

rest contentedly therein after doing all within our power. In Paul's case it may be that conditions at Rome would be more favorable to his ministry later than they were at this time. It may be also that the Lord had a work for him to do in the interim as a prisoner at Cæsarea,—amongst the Romans. And so in our affairs: we are to look for the opportunities of service as they come, and leave to our Lord the supervision of our life as a whole.

As a result of the communication of the plot to the Roman captain, he sent the Apostle under a strong military escort to the Roman capital of Judea,—Cæsarea. There the Apostle, although kept a prisoner, was doubtless made comfortable, awaiting the trial before the Roman governor, Felix. The essence of this lesson as a whole, in its application to us, is expressed in the Apostle's words, "If God be for us who can be against us?"—Rom. 8:31.

INTERESTING QUESTIONS ANSWERED

WHICH WERE THE MORE RESPONSIBLE; JUDAS OR ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA?

Question.—What difference should we recognize as between the condition of Judas Iscariot and his crime, and Ananias and Sapphira and their crime? The one sinned before the holy spirit was dispensed at Pentecost; the others subsequently. If Judas' case merited the verdict of second death, would not the others merit the same? If Ananias and Sapphira did not sin the sin unto death, how should we regard the case of Judas?

Answer.—There would appear to be considerable difference between these two cases. Both crimes were committed against much light; both were reprehensible; but that of Judas seems to us to be much the more serious of the two. While he lived prior to Pentecost, we are to remember that he was one of the twelve upon whom Jesus had specially conferred a measure of his spirit—such a measure as permitted him, with the others, to perform miracles of healing, casting out of devils, etc., as recorded. His position was one of special closeness to the Lord and his personal instruction, both by precept and example. We remember our Lord's words to the disciples, "To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom; but to them that are without these things are spoken in parables." All this privilege, opportunity, knowledge, contact, made Judas specially responsible. Then, too, his crime would have been bad, wicked, had it been against any ordinary person; but was seriously intensified by being a crime against him who spake and acted as never man spake or acted before. It is from this standpoint that our Lord's declaration, that he was the son of perdition, seems to have special weight, or import, as implying that he had enjoyed a sufficiency of light and knowledge of righteousness to constitute a trial, and that his deliberate sin against such light and knowledge meant the second death.

In the case of Ananias and Sapphira they were beginners; they had not been long in the church; they never met the Master, and had not known the apostles a great while. They saw others consecrating their goods and noted that they were correspondingly appreciated in the church. They wished to have such an appreciation, and wished to do some good with their means; but a selfish feeling, combined, perhaps, with a feeling of caution, ensnared them into a wrong course of conduct which the Apostle Peter denominates "lying unto the holy spirit." We do not positively say that they will have any future or further opportunity for gaining everlasting life; we know of no Scripture which guarantees to us that they will have any such; yet it seems to us not improbable that they will have a further opportunity in which they will have greater light, and greater knowledge of right and wrong, and of the results attaching.

SHALL WE USE THE TERM "EVOLUTION," ETC.?

Question.—I note your opposition to the evolution theory; yet in MILLENNIAL DAWN, Vol. I., page 31, you remark the pos-

sibility that something of an evolutionary development was used by our Creator in bringing the various species of animals each to its own perfection. Let me ask, then: Cannot we Christians hold to the word "evolution" with propriety? and may we not even think of Adam as having reached *human perfection* by a process of development as one of the species animal?

Answer.—No; to both questions. We regard the words *Evolution* and *Evolutionist* as now definitely attached to a particular theory. These words belong wholly to those who invented and now have them, and we believe that, as Christians, we would do well to avoid them thoroughly, as the thought connected with the word is a mechanical one, pure and simple, as in opposition to a creative one. We would hold that God did develop different species, each to its perfection, and that he developed these, either by a long or a short process, from the earth itself; but we cannot admit, as evolutionists would claim, that this was merely a development which needed not the Lifegiver to start it, and to maintain and direct it. We would claim that God is the director of all the forces of nature, and that they are all of his own creation, and results, therefore, of his direct creation in every instance—fish, fowl, brute, man.

It would not strike us as reasonable to suppose a gradual development of a perfect man by an evolutionary process without his having some measure of responsibility added at some stage of his career before he reached perfection. Neither would it be reasonable to suppose the evolution of a man from a lower order of being to absolute perfection of his own kind, without a history, literature, etc., etc.; neither would it be reasonable to suppose a human being so evolved from a lower order of being to human perfection, as being in ignorance of good and evil up to the time that he reached perfection. If we who are in a fallen condition are held to be responsible to divine law, would not those of the human family who had not yet reached full perfection, but who had considerable intelligence, be reasonably amenable to law also?—supposing your theory to be true.

From whatever standpoint we would view the matter we can find no ground whatever for supposing that Adam ever had a human father, either perfect or imperfect in the flesh. Much more would we disbelieve that he ever had a father of a lower order of being, who could give him life in the divine likeness, in heart and head. Furthermore, to suppose such a possible evolution of a man to perfection from a condition of imperfection, would be to suppose that man, in the present-time imperfect condition, is his own savior, and could re-commence a process of evolution just as well as he could have carried on such a process before reaching perfection. If such a proposition should be considered true, it would negative all the Scriptural teachings we have respecting the necessity for a Redeemer and for his interference in order supernaturally to bring about times of restitution of all things.

"LOOKING FOR THAT BLESSED HOPE"

"I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."—John 14:3.

What joyful hopes, what exuberant anticipations, cluster around this promise, in the hearts of the Lord's faithful! In a few words it sums up all the good things that God hath in reservation for them that love him. But not all mankind have such feelings in respect to this subject;—not all are aware of the gracious blessings held in store for the world, awaiting that auspicious time for their dissemination; and not all mankind are in such a condition of mind and heart as to be able, with joy, to anticipate meeting the Lord. We can readily surmise that not only a large proportion of nominal Christians, but a comparatively large proportion of true Christians, are not living in that attitude of heart and daily life which would permit them to anticipate this meeting with sentiments of pleasure.

