

ture of the permission of evil, the end of the first dispensation and the end of the permission of evil being alike in that they end in catastrophe.

(2) The race which was destroyed at the flood represented Adam's whole progeny; while the replenishing under Noah represents the new race which shall find life under the Life-giver, the Everlasting Father, our Lord and his bride.

(3) Noah and his family, therefore, do not represent those of the human family which will be carried over from this present evil world into the kingdom of heaven soon to be established on the earth. Rather he and his family with the ark represent the church. Lifted up above the whole earth, saved by the flood, they will be preserved from the terror of the trouble, and "when the trouble is overpast" will come down from heaven to bless and replenish the earth.

But it is in reference to the time features that I now write. From the day when Bible chronology was seen so explicitly, accounts of time in the Scriptures have always demanded their full measure of regard; and the account of the days of the year of the flood, given so particularly, have always been regarded as of importance. But as the forty days of rain and of the breaking up of the fountains of the great deep seem so clearly to correspond with the forty years of the present harvest, one has, perhaps naturally, looked for the other periods of the flood year to follow, in type, on into the establishment of the kingdom. But without result, for there seems to be a complete lack of Scripture corroboration of this thought. Now, I think that way is not the correct one, and that probably we should view the matter from this standpoint:—

(4) That the first dispensation covers the entire period of evil under present ruling powers, which last until October, 1914, A.D.; and that

(5) The year of trouble so remarkably detailed is a figure of the year of trouble, 1915, A.D., and that probably the details fit exactly to the events of this year.

If the kingdoms of this world are undermined, as many Scriptures and parallels indicate will be the case, when the restraining power of God is removed little will be needed to bring about their destruction. Probably the forty days will be ample for the overthrow and utter ruin. The remaining part of the 150 will serve to let anarchy have its raging and tossing whirlpool, and, to an extent, to exhaust itself. From that time the trouble will begin to abate, partly for lack of power, and partly because the horror and desolation is being felt. The raven may signify that even yet trouble is rampant. It found no need to return to the ark, while the gentle dove soon came back. But a little later the dove brings the olive leaf: there is capitulation, the trouble is fast dying down and peace is wanted. Soon the waters are dried up, and on the "first day of the first month" of a new and blessed year and dispensation the earth is ready to be blessed by those whom God has prepared.

No doubt most of these thoughts are old to you; but I wonder if you have connected the year of the flood with the year of trouble, and if you have whether you think this is the type. A little time ago one was almost precluded from seeing the above by reason of the thought that all the trouble would be over in October, A.D., 1914. Much love to you, as ever.

Your brother in the Lord,

J. HEMERY.

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VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER

THE "HELL CYCLE" STARTED

In "The Westminster," a Presbyterian journal, Philadelphia, Reverend H. H. Barstow predicts a return to "The Hell Cycle." He says:

"We ministers have easily caught the cue from the popular demand, and have fed the people the love of God and the beauty of holiness and the doctrines of sweetness and light—shall I say it?—ad nauseam."

He believes that the signs of the times indicate that "the pendulum has touched its limit in that direction; that the cycle of hell-fire—figurative, yes, but for that reason all the more awful and appalling—is due once more." Are we to understand the gentleman to mean that the preachers merely watch the popular sentiment that they may preach what will please the majority of the people? Does he mean that it was because of the popular demand which he mentions that he was preaching the love of God, the beauty of holiness, etc.? Evidently he has been preaching more of it than he believed, as is indicated by his nausea in connection with these teachings. His nausea is somewhat relieved now, and he feels a little more free to speak against the beauty of holiness and the love of God because he realizes that the "popular demand" is turning his way again and bids fair for another hell-fire cycle.

This is what we have feared for some time—that a great many preachers are merely endeavoring to find the popular demand, and are proportionately careless respecting the will and Word of the living God. They have been telling the people of their dreams respecting politics, woman's rights, social fads, etc., and sending them off wholesale to a dreamy heaven quite contrary to the Word of God. The people are waking up to a realization of the fact that they have been fed ad nauseam something unsatisfying, and an increasingly large proportion of the intelligent, especially of the male sex, no longer attend such preaching. Reverend Barstow believes he has the secret, and that "popular demand" is moving toward a love for hell-fire for other people, and that if he gets in on the tidal wave soon enough it will score him a big success.

Perhaps the gentleman is mistaken. We believe he is, and that he will find it out before very long. In our opinion many people are getting awake, so that they begin to know the difference between dreams and realities, and are wanting something more substantial. Their craving is in line with the divine direction, "He that hath a dream let him tell a dream, but he that hath my Word let him speak my Word."—Jer. 23:28.

After calling attention to the wave of sentiment in favor of pure politics that is sweeping over the country and the

general arousing of the public conscience on the subject of graft, the gentleman says:

"This is our revival, the answer to our prayers. And this is the cause and heart of it. What is true in the civic sphere is just as true in the spiritual, and the two are not to be separated. I firmly believe that the hearts and consciences of the people are ready for the preaching of judgment on sin, without dilution or reservation, given with the clear note of Christ to the Pharisees and laid hot upon life for this world and the future: 'How can ye escape the damnation of hell?' Let love glow undimmed—but let justice flame. The fear of the Lord is still the beginning of wisdom; and some will never learn wisdom unless fear be stirred. The Felixes of the home, the mart and the throne need to tremble at the message of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come, and we all have them in our congregations. Let the hell-fire cycle strike once more."

So this is the revival that has come in answer to prayers—not a revival of the Lord's saints to renewed zeal in self-sacrifice on behalf of the divine Word and plan, nor a conversion of sinners to repentance and reformation of life and consecration to God, but merely the arousing of the spirit of righteous indignation against trusts and boodlers—an indignation which is usually fraught with anger, malice, hatred, strife, etc. This is what one minister at least has been preaching for, and is now rejoicing that his prayers have been heard. It is well that he states himself so exactly: on our part we see the uncovering of rotteness in political and financial circles highly esteemed amongst men, and to us it reads that we are in the day that the Lord referred to when he said that whatsoever things were hidden would be made manifest.

This manifestation of the hidden corruption of the hearts of the respectable, the wealthy, the influential, is not, so far as we know, leading others to paths of righteousness, but rather exciting their bitterness and resentment—that others have had the advantage of greater opportunities for the accumulation of vast wealth by unscrupulous means, and chagrin on their part that the opportunity had not been their own, and the determination that if they cannot at some time in the future find a prospect for accumulating vast riches in some such manner they will be ready to wreck the interests of those who have fared better. From our standpoint this uncovering of the weaknesses of human nature means loss of confidence in the rich and influential generally, and spells eventually the hatred which ere long will fulfil the prediction, "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you."—James 5:1.

It strikes us as quite pharisaical on the part of the majority of mankind to make a great ado over the shortcomings of the rich, when in their own hearts the majority well know that the only reason they did not do likewise was that they did not have the opportunity. God forbid that we should say that there are no honest people in the world, but our experience with humanity leads us to the conclusion that the majority have their price—some higher and some lower. Experience, too, shows that those who decry cupidity in others are themselves frequently found wanting when tried in the balances. For instance, one of the most prominent of these life-insurance presidents went into office as a thorough reformer; he heartily reprobated the shortcomings of his predecessors. Do we not usually find it the same with politicians? The reformer of one election needs to be reformed at another election. The trouble is that the whole human family is weak and imperfect through the fall, and while they would do good evil is present with them, and the temptations which assail are more than their characters will stand. As for the stronger characters in the world, those moulded and fashioned by the power of divine truth, they are rarely put in such positions of honor and trust, being too much out of harmony with the world and its spirit to be chosen. Even the preachers are accused of wire-pulling in connection with their securing desirable charges and principal offices in their denominations.

