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VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER

From the standpoint of the truth and its prosperity—its victory over error—no year in the past, in our experience, has ever offered so grand a prospect. During the past year the Lord has done great things for his people, whereof we are glad. Viewed from some standpoints it is difficult to imagine that the coming year could equal the past one, much less excel it. However, as we are learning more of the Lord's ways we are coming to have greater confidence in his almighty power, which is able to make all things work out his glorious plans as the due time of each item arrives.

But our hopes have circumstantial foundations supporting our faith. We will mention some of these, that we may hope and rejoice together. (1) The number of the interested is greater than ever before;—the WATCH TOWER list is nearly twenty thousand, which represents about 40,000 readers and co-laborers. (2) The consecration of all seems to be deepening. (3) These furnish nearly one thousand "volunteers," and guarantee a circulation of at least three millions of tracts which we may hope will find and enlist other earnest, consecrated heads, hearts and hands. (4) The colporteur brigade is now nearly 150 strong, and many of them well tried and experienced soldiers of the cross, whose zeal increases as they realize that "now is our salvation nearer than when we first believed." (Rom. 13:11) These will surely put into the hands of the Christian people many thousands of volumes of *Millennial Dawn*—which, in turn, should assist much in breaking down prejudice and superstition in thousands and in bringing hundreds into fellowship with the truth. (5) The pilgrim service will, we trust, be blessed of the Lord to those already fully committed. (6) The *Pittsburgh Gazette* each week publishes the editor's sermon to from 70,000 to 85,000 readers far and near. This should prove a help to some. Many will read in a secular journal what they would refuse to notice elsewhere. (7) The "Good Hopes" prospects are favorable so far, and encourage us to lay our plans broad and deep for the year beginning.

The above prospects relate to the "machinery" which the Lord seems to have provided and blessed in connection with the "harvest" work. Now let us look to the conditions in the world outside our influence. We find that an increasingly large number of pious, Christian people are losing their prejudice and getting their eyes opened, little by little, to the beauties of the divine plan of the ages. It may be that the millions of tracts and hundreds of thousands of DAWNS which we have unitedly circulated, and the other efforts put forth to proclaim the truth, have been used of the Lord to break down the prejudice and to anoint the dim eyes. We are glad to hope so: we would feel discouraged indeed with any other view.

However, we are inclined to think that the results are largely the operation of forces at work in an opposite direction. While we are busy heralding the truth and endeavoring to show the real meaning of God's Word and its sureness of fulfillment, Satan is no less busy and has powerful influences at work. For the past twenty years he has been carefully sowing and watering the seeds of unbelief—"evolution" and "higher criticism"—in all the colleges and theological seminaries of Christendom. As a result the "leaven"—the corruption of faith—abounds in every direction. To such an extent

is this true, that the term "orthodoxy" practically stands for this modern form of "rationalism" or unbelief.

The effect of this growing skepticism, or "falling away" from the faith, is two-fold. To a large class it is infectious: never well established or convinced of the truth of God's revelation, they needed only the word of some one "highly esteemed among men" (Luke 16:15), D. D., to turn them away from the truth to fables. Soon they plume themselves upon their "advanced views," and learn to look down upon those who hold fast to the precious Word (Titus 1:9), and to think of them and speak of them as "credulous" and "old fogey."

These "snares of the adversary" will, we doubt not, entangle the great mass of professing Churchianity. They shall indeed be snared and taken. A thousand will fall to one who will stand. (Isa. 28:13; Psa. 91:7) But the Lord's truly consecrated people will be kept by the power of God through faith. At first they are sure to be bewildered as they hear their trusted under-shepherds advance the very arguments once set forth by Ingersoll, Paine and other opponents of the Word. They wonder whether or not they heard correctly, and finally they wonder if they have been too slow and stupid and too credulous.

Alas! many of these dear sheep have relied too much on the creeds and traditions of men, and have not sufficiently "proved all things" before acceptance, with the standard of God's Word. And so their faith may be sadly shaken and their peace and joy in the Lord destroyed. But as surely as they are the Lord's sheep he will not abandon them, but if they cry unto him he will deliver them from the Evil One.

Deliverance will come to them just in time;—just when they have learned to deplore their loss of faith and its connection with the joys of the Lord. We are rapidly approaching a time of famine for the hearing of the Word of the Lord. Those who have always fed on the husks of human theory and tradition will not be aware of this famine; but those who do know the Lord will begin to feel the pangs of hunger. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." The Lord will hear their cry for the bread of present truth and will send it to them by the hand of some of his willing servants. Verily they shall be fed and led into green pastures; because they are true sheep and under the care of the true Shepherd.—Psalm 23.

It is, therefore, in the interest of the Lord's true sheep that the evolutionists and higher critics should become more and more bold and aggressive soon. So much the sooner will the Lord's true followers discern that Babylon has been rejected—that instead of the name meaning longer the Gate of God, it now stands for confusion. When once they get their eyes open on this subject they will listen more carefully than ever for the true Shepherd's voice, and seek for the flock he is feeding, that they also may feed in pastures green and be refreshed by the still, deep waters of present truth.

Our view in this direction is most encouraging. The leaders of Babylon are nearly all evolutionists and higher critics, and their numbers and influence are making them more and more bold and outspoken. We welcome this progress of error in this class, realizing that it is the Lord's way of letting

error and all things work out good to those who really love him;—the called ones according to his purpose. Thus God will cause the pride and worldly wisdom and wrath and boastfulness of Satan and his deluded ones to praise him, to serve his cause, to deliver his true sheep from the bondage of churchianity. Let us be vigilant to use every opportunity to serve these and to do good unto all as we have opportunity; but let us not forget that the "strong delusions" the adversary is now permitted to bring upon Christendom will not be permitted by the Lord to deceive "the very elect."—Mark 13:22.

PRAY FOR THE REAPERS IN THE HARVEST

—MATT. 9:28—

Seeing that the fields of Christendom are thus white for harvesting, that everything is ripe for the gathering of the "wheat" class, what should be our attitude toward the Lord's work? The Lord arranges matters so as to place opportunities for his service within our reach—such opportunities for printing and circulating the truth as never before fell to the lot of the Lord's people. Are we doing all that we can for the Lord's honor, and for the assistance of brethren both in and out of Babylon? Some are doing heroic service and are being blest. It is our duty to stimulate all as best we can to seize and use the opportunities as they are daily passing us. If we fail so to do some in the future might reproach us with not having done all we could to bring them into the place of greatest blessing and security; for it is the zealous that are least likely to be ensnared by the adversary—if their zeal be born of love.

This time of great opportunity for the Lord's service is likewise a time of great opportunity for self-service—for "money-making," etc. It is a time of general activity, and the question is—In what direction shall our energies be expended? Whom will we serve? The Lord, his truth and his brethren? Or self, or the world, or the flesh, or the devil?

This is the hour of trial for the consecrated. We have solemnly told the Lord that we love him more than we love houses or lands, or father, or mother, or self, or any other creature, and now he is putting our professions to the test. The measure of our sacrifice of earthly privileges for spiritual ones will mark the degree of our love, our devotion, to the Lord; and our favor with the Lord, our growth in him, in his character-likeness, will be proportionate.

