

The WATCH TOWER and Herald of Christ's Presence

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No. 1

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER

When our worthy President and also his Holiness the Pope requested Christian people to pray God for the cessation of the European war, we declared that the prayer was not in harmony with the divine arrangement and would not be answered. We pointed out that according to the Scriptures the 2520 years of Gentile dominion ended in September, 1914; and that the war is the one predicted in the Scriptures as associated with the great day of Almighty God—"the day of vengeance of our God." We pointed out the Word of the Lord through the Prophet Joel respecting the gathering of all nations to the Valley of Jehoshaphat—the valley of death.—Joel 3:1-12.

The experiences of Elijah in the closing of his ministry showed us how the great day of the Lord will be ushered in: first, the wind rending the rocks, representing the present war; secondly, the great earthquake, representing the revolution that will follow the present war; thirdly, the fire, representing the anarchy that will follow the revolution; fourthly, "the still, small voice" of God—which will follow the anarchy in the world—through Messiah's kingdom speaking, "Peace! be still!" "Beat your spears into pruninghooks and your swords into plowshares, and learn war no more!"—Micah 4:3.

We see no reason for thinking that the present war will terminate until either Great Britain or Germany has a decisive victory upon the sea. The strife between these two has been fomenting for thirty years. Each has wished the destruction of the other's fleet and colonies, but dreaded the war which would accomplish these ends, well knowing in advance that it would be a terrible one. The unfortunate circumstances which suddenly led up to Austria's assault upon Serbia, Russia's defense of Serbia, and France's revenge for Alsace-Lorraine, involving Germany on both sides, presented Great Britain the long-sought opportunity for crushing her commercial rival. It seems improbable that the British would now consent to cessation of war until a complete victory would be had over Germany, or until her own existence would be in jeopardy.

So far as at present may be discerned, nothing very decisive may be expected before Spring. Meantime, the soldiers are perishing, vast debts are accumulating and the industries of peace are being neglected. By and by, doubtless, the people will awaken to a saner view of the matter, and ask themselves why the people of Europe cannot live as happily there as they can live together in the United States. By and by they will raise the question as to why it should be wrong to murder one another at any private behest, and yet right to slay one another at the command of kings and kaisers. By that time the earthquake stage of the trouble will be near.

When the earthquake, or revolution, so prominently mentioned in the Scriptures shall have come, that, no doubt will be the time when the kings and the captains of industry, of finance and of politics will in self-defense greatly exalt the power of religious leaders. Then we may expect that the Federation of Churches will exercise a power in the world such as has not been since the days of Papal supremacy. In the symbolic language of Revelation, that will be the time in which the "image of the beast" will have life and work great wonders, threatening, commanding, in the name of heaven.—Rev. 13:11-18.

MEANTIME, WHAT SHALL WE DO?

The effect of the war is not unfavorable in all respects. From Europe we have the word that a great religious impression is being made upon the people by the war. In their own

distress and the distress of their loved ones on the battlefield, there is a natural tendency to turn to heaven for help. At the same time there is a quickening of understanding. People are more ready to think than previously. Told that the soldiers are fighting for the Lord's cause, and with the implication given that those who die are more or less martyrs for the cause of right (and are therefore heirs of heaven), the people are fighting valiantly.

The newspapers tell them how the Catholics and the Protestants of Great Britain are praying for the Allies against their enemies; and how the German churches, Catholic and Protestant, are praying for the Germans and against the Allies. The people are wondering and will wonder still more as they think further as to how these different prayers can be answered—how the Germans could be taken to heaven for fighting against the Allies and the Allies be taken to heaven for fighting against the Germans! With all their thinking some will be sure to wonder whether or not these are reasonable conclusions, and what is their foundation.

On the other hand, they will think of the hell of fire and the purgatory of suffering taught them from infancy; and if all the soldiers are going to heaven, they will wonder who is going to hell. The sober thinking which the war is engendering will, no doubt, be helpful in the end, however unreasonable some of the conditions may be in the beginning. Saner views must ultimately come.

The American people are in some respects suffering more from the war than are the peoples of Europe; for the traffic of the world is temporarily hindered. They have not the business stimulus which prevails in Europe, because of military preparation there.

Americans, too, have a better opportunity of taking a calm, unprejudiced view of the war than have the people of Europe, who are so close to it and so liable to be influenced by the specious arguments of crafty leaders who tell them that the war is necessary for the maintenance of civilization—putting on their construction as to what is real civilization. Partisan spirit, called patriotism, runs high in the countries engaged in the strife. The newspapers defend and uphold the governments; so do the preachers; so do the orators. The few who take the saner and correct view of matters are forced to silence.

From a distance the war seems most unreasonable. Germany should be allowed to build as many ships as she desires, until her people, vexed and worn out with the cost of militarism, will insist on a change of governmental policy. Great Britain should be allowed to have as many ships as she wants and as her people are willing to pay for. Each nation should be allowed to do all the business she can do justly, honestly.

Christian ministers should have long ago pointed out to the people that the present kingdoms of Europe are not God's kingdoms, but human institutions; and that all these, according to the Bible, will eventually pass away at the inauguration of Messiah's kingdom. The reverence of the Lord should have been taught, and patient waiting for his time and way. The effect of the war has certainly in America been favorable to Christian enlightenment. People who may be said never to have thought before on religious subjects are thinking now, thinking hard, and many are reaching reasonably sane conclusions.

The work which our Society has been doing in the world for several years is bearing some fruitage. People who sneered

at the thought of Christ's Millennial kingdom being imminent, and who trusted for a time that the world would be converted by the nominal churches, are now awakening to the realization of the fact that the fulfilment of the Lord's Prayer is the only real salvation of the world, and are continually praying, with more meaning than before, "Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth, even as in heaven." They are beginning to realize that not only have the heathens abroad doubled within a century, but that the heathenism at home is much greater than they had believed, and that the so-called Christianization of modern civilization is but a thin veneer.

OPPORTUNITIES NEVER SO GREAT AS NOW

All these conditions are favorable. Every tract and every book circulated now is likely to do three or four times as much good as in times past; for the people are getting awake to read, awake to think. Not only so, but they are more and more coming to doubt the theology of the creeds, and to see that the majority of ministers neither teach from the Bible nor believe in it as the only and the inspired revelation of the divine purposes.

We are well aware that some of our dear readers have the thought that the Gentile Times having closed, the Gospel message was closed. Some of these brethren feel that it is useless to continue the message. We cannot sympathize with their reasoning. The divine command was that they should preach the Word, not until the close of Gentile Times, but until the church would be completed. Just how long it will be before the church will be completed we cannot say, but we do believe it is our privilege to tell the Good Tidings as long as there are hungry hearts to receive the message; and we do believe that some of those coming to a knowledge of the truth now are amongst the finest characters that have ever come into the truth.

We believe also that the evidences strongly favor the thought that some of those who have recently come into the light are fully received of the Lord into the blessings and privileges of the church—his members. Some of them have the real spirit of sacrifice, which is one of the sure signs. They manifest a love for the truth, which is another favorable sign. The Lord grants them clearness of understanding in the truth, which is another indication of their having been begotten of the holy Spirit. Some of them are willing and glad to suffer for the sake of the truth, which is one of the best evidences that we could ask that they have received the Spirit of Christ.

So long as we see such evidences of the Lord's blessing by the preaching of his word, should we falter, should we hesitate? Should we not rather be enthusiastic and redouble our efforts in the service of the King and for the service of the brethren, that they may be delivered from the bondage of ignorance and superstition into the glorious light of the knowledge of God?

We are asked, Did not the forty years of harvest seem to close with the end of Gentile times? We answer, Yes; we had so expected. But we remember that the Jewish harvest, which was a picture the Lord drew, was a little different from our harvest. Under the law, the Jews were commanded to leave the corners of their fields unreaped, so that there might be something for the gleaners to do after the regular harvesters had done their work, that while the barns were being filled and the tares were being huddled and burned, making ready for a new crop, the gleaners might gather the wheat from the corners of the harvest field. Perhaps the present work is largely that of gleanings. It would appear so.

Looking back at the Jewish harvest, we perceive that it ended in the year 69 A. D., but that certain features of the harvest work continued over into the year A. D. 70. The burning of the chaff took place then. While that was in progress and the nation of Israel was being overthrown, doubtless there was a gleanings work, as the eyes of understanding began to open and as the people began to realize the fulfilment of Scripture. And just so it seems to be here. Shall we not be earnest in our endeavor to do this gleanings work? Surely we will be if we still maintain our love for the Lord's name and character! This will lead us to tell forth his glorious character, to show forth the errors which have beclouded the name of our heavenly Father by misrepresenting his divine plan of the ages. Surely we will be energetic in this work if our love for the brethren continues; for we see many who seem to be true children of God still in great darkness respecting the great and wonderful truths to which our eyes of understanding have opened.