Not only do false doctrines hinder a joyful anticipation

of this great event, but sin, likewise, hinders such joyful anticipation, induces shame and fear,—knowing that even those conditions of heart which may be hidden from fellow-servants cannot be hidden from the Master. We pray with the prophet, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults, keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins," and to the extent that this is the desire of our hearts, and the effort of our lives,—to the extent that the testimony of God's Word dwells in us rightly, and enables us to recognize the lengths and breadths of divine love and compassion covering unintentional shortcomings,—to this extent the Lord's faithful ones are able to rejoice in this promise, and to look forward with joy not only to the meeting with the Lord, but also to their abiding everlastingly in his presence and companionship. But to all others—to all who are not living up to their privileges as children of God and

joint-heirs with Jesus Christ their Lord,—to all who are not seeking to walk circumspectly in the footsteps of Jesus, the words of the text come bringing only a measure of joy, a measure of hope, and not an exuberant overflow.

THEY KNEW NOT AND RECEIVED HIM NOT

Looking back to the harvest of the Jewish age, we readily perceive that the difficulty in the way of God's ancient people—the direct cause of their stumbling—lay in their failure to appreciate the fact that the coming of Messiah, for which they had so long waited and prayed, was a compound event, having its beginning in their day in the advent of Jesus in the flesh, and having its consummation now, in our day, in the advent of Jesus, a spirit being in glory. The prophecies do not clearly distinguish between the sufferings of Christ and the glory to follow; and it is not for us to blame unduly the poor Jews for seeing with hope and joy the ultimate blessings which Messiah would bring, and overlooking the trials, sufferings and death which must necessarily precede the glory. The Apostle assures us of their expectant attitude; saying, "Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God, hope to come."—Acts 26:7.

We inquire, Why were they permitted to stumble through the misconception of the prophecies? Why was it not explained to them clearly and definitely that the Messiah should first come as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, to be a sin-offering for the sins of the whole world; and that subsequently he would come as the King of Glory to deliver and bless the possession purchased with his own precious blood? We answer, Because the Lord did not wish to draw all Israel into the Gospel church. He wished to draw only a certain special class; hence, as the Prophet foretold, he spoke unto the people in parables and dark sayings, that hearing they might hear and not understand, and seeing they might see and yet not believe—lest they should receive Jesus, lest they should accept him as their King. God's dealings in this matter would be inscrutable, unjust, unloving, unfair, were the ordinary conception of his plan the correct one;—if, for instance, all those who rejected Jesus were to be sent to eternal torment.

But we have already seen that this was not a part of the divine plan, and that while only the elect class of Israel received the Lord, or were able to appreciate him and to accept his invitation, the remainder of that people were merely blinded, and that, as the Apostle tells us, for a time only,—until the elect class should be completed by selections from the Gentiles also, and then divine favor shall return to them, and all Israel shall be saved from that blindness which there came upon them. The eyes of their understanding shall be opened, and the Lord in glory, speaking to them at his second advent, will no longer hide his meaning under parables and dark sayings, but, on the contrary, shall cause the knowledge of the Lord to fill the whole earth, so that no man will need say unto his neighbor, Know the Lord—because all shall know him, from the least of them unto the greatest of them.—Jer. 31:34.

If such were God's dealings with the natural Israelites—if the matter of the sufferings and glory of Messiah, and the relationship of these two features of his coming were hidden from natural Israel, how has it been with nominal spiritual Israel—with those who from amongst the Gentiles have to some extent accepted God and Christ? Has this subject of the manifestation of Messiah been clearly discerned by nominal Christendom throughout this Gospel age? We answer, No; although the blindness to the subject is from a somewhat different standpoint. The Jews through their traditions were blinded to the sufferings of Christ, and looked only for the glorious empire which he would establish for the blessing of the world; while Christians, generally, see matters only from the reverse standpoint—see merely the first advent of Christ, its sufferings, the redemptive work, and fail to discern the kingdom and the blessing of all the families of the earth, which are to result from its establishment at the second coming of our Lord.

What is the source of this error, this blindness to the facts so clearly enunciated in prophecy, that the Apostle could declare that the times of restitution which shall come at the second coming of our Lord, had been "spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began"? Why do not Christians see this? We answer, Because they are blinded in the same sense that the Jews are blinded, although with a different form of blindness. But as the "Israelite indeed" amongst the Jews was not suffered to be blinded on the subject, but was clearly instructed by the Lord, guided into the truth, so that all the wheat of that nation were brought to a knowledge of Messiah, and only the chaffy element failed to discern him; so now, amongst the wheat and tares of this Gospel age we find the Scriptures clearly teaching that all

who are of the wheat class will have the light of life; and all who are of the tare class will, just as surely, be left to grope and stumble in darkness, as did their prototype in the end of the Jewish age. Why? For the very same reason. Because the Lord is still seeking not for masses; not for numbers; but for peculiar characters—for those who are in heart-harmony with him;—for the pure in heart, in motive, in intention—the honest, the sincere. These will as surely be guided by the Lord into a knowledge and appreciation of the second advent of Messiah and of the kingdom glories, as were those of the similar class in the end of the Jewish age—even though, as in the case of Saul of Tarsus, it should be necessary to strike them down in the way with some exhibition, or demonstration, of the truth.

THE HIDDEN MYSTERY

There is a secret connected with this subject which the Apostle repeatedly calls the "Mystery" of God (Rom. 16:25, 26; Eph. 3:9; 5:32; Col. 1:26; Rev. 10:7). This mystery, as he explains, relates to the Gospel church;—the peculiar relationship between the Gospel church and its head and Lord is not intended to be understood by the world or by the nominal Christian nor by even the true Christian who is not in a proper attitude of heart and fully consecrated to the Lord.

When we catch a glimpse of this "mystery" it explains the whole situation. It shows us that from the divine standpoint, the promised Messiah, the Deliverer of the world from the bondage of sin and death—the Restorer, the great Prophet, Priest and King, whose Millennial reign as "the seed of Abraham" is to bring blessing to all the families of the earth—is not our Lord Jesus alone, but also with him, and under him as its head, the entire church of God—the faithful in Christ Jesus—the "little flock," whom God is selecting from amongst men during this Gospel age,—these, unitedly, are the Christ, the Messiah which God promised and is providing for the deliverance of the world.

Grasping this "mystery," it shows us that the first advent of Christ—in the flesh—for the suffering of death—has been in progress for nearly nineteen centuries. First came "the Lord Jesus, the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth," who was the forerunner; none could precede him, all who would be associated must be followers and under his control and direction for he is the "Head over all, God blessed forever." (Rom. 9:5) He learned certain lessons which would qualify him to be the great High Priest for the world, as the Apostle declares, "Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people."—Heb. 2:17.

