

representatives of Israel were unready for the invitation was not permitted to hinder, and our Lord, through his disciples, subsequently extended the invitation to another class.

The trial of the nation as a whole, represented by its leaders, ended at Calvary, or rather five days before Calvary, when our Lord rode on the ass and wept over the city of Jerusalem, saying, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee: how oft would I have gathered thy children, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate!" As a nation, as a people, you have rejected the divine invitation to the great feast, and as a nation you cannot taste of it. Nevertheless, according to divine intention and promise through the prophets, God extended mercy to various individuals of that nation, after the nation as a whole had proven itself unworthy of the kingdom privileges. The apostles were sent to gather not the nation, but such individuals as were of humble mind, to share in the feast, and this calling of individuals, instead of the nation of Israel, was responded to exclusively by those who realized their own unworthiness,—the lame, the halt, the blind, who confessed that they were not perfect, but who desired perfection and who rejoiced in the call to partake of the kingdom privileges, and gladly forsook all else for it. Amongst them we are assured there are not many wise, not many great, not many learned, but chiefly the poor, for although the poor are not always humble by any means, yet amongst them proportionately more were found who were of acceptable character; amongst the rich and the great humility would appear to have been at all times correspondingly scarce.

This second invitation to the poor, the halt and the blind, in the streets and lanes of the city, as a picture would be very difficult to appreciate in our day of hospitals and almshouses, etc., provided by general taxation; but in the days of our Lord it would be very easy indeed to have collected a large crowd of indigent and infirm in short order.

It will be observed that both of these first calls belong to the city—that is, Israel, the nominal kingdom of God. But the two calls failed to find the sufficient number which God had predestinated should constitute the kingdom class. He could indeed have induced others to come in, but, on the contrary, he purposely put the invitation to the feast in such a form as would repel those who were not of the right attitude of heart—in such a form as would attract Israelites indeed, who felt and acknowledged their own unworthiness, and who would be glad, on entering the feast, to have on the robe provided for the guests (symbolical of Christ's righteousness), to cover the filthy rags of their own imperfection. But now, because a sufficient number was not found in Israel to complete the elect number, the message must be sent outside the city, outside of Judaism,—to the Gentiles; and thus the third message was, "Go ye into the highways and whosoever you meet, compel them to come in." The word "compel," however, gives a wrong thought here: it should properly be rendered, urge, persuade.

And thus it has been that throughout the Gospel age, since the bringing in to the Gospel favor of as many Jews as were ready for it, the message has been turned to the Gentiles, "to take out of them a people for God's name," to partake of the great feast with the remnant of Israel. As the Apostle Paul said to some of the Jews in his preaching: "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to

you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles; for so the Lord hath commanded us." (Acts 13:46, 47) They showed themselves unworthy of this great blessing or gift, in that they were interested more in the things that perish than in the glorious promises of the everlasting future.

The Apostle Paul calls attention to this fact in Rom. 9:27: "Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant [only] shall be saved." The Apostle further shows that the call of the Gentiles to be sharers in the kingdom is merely the continuation of the original call, and that we are called in to take the places of those who neglected so great salvation and privilege. He illustrates this by the olive tree, saying that the natural branches were broken off that we, who by nature were wild, might be grafted in and become partakers of the root and fatness of the olive.—Rom. 11:17.

This third call to the great feast of the kingdom blessings and privileges has progressed throughout this Gospel age, and to our understanding is now nearly complete—nearly all the places at the table have been provided with guests; only a few are yet vacant; and so soon as these places are filled, the great feast will begin, and we shall indeed enter into the joys of our Lord, and not only be privileged to feast ourselves, but to carry of its bounties and blessings to all the families of the earth.

The same matters which hindered the Jews, under the first call, from accepting this invitation, have hindered to a large extent also many of the Gentiles who have heard the third call. It is impossible to be thorough-going business men, wealthy, influential, etc., and at the same time follow in the footsteps of Jesus, giving all of our hearts, talents and energies to the Lord in acceptance of his invitation to this feast. The acceptance of the invitation to this feast means a deep interest in it, beyond everything else, so that all other matters, whether houses or lands, father or mother, wife or children, shall be secondary to the interests of the kingdom, and to our responsibilities to the terms and conditions of the invitation. Consequently, what was true respecting Israel has been true as respects the Gentiles, viz., that the call to the kingdom has been generally rejected by those who had a considerable measure of this world's blessings and advantages—those who are rich, either in honor of men or social position or talents or reputation or money, have found it difficult to leave these all to follow Jesus in the narrow way; and, consequently, the Scriptural assurance is, not only that those elected in the end of the Jewish age were chiefly the poor and lowly, but that the same has been true amongst the Gentiles, and is true today: "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble;" but chiefly the poor of this world, rich in faith.—1 Cor. 1:26; James 2:5.

This does not debar those who have riches of any kind, but really gives them all the greater privilege and opportunity; for they have that much greater talent which, if they will, they may sacrifice, and thus the more fully demonstrate their appreciation of the invitation and of the feast, and be correspondingly appreciated by the Host. Let us all, like the Apostle Paul, lay aside every weight, every hindrance, every besetment, everything precious to us of an earthly kind, that we may run with patience the race set before us, in response to this invitation to the great feast of joint-heirship with our Lord in the kingdom.—Heb. 12:1, 2; Rom. 8:16-18; 12:1, 2.

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER

THE BIBLE TRIUMPHANT

Evidences corroborative of the Bible's truthfulness accumulate. Genesis notes Nimrod as the founder of the Chaldean or Babylonian empire before Abraham's day. (Gen. 10:8-12) These and other features of the narrative have been doubted and considered mythical; but explorations in Babylonia seem to confirm the Bible record at every point.

We have already mentioned the exploration of the ruins of ancient Nippur, once the royal capital, commenced some years ago by the representatives of the University of Pennsylvania, U. S. A. The past year, it seems, has been a very fruitful one, the ruins yielding to the searchers vast literary treasures,—the once National Library of Chaldea. The *Biblia* gives the following interesting description of the find:—

"The most surprising feature of the discovery is that the persons who collected the tablets and placed them originally in the pot was an old priest, who lived previous to and during the time of Belshazzar, and who was evidently a scientist of no

mean discrimination. The pot was, indeed, his archaeological museum, not portentous in size, but the first museum known to man, and therefore more important for the bearing it had on the history of civilization than any of the great museums in existence today. Among the articles found in it were the following tablets:

"1. One of Sargon, which gives his titles. This particular piece of baked clay may give information concerning the doings of centuries. It was the custom in those days for each king to inscribe a memorial tablet not only with an account of his victories, but with his pedigree, showing where he was born, who were his ancestors, the god he worshiped, and in fact, anything else that might serve to impress posterity with his personal glory. These tablets, therefore, reveal the names and origin of many of the writer's contemporaries, predecessors, and, as the accounts of the successive kings dovetail into one another, they will all in the end constitute an unbroken history of this early civilization. There are, however, compara-

tively few of these tablets yet found which date so far back as 3800 B. C., hence the vast importance of this tablet.

"2. A tablet written in the reign of Ur Gur. This king is famous for building and remodeling the old temple of Ekur, dedicated to the god Bel. This stone tablet states specifically that he rebuilt the temple wall, which had originally been erected by Narim Sin. He also erected many other buildings in Nippur.