WHAT ABOUT THE MONEY SUPPLY?

But some may say, "Did we not read between the lines in the Society's Annual Report that the financial streams were drying up? And have we not heard that thirteen DRAMAS have been withdrawn, representing fifty exhibitions per day explana-

tory of the divine plan of the ages? And does this not indicate that God's time has come for closing down the work?"

Our reply is that these things are so, but that we have a reason to surmise that God intends to send us in his own way further financial support, that his message may go forth with great force throughout the whole world! With this in view, we are having all the DRAMAS overhauled and put into good order, anticipating that the funds to operate them will be in our hands shortly. Although we are still walking by faith and not by sight, we urge upon all the dear friends everywhere to slack not their hands in the divine service, but rather to continue to labor and to wait, assured of God's favor and blessing in any event.

More than this, we suggest that all the dear brethren who have been active in the DRAMA work, and who are temporarily discontinued, do not enter into other business permanently, but hold themselves in readiness for this wonderful means of proclaiming the truth which reaches so many people and gives them so much satisfaction and enlightenment respecting the Bible and its true message. We also urge others who have not been with the DRAMA, but who may have knowledge of operating moving-picture films and stereopticon slides, that they make themselves as proficient as possible and advise us of their willingness and readiness and ability for this service.

We request all I. B. S. A. classes to consider well if they have any brethren of special ability whom they could recommend to the Society for such openings as may come: (1) Men clear in the truth and loyal to it, ready to lay down their lives for it; (2) men of good address and possessing a talent for public speaking and an ability to speak grammatically. We want to have a list of these, that we may call for them if opportunity offers. But be sure that you conscientiously answer the questions above, and that you do not recommend any to the Society except those who would be a credit to the truth and its service. There may be other ways in which some could serve without the talent of public speaking and without any particular knowledge of grammar; but for the public service the Society believes it to be the Lord's will that his truth should be presented in a credible form.

Quite a number of our readers have had more or less experience in colporteur work. Some of them have withdrawn from the service because of inability to meet their expenses, even though the Society gave them the books at less than cost—one-half the selling price. Any such colporteur, who has some ability and who could re-enter the work under favorable conditions, is requested to drop us a postcard stating willingness to re-enter and stating the number of books he was able to sell when in the service. Some of these might be assisted in one way or another so as to help them back again to this very important colporteur work. We have methods and instructions now, by the use of which many are successful who formerly were unsuccessful.

We want to get this list, so that, if a way should open up that we expect, we may know how to communicate with you promptly. We ask for this address on a postcard, so that it may be easily filed.

The volunteer work for 1915 should not be forgotten. As stated before, the people are awake and reading, whereas before many of them neglected the literature handed them. Now is the time to put a piece of literature into every home in your own city and to ascertain whether or not the adjoining towns and villages have been served—thus to extend your service in the harvest work. We are ready to supply this literature free, paying the freight to destination. Send in your orders that they may be filled as promptly as possible.

EUREKA DRAMA SUCCESS

In our Report we pointed out that, although only recently started, the EUREKA DRAMA service is proving a very efficient one, especially where it is taken into the small villages and cities. Empty churches, court houses, schoolhouses, etc., are very generally obtainable, when the people know that they are to have a very interesting entertainment free of charge. Some of the classes have obtained these EUREKA DRAMAS by a partial payment down, the Society waiting on them for their greater convenience to pay the remainder. As these remainders are paid we are able to give out other DRAMA sets. Thus the work progresses. The blessing in every case seems to be not only to the public, but especially to those of the dear friends who are serving the public.

Be of good courage and the Lord shall strengthen your heart! Let us be loyal, faithful, and forget not the cultivation of all the fruits and graces of the holy Spirit. Thus shall we best be prepared for the glorious consummation of our hopes, which we believe so near at hand!

RIGHTEOUS AND UNRIGHTEOUS ANGER

"Love is not easily provoked."—1 Corinthians 13:5.

In the chapter from which our text is taken, St. Paul sets forth the prime necessity for the cultivation and development of Love, without which, whatever else we may attain, we shall be nothing in the sight of God. The Apostle tells us in the words of our text that love is not easily provoked. Evidently he uses the word provoked here in a very different sense from its meaning where he says that we should "consider one another, to provoke unto love and good works." (Hebrews 10:24) The thought of the latter text is to incite to good works, to call forth love in others, to exert an influence favorable to righteousness. The thought in our present text, however, is that of being excited, or aroused, to anger. St. Paul declares that love is not easily thus aroused, but is long-suffering.

We might say, strictly speaking, that it is not the quality of love itself that would ever be moved to anger. Yet righteous anger—a just indignation aroused by our love for the principles of righteousness—is not incompatible with love. "God is love," and the Scriptures assure us that he "is angry with the wicked every day." His anger is righteous indignation against sin.

GOD'S RIGHTEOUS ANGER

Looking to God as our great Example, we see that his love was manifested on behalf of his human creatures in the beginning. It was love for humanity that provided the Garden of Eden with all its blessings and its perfect life, just as his love for the angels had provided all their blessings. But when sin came in, love stepped back; or in other words, justice was the special attribute of God then manifested. It was better for mankind that there should be this punishment for sin; for from the foundation of the world God, foreknowing man's fall, had purchased his redemption. So even in the sentence of death his love for man persisted. But God is the opponent of sin, and when his law was violated, love, or he who is the embodiment of love, was provoked to righteous anger.

God's indignation was likewise kindled against his chosen people, the Jews, when he said to the Prophet (Jeremiah 8:19), "Why have they provoked me to anger?" Many Scriptures speak of God's anger. That anger has ever burned against sin. It has been resting upon the world for six thousand years. But the love of God has in no way been violated by this attitude against the condemned world. Therefore, love can be justly provoked to anger. He who declares that justice is the foundation of his throne never indulges in sentiments which are not in the fullest harmony with that justice. But he has arranged for the recovery of this condemned race. The love of God has made this provision for his fallen creatures.

GOD'S LOVE HELD IN ABEYANCE

But love is not easily provoked, not unjustly provoked. It required an act of intentional disobedience on the part of father Adam to provoke God to anger. It was not because mother Eve was deceived that the sentence came upon the world. The anger of God came upon mankind and the sentence of death was pronounced because of father Adam's sin, which was committed with full knowledge. And during all these six thousand years of sin God's love has been held in abeyance, so to speak, provoked to the point of withdrawal.

But all the while God's character has not changed. He did not cause the diabolical conditions which have existed since the fall of man. Neither love nor justice, as embodied in Jehovah, would sanction sin; "The wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23) And everything that goes with death as its natural result is a part of that penalty. But God has permitted these conditions, knowing that by his power they would all be overruled for the ultimate good of mankind. The great adversary of God is responsible for the disaster which sin has wrought upon the earth. But the Almighty will yet cause Satan to work out good for the children of men, ultimately crushing, annihilating, the great enemy of righteousness.—Hebrews 2:14.

The love of God, thus held in abeyance, has bided its time, to be revealed to astonished man when the due time shall have come. Nearly two thousand years ago love manifested itself on behalf of the world, when God sent forth his only-begotten Son to be man's redeemer. He came to earth and gave his life—a willing sacrifice for human sin. Then the call went forth to gather the church, the class who were in God's purpose to be the bride of his Son, to be associated with him in the great future work for the race of Adam. During this Gospel age, this church is being gathered, and in due time will be exalted in kingdom glory. Then God's love will manifest itself to our race. The kingdom of God will lift up mankind from sin and degradation and death, into the light and glory of the Lord—all who are willing to accept life on God's terms.

SPECIAL CRISES IN CHRISTIAN LIFE

How earnestly we as children of God should watch and pray that we may indeed be fitted for our great future work—

now so near! There is a danger that love will not be sufficiently strong in us; for by reason of the fall, sin and selfishness have come to be preponderating influences in the world. These, operating for six thousand years, have made man very deficient in love, sympathy, brotherly-kindness and long-suffering. Now there is a greater tendency toward anger, malice, hatred, strife, than toward love. Consequently, when God accepts us into his family, he tells us that one of the first requirements is love. Love must grow in our hearts and minds, and permeate all our thoughts, words and actions.

Our fallen flesh, helped on by the unseen "powers of the air," will seek to prevent our attaining this necessary condition; and after we have attained it, strong pressure will at times be brought to bear upon us at new creatures to induce us to withdraw from this position. From time to time the child of God has experiences with others of the brethren that seem to threaten his spiritual health, or even his spiritual life. The powers of darkness assail him, endeavoring to encourage the feelings and sentiments which he is strongly tempted to adopt. He has come to a crisis in his Christian experience. He must go forward or backward. He cannot stand still. The struggle is on. Will this severe trial prove a stepping-stone to lift him nearer God, or will it be a stone of stumbling, to overthrow him?

