

THE PASSOVER IN THE FIRST MONTH

Considerable difficulty is experienced by many in harmonizing our solar calendar with that of the Jews, which is built upon an association of lunar and solar time. We tender assistance to such by quoting an extract from *Smith's Bible Dictionary* on the subject—followed by an extract from the Hebrew chronologist Lindo on the same subject.

Smith's Bible Dictionary says:—

"The characteristics of the year instituted at the Exodus can be clearly determined, though we cannot absolutely fix those of any certain year. There can be no doubt that it was essentially tropical, since certain observances connected with the produce of the land were fixed to particular days. It is equally clear that the months were lunar, each commencing with a new moon. It would appear, therefore, that there must have been some mode of adjustment. To decide what this was, it was necessary first to ascertain when the year commenced. On the 16th of Abib ripe ears of corn were to be offered as first-fruits of the harvest. (Lev. 2:14; 23:10, 11.) The reaping of the barley commenced the harvest (2 Sam. 21:9), the wheat following. (Ruth 2:23.) It is therefore necessary to find when the barley becomes ripe in Palestine. According to the observation of travelers, the barley is ripe, in the warmest parts of the country, in the first days of April. The barley harvest, then, commences about half a month after the vernal equinox, so that the year would begin at about that tropical point, were it not divided into lunar months. We may conclude that the nearest new moon about or after the equinox, but not much before, was chosen as the commencement of the year. The method of intercalation can only have been that which obtained after the Captivity—the addition of a thirteenth month whenever the twelfth ended too long before the equinox for the first-fruits of the harvest to be offered in the middle of the month following, and the similar offerings at the times appointed."

Extracts from *Lindo*:

"The Jewish year is luni-solar, for although the months are lunar, our calculations being founded on the lunar cycle, every 19th year we come to the same date in the solar year. The cycle contains 235 lunations, which we divide into twelve years of 12 months, and seven (termed Embolismic) of 13 months.

"The celebrated mathematician Meton of Athens, who flourished B. C. 432, which was in the reign of Zedekiah, A.M. 3328, made the same division of time, but by making every third year embolismic, the 18th and 19th were both of 13 months; by our arrangement the solar and lunar years are better equalized.

	Days	Hrs.	Min.	Sec.
19 years, according to Rab Ada.....	6939	16	33	3½
235 lunar months.....	6939	16	33	3½

"The year is of three kinds, perfect, common and imperfect. The perfect has 355 days, and is when the months of Hesvan and Kislev have each 30 days. The common, 354 days, when Hesvan has 29 and Kislev 30. The imperfect, 353 days, when both have only 29. The embolismic year is formed by the introduction of an intercalary month, immediately after Adar, which is called Ve-adar, or Second Adar. The year then consists of 385, 384, or 383 days, according to the rule above. The reason of the introduction at that period is that the Passover may be kept in its proper season, which is the full moon of the vernal equinox, or after the sun has entered Aries; it is indifferent at what period of it the full moon happens, but it must be kept while the sun is in that sign. That a time was fixed for its observance is shown in Numbers 9:2, 'Let the children of Israel also keep the Passover at its appointed season.'

"That our months have always been lunar is shown by 1 Kings 6:38, 'And the eleventh year in the month Bul, which is the eighth month,' etc. By a reference to the Hebrew text it will be seen that the two words translated month are different, the first being derived from the word 'moon,' the latter from 'innovation.' Our months are the following:—

Tisri	30 days	Nisan	30 days
Hesvan	29 or 30 days	Yiar	29 days
Kislev	29 or 30 days	Sivan	30 days
Tebet	29 days	Tamuz	29 days
Sebat	30 days	Ab	30 days
Adar	29 days	Elul	29 days

"In the embolismic years, Adar has 30, and the intercalary month Ve-adar 29.

"As a lunation from one conjunction to another, termed a synodical month, has 29:12:44:3½, being 29½ days and about ¾ hour, it could not be better arranged than by making

one month 29 and the following 30 days. When a month has 30 days, the last day of the month and the following day are both kept as New Moon, on the principle that a holiday cannot be kept part of a day. The 30th day being half in the preceding month and half in the new moon, the whole day is made a holiday, and the following as a matter of course, from its being the first whole day of the new moon. That this rule was followed in ancient times, is to be seen in 1 Sam. 20:5, 27.