"3. A tablet, excellently preserved, stating the great hall of the temple was called Emakh. It also stated, to Professor Hilprecht's great amazement, that there were forty different shrines in Nippur, each of which was dedicated to a distinct god. This important fact will amaze Babylonian scholars, because it has hitherto been supposed that there was but one god, *i. e.*, Bel, worshiped in Nippur.

"4. A text inscribed by Ashur-etil-ilane, a king who ruled a short time over Assyria.

"5. An important text of Assyria's last king, Sin-shar-ishkun.

"Near the spot where Professor Hilprecht found this wonderful little museum there was picked up a peculiarly shaped barrel cylinder recording King Samsu-iluna's restoration of part of the Temple of Bel. This was about 2000 B. C. Near by lay a curious truncated barrel cylinder marked with the name of Assur-bani-pal, a king whose name is well known to the explorers. In addition to these, two hundred Hebrew bowls, excellently preserved and some of them quite large, were unearthed in another part of the mounds. But these were quite modern, having been left by the Jews who lived on the mounds of Nippur as late as 700 A. D.

"No one can read an account of the work of Professor Hilprecht without being struck by the fact that the people of 7,000 years ago lived very much as we do today. There was the same appreciation of literature and art, as shown in the cuneiform scripts and in their sculpture. Wealthy people lived in the cities and employed attorneys to manage their tenantry who lived in the country on farms. When they bought jewelry a written guaranty went with it. In the archive room of Murashu Sons, attorneys of ancient Nippur, there was found a tablet guaranteeing that an emerald set in a ring would not fall out for twenty years. Houses were built on an extensive, not to say modern, plan, and were furnished more or less magnificently, as evidenced in the palace above mentioned above. Fortifications were built, wars were carried on, conquests were made, and heroes were glorified. People, when they died, were not thrown hastily into the earth, but were laid away carefully in clay coffins, which are found today still covered with the beautiful blue glaze with which they were decorated by the ancient undertaker. And for the benefit of posterity, science was studied and museums were planned that they might be found in the dawn of the twentieth century, and the history of the race read as a sermon in stones."

Commenting on these discoveries, the *London Daily News* says:—

"The find has been much more important than could have been anticipated. In the course of three months no less than 17,200 tablets, covered with cuneiform writings, have been recovered. These are not of the character mentioned in my former notice of the discovery of tablets, namely, the recovery of private business contracts, conveyances, letters, and the like, but bear more resemblance to the contents of an ordinary library. The tablets are historical, philological, and literary. They treat of mythology, of grammar and lexicography, of science, and of mathematics. There is reason to believe that they will for the first time enable the world to form an adequate idea of life in Babylonia such as could be possible only by the discovery of a national library, recording the national progress in literature, science, and thought generally. No document is found in this collection of a later date than 2280 B. C. As this date marks the invasion of the Elamites, the fact adds confirmatory evidence that the library was destroyed during this invasion.

"The unexplored remains of the library are even more extensive than those already examined. The tablets are generally arranged with regularity on clay shelves around the rooms of the library, and Professor Hilprecht estimates that at their present rate of working five more years will be necessary to excavate and examine the contents. He thinks it probable, judging from the contents already found in the rooms excavated, and from various other reasons, that the unexplored part will yield 150,000 tablets to be added to those already discovered. As the library was one of great renown, the chief glory of the temple in early Babylonia, the chief college for instruction in law and religion, which, as in all early systems, were inextricably bound together, and,

indeed, in all studies judged worthy of attention, it is evident, that no examination of the contents can be too careful. It is, in fact, hardly too much to say that if the unexplored parts should prove as rich in results as that already found, there will be no example in the world's history, not even in Egypt, of so complete a recovery of the records of an ancient civilization. . . .

"In the course of the present excavations a palace belonging to the pre-Sargonic period was uncovered beneath an accumulation of seventy feet of rubbish on the southwestern side of the Shatt-en-Nil, dividing Nippur in two parts. Professor Hilprecht himself, having never been doubtful as to the actual site of the temple library at Nippur since his first visit to Babylonia in 1889, considers the discovery of this large building, with 600 feet frontage, which will probably turn out to be the palace of the early priest-kings of Nippur, as the most important result of this year's campaign. Already the few rooms excavated have given valuable results in the shape of pre-Sargonic tablets, of seal cylinders of the earliest type, and clay figurines of early date and great interest. The palace was very extensive, and at least two stories high. . . .

"Beyond doubt the greatest success of the year is that accomplished by the American expedition. The importance of the discovery of the pre-Sargonic palace and of the library of so famous a temple as that of Nippur was at once recognized. The systematic and thorough examination which it is hoped will be made next year promises to give a full and detailed picture of life in what the author of the Book of Genesis regarded as one of the oldest cities in the world, and one whose origin, even in his time, was attributed to the famous hunter whose name has become mythical. The results of the explorations will probably show that Nippur was as important in the fifth millennium before Christ as it was in the third; that it anticipated the civilization and the period when Babylon took the lead by at least two thousand years, and that at this early period the human race in Babylonia had acquired arts and knowledge which hitherto have only been attributed to a much later period.

* * *

How does this agree with the claim of Evolutionists that Adam was but one remove from the highest type of monkey, and too ignorant at first to wear clothing? On the contrary, how these evidences of intelligence amongst the ancients corroborate the old Bible, at which "higher criticism," falsely so called sneers! The Bible's declaration is that the first man was *up*, high up in intelligence, in the very image of God, and that he fell *from* that high estate because of sin. The fact is that during the 1656 years to the flood, the *fall*, the depravity of mankind, was very great; and that in Abraham's day, about 400 years later, the race was still further enervated, through climatic and other influences, as shown by the fact that Arphaxad, born two years after the flood, lived 438 years, while his children, during those four centuries, gradually declined in vitality and years, so that Terah, Abraham's father, died at two-hundred-five: and it is reasonable to presume that the mental vigor suffered equally with the physical. And yet the Scriptures show us Abraham, every way a noble specimen of humanity: and now ancient Nippur's libraries, then in process of formation, show us that a high degree of intelligence was then prevalent among the sons of Ham, as well as in the family of Shem.

But we caution all to beware of the *dates* ascribed to these ancient tablets, cities, etc.; for they are only scientific guesses: and since they are contradictory to Bible chronology, we know that they are unreliable. The worldly-wise, depressing the Bible as unscientific, and relying on their own "findings," endeavor to reconcile such archaeological testimonies with their previous errors instead of with the Bible. And scientists, misled into reckoning on "evolution" lines, have given to human history an age much beyond that declared in God's Word, which we accept as the only authority;—some of them going to more absurd extremes than others.

Blessed is the man who putteth his trust in the Lord and in his Word.

MANNA FOR THE FAMISHING OF INDIA

"The strange appearance of manna on the stems of the bamboo, was reported last March by the divisional forest officer, Chanda, Central Provinces, and notices of this phenomenon have been published in the local papers. The bamboo forests of Chanda consist of *Dendrocalamus strictus*, the male bamboo, a bushy plant from twenty to thirty feet in height, and affecting the cooler northerly and westerly slopes of Central and Southern India. This is said to be the first time in the history of these forests that a sweet and gummy substance has been known to exude from the trees. The gum has been exuding in some abundance, and it has been found very

palatable to the natives in the neighborhood, who have been consuming it as a food. The occurrence of the manna at this season is all the more remarkable, since the greatest famine India has known is this year visiting the country, and the districts where the scarcity is most felt are in the Central Provinces."—*Nature*.