At such crucial times, the only refuge is prayer. The Lord permits these very trials to test our mettle as children of God. The adversary will endeavor to place the matter before our agitated minds in the most unfavorable light as regards the brother or sister. He will seek to pervert the judgment, and to deceive the mind as to the real facts in the case; and our flesh responds to this view of the matter. The only safe course is to refuse to entertain in the slightest degree the thoughts of bitterness trying to find a lodgment in our mind and heart, and to cry at once to the Lord for strength and help in our time of need, seeking counsel of his Word bearing upon our proper attitude in such an emergency. Let us remember the words of the hymn we have often sung:

"Yield not to temptation,
For yielding is sin;
Each victory will help you
Some other to win.
Fight manfully onward,
Dark passions subdue;
Look ever to Jesus,
He'll carry you through."

"FORGIVE, AND YE SHALL BE FORGIVEN"

"Let us, then, be kind and forbearing one with another, brethren, seeking to put the kindest construction upon the words, the actions and the natural tendencies of one another, remembering our own peculiarities and foibles. Let us remember that each of us is blemished by the fall, and that those of the brethren who try us most may have had hereditary tendencies and environments in earlier life of which we are not aware, and which would make us very pitiful if we knew. Let us remember also that we may be altogether unaware of some of our own weaknesses and mannerisms, which may grate upon others. We should be much more careful to note our own mistakes and faults than those of other brethren of the Lord.

"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger [fleshly anger], and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice; and ye be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you"—and still forgives you. (Ephesians 4:31, 32) "Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing one another and forgiving one another, if any man have occasion of complaint against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things, put on love, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which ye are also called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom."—Colossians 3:12-16.

After the child of the Lord has gained the victory in a struggle like this, and has through prayer and determined effort brought the Arm of God to his deliverance, he is a stronger Christian than before the trial came. He has taken a stride forward in the narrow way; he has taken a firmer hold on God, and will be the better enabled to conquer in the next testing. But every failure to thus overcome leaves the child of God weaker and less able to resist the onslaught of his flesh and of the adversary and his evil hosts, and the less sure of being a final overcomer.

In speaking of love as respects the church of Christ, the

Apostle assures us that if we would be pleasing to the Lord we must develop richly this grace. Those who possess this quality in goodly measure will not be easily provoked to anger, will not readily take offense, will not be too watchful lest their rights and dignity be infringed upon. Those who have little love will be easily angered and offended. Let us keep self down, and diligently continue the work of its crucifixion, looking ever to him from whom cometh our help. The love which our Lord appreciates is longsuffering. This does not mean that there would never be occasions for just indignation, righteous anger. There should be a feeling of righteous anger when we see great injustice. Why? Because injustice is wrong. God is angry with injustice, when it is committed knowingly, or willingly. And so God's people should have no sympathy with injustice.

LOVE SUPERADDED TO JUSTICE

If the children of God do not carefully cultivate the quality of justice, they will get themselves into that attitude where they will not appreciate justice at all. But while appreciating what is right and what is wrong, we are to go further, and see that we cultivate diligently the quality of love, sympathy, charity. None can say that his own estimate of what constitutes justice and love is entirely right, and that the other man's estimate is entirely wrong, especially when this other is a brother or sister in Christ, seeking to develop the same Christlike qualities as ourself. Our viewpoints cannot be always the same; therefore let us not be too sure that our own viewpoint is the correct one, and the other view wrong, where there is any possibility of our being mistaken.

No follower of Christ is so well developed that he can say, I do not need any further instructions along the lines of justice and love, but my brother needs it. And in our experiences with the brethren, where the other one seems to be at fault, let us say to ourselves, Here is a brother who perhaps has had more disadvantages than I have had. He is a brother of mine

according to the Spirit. He seems to me to be doing something wrong, but I sympathize with him because he probably does not know that his action is wrong. Or I may be wrong myself. If he saw the matter from my viewpoint, he would do differently. I will not judge him, but leave that for the Almighty, who is infallible in judgment and to whom judgment belongs.—1 Corinthians 4:5.

SYMPATHY FOR ALL MEN

God has no sympathy with sin; but he has so much sympathy for sinners that he has provided his well-beloved Son to redeem and uplift the sinner. He has set apart a thousand years for this work of human uplift. We note injustice; we ought to note it. But it is not our province to flay, to inflict punishment. We are to "judge nothing before the time." We see acts committed that shock our moral sense. We are to say to ourselves, I believe that act to be criminal; but it is not for me to settle with that wrong-doer. God knows to what extent the individual is responsible; I do not. It is my duty as far as possible to view him from the standpoint of sympathy. It is my duty to assist him if it is in my power, if I have a proper opportunity—to help him out of his wrong views into right views. But even in this I am to be "wise as a serpent, and harmless as a dove." The conduct is wrong, but I cannot know how wrong the individual may be.

So love looks out and sees that the whole world is in much difficulty through the fall. And love says, Be gentle toward all; be meek; be forbearing. We are ever to remember that we are in a world of sin, pain, sickness, death. From this viewpoint, love will not easily be provoked, but will think kindly and sympathetically of others. Thus, beloved, shall we grow up into Christ, our glorious Head, in all things, until, made perfect and complete through his grace, we shall be presented to the Father "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing."—Ephesians 5:27.

THE FIRST ARMAGEDDON BATTLE

JANUARY 10.—JUDGES 4:4-24; 5:1-22.

SISERA AND BARAK—MRS. DEBORAH AND MRS. Jael—WAS THE LATTER A MURDERESS?—HOW "THE STARS IN THEIR COURSES FOUGHT AGAINST SISERA."

"The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of their troubles."—Psalm 34:17.

We have heretofore pointed out that the great Battle of Armageddon—the anti-typical one—is near—that it will quickly follow the present world-war. Today's Study relates to the first of the great battles in the Valley of Megiddo, noted for its many slaughters, and therefore made the basis of the divine prediction respecting the "time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation," which will precede and prepare the way for Messiah's glorious rule of a thousand years.—1 Cor. 15:24-26; Rev. 20:6.

The Israelites, guilty of idolatry, had, according to God's covenant with them, been chastened by the permitting of their enemies to vanquish them. They had come to great straits. Their enemies had become strong and high-handed. General Sisera, of the Canaanites, having humbled the Israelites of North Palestine for years, started with a large army, intent upon victories, to the southward. The strength of his army is shown in the statement that it contained nine hundred iron chariots.

By the time he had gotten as far southward as the Valley of Megiddo, messengers reached him, informing him that Barak, a leader among the Israelites, had improved the opportunity of his absence and was also leading southward an army of ten thousand Israelites. Under divine guidance Barak made Mt. Tabor his army base—the same which, in Jesus' day, became known to his followers as the Mount of Transfiguration, where the coming kingdom of Messiah was represented in a vision. Thus we have another remarkable feature of the picture of the future—the association of the vision of the kingdom in proximity with the Armageddon field of disaster picturing the overthrow of present institutions.

A DISCOMFITED ARMY

General Sisera, disdaining the poorly armed Israelites, advanced with his army on both sides of the River Kishon toward Mt. Tabor. Then it was that the word of the Lord came afresh to General Barak, directing him to advance against the army of the Canaanites. The slaughter was a great one, as related in our lesson. Sisera's army was discomfited, so that it scattered. A great storm and cloudburst swelled the river, making quagmires of the lower valleys, rendering useless the chariots of Sisera. His soldiers, fleeing for their lives, were cut down by the Israelites, while other thousands

were swept by the freshets down the river to the sea. This interference of God on behalf of his people Israel in figurative language is styled the fighting of the "stars of heaven" against Sisera's army. Similarly in the great Armageddon near at hand it will not be human might that will prevail, but the disconcerted hosts will effect the complete disruption of the present order of things, for "every man's hand shall be against his brother and against his neighbor." (Ezekiel 38:21; Zechariah 8:10; 14:13) It is the cloudburst of truth and the rising waters of knowledge which are bringing to pass this great human catastrophe—which the Lord will overrule for the blessing of the world.

THE POWER OF A FAITHFUL WOMAN

Although the Lord has been pleased usually to use men in connection with his work, not only as typical characters, but also as evangels of the Gospel, nevertheless the Scriptures give us pictures of noble women who, because of the delinquency of men, have been used and almost forced into public service by God's providence. Notable amongst the instances of such in the Bible is the case of Mrs. Deborah. She perceived how neglect of the divine law had borne fruit in the subjugation of her people. She perceived that this was spreading throughout the land of Canaan, and that what was needed was a guide to point the people to the right way—back to God. The Canaanites, whom they had not conquered, had conquered them.