We all see the issue squarely. Let us each resolve that by the Lord's grace we will yet hear his voice declare of us, as members of his bride,—*"She hath done what she could."* This will mean more energetic and more persistent service. It will mean more "volunteers," and a still greater area of the wheat-field attended to. It will mean more WATCH TOWER subscriptions (free or paid—for you know that the interested poor are as carefully served and as much esteemed as those who can and do pay). It will mean daily watching and praying, that neither fear of man, nor pride, nor sloth, nor any form of selfishness, shall hinder us from attesting to the Lord our love and loyalty, nor deprive us of the present and future joys and rewards of his service.

We have specified labor in the circulation of our Society's publications, because we know of no others giving the "harvest" message—no others which the Lord is using so specially and peculiarly; and because we address those who we believe view the matter in the same light. We urge your coöperation, not only for the good that may thus be done to others, but also for the spiritual profit sure to come to your own souls. The work as we view it is one—the Lord's, and hence yours and ours, in proportion as we are the Lord's and are collaborating with him. TOWER subscribers now number 19,000; let us see what, under the Lord's blessing, we can make it by this time next year. In our last issue you saw the circulation of tracts and DAWNS for the past year; let us see what we each can do to increase those large figures for the year now commencing. The way to accomplish large results is not to hope that some one else may do and bear and get a blessing in this service; but for each to resolve to do what he can. Ask yourself,—What more can I do to increase the circulation of the WATCH TOWER and the DAWNS? How many more DAWNS can I put into circulation than I did last year? How many more WATCH TOWER subscriptions can I influence than last year? Remember, however, that our desire for the list is that it shall represent the *interested*, whether free or paid subscriptions;—especially are we desirous of having the Lord's saints on this list.

Pray for reapers! And ask the Lord to help you more and more as one of them, to gather much fruit. But in all this labor for others let us not forget that our first duty is the cultivation of the graces of the spirit in our own hearts. "He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto eternal life."

THE FINANCIAL STORM

Whether the financial storm is over, or only begun, no man knows; but appearances seem to indicate a clearing financial outlook for 1904. In any event, care and conservatism, "moderation," is the proper course for the Lord's people to pursue. Seek first (i. e., chiefly) the kingdom of God (to be joint-heirs in it with our Lord), and seek its righteousness,—the righteousness it will uphold; and so far as possible get out of debt and keep out of it.

We still think, as a year ago, that the next few years will be very favorable ones for the propagation of the truth. This may be by the continuation of "good times," permitting the purchase of DAWNS by all classes; or it may be by a curtailment of prosperity which may give some the time for thought and study as well as the inclination now lacking.

THE WORLD'S OUTLOOK

There are strong indications of war between Russia and Japan, and there would be no knowing where the matter would end if once begun. Alliances might involve other nations. We look for a great war in which the whole civilized world will be involved (Joel 3:10), but know not if the time for it is very near. Our confidence is that the Lord is at the helm of national affairs in a special sense now, and that all things permitted will work favorably to the establishment of the kingdom for which we long and pray.

SPECIAL TRIALS FOLLOW CONSECRATION

MATT. 3:13-4:11.—JANUARY 17.

GOLDEN TEXT:—"And lo, a voice from heaven saying, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."—Matt. 8:17.

This lesson, relating to our Lord's baptism unto death and his temptations in the wilderness, which immediately followed, illustrates the experiences of all who follow in his steps. In order to become Jesus' disciples at all, we must take a step which he did not take, namely, that of justification from our sins to divine favor and relationship through faith in the blood of Christ. Having taken this step the call of the Gospel age has been for such as are of right condition of heart to forsake all and follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth—in trials, difficulties, oppositions and persecutions in this present life and into the glorious honors and divine favors of the life which is to come. Our Lord's experiences, therefore, furnish a good basis for reflection respecting what is to be expected and endured by all of his faithful.

Our Lord's baptism was more than "John's baptism." The latter was merely for sinners against the Mosaic Law, and indicated a return to harmony with that Law and to the relationship with God which that Law Covenant through Moses established. Our Lord Jesus needed no such repentance and reformation, being holy, harmless, and separate from sinners; hence it was that John was astonished when he presented himself for baptism. At first John declined, asserting that of the two he himself rather than Jesus needed that baptism, since they were both heartily obedient to the divine arrangement and had not at any time been open transgressors of the Law.

LIKE A DOVE

Without explaining to John what the latter would not have understood respecting the new dispensation and the appropriateness of water immersion as a symbol of his consecration unto death, our Lord merely said, Permit the service to proceed, John. I have a reason for so desiring it, and it is proper that I should do it in the fulfilment of certain things which I recognize to be right. Then John baptized him, and immediately after Jesus' baptism was finished and he had come up from the water John beheld and heard peculiar things, which apparently others thereabouts knew nothing of. He saw as it were an opening in the heavens, and something which he understood to represent the holy spirit, the power of God, descending upon Jesus. This was possibly a stream of light, which came not violently, like the lightning, but gently, like a dove, and he heard a voice saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Whatever sentiments John entertained toward his cousin Jesus previously, he was now convinced by what he witnessed that his cousin was the Messiah. Then he bore record, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," and testified that when he was sent with the mission to baptize, and to preach the kingdom of heaven at hand, he was distinctly informed that in due time he would know the Messiah by seeing the holy Spirit from God come upon him.

Nothing in the account indicates that others than John saw this vision, nor was it necessary for others to see it. John was to bear record, and those who heard him had the same opportunity that we today have of knowing about this matter.

CONSECRATION AND BEGETTING

To Jesus this was a great moment—the moment of his begetting of the spirit. He had left the spirit condition that he might fulfil the Father's will and plan by becoming man's representative, substitute, ransom price; but he had been promised that the faithful performance of this would bring to him again the spirit nature, with added glory and greatness and divine favor. Now at thirty years of age, as soon as was possible for him to begin his ministries under the Law, he had made a full consecration of himself as a man—to give his time, his influence, his energy, his life, "all that he had," to purchase the forfeited life and inheritance of father Adam and his entire posterity. The consecration made by our Lord at the moment of his baptism is represented in the Scriptures in these words, "Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will O my God; thy law is written in my heart." This full consecration to death involved every human power, and there—as sealing the engagement—the Father gave him the holy Spirit as a first fruit of the new spiritual nature, which he would receive completely in his resurrection. That anointing of the holy Spirit was the begetting which, in due time, our Lord being faithful, would bring him to the birth of the spirit in the resurrection. We know from the Scriptures that he was faithful and thus became the first-fruits of them that slept, the firstborn from the dead.

Immediately he was led into the wilderness—Mark expresses it "driven into the wilderness"—by the spirit, the holy Spirit, which was now his own spirit or mind or will. We can readily understand why the spirit thus forced him away from the society of others. Jesus realized that he had a special mission in the world, different from others; that he had left the spirit plane of being and had become a man, that he might accomplish a work for mankind. He realized that this work was an important one in the Father's sight, and that already for centuries his coming and the great work he was to do had been foretold in the types of the Law and in the words of the prophecies. Even at the early age of twelve years he had felt anxious to be about the Father's business, and as soon as the legal age for his engaging in the Father's business had arrived, he had hastened to make his vow of consecration to do the Father's will in everything. As a man he could not understand and comprehend clearly and fully the meaning of the various prophecies, even as the prophets did not themselves understand these; and, although familiar with the letter of the Scriptures, he had been obliged to wait for a clear understanding of them until the time of his anointing of the spirit;—because "the natural man [however pure and perfect] receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."—1 Cor. 2:10.