WHAT WILL BECOME OF PROTESTANTISM IN JAPAN

"The *Japan Advertiser* has it upon the best of authority that one of the American mission boards is next month to withdraw from Japan its only remaining representative, and is to leave its work, henceforth, entirely in the hands of the Japanese, who have become interested in it. 'The latter (says our contemporary) are to have the use of the buildings and property (of no inconsiderable value), and some pecuniary aid will continue to be granted them, but the work itself will be practically free from foreign guidance.'"

A literary man, residing in Japan, Mr. Penman, makes comment on the above as follows:—

"This extract shows clearly the failure of Protestant Christianity in this country; for it is failure, and not large-hearted trust in the Japanese Protestant, that has caused this retreat. There are at present independent Protestant churches in Japan; but, in the first place, their Christianity has become so vague that it can hardly be called Christianity at all; and, in the second place, they are not making headway. A Japanese journalist, who relates his experiences in the columns of the *Kirisuto Tokyo Shimbun*, says that he examined the roll of one of these churches some time ago, and found out of a total membership of 323 no less than 86 persons were marked absent. He was informed that out of the remainder, 123 persons were Christian only in name, so that the work of the church had to be carried on by a little over 100 converts; and even out of these the average attendance at church meetings did not exceed 77. And the last report of the *Kumiai* (Independent Japanese churches—Protestant, of course,) shows that the number of self-supporting churches has fallen from 40 to 34, and, if the truth must be told there are not more than 24 or 25 of these that are self-supporting in reality.

"Not only are the 'Independent' churches thus going backward in point of numbers, they are, as I have just hinted, going woefully backward in regard to doctrine as well. I shall give a concrete example of what I mean. The Doshisha is a fine educational institution established by a Japanese Protestant who was, I believe, a sincere and able Christian. It was run for a number of years as a religious establishment in connection with the American Mission Board, and of course the trustees were all Christians of good standing, and generally clergymen. For some time they were Christians, but changes—mental and otherwise—occur rapidly in Japan, and only last year they had progressed so far toward Agnosticism that a breach with the American Mission Board occurred. I visited personally some of the leaders of the movement, and they told me that they certainly did not believe in the divinity of Christ; in fact, I failed to discover any one point of Christian belief that they did believe in. . . . Ten years ago Protestantism had a very good outlook in Japan, and many highly educated Japanese embraced it. But it took the 'advanced thinkers' among the converts only a year or two to out-Spencer Spencer, and today the vernacular Protestantism of Japan is getting on as best it can without any burning or shining light whatsoever. The burning and shining lights—in other words, the leading native ecclesiastics—became all of them 'philosophers,' and, while still professing to be Christians, attempted to call in German and other materialism to their aid. The English and American missionary bodies to which they belonged, naturally objected. The American Episcopal church of Japan fell foul of Dr. Sagiura, a Japanese minister (who has had, by the way, the advantage of an excellent American education), who denied the miraculous birth of Christ. Many of the leading Japanese clergymen resigned, and, in another direction, the organ of the Lutheran Church in Japan, a magazine which maintained that the Bible is a revelation, was discontinued because 'no suitable editor could be found who was prepared to defend such a theory.'"

Mr. Penman quotes a Japanese writer in a Tokyo magazine as follows:

"Can it be said that our Christian philosophy has been more successful than our preaching of morality? I trow not. After attempting to call in German materialism to the aid of Christianity with poor results, our philosophers fell back on the ultra-idealism of Brahmanism and Buddhism, with the outcome that they have gradually explained away the personality of the Christian God, reducing him to a mere controlling

force, or to a fixed law called *Temmei*. What possibility is there of building a system of morality on belief in the existence of such an entity as this? . . . If we ask what amount of real faith in Christianity there exists in this country, the answer must be discouraging. Christians dispute about opinions and discuss this doctrine and that, but beneath it all, it seems to me, there is little real belief. Christianity, in coming to us, has had the advantage of being associated with a system of civilization whose merits are acknowledged. It has been represented as part and parcel of that civilization, and hence has in the past received a certain amount of prestige that it is no longer likely to retain. The feeling of the nation in reference to the various elements composing what is called Western civilization has changed, and hence Christianity is no longer likely to be regarded as an inseparable part of that civilization. If things proceed thus, in thirty years Christianity in Japan will be effaced."

We cannot vouch for the correctness of these pessimistic views of the Protestant situation in Japan: doubtless honest people view these things through various spectacles. We do know, however, that Mr. Penman's picture corresponds well with what we see right here at home—that the colleges and theological seminaries of this so-called Christian land are hot beds of infidelity called "advanced thought," "higher criticism," "Evolution," etc. We cannot wonder, then, that the same spirit has reached Japanese institutions; nor can we wonder that the Japanese, less bound to the Bible by traditions of the past, should be more free to speak and act out of their unbelief—especially when popularity, the masses of the people, etc., would all favor such a course.

Surely the shaking and sifting will be thorough (Heb. 12:26); for it is the Lord that is back of it, wishing to thoroughly separate the little handful of wheat from the vast quantity of tares constituting nominal "Christendom," "Babylon." We may be sure, however, that not one grain of the true wheat will be neglected by the great Reaper—Matt. 24:24

SEEKING 2,000,000 HEADS OF WHEAT AND TARES FOR "METHODISM'S BIG FLOCK"

The public press has the following announcement

"Methodists Seeking 2,000,000 Converts—The Twentieth Century Movement has Opened Offices in Chicago—200 000 Workers Enlisted—Greatest Harvest of the Year's Revival Expected in the Large Cities

"CHICAGO, Sept. 8.—The twentieth century movement of the Methodist Episcopal church to save 2,000,000 souls is well under way.

"Bishop James M. Thoburn proposed the plan at the General Conference of the church in May. It has been the chief topic at the ministers' meetings. The order has gone to the Bishops and will be handed down to each member of the church. Briefly, the scheme is to have 200,000 members each pledge themselves to bring ten converts into the church before Dec. 31, 1901. The Methodist church is so thoroughly organized that the movement will be carried out without a hitch throughout the country.

"W. W. Cooper, secretary of the movement, has opened an office in the Methodist Church block in Chicago.

"A large part of the work ought to be done in the big cities," says Mr. Cooper. "This is the beginning of a revival that will extend through the first half of the coming century. Every organization connected with the church will be utilized to further this grand plan. There is much dead timber in the church, which, it is hoped, will respond to this invitation to extend the influence of Christ.

"It is quite true that church membership is not increasing in ratio to the census, so the Methodist church has decided to start a great agitation."

Last year witnessed a decrease in Methodist numbers, and this and other offsets are proposed. No doubt results will follow. It is as much a part of this harvest work to gather the tares into "bundles" and "bind" them, as it is to gather the "wheat" into the light and liberty wherewith Christ makes free and safe in his "garner." Should any ripe "wheat" be gathered into these "bundles," we may surely expect them to be gathered out again, speedily; for "The Lord knoweth them that are his," and is calling in a voice which all his true ones will hear and recognize and obey, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins and receive not of her plagues!"—2 Cor. 6:17; Rev. 18:4.

No doubt this "Twentieth Century Movement" will spread among all denominations, and favor the "Union" movement. No doubt also it will lead to an increased bitterness against present truth and all who are loyal to it as the true gospel. It would not surprise us if this led to persecution, for no doubt many now, like Saul of Tarsus, will verily think that in persecuting the truth and its servants they are doing God service.