The conquest was permitted by God. It had its incipient state when the Israelites neglected the divine direction that they should live separate from all other people. Instead, they had begun to intermarry with the Canaanites. These, in turn, had enticed their husbands and their children to the heathen gods of worship. Apparently many of Israel who had not gone over to idolatry had nearly lost their knowledge and appreciation of the true God.

The same is a difficulty today in this land—everywhere. The revulsion of Christian people from the monstrous creedal errors of the past has alienated many from the Bible, under the belief that the Bible and the creeds teach the same doctrines. This is the explanation of empty pews and a distaste for religion. What the people need is correct information re-

specting the true God of love and his real plan, as outlined in the Bible.

In the dark hour of Israel's oppression, the princes of the tribes seemed to lack patriotism as well as faith in God. Each tribe was a separate state and there was no cohesion between them—the divinely intended bond of union, the true religion, having relaxed. It was about this time that the Lord, seeking a channel through which to be gracious to his people, found that channel in a woman—Deborah. She realized the situation more keenly than others, probably because more deeply consecrated to God and his service. She removed from her home in the northern part to a central place in the highlands of Ephraim. From there she sent encouraging, stimulating messages to the chief men of the various tribes. She was respected. Her counsel was appreciated. Her advice was sought. In this sense she judged—admonished, guided, assisted—Israel.

FULL DEVOTION OF HEART ESSENTIAL

Deborah is styled a prophetess. This might mean a public teacher, or it might mean one through whom the Lord sent special messages. Some things connected with the story indicate the latter. Surely the Lord used her, and that because she was a willing and consecrated servant of his cause, his people. What a lesson here for all of God's people—that in order to be used in the Lord's service and accomplish things for him and his, full devotion of heart is essential.

At an opportune time, when Sisera's army with nine hundred chariots had proceeded southward to Megiddo, Deborah sent word to Barak, a leader in her tribe—Naphtali. She admonished that now was the time to do something for the deliverance of God's people, and that he should immediately march to battle with ten thousand Israelites. Barak refused unless she would co-operate. She agreed to do so, forewarning him, however, that the honor of the matter would thus be divided with herself, and that he would miss a part of his blessing by reason of his lack of courage. Thus it was that when Barak's army moved to Mt. Tabor, it was under General Barak's command, but a woman was the real mouthpiece or agent of God, in directing the affairs of the battle which brought such signal victory to Israel.

WAS THE WAR JUSTIFIED?—MRS Jael

General Sisera's chariots stuck in the mire; his army defeated, he fled afoot with others, only to be overtaken by the victors. Entering a supposedly hospitable tent, he hid himself

and fell asleep. His hostess improved the opportunity and drove a tent-pin through his temple. The act has been denounced as a breach of hospitality by some, but has been defended on the grounds that the custom still of the Arabs of Palestine is that any man intruding into a woman's tent is worthy of death. Anyway, let us remember that Jael was not a Christian woman, not begotten of the holy Spirit, not taught in the school of Christ and that, therefore, whatever may be said of her would have no bearing whatever in respect to Christians who are under the law of the Spirit of Christ—the law of love.

Incidentally, let us remember that none of the Jews stood in the same relationship to God and his divine purpose that true Christians occupy. Their warfare in the flesh typifies our warfare as new creatures against the weaknesses and appetites of our flesh. Let us remember also that the death of Sisera and his army did not precipitate them into a hell of eternal tortures, but merely was the passage-way by which they were "gathered to their fathers"—"slept with their fathers." They have known nothing since, and will know nothing in the future until the time of their awakening; and that awakening God has graciously timed so that it will be after Messiah shall have taken possession of the world, and by the establishment of his kingdom shall have overthrown the kingdom of Satan and the reign of sin and death.

Sisera and his army will come forth, like the remainder of mankind, as a result of the redemptive work of Jesus, finished at Calvary. They will come forth in order that the grace of God may be testified to them, and that they may have an opportunity, by obedience to the laws of the kingdom, to prepare themselves to enter into everlasting life on the plane of human perfection in an earthly paradise. With this thought before us, it makes little matter whether death comes upon us through war, pestilence or disease. Only those who have heard of Christ, who have accepted him and who have been begotten of the holy Spirit as new creatures—only these are on trial at the present time. The trial of all the remainder of the world is future; for knowledge is an essential feature of testing for life eternal or death eternal.

"A thousand years! earth's coming glory!

'Tis the glad day so long foretold;

'Tis the bright morn of Zion's glory,

Prophets foresaw in times of old."

GIDEON—THE MAN OF COURAGE

JANUARY 17.—JUDGES 6:11-40.

A LOGICAL MAN—A STRONG CHARACTER—TOO HUMBLE FOR SELF-CONFIDENCE—FAITH AFTER PROOF—HOSPITALITY REWARDED—DARING AND DOING FOR GOD—FAITH GROWING SEEKS FRESH PROOFS.

"Blessed is the man whom Thou chooseth."—Psalm 65:4.

Although the Scriptures tell us that not many great, rich, wise and strong are chosen of the Lord for his work, we may be sure that this is not because they would be unacceptable, but because their wisdom, riches, strength, courage, usually make them too self-confident and not sufficiently reliant on the Lord—not sufficiently humble to be taught of him and to be glad of opportunities for his service. It was to Gideon, a stalwart young Israelite, that the angel of the Lord was sent with a message and with a work. His salutation was, "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor." Gideon replied with excellent logic, "Why, if the Lord be with us, hath all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles of which our fathers told us?"

The Midianites and others of the nomadic peoples from the East, discerning that the land of Canaan was very fertile, repeatedly invaded it, confiscating much of the product of the land, so that on this very occasion Gideon was threshing out a few sheaves of wheat, fearing to have a customary threshing lest the Midianites should rob them of all their possessions and increase their levy.

The angel was not there to discuss theology, but to inspire Gideon and to make of him a messenger of the Lord in the deliverance of his people. The humility of the man shines out in his protest that his family was one of the poorest of the tribe of Manasseh, and that he himself was inferior to his brethren of his own father's house. Surely a mistake had been made in the selection, and a more capable person should be found! But to this the angel of the Lord replied, "Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man."

When we remember the Lord's promise to Israel that he would defend them and protect their interests—when we remember that their interests were earthly interests—then

we should remember also that this protection was dependent upon Israel's maintenance of heart-loyalty and faithfulness to God. In the same covenant the Lord assured the people in advance that if they would wander away into idolatry he would bring upon them various adversities—that their enemies should reap their harvests, etc. Thus we may know the answer to Gideon's question of why the Lord allowed the distress in which they were. It was not that God was unfaithful to his covenant, but that the Israelites had been unfaithful.

A proof of this unfaithfulness is found in our lesson and its context. Gideon's father had the charge or was caretaker of the groves of Baal and Ashtaroth. Their images were near his home—apparently on his property. These groves were large posts, significant of honor, erected near the idol; and these were maintained by the people of Gideon's own time, his own father being one of the principal of them. Here was the secret of Israel's helplessness and subjection to the Midianites.

Although Gideon apparently did not surely know who was his visitor, nevertheless something in the conversation persuaded him that he had an honorable guest. He prepared him a feast, and brought it to him. Instead of eating it the angel directed that the soup be poured out on a rock round about the food, and then touched the cakes and the lamb with his staff. A miracle followed which demonstrated that the visitor was the angel of the Lord—fire proceeded from the rock and entirely consumed the food, which was accepted as a sacrifice. Immediately the angel vanished from Gideon's sight; for he had accomplished the purpose of his mission.

THE MINISTRY OF ANGELS

Here we have another illustration of the fact that we are surrounded by spirit beings, invisible to our natural eyes, and the fact also that in God's providence in olden times he communicated to mankind through these angels, of whom we read,

"The angel of the Lord encampeth around about them that fear him, and delivereth them." And again, "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister unto those who shall be heirs of salvation?" Doubtless the angels of the Lord are as present with his people as ever—indeed more so during this Gospel age since Pentecost than ever before, because now God's people are the Spirit-begotten ones specially precious in their Father's sight.—Psalm 34:7; Hebrews 1:14.

"Their angels do always have access to the Father," was the comment of the Lord Jesus respecting his followers. It is a part of their business to look after the interests of the consecrated members of the body of Christ and to deliver them from everything that would not be for their advantage, in harmony with the assurance that "all things shall work together for good to those who love God." But it is the interest, the good, of the new creature that is being considered and not the interests of the flesh. These messengers, no less powerful, are invisible throughout the Gospel age because the Lord would have the members of the house of sons walk by faith and not by sight.—2 Corinthians 5:7.

In olden times, however, in the time of the house of servants, the Lord's representatives assumed human bodies and ordinarily appeared in connection with their visits to humanity, so that they might have the better opportunity of direct conversation and instruction when communicating their messages. Thus the angels of the Lord appeared to Abraham and ate with him. He knew them not until subsequently they revealed their identity.