Our Lord did not tolerate unrighteousness or injustice in any sense of the word, and his most scathing criticisms were hurled against the Pharisees because of their hypocrisy, because they pretended to be better than they really were. This gives us the thought that in the Lord's estimation honesty is one of the noblest traits of character, and that it would be more pleasing in his sight for his followers to acknowledge that the whole world is imperfect through the fall, and that all need the divine mercy, and to point each other forward to the glorious kingdom of righteousness which the Lord alone can establish, than that they should self-righteously point at the few evil-doers who had good opportunities, and attempt to justify the majority of the race as though they were perfect, sinless.

Let us watch and pray against the temptations which lie in our path: let us sympathize with the exposure of everything that is sinful; but let us not glory in the righteousness of the majority, who have not been found unfaithful because they have not been tempted in any considerable measure. Let us sympathize with the stopping of wrong doings while sympathizing also with the wrong doer and with the whole world in its depravity. Let us remember that the world has not the advantage of the higher ambitions and the new nature which are possessed by the Lord's consecrated followers and let us have sympathy with them, while hoping and waiting and praying, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven."

EVOLUTION IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM

The world, perhaps, holds no other such single collection of scientific curiosities as can be found in the British Museum. Gallery after gallery, cabinet after cabinet, and mile after mile of shelving, exhibit a bewildering array of beasts, birds, fishes and moving creatures of every kind, stuffed and preserved, along with prehistoric relics, fossil forms and all the various specimens of organic life.

Here would be the place of all others for the scientific skeptic of the day to trace the lineage of which he boasts, and to demonstrate his descent from the prehistoric monkey. But, unfortunately, the men who have the greatest opportunities do not always make the best improvement of them; and a large proportion of the talk about scientific infidelity comes from men who know nothing of science. The editor of the "New York Evangelist" publishes the following article containing the testimony from Mr. Etheridge, who stood at the head of the Natural Science department of the British Museum:

"Our friend and fellow-traveler in Palestine, Prof. George E. Post, is, as our readers are aware, a man of extensive attainments and wide and acute observation of facts and phenomena—in short, a man of science in the true sense. On the alert for whatever is worthy of study, it was a matter of course that while recently in London in quest of instruments and apparatus for the Medical College at Beirut, he should spend some portion of his time in the British Museum—that immense storehouse of all that remains to us of the arts, the learning and life-conditions of the ages. Treated with the utmost courtesy by the large circle of noted men and scholars, Dr. Post very naturally, in the course of his visits to this great center of attraction, came in contact with Mr. Etheridge, than whom no one is more able to interpret and sum up whatever is there to be seen. Indeed, he had a special errand with him, and it thus fell out, in common phrase in a good sense, that the recognized British expert in all these matters was 'interviewed' by our American missionary and man of science as to his conclusions, his summing up of the bearing of the entire deposit there collected in the department of Natural History, and set in order as nowhere else in the world. And thanks to a correspondent, a former colleague of Dr. Post, we have here an account of Mr. Etheridge's conclusions. They are given only in summary, but are clear and satisfactory as to what may be learned from a full study of the remains of all pre-historic periods. Their decisive bearing on the controversies of the day will be apparent to all. It is seldom that so much that is significant and entitled to great, even conclusive weight, is embraced in the same space:

" 'London, Aug. 2, 1885.

" 'Yesterday I was in the Natural History department of the British Museum. I had business touching some fossils which I found in the Lattakia Miocene and Pliocene clay beds, and about which I wrote an article which appeared in "Nature" last year. Mr. Etheridge, F. R. S., kindly examined and named them. I was anxious to hear what a first-rate working scientist, with perhaps the largest opportunity for induction in the world, would say on Darwinian Evolution. So, after he had shown me all the wonders of the establishment, I asked him whether, after all, this was not the working out of mind and Providence. He turned to me with a clear, honest look into my eyes, and replied, "In all this great Museum there is not a particle of evidence of transmutation of species. Nine-tenths of the talk of evolutionists is sheer nonsense, not founded on observation, and wholly unsupported by fact. Men adopt a theory and then strain their facts to support it. I read in all their books, but they make no impression on my belief in the stability of species. Moreover, the talk of the great antiquity of man is of the same value. There is no such thing as a fossil man. Men are ready to regard you as a fool if you do not go with them in all their vagaries. But this Museum is full of proofs of the utter falsity of their views."

" 'I have condensed very much, but you may spread this out over twenty minutes, and imagine what a comfort it was to hear it. I do not propose to surrender yet even to theistic evolution, which seems to me at best a bad name for God's creation."

Now we want to hear the verdict of bar-room scientists, saloon geologists and horse-shed philosophers, who are more anxious to establish a connection with the monkeys and baboons than with Adam, who "was the son of God."—From "The Armory."

WHEELING AND LOUISVILLE CONVENTIONS

The interest in Wheeling seemed to warrant us in giving it a second one-day convention sooner than usual—on March 18. The topic for the public service was "Resurrection of Damnation." The forenoon discourse was given in Odd Fellows' Hall and was well attended by the interested, though not publicly announced. That discourse was published in the secular journals which many of you receive. The afternoon discourse was for the public. The services were held in Court Theater, the largest auditorium in the city; the attendance was large, and the attention and interest manifested were very gratifying indeed. The number present was estimated at 1,400. At this meeting announcement was made for two chart talks on the following Sunday in a smaller auditorium. Brother A. E. Wil-

liamson filled the appointments and had excellent hearings at both sessions. Our thought is that it requires several discourses to mature the interest first aroused, and that of the thousands who hear with some degree of interest only a small number are to be expected to have the deep interest which could only be looked for in the fully consecrated of the Lord's people. The dear friends at Wheeling did nobly and feel very much encouraged.

Louisville, Ky., had its first one-day convention on March 25. The locally interested were ably seconded in their efforts to make the convention a success by dear friends residing in nearby communities. Their mutual efforts under the Lord's blessing and providential guidance resulted in a great arousing of the people of that vicinity.

At the morning session, which was not advertised, quite a goodly gathering appeared. Some excellent testimonies were given for about an hour preceding a morning discourse by Brother Russell, which has already been reported in the secular journals, seen by many of you. The afternoon meeting in McCauley's Theater was jammed to its fullest capacity, about a hundred being seated on the rear of the stage and considerable numbers standing. The police ordered the doors locked that no more should be admitted, claiming that no more could be admitted with safety. Those in a position to estimate reckoned that there were 2,000 present, and that an equally large number were unable to gain admittance; to the latter, however, were distributed more than 1,100 copies of the WATCH TOWER treating on the subject of hell from the Bible standpoint. The audience gave closest attention for nearly two hours, and our hope is that some of them were there started on a more rational view of the divine Word, and inspired to more loving and more reverent conceptions of the divine character.

We are not to expect that a large proportion in such

audiences would be saints, permitted of the Lord to see and understand clearly all the riches of his grace, but we do have reason for believing that there were some of this class, and that they received help and impetus in a good way, and that others were helped nearer to the Lord and further from sin. We were introduced to one brother, now deeply consecrated, and a very fine man, a doctor, and were informed that only a short time ago he was practically an infidel as well as a drunkard, and that he was reclaimed through the reading of MILLENNIAL DAWN, and has been helpful in the bringing of many in that vicinity to the knowledge of God and of his Word. Items of this kind are very encouraging, but at all events we know that the Lord's blessing is always with his own Word, and that it will accomplish the purpose for which he sent it, and will not return unto him void. We know that this Gospel age will gather out the full number of the elect, and prepare them for the glory, honor, immortality and the great work of the Millennial age. Praise and honor and glory to him that sitteth upon the throne and to the Lamb!

THE BRIDEGROOM'S DOVE

CANT. 2:14.

"My Dove!" The Bridegroom speaks to whom?

Whom think'st thou, meaneth He?

Say, O my soul! canst thou presume

He thus addresseth thee?

Yes, 'tis the Bridegroom's voice of love,

Calling thee, O my soul! His dove!