Additionally, through the sacrifice of himself, this Chief of a royal priesthood bought the world, thus making possible the restitution of as many as will in due time receive the blessing of God at his hands, and at the same time making possible the invitation of some of them, some of the redeemed, to become joint-heirs with himself in his kingdom. But if it was necessary that the Head of the priesthood should be tested in all points, and should learn obedience by the things he suffered, it was certainly not less necessary that all who would be members of the kingdom class with him, after being redeemed by his precious blood, should be exercised, tried, tested, proven—"made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." So how plain it is, that the Head having been manifested in the flesh, seen of men, testified of angels, etc., all the members of his body should likewise be manifested in the flesh; because, as the Apostle declares,—"*As he was, so are we in this world.*"—1 John 4:17.

Looked at from this standpoint, we see that the first advent of Christ—in the flesh—has been a gradual one, covering a period of nearly nineteen centuries. We see that the Master has acknowledged these members of his body, made them his ambassadors, and through them has borne witness to the world, and in their sufferings he has suffered; for, as the Apostle declares, "We fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ." (Col. 1:24) The Apostle Peter declares, that the prophets "spoke of the sufferings of Christ [which, as we have seen, have extended over a period of nearly nineteen centuries] and of the glory that should follow"—as soon as the sufferings are completed. (1 Pet. 4:13) The sufferings evidently did not end at Calvary, else the glory would have begun long ago. The words of our text are in full harmony with this; for the Master addressed not the world, but this very class, his brethren, his church, the members of his body, "you." His declaration implies that when all of this "you" class shall have been found, tested, tried and approved—when the elect company shall be complete, the Head, who meantime passed into glory, will reappear to be then and ever

afterward associated with the members of his body in glory—"in power and great glory"—a spiritual company. And for what purpose?

We answer that God is "the same yesterday, today and forever"; and his plan is an unchangeable one; hence, all this preparation of the Messiah, head and body members, is part and parcel of the original plan. This implies that when this great Messiah, head and body, changed and glorified, no longer in the flesh; but in the spirit, no longer of human nature, but of divine nature shall be complete,—then shall come the time in which all the gracious promises of ancient times shall have fulfillment,—"times of restitution." Then Israel's blindness shall be turned away, and the blindness of the Gentiles also; for is it not written that "all the blind eyes shall see out of obscurity" and "all the deaf ears be unstopped," and that Satan, the god of this world, shall be bound, and deceive the nations no more? The Apostle declares that he has blinded the world; and doubtless Satan supposes that he is interfering with the divine plan; but behold, as the mists clear away, we perceive that the Almighty has made use of his unwitting servant, to keep secret the mystery which he did not intend should be understood except by the faithful, until the great day of revealing. Then the whole world, released from its bondage of ignorance, superstition and blindness, shall be again made to see, and assuredly many will shout for joy, "Glory to God in the highest,"—giving thanks for the gracious plan of God in which they will be participators, and which will be carried out through the agency of the glorified royal priesthood of which our Lord is the Head and Chief and Redeemer.

ERRORS BECLOUD TRUTHS

False doctrines have beclouded this subject of the second coming of the Lord in the minds of many. (1) First came the wrong thought that the church in its present condition, in the flesh, was to accomplish the promise of God made to Abraham,—to bless Israel and all the families of the earth. How false this conception! It is true that some blessing has followed the promulgation of the Gospel, even when sadly mixed with the traditions of men; it is true also that a measure of civilization and enlightenment has followed in the wake of the testimony of Jesus, even when uttered through imperfect lips and in distorted form; but this is not the blessing which God has promised; this is not the "restitution of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets." In no sense of the word is it the blessing of all the families of the earth. At no time has even this measure of blessing reached more than a tithe of the living generations and nations—to say nothing of the generations of all nations which have passed into the great prison house of death. What a short-sighted interpretation it is that could apply to the church in its condition of humiliation, of the past nineteen centuries, all those glorious promises of power and glory and majesty, and earth-filling knowledge, and victory over evil, sin and ignorance, and Satan; and the blessing and uplifting of all mankind;—so clearly stated by all the holy prophets since the world began!

(2) Another false doctrine which has helped to becloud the minds of many is the theory that those who die *do not die*, but are, on the contrary, when dead, more alive than ever before—that they merely *seem* to die—that in reality they are in the moment of dying clothed upon with immortality, and as spirit beings, pass into an eternity of either bliss or torment. This unscriptural teaching makes void the Scriptural promise of a resurrection of the *dead* by claiming that *none are dead*; and it makes void also the lesson of our text and hundreds of others like it; for why should those who believe such things have any interest in such a promise as this text presents—"I will come again and receive you unto myself"?

In proportion as the doctrine of the second coming of Christ, and the resurrection of the dead then to take place, have been lost sight of from either of the above causes, in that same proportion blindness and darkness and lack of spiritual life have surely resulted. By the lack of spiritual life we do not mean lack of excitement, "revivals," "vanity fairs," "church work," etc.; but we do mean lack of piety, lack of deep Christian experience, lack of the fruits of the spirit and the joys thereof. And be it noted now, that those Christians who hold this hope of the second coming even though bound with various false doctrines, receive a blessing from it that is not fully counteracted by the false traditions of men which they have wrongly associated with it. Indeed, this must be true in respect to every feature of divine truth;—every item of it has its power as a sanctifying medium, as explained in our dear Redeemer's prayer—"Sanctify them through thy truth, thy Word is truth." Whoever has even one item of

item, a sanctifying power; whoever has five parts of truth and five parts of error has a considerable measure of sanctifying power; and whoever, by the grace of God, can get rid of all the error, will have the tenfold power of the truth working in him to will and to do God's good pleasure—sanctifying him.

These ten various points of truth are not alike powerful either, and amongst them all we know of none which has greater purifying influence than this one referred to in our text—"that blessed hope"—the appearing of our glorious Lord.

THIS HOPE PURIFIETH

"He who hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." (1 John 3:3) He who has not this hope in him may purify himself in some measure from other motives, but is not at all likely to be purified to the same degree as he would be purified by this hope. Indeed we may be sure, on the other hand, that none but the pure in heart can honestly and truly entertain this hope; to the impure of heart it must rather be a dreadful thought that, shortly, he who can read the very thoughts and intents of the heart will be present; and that all shall appear before him—that all shall be open and naked before his sight. The illiterate and uncultured and morally impure would be sadly out of place if found in the midst of the pure, the noble, the refined, even for an evening; much more would the matter be distressful to them if the prospects were that they must be thus associated forever. And so it is with the immoral and impure of heart in respect to the second coming of our Lord, and the prospect that all the pure in heart shall be there with him,—the impure cannot covet a place in such a gathering, nor could they rejoice in the hope of such a companionship. Indeed the thought of such associations everlastingly would to such be unendurable.