GIDEON'S GREAT COURAGE MANIFESTED

The same night following the visit of the angel, the Lord made a further revelation to Gideon, instructing him to destroy the idols upon the property and to overthrow the altar of Baal and to build instead an altar to Jehovah, to kill one of his father's bullocks and therewith to make burnt offerings unto the Lord, using for the purpose the wooden pole, or "grove," which formerly did honor to Baal. The work was accomplished in the night because his father, his brethren and the men of the village would have stoutly resisted the work, had they known of it. Gideon, therefore, was very courageous when once he knew that he had been called of the Lord to do the work.

Indeed, we may say that conviction that our work is of divine authority is a power of itself in the heart of any man or woman. This is part of the lack of today—lack of faith in God, and failure to recognize a mission that is of God. Much of the preaching, praying and good endeavors is therefore formalistic, "having a form of godliness without its power."

From such we turn away, as St. Paul directed. We are seeking to be God's servants and we want surely to know the divine Word. Armed with it, "one may chase a thousand."

A young Hebrew pursuing his course at Harvard University said, "I have a talent for music and am pursuing it; but, oh, I feel as though I want to find some great object worthy of my life and give my life for that object." Undoubtedly there is such a sentiment in many of the young, especially between the years of twelve to twenty. Happy are the youth who, in God's providences come under wise, helpful instruction, that they might realize that the grandest use of life possible is to render it to God in his service and in the service of humanity! Gideon was one of this type, as is manifest all through the story. He had the courage and the faith, and merely needed to have the knowledge of God and to be commissioned to go forth in his name to do his will.

When the villagers found what had happened and traced it to Gideon they called upon his father to deliver him up to death, but the latter wisely responded as to whether or not a god of mighty power would need to be defended. If Baal could not defend himself he could not defend Israel. The argument was potent. The people were prepared to look for a better God as their deliverer. Meantime, in harmony with his commission, while the Midianites were gathering, Gideon sent messengers to the various tribes, with the result that thirty thousand volunteers responded to give battle to the invaders.

But meantime, also, Gideon required fresh evidences of the Lord that he was doing the divine will. The one test was that a wool fleece laid out in the open over night might be thoroughly wet with the dew, while the ground all about it might be dry. The Lord responded and granted the proof; for Gideon wrung from the fleece a bowl of water. But this was not enough. Who could tell but what there was some special attraction for the fleece in the water? He would reverse the test and ask God to grant a demonstration that all around the fleece might be perfectly wet with dew and that the fleece might be dry. This was also granted.

But we are not to think that because the Lord thus granted proofs to Gideon it would be proper for us today to make similar tests. We have much advantage every way. Behind us are the experiences of Gideon and others for now thousands of years—added to which we have the New Testament records of God's favor toward mankind and the Lord Jesus. We have the "wonderful words of life" and an introduction to the Heavenly Father through the begetting of the holy Spirit as a result of faith in the precious blood. Ours is a different case. The Lord would have us walk by faith in the lessons already taught us, and not by sights and signs of our own time.

GIDEON'S BRAVE THREE HUNDRED

JANUARY 24.—JUDGES 7:1-8, 16-23.

A LITTLE ARMY TOO LARGE—"THINE BE THE GLORY"—COWARD'S OFF FOR HOME—COWARD'S SPRING—STILL TOO MANY—WHY THE LAPPERS WERE CHOSEN—"DO AS I DO"—PITCHER, LAMP, TRUMPET—JEHOVAH AND GIDEON—THE VICTORY—THE INCIDENT A PARABLE—ITS MEANING.

"Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith Jehovah of hosts."—Zechariah 4:6.

Today's study reminds of the victory of the Spartan three hundred over the Persian hosts, except that in this case the battle depended, not upon human bravery, but upon the Lord's blessing. Our last study showed us Gideon, encouraged by the Lord's promise of victory, sending messengers to the various tribes in Israel. Today's study shows the resultant army of 32,000 with Gideon at the foot of Mount Gilboa, at Harod Spring—a little lake which drains off eastward to the Jordan. On the farther side of the lake were the Midianites, numbering about 135,000. An invading host, they had for some time been pillaging the Israelites unmolestedly; but now they learned that Gideon's army was gathering; and they assembled themselves to crush it.

While Gideon was feeling that his army was far too small for such a battle—one to four—the Lord directed him to the contrary—that the army was too large, and that there would be danger that the victory he purposed should come might not be appreciated as being from the Lord, but be thought to indicate the dexterity of Israel's warriors. Accordingly, by divine direction, Gideon gave word to his army of 32,000 that as many of them as were fearful and preferred to return home might do so. Many were fearful—22,000. The name of the spring, Harod, signifies coward; and it has been assumed that the name was given it because of the fear manifested by the 22,000 who went home.

Surely the faith of Gideon was tried as his little army melted to 10,000 men! But the Lord said to him, There are yet too many. Cause the host to go down to the spring to drink;

and discern between those who drink directly from the pool, kneeling down and putting their mouths into the water and sucking it up, and those who, bending over, lap from their hands as a dog laps with his tongue.

There were three hundred of this latter class left by this test; and the Lord declared these to be the proper ones to especially win the victory. The remaining 9,700, however, would later join in the pursuit of the enemy.

The custom of lapping water with the hand is still common with the people of Palestine—shepherds, etc. They became very expert at it. Symbolically, this act would seem to signify alertness and obedience. An ox drinks by putting his mouth into the water and sucking it and, when thirsty, gives his entire attention to the sucking of the water, refusing to pay any attention to the commands of his owner, and even resisting the use of the rod upon his flanks. The dog, on the contrary, while lapping the water with his tongue, is all alert, with his eyes watching in every direction, seeing everything about him, and ready to quit the water at any moment in pursuit of obedience to duty.

If water here, as elsewhere in the Bible, be understood to represent the truth, these two companies of Gideon's army would represent two classes who love and appreciate the truth. Both classes drink of the water of truth, but the one class more for their own satisfaction. The other class, watchful, attentive, drink according to their needs, and do not neglect alertness in the Master's service, keeping eyes and ears open for the guidance of divine providence at all times. This latter, wiser

class are represented by the three hundred who were with Gideon, himself representing Jesus, the Captain of our salvation.

THE VICTORY AT ARMAGEDDON

Armies in olden times evidently did not keep so strict a watch as do modern armies. At all events, Gideon and a trusted companion were able to penetrate in the darkness of the night amongst the tents of the Midianites. Listening, they heard one relate his dream of how a barley loaf rolled down a hill and did havoc. Another offered the interpretation that this was Gideon and his small army, which was likely to be their undoing. The incident shows that the Midianites were fearful, apprehensive. Gideon was confident; his faith was strengthened by this little experience which the Lord permitted him to have.

About midnight, shortly after the hour of the changing of the guards amongst the Midianites, was the time appointed for Gideon's attack. The method of warfare was novel. The three hundred were divided into three companies, and spread out over a considerable space near the Midianites. In addition to their usual armor, sword, etc., Gideon and his three hundred had new weapons. Each in his left hand had a pitcher of earthenware, each pitcher had in it a lamp; and each soldier had in his other hand a ram's horn trumpet. The instructions to the three separated bands were that those who were immediately with Gideon should do as he did; and that the other bands, hearing should imitate, breaking the front of their pitchers to let the light shine out ahead, shouting aloud, "Jehovah and Gideon," and blowing in the ram's horns.

The Midianites, waking out of sleep, beholding the flashing lights, hearing the clash of the pottery like the sound of armor, hearing the shouting of voices and the blowing of trumpets, imagined themselves being surrounded by a great host; and half-dazed, they fled. They fought each other, mistaking each other for foes. Gideon and his three hundred pursued and were soon in the fight, assisted by the remaining 9,700. The victory was a great one. The Lord was recognized to be the deliverer; and Gideon, his servant, was honored accordingly.

SOME LESSONS FOR TODAY

Referring to Old Testament matters the Apostle declares, "These things were written aforetime for our instruction." (Romans 15:4) In addition to the lessons learned at that time the Lord, through some of these experiences of the past, gives certain spiritual lessons to spiritual Israel. Gideon's call resembles the Gospel call for volunteers on the side of righteousness—of right against wrong, truth against error.

Many in the world hear the message, have sympathy with

it and respond, purposing to become soldiers of Christ; but before they are fully accepted, the voice of Jesus calls to them, saying, Sit down and count the cost; it is better not to put your hand to the plow and become a servant of the Lord than afterward to look back and wish that you had not become one.

The sight of the enemy, the "fear of death" (Hebrews 2:15), causes them to walk not with the Master, because it is too much. When they first responded to the call, they thought of the glory and honor, but overlooked the fact that these could be obtained only at the cost of hardship and endurance. These cowards who turn back, and never really take the vow of consecration, are perhaps no worse off than if they had never responded. But they will not share in the great victory—the laurels will not be theirs; the crown of life will not be their portion.