"LORD WHAT WOULDST THOU HAVE ME TO DO?"

Jesus then hastened into the wilderness, away from friends and acquaintances and every distracting thing, that he might make use of the power of the holy spirit that had come upon him, that he might use the new sight. The eyes of his understanding had been opened to comprehend the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the divine love and plan which he was to fulfil. He must not confer with flesh and blood respecting his future course, even if there had been any one perfect like himself with whom he might have conferred. He must confer with the Father. He must take the Father's words through the prophecies, and the lessons through the types, and must hear and see in these the great work mapped out for him. He must make no mistake at the beginning of his mission. He must not hastily conclude that the suggestions of others respecting the course Messiah would pursue were correct. He must not even take his own previous conceptions of his work. He must look at everything from the new standpoint of the spirit. No wonder he wished to be alone with God, and with the Word of God, which he had treasured up in his heart from infancy, and which, having a perfect mind, he unquestionably had before him as plainly as though he had the printed book.

Forty days passed, yet so intent was he upon the study of the work the Father had given him to do, and so perfect was he physically, that he did not hunger until then, as it is written, "He afterward hungered." The season had been a precious one, and undoubtedly the close of that forty-day period saw the Lord fairly well equipped in an understanding of the divine arrangement respecting the necessity for his death. He understood that the payment of the ransom price for the world was a prerequisite to his coming reign of glory and to

its privilege of blessing all the families of the earth with an opportunity for attaining all that had been lost through father Adam's disobedience. But just at that juncture, when he was weak from his long fast and probably also from lack of sleep—for he probably was so deeply engrossed respecting the study of the divine plan that he neither ate nor slept those forty days—at this juncture of his extreme physical enervation came the adversary's chief besetments. True, through the forty days, while thinking of the divine arrangements, there were opportunities for questioning the wisdom of the divine arrangement; but these apparently were all nullified in the Lord's zeal to know and do the Father's will, and hence the temptations that are recorded are those following the fasting.

"HE WAS A MURDERER FROM THE BEGINNING"

We may well suppose that the great adversary—through whose deception mother Eve fell into disobedience, which brought in its train the wreck and ruin of the race—was an interested spectator in everything pertaining to the divine plan. Of course he knew the prophecies. Of course he knew of our Lord's birth and the annunciation of the heavenly hosts that the babe born at Bethlehem was to be the Savior of the world, the one whose coming was intimated to mother Eve—the seed of the woman who was to bruise the serpent's head. No doubt Satan had watched Jesus in all of his course up to this present time, had seen his baptism of consecration and had seen the Father's recognition of him by the anointing of the spirit. No doubt he had kept track of him while in the wilderness. All this is intimated in the words of one of the fallen angels or demons, who subsequently said, "We know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God." It may be noted here, however, that the Greek word *daimonion* (demons) is the word generally translated devils when speaking of the evil spirits which our Lord and the apostles cast out of many, but in the narrative of our lesson this is not the word used. Here we have the word *diabolus*, preceded by the Greek article thus making it the *diabolus*, the devil, the one whom the Jews sometimes called Beelzebub, the prince of the devils—the one referred to in the Hebrew as Satan, an opponent of God and of righteousness.

Satan realized that the most favorable time for an attack upon the anointed Jesus would be when he was weak from his long fast and vigilance, and hence it was at the close of the forty days that the temptations mentioned in this lesson were set before the Lord. It may be wondered by some why the Father would permit temptations, or why they would be necessary, or how they could be temptations to a perfect one. There is a difference between temptations which the Father considers proper and the temptations which come of the adversary. The former are tests of loyalty to God and to the principles of righteousness, and are intended to be a blessing and a help to all those who withstand them, and who thus demonstrate their loyalty to righteousness. The temptations of Satan, on the contrary, are in the nature of pitfalls and snares in evil and wrongdoing, temptations to make right appear wrong and wrong right, putting light for darkness and darkness for light. In this sense of misrepresentation and ensnarements in evil, God tempteth no man. (Jas. 1:12, 13) It was necessary that our Lord should be tested, and he was tested all through the three and one-half years of his ministry. Since he had consecrated himself and entered upon his work, it was necessary that these testings should begin at once, for if he manifested disloyalty to the Father, if he had a will of his own, a will that was not fully submitted to the Father's will in all points, he would not be worthy to be the Leader, the Captain of salvation to the many sons God intended to bring to glory. And unless proved perfect by testing his death should not have been accepted as an offset, the ransom price for the sin of Adam and for the sins of the whole world. To experience temptation does not imply sin, but it does imply liberty and freedom of will.

The three temptations here recorded practically illustrate all the temptations that came to our Lord during his three and a half years of self sacrifice, and likewise they illustrate all the trials and temptations that come to his followers. We are not to think of the Lord Jesus as being tempted by the weaknesses of the flesh, for he had no such weakness. We are not to think of his being tempted as a father, for he was not a father. We are to remember the statement that he was tempted in all points as we are—not we the world, not we believers merely, but we the consecrated believers, who are likewise begotten of the spirit and therefore subject to the besetments of the adversary along the lines in which the interests of the spirit clash with the interests of the flesh, however good and pure the latter may be.

"COMMAND THAT THESE STONES BE MADE BREAD"

The first of these temptations related to the Lord's hunger. He had possibly been hungry before, but not until endued with

the holy Spirit after his baptism had he that divine miraculous power at his command which would have permitted him to turn stones into bread. This temptation, therefore, did not signify that it is wrong to eat nor that bread is an improper food, but merely that the method of obtaining the food would not have been a proper or legitimate one. But why not, if he had the power, if he were the Son of God and God had given him this ability—why not use this power to satisfy his legitimate cravings? We reply, that the power that was given him was to enable him to carry out the consecration which he had made, and which involved the sacrifice of his flesh instead of its preservation. He might use this holy power upon others, to demonstrate his mission and to draw the attention of the people to the glorious restitution times prefigured in his miracles: but he might not use this holy power in any selfish manner for anything personal. To have done so would have been to misuse it and would therefore have meant sin.

Let us stop here and notice the lesson there is in this temptation for the Lord's followers. We also have received of the begetting of the spirit; and although we have the spirit in less measure than our Master, it is for the same purpose—not to be used selfishly for the feeding of our material bodies nor for the healing of our bodily ailments, but simply and only for the service of the Lord, the brethren, the truth. As our Lord declared in the garden, he could have asked the Father and have had twelve legions of angels to protect him; and so he could have asked the Father and have had the stones turned into bread, which would have nourished his body; but as our Lord declined to do both of these possible things, so should his followers, having consecrated their lives to the Lord, refuse to ask for divine interference for their own personal and temporal convenience or advantage. To do so would be to ask amiss, to ask selfishly, to ask what would be in opposition to the consecration made.