The Dove is gentle, mild and meek:

Deserve I, then, the name?

I look within in vain to seek

Aught which can give a claim:

Yet, made so by redeeming love,

My soul, thou art the Bridegroom's Dove!

Methinks, my soul, that thou may'st see,

In this endearing word,

Reasons why Jesus likens thee

To this defenceless bird;

Reasons which show the Bridegroom's love

To His poor helpless, timid Dove!

The Dove hath neither claw nor sting,

Nor weapon for the fight;

She owes her safety to her wing,

Her victory to flight.

A shelter hath the Bridegroom's love

Provided for His helpless Dove!

As the poor Dove, before the Hawk,

Quick to her refuge flies,

So need I, in my daily walk,

The wings which *faith* supplies

To bear me where the Bridegroom's love

Places beyond all harm His Dove!

My soul, of native power bereft,

To Calvary repairs:

Immanuel is *the rocky cleft*

The secret of the stairs!

Since placed *there* by the Bridegroom's love,

What evil can befall His Dove?

My soul, now hid within a rock,

(The "Rock of Ages" called),

Amid the universal shock

Is fearless, unappalled.

A cleft therein, prepared by love,

In safety hides the Bridegroom's Dove!

O happy Dove! thus weak, thus safe;

Do I resemble her?

Then to my soul, O Lord! vouchsafe

A *dove-like* character.

Pure, harmless, gentle, full of love,

Make me in spirit, Lord, a Dove!

AUTHOR UNKNOWN.

"I HAVE PRAYED FOR THEE"

"Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he might sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not."—Luke 22: 31, 32.

As the Passover season approached our Lord not only said, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful even unto death," and found himself pleading "with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him out of death;" but additionally he had great solicitude for his dear followers, and sought to arouse them to an appreciation of the hour of temptation into which they were entering, saying, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." Not only was that the most trying time of our Lord's earthly experience, but it was also the most trying time for his apostles, and particularly for Judas and Peter. Both of these men were prominent amongst the apostles, the one as the treasurer and purchasing agent of the little group, the other as a specially bold champion of the Lord's cause, who had, as the mouthpiece of the twelve, announced their faith in Jesus as the Messiah, and who had publicly declared that although all men should forsake the Lord he would not do so. From the human standpoint it would have been surmised that any temptation that might come upon those thirteen would have been upon the weaker and less prominent ones and not upon the three most prominent.

THREE TEMPTED—VARIANT RESULTS

We may draw some valuable lessons from noting the course of the three specially tempted. Our Lord's course was the proper one, humility, fear, an appreciation of the trials leading to watchfulness and prayer. He escaped and came out of the trial stronger every way, and on the day of his public arraignment before the priests and Pilate, and

when he was crucified before the multitude, he was the calmest of the calm, for the Lord had strengthened him. He is our pattern: our course should similarly be one that would not deny dangers, would not boast of our courage, strength, but would lean upon the arm of the Lord and through his grace come off conquerors.

Peter's case we remember well: A good man of strong character, he realized not his danger, and hence was not prepared for the arts of Satan, by which he was placed in so trying a position that his boasted courage fled, his wonted strength of character vanished, he denied his Lord even with profanity. What a lesson to us of human frailty, and of how we ourselves might be overtaken and ensnared by the wiles of the devil. How much each one needs to watch and pray, lest we enter into temptation—lest we succumb to temptation. How much we each need to remember the prayer the Lord gave us as an ensample, "Abandon us not in temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

That was a fateful time for Judas: If the adversary could so juggle, deceive and mislead the true-hearted Peter because he was off his guard in watching and praying, what might we not expect he might be able to accomplish with Judas, whose heart was not right, who was selfish, self-seeking, ambitious, covetous? We cannot wonder that Satan's victory over Judas was soon accomplished—that he fell quickly into the snare of the adversary, and lent his heart and energy to the betrayal of the Master for thirty pieces of silver. His case was very different from that of Peter, the loyal, the true, for the moment bewildered and

off his guard and fearful. The cases of the two men are very different because, although the danger was the same, their hearts were in different conditions.

"TAKE HEED TO YOURSELVES"

Is it not so with all the Lord's followers? Is not this the secret of the differing results of temptation as they surely come to each one of us? The Judas class of today and always are those who when temptation comes receive it, entertain it, enter into the spirit of the ambition or otherwise wrong allurements, and are swallowed up by it. The Peter class is also with us ever since; and today the true-hearted, but not sufficiently watching and praying and on guard against the adversary's allurements, are at times taken unawares, and for a moment not only dishonor the Lord but dishonor their own hearts and consciences also. The difference between these two classes is the heart condition: the Peter class do those things which they do not wish to do, or leave undone those things which they really desire to do, and their difficulty lies evidently in the weakness of their flesh, in the power of the Adversary, and in their failure to lay hold upon the help which the Lord has promised, the succor in their time of need.

The Judas class are those whose hearts are not loyal but selfish, and who therefore enter into the adversary's scheme heartily, and are not, in their wrong course, going contrary to their own wills but in harmony therewith. The difference in God's sight is seen in that, although both Peter and Judas repented, the one was accepted back to divine favor, the other was not—the one who was merely entrapped, but who at heart was not disloyal, was restored and blessed; the other, though not without conscience, as shown by his later remorse, was without the genuine loyalty of heart which in the Lord's sight is indispensable, and the absence of which, considering Judas' intimate acquaintance with the Lord, was inexcusable.

Our Lord's words in our text give us the assurance that, because of this difference in the hearts of the two men, he could properly be the advocate of the one before the Father but not the advocate of the other. He could stand for and represent the one who at heart was loyal to him, however weak his flesh, however careless he might be of the divine provision for his protection. He was still one of the Lord's sheep, therefore subject to the Shepherd's care. He was still one of the Lord's members, therefore subject to the oversight and interest of the Head in his welfare. He was still one of the members of the Lord's espoused virgin church, whom he loved and for whom he gave his life, and for whom, therefore, he might properly and did make supplication as the betrothed Bridegroom.

But in the case of Judas, his heart alienated through selfishness, any appreciation for the Lord and love for him which he possessed at the beginning of the ministry had evidently died, been swallowed up of selfishness and ambition—and into that heart thus fully withdrawn from the Lord we are told Satan entered. By thus willingly withdrawing his heart and strength and consecration from the Lord and lending the same of deliberate intention to self-seeking, he became a tool of the adversary. As our Master said, "It must needs be that offenses come"—that he should be crucified—"but woe unto that man by whom the offense cometh."

SIMILAR CONDITIONS TODAY

In our experience the Passover season has always been one of special danger, special besetment to the Lord's consecrated people. For some reason unknown to us the Adversary seems to be permitted to have special power at this time. We have noticed time after time that, as we approach the Passover season, Satan's activity has been manifested by some kind of an attack upon the truth and by some kind of a special trial or test upon the friends in connection therewith. Although we know in advance that none of the Lord's disciples true at heart will be plucked out of his hand by the adversary, nevertheless we fancy that we can sympathize to some extent with our Lord's feelings when he exhorted the disciples to watch and pray, lest they enter into temptation.

True, Jesus knew who it was that should betray him, and was, therefore, not surprised or disconcerted in respect to Judas' course; and yet, undoubtedly, the thought that one who had eaten bread with him should "lift up his heel against him" (John 13:18), one who had been his companion, helper, familiar friend, should become his enemy (Psalm 41:9), all this must have had a saddening effect upon our dear Master, who could assuredly sympathize with even his bitterest enemies as well as with those who, Peter-like, failed at the first to withstand the adversary's assault

but who subsequently are recovered by divine mercy and aid.

Since the body of Christ is one, and since our Lord declares that whatsoever is done to one of the least of his members is done to him, it follows that the Judas class and the Peter class all down through the Gospel age to the present moment have been betraying the Lord in proportion as they have betrayed or denied his members. We, therefore, should note the significance of his statement to Peter, "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not."