Then comes the second test—that of obedience and loyalty. One class of the Lord's people, like the faithful dog, put obedience to the Master's voice first, alert to do his will. Another portion of the Lord's consecrated people heed less the Master's voice, and even the rod; and being less alert to the service of the Lord, they are less used of him.

Compared to the world, the most alert ones are but as very few. It is those of the Lord's people who are alert that he chooses and grants the greatest opportunities for service. These are the ones most willing to break the earthen vessel—to use their present earthly lives in the service of the Lord—that the light of truth may shine out, and that the cause of truth may have a victory. These zealous ones are most faithful in blowing upon the trumpet, representative of God's Word. These have the blessed opportunity for letting their light shine. Their zeal entitles them to special privileges and opportunities.

The victory of the Lord is attained by the antitypical Gideon and his little band of faithful followers, "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." The Lord's Spirit is represented by the light of the lamp shining from the broken vessel. The broken vessels of Gideon's host represent how the Lord's people present their bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God, in his service—in letting the light shine out—in fighting a good fight against the hosts of sin.

We are doubtless near the time when the great victory, the antitype of Gideon's, will be accomplished, when the hosts of sin, the powers of evil, will fall upon one another for their mutual destruction. The present war amongst the nations of Europe is the beginning of this, but not its end. According to the Bible, the climax will be a temporary reign of anarchy, which will fully prepare the world for Messiah's glorious reign of righteousness.

1915—OUR YEAR TEXT—1915

We have chosen as a text for the year the Master's words just before his crucifixion to two of his dear disciples, who had asked to sit with him in his throne. We have selected the Master's reply as the text for this year: "Are ye able to drink of my cup?"—Matthew 20:20-23.

Who knows what this year may bring forth! Who knows but that there may be some special trial, cup of suffering or ignominy, for the loyal followers of the Lamb during 1915! It seems well that we should have this text especially before our minds, "Are ye able to drink of my cup?" Let us answer as did the two disciples on that occasion, "We are able." This was not a boast on their part. It was merely a declaration of their full decision that, whatever circumstances or conditions might arise, they had no thought of any other course than that of obedience to the Lord and of following in his footsteps.

Let us make such a decision promptly. Let us think of it daily. Let us remember, too, that to all those who made such a prompt decision of their determination to drink of his cup, the Lord gave the same assurance that he gave to those two disciples; namely, "Ye shall drink of my cup." We are glad of the assurance that we shall drink of the Lord's cup, because we know that only those who drink of his cup will share with him in the glories of the future, because we know that those who drink of his cup are especially loved of the Father, because we delight to do the will of our Father and to walk in the footsteps of our Lord Jesus.

We have some little cards illustrative of this year's text. We had hoped for them in time for the holidays, but our printing was delayed. We shall be glad to send one of these cards to each regular attendant of the different classes of the I. B. S. A., upon application of the class secretary, or to any other WATCH TOWER subscriber living in a place where there is no

class. You will please receive them as little souvenirs from the Society. The card has a medallion head of the Savior—a beautiful one, embossed. Around the edges is shown a grape vine, bearing large bunches of grapes, representing the fruitage of the Holy Spirit, proceeding from the church and primarily from the Lord who declares, "I am the Vine; ye are the branches." At the bottom of the card is a very fine reproduction of the Last Supper. On the card are the words of our text for the year, "Are ye able to drink of my cup?"

The medallion picture of our Lord is an extraordinary one—admittedly one of the finest. The legend respecting it is interesting. It is the reproduction of an intaglio cut in an emerald. It purports to have come from the Roman Governor of Judea to the Roman Caesar, and was found amongst the valuables of the Caesars at the time of the fall of Constantinople, which for some time was the seat of government. It was presented to the Pope and is now amongst the treasures of the Vatican. A finely painted copy of this in a gilt frame was presented to us, and this picture and the frame have been reproduced on the card for the comfort and refreshment of you all. It is our desire that one copy of it should be in the hands of each WATCH TOWER subscriber; hence the above suggestion as to how you can best procure it.

On the reverse side of this card we have printed "Our Morning Resolve." Quite a good many have expressed their appreciation of this little resolve and have assured us that it brought them a blessing—greater contentment of heart—greater resignation to the divine will—greater joy in the Lord. We trust that having it on these cards may induce many of THE WATCH TOWER readers to make this resolve their own and thus to share in this blessing. "The blessing of the Lord maketh rich."

THE LIFE PROMISED TO THE CHURCH

"This is the promise which he hath promised us, even eternal life."—1 John 2:25.

From the standpoint of Christian thought in general, the words of our text would be practically meaningless; for the great majority of people believe that everlasting conditions are forced upon all humanity from the moment of birth, and that all must live forever somewhere. Therefore they argue that whoever does not merit heaven must, at death, of necessity go to a hell of eternal torment. This erroneous conclusion is based upon the assumption that every human being possesses everlasting life and cannot possibly rid himself of it, even if he tried. We are born, they declare, with a deathless nature, and whoever comes into being must continue to live somewhere to all eternity.

The Scriptures, however, teach to the contrary. They declare that no one can have life except as God gives it to him. When God created man, he gave our first parents perfection of life and organism. Then he informed them that they might have that life forever if they would obey his laws; but that if they were disobedient he would put upon them the penalty of sin—death; that as soon as they had transgressed, the sentence, or curse, of death would go into effect—"Dying, thou shalt die." They disobeyed, and the penalty came upon them.

After nine hundred and thirty years of dying, Adam was dead. During all that period the penalty was coming upon him gradually. Daily he was dying, until finally he ceased to breathe. We see that the children of Adam could not share his perfect life; for he had lost it before any of them came into the world. Thus the world has been misshapen in sin and iniquity—a dying race.

NO LIFE EXCEPT THROUGH CHRIST

The Scriptures tell us that there would have been no future life for the human family had it not been for God's provision in Christ. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish"—lose life altogether. Even before God sent our first parents forth from Eden, he promised that eventually there would be a redeemer. The seed of the woman would at some future time bruise the serpent's head.

Although death reigned from Adam to Moses, nevertheless there was a hope held out to mankind that one day the curse would be removed. This hope was transmitted through the family of Seth, afterwards through the family of Noah, and later through Abraham and his posterity, the children of Israel. This hope was merely a suggestion; no definite revelation was made respecting God's purposes. True, the Prophet Enoch, the seventh from Adam through the line of Seth, had prophesied, "Behold the Lord cometh with myriads of his saints, to execute judgment upon all," and thus had intimated that one day righteousness would be established in the earth. Even the promise made to Abraham, "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed," was not a clear, positive statement of everlasting life, although it implied a resurrection from the dead.

When the Israelites found that they could not gain life everlasting by keeping the law of God, the Lord promised to send them a deliverer, who would take away their stony heart and make a New Covenant with them. Their experience under the Law Covenant taught them that nothing they could themselves do would deliver them from the power of sin and death. Messiah would be their Deliverer.—Romans 11:26.

THE IMPORT OF JESUS' TEACHINGS

When Jesus came, he brought the words of eternal life, everlasting life. As St. Paul declares, Jesus Christ "brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel." (2 Timothy 1:10) The fact that our Savior brought these to light demonstrates that they were not seen before. Although there had been an intimation of God's plan given to Abraham, yet everything looked contrary to this. The death penalty which God had pronounced in Eden seemed to preclude all hope of life everlasting. Although God had stated more or less vaguely that he would one day deliver humanity from the curse of sin and death, no one could tell how this could be—how God could remit the death penalty and still be just.

But when Jesus came, he brought the whole subject to light. He showed that his redemptive work, provided by God's gracious arrangement, would eventually give life everlasting to all who would accept of it upon the divine terms. He also brought immortality to light. He revealed the fact that God purposes not only to give the world of mankind life everlasting, but to give the faithful followers in Jesus' footsteps a higher kind of life—immortality. Thus a new thought was brought out—one never even dreamed of before.

Our Lord's statements respecting life everlasting and immortality are not so clear as are the statements made by his apostles. We recall that these apostles were promised that

they should be especially guided in their utterances. Whatsoever they would bind on earth would be binding and obligatory in the sight of God; and whatsoever they would loose would not be considered binding in God's sight. But in what our Lord Jesus said there was a basis for all that the apostles said and taught.

There was a reason why Jesus did not clearly specify things in respect to himself. This he declared when he said to his disciples, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." To have attempted to tell them all about the glory, honor and immortality to which the church was being called would have been to give them more than they could have borne. The natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God—the deep things. Hence it was best for our Lord to leave those deep spiritual subjects. After Pentecost the spirit-begotten would be enabled to understand.—John 16:12-14.