"THOU SHALT NOT TEMPT THE LORD"

Satan then tried another plan, suggesting a use of our Lord's divine protection which would bring him suddenly into notoriety amongst the people, and demonstrate that he was not an ordinary person but a special object of divine care. The suggestion was that he should go to the highest part of the temple structure, which overlooked the Valley of Hinnom, at a height of six hundred feet from its bottom—that he should leap from this prominent place in the sight of the people, and thus demonstrate his own faith in the Lord and in his mission as the Messiah, and attach to himself the awe and reverence of the people who would see the transaction or hear about it;—for all would know that without divine protection such a leap would mean certain death. The temptation had its plausible side. It seemed to imply great faith in the Almighty, and a refusal to follow the thought would seem to imply doubt on our Lord's part respecting his Messiahship and lack of faith in the divine power. It was a shrewdly put proposition. Additionally, it was backed up by Scripture texts: for Satan can quote scripture when it suits his purpose just as, under his guidance, Spiritualists and Christian Scientists and other rejectors of the Word of God are ready at times to quote what they think will serve their purposes. The scripture quoted was a very able one. "He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands shall they bear thee up lest at any time thou shouldst dash thy foot against a stone." (Psa. 91:11, 12) It would almost appear that this scripture implied that our Lord was to make such an exhibit as Satan proposed.

First we inquire wherein such a course would have been an improper one—what scriptural injunction or righteous principle would have been violated? We reply that if our Lord had been pushed from the pinnacle of the temple, or if he had been in a dangerous position in discharge of duty and his foot had slipped, and he thus had been precipitated to the valley below, he would have been quite right in assuming that the divine power could protect his interests and cause that all things should work for his good according to promise. But to deliberately place oneself in danger and to call upon or expect God to offset the deliberate act with divine protection would be a mistake. It would be tempting God. And this was our Lord's reply to Satan, "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

We are here furnished a practical lesson in the interpretation of scripture. Where two scriptures seem to conflict we must examine the principles which underlie them, and the spirit of a sound mind, the holy spirit of loyalty to God and reverence for him, must assist us in determining the proper relationship of these scriptures, or which one should be followed when they seem to be in conflict. It is quite possible that the time had not yet come for the scripture which Satan quoted to be rightly understood. It is possible, therefore, that our Lord at that time did not know the proper interpretation

of the words quoted by Satan; for if he had there would have been little temptation in the suggestion. He was guided by the principles of righteousness as well as by the scriptural testimony which he quoted. He perceived that it would be wrong to do a foolish act and to tempt the Lord to shield him from the natural consequences of the act. This conclusion of our Lord's mind was fully backed up by the Scripture which he quoted.

RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH

The scripture quoted by Satan we may now understand clearly, and this proves that the due time for its comprehension has come. We now see that the Psalm from which this is taken refers to the whole church of this Gospel age—Jesus the Head, and his faithful, the members of the body. We now see that while there have been feet members in some respects all the way down through this Gospel age, yet in a particular sense the Lord's people of this present time are the "feet of him that bringeth good tidings of peace." (Isa. 52:7) We see that as the feet, the last members of the Jewish house, stumbled over Christ as the stone of stumbling and rock of offence in the end of the Jewish age, so now we see the feet members of the spiritual Israel in the harvest or end of this Gospel age will be in danger of stumbling over the rock of offence. As it is written, "He shall be for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel"—the fleshly and the spiritual. (Isa. 8:1, 4) We see that as the fleshly house stumbled over the cross (1 Cor. 1:23), so the spiritual house is to stumble over the same obstacle—the cross.

We see this stumbling now taking place, that higher criticism is undermining true faith in all denominations, and that the evolution theories are making the cross of Christ of none effect—implying that Jesus and the sacrifice for sins was wholly unnecessary, that men have been evolving and progressing upward under a natural law of progression and evolution, that he needed no redemption, and that restitution to a former estate (Acts 3:21) would be the worst thing which could happen to him. We see that in fulfilment of this promise the Lord has given his ministers a message for the feet class, designed to be helpful to them and to assist them over these peculiar stumbling stones of our day—to enable them to "stand" (Eph. 6:13); and this we see corresponds exactly to the assistance rendered to the feet members of the Jewish house—the Israelites indeed of that time. We remember how the Lord's dark sayings were not for any except those in a special attitude of heart, so that others hearing might hear and not understand, and seeing they might not perceive. So it is now: the great mass of churchianity hear not, see not, and rejoice in conditions which they fail to recognize as stumblings and in falling away from the faith once delivered to the saints.

"TEMPTED IN ALL POINTS LIKE AS WE ARE"

Coming back now to the temptation, let us see whether or not there are temptations before the body of Christ similar to this one recorded of our Head. There are. Temptations continually assail the Lord's people—suggestions to do some wonderful works in his name, and to thus prove to themselves and to others that they are heaven's favorites. The lesson for us to learn is that the work which the Father has given us to do is not a work of convincing the world, of showing his favor toward us and our greatness in him, but rather—"Hast thou faith, have it to thyself," as the Apostle says. Rather that we should quietly and humbly, yet as effectively as reason and propriety will permit, let our lights shine, and show forth the praises of him who hath called us from darkness into his marvelous light, and from a desire to be wonder-workers to the reasonable position of servants, ministers of the Truth. Let us fix our Lord's answer clearly in our minds, "It is written, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Let us as members of the feet of Christ not accept outward deliverances from the trials and difficulties and responsibilities of life, but expect that our protection, our upholding, will be along spiritual lines—that we shall be kept from falling and from injury as new creatures in Christ Jesus, because our faith is stayed on him.

We do not know that Satan was personally visible to our Lord during these temptations: we must assume that he was not visible, that he did not appear as a man, nor in any other tangible form. Undoubtedly, as the holy angels had power to appear as men, Satan and the fallen angels at one time had the same power or privilege. But the divine sentence against them after the flood is distinctly recorded in the Scriptures. They are "restrained in chains of darkness" until the judgment of the great day, until the dawning of the Millennial morning. However, it matters not to us in what way Satan communicated to our Lord these tempting suggestions. In the third temptation, however, it is evident that the taking of our Lord to a high mountain and showing him therefrom all the king-

doms of the earth, was not a literal taking, but a taking in spirit or in mind or in thought. There is no mountain in the world from which all the earth could be seen, and even if the Roman world were understood there was no mountain anywhere in Palestine from which any considerable portion of the Roman world could be seen. But the mind can be projected to any part of the world in an instant or to any part of the universe in imagination.

Satan called to our Lord's mind, imagination, a great mountain or great kingdom, having supervision of the entire world. He suggested to our Lord that his mission would be accomplished if he should succeed in thus establishing a kingdom over all the kingdoms of the earth. This to some extent is the spirit of prophecy; namely, that it is God's purpose to establish through Christ a world dominion which will rule all the people of the earth to their blessing and uplifting from sin and degradation to life, joy, and peace—or so many of them as will respond to the blessed influences of that Millennial kingdom. Our Lord certainly understood that this was his mission—to lay the foundation for such a kingdom: we cannot, however, suppose that he as yet fully understood or comprehended all the steps incidental to that kingdom's establishment. Had he understood this, there would have been no temptation in Satan's presentation.