For all of the Peter class the Lord is the Head, the Representative, the Advocate before the Father. Without his aid, without appearance for us and application to us of the merit of his own sacrifice, none of us could stand, all would be judged unworthy, unfit to have part or lot in the great blessings which the Lord has invited us to share with Jesus. And as the Master prayed for such, intercedes for such, makes good the unwilling imperfections of such, so should all who have his spirit feel generously, kindly, sympathetically, speak helpfully to the Peter class. But as the Master had no such words of sympathy for Judas, the open and premeditated enemy and traitor, so likewise, whatever our sorrowful feelings for such may be, there is no room for any expression of sympathy of cooperation in their evil work: as for any of the apostles to cooperate with Judas would have meant a share in his evil deeds.

"SIFT YOU AS WHEAT"

However much sympathy we may feel with Peter and others of similar character and experience—since, however much we may rejoice with him that the Lord prayed for him so that his carelessness in the matter of watching and praying for himself did not result in his undoing and his loss of relationship to the Lord—nevertheless we should strive not to be of the Peter class, but of the class represented by our Lord himself. Let us be of the watching, praying and faithful kind, who will not be overtaken by the adversary's temptations of the present time.

We are in the "harvest" time; the separation of the wheat from the tares is due, and, more than this, the separation of the chaff from the wheat is also due—a sifting process. While this figure may to some extent fit to the experiences of the church in the past, we are sure that it does specially apply to the church in the "ends of the ages"—to those who were living in the end or harvest of the Jewish age, and to those who are now living in the end or harvest of the Gospel age. And our Lord is pleased to permit of these siftings; they are necessary, apparently, that the Judas class may be entirely sifted out, and that the Peter class may be so thoroughly stirred up by the trials and difficulties and realization of their own weaknesses, and the knowledge that they would utterly fail without the Lord's sustaining grace, that these lessons may prove profitable to them, developing in them more and more of meekness, watchfulness, prayerfulness and trust in our all-powerful Head.

We remember in this connection our Lord's words which indicate that the present will be a time of trial which "will try all them that dwell upon the face of the whole earth." (Rev. 3:10.) We remember the Apostle's statement also that it will be a time of fiery trial upon those who are of the true church, saying, "Every man's work shall be tried so as by fire," and his assurance is that only the gold, silver and precious stones of faith, hope and love will abide the fiery trial.—1 Cor. 3:13.

"THE FIRE OF THAT DAY"

Whatever perfect love has not been attained the "fire" of this day, the siftings of this day, will manifest it—the Lord will separate the deficient ones. This may cause us sorrow, as earthly ties are severed and fond hopes blighted; nevertheless the Lord's message to us on the subject is figuratively represented in the command which he gave to Aaron and his sons, when two of the under-priesthood perished because they offered strange fire before the Lord which he had not commanded them. (Lev. 10:1.) Moses as the Lord's mouthpiece declared that the survivors in the priesthood must make no mourning or lamentation for those whom the Lord had cut off. To have done so would have implied disloyalty to the Lord and a failure to appreciate his wisdom and justice and love in the matter.—Lev. 10:6.

How searching will be the tests which will prove our love and loyalty to the Lord and his divine arrangements is clearly intimated in our Lord's prophecy respecting our day when he said that the sifting would be of such a kind as would "deceive if it were possible the very elect." It will not be possible to deceive the very elect, because for

these our glorious Head stands sponsor. They are his followers, they are his betrothed, they are his members; he is their Head and Representative and Ambassador; he intercedes, supplicates, prays for them, and their faith will fail not because they are his, because—however imperfect they may be as respects the flesh—at heart they are perfect, thoroughly loyal to him and to his cause, to their fellow-members.

So, then, we sound again, as we have previously done at this season of the year, the Master's words, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." Our words, like the Master's, will fall on two classes—some will make light of the warning and expose themselves to danger; others will hearken to the warning of the Master's voice, and to them it will be a part of the power of God unto their preservation.

FORGIVEN MUCH, SHE LOVED MUCH

Luke 7:36-50.—APRIL 22.

Golden Text—"Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

The miracles at Capernaum and at Nain spread the fame of Jesus far and near in Palestine, and led a prominent Pharisee named Simon to press upon the Master an invitation for dinner. Not that Simon was a disciple and believer, but rather that as a prominent man he posed as a liberal one also, affecting that although fully content with himself and the expectations of the Pharisees he had nothing to lose nor to fear from the new and wonderful Teacher. Jesus accepted the invitation, and after the manner of the time reclined at the table with the Pharisee and the other guests. At an earlier date the Jews had been accustomed to sit upon the floor cross-legged when eating, but had changed this for the Persian custom of a sloping couch table, where the guests reclined resting upon the left arm while feeding themselves with the right hand, the feet extending back from the table portion of the couch.

Privacy in the home is still unusual in the East. Neighbors, friends, visitors, feel at liberty to come and go much as they please, sometimes coming in to converse with the guests while dinner is being served. Thus it was that while Jesus and others were at dinner a woman of the city, a disreputable character—possibly Mary of Magdala, but surely not Mary of Bethany, the sister of Lazarus—came into the room with a vial of very precious ointment in her hand, walked to the back of the table couch and directly to the feet of Jesus. Her intention evidently was to anoint his feet with the ointment, but ere she had succeeded in breaking the seals and unstoppering the vial her pent-up feelings found expression in a gush of tears which rained upon the Master's feet—an indignity where she had intended honor. Quickly unfastening her hair she used it as a towel to dry the feet, and then, as expressive of her love and sympathy and adoration, while wiping the feet she kissed them repeatedly (for so the Greek text implies.) Then, opening the alabaster vase, she poured upon the blessed feet the sweet, odorous ointment as originally intended.

THE PHARISEE AN EVIL SURMISER

The Pharisee said nothing, but in his heart concluded that he now had proof that Jesus was not a prophet, else he would have known intuitively that the woman was a sinner, and would have repulsed her approach even to his feet, and would have denounced her and her sinful life in no measured terms. Simon, however, was measuring the Lord by his own standard, for he appreciated not the loving sympathy of Jesus' heart, and that, although he recognized the woman as a sinner, he had compassion upon her—especially in view of the evidence she gave of shame, contrition and reformation. The incident furnishes us with a blessed illustration of our Lord's sympathy for those who come unto him accepting his mercy and love and forgiveness, however unworthy they may be of his fellowship.

One thing is noteworthy: this Pharisee seems to have entertained no thought of impurity on the part of our Lord, or that there was any acquaintance between him and the sinful woman who did him honor. Evidently the Lord's face and general demeanor, etc., were such as to preclude all thought of evil on his part. So should it be with all of the Lord's followers—their words, their manner, their looks, should all witness to that high and lofty standard of character which would place them above reproach or insinuation. It may not be possible for us to manifest so high and lofty a standard as did our Lord, because he was perfect while we are imperfect; but we should aim for his standards as nearly as possible.

Jesus answered Simon's unexpressed thought with a little parable concerning two debtors, the one owing his Master five hundred pence, the other owing fifty pence. When both parties were forgiven, which debtor would appreciate the more the creditor's generosity? which would have the more love for him? The question was addressed to Pharisee Simon, who answered that he supposed the one who had been forgiven most. This off-hand answer seems to imply that Simon did

not up to this moment realize the bearing of the parable upon his own case and that of the woman—that he represented the debtor owing fifty pence, the woman, the greater sinner, owing five hundred.