"It will have been seen that by this arrangement there is yet a deficiency every month of 44 min., 3½ sec., making nearly 9 hours in years of 12 months. To make up this deficiency one day is added to Hesvan every second or third year, by which that month then consists of 30 days. When Hesvan has 30 days, Kislev invariably has the same. Without Hesvan having 30 days, Kislev is sometimes made 30, which is done to prevent Passover happening on Monday, Wednesday or Friday, for as that festival regulates all the other holidays, it is arranged that none may fall on days on which they could not be properly observed. On the same day of the week as the

1st day of Passover are the fasts of Tamuz and Ab.

2nd day of Passover is the first day of Sebuot and Hosana Raba.

3rd day of Passover is the first day of New Year and Tabernacle.

4th day of Passover is the Rejoicing of the Law.

5th day of Passover is the Kippur, the day of Atonement.

"Consequently, were the first day on Monday, Purim would be on Saturday and Kippur on Friday, days on which neither could be observed. If it were on Wednesday, Kippur would be on Sunday, on which it could not be kept; the reason is that as Kippur has the same strict ordinances as Sabbath, it cannot precede or follow the Sabbath. If it were on Friday, Hosana Raba would be on Saturday, a day on which the ceremonies of it could not be observed. By the above regulation, it will be seen that Rosh Ashana can never fall on Sunday, Wednesday or Friday.

"This holiday is to be observed on the day of the conjunction, with the following exceptions:—

"1. If the conjunction takes place on Sunday, Wednesday or Friday, the holiday is to be kept on the following day, as in 5604.

"2. If the conjunction should happen after noon, the following day is to be observed, and if that should happen to be Sunday, Wednesday or Friday, the next is to be kept, as in 5601.

"3. If the conjunction takes place in an ordinary year on Tuesday, on or after 9h., 11m., 20s. A.M., it is not to be observed thereon, and as it may not be kept on Wednesday, it will be observed on Thursday, as in 5616. An objection may be made to this, as New Year should be observed on the day of conjunction, but were it to be so kept, the preceding month of Elul would only be of 27 or 28 days, and a month can never be less than 29.

"4. The conjunction being on Monday, on or after 3:30:52 P.M., in a year immediately following an embolismic, the holiday is to be kept on Tuesday, as in 5617. This occurs but seldom.

"Our embolismic years are Nos. 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17, 19 of each cycle.

"Although the Gregorian calculations have been made with great nicety they are still imperfect, and other alterations must take place in future ages. As a proof the Council of Nice ordered that Easter should not be kept on the same day as the first day of Passover, in order that there might be no appearance of Judaism in it; '*Ne videantur Judaizare*,' to prevent which they ordered its observance on the Sunday after the full moon, Passover being always kept on the day of the full moon; and yet in 1825 both were kept on the same day."

* * *

From the foregoing it will be seen that, with every endeavor to reach exactly the date specified in their Law for the Passover, the Jews have difficulty, and often there is of necessity a choice between two days equally appropriate. However, they follow the guidance of their leaders in this matter and have a uniformity of celebration, instead of each one trying to fix the date and celebrating according to his personal knowledge, convenience or preference. And this measure of subservency to leaders was endorsed by our Lord, who said, "The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat; whatsoever therefore they bid you observe, that observe and do." (Matt. 23:3.)

The Apostle indicated the same course to the Gospel Church. (Heb. 13:17.) Two essential features of the celebration of the Passover were: (1) uniformity, and (2) that it begin as exactly as possible at the full of the moon—which symbolized the fullness of favor to Israel.

THE MEMORIAL SUPPER, 1908

Following the custom of the early church, we celebrate the "Last Supper," not weekly, nor monthly, nor quarterly, as do our fellow-Christians, but *annually*. Nor do we celebrate it in the forenoon, but as a supper. To our understanding we thus better preserve the letter and spirit of our Master's request—"Do *this* in remembrance of me."