SATAN AS AN ANGEL OF LIGHT WOULD MISLEAD

Having stated the proposition in a form that would at once appeal to our Lord as being largely in accord with the Father's plans he had come to execute, Satan would have our Lord feel that he sympathized with Jehovah's project and with our Lord Jesus in the execution of it, and was willing to render coöperation and assistance. In effect he said, Such a universal kingdom, for the civilization, enlightenment, uplifting and blessing of all the world I know is your proposition, and I am fully in sympathy with it; but there are different ways of getting at the matter. If you attempt his great work in the wrong way you will merely bring disaster upon yourself and failure to your plans, but if you get at the matter in the proper manner you will succeed. I am the master of the situation—the whole world is under my influence. I admit that in many respects it is a painful influence, and I shall be very glad indeed to have it rectified and the world's government made righteous. My leading of mankind into sin and rebellion and superstition was not so much because I wish them evil as because I knew that only in this way could I hold my power over them. Now all that I ask for coöperation with you in this scheme of a great kingdom to bless the world is that I receive a share of the dignity and honor with you—that you recognize me. Let us be partners. I will recognize you and you will recognize me, and together we will effect this great work of reformation for the whole world, for which you have so grandly and nobly sacrificed every interest up to this moment. Now be wise, for I assure you that any other method will meet only with disaster and bring needless and fruitless pain upon yourself.

As already intimated, the Lord had been studying the Scriptures from childhood; his perfect memory had grasped every detail of the prophecies, and now, since his anointing with the holy Spirit, he had come into the wilderness to determine this very point—how the great object of his coming into the world was to be made effective to the blessing of mankind—how he must proceed in order to fulfil the divine projects and become King of kings and Lord of lords amongst men for their blessing and uplifting. He heard Satan's proposition carefully, he noted the weight of the argument, he realized the truthfulness of much that Satan had said; but he saw in the Scriptures enough to indicate to him that the Father's plan was not the smooth one that Satan had suggested. He noticed in the Scriptures suggestions not only about glory, honor, dominion and power, and the bowing of every knee, and the confessing of every tongue, and the desire of all nations coming, and the knowledge of the Lord filling the whole earth, and the time coming when there would be no need to say to one's neighbor and to one's brother, Know thou the Lord, because all should know him from the least even unto the greatest; but he noticed also scriptures and types which clearly intimated that there was to be a sacrificing work accomplished. All the sin-offerings implied this, and the testimony, "he shall be led as a lamb to the slaughter," etc.

Reasoning on the question he could readily see that this sacrificing, slaughtering, etc., could not come after the glory and blessing and enlightenment of the world, and hence that it must precede the glory; for, as the Apostle Peter points out, the prophets "spoke of the sufferings of Christ and the glory which should follow." Doubtless by this time the Lord had come to see that it was a clear teaching of Scripture that without the shedding of blood there could be no remission of sins, and that this meant that in some manner he should die for the people. Supposing that he saw this at the time, it meant that

the temptation he experienced was all the stronger, because here Satan was proposing to him a method for dealing with the question from the opposite standpoint, without suffering, with exaltation and honor from the very commencement.

COMPLETE CONSECRATION ESSENTIAL TO VICTORY

Our Lord was saved from any vacillation or manifestation of weakness on this subject by reason of the fullness, the completeness of his consecration, which he had symbolized at Jordan. There he had said, in heart at least, "I delight to do thy will, O my God, thy law is written in my heart." This desire to please the Father, to obey the divine law in his heart saved our dear Redeemer from any yielding to Satan's wiles, and similarly our consecration as members of his body must be thorough if we would hope to stand the testing which must come to each one of us as we pass along the narrow way, following in his footsteps, seeking the glory, honor and immortality which he has promised us. Our Lord's prompt and allsufficient answer was, Leave me, adversary; for it is written, the Lord thy God shalt thou worship and him only shalt thou serve. I cannot be a co-worker with you in any sense of the word; to do so would be disloyalty to the great Jehovah. I must be loyal to the Lord and to the commission he has given me and to the doing of his will in his way whatever the cost.

Members of the body of Christ following in his footsteps have temptations from the adversary along similar lines. Not that he offers to divide the kingdom of earth with us, for so great a proposition would not appeal to us, being incredible; but to us he does propose deviation from the close following in the Master's footsteps. He suggests continually to the Lord's followers easier ways by which as much or more good can be accomplished and without sacrifice and self-denial. These ways of avoiding sacrifice and yet of seemingly attaining good ends always imply more or less of co-partnership with the adversary directly or indirectly, an acknowledgment of him, a bending to evil—to evil men or evil principles.

Under such circumstances we should note carefully the Lord's method and walk in his steps. We should refuse to have any partnership with sin or evil influences or methods in our endeavors to serve the Lord and his truth. Satan does not approach us in human form nor in diabolic form, but generally through human agencies, through human ambitions, parties, sects, etc. If our Lord had made inquiry of Satan as to what would be the program, doubtless he would have advised him to become a Pharisee of the Pharisees at once, and through such steps gradually he would have proceeded to elevate our Lord over the Jewish people and ultimately over the world—if indeed he who was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the truth could be trusted in respect to any promise.

Similarly, today, he proposes to the Lord's followers identification with nominal churchianity. He flatters them with some trifling office larger in name than in fact or service; he persuades them that they have a large influence and that to withdraw from Babylon would be to incur suffering upon themselves and their families and to do general injury to the work which they seek to forward. By this means, if he cannot lead them onward step by step to full coöperation with him in the blinding of others, he at least can hinder those who yield to his propositions from ever stepping out boldly and courageously on the Lord's side and in opposition to superstition and error. He can hinder them from being more than conquerors and having a place in the body of Christ. What shall our answer be to his suggestions? Let us answer with our Lord that we can enter into no partnership, be members of no institution, nor coöperate with any along lines that would be either dishonoring to the character of our heavenly Father or in any measure contrary to those which he has marked out as the pathway for those who love him—the pathway of self-denial, and incidentally of suffering for the cause of right and truth.

"ADD TO YOUR FAITH, FORTITUDE"

Another thought: one great difficulty with the Lord's people is that, even when determined for a right course and thus resisting the temptation, they do not take sufficiently positive action. Many say to the tempter, I have concluded not to yield at this time. Thus they leave in their own minds an opportunity open by which the tempter may return. Our Lord's course was the proper one: we should dismiss the tempter once and forever. We should take our stand so firmly that even the adversary would not think it worth while to come back at us along that line; "Leave me, adversary," I will worship and serve my God alone.

Our Lord's temptation thus terminated. Henceforth he had Satan for his adversary, but the Father his protector and ultimately his deliverer. Had he not reached this final decision we may presume that Satan's temptations would have continued for days or weeks or years, and would have been a hindrance to the Lord in the work he had come to do. So with us, we must settle it if we would be on the Lord's side; we must

decide that in no sense of the word will we yield to the adversary, either from policy or to enter into any transaction either to protect life, name or fame. Our decision must be a firm one, somewhat as expressed by the poet:—

“Vain, delusive world, adieu,
With all thou callest good;
To my Lord I would be true,
Who bought me with his blood.”

