Covenant along these lines—preparing the members of the body of Christ, the Mediator, and helping them to make their calling and election sure to the glorious things promised in the Word.

He continues, "Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me." Apparently some of those who were of St. Paul's company had no trade or could find no profitable employment, while the Apostle's trade of sail-making, tent-making, was apparently a lucrative one, furnishing employment in the various seacoast cities visited. Apparently the others were largely dependent upon this leader for things temporal, as well as things spiritual. He had never complained. He did not now complain. He merely drew their attention to the proper course which he believed he had followed, which he believed was pleasing in the sight of the Lord. He commended to them a similar spirit of love for the Lord and love for the flock and love for the truth—to the self-sacrificing degree. Thus they might be faithful stewards of God's mercy, faithful overseers of his flock. His own form of stating the message is summed up thus, "I have showed you an example, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

"WITH JESUS AND LEARNED OF HIM"

How much is told in the few words respecting Peter and John, and what their opponents thought of them, in the expression, "Now, when they saw the boldness (courage) of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus"—Acts 4:13.

One of the remarkable things connected with the "present truth" is its effect upon those who receive it—its transforming effect, its renewing effect. As the Lord foreknew and foretold, the Gospel message has not specially appealed to the rich, the learned or the great. These feel themselves above the Master's teachings and are comparatively satisfied with their conditions. They are led to believe that God would give them a preference any day over the ignorant, the stupid, the ignoble. Thus they do not so much and so deeply feel their need of spiritual healing from the Good Physician.

The Gospel message takes hold chiefly upon those less favored in the present life. And this is true as well of the special features of present truth as of the general features of the Gospel message. In every case, however, the marked effect of the Gospel of Christ is manifested where it is received into a good and honest heart. It lifts up. It gives courage instead of fear. It gives hope instead of despondency. It gives an aim and object in life, instead of brutish stupidity. It cultivates the will and manifests itself in the intelligent expression of the eye, in the alertness of the step, the increased deftness of the hand, and loosing of the tongue to speak of the Lord and his grace.

Our enemies take note of all these things, and frequently marvel at the intelligence on every subject of those who for a little time have been students of the Divine Plan of the Ages as presented in the six volumes of "Scripture Studies," and in the columns of this journal. This is well. We are glad of it. Yet there is a danger here. If the spirit of self-satisfaction, or pride of knowledge of the Scriptures, or of ability to present the divine plan, be cultivated, it may mean spiritual injury.

It is well that with us as with the Apostles our adversaries should take note of our courage; that we have the courage of our convictions; that we fear the Lord only, and that our highest aim is to deliver forth the good tidings of great joy to all who have the hearing ear. Here, however, we wish to call attention more particularly to the importance of the second feature mentioned in the Scripture quoted, namely, that they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus; that they were his disciples, learners in his school. This, truly, is the important thing for us—to learn of Jesus, to become like him.

All of our readers will bear us witness that we give due weight to doctrinal knowledge of the divine character and plan as set forth in the divine Word. But while emphasizing all of

this, and contending for its absolute necessity to growth in grace, we feel the necessity of continually urging upon the Lord's followers those features of the Master's teaching which constitute more particularly his spirit, his disposition. The sum of these is called Love. As of our Heavenly Father it is declared that "God is love," so love also is the special characteristic of our Redeemer, who was the image, the very reflection of the Father.

The analysis of love, as given by the Apostle, may be understood to be an analysis of the divine character as exemplified in our Lord Jesus—meekness, gentleness, patience, longsuffering, brotherly kindness—love. And since all his followers are invited to become disciples, or learners, under him as their teacher, it follows that all who learn of him will gradually attain to these same elements of his character.

How could we better proclaim our relationship to him? How could we better recommend to others the School of Christ? How could we better show forth the praises of our Master than by living out his example, representing his character before men? Is not this the significance of his injunction, "Let your light so shine before men that they, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven"? It is proper, indeed, that we let our doctrines shine out before men, but it is specially important that we let the character of Christ shine out. It is specially important that the doctrines and the character shall correspond and co-attest each other.

We remember our Lord's words, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." This was the new commandment that we should love one another as he has loved us—with a pure, unselfish love which thinketh no evil, vaunteth not itself, is not easily offended, and seeketh not its own, selfishly—the love which lays down time, energy, and even life itself, for the brethren.

We may never become entirely satisfactory to ourselves in thought, word and deed while in the flesh; and we may never, therefore, be entirely satisfactory either to others; but we can, we should, we must, and by the grace of God let us each resolve that we will, attain to all of this so far as our hearts are concerned. Nothing short of this will be satisfactory to our Lord, to whom we are "betrothed" as members of the chaste, virgin church. If we fail to come up to this reasonable, possible, standard, we will fail to make our calling and election sure to a place in the bride company. But if we do these things, if at heart we are at this standard, and are daily seeking to live it to the best of our ability, the heavenly Bridegroom will rejoice to own us as members of his elect. Oh how much depends upon our learning this lesson! "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

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