When we speak of the pure in heart who alone can rejoice in this promise, we are not to be understood as meaning perfect men and women according to the flesh, in every word and act acceptable to the Lord. We have God's own assurance that there are none such—"There is none righteous, no not one"—all come short of the glory of God, the majority very far short. But the Lord knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust, that we were born in sin and shapen in iniquity, that all the children's teeth were set on edge by the sour grapes of sin of which our first parents partook. Those who rejoice in the promise of our text were "children of wrath even as others," and the difference now is that they have been reckonedly justified—their sins are covered by the merit of the great redemptive sacrifice, they have a new standing with the Lord as "new creatures"—not sinners, but friends—accepted in the Beloved; accepted not according to the flesh and its imperfections, but according to the new mind, the new heart, and its new divine aspirations and endeavors.

FEW KNOW OF OUR LORD'S PAROUSIA

Let us, dear brethren, keep well before our minds the Master's promised return, and now in the time of his "*parousia*" (invisible presence), let it have its full weight and influence upon our every word and act; yea, upon our very thoughts. Let the hope that we shall soon experience our resurrection change, and be made like our dear Redeemer, and see him as he is, and share his glory in the great "*epiphania*," or shining forth of the sons of God in the glory of the kingdom, enthuse us;—let this energize our hearts, loose our lips, and strengthen us for every duty, privilege and opportunity—to serve our Master and the household of faith. If this hope has been an anchor to the Lord's people for so many centuries, how much more does it mean to us who are living now in the very time of his presence, waiting for his "*apokalupsis*"—his revealing in the glory of the kingdom!

It is only in accordance with what we have seen respecting the heavenly Father's dealings in the past, that we now perceive that there are various matters connected with our Lord's second advent which are inscrutable to the natural man, and can only be perceived by the faithful, and that under the guidance of the spirit in the understanding of the Word. As we saw previously that the Jews failed to grasp the facts connected with our Lord's presence at the first advent—except those who were Israelites indeed, and they but a handful in comparison with the nation,—so here, may we not expect that even amongst those who today are hoping for the Master's return, only a comparative remnant, a handful, will be in such a condition of heart as to permit them to discern clearly and distinctly the manner of the second advent? The presence of our Lord, invisible to men, is for the gathering of the wheat into his barn and the tares for burning; and, subsequently, the manifestation of the complete Christ, head and members,

in the glory of the kingdom, as the Sun of righteousness will be for the healing and blessing and restoring of all mankind

then willing to accept the blessings of the Lord on the terms of righteousness.

THE MEMORIAL CELEBRATION

Good, heart-cheering reports are at hand from various quarters, showing that the Memorial Supper was this year an occasion of great interest and spiritual profit to the Lord's people scattered abroad. It surely grows in meaning to us as we grow in the knowledge of the divine plan, and as we come closer and closer into accord with the great Fount of every blessing.

Three hundred and thirty devoted souls gathered at the Bible House Chapel, Allegheny, and after a review of the meaning of the emblems, the bread and the cup, partook of them with hearts overflowing with gratitude (1) for the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation to God, already effected for all of the "church of the firstborn"; and (2) for the inestimable privilege of participating with our dear Redeemer as members or parts of the "one loaf"—the one body;—and as participators in the "one cup" of our Lord's sufferings,

even unto death, as the Apostle explains. (1 Cor. 10:16, 17) Three baptism services witnessed to the consecration of eighteen, and made deep impressions upon those who had already witnessed the same good confession.

We have reports before us which indicate that a much larger number participated this year than ever previously. All report showers of refreshing. Some of the leading companies numbered as follows:—Boston, 142 communicants, 32 baptisms; Philadelphia, 130 communicants, 14 baptisms; Chicago, 125; New York, 71; Indianapolis, 80, immersions 11; Washington, D. C., 67; Toronto, Ont., 57; Cleveland, O., 54; Columbus, O., 25; Houston, Tex., 30; Toledo, O., 37; Richmond, Va., 35; Brantford, Ont., 28; Tiffin, O., 35; Atlanta, Ga., 22; Buffalo, 27; Cincinnati, 46; Baltimore, 26; Dayton, O., 32; Lynn, Mass., 27; Auburn, R. I., 35; Scranton, Pa., 33; Minneapolis and St. Paul, 37.

PAUL BEFORE FELIX

ACTS 24:10-16, 24-26.—MAY 17.

"I will fear no evil: for thou art with me."—Psa. 23:4.

Five days after Paul's arrival a prisoner at Cæsarea the chief priest, Ananias, accompanied by a public advocate and a deputation from the Sanhedrin, also appeared in the city to make charges against Paul, and the trial at once took place. The advocate, Tertullus, began his case by making very flattering allusions to the governor—very hypocritical allusions, as we know from secular histories of the time. "Both Josephus and Tacitus represent him as one of the most corrupt and oppressive rulers ever sent by the Romans into Judea."

Flattery of this kind, undeserved praise, is extremely reprehensible; totally contrary to the principles which govern the Lord's followers. It is dishonesty, hypocrisy. Nevertheless, flattery is a very powerful weapon, which the unregenerate have little scruple in using, and it frequently gives them a decided advantage in wordly affairs, in opposition to the Lord's faithful, who are restrained from such flatteries, being obliged to consider truth and honesty in all their words and dealings. Some of the Lord's people are, on the other hand, inclined to carry honesty in such matters to an extreme: many in Paul's stead would have felt it their bounden duty to have upbraided Felix roundly. It is no more obligatory upon the Lord's people to denounce every wrongdoer whom they may meet in the street than it is for them to tell all homely persons they may see of their lack along the lines of beauty. The Apostle's course in this case is an illustration of the possession of the spirit of a sound mind. When it came his turn to address the governor he neither upbraided nor reproved him, nor did he utter any words of flattery. The introduction to his defense was every word true in the fullest sense, and yet it was framed and presented in courteous and agreeable language.

Politeness is always a part of Christian character. In the world it may be polish, but in the Christian it is not merely a veneer, but represents the true sentiments of the heart, developed along the lines of the spirit of life—love. Love leads to gentleness, patience, kindness, etc., and even in the case of disobedience it will hesitate to utter an unkind word, and will avoid the same so far as duty will permit.