“MARVEL NOT IF THE WORLD HATE YOU”

When the Lord's followers take a firm stand on this subject as their Leader did, the results are the same. Satan is their implacable opponent; he will see to it that they do suffer, that there will be opposition not only by himself but by the world, which is largely under the influence of his spirit, and in various ways. Taking this stand they must not marvel if the world hate them, and if all manner of evil be said against them falsely for Christ's sake. And the more prominent they may be, as in our Lord's case, the more virulent we may expect attacks

against them to be—the more interested will the great adversary be in overcoming them. This thought of Satan's opposition to us, and that we are contending not merely with flesh and blood but with principalities and powers and wicked spirits in high positions of power, would be appalling to us did we not on the other hand realize that by this same positiveness of decision we acquire great helps and assistances by other unseen powers. From that moment of our positive resistance of temptation and positive standing up for the Lord and his cause, we become stronger in the Lord and in the power of his might, and greater is he that is for us than all that be against us.

It was so in our Lord's case. At once he was ministered to by the unseen messengers of Jehovah, and whatever terror lay in the intimidated opposition of the adversary was more than counterbalanced by the assurances of divine favor and assistance. So it is with us. If God be for us who can be against us—what will all the oppositions of the world, the flesh and the devil amount to since God declares that we are his and all things are ours, for we are Christ's and Christ is God's?—1 Cor. 3:21-23.

THE TEACHER AND HIS MESSAGE REJECTED

LUKE 4:16-30.—JANUARY 24.

GOLDEN TEXT:—“He came unto his own and his own received him not.”—John 1:11.

Our Lord began his ministry in Judea, and is supposed to have spent a year there before going to Galilee, the province in which most of his life had been passed. And even when he did go to his home province he chose to visit Capernaum before going to his native city, Nazareth. This was a wise course, considering the fact that a prophet is generally less esteemed at home than abroad. As it was, his fame in Judea and still later at Capernaum had aroused quite an interest in the people of Nazareth, where he had lived from about three years of age until thirty. A certain amount of pride in their fellow-townsmen had thus been awakened, and we may be sure that there was a large attendance at the synagogue on the first Sabbath day after our Lord's arrival in Nazareth.

But while it was an object of our Lord's ministry to awaken and draw the interest of the people of Palestine to himself and to the message which he had to deliver, nevertheless it was not the object of that message to gather all the people to the Lord, but rather to separate the wheat from the chaff—to gather the wheat to Jesus and, naturally, to array the chaff class in opposition. This foretold result of the Lord's ministry we see was fully accomplished. “He came unto his own [people] but his own received him not, but to as many as received him, to them gave he liberty [privilege] to become the sons of God”—to be transferred from the house of servants, of which Moses was the head, to the house of sons, of which our Lord Jesus is the Head. We remark incidentally, however, that although faithful servants were gathered during our Lord's ministry, they were not begotten again until Pentecost. Pentecost brought the begetting of the spirit to such of them as were then ready—the begetting necessary to a spirit development of character, necessary to an ultimate birth of the spirit in the first resurrection.

The first verse of our lesson shows distinctly that it was our Lord's custom to attend the synagogue meetings every Sabbath day, and his custom also to be the reader for the congregation. The synagogue services were not at all like the temple services. The latter was the house of prayer, and the place where typical atonement was made for the sins of the people with the blood of bulls and goats, etc. The synagogue more nearly resembled present day Bible classes, where the Scriptures are read and freely discussed, not only by the leader but also by all in attendance as they may feel disposed. There are certain good features connected with this arrangement, one of which is the opportunity it affords for bringing out discussion on any Scriptural topic. We warmly commend the Bible study and Bible-class methods as still appropriate to the Lord's people and still beneficial for the elucidation of truth.

RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH

The Jews had a certain order in which the Scriptures were read in the synagogue, and apparently the book of Isaiah was the appropriate one for this occasion. The Lord turned to what we now call the sixty-first chapter of Isaiah and read the first verse and part of the second, and closing the book he sat down and made certain comments upon the passage read. We find that our Lord read discriminatingly, or, as the Apostle expresses it, he “rightly divided the Word of truth.” He read the part appropriate to the time, but did not read about the day of vengeance. His teaching was to test the people: if his message were received no day of vengeance would be necessary; if not received the day of vengeance would follow, as it did follow upon that nation after it had rejected him. There is a lesson for the Lord's people in this: it is better that we should read

one verse understandingly and appreciatingly than that we should merely read chapter after chapter of the Lord's Word in a formal manner.

Our Lord brought home to his audience the meaning of his text, saying, “This day is this scripture fulfilled in your hearing.” It had been written centuries before and read hundred of times, but now, in the harvest of their age, for the first time it could be said that it was fulfilled. The holy Spirit had come upon the Lord Jesus about a year before, after his consecration at Jordan. It constituted his anointing. The Jews were accustomed to this thought of anointing: their high-priests were anointed, as representing the Lord's power or spirit upon the priest, to authorize him to perform the sacrifices and to mediate between God and the people. Their kings were anointed, representing that divine power and guidance was upon them, and that they were specially authorized to represent the Lord in the government of the people.

The promise was that the Lord's anointed, the Messiah, should by and by come and establish a reign of righteousness in the earth, and now our Lord announced himself as the anointed of the Father. He did not do this in any coarse or rude manner, saying, “I am the Messiah. I am the anointed of Jehovah, with authority as priest and king;” but he did it in a quiet, unassuming manner, by calling attention to the prophecy and declaring that its fulfilment had now taken place. The announcement was not that the Lord had anointed him to rule, but that the first part of his mission was to preach, to declare, to be the mouthpiece of God to humanity. He had a great message which should ultimately be unto all people, but which at that time was only for so many as had ears to hear.

It would undoubtedly be disappointing to many to have the royalty feature passed by, and to find that Messiah's work as herein delineated by the prophet and announced by the Lord, was one of preaching a good message rather than of raising a great army—of preaching to the meek and poor, rather than of rallying round himself the rich and wise and proud. They would be disappointed, too, at the part of the message which says that he was to bind up the broken-hearted. They had expected, perhaps, that, like the great warriors and leaders amongst the other nations, their deliverer would be the one who would cause the loss of many lives and the breaking of many hearts with sorrow and with trouble. Even those whose hearts were somewhat broken were probably disappointed because of their wrong expectations.

The proclaiming of liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison doors to them that are bound, our Lord's hearers probably did not understand. Their thoughts may have gone out to John the Baptist, who at this time was in prison, and they may have wondered whether Jesus would take any steps for his release. They probably had little conception of the real meaning of this scripture—that it signified the liberation of Satan's captives from the bondage of sin, and ultimately the release from death and its bondage of the millions who have gone down into that great prison-house, the tomb. Even the Lord's disciples, who had ears to hear his message and hearts to respond thereto and become his followers at any cost, could not at this time have appreciated the greatness of the Lord's work. Little by little he needed to make known unto them the meaning of the prophecies and explain that the hour is coming in which all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man and shall come forth.