A sin is a sin, a violation of the divine law, whether it be in a great matter or in a lesser matter. We are not to understand that in God's sight there is any difference as to enormities of sin, but, as here illustrated, that some are more deeply involved in it than are others—ten times as deeply. The point we are to remember, however, is that all sin is a transgression of the divine law, and that no sinner can have the divine favor of eternal life; hence, whatever our degree of sin it must be gotten rid of if we would come back into harmony with God and escape the penalty of sin and obtain the gift of God, eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. From this standpoint it was as necessary for the Pharisee to have his sins forgiven as for the woman to have hers forgiven, as neither could enter into life except as they first would be purged from sin. From God's standpoint undoubtedly Simon was in a better attitude than this sinful woman—he was nearer to God, nearer to righteousness; but since he could not attain to full righteousness and perfection in himself, but must depend upon divine mercy for the forgiveness of his sin, he was just as dependent as was the woman. As for God, it was just as easy for him to forgive the greater sins as to forgive the lesser ones, provided the required conditions were met by the sinner.

Our lesson illustrates this, and shows the attitude of those who are in condition to be approved of the Lord—to be forgiven. The parable here supposes the desire and request for forgiveness on the part of the debtors and the willingness of the Lord to cancel the debt for both. In the illustration before us we see Simon indifferent because he felt that his sin was less, the woman repentant because she felt that her sin was great. To the repentant one only could God's grace extend mercy; hence the woman was justified, her sins were forgiven, while the Pharisee, with really fewer sins, was unforgiven because he had not appealed for forgiveness nor appreciated properly his need therefor.

WITHOUT HUMILITY NO FORGIVENESS

How we see this principle illustrated all about us every day! Some of the finest, some of the noblest characters among men and women, like Simon the Pharisee, realize that they are ten-fold better than some of their neighbors who go to the Lord. They seem inclined to say within themselves, "Well, my neighbors should go and repent of their sins; surely they have need to do so. I hope that they will meet with mercy, turn over a new leaf and try to be different, as I am." These poor Pharisees know not how much they miss; they realize not that some of their more blemished neighbors and friends and acquaintances receive a forgiveness and divine blessing, while they lack these things because not sufficiently humble in heart to make the request—to come unto the Father for forgiveness through the only name given under heaven and amongst men whereby we must be saved.

We are not threatening such with eternal torment or any other dire punishment: we are merely pointing out their loss—that they fail to receive the fellowship, the forgiveness with God, the blessings and privileges which might be theirs, and from the standpoint of which they might attain to still greater favors and mercies under the high calling of this age. Surely, therefore, the loss suffered at present is great, regardless of any future retribution.

Here we see the reason why the Scriptures declare that not many great, not many wise, not many learned, not many noble or rich according to the course of this world, will be amongst the Lord's chosen ones and heirs of the kingdom. Why? Because these more favored ones, according to natural conditions, appreciate less the necessity of divine sympathy and assistance and forgiveness and help. Hence we find still that the Gospel of mercy and forgiveness appeals most directly

to the sinner class, and this class it is continually lifting up out of the mire of sin and death, transforming them by the renewing of their minds, changing them from glory to glory, until some of them by the grace of God shall be heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ their Lord in the kingdom and its glory, honor and immortality. It is not that our Lord Jesus loves less those who are more moral, more upright, more nearly by nature up to the standard of perfection. Nay! other things being equal, he certainly would love these the more.

For instance, note the Master's love for the young man who was very rich and who inquired what he should do to inherit the kingdom. When the Lord pointed to the Law and the young man was able to say, "All these have I kept from my youth up," Jesus beholding him loved him—loved him, we may be sure, far more than he would have loved him had he been a reprobate character, a prodigal. But when it comes to the point that the moralist or man of noble character spurns divine favor and ignores his own blemishes, and when, on the other hand, the poor, the degraded, the prodigal, realizing their sins, cry out to the Lord for mercy and forgiveness, we can understand why the broken and the contrite heart is more acceptable to God and justified rather than the other. Let us, dear brethren, while rejoicing in every element of natural advantage and likeness to our Creator that may be ours, remember to be very humble, remember that we have nothing perfect, and hence that we could not commend ourselves to God; and that, in order to receive his blessing and favor, we must confess to him our sins and have his forgiveness, and that in the only channel and name in which he has provided it—Christ.

VIEWS FROM TWO STANDPOINTS

Simon had been congratulating himself that he was honoring the Master by having him to dinner because of his own honorable station in society, and that this poor woman was dishonoring him because of her inferior station and evil reputation. Our Lord reverses the picture before his mind by calling his attention to the fact that he had really neglected the usual hospitalities of the country as respects an honored guest, while the woman had made up for his lack. It was the custom of the country for a host to receive his guest with distinguished attention, to embrace him, to kiss him on the cheek when he entered, to have his head anointed with perfumed ointment and to have a servant wash his feet. Simon, as a wealthy and prominent man, knew all this, and would doubtless have followed the ordinary custom had his guest been one in high social standing; but his invitation had been of a patronizing sort. He felt that he was doing the Master an honor to bring him into his house, and that for the sake of others he would not wish that this honor should seem too pronounced, because the followers of Jesus especially were ignorant, unlearned men and not used to the best customs of society. His own servants would occupy a higher social plane really than the disciples of Jesus, and hence he felt that he must restrain his manifestations of hospitality lest Jesus and his humble band and the public should get the impression that he really recognized Jesus, a Teacher, as his equal or his superior.

Our Lord in no unkind terms called Simon's attention to the fact that he neither gave him an anointing, nor kissed him, nor provided the washing for his feet, but that this poor woman had washed his feet with her tears, had kissed them, and had anointed them with a very precious ointment. The Master associated these facts of the moment with his parable, and declared that this was an indication of greater love which the woman bore and of her greater appreciation of his message of forgiveness and mercy. Her course intimated that she had accepted the Lord's declaration, and so now he probably formally declared to her that her sins were forgiven. To the Pharisee he explained that he, having less to be forgiven, had been less appreciative of the privilege of forgiveness, so the penitent sinner got the blessing and the much more nearly righteous Pharisee (holiness professor) failed to receive it.

"THY SINS BE FORGIVEN THEE"

What words could have been more sweet or more precious to the poor woman's ears! Surely she appreciated that declaration more than anything else our Lord could have said unto her. And so it is with all who approach the Lord as their Savior from the right standpoint. We do indeed rejoice subsequently to hear our Lord's message respecting the glory, honor and immortality which we may attain through his assistance, but the first message to every one of us must be,

"Thy sins are forgiven thee"—otherwise we could have no peace, no joy, no hope of a glorious future. In other words, every other hope, every other blessing, is based upon this one—the forgiveness of our sins.

Let us make sure not only that we have thus come to the Lord recognizing our sins, manifesting our repentance for them, but let us be sure also that we have accepted the divine grace in and through the blood of Christ, and that we are trusting not in any righteousness of our own, but that we wholly lean upon the favors secured to us through him who loved us and bought us with his precious blood. Upon the strength of this faith we may bring our tears and our alabaster boxes of perfume of daily endeavor to serve and to please him who has done so much for us, but without our recognition of our sins and of his forgiveness we could bring nothing acceptable to him. In this connection also let us remember the Master's words to the woman in conclusion, "Go in peace."

"THY FAITH HATH MADE THEE WHOLE"

Ah, none but the forgiven ones know the peace of God that passeth all understanding which comes into the hearts of those who hear the Master's assurance that their sins are all forgiven, covered by the robe of his righteousness. They and they alone can go in peace, and their peace will be in proportion to their faith, and their faith in proportion to their knowledge. It is to this end that the Lord gives us a full, clear and explicit explanation of what constitutes sin, what is the remedy for it, how that remedy has been provided, and how it is applied to us in proportion to our exercise of faith, and that our faith is manifested by our devotion.

Let us bear in mind that it was not the woman's works that saved her and brought her the Lord's favor, nor the ointment, nor the tears nor the kiss—it was the faith: "With out faith it is impossible to please God." (Heb. 11:6.) According to our faith it shall be unto us. But let us not forget either that faith must work; that if it does not work it is a sure sign that it is dead. So surely as we have the true faith in the Lord, so surely good and honest hearts will bring forth worship, praise, honor to our Master and Redeemer. These conditions of our hearts will surely manifest themselves as did the woman's, by tears, by services to the feet of the Master, by an anointing of the most precious perfume that we can bring.

"HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF HIM"

The Prophet, speaking evidently of the living members of the body of Christ at the close of this dispensation, declares, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" There is a beauty, a grace, peculiar to our Lord, the Head; and each member of his body has some peculiar grace or quality of character-likeness to him. And so, when in the end of this age the last members of the Lord's body, the church, announce in its due season the parousia of the Lord and that his kingdom is at hand to be established, there is a beauty attaching to that in connection with this service, this message, in the sight of each other, in the sight of all who are of the household of faith, but not in the sight of the world, for, as the Apostle declares, "The world knoweth us not even as it knew him not."—1 John 3:1.

It is not our privilege or opportunity to anoint the Head of the body, the Lord Jesus. Simon and others of that time had that great privilege, however they used it. With us, however, the privilege still remains of anointing the feet members of the body of Christ, and day by day we are tested along this very line. To what extent do we love much the Lord and his members? Is it not in proportion to our appreciation of the divine love for us and for all mankind? If we love little we will honor little, if we love much we will honor much.

Let us, then, avail ourselves of the privileges day by day of anointing the feet members of the body, realizing that whatsoever is done unto one of the least of these his brethren is done unto the Lord himself, and is a perfume of sweet odor to him. Let us be more gentle, more tender, more careful in our honoring and dealing with the feet members. Let us remember that they have trials and difficulties enough in their conflict with the tiresome journey of life, and that there must be no neglect of them on our part, for the opportunity of thus manifesting our love and devotion to the Lord is too great a privilege to be overlooked or slighted. Nor need we wait for opportunities to do great things: kind words and looks, a little assistance, may be the tears or the perfume as circumstances may permit.

"THE SEED IS THE WORD OF GOD"

Mark 4:1-20.—APRIL 29.

Our Lord had returned to the Sea of Galilee, where some of his earliest teachings had been given. Great multitudes were attracted to him by reason of the miracles he performed. Entering a boat he sat in the prow of it and taught the people on the shelving beach by various parables, similes, illustrations, the thing said never being the thing meant. One of these parables, constituting the basis of our lesson, is known as the parable of the Sower, though more accurately perhaps it might be described as the parable of the four kinds of soil, representing the four kinds of human hearts. The parable is introduced by the word,

"HEARKEN"—TAKE HEED

This is an implication that an important lesson is contained in the parable. Nevertheless the world gives little heed to this or other of our Lord's teachings, and even his professed followers rarely give the Master's words that deeper, attentive thought necessary to their appreciation, and only he that seeketh findeth the true meaning, the true lessons.

The parable itself is a very simple statement of a matter familiar to his hearers: A farmer sowed good seed, a portion of which fell on the pathway leading through the farm, where it was readily seen and quickly devoured by the birds. Some fell on stony ground, the soil of which was good enough but shallow, with the result that it sprang up quickly, made a good show at first, but soon withered under the heat of the sun. Other seed fell upon ground infested with the seed of thorns, and the two growing together the thorns so choked the good seed that it became unfruitful. But some of the seed fulfilled the farmer's intention and brought forth much fruit, some thirty, sixty and a hundred-fold, because the soil was more favorable: it had been prepared by the plowing processes to receive the seed, it was deep enough to properly care for and root the seed, and it was not thorn-infested.

This picture, familiar to all farmers, was especially clear and forcible to the minds of those who heard Jesus, for several reasons: (1) The fields of that land are not fenced and the paths of travel frequently cross them. (2) The birds of Syria, including Palestine, seem to be much more numerous than elsewhere, probably on account of the climate; they are said to be one of the special pests of the farmer of that region. (3) Thorns abound there. A writer says, "There are no less than fifty genera and two hundred species of plants in Syria and Palestine furnished with thorns and prickles. There is probably no country on earth of the same extent which has so many. . . . Thistles grow to a height of ten to fifteen feet." As for the stony ground: Palestine abounds with limestone, which renders the soil very rich, but when shallow very hot. As for the hundred-fold crop we are assured that this is not an exaggerated statement. One writer remarks that at Geneva in 1855 he got from the field a single ear of barley containing two hundred and seventy-six grains.

WHY TEACH IN PARABLES?

Our Lord concluded his parable with the words, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." The majority of the multitude heard, wondered at his gracious words, thought of him as a wonderful teacher sent of God, but took no deeper interest. They had not the ears to hear, they were not hungry for the truth, their hearts were not prepared. There remained with the Lord not only the twelve apostles but a considerable number of disciples or followers. These now crowded about the Master to ask the interpretation of the parable. They had ears not only for the story but for the meaning, for the lesson: they desired to know the will of God that they might do it—they were consecrated to know and to do the Father's will.

The Prophet had foretold that our Lord would open his mouth in "parables" and in "dark sayings" (Psa. 78:2), and the evangelists record that thus he did, and now to those who inquired the meaning our Lord answered, "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God, but unto them that are without [outsiders—not disciples—not consecrated] all these things are done in parables, that seeing they may see and not perceive, and hearing they may hear and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted [turned to a proper course] and their sins should be forgiven them."—Mark 4:11, 12.

WHY THE MYSTERY—SECRECY?

From the standpoint of ordinary Christian thought the Master's words here are utterly unintelligible. The ordinary thought is that all not converted, all left in their sins, are destined to an eternity of torture. But if that were true how could our Savior have used the words just quoted? His words are intelligible only from the standpoint of the plan of the ages, which alone makes clear the divine Word as a whole or in part. When we see our Lord's mission amongst

men in its true light it has two divisions: (1) Through his own faithfulness to the Father's plan and as our Redeemer he needed to pay our ransom price by tasting death for every man, suffering the Just for the unjust that we might be reconciled to God. (2) While thus laying the foundation for the blessing of the whole world, with the opportunity to escape from sin and death, our Lord began a second feature of the divine plan, namely, the selection of a kingdom class, a church class, which would be associated with himself in the sufferings of this present time and in the glorious work of the future—the blessing of all the families of the earth under the favorable Millennial conditions.

In harmony with this thought our Lord at the time of this parable was not only in process of laying down his life, dying daily, hourly, but also engaged in attracting to himself an elect class who would be suitable for his bride, his kingdom, his church.

It was some of this kingdom class, this elect class, that had come around him and asked the interpretation of the parable. He declared that it was his wish, his desire, to make the matter clear, very plain, to these; that it really belonged to them to know, because they were in the condition of heart that would be profited by the knowledge—because the knowledge thus imparted would be essential to their development, to their strengthening, to their guidance, to their preparation for the kingdom—"To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom." Nearly all of our Lord's parables related to the kingdom, and all of them therefore are to be understood by the kingdom class, the elect, the consecrated. All of this class should be earnestly desirous of an understanding of "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Their earnestness in desiring will be part of the evidence that they belong to this class, that it is proper for them to know. It is to their advantage that it should be hidden, so that they may seek and find, and that in seeking and finding they may have a greater blessing than if the entire matter were strewn upon the surface.

Our faith in the Lord and in his wonderful plan is strengthened when we find how simple his plan is, how grand, how beautiful, and yet how hidden from the world—from all except those who have the guidance of the holy Spirit and to whom it is given to know the "mystery." Some of these mysteries pertain to the present and some to the future, and the more clearly we seek the more we may find, and the more clearly we discern the stronger will be our faith and loyalty and the better will be our prospects therefore of making our calling and election sure by obedience.