There still persists amongst Christians in general a halloved respect for our Lord's death-day, celebrated as "Good Friday," but the precious Memorial Supper of the preceding evening they overlook. The reason for this is evident. Catholicism, which long held almost universal sway, introduced the "Sacrifice of the Mass" as a *substitute* for the Memorial Supper; and when the Reformers rejected the Mass as a *sacrifice for sins* and resumed a more proper celebration they styled it "the Holy Communion." They failed, however, to note that the original Supper was given to celebrate the *antitypical* fulfilment of the eating of the Passover Lamb—and that its force and beauty would be dimmed by observing it oftener than on its anniversary.

The writer and many others would incline to celebrate the Memorial Supper annually on the Thursday night most closely corresponding to the original celebration, for several reasons. (1) That would bring the celebration into its proper relationship to Sunday, which is the remembrancer of our Lord's resurrection. (2) At that season Easter Sunday is quite generally celebrated as a special memorial of our Lord's resurrection. (3) The celebration of the Memorial Supper on the evening of what is by many styled "Holy Thursday" would of itself be a powerful lesson to many of our dear Christian friends who now think us "odd," or "followers of a Jewish custom," because, without study, which they will not give, they cannot understand our position. (4) Instead of copying anything "Babylonish," we would be calling attention to something long lost to Babylon. The finding of this sometimes means an investigation and appreciation of other truths lost or buried under human traditions.

But we pass by all these advantages, fearing that some could not appreciate them, and that therefore a *schism* might ensue. We prefer to remember the Apostle's words that there be no *schism*; that we seek to "preserve the unity of the Body in the bonds of peace." Hence we *do not announce* as the Memorial date the Thursday night nearest to the first full moon following the spring equinox. We again announce, as heretofore, the Memorial date as the evening of (preceding) Nisan 14—the day before the commencement of the Jewish Passover Feast-week; viz., April 14, 1908, after 6 P.M. The Jewish Passover begins Thursday, April 16 (Nisan 15); but in Jewish reckoning it begins after sundown of April 15. Consequently Wednesday, April 15, is Nisan 14, beginning at sundown of Tuesday, April 14.

"CHRIST OUR PASSOVER IS SACRIFICED FOR US, THEREFORE LET US KEEP THE FEAST"

1 Cor. 5:7.

What a meaning is in these words when seen in connection with the Memorial Supper as the remembrancer of the Jewish Passover! How the light of the type illuminates the antitype. As the first-born of Israel were exposed to death, so "the church of the first-born whose names are written in heaven" (Heb. 12:23) are now on trial for life or death everlasting. As then all the typical first-born were *safe* so long as they remained in the house and ate of the lamb whose blood was sprinkled upon the door-posts and lintel, so we who abide in the household of faith under the better "blood of sprink-

ling" and who eat of our Passover Lamb, Jesus, are safe from death—sure of life everlasting under God's providence.

We do not now recognize the typical lamb, but instead Jesus, "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." On him we feed; not eating his flesh literally, but by faith partaking of the merit of his sacrifice and appropriating it to ourselves. All through this night of the Gospel age do we thus feast on our Lamb—until the morning of the Millennium, when we shall be delivered. The annual Memorial Supper is not our feast, but an illustration or archetype of it—a remembrancer—most beautiful, most solemn, helpful. Let us keep the feast of faith and also the Memorial Supper. "As oft as ye do this [annually] ye do show forth the Lord's death—till he come again."—1 Cor. 11:26.

In accord with our usual custom let us, then, on Tuesday night, April 14th, at 7.30 P.M., assemble ourselves and memorialize the great Redeemer's death and our release from condemnation to destruction. Yea, more, as we break the loaf of unleavened bread, let us remember the later suggestion of the Apostle that all the consecrated followers of Jesus are so counted in with him by the Father that we are "all one loaf" (1 Cor. 10:17) and all have participation not only in our Lord's sacrifice or breaking on our behalf, but are to be broken with him as "members of his body," the church of the first-born. And as we partake of "the cup" of "the fruit of the vine" let us recognize it as not only representing our Lord's blood, his life sacrificed for us, but also as the cup in which we join—our communion or fellowship in the sufferings of Christ, as the Apostle explains. (1 Cor. 10:16.) And let us remember further the Apostle's words that "we fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ *for his body's sake* [service], the church." Thus "we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren"—our moments and hours and talents and strength and convenience.—Col. 1:24; 1 John 3:16.