THE ACCEPTABLE TIME

"The acceptable year [time, period] of the Lord" mentioned by the prophet was not understood either. Blessed are our eyes that we now see that this acceptable year or acceptable time or acceptable period is the entire Gospel age, during which God is willing to accept all that come unto him through Christ—willing to accept them as joint-sacrificers with Jesus, as members of the great royal priest. True, by and by, at the close of of Millennial age, the Lord will be willing to accept so many of the world of mankind as the great Redeemer shall have brought into heart-harmony with him, and, by restitution processes, back to the image of God. But that acceptance of the world, after restoration by Christ, is a very different one from the acceptance of the church in this present time.

Our acceptance now means our change of nature, our begetting to the new nature, the spiritual; and the terms or conditions of this acceptance are, as expressed by the Apostle, that having been first justified freely by God's grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, we should, secondly, "present our bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God and our reasonable service." This acceptable day, then, means the day in which our heavenly Father is willing to accept the sacrifices of the anointed. He had only accepted Jesus' initiatory sacrifices of consecration, which later our Lord fulfilled and finished at the cross. It was the ground upon which the heavenly Father gave him the exceeding great reward of the first resurrection blessing—to glory, honor and immortality. So with all the members of the body following in the footsteps of the Savior, justified by his blood—their sacrifices are counted in as acceptable to the Father during this antitypical day of atonement; and by its close all of these "better sacrifices"—then the typical bullock and goat sacrifices—will have been offered and will have been accepted, and thereafter no sacrifices will be either needed or accepted.

This wonderful prophecy which our Lord declared was being fulfilled in his own person is still in process of fulfillment in the persons of his truly consecrated followers—the members of his body. This was shown in the type. The holy anointing oil was poured upon the head of Aaron, but ran down even unto the skirts of his garments, thus anointing in the figure each member of his body. So it is with us. We are members of the Anointed One, and that which was true of our Head is true in a measure also of each one of us. We are all anointed to preach, all authorized of the Lord to declare the good tidings of the coming kingdom to all the meek and broken-hearted. It is a mistake to suppose that our commission and the Gospel message given us is intended of the Lord to break men's hearts. It is a mistake to suppose that we are commissioned to go especially to the froward. Our message, while given out broadcast, must not be expected to attract any except the meek and broken-hearted. True, the light shining in the darkness will reprove the darkness and convince of sin, of righteousness and of coming judgment, or discrimination between the righteous and the unrighteous; but this is an incidental feature. The real mission of the Gospel is to the meek and to the broken-hearted.

As respects the world our general message, so far as they are able to hear it, is liberty to the captives and ultimately opening of the prison-doors of death, that all the families of the earth may in due time receive from the Lord through his Anointed the great blessing of the knowledge of the truth, the opening of the eyes of the understanding, opening of the deaf ears, that they may know their God and be able to return by way of holiness and the restitution processes which will ultimately be at their disposal during the Millennial kingdom. We can do still more for those who have ears to hear now. We can tell them of their liberty, of their freedom from the domination of Satan and sin and the weaknesses of the flesh. We can assure them in God's name, and through the merit of the great sacrifice for sins given by our Savior, that their past sins are forgiven and that their present weaknesses and imperfections are covered, if so be that they are trusting in Jesus and seeking to walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit to the extent of their ability. This justification by faith is for the Lord's servants and handmaidens now, but an actual justification or release from the bondage of sin and Satan is the glorious provision for the world in general during the coming age, when Satan shall be bound, when he will deceive the nations (peoples) no more.

GRACIOUS WORDS TO UNGRACIOUS HEARTS

The Lord's discourse is not given, but unquestionably it was a grand one based upon so grand a text. The record is that all present bore witness to the words of grace which proceeded out of his mouth—words of favor, of blessing, of comfort, of peace. We know not to what extent the Lord may have described the blessings yet to come upon the world through his Millennial kingdom, secured by his work of redemption. His

old neighbors and friends were beginning to think very highly of him, and apparently the old proverb that a prophet is without honor in his own country and amongst his own kin was about to be disproved. Apparently, also, the people of his home city were about to receive him as indeed being a great prophet, and rejoice in him and be proud of him because he was of their city—Jesus of Nazareth.

But how short-lived was their appreciation of him! How quickly the natural mind and perverse reasoning turned everything upside down, and turned his admirers into enemies, hating him and seeking his life! They began to say, Is not this the one we have known as Joseph's son? And then they began to wonder what mighty works Jesus would do in their midst, having heard of the great miracles wrought by him in the province of Judea and in the nearby city of Capernaum. Our Lord interpreted their thoughts and said, "Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do here in thine own country."

We know not why our Lord refused to perform miracles in Nazareth. We may surmise, however that this being his home city, where he was well known and where undoubtedly he had previously read in the synagogue, the people being in a right condition of mind should have been ready to accept the good tidings without any attestation of miracles; whereas in the other cities, where the Lord was not known, the miracles were more or less necessary as his credentials, and none might have been expected to receive him and to accept his teachings without having either a personal acquaintance with him or the attestation of miracles. The thought would be that the miracles of our Lord were not intended to be restitution blessings, because the restitution times had not yet come—that the miracles performed were merely to witness, to attest, to substantiate, fortify and clinch our Lord's teachings. Secondly, the people of Nazareth should not have expected miracles, did not need miracles, having another attestation instead, namely, their acquaintance with Jesus.

HAVE WE NOT DONE MANY WONDERFUL WORKS IN THY NAME?—MATT. 7:22, 23.

A lesson may be drawn from this circumstance applicable to our day. Miracles are not necessary today amongst the Lord's people, and hence they have passed away. Not that the Lord has any the less power, but that the time for restitution has not yet come, and the necessity for miracles as introductions to the Gospel message is no longer manifest. Hence, although not for a moment doubting the divine ability to heal all manner of diseases today, we are inclined to look with suspicion upon the miraculous healings of the present time, whether done by Mormons or by Christian Scientists or by Christian Alliance people or by Spiritualists or by Mr. Dowie and his followers or others. We are inclined to look upon miracles as some of the "wonderful works" mentioned by our Lord, to the performers of which he will say, I do not recognize you as my faithful disciples.

Satan and his work are undoubtedly opposed to life and healing, etc.; nevertheless, he is quite able and willing to reverse his processes and to become either a preacher or a healer, as may best suit his convenience. Our Lord in speaking on this subject implied such a course on the part of Satan, but intimated that it would mean the fall of Satan's kingdom—that it would imply that such efforts were necessary in order to perpetuate the superstition and blindness which he has been exercising over mankind, necessary in order to distract attention from the glorious light of present truth, gradually breaking in upon the hearts and minds of those who are the Lord's truly consecrated people.

The present time, so far as the Lord's people are concerned, is a time for sacrifice and not a time for restitution—a time for laying down their lives and not a time for saving them. It is a time for the binding up of their broken hearts, though not a time for the repairing of their marred bodies; a time for a reckoned deliverance from sin and death, but not a time for actual deliverance. As for the world, it has now a sufficient witness on every hand to the greatness of Messiah and to his merit as a teacher, it needs no temporary healing of the sick for this purpose, and as for the permanent healing of the world's sickness, the time has not yet come for this; but, as the Apostle Peter points out, it will come at the establishment of the Lord's Millennial kingdom at his second advent. "The times of restitution of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began" shall follow, and they will indeed be "times of refreshing."