REV. E. A. TORREY'S ARRAIGNMENT

At the convention of Christian workers, Chicago, Sept. 19, Rev. Torrey, as reported by the *Chicago Evening Post*, said: "Unbelief is rampant. Many regard it as a mark of intellectual superiority to reject the Bible, and even faith in God and immortality. It is about the only mark of superiority many possess, and perhaps that is the reason they cling to it so tenaciously. Many of us who are professedly orthodox ministers are infidels. Worldliness is rampant among church members. Many church members are just as eager as any in the rush to get rich. They use the methods of the world in the accumulation of wealth, and they hold just as fast to it as any, when they have it. Many do not believe in the whole Bible. The book of Genesis is a myth; Jonah is an allegory; and even the miracles of the Son of God are questioned. The doctrine of prayer is old-fashioned, and the doctrine of the holy Spirit is sneered at. Conversion is unnecessary, and hell is no longer believed in. Then look at the fads and errors that have sprung up out of this loss of faith. . . . Praylessness abounds among church members on every hand. Many Christians spend twice as much time every day wallowing in the mire of the daily papers as they do bathing in the cleansing waves of God's holy Word."

ZIONISM PROSPERING SLOWLY

While the last Zionist Congress (London, August) was a success as respects numbers and enthusiasm, it revealed no progress on the part of its leaders in the accomplishment of its aims, or steps thereto. The *London Spectator* says of it:

"The main arguments of the speakers are the horrible position of the Jews in countries where, as in Roumania, they are actively persecuted, and the benefit they may be to Europe, as the vanguard of an army of intelligence for penetrating Asia. Both are sound arguments, but some hotter impulse than either would seem to be required before the majority of Jews will quit countries to which they are accustomed, for a country which has for ages been represented to them as desolate beyond experience. The English Jews in particular are too comfortable to move; the Jews in professions on the Continent fear to be declared foreigners; and the poor majority have no means of influencing the Turkish government, which is not favorable to the movement. Some day or other, when the Seraglio is in acute want of money, a great experiment will be tried; but meanwhile Zionism is rather the highly interesting aspiration of a great race, than a practical design for the restoration of the Jews to their own land."

Addressing the Congress and speaking on the "General Position of the Jew," Dr. Max Nordau is reported to have said:

"Since they began to review the position of the Jew among the nations, during the sittings of the Congress, the drama had developed before their eyes, and every act was progressively heartrending. The book of Job must be taken to be the picture of the Jewish position. Anti-Semitism was growing more virulent. The press of Europe bore testimony to Jews being cast in prison for a crime to none so revolting as to the Jew. In Prussia these ridiculous charges had received their quietus, and the energetic action of the government deserved the best thanks of Jewry."

"Why are we thus treated? Are we not as human as our neighbors? Are we not as innocent? Is our desire to support our wives and children less laudable in us than in them? There have been other religious persecutions, but none so gruesome."

"One historical parallel occurred to his mind. In 1729-31 all the Protestants in Salsburg, Austria, were expelled from their homes on account of religious intolerance. They took all necessary comforts with them. Church dignitaries offered them valedictory blessings, and even accompanied them some distance towards their new land. King Frederick William I. of Prussia offered them a home, and their new neighbors vied with each other in the heartiness of their greeting. But the poor 270,000 Jews exiled from Roumania carry nought but the rags on their backs; for their sick there was no medical consolation; and their future was as uncertain as their past was dark. They are accompanied on their rough road with suspicion and hatred; are met with repulses and rebuffs, and with the cry, ever growing sterner, 'Go further, further.'"

ARE THE HEATHENS SAVED OR LOST?

Inconsistency seems to be stamped on every doctrine and practice of "orthodox" Churchianity. For instance, point out to them that only one-fifth of the world's population make the slightest claim to be Christians, in the most formal sense, and that therefore the four-fifths who are professedly heathen can in no sense be *saved in Christ*, and that unless there be hope for them in the future, by an awakening from death to "a resurrection by judgment," there can be no other hope; and

they will at once reply, Oh, no! we believe and teach that the heathen can be *saved* and go to heaven if they believe in Mohammed or Buddha or Confucius or some other divinity, if they do the best they know how.

You ask them, Will not *heaven* then be a place of common rather than choice spirits, with such a preponderance of heathen? and, What advantage then have Christians? and they are sorely perplexed, but generally not sufficiently perplexed to start a fresh investigation of the divine Word to see where the difficulty lies. When we further ask, Why the expenditure of millions of dollars annually, and the sacrifice of many lives of missionaries, if the heathen are *saved* anyway? they are confused at their own inconsistency. And if we then inquire, Do you not claim that the *hearing* of the Gospel, with the natural ear, brings condemnation to eternal torment if it be rejected? And do you not admit that the vast majority of those who thus hear do reject the Gospel? And putting this part of your faith with the other, do you not admit that one or the other must be wrong, or else that missionary effort is keeping millions of heathen people *out of heaven*?—Then they are confused and want (not to search for the truth but) to change the subject and stop thinking lest they lose their "faith." Poor things, they hold fast to their nonsensical delusions, calling them *faith*!

But now, in line with the above, we have another question to propound to so-called Orthodoxy, based on the following clipping from the daily press:

"POPULATION ANNIHILATED

"Five Thousand Chinese Driven into the Amur River, Where They Perished Miserably—Shot if They Attempted to Land

"LONDON, Sept. 21.—'Authentic accounts have been received here,' says the Moscow correspondent of the *Standard*, 'of a horrible massacre at Blagovestchensk, which was undoubtedly carried out under direct orders from the Russian authorities, and which then let loose the tide of slaughter through Amur.'

"The entire Chinese population of 5,000 souls was escorted out of town to a spot five miles up the Amur, and then, being led in batches of a few hundred to the river bank, were ordered to cross over to the Chinese side. No boats were provided and the river is a mile wide. The Chinese were flung alive into the stream and were stabbed or shot at the least resistance, while Russian volunteers, who lined the bank, clubbed or shot any who attempted to land. Not one escaped alive. The river bank for miles was strewn with corpses."

It is the claim of certain religious journals, and of many ministers of the gospel, that the present war in China for the protection of ministers and missions is a holy war in the interest of Christianity and its civilization, as against heathenism and its civilization. Now our question is whether this war is adding to the population of heaven or of hell, according to "orthodoxy?" It is surely a very important and proper question from their standpoint. Let us see; the succoring of the ministers and missionaries (every one of whom no doubt would have been passported to heaven by his own denomination) has cost the lives of probably 50,000 persons thus far, about 5,000 of the number being soldiers representing Christendom (as the Russians of the above clipping). Now did the entire 50,000 go to heaven?—the heathen because they did not know of Christ and the soldiers of "Christendom" because they were "soldiers of the cross?" If so, then the war already has *saved* 50,000 and should be prosecuted vigorously.

If our question be answered negatively—that the heathen 45,000 went to torment, and the "Christian" 5,000, being no more "saints" than the heathen, went to the same awful fate, then another question would be in order, namely: Would it not have been more Christ-like for the few rescued ministers and missionaries to have taken death as martyrs, in their faith of an immediate entrance to heaven; and to have allowed the 50,000 thus far slain in the war, to escape the *torture* for a few years more at least? How inconsistent "orthodoxy" is in its every proposition respecting the very subject it professes to know all about; *viz.*, the divine plan of salvation!