The advocate, or attorney, Tertullus, made serious charges against the Apostle. He would have him appear to Felix as more or less a conspirator against the Roman government—at least a raiser of tumults and seditions amongst the people. This charge was made broadly, applying not only to the present instance, the tumult at Jerusalem, but that everywhere, throughout the provinces of Rome, wherever he went, tumults arose amongst the people. It did not seem to occur to this attorney that the tumults might be caused by evil-doers in their endeavor to stop the progress of righteousness and truth; the thought he endeavored to present to Felix was that whoever occasioned tumults, regardless of his plea, was to be considered an enemy to good government, law and order. The same arguments are powerful today with those who do not appreciate the true principles of justice and liberty. It will not surprise us at all if by and by the enemies of present truth take a similarly unjust stand against us, who are seeking to walk in the footsteps of the Apostle—seeking to present the truths of a new dispensation to our brethren in Babylon, who are not only themselves unwilling to hear, but are easily

aroused to anger, vituperation and persecution, that they may prevent others from receiving the good tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people.

When the charges had been preferred, Paul was permitted to speak for himself, and did so to good effect. He showed (1) that he had but recently arrived in Jerusalem; that he had raised no riot or commotion, but that, on the contrary, at the time of his arrest he was quietly worshipping God in the Temple—disputing with nobody and interfering with nobody's rights. (2) He challenged his accusers to produce proofs of the truthfulness of their charges—denying their ability to prove them; and thus in a most reasonable and legal way showed that the burden of proof was upon his accusers, and not upon himself. (3) He did confess, however, that there was some ground for the animosity manifested against him, and this was that his fellow-Jews charged him with believing and teaching heresy—a split-off from the Jewish religion. It was his answer to the charge that he was a ring-leader of the sect of the Nazarenes; he denied that it was heresy against the Jewish religion, and a sect, or split-off party. It was his enemies who called Christianity heresy, and separation from Judaism, but their charges were false from the Apostle's standpoint. Christianity, instead of being split off from Judaism, was the natural outcome and proper development of it—the fulfilment of the promises of God upon which the hopes and prospects of Judaism were all built. The Apostle shows this matter most distinctly in his letter to the Romans (chap. 11), where he pictures the Jewish nation as the olive tree whose root was the Abrahamic promise, and whose branches were the people of Israel. He does not picture Christianity as another tree, nor yet as a new shoot out of this original olive tree, but he does picture it as the fuller development of this tree, representing all Jews refusing to progress and to accept of Christ, as branches that were broken off—all the true Jews who continued to be recognized of the Lord—all the Israelites indeed,—were the Christians who from Pentecost onward have been known as spiritual Israelites.

Progressing, the Apostle justified the claim which he made at his hearing before the Sanhedrin; viz., that a serious part of the objection raised against him by his countrymen was his belief in the resurrection of the dead, which some of them also allowed, or believed,—"that there should be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust."

That the Apostle preached a Gospel in many particulars different from the general belief of our day, is quite evident from this presentation of it—the making prominent of the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. True, some might claim that it is unnecessary to make this doctrine prominent, because there are few Sadducees today—few who deny the resurrection of the dead. We answer that there are few who believe that there are any dead. The vast majority of mankind, Christians as well as heathen, have adopted the theory that none are dead—that those who appear to die really become more alive than ever. Not believing in anybody's being dead it would be impossible for them to believe in the resurrection of the dead. Instead, another thought prevails now; viz., a resurrection of the *body*—the person or soul, it is claimed, does not die, but merely sheds the body as an old

garment, and at some future time is to have it back. But it will be conceded that if this were all that the Apostle meant by the resurrection of the dead,—if he really meant a “resurrection of the body,” his argument was a weak one. It would be foolish to waste much time or breath or energy in discussing such a proposition as would have no particular advantage or merit, even if it were proven.

The Apostle had a totally different thought: his preaching was to the effect that death is a real penalty for sin, and that there never could be life or consciousness, except by a resurrection of the dead, and that a resurrection of the dead could only come by divine favor in the accomplishment of a redemption of all that had been condemned to death. In preaching the resurrection, therefore, he was declaring not only his faith that Christ Jesus was not dead, but also his faith that God would in due time grant the world a resurrection. Thus Jesus and the resurrection constituted the sum and substance of the gospel hope from the Apostle's standpoint and—because we take his—from our standpoint also.

The question may occur to some—if resurrection (*anastasis*) means a full, complete raising up out of death conditions into perfection of life conditions, how could the Apostle here speak of the resurrection “both of the just and unjust”?

How shall we understand this, and harmonize it with other Scriptures which declare that only the justified shall attain full perfection of life?—that he that hath the Son may have life, and he that hath not the Son shall not see life—in its perfection?—that he that will not obey the great Prophet shall be cut off from amongst his people—cut off from life, in the second death?

We answer that the Apostle is not carrying his argument down into the future, declaring that in the future the just ones shall attain to the full perfection of life and the unjust ones also; he is merely referring to those who in the present time are just and unjust. The just of the present time are “justified by faith,” and if faithful to the conditions of the call are to have part in the first resurrection. The unjust of the present time are the unjustified, the unbelievers, and the Apostle explains that they believe not because the god of this world hath blinded their minds. (2 Cor. 4:4) However, as the Scriptures distinctly show, it is to be the special work of the next age to open all the blind eyes and to unstop all the deaf ears, and to cause the knowledge of the Lord to fill the whole earth, to the intent that those now unjustified, unjust, may be just before God, and thus share in the resurrection which is provided for all, and which will accomplish the resurrection of all except as its gracious provisions are individually rejected.

Having stated thus his belief in a future life, by a resurrection, the Apostle declares that his present life was being used in accordance with that hope of a future life—with a conscience that controlled his thoughts and words and deeds in relationship to God and men.

Can we wonder that Felix, perverse though he was, himself felt disinclined to yield so noble a prisoner to death, even to accommodate and please the flattering attorney and the influential high priest, whose favor he would undoubtedly prefer to hold? The record leads us additionally to infer that Felix considered that in Paul he had a good opportunity for receiving a bribe for the performance of justice; for in his narrative the Apostle proceeded to show that so far from seeking to do injury to his fellow-creatures, he had brought with him from foreign cities large sums of money. Felix thus perceived that the prisoner, who had liberal education and talent and Roman citizenship, had friends not only in Jerusalem, but abroad. He doubtless concluded that they would be quite willing to make him a handsome present to effect the Apostle's release. This is the suggestion of the 26th verse.