The people of Nazareth were interested in Jesus from the standpoint of selfishness—pride in him as the representative of their city—and hoped that the great miracles that he had wrought in other cities would be more than duplicated at his home. And so when he intimated that he would do no such miracles there they were chagrined. His citation of previous

similar dealings in no measure placated their anger. They were filled with wrath and rose up and thrust him out of the city in the direction of a precipitous hill about forty or fifty feet high, with the evident purpose of killing or maiming him by pushing him over the brink.

"MARVEL NOT IF THE WORLD HATE YOU"

What a picture we have here of the natural man in his fallen condition! At one moment rejoicing in the Master's gracious words, at another desiring to destroy him because of the failure of their selfish hopes and ambitions. So it has been with the Lord's people since, and particularly is this true in the present time, the harvest of this Gospel age. Many hear the good tidings of great joy for all people, and while declaring it to be the grandest Gospel message conceivable, yet selfish interests—especially sectarianism, and the feeling that instead of this message building up their favorite sect or party it will have the effect of discrediting the same—seem to evilly influence those who rejoiced in the gracious message but a short time previously.

Apparently our Lord permitted the matter to go far enough to show the real spirit of his opposers, and then, turning himself, he overawed them with the glance of his eye and passed through their midst unmolested. He exercised this power because his time was not yet come. So, too, we may suppose it will be with all the members of his body. As the Father had a due time for the Son in which to accomplish his work, so, doubtless, divine providence is overruling and guiding the affairs of each member of the body of Christ so that not even a hair of their heads could fall without divine notice; and so, their lives being precious in the Father's sight cannot be taken from them in any manner until their time shall have come—until they shall have finished the work which the Father has for them to do—until they shall have experienced the chastening and polishing necessary to fit them for the kingdom, or until

by their own wilfulness they shall have taken their affairs out of the Lord's hands or have refused to walk in his steps.

"HIS OWN RECEIVED HIM NOT, BUT—"

Our Golden Text was fulfilled not by the above rejection of our Lord at Nazareth, but by his rejection by the whole nation of Israel. The Apostle, however, points out that, while the nation as a whole rejected the Lord, there were individual exceptions; and hence, while the nation as a nation was rejected by the Lord, these faithful individuals who became his disciples were received of him, were granted liberty to become members of the house of sons, and at Pentecost received the spirit of adoption, the spirit of begetting to the new nature.

A parallel to this experience of fleshly Israel is to be sought and is readily to be found in antitypical Israel—nominal spiritual Israel. At our Lord's second advent he comes to Christendom as his professed people; and, in harmony with the prophets, he is again rejected—yet not by all. As there were some amongst the Jews ready to receive him and to follow in his steps, so, today, there are some to whom his words are applicable, "Blessed are your eyes for they see and your ears for they hear." Those of the spiritual house now accepting the Lord are in due time to receive a great blessing—the antitype of the Pentecostal blessing—it will be glorification. Soon shall the wheat class of this Gospel age be blessed and changed that they may "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." (Matt. 13:43) Thus we see that the Lord will be for a stone a stumbling to both the houses of Israel, but for a blessing to some, the faithful of each. They shall become as the very elect, his body members, his bride, and be associated with him not only in the anointing and sufferings of this present age, but also in the glories of the future work of blessing all the families of the earth with a knowledge of the Lord and with an opportunity to return to favor if they will.

"THE EARTH SHALL YIELD HER INCREASE"

The following is a letter from a brother in the Truth illustrating well how all that the Lord has promised respecting food for the restored millions of our race now in death can be fulfilled:

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:—

I have recently learned of a matter which I believe will be interesting to you. It is this:

About ten miles from Philadelphia there is a small farm of fifteen acres, the owner of which has brought it to an extremely high state of cultivation. The results are almost past belief. The matter has been attracting the attention of the United States officials, who have been keeping tab on the wonderful doings of this farm for the past four years.

I visited the farm and met the owner personally. He is a minister in the nominal church, and manages this little farm additionally. On the fifteen acres he was supporting, at the time of my visit, twenty-nine head of cattle and three horses. He raised all the feed for this stock on the fifteen acres, and sold additionally considerable hay and grain which he was unable to use. He has a good-sized house and barn on the premises, and last year, besides maintaining himself and family from the proceeds of the farm, cleared from it a profit of twenty-one hundred dollars. He has brought his farm to a condition where it produces three crops annually without expending a dollar for fertilizers of any kind. The vegetation is so heavy and luxuriant that weeds are completely choked out. There is scarcely a weed to be found on the place. All this has been done on an ordinary clay soil in only twenty years. About him on every side are farms many times as large where the owners use large quantities of imported fertilizers, gather only one crop a year and only just manage to get along comfortably.

I at once thought to myself, this is an illustration of how the wilderness shall blossom as the rose and the earth yield her increase, and it is coming to the attention of mankind at just the proper time—at the beginning of the millennium. I suggested this thought to the minister, but to my sorrow he replied that he had no faith along that line; that he was in accord with Henry Ward Beecher's view that the fall of man must have been upward, and that we are gradually attaining by evolutionary processes the perfection of our race.

I replied that my loyalty to the Scripture teaching that man passed under divine condemnation through disobedience, so that he needed the redemption which our Lord Jesus accomplished

as a ransom for all, and that he still needs the blessing of restitution to bring him back to the image and likeness of God in which he was created, forbade me to accept any such view.

The minister replied that he once held similar views regarding the atonement until he went to college, and that there he learned to view matters very differently. Seeing that he discarded the foundation doctrines of the divine Word, I felt that it would be useless to make further effort to interest him in the glorious plan of the ages. I said to myself, "Here is one of those mentioned by the prophet, when he said, 'A thousand shall fall at thy side.'" This friend has fallen. Doubtless many others are similarly falling away from their relationship to our heavenly Father through a loss of faith in the Redeemer he has provided. I at once applied to myself the words of the Apostle, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall"; and while rejoicing that I still stood firm on the ransom, I uplifted my heart in prayer to the Lord that he would ever keep me loyal to himself and the great plan of the ages of which our dear Redeemer's sacrifice is the center and foundation.

Returning to the subject of the farm, I made a little calculation as follows: In a little country village a total annual income of two hundred and fifty dollars, used carefully, will easily maintain for one year five adult persons who enjoy good health, even under present unfavorable conditions as respects the quality and prices of commodities. Thus this little farm of fifteen acres would maintain the minister's family of say five persons and forty-two other individuals or forty-nine in all—an average of about three per acre or one thousand nine hundred and twenty persons per square mile.

The total land surface of the world is 52,299,431 square miles, and doubtless under the divine government nearly all of this will be reclaimed for purposes of cultivation; but let us suppose that one-third of it will always be waste land. This leaves 34,866,287 square miles for cultivation, and on the basis I have suggested, would support an army of 66,943,271,040 people.

It seems to me that the preacher's little farm comes pretty near making a basis for a mathematical demonstration of the earth's ability to yield crops sufficient for the support of all who will be found worthy of lasting life at the conclusion of the millennial age; even without allowing for supernatural power and bettered conditions.

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