But how consistent the Bible teaching on these subjects. —(1) That only consecrated believers in the atonement are Christians—"saints." (2) That the vast majority of those killed on both sides were merely "children of this world," and not to be reckoned among the "children of God," whose trial for "glory, honor and immortality" is *now* in progress. (3) That the hour is coming in the which not only these, but "all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man and come forth," the masses "unto [i. e., to have an opportunity for] a resurrection [raising fully out of death, in perfect and everlasting conditions] by judgments,"* dis-

* The word in this text (John 5:29) rendered "damnation" is very improperly translated. It should be "judgment," as in the *Revised Version*, and in verses 22, 27 and 30 of this same chapter and many other places in the Scriptures where this word *krisis* occurs.

ciplines, corrections in righteousness, which will prevail toward all men during the Millennium.

CAN RESTITUTION CHANGE THE ETHIOPIAN'S SKIN?

The following, from the *New York World*, is the third we have seen reported. These suggest and illustrate the process of restitution soon due. The item reads:

"From Black to White He Slowly Turned"

"PARKERSBURG, W. Va., Sept. 8.—It has fallen to the lot of the Rev. William H. Draper, pastor of the Logan Memorial church, of Washington Conference, A. M. E. church, of this town, to give a living affirmative answer to the famous Biblical question, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots?" Though, once as black as charcoal, the Rev. Mr. Draper is now white. His people say that his color was changed in answer to prayer. Many years ago Draper was employed by a fair-skinned man, and he was often heard to remark that if he could only be white like his employer, he would be happy. While in the white man's service Draper 'experienced' religion.

"From that day forward he prayed constantly and fer-

vently that he might become white. Thirty years ago his prayer began to be answered. He first experienced a prickling sensation on his face, and upon close investigation found a number of small white spots scarcely larger than the point of a pin. He became alarmed, thinking he had some peculiar disease but he did not suffer, and aside from the prickling sensation felt nothing unusual. Gradually the white spots became larger and extended themselves, until now, after the change has been in progress for over thirty years, Draper has not a single dark spot on his body.

"Many years ago, before this strange metamorphosis took place, Mr. Draper was in charge of the same church he has now. He was popular with his flock and his departure was a source of great regret. When he recently returned to Parkersburg there was great rejoicing among the churchmen because their favorite pastor was coming back. When, however, Draper appeared in the pulpit the first Sunday, not one of the congregation recognized him. In fact, it was all he could do to convince them that he, a white man, was the same old black preacher they had years before."

DIVINE CARE FOR THE LOST

LUKE 15:1-10.—OCT. 21.

"There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

Lost, as used in connection with mankind, has quite a different meaning in the Bible from that commonly given it in modern theology. The latter uses the term "lost" in connection with reprobates, for whom there is no hope; it implies, according to "orthodoxy," hopeless, endless, eternal torment. But from the Scriptural standpoint the word "lost" is used in an almost opposite sense, as will be noted in the lesson before us.

Our Lord, holy in word and in conduct, naturally would draw to himself especially the holiness people of his day, and these were the Pharisees, amongst whom, however, were many whose holiness was of a hypocritical character—delighting in outward show rather than in purity and holiness of heart. Recent lessons showed us our Lord the guest and companion of prominent Pharisees, and how he improved the opportunity to preach the gospel to them as well as to others. But the Pharisees, accustomed to thinking of themselves as the holier class of the Jews, had gradually separated themselves from the lower elements of that people, so that in our Lord's time the two classes mingled very little; the Pharisees refusing to acknowledge the others as brethren and fellow-heirs of the divine promises. Consequently, when they perceived that the lower classes of the Jews were interested in Jesus' teachings, and that Jesus did not hold himself aloof from them, but mingled with and taught them just the same as others, they wondered, and this inclined them to repudiate Jesus, whom they would have been glad to have had as one of their number if he had been willing to be known as a Pharisee and to conform to their customs. It was to correct the wrong ideas of these Pharisees that Jesus gave five parables, which we are about to consider—two of them in this lesson.

The parable of the true shepherd who, loving his sheep and caring for them, left the ninety and nine well cared for by under-shepherds in the wilds (not in a desert) and went after the one lost sheep until he found it, gives us an illustration of the divine care. Possibly our Lord meant no further lesson than this to be taken from his words; but if we shall suppose that the parable was intended to be applied in its varied particulars, and to illustrate features of the divine plan of salvation, we would be obliged to suppose that the one sheep that was lost represented Adam and the human family, and that the ninety and nine never lost, but remaining under the shepherd's care, were the angels and other spirit beings, who never wandered into sin and away from God; and who always have been under his supervision and care. In this view the shepherd going after the straying sheep would represent our Lord Jesus, leaving the glory which he had with the Father before the world was, and coming into human conditions in the interest of mankind.

To take any other detailed view of the parable than this would seem inconsistent; as, for instance, to suppose that the lost sheep represented the degraded element of humanity, and ninety-nine sheep a holiness class, would be inconsistent in two ways: (1) "There is none righteous, no, not one," is the Scriptural declaration; and again, as the prophet has declared, "we all like sheep have gone astray." (Rom. 3:10; Isa. 53:6) (2) Even if it should be claimed that the ninety-nine represented some who are relatively whole, tho not actually so, the illustration would be inapt; because it will not be questioned

that only a small minority—one in ten thousand, or one in a hundred thousand of earth's sixteen hundred millions, is even in a condition of reckoned and relative harmony with Jehovah, the Great Shepherd.

Viewing the one sheep as representing the whole of humanity, fallen in Adam and straying far from paths of righteousness, and viewing Jesus as the Good Shepherd, the representative of the Father, the Great Shepherd (Psa. 23:1), we see that the work of going after the lost sheep began at our Lord's first advent. We see the cost to our Saviour incidental to his start for the recovery of the sheep, but we do not yet see the sheep recovered; for in no sense of the word is mankind brought back into harmony with God. We do, however, see that during this Gospel age God is selecting from humanity an elect church, to be the body of Christ—members of the Good Shepherd, under Jesus as the Head; and we see that it is costing every member of the body something to prepare to join in this work of seeking the lost sheep—humanity in general—during the Millennial age.

Already the sheep is found, in the sense of being located; indeed, in that sense of the word it was not lost. But as it was lost, in the sense of having wandered from God into sin and degradation, in the same sense of the word it must be recovered or brought back, by processes of *restitution* (Acts 3:19-21) out of degradation, out of the mire of sin, and the horrible pit of iniquity and death. It will require the entire Millennial age to bring back the sheep in the full, perfect sense of the parable; but meanwhile our Lord assures us that every step in this great plan for human salvation is viewed with interest by the heavenly host, the sheep who strayed not from the Father's fold; and the figure changing a little in our Lord's explanation, and no longer represented by one sheep, but by many (even as the human family, tho originally one, is now many), he declares that there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth—that returns to the fold, to harmony with God.

Those now returning to harmony with God are accepted in the Beloved, and justified freely from all things by the grace that was in him, and are, in the language of the Apostle, "returning to the Shepherd and Caretaker of their souls" (1 Pet. 2:25); and called to be co-laborers with the Good Shepherd, as members of his "body."

In the case of Father Adam, the one original straying sheep, as in the case of many of his posterity, the lost condition is not the desirable one—far rather would he and many others have gone back again to the fold from which he strayed; but in the degradation and mire of sin, they became so degraded and helpless that it was impossible for them to *return* in their own strength by the way in which they went. They needed a Savior—one able to save them unto the uttermost—able to recover them fully from all condemnation of sin, and to bring them back completely into the fold of God; and just such an one the heavenly Father has provided in our Lord Jesus: "He is able to save unto the uttermost all who come unto the Father through him."