"LEST THEY SHOULD BE CONVERTED"

But, says one, how would it have injured the multitude to have heard and understood a good parable, even if they were not prepared of heart to receive and act upon its message heartily? Would they not have received some blessing through a partial understanding of the divine plan? Not being perfect in knowledge or wisdom it is becoming in us to trust the Lord's love, knowledge and wisdom on this subject, and to conclude that the multitudes were really better off left in ignorance for the time. Perhaps we can see to some extent how and why this was so. (1) Even worldly wisdom has decided that "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing." (2) Had the multitudes been drawn to the Lord to accept him fully as a teacher and to believe his doctrines, while their hearts were still in an unconsecrated attitude, they would not have been of the kingdom class which the Lord is now seeking, but might have hindered certain features of the divine plan connected with our Lord's sacrifice by so protesting against his death as to have engendered an insurrection, which would have forced Pilate to defend him against the malice of the rulers.

All this is reasonable and intelligible when viewed from the standpoint of the plan of the ages—when we see that the election of the church does not signify the damnation of the remainder of the world, but, on the contrary, that the elect are to be God's agents by and by for the blessing of the non-elect, and bringing all to a clear knowledge of the Lord and to opportunities for everlasting life, which would be more favorable to the temperament, disposition, etc., or the masses. Nothing is more evident than that only a very few have ears to hear and hearts to appreciate the invitation of the present time—to suffer with Christ in the narrow way in hope of the glory, honor and immortality of the future.

HOW UNDERSTAND ALL PARABLES?

Our Lord's words, "Know ye not this parable? How, then, will ye know all parables?" may be understood to signify: It is proper for you to understand this parable, as it will prove a key valuable in the interpretation of all parables.

Our Lord then proceeded to give a very particular interpretation of the parable.

(1) The "seed is the Word of God" (Luke 8:11.) The different kinds of soil represent different kinds of hearts coming in contact with that Word. By the Word of God we are to understand the entire revelation which God has made to us—the Bible. This includes, as the Apostle points out, "the word spoken by angels"—God's direct messages in the past to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, etc., including the giving of the law. These angels represented God as his mouthpieces. It includes also the messages sent through the prophets, "when holy men of old spoke and wrote as they were moved by the holy Spirit." (2 Pet. 1:21.) And it includes the teachings of our Lord Jesus and his apostles, whom he authorized to speak in his name, as it is written, "God hath in these last times spoken unto us by his Son," and the Son declared respecting the apostles that those who heard them heard him, those who received them received him, as those who heard and received him heard and received the Father. —Heb. 1:2; Matt. 10:40.

It is well that we lay full emphasis upon this only proper seed, because much confusion has resulted from a mistake on this point, the using of improper seed, as we shall see in our next lesson. We are not limiting the seed to any particular translation of the Word of God, nor do we urge that religious writings which contain this Word are invaluable and good seed. We do urge, however, most emphatically that they are good seed only in proportion as they are thoroughly loyal to the divine Word. To whatever extent they present human philosophies instead of the divine plan and philosophy, to whatever extent they mix the human with the divine, to that extent they are not the good seed. How careful, then, the Lord's people should be respecting the seed which they receive into their own hearts from day to day, and respecting the seed of truth which they in turn seek to scatter in the good ground of other hearts.

Alas that we must confess it, but nearly all of the theology and theological works outside the Bible are so mixed as to be untrue, misleading: hence they do not bring forth the intended harvest in the heart, in the life of the individual. This is the great trouble with nominal Christendom, churchianity, today. Traditions of men have taken the place of the Word of God; the good seed, the Gospel of the kingdom, is a scarce article outside the Bible, and even in the Bible presentation of God's Word there are difficulties and hindrances in the shape of mistranslations and interpolations which hinder its results. In MILLENNIAL DAWN and WATCH TOWER publications we endeavor to set forth the Word of God simply and without human traditions in any measure or degree. We repeatedly, continually, persistently scatter that Word by liberal quotations and expositions of it—presenting it cleared of many misrepresentations and falsifications thereof. By the Lord's grace we trust that only the pure, unadulterated seed will be scattered by us in the Master's name.

THE WAYSIDE HEARTS

Our Lord elsewhere declares that the field is the world, but not all of the field or world is being planted at the present time. Vast areas of the world of mankind are already sown thickly with various human doctrines and are growing great crops after their kind. The field that the Lord is sowing first is a Jewish field, already prepared by divine instructions and disciplines. And although the middle wall of partition has since been broken down, so that there is no longer a distinction made as between Jews and Gentiles, nevertheless the portion of the Gentile field that is being sown is but a limited one, namely, the comparatively few amongst whom the Gospel of the kingdom, the Word of God, has been declared.

So, then, we may say that Christendom is the wheatfield in which the Lord has sown his Word. In Christendom, therefore, and not in heathendom, where the Word has never gone, we are to look for the four kinds of results brought to our attention in the parable. In Christendom some are like the wayside, or paths hard trodden by life's experiences; sometimes, by too great prosperity and unprepared to receive God's message, unappreciative of it. If such hear the message it enters not into the heart: it is to them merely a mental hearing, they take little interest in it. At first indeed they may appreciate the harmony and certain beauties and consistencies of the truth, but it never becomes theirs, it never enters in, they are not open to its reception. Ere long the enemy comes; Satan the adversary steals away from them every element of truth they once had seen or appreciated. The truth is not for such, even though, being in the way, some grains fell on them.

This class of people may be found in every community, in almost every home. They are not specially to be blamed,

though we may sympathize with them, regretting their inability to receive the comfort and grace of the Word of God. These hearts are not fit for the kingdom under present conditions. What the Lord may do for them in the future—either through trials and sufferings and disappointments in the present life, that will plow them up and make them ready for the reception of the truth—or what he may do for them in the disciplines of the Millennial age to fit and prepare them for the truth, are different questions. All the parable says is that while in this condition they are not acceptable, not wanted amongst the Lord's people.

THE STONY-GROUND HEARERS

We have all come across this class of hearers in Christendom; they not only see something of the beauty of God's plan but they receive it with joy, they give every evidence of bringing forth much fruit. We say to ourselves, I believe that person is a true Christian and will be one of the overcomers. But we cannot see as God sees, we know not the heart, the shallowness of the nature is not disclosed until, opposition being aroused, the sun of persecution blights and withers the results. We are inclined to feel discouraged, especially if we helped to plant the seed and had expected great results. The Lord in this parable cautions us against discouragement by assuring us that he knows in advance that considerable of the seed will fall upon stony-ground hearts, where, having little nourishment backed by little character, it will soon wither and bring no fruitage to maturity.

This should not signify to us that the case is a hopeless one as respects the future. Under new conditions character will be deepened and good results will be proportionately obtained, or else, if the heart will not come under the influence of the Lord's dealings in the future, it will be utterly discarded as useless ground. If any of the Lord's people who have received the truth find in themselves this shallowness of nature, this superficiality represented in the parable, he or she should at once appeal to the Lord for such a deepening of the soil of their hearts as would enable them to bring fruitage to his praise.

THE THORNY-GROUND HEARERS

The soil that brings forth great thorns is rich, and if devoted wholly to the production of wheat would bring forth large crops. So it is, our Lord explains, with some who hear the message of God respecting the kingdom—they are good, strong, deep characters, they would make noble Christians and bring forth much fruitage to the Master's praise and to their own honor if they were fully devoted to the Lord. But alas! their talents, influence, means, time—the strength of their hearts, the strength of the soil, is absorbed in another direction—in the bringing forth of earthly projects and ambitions whose interests conflict with the interests of the kingdom. The parable shows that where the thorns are permitted to remain the kingdom interests will suffer. This is another way of saying that those who have heard of the Lord and love him are mistaken when they suppose they can love both the Lord and the world; it is another way of telling us that we cannot serve God and Mammon, that we cannot bring forth both thorns and wheat. Our hearts must be single, wholly given to the Lord; we must love him with all our heart, soul, strength, mind, else we cannot bring forth the fruitage which he requires of disciples.