Apparently Felix was considerably interested in his prisoner, and mentioned him to his wife, a Jewess: he was called before them, that they might know further respecting this new teaching. His curiosity was evidently soon more than satisfied, as the Apostle proceeded with his subject, showing the plan of God, the righteousness of the Law, the inability of fallen man to fully meet its requirements, that Jesus became the Redeemer of those condemned by the Law, and that now salvation and life eternal are open to as many as will obey the gospel—forsake sin and lay hold by faith upon the Redeemer. The Apostle proceeded to show that righteousness was the reasonable requirement of the divine law, and that the acceptance of God's favor in Christ led to self-restraint and opposition to natural tendencies, and that there is a judgment day to come, in the which all deflections from righteousness will be rewarded with stripes proportionate to knowledge. The governor trembled; his own wicked life and licentious course

stood out before his mental gaze, and he realized that, according to the standards presented, he would have many stripes to bear in the future. His wife, Drusilla, was really the wife of King Azizus; but her conscience, evidently more seared than his, seems not to have been in the least agitated. Felix suggested that at a more convenient season he would hear further of the Gospel; but we doubt if ever he called for any further explanations—he already had enough, more than he was willing to obey. His course is one too frequently imitated since. Many who tremble as they think of their sins, hope that a more convenient time for breaking off may come to them; but a convenient season for abandoning sin—when sin indulged in our members will make no objection to being ousted—will never come. He who would become a follower of the Lord Jesus, must courageously accept of Christ, the power divine for the breaking of the shackles of his slavery to sin—must first love the liberty wherewith Christ alone can make us free. Those who have not this craving will remain slaves of sin until the glorious Millennial morning shall break, until after the completion of the elect church of “overcomers”—until the dawning of the Millennial morning, when the overcomers, with Christ at their head, shall break all the shackles of sin and set all prisoners free, and command all to render obedience to the laws of the kingdom of God, inflicting stripes of punishment proportionate to their present wilfulness in sin, with a view to their recovery, and for restitution to all that was lost in Adam and redeemed with the precious blood.

A good lesson may be learned from the Apostle's method of presenting the truth to Felix. He did not attack the governor's character, nor berate him for his sins. He did better than this. Ignoring the individual entirely, he lifted the mirror of the perfect law of love and liberty and righteousness before the governor, and let him see for himself how far short he came of the perfect standard which alone God can approve. Would that all of God's children could learn thus to reprove sin—by letting the light of truth and the corroboration of the same in their own conduct shine out—their words, and no less their conduct, being epistles of the grace of God and his gracious arrangements, both for rewarding those who seek him and for chastening and correcting those who require it!

The courage of the Apostle in holding up the truth before one who so largely had to do with the decision of his own case is remarkable and commendable. It is in full agreement with the declaration of our Golden Text. Those who are on the Lord's side, and who, therefore, have the Lord on their side, in all of life's affairs, need fear no evil. This absence of fear, however, should not in us, any more than in the Apostle, lead to bravado or discourteous manner or language. The divine rule is, as expressed by the Apostle, that we should speak the truth in love.—Eph. 4:15.

Another lesson taught us by the Apostle's experiences, yea, by all of the Lord's notable children, from the Master down, is that the assaults of calumny, slander, etc., can do them no lasting harm. Look at the Captain of our salvation, against whom all manner of evil was said and done falsely, even to the extent of calling him the prince of devils, and crucifying him as a blasphemer of God. How those assaults of the great adversary, through his deluded children of disobedience, serve now to make the Lord's character and conduct the more transparent and resplendent! So also it is in respect to the Apostle Paul's experiences—they all reflect grandly upon his character today. Bunyan's “Pilgrim's Progress” gives a scene which illustrates this feature of our lesson and encourages all of us to disregard the slanders and evil speakings of the present time, if so be that we can continually realize the divine favor and blessing with us and upon our efforts to serve the Lord. We give an extract from Bunyan's writings as follows:—

“Then the shepherds had the pilgrims to another place, called Mount Innocence, and there they saw a man clothed all in white, and two men, Prejudice and Ill-will, continually casting dirt upon him. Now behold, the dirt, whatsoever they cast at him, would in a little time fall off again, and his garment would look as clean as if no dirt had been cast thereat. Then said the pilgrims, ‘What means this?’ The shepherds answered, ‘This man is named Godly-man, and this garment is to show the innocency of his life. Now, those that throw dirt at him are such as hate his well-doing; but, as you see, the dirt will not stick upon his clothes; so it shall be with him that liveth innocently in the world. Whoever they be that would make such men dirty, they labor all in vain; for God, by that a little time is spent, will cause that their innocence shall break forth as the light, and their righteousness as the noon-day.’”

VOLUNTEER WORK FOR THE SEASON 1903

For several years the dear friends of the cause in all parts of the United States and Canada have industriously circulated on Sundays, at church doors, various of the WATCH TOWER publications. Good results have come—though far less than we hoped for from the vast quantity of printed matter thus circulated. We can only trust that some of the seed has fallen into good ground, and is bringing forth fruitage quietly, which will later be manifest. We believe that on the whole a general modification of the views of Christendom is in progress, and that the tendency is in two directions—the majority toward infidelity, higher criticism, etc., and animosity toward the truth; and a minority toward a proper appreciation of the Word of God and its teachings. We are thus encouraged to go on in the good work while it is called today, realizing that a dark night of unbelief is rapidly settling over our dear brethren and sisters still in Babylon, and that those whom we would rescue must be reached speedily, if at all, before the great time of trouble shall have closed the door to the high calling.

We propose that the volunteer work this year be varied a little from the methods of previous years—to the extent that the tracts we are expecting shortly to furnish be *circulated from house to house*, on Sunday forenoons, instead of being circulated at church-doors. We advise that foreign quarters, and especially Roman Catholic quarters, be avoided, as the circulation of tracts there would mean a loss of time, effort and means. Our thought in making this change for the current season is that there may be people who would thus be reached who have not been reached by the church distributions of the past. We find that there are today quite a number of thinking people who rarely go to church, sometimes for one reason and sometimes for another. Amongst these are some of the most conscientious, God-fearing and well-disposed, who should be amenable to the influences of present truth. We have found it so.

Our arrangement with the printers is that the two tracts which shall constitute the "ammunition" for this year shall be put up, mixed alternately, in bundles. The thought is, not to give two at each house, but one, that neighbors may possi-

bly exchange with each other, and thus a greater variety of reading matter be utilized.