True, there will be a class, as the Scriptures clearly show, who, after having received at the Lord's hands all the blessings and opportunities which his love has provided for their recovery, will still persist in wilfulness—self-will, and thus

spurn the Good Shepherd's proffered assistance. These, in the Scriptures, are said to "sin wilfully after they have come to a knowledge of the truth;" for such, the Apostle declares, there remains no longer an interest in the great sacrifice, and "it is impossible to renew" or recover them. Respecting the course of such it is written, "There is a sin unto death; I do not say that ye should pray for it." Whoever thus sins wilfully and persistently puts himself beyond the reach of the Good Shepherd, and dies the second death, and thus ceases to have any part or lot in the divine plan. (Heb. 6:4-6; 1 John 5:16) It was not for the "goat" class that the Good Shepherd gave his life, and seeks in the desert; nor for the "wolves;" but merely for those who retain something at least of the "sheep" nature, despite their degradation in sin. Adam was a "sheep," or, as the Scriptures declare, a "son of God" (Luke 3:38); and while his transgression was a wilful one, in some respects, we have no reason to suppose that it was more than a *wandering* of the "sheep" from the fold, into ways of self-will: it did not mean a change of nature from a sheep disposition to that of a goat or a wolf. It did not mean that Adam preferred to be a "child of the devil."

Had Adam at heart become intelligently and wilfully an enemy of God and of righteousness we cannot suppose that the all-wise Shepherd would have sent his Son after him as a "sheep." True, many of the children of Adam today have attained marked characteristics of goat nature, and, as the Apostle declares, are "enemies of God through wicked works." (Col. 1:21) Nevertheless, the Apostle also explains that many of these are in this condition, not wilfully, but because they have been deceived by Satan into putting light for darkness and darkness for light—the eyes of their understanding have been deceived. He explained that the "god of this world [Satan] hath blinded the minds of them that believe not" lest they should see the glorious light of truth. (2 Cor. 4:4) Many of these, then, who through association with the adversary have become goat-like in many respects, still have something of the sheep nature, which, under proper enlightenment, would assert itself and be glad to have the Good Shepherd restore them fully to divine favor and the fold.

From this standpoint, which we believe is the true one, and the only one in harmony with the various features of the parable, we perceive that God takes no account whatever of those who will go into the second death; they will have no existence whatever, so far as God and his plan are concerned, from the moment they lose the sheep nature. And the one sheep which our Lord will recover during restitution times, and by the close of the Millennium bring fully back into the fold of God, will be *the human family* as God has recognized it from the first; *viz.*, those created in God's image and likeness, and who never fully lose that image and likeness, and in whom his image and likeness will be revived and restored during the Millennium. The lost sheep, which originally was represented in one (Adam and Eve) in its recovery will be represented by hundreds of millions of the redeemed and restored of mankind.

THE LOST PIECE OF SILVER

The parable of the woman who, having a bracelet on which were hung ten pieces of silver—a marriage token—on losing one of these set diligently to work until she found it, is another representation of the same thought expressed foregoing. The woman's energy in seeking for the lost piece of silver is given by our Lord as an illustration of *divine energy* on behalf of *lost humanity*. And here again we see that the Scriptures use the word "lost" in reference to the original loss, and not at all in respect to those who will be destroyed in the second death—the latter are not said to be lost; they cease to exist; they are not reckoned in the divine calculations at all, and not worthy to be mentioned. They are not at all like the original that was lost, which God recognized and proposes to recover.

The ten pieces of silver were not only of value, but each had stamped upon it, as is the custom with coin, a certain image or likeness. And so with all the sons of God, angels, archangels, and we know not how many other orders of spirit

beings, were made in the *image and likeness* of God. It was one of these that was lost—the human one, man. And it was that which was lost that was sought, and ultimately found.

The houses of olden times, lighted mainly through the doorway, with the floors of earth (clay or sand or stones) more or less littered and defiled, well represented the condition of sin and degradation in which mankind was lost, as represented in father Adam, who bore the image and likeness of God, as represented in the lost coin of the parable. The parable does not represent the processes of restitution, but merely the original loss and the ultimate recovery of the *same thing that was lost*, and the energy put forth to this end. The lighting of the candle and the sweeping diligently represent the work of God through the Christ, which will be accomplished by the end of the Millennial age, when that which was lost and sought for, will have been fully recovered.

The restored race, when returned to the heavenly Father at the close of the Millennial age will, each and all, be as perfect in his image and likeness as was Adam in his creation, with the added benefits of larger knowledge and fuller appreciation of the divine One, whose likeness they will bear. No account is taken in this parable, either, of the increase in the numbers of the human family, nor of those members of Adam's posterity who, by reason of wilful sin (the love of sin more than righteousness) will be "destroyed from amongst the people." (Acts 3:23) They have no standing in the Father's sight; indeed, the Father takes no cognizance of any except that which was lost, and that which will ultimately be restored to him by his faithful representative, Christ, who seeks and finds.

The great time of rejoicing, both in heaven and in earth, will come at the close of the Millennial age, when all things in heaven and in earth will be heard praising Him that sitteth upon the throne, and the Lamb; but now, in advance of the complete rejoicing, our Lord assures us that all the heavenly host rejoices in every evidence of the accomplishment of the great work; rejoices over one sinner that repenteth—who fully turns from sin to harmony with God. And if the angels in heaven rejoice, so, in proportion as they are in harmony with God and the heavenly beings, will all who profess to be God's people on earth have rejoicing in the recovery of fellow-creatures out of the snare and blindness of sin and Satan.

This was the particular lesson which our Lord sought to impress upon the Pharisees—that instead of holding themselves aloof from, and feeling offended at, those who were hearing Jesus gladly, they should, if they were in harmony with God and the heavenly holy ones, have rejoiced to see any evidence of repentance and reformation; and should have been glad to assist back into harmony with God those who, as the Apostle expresses it, were "feeling after God, if haply they might find him."—Acts 17:27.

And this must be the attitude of all the Lord's people today: if they have not this sentiment of heart it is an evidence that they have not the spirit of the Lord. And to have such a feeling of loving interest in the recovery of others out of sin, and a disposition to assist them back to harmony with God, not only is an evidence of a condition of heart which is in harmony with God, but will be found to be an aid to such themselves, an assistance in making straight paths for their feet, that they themselves, under the Shepherd's care, may ultimately reach the fold in safety.

So then, let all of the Lord's dear people who have already been found by the Good Shepherd, and who have accepted his loving care and assistance back to God, cultivate more and more the spirit of sympathy for others, and of helpfulness and coöperation in the work in which the Good Shepherd is engaged—not yet in seeking for humanity as a whole, but now specially in rendering assistance to those whom the Lord is, in the present age, seeking out as the "first-fruits" of his work and victory—edifying one another, building one another up in the most holy faith, encouraging one another: helping one another to put on the wedding garment, and to be meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, as joint-heirs in the kingdom.—1 Thess. 5:11; Jude 20; Col. 1:12; Rom. 8:17

THE PRODIGAL'S RETURN

LUKE 15:11-24.—OCT. 28.

"I will arise and go to my father."