HOPE FOR THE WORLD

The whole subject matter of Jesus' teachings was the everlasting life. He had come for the very purpose of giving his life a ransom for many, that men might have restored to them the favor originally enjoyed. The Scriptures nowhere teach that all have life inherently; on the contrary, they teach the very reverse. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

The promise mentioned in our text we understand to refer particularly to the message brought by our Lord Jesus: "Which salvation began to be spoken by our Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him." (Hebrews 2:3) When Jesus came, he threw light upon the entire subject of God's plan for human salvation from sin and death. He showed that there was to be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust—of those in a justified condition and of those not justified. He would raise them up at the last day, at the beginning of the great seventh day of a thousand years, during which his Messianic kingdom would prevail and the blessing would be world-wide. As the long-promised seed of Abraham, he and his church would bless all the families of the earth.

SPECIAL PRIVILEGES OF THE CHURCH

Our text refers to a certain class only. It does not include the world. "This is the promise which he hath promised us." (1 John 2:25) The promise is now to the church, and to no others. All the promises for the world are made along the line of general principles. All the world are to be blessed, and the blessing that will come to them is an opportunity to gain life everlasting. God made everything dependent upon the Son: "He that hath the Son hath life"—no others. So only believers can have life now—and these not in the complete sense—only the beginning of that life which will be perfected in the resurrection. The world have no life in them, and cannot have it, except under God's arrangement.

Those who now come to Christ are the church, the bride class, and are an especially privileged class. They come into the life that is incorruptible. But there is a promise for the world, and only believers know about this provision for mankind. All shall have opportunity for attaining everlasting life. God has provided a trial day, a judgment day, to demonstrate whether, when mankind shall have been brought to a knowledge of the truth, they will accept his terms and thus attain everlasting life.

The Lord will make it quite possible for the world to gain life everlasting on the human plane, just as he is now making it possible for the church to attain life on the divine plane. The thing for the consecrated people of God to do, then, is to strive to be of the "us" class. This term applies to those who become disciples, those who believe in the kingdom glory and honor offered them, and who, so believing, devote their lives to walking in the footsteps of Jesus, even unto death.

This "us" class includes not only the antitypical Priests, but also the antitypical Levites. But while both classes will have eternal life, everlasting life, "the crown of life" (immortality) is only for those who will prove themselves to be "more than conquerors." The Scriptures hold out a special promise to all who will walk carefully in the footsteps of Jesus. This class are promised joint-heirship with him, the privilege of sitting with him in his throne.—Revelation 3:21.

On one occasion our Lord said to the Jews, "For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." (John 5:26) In this statement, doubtless, he touched upon the subject of immortality. As the Father has inherent life, so he gave to the Son to have this life; and as the Son hath the promise of this life during his earthly ministry, so he had the actuality of it in his resurrection. This same

promise is given to the church which is his body.—John 10:27, 28.

On another occasion he said, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." (John 6:53) This would be inherent life—life in themselves. The difference between this life and ordinary life is that the former is inherent, and the latter maintained. All the angels have a life not forfeited, an eternal, everlasting life. It can cease if God so choose, but it is not a life that has a terminating period. We do not know how the angels are supplied with life, but the fact that the Scriptures declare that some of them will die is a proof that they do not possess immortality.

A WORD OF CAUTION

We should be very careful in our use of language. If we were to say to the majority of people that we believe that only the elect church will have immortality, they would misunderstand us altogether—they would misunderstand us to mean that all the remainder of humanity were to perish like brute beasts. Therefore we should be sure that we make the thought clearly understood. Everlasting life is a life that needs to be sustained; immortality is that divine degree of life that needs not to be sustained.

Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (John 10:10) It was life that Adam lost. That life was everlasting in the sense that

it might have lasted forever. It was not a life granted for a fixed period—a year or even a million of years—but was to last so long as it was not forfeited. In this Scripture our Lord refers to two classes—the obedient of the world, who will have sustained life everlastingly, and the church, who with Jesus will share the divine nature will have life "more abundant" in the sense that it will be inherent life, not requiring to be sustained.

This is the promise, then, which he has promised us. If we would make our calling and election sure to glory, honor and immortality, we must exercise great carefulness indeed. Those who attain the prize will get the grandest blessing God has to give. All should understand that we have something to do in realizing the gracious promises of God to us. While God is both able and willing to perform his part of the contract, yet we must make sure that we co-operate in every reasonable way.

"And can we hope to gain, dear Lord, such wondrous bliss—
To dwell with thee in light ineffable?

Oh, can we e'er attain such joy as this—

The life immortal, incorruptible?

Ah, yes! for thou hast promised, and thy Word is sure,

And thus inspired we press along the way;

The path is lonely, but the end is sweet,

And openeth into realms of perfect day."

INTERESTING LETTERS

MORE ABOUT LONDON DRAMA EXHIBITIONS

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:—

Greetings and love in our Redeemer! The interest in connection with the PHOTO-DRAMA at the London Opera House continues, so that a further fifteen-days' exhibition has been arranged for. The enclosed card gives the figures to date.

This is proving by far the most economical exhibition held in London. Owing to the great interest in the DRAMA we have no need to spend a penny on advertisements for the repetition; we issue a plentiful supply of tickets, and leave the people themselves to do the canvassing, and they are glad to do it. The electrical equipment belongs to the House, so we have no charges on that account; the profit on the sale of Scenarios pays for the electric current, and we have only the rent to find; on this last occasion even this was provided by one of the audience. Brother Tharratt, who is acting as floor manager, had an envelope put into his hand by one of the crowd passing—a perfect stranger to him. To his joy when he opened the envelope, he found twenty £5 notes (\$500.00), which is just the amount required for rent for a further fortnight's presentation.

You can well understand, dear Brother, how our hearts rejoice in this manifestation of the Lord's approval. It is heartening to see with what eagerness the crowds press forward to their seats and listen intently to the message from the Lord; they show further appreciation of the DRAMA by frequent applause. We wish the house were larger that all might be enabled to find accommodation; night after night we are packed out, and great numbers are turned away.

It is surely a foretaste of how the "pure language" will be sought after by and by, and indicates how the great work of restitution will be accomplished in the comparatively short space of time.

We think of you, dear Brother, and often wish you were here to see for yourself something of the wonderful results of your noble service for the Lord and his precious truth. How London would delight to see you at this time!

Desiring for you, and all the loved ones with you, a continuance of the Lord's blessing,

Your brother and servant, H. J. SHEARN,
Supt. of DRAMA for London.

DRAMA PROSPERING IN SWITZERLAND

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:—

Concerning the DRAMA work in German Switzerland, I can give you good news; since I wrote last, we had very good exhibitions in Zurich, Basle and St. Gall. Altogether 40,000 visitors and 60 exhibitions at the expense of 50 francs [about \$12] per exhibition, rent and everything else included. In all these places, we found remarkable interest, and a large number of letters of appreciation came in, which I turn over to you, dear Brother, as the author of the DRAMA. We got over 3,000 addresses of such ones, who express a special interest in present truth, and we are anxious to lead them on further. All this keeps me exceedingly busy, and therefore I hardly find time for correspondence. I lecture nearly every night and Sundays two or three times publicly and always crowded halls. Present conditions have very much to do with it, as people are waking up. We sell much literature, but there are many who cannot even afford to pay ten or twenty cents for a booklet or a volume.

To these we loan one after another, in order that no one who has interest is hindered from getting the truth.

As we are nearing Christmas and a new political year, we naturally ask ourselves: Will it be the last one? The Lord alone knows, and we are glad to wait patiently this side of the veil till he calls us thither by such or other means. Our times are in his hands, and he cares well for us. What can we ask more? His name be blessed!

The many difficulties are growing fast, and people begin to become more and more afraid about the things to come. It seems hard to believe that the church should gain more influence yet over the state. Everything we hear goes to the contrary, and shows how little influence the church really has today. In Germany and German Switzerland most of the pious people say, "If Germany loses the war, then we will not believe any longer in the existence of a living God. It would prove that there is no such Being, for Germany fights for a just cause."

On this occasion I transfer to you, dear Brother Russell, the heartiest Christmas and New Year wishes from Sr. Lanz, myself and children and all the dear friends over here, who do not forget to thank the Lord every day more for the blessed truth we got by your mediation. May the Lord be your great reward, and help us all to become partakers of his blessed kingdom, which ere long will be established.

With much brotherly love, I remain,

Your servant in the Lord,

EMIL LANZ, Bern (Switzerland).

SAYS COLOSSAL THANKSGIVING IS DUE

DEAR MR. SHEARN of the London, Eng., I. B. S. A. Drama:—

I feel constrained to write you to indicate in some way my intense thankfulness, first to God, and after him to Pastor Russell, yourself, and the I. B. S. A., for the great blessing of the last month.