Alas! of the disappointing ones who hear the Gospel of the kingdom during this age, the thorny-ground hearers have the most conspicuous place. Not much could be expected from the wayside heart, not much could be expected of the shallow hearted, but great possibilities are lost in those in whom the seed of truth is choked by the cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches—the thorns. All of the Lord's people who find these thorns mingling with the truth in their hearts should learn from this parable the impossibility of bringing forth two crops—of being prosperous, successful and prominent and honored according to the course of this world, and also growing prosperous in the spiritual interests and in association with their Lord in the kingdom. We cannot serve God and Mammon. The Lord seeketh not such as are double-hearted to be his joint-heirs in the kingdom. We must love him with all our hearts in order to bring forth the proper fruitage, and eventually to hear his, "Well done, good and faithful."

THE GOOD-GROUND HEARERS

Thank God that in his providence and grace some of our hearts have been plowed deeply by the plowshare of experience, trouble, disappointment in respect to earthly affairs and conditions. Thanks be to him, too, if the soil of our hearts is deep and able to receive and appreciate the truth, the Word of the kingdom. We praise him if we have learned the necessity

for the establishment of his kingdom and have heard the invitation and received the seed of truth which invites us to become heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord, and which makes known to us the terms and conditions of fellowship in his sufferings if we would have fellowship also in his glory to follow. Thanks be to him also if our hearts have been in the attitude to respond to these things and not infested with the double mind of business care, household work, etc.

Doubtless in the very best fields seeds of thorns and thistles may be found. O, that we may receive the good seed in such abundant measure as to choke out the thorns, as to separate us fully from the world, its spirit, its ambitions, its aims, and to sanctify us wholly to the love and service of him who hath called us from darkness into his marvellous light.

Let us, dear brethren, not only be sure that our hearts

are of the good-ground sort, and be sure that we have received and are developing the good seed, the Word of the kingdom, but let us seek also to bring forth much fruit. Seeing that some of these may bring forth thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred-fold to the Master's praise, let us determine that by the grace of God, which we know is ours and will assist us, we will be of those who bring forth fruitage an hundred-fold—to our largest possible capacity and measure of service to our King. How may we increase our faithfulness? We answer, By increasing honesty of heart, which prepares us for increased measure of the seed and which enables us to bring this forward to perfection. The harvest is nigh: let us give diligence, therefore, while still there is opportunity, that the Master may find us fruit-bearing to the very largest degree of our possibilities of nature, surroundings and opportunities.

PASSED BEYOND THE VAIL

Another member of the Board of Trustees of the WATCH TOWER BIBLE & TRACT SOCIETY, Brother William M. Wright, passed beyond the veil, into the Most Holy, we trust, on April 3rd. He was well known and dearly beloved by the friends of the truth in various parts, but especially by the Allegheny company, with whom he has lived and met for the past eight years. He was buried from the Bible House chapel on the 5th.

We have every reason to hope that the deceased was not

only called and chosen but faithful unto death. We had distinctly the evidence that he "loved the brethren" and delighted in laying down moments and hours of his life on their behalf. He died after a brief illness which came on while he was telling the divine plan of the ages to two of his sons and some of their acquaintance who had just returned with him from our church service at Carnegie Hall on the 1st.

INTERESTING LETTERS

Dear Brother:—Several weeks ago we were studying I Thess. 3, where Brother Paul was expressing his love and concern for the brethren. One brother remarked that we could draw from this that an occasional letter to you would be appreciated.

Realizing that I have been thoughtless in this matter, and out of a motive of love to you, will give you a few lines of testimony.

My rejoicing in the glad message (which I have had in the last four years) has been the most profound experience of my life. The Bible is more and more commanding my reverence by its harmony, its beauty and its majesty, which can only be seen by observing God's order in its study, and can also say as much of my dear brethren here.

We had a visitor at our public meeting last Sunday from a neighboring town, and the effect of sound doctrine on him may be of interest to you. He is a man of about thirty-six years and had been a drunkard for many years. Nine months ago he came in contact with the truth through a brother in Christ, and it appealed so forcibly to him that it allured him from his old habits. He is quite a sturdy student of the Bible now and has quite a ravenous appetite for the truth. He is considering seriously a full surrender of himself to the Lord. His fellow-townsmen of the Babylonian frame of mind, seeing his wonderful reform, are at him on all sides to join their churches and to head a siege of the "joints," etc., but the spirit of a sound mind turns a deaf ear to these. The dear brother is running under a higher tension than the ordinary, but will not be tested beyond that which he can endure. Thank God!

Praying for you, dear brother, that our heavenly Father may continue his care over you, I am yours in Christ to the glory of God.

HUGO H. REIMER,—Colporteur.

Dear Brother in Christ:—For some time I have been thinking of writing to you a brief statement concerning the Lord's dealings with me, and will do so now. I am rejoicing in the blessed hope set forth in the glorious gospel of Christ. I am truly grateful to my heavenly Father for permitting me to see and appreciate the wonderful truths which I now so clearly see, and I now especially thank you, his faithful steward, for the part you have had in opening the eyes of my understanding to these blessed truths, which so cheer and comfort me.

My parents were Methodists, and when I was converted at the age of nineteen I joined the same denomination, and some years later became a minister, preaching during five and one-half years in the North West Kansas Conference. I was a sincere and loyal minister in that denomination until the last year of my ministry, when I began to have a clearer and more Scriptural view of the character of God's church, and I could no longer in good faith perform all the duties required of a Methodist minister. Then I asked for and received a certificate of location from the conference, and went

back to my former trade, that of carpenter, meanwhile studying the Word of the Lord and asking for more light.

Step by step the Lord has led me and given me light as I was ready to receive it, until a few years ago, in the providence of God, I was led to come to this place. Here, through the faithfulness of Brother S—, my attention was called to the MILLENNIAL DAWN books, and I scarcely need say I have seen a great light. I now see a beautiful harmony in the entire Scriptures such as I could not see before.

I am rejoicing in the glorious prospect of the speedy beginning of the fulfilment of Dan. 2:44, and many other precious promises contained in the Word of God.

Again I sincerely thank you, dear brother, for your faithfulness as God's steward in providing "meat in due season." Your brother in Christ,

J. W. ADAMS,—California.

Dear Brother Russell:—I feel moved to write and express my gratitude for the new light which has been shed upon the "Path of Life" through the influence of the "Plan of the Ages" and "The Time is at Hand." The Bible is a new book to me, and although I have read it for years I can truly say that I have learned more of the wonders of God's love from the reading of those two books than in all my years of misdirected study.

I now prize the Bible as never before. Stumbling blocks have been removed. New light has come in. I have had a wonderful experience of God's love and direction. I have always craved more light, and in prayer asked God to grant me the true light, and the manner in which the WATCH TOWER came to my notice was God's answer to the prayer for light.

In 1900, while located in G—, as a local preacher for the Methodists, a sample copy of the TOWER came to a Mr. R—, with whom I was living, and I read it with great interest, as it treated a subject with which I was having a great amount of trouble (the future state of the wicked). I could never accept the doctrine of eternal torment as the plan of a loving God. I wrote you for the TOWER and you sent it to me as requested, but I must truly confess that I did not give it the attention I should, but gave away some and left some without reading, for I was impressed with the idea that in reading the TOWER I was disloyal to the teachings of "my church."

In 1902 I withdrew from the Methodists and joined the Church of Christ, for they were not creed bound, and gave one liberty to study the Bible as the only "rule and guide for our faith and practice" and the Bible only as a creed to follow. Since that time I have devoted all my time to the study of the holy Book and have never preached a sermon without being able to give God's Word as proof.

I have searched for the truth as a pearl of great price, and a few months ago the "Plan of the Ages" in WATCH TOWER form, came into my hands, and I read it with a mind freed from all sectarian prejudice, with the result of being