Having given in the foregoing parables of The Lost Sheep and The Lost Coin, an outline of God's general dealing with the human family, our Lord now gave a third parable as illustrating God's special dealings with the people of Israel. He wished not only that his hearers should have the general illustration of God's goodness and care for the recovery of the lost, but now he would give a special lesson that would bring the

matter close home to his hearers—both Pharisees and publicans—and show to all the real situation and the proper line of conduct for each to take.

It will be noticed in this connection that while our Lord was known to be friendly toward sinners, he was never known to condone sin. The friendship of the publicans was not gained through our Lord's falsifying matters to them and claiming

that they were not sinners; but on the contrary, by his declaring them to be sinners, by showing his sympathy and love, and that their case, so far from being a hopeless one, as the conduct of the Pharisees would imply, was hopeful, if they would but repent and turn to God. The "father" in the parable represents Jehovah God, and the "two sons" represent two classes in Israel, the elder son representing Moses and the prophets, and all who "sat in Moses' seat," as representatives of the law, with all who sought to conform their lives to its requirements, Pharisees, etc. The younger son represents the remainder of that people Israel—the class which was inclined to wilfulness and waywardness as respects the divine law.

These two classes, all Israel, were inheritors together of certain wonderful blessings and promises—the blessings being equally divided between them, but the promises remaining for those who would be faithful to the will of the Father. The elder son represented the class which, having respect to the promises, enjoyed the blessings at home with the Father, that is, in fellowship with God as his people. The younger son represented the class which ignored the promises, took its share of present blessings, and departing from God wandered afar from him, in sin and disregard of the law.

The latter class had anticipated much pleasure in the wayward course; but as a matter of fact found, as all transgressors do, that "the way of the transgressor is hard." And in this respect the sinner-class of Israel was no different from any other class of sinners at any other time living in violation of the known law, it is an attitude of want, of hunger, of dissatisfaction, discontent, it is a condition of slavery to sin and of receiving of sin's wages; in the present life, wages of unhappiness, melancholia, heart-aches as well as body-aches. The parable represents this son as thoroughly disgusted with his condition, resolving to return to his father's house—not expecting to be an inheritor of the great promises, the rights to which were admittedly forfeited, but merely hoping to have the privilege of being admitted to the house as a *servant*, not hoping to be received as a *son*.

Our Lord thus illustrates the condition of some of the publicans and sinners hovering about him and listening to his teachings, respecting whose reception and instruction the Pharisees were finding fault. Our Lord would have them see the attitude of the heavenly Father toward these returning ones, and in the parable pictured him as seeing the repentant prodigal a long way off, and as having compassion for him, and great willingness to receive him. How this must have touched the hearts of the publicans who heard—to think that God was willing to receive them back again, not to spurn them as the Pharisees did! Our Lord proceeds with the picture further, to show that the Father not only received the prodigal, but, beyond his expectations, received him as a son, not as a servant—providing for him a new robe of righteousness, and making for him a great feast of welcome.

Then, as illustrating the attitude of the complaining Pharisees, the elder brother is pictured in the parable as disappointed at the return of the prodigal brother. Thus our Lord revealed to them how different was their attitude of heart from that of the heavenly Father; and thus he gently reproved them. The parable shows the attitude of the Pharisees in declining to call the prodigal "brother," saying—"This *thy son*," while the view of the heavenly Father to the contrary is expressed in the words, "This *thy brother* was dead and is alive again."

The Pharisees and others of the Jewish nation who sought to keep the law—to be faithful to God's requirements, were, so far as that was concerned, in the right attitude; and up to that time and point were heirs of all that God had promised, and had to give; and had they been not only outwardly religious but religious in heart also, they would have been fully prepared to have received at our Lord's hands the great blessings of the kingdom privileges which being in a wrong attitude of heart, they despised and rejected and lost. This their loss is represented in the parable by their refusal to go in to the feast made by the Father, to which they were as welcome as the returned prodigal, and in which feast, had they been in a proper attitude of heart, they would have had a prominent place with the Father in bestowing the welcome on the returned one. But as they were not in the right attitude of heart to receive their repentant brethren, neither would they have been in the right attitude of heart to be the Lord's instruments of general blessing in his kingdom. He selects for joint-heirs with himself in the kingdom, not the self-righteous, who despise others, but such as are of an humble heart, and who, receiving divine mercies and favors as a grace, are filled with thankfulness, and having the spirit of humility and of harmony with the Father, rejoice to co-operate with him in all of his benevolent plans for the recovery of the lost.

To hitch this parable on to the general theme presented in the two preceding, we might view the prodigal son as representing, in a secondary sense, all the remainder of mankind outside of those few in Israel who were seeking to do the Father's will; and from this standpoint we can see that the feast of fat things provided for the sinners in Israel corresponds to the feast to be opened ultimately to the whole world of mankind under the kingdom (Isa. 25:6), that all may return to the Father's house and that all who thus return will be received of God through Christ, not as slave-servants, but as sons.

The two preceding parables make no reference to the human will in the matter of the recovery of the lost; but this parable makes the human will very prominent. It was the *will* of the elder son which for a time kept him in the Father's house; it was the *will* of the prodigal son that led him forth, his wilful going into the depths of degradation not being hindered by the Father. Likewise, it was his own *will* that led him to retrace his steps to the Father's house; and it was only the *will* of the elder son that hindered him from entering into all the joys of the festal occasion with which the parable closes.

This parable also ignores the second death, and the class that will ultimately be cut off therein. The son that was lost, and subsequently was found, was lost in his going away into sin, and not lost in eternal torment. He was found in his return to God. He was dead, so far as the Father was concerned, when he was away; but he was alive again when he willingly returned.

The lesson to the Pharisees, in this parable, like the others, was in respect to their proper duties toward their brethren, who in receiving Jesus were showing evidences of a return to God. Indeed, so far as we know, few, if any, of our Lord's disciples were of the religious class of that time, who claimed to sit in Moses' seat, and to be in every sense of the word the favorites of the Father in that covenanted nation. That the Pharisees did not profit greatly by the parable seems evident; few from that class were willing to abandon their position of vaunted superiority, and to acknowledge that in everything they were wholly dependent upon the Father's grace, and of themselves could do nothing.

Some parallel to those conditions which obtained in the end of the Jewish age might be found now in the end of the Gospel age, even as we have found that in every particular the Jewish people and their harvest time were a pattern or figure or illustration of the Gospel age and spiritual Israel. Amongst spiritual Israelites today, in our Lord's second presence, a message is going forth to the groaning creation, a message respecting the Father's love, and its lengths and breadths and heights and depths; a message respecting the ransom given by our Lord Jesus, that it was "a ransom for all," and that his death was "not only a propitiation for *our* sins [the church's but also for the sins of the *whole world*," a message that the whole world, thus redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, is to have full opportunity of returning to divine favor during the Millennial age, "the times of restitution of all things, spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began."

Now, how is this message received by nominal Christendom, as to some extent corresponding to the elder brother of the parable? Does it not appear that the message of restitution for a "groaning creation" (Rom. 8:22) is received in much the same manner that evidences of God's grace toward the Jewish prodigal were received? Does it not appear that many of our dear friends, whom we would have expected to rejoice to find the heavenly Father willing to receive back the repentant world, and that he has made full provision for their return to fellowship with himself through Jesus, and full preparation to let them all know of his grace in Christ,—does it not seem that this gracious message of "good will toward men," "good tidings of great joy to all people," should be to all Christians a gladsome message?