As yet, I am a trifle bewildered by the magnitude of the outlook. In all modesty and reverence, I feel as though the Almighty had taken me into his confidence and solved problem after problem that I had always thought insoluble. Often I have tried to read and understand the Bible (both Testaments), and the statements have appeared involved, incoherent, and unintelligible. Now it would seem impossible to misunderstand; the whole Book seems to blaze with information.

Formerly I had just grasped a point here and another there; but there was no connection between the points, and I had come to the conclusion that—in any case, at any rate—the connections could not be made during life.

I feel devoutly thankful for one thing, though, which now—in this fuller knowledge—would be impossible; and that is, I am thankful that I had fully made up my mind to pay God the only compliment possible in my so-recently unenlightened state—to trust him and to believe that he was infinitely better than his ordinary servants made him out to be.

Then came the PHOTO DRAMA, and my chat with you the last thing Saturday, and your explanatory lectures Sunday.

What pleases me most is that I had trusted God while in the dark; for to doubt now is a sheer impossibility.

This letter is therefore an attempt to put in words the feeling of a colossal thanksgiving due to the teaching of the I. B. S. A. and the direct blessing of God in leading me to it. I

have never wanted wealth before; but I want it now to help on, to the utmost of my power, the holy work of this real man of God—Pastor Russell. With all best wishes, very faithfully yours,
GEORGE RAWLINSON.—England.

REALIZES THE PROMISED ONE HUNDRED FOLD

MY DEAR BROTHER AND PASTOR:—

In the Master's name, Greetings: I feel constrained to write to you today, because it is the anniversary of a day which marked the opening wide of a door of opportunity to labor effectively in the Lord's service.

Though having been associated with present truth since 1900, it was only three years ago today that, kneeling at my table, I wrote out and signed the vow—a solemn reminder of my personal covenant with the Lord, and sealed it with tears which, like "the cup," were mingled sweet and bitter. Daily my desire has been, "May thy rule come into my heart more and more, and thy will be done in my mortal body"; and whilst praying for you and all at the Bethel Home and everywhere, I have tried to scrutinize more carefully my thoughts, words and actions that I might be of more use to the Lord and his dear people.

So fortified, and encouraged repeatedly by our Father's smile, time passed in joyous service, and then that beautiful resolve you commended to us appeared in THE TOWER. There was no waiting this time. My heart leaped to take advantage of this further fortification, and as I took up "The daily round, the common task," I said, "I will, this day, as a saint of God, fulfil my vows, continuing the work of sacrificing the flesh and its interests," and I tried to be humble, gentle and true to all; and then, when the anxieties pressed sore, and my "old man," naturally a mutterer, was tempting me to worry and fret, I remembered the closing lines and sought God's grace to "Repel all anxiety, all discontent, all discouragement."

I can now see that before November 11, 1911, I was not in an attitude which invited the utmost blessing from the Lord, but since that time I have realized the promised one hundred-fold in this present life, and now look forward with full assurance of faith to that deliverance which soon shall swallow up our present hopes in wondrous realization.

May the Lord bless thee, dear Pastor. I thank him continually for your able and faithful ministry, and esteem very highly the privilege of association with you in the dissemination of the harvest message, particularly in these closing days, when we have the PHOTO-DRAMA OF CREATION.

Your brother by his grace, H. C. THACKWAY.

CREATION DRAMA ITEMS

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:—

At Dothan, Ala., a Jewish merchant said to one of the brethren there, "My son was out to see your pictures last night (Part 3), and he says he loves Jesus now."

At Pell City, Ala., a holiness revival meeting was in progress, and they had been praying that the Lord would close up the motion-picture house which had started recently—the only one in town. The revivalist lost his congregation when the PHOTO-DRAMA OF CREATION was opened up, so he closed his meeting and came, too. This incident ought to appeal to the owners of motion-picture houses.

One lady came out at the close of Part 3 and said, "I have been a Christian and read my Bible for many years, but I never loved the Lord Jesus as much as I do tonight."

At Cairo, Ga., the ministers decided to fight us, and one of them, apparently more fair minded than the rest, decided to come and see Part I., so that his opposition might be intelligent. The result was he came to see all the parts and was much impressed.

At Sylacauga, Ala., the electric lights are furnished by water-power, but a continued drought had closed down the electric light plant and, of course, the motion-picture houses, too. So the Opera House was offered to friends at the low rate of \$10 for four days. It seemed the \$10 was to be wasted, but a day or two before the windows of heaven were opened, and the rain descended, and they had plenty of power for the PHOTO-DRAMA.

I am greatly thankful for the privilege of a part in this phase of the harvest work, and daily pray that I may be kept humble and faithful in the discharge of my privileges to the

Yours in much Christian love, very end. B. H. BARTON.

"BETTER THAN FOUR WEEKS REVIVAL"

DEAR FRIENDS:—

The PHOTO-DRAMA, with its trials and blessings, has come and gone, but I hope it has not been in vain; for it has left its

mark here as nothing else has done for a long time back. The trials it brought us were considerable; but the blessings so far outweighed and exceeded the trials that the latter passed into insignificance.

We are truly thankful to you for giving us the opportunity of showing the DRAMA here. And we can never thank and praise our dear Heavenly Father enough for giving us this grand and wonderful privilege of helping in the work of presenting the DRAMA to the people of this town and vicinity. It is truly a marvelous witness for the truth, and we trust that much good has been done here that will bear fruit in God's due time. And we are so glad and thankful that we could have a share in this, that the cost to us has seemed not worth mentioning. I am sure I speak the sentiments of all the class here.

Many are the favorable comments. One man said, "The DRAMA did the town more good than a four weeks revival." Another, "It is the finest thing that ever came to town; bring it again." Another, "It did me more good than anything I ever saw or heard." Many pronounced it the finest thing they had ever seen, even in the books; one of them is an infidel.

I saw the DRAMA at the Clinton, Iowa, Convention, but never realized what a wonderful and powerful witness for truth it is, until it was shown here. It has been such a blessing to me and has filled my heart with such an overflow of joy that I could not contain it all. The joy comes largely from having the privilege of serving it to others.

Yours in the love and service of the Lord. E. M. LANE.—Ia.

GREATEST BLESSING THAT HAS COME INTO HER LIFE

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:—

I feel I must write you a note of thanks for the greatest blessing that has come into my life, through the blessed promises of the divine plan of the ages. I feel as though God had taken me into his very presence by giving me a glimpse of the glory of his love.

Last May, when the PHOTO-DRAMA came to Birmingham for a month it was my privilege to see it, and through its influence I was led to purchase the SCRIPTURE STUDIES. I have read and reread with growing delight those precious pages with the Bible at my side.

This has brought sure peace and contentment, answering the "Why?" that has been for years tugging at my heart-strings. How good God is to be so tenderly patient, and how I want to appreciate his love for us and do everything I know to please him!

I realize the time is short, and by his grace am starting in the colporteur service this week, grateful for the honor to be an ambassador for Christ.

I have just learned that a record is kept at the Tabernacle office of those who have sent in their names as having made the vow their own. I recognize it as the deeper significance of my consecration vow, and have reverently asked God to help me make it and keep it my own, desiring that my name be added to the record. By his grace, one of the little ones in Christ.

MRS. EDLENA B. GIBSON.—Ala.

RE ASSOCIATED BIBLE STUDENTS

DEAR BROTHER AND PASTOR:—

We have noted the paragraph in November 1st WATCH TOWER re the name "ASSOCIATED BIBLE STUDENTS" in place of the one we have been using, "INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION." We can see some reasons why we are not entitled to use the latter name and we think the new one a very good one.

Shall we take down the signs that now appear on the Temple and change our stationery? (The signs over the doors now read, "PEOPLES TEMPLE, LOCAL HEADQUARTERS INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION.")

Trusting we may impose on your valuable time long enough to reply to these queries, and assuring you of our continued love and prayers, we are,
THE LOS ANGELES ECCLESIA.

IN REPLY

The words "ASSOCIATED BIBLE STUDENTS" on a religious-notice page of newspapers seems a very good name. We therefore use it in advertising local New York Meetings. This does not mean that we have abandoned the use of the words INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION in connection with all literature, conventions and general affairs. As respects the friends everywhere, if they think it best to continue the use of the name INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION they may do so; but we would like that it be used only as you have used it in Los Angeles; namely, "Local Headquarters (or Local Class) INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION."

THE DRAMA IN MANY TONGUES

The DRAMA is being shown and heard by the Finnish, the Swedish, the Danish, the Norwegians and the Germans. We are hoping to have copies of these records for American use shortly. The Danish records have already arrived. We also have

some inquiries for these in Polish, Greek, Spanish and Italian. If the interest seems sufficient to justify it we hope to have a fairly good array of foreign translations of the DRAMA. Interested should address EUREKA DRAMA DEPT., 17 Hicks St.