This new method of distribution will render useless the information secured by the various captains during former seasons, but will, nevertheless, give them plenty to do in districting their cities and towns so that every house in proper districts shall be reached and served, and so that the workers shall not lap upon each other's territory. We recommend that the circulation take place on Sunday mornings, at such hour as seems to the friends at each place the most convenient one, least likely to inconvenience those who rejoice to give their time in this service.

It may be possible that some of the friends will find a week-day more convenient than a Sunday, and if this be so we advise that their wishes for territory and tracts be granted. On the whole, however, we rather think that Sunday will be the most advantageous and convenient day. We are not to think of this, nor will other right-minded people think of it, as being "labor," and in violation of Sunday rest. The walking will be no more than would ordinarily be done in going to church, and the labor would be considerably less than in the preaching of a sermon, while the printed sermon thus delivered will, in the judgment of the distributors, be superior, of course, to what would be generally obtained.

FOR THE GERMAN WORK

We are preparing this season to do some volunteer work amongst the German Protestant churches, and will be pleased to fill requisitions for "ammunition" in that language. We advise that this material be served on Sunday in the way the English churches were served in previous years, as it would be difficult to locate the Germans otherwise.

We hope that all orders will be with us promptly, and as soon as possible we will have the tracts shipped. We remember daily in prayer the dear brethren and sisters engaged in this, as well as in every branch of the service of the Lord, that his rich blessing may go with the efforts put forth, to the awakening of the true ones of the flock. May grace, mercy and peace abide with all in your loving efforts to cooperate in the spread of the glad tidings.

"ALMOST THOU PERSUADEST ME"

ACTS 26:19-29.—MAY 24.

"Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day."

Paul remained a prisoner at Cæsarea two years—until the recall of Felix to Rome. According to history, the latter had given ground for much complaint by the use of his office, and in order to placate the Jews, and to avoid further animosities, he left Paul a prisoner, instead of doing him the justice of acknowledging that he had committed no crime and, therefore, had full right to his liberty. It is impossible for us at this distance even to surmise with any accuracy what may have been the Lord's object in permitting his faithful representative to be thus isolated, and debarred from the privileges of service. On the one hand, it may have been to give the Apostle rest, quiet, opportunity for further study of the truth. On the other hand, it may have been to teach him a lesson of patience, submission and confidence in God;—that his services were not indispensable; that while the Lord had not let go of him, and would ultimately deliver him, he was not indispensable to the divine plan. These are important lessons for all of God's people to learn, and particularly all who are in any prominent way identified with his service.

On the other hand, it may be that the Lord had a work for the Apostle to do at Cæsarea, where possibly he had contact with the officers of the garrison—and where they would have opportunities for observing the man and appreciating the power of God to uphold him in his adversities. We may be sure that the Apostle let his light shine on every proper occasion, and we may be sure also that his labor was "not in vain in the Lord," whatever it was, and however it was accepted or made useful in the interests of others. If, even, he had no opportunity for serving others, and the work of grace were accomplished in his own heart, it was not in vain, and faith commands us to accept the matter without doubt respecting the wisdom of the arrangement.

Festus, the successor of Felix as Roman governor, was of a totally different character from his predecessor. The Apostle styles him "noble Festus," and history confirms the appellation. The Jewish rulers, taking advantage of the fact that a new governor would naturally desire to make a favorable impression in respect to prompt dealing with prisoners charged with sedition, rioting, disloyalty, etc., quickly brought Paul's

case to the attention of Festus. Doubtless their charges were the same as those made before Felix, coupled with suggestions, perhaps, that Felix had been rather lax in his dealings, and that they doubted not that the new governor, appointed by the emperor as a more capable person, would, on the contrary, show his thoroughgoing character by bringing all such offenders to justice. Apparently, however, they realized that it would be useless to attempt to try the case before the governor, since they had no witnesses to any wrong-doing which he could recognize as against Roman law or the privileges of a Roman citizen. Apparently their explanation was that the Apostle's conduct had been an assault upon their religion, along lines which the Roman governor, unacquainted with their religion, would not be prepared to appreciate. They therefore asked that the prisoner be tried before the Sanhedrin. The governor acknowledged his ignorance of the religion of the Jews, and made no objection to the trial of the prisoner by the religious court of his countrymen; but the Apostle was a Roman, and since he claimed Roman citizenship it was not permissible to turn him over to his countrymen for trial unless with his consent. The matter, therefore, was appealed to the Apostle: was he willing to be released as a Roman prisoner, and to be turned over to his countrymen for trial, according to their usages in religious matters? The Apostle promptly replied that he would not consent to this; that as a Roman citizen he had a right to Roman privileges, and therefore appealed his case to Cæsar's court at the capital city. He well knew the animosity of his countrymen, and that those who were ready to assassinate him two years before were probably still unchanged in heart. The Apostle's course furnishes a good example for all of the Lord's people in similar circumstances. It is a mistake, made by some well-meaning members of the Lord's family, to suppose that the Master's teaching of non-resistance means that they should put forth no efforts on their own behalf. It is our privilege to avail ourselves of every right granted to us by the laws of the country in which we live. It is proper for us to appeal to higher or better courts if we can, to obtain that justice which might not be obtainable in lower courts. But having exhausted all such

legal resources and remedies, the Lord's people are to be submissive to the results—not anarchists, not grumblers, not resisters of the decisions of the law. Another matter worthy of notice is that, so far as the records show, the Apostle did not berate or calumniate his people, the Sanhedrin or others associated as his prosecutors and persecutors. The lessons for the Lord's people today is to speak evil of no man; take advantage of every legal right and privilege and opportunity, and accept the final results as the providence of God.

Festus was placed in a peculiar position; in sending the Apostle to Rome, as he was obliged to do in the case of appeal of a Roman citizen, he must of necessity send some charges, and being a just man he desired that the charges should be truthfully stated. Confessing himself to be ignorant of the Jewish religion, he asked King Agrippa and his wife, Bernice, who were nominal Jews (really Edomites), to hear the Apostle's explanation of his case, that he might advise him respecting how serious were the divergencies between Christians and Jews in doctrine.