We recommend that *unleavened* bread be used. Jewish Passover bread (crackers) may be obtained in many cities, but otherwise "Uneeda" biscuit or soda biscuit would serve every requirement. As for the cup, "the fruit of the vine," we advise that grape-juice or raisin-juice be used, if agreeable to all, but if any require regular wine we advise that such be accommodated also.

We advise that the celebration be in classes or congregations as they usually meet for worship every Sunday: that friends do not desert the little gatherings on this occasion in order to celebrate with larger groups—unless *all* can thus unite, which is improbable. Do not forget the Lord's words, "Where two or three of you are met in my name there am I in your midst." And if there be sick or solitary brethren or sisters who cannot possibly meet with even one other, let them celebrate alone with the Lord. All such who have no means of preparing the Memorial emblems, if they apply to us by April 1, will be supplied freely.

For those who think of no better method, we advise the reading of selections on the subject from DAWN-STUDIES, Vol. VI., with prayer and praise. As for the *ministers* or servants for the occasion: they should be those ordained or set apart by the congregation by *vote*, "by the stretching forth of the hand"—the elders. If the class is small and no elder has been chosen, a servant for the occasion should be first chosen by consent of the majority of the consecrated believers participating. It is requested that some one be appointed to communicate to us on a post-card a brief report of each celebration, giving the number of participants. We urge that *all* of the *consecrated* shall thus renew before the Lord their vow of loyalty and devotion to him and his brethren and his cause. There is a blessing in so doing which each one *needs*. Such participator will be strengthened and blessed, as the Lord and the Apostle indicate. Address all of these cards (even from foreign lands) to the Society at Allegheny, Pa., U. S. A.

BEREAN STUDIES ON THE ATONEMENT

[As these questions are to be had in book form we do not reproduce them here.]

"NOT IGNORANT OF HIS DEVICES"

Dear Brother Russell:—

I am sending under separate cover the little book, "Practical Methods," which I am told is being widely circulated, that you may appreciate the subtle bait the wily adversary is using to entrap the pure-minded. You must see that the author is evidently sincere and honest and hence the more powerful tool of Satan. You must see that an

advanced point of knowledge is indeed given, but, like the Bible symbol, it is water from the mouth of the dragon.

I am told that this counterfeit "regeneration" is the secret, underlying teaching of Seventh Day Adventism, New Thought and Theosophy, Christian Science and Spiritism, and indeed every outgrowth of the "three unclean spirits" now boldly masquerading under the guise of purity and

righteousness. I feel sure, Brother Russell, unless you note carefully certain facts you will fail to appreciate the severity of the temptation under which such a book comes to one of the Lord's true-hearted and pure-hearted. The religious errors are so apparent that one such earnest searcher for knowledge would not, could not, fail to distinguish them, and for this reason fail to see its danger. But failing to see that the Word of the Lord was sufficient, that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto every good work, and still under the delusion that light on these matters, considered secular, should properly come through secular channels, a book like this is read as secular knowledge, and unconsciously the principles of Theosophy are absorbed and do their vitiating work.

No human mind, as such, is capable of devising the subtle deception that underlies this book. Passing by the easily detected errors, from which the unwary reader feels himself perfectly safe, and, sure that he is gaining only needful secular knowledge, he is not prepared to see how certainly and surely he has been led to enter a realm of thought, which adherence to the Word of the Lord would have saved him from entering. That *DAWN*, Vol. VI, gives explicit information I am fully aware; that the Lord's people have only tasted of this "heavenly gift" I am equally aware.

I feel sure, Brother Russell, that danger to the Lord's people from this source has never before been seen. You have on several occasions said the words to me, but I have never before so fully appreciated their force, that "human knowledge is defiled"—wisdom from beneath, earthly, sensual, devilish. I appreciate as never before that no channels are clean except such as are divinely provided.