It surely should be such to all who have the Father's *Spirit*; to all who love their neighbor as themselves. But we know how bitterly the message is rejected by some who, to outward appearances, have long been favored of the Heavenly Father, and who are well versed in his law, and who have been seeking to keep close at home, in the sense of outward obedience to the laws of righteousness. What would their course of conduct in respect to his message of present truth imply? Would it not imply that outwardly they had been sons of God, in obedience to the laws of righteousness, but that they had at heart been far from him, even when with their lips they drew nigh unto him, and when they bent their knee in prayer to him?

Would it not seem that if they had the Father's spirit of love and kindness and generosity and justice and truth

they would be glad, yea, rejoice exceedingly to know that after the selection of the church of this present age to be the bride and joint-heir with Christ in the kingdom, the Heavenly Father had a great and wonderful plan of *restitution* for the world of mankind in general? If they had the Father's Spirit, if they had the spirit of him who left the Father's glory and humbled himself to our conditions, even unto death, to be a co-worker together with the Father in the great work shortly to be accomplished for the recovery of the lost, it certainly should fill the Lord's "brethren" with joy to know that it will be a part of their privilege as members of the body of Christ to join with him in this great work of

bringing back the lost sheep, of sweeping diligently and finding the lost coin, and, in every sense of the word, of welcoming back to the Father's house the lost brother.

It is not for us to judge the hearts of men; that is beyond our power; but the Lord seems to be using his truth in such a way that it shall become the discernor of the thoughts and intents of the hearts, and that, sharper than any two-edged sword, it shall separate, shall discover, shall manifest, who have the spirit of the Lord, and who have not his spirit. "If any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his."—Heb. 4:12.

AN INTERESTING QUESTION

HEB. 12:23.

THE SPIRITS OF JUST MEN MADE PERFECT

Question.—How should we understand the statement of Heb. 12:23, respecting "the spirits of just men made perfect?"

Answer.—To appreciate this we must take the statement in its connections: The Apostle is contrasting the introduction of the Law Covenant with the introduction of the New Covenant; and let us remember that altho the church is justified by the blood of Christ, which seals the New Covenant, nevertheless, the New Covenant itself is not considered as having gone into effect during this Gospel age; it is a covenant for the world of mankind, and the putting of it into effect brings the times of restitution of all things at the second advent. The church, altho justified by the sacrifices which sealed the New Covenant, is really accepted under the Abrahamic covenant—accepted as the Seed of Abraham—members of the body of Christ—through which Seed all the families of the earth are to be blessed under the New Covenant, sealed at Calvary, during the Millennium.

The Law Covenant, of which Moses was the Mediator, and which was given at Mount Sinai amid the thunderings and lightnings and voices, etc., was typical of the New Covenant of which Christ (Head and body) is the Mediator, and which is to be introduced to the world of mankind after the whole body of Christ has shed its blood and been completed and glorified.—Acts 3:22; Col. 1:24.

The Apostle draws a parallel between the marching of Israel from Egypt and the Red Sea, up to Mount Sinai, where, under the leadership of the priesthood, they came under the Law Covenant, and all who hope to become God's people, marching under the lead of Christ and the "royal priesthood" toward another mountain—to Mount Zion, the kingdom of God, the Millennial kingdom. Following under the banner of the antitypical Mediator, will come all of God's Israel, all who are willing to be delivered from the power of the antitypical Pharaoh, viz., Satan.

When we consider how the Israelites approached Mount Sinai as a host, and that they did not all get there at the same moment nor the same hour, nor even in the same day, we find the parallel of this in the fact that the Lord's people throughout this age have been gradually approaching this kingdom—not all at once, but one after another throughout the age. The last members of the royal priesthood are only getting close to the kingdom, Mount Zion, now; and are to be followed in turn by all the hosts who *will become* true Israelites during the Millennial age, when light and knowledge shall be freely granted.

With this picture before the mind, and reading the Apostle's words as translated in the *Diaglott*, we see a beauty in the expression: We have not approached the natural mountain with the terrors of the law, the smoke and the clouds and thick darkness and lightnings and voices of words that spoke condemnation and death to any who erred; but we are ap-

proaching, and all of the church throughout the age have been approaching, the glorious Mount Zion, the kingdom of God, the kingdom of blessing.

And what shall we find in this kingdom when we have fully reached it? We shall find the heavenly city, God's kingdom of power and great glory. We shall find ourselves introduced to a new company of brethren—the heavenly host; and we shall find our loved ones who have traveled with us in the narrow way, in that first general assembling of the church of the first-borns, whose names are written in heaven. There we shall find our heavenly Father, the great Judge of all; there we shall find the spirits, the new natures of the justified ones—fully perfected in the likeness of their Lord and Head—"We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." There we shall find in due time perfected human beings fully restored to the divine likeness in which father Adam was created; and there we shall find Jesus, who mediated the New Covenant; and there we shall ever appreciate the blood of sprinkling which cleansed us and presented us faultless before the Father in love.

But altho we are approaching these grand and glorious things, we are not to expect that they will all be ushered in in a peaceful manner; on the contrary, as the Apostle points out (verses 26, 27), there will be a correspondence between the great time of trouble, with which the Millennial age and its New Covenant for mankind will be ushered in, and the way in which the Law Covenant to the Jews was ushered in—only that the New Covenant will be ushered in on a much grander and antitypical plane. There will be a shaking here, as there was a shaking there; but instead of its being the physical earth that will shake, it will be the symbolical earth—society. And not alone the social structure, but also the heavens, or ecclesiastical structure, is to be shaken here. As the Apostle's words clearly intimate, the shaking will be a much more wonderful one than was its type, even as every antitype is much greater than its type. He explains that the shaking here is to be so thorough that it will shake everything that is shakeable, and that only the fixed, permanent, righteous things shall ultimately remain. And those things that shall be permitted to remain, he declares (verse 28) pertain to the kingdom of God, which is immovable, unshakable.

It is this kingdom toward which all of the Lord's people march throughout this Gospel age, that will then be fully attained amidst all that great shaking and confusion of the great day of trouble which is just before us. And as Moses went up into the quaking mountain, and was lost to the sight of the people below, so at, and in conjunction with these mighty manifestations of the time of trouble the entire church will be "caught up," gathered to the Lord, changed to his likeness—passing through the portals of death, though they shall not sleep, but be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.

ENCOURAGING WORDS FROM FAITHFUL WORKERS

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:—Some time ago Brother Woodworth witnessed my method of handing out the Volunteer TOWERS and was so well pleased with it that he made me promise to write to you about it. I don't consider it anything out of the ordinary, but for the sake of my promise I will give it to you.

With a bow and a smile I say, "Sample—WATCH TOWER;" or "Free sample WATCH TOWER." If any questions are asked, I say, "An unsectarian religious magazine." My reasons for this method are, I seek to interest them thus, or rather to arouse their curiosity in knowing what the paper is; rather giving them the impression that I am seeking subscribers. In this

way they will read with an unprejudiced mind—it does not arouse their antagonism my giving them the impression that you have something to refute the arguments they have just been listening to. If any know of the WATCH TOWER and do not care for it, they can refuse to take it, and thus one is saved for some one else. I think I am justified in giving the impression that I am seeking subscribers; if anyone becomes interested, he *will* become a subscriber, and it is for such that we specially labor. With much love, I am,

Yours in the best of bonds,

JOSEPH L. HOAGLAND.—Pennsylvania.