The invitation was accepted, and the Apostle began his address before the king and queen and the Roman governor, and, doubtless, quite a retinue of officers and soldiers. Here was an opportunity for preaching the Gospel to the people, whom the Apostle could otherwise never have expected to reach. He appears to have appreciated the occasion thoroughly, and made a stirring address, his text being the circumstances of his own conversion—narrated here for the third time. We cannot doubt that he was guided of the Lord in the matter, and it offers the suggestion to all ministers of the truth that nothing is apt to appeal more quickly to others than those things which have appealed to ourselves. Every minister of the truth, to speak heartily and forcefully, should speak from conviction, and the conviction should be backed by reasonable and positive evidences. Nothing could appeal to his hearers more strongly than the fact that he admitted that he had been a persecutor of the Christians himself, before he saw the way of the Lord more perfectly, and that now, seeing the Lord's way, he was sacrificing all that man could hold dear in his service of the truth.

The fact that the Apostle was addressing royalty did not hinder him from bringing out the salient features of the Gospel, and these are, we fear, too frequently forgotten by many.

(1) Repentance from sin; (2) turning to God to seek his favor, to know and to do his will; (3) the doing of good works, and thereby showing that repentance was sincere. Because our present work is very largely that of "reaping" rather than "sowing," we have less need to appeal to those who are living in sin and alienation from God, and needing reformation of life; but whenever we have occasion to present the message of the Lord to some or to any whom we have reason to believe are not living in harmony with the requirements of the Gospel along these lines, we should be careful, as the Apostle was, to leave no room for misunderstanding—no room for thinking that the gospel of Christ is sympathy with uncleanness, impurity of heart or life, sin, selfishness or evil deeds.

We are here informed, though not elsewhere, that the Apostle had at some time in his experience preached the Gospel throughout all the country of Judea—evidently before he went to Antioch and engaged in the general work amongst Gentiles—possibly during the two years prior to his first going to Antioch. The Apostles thus showed his auditors that his work had not been exclusively to the Jews nor exclusively to the Gentiles, but to both according to opportunity. It is for this cause, he declares—because realizing the change of dispensation by which God's grace was not confined any longer to the Jews only—that the Jews specially hated him and seized him in the Temple, and attempted to kill him. It was the selfishness on the part of the Jews that made the Apostle specially obnoxious to them. They were opposed to Jesus, but specially opposed to the giving of his gospel to the Gentiles—the teaching that the Gentiles might now, in any sense of the word, enjoy equal privileges with the Jews in respect to God's favor, etc.

In referring to the preservation of his life, the Apostle does not give credit to Lysias, the commander of the garrison at Jerusalem, but declares that he obtained help of God, by whom he had been sustained to the time of his speaking. Doubtless on a proper occasion the Apostle would have been quite willing to have given Lysias full credit for promptness in preserving his life; but speaking from the highest standpoint of his own appreciation and ours, he gave the credit for his deliverance to the Lord. There is a good lesson in this for all of the Lord's people. How apt many are to give credit to "luck" or "chance" or human instrumentality, overlooking the fact that the Lord's saints are the special objects of his

care, and that the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them and delivereth them.

The next sentence intimates that during the two years of the Apostle's imprisonment he had been witnessing, preaching the Gospel, both to small and great—such of the soldiers or servants or commanders of the camp as seemed to have a hearing ear undoubtedly were communicated with. We may be sure that the Apostle slackened not at any time his endeavors to serve the great Master, the Captain of our salvation, as a true soldier and faithful servant. So, too, should we continue to serve, even when apparently the most favorable opportunities are withheld from us. "Thou knowest not which shall prosper, either this or that."—Eccl. 11:6.

We should notice what the Apostle specially testified, and consider it a clue to our most favorable testimonies in the interest of the same cause. He doubtless presented the subject from various standpoints at different times; but the essence, the substance, of his message on all occasions was the death and resurrection of Christ, as the one in whom were fulfilled the types of the Jewish law and the declaration of the prophets. He did not stop with declaring the death and resurrection, but pointed to the ultimate legitimate results of these—that they meant that eventually the true light should shine unto all the Jewish people and also to the Gentiles. "This is the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." It is in vain that we attempt to preach any other gospel—no other will be considered acceptable by him whom we would serve. We find, on the contrary, some today preaching a coming blessing of a new age and its light and favors to mankind, but denying the Scriptural foundation for such hopes—the death of Christ as our redemption price, and his resurrection, that he might be our helper and deliverer. Others, too, state the matter from a different standpoint, claiming that the favor of God and the blessing of forgiveness through Christ is to extend even to the heathen—but without light; that they will be saved in their darkness and heathenism. Let all who would ultimately hear the Master's words, "Well done, good and faithful servant," be careful to preach the same gospel that the Apostle proclaimed; viz., the one based upon the ransom sacrifice of Christ, attested by his resurrection, on account of which the Lord is yet to be (during the Millennial age) the true light that will lighten every man, every member of our race, and bring to each and to all not only the blessings of opportunity but also tests and proportionate responsibility.

King Agrippa was evidently considerably informed along the lines of the teaching of the law and the prophets, for the Apostle appealed to him as able to corroborate his presentations respecting the law and the prophets; but Festus the Gentile, who had no knowledge of Jewish hopes and promises, was astounded as he heard the Apostle's line of argument—doubtless much more extended than is presented in the record. Interrupting the Apostle by speaking still louder than he, Festus cried, "Paul, thou art beside thyself! Much learning doth make thee mad!"—your head is turned; you are painting fancy pictures when you tell us of a great God, our Creator, and that he cares for us, his creatures, and has provided for our redemption through the sacrifice of his Son, and that he has raised him from the dead, and is ultimately to send a blessing to every member of our race. Surely this is your own imagination! It is a wonderful picture, astounding to me who, as a Gentile, never had so connected a presentation respecting any of the deities of whom I have heard by the thousand.

Truth is stranger than fiction, and it is no wonder that some today, like Festus of old, find it hard to believe in the goodness and wonderful provision that our heavenly Father has made for his creatures. Today, if some of our worldly friends note our enthusiasm for the Lord, his brethren and his truth, it all seems very different from any religious sentiments or feelings, hopes or ambitions they have entertained, and they are inclined to say of us also that our heads are a little turned. They think it not strange if men become enthusiastic about politics or money-making, because such enthusiasm is common to men; everybody is more or less excited and interested in money-getting and in politics. But when it comes to religion, they say to themselves, No one knows anything about this matter; it is all pure speculation, and these people must be crazy when they think of their religion as being tangible, worthy of self-denial and the enduring of persecutions. We admit that no romance of earth ever equaled this one of the divine arrangement for man's salvation:—the fall; the calamity of death and disease, mental, physical and moral; the sending of God's own son; his offering of himself as the sin-offering on our behalf; his resurrection and ascension to glory, honor and power; the gathering of a little flock to be his bride