Do you appreciate, Brother Russell, that a pure-minded person could take this book and read into its words that which is pure and good, and yet be defiled by a certain clearly discernible spirit after its results are manifest, but not discernible previously? Perhaps the discernment came by means of light now due, but which was not due before a recent date.

I wondered when, in the *WATCH TOWER*, you warned the friends against mechanical manifestations of spirits, through raps and Ouija boards, that you were silent on so powerful Satanic weapons as scientific books. Literary and professional brethren are surely more open to danger from this source than from material sources. Does not one come more directly in contact with the spirit of the evil one through a book than through a mechanical device? Is this danger of the Lord's people confined to the physicians and the teachers? Does not the very hunger of the mind of all for knowledge, with the plausible necessity for its employment, constitute a most powerful temptation to every intelligent child of the Lord? Does not our great adversary know this fact, and is he not specially designing to attack this point, surely vulnerable in so many? Is it not time to sound the alarm in a new direction? "Be in health" surely was timely, but have all heard?

I feel sure that the circumstances under which I am mailing you this are sufficient reasons for the earnestness of my letter, and I know my heart has grown into a sympathy for the severity of the temptation under which the Lord's holy ones encounter our wily foe, and I surely cannot do less than communicate to you that which has now become so plainly evident.

Yours sincerely,

M. L. HERR.

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To be perfectly balanced physically is to be almost immune to disease. In other words, those who digest well what they eat, and who eat sufficiently and who work proportionately are so healthy that colds and other ailments pass them by. Those attacked by every passing ailment are usually either the *under-nourished* or the *slothful*. (See Vol. VI, pp. 559-562.)

This is true also of the new creation. Some "babes" in Christ are always "catching" something in the way of false doctrine—usually because *under-nourished* in the truth, but sometimes because their *labors for the truth* have been insufficient to properly utilize the nourishment they have taken.

Whoever has studied the Word to good effect has learned that its standard is the correct one; namely, that we must grow in knowledge and the graces of the Spirit by our daily walk in life. We put forth first the *faith* foot and then the *works* foot, and thus proceed to more faith and more works. These "rightly exercised" make us strong in the Lord and the power of his might. It is to such obedient children of God that the promise applies, "The wicked one toucheth

him not." Surely this is the only safe condition for any of the Lord's people to occupy.

The Lord has provided for his household the long-promised "meat in due season"—"things new and old." Some have repudiated and violently opposed these harvest blessings; others of us have embraced them and feasted on them and hungered and thirsted for more and more of the same kind, declaring with the poet:—

"I love to tell the story,
Because I know it's true,
It satisfies my longings
As nothing else would do."

We want more of the same, but since tasting of the heavenly manna we have no appetite for other things. If the class thus described is rightly exercised by their good nourishment they will be active in distributing it to others. They will neither be slothful nor be busy making a new brand of their own. They prefer to use and to recommend to others the very kind and brand which the Lord has provided. These, thankful and active, are in no danger from all the various snares and poisons prepared by the great adversary—and permitted by God as tests to his people. As the Apostle Peter declares: "If ye do these things ye shall *never fall*."

But there are others who are *sure to fall away* in this evil day, as the Scriptures declare:

(1) Those who received the truth with joy—those glad to learn that there is not a hell of torment, but a blessing provided by the Lord for all the families of the earth. These, without the proper loving zeal, are indolent as respects labors of love and self-denial on behalf of the Lord, the truth and the brethren: the truth they have rather inclines to puff them up and makes them fit subjects for any malaria of error which the adversary may blow their way. The more knowledge of the truth such have had and have not properly used to the glory of God the more sure they are to "catch" some error; and the severer and more hopeless will be their case. Is this not both true and *just*? Does it not speak loudly to all of us to *strive*, to *labor*, to *sacrifice*, if we would be accepted as "overcomers?"

Nor is it enough merely to "beat the air"; we must, as the Apostle declares, "strive lawfully if we would be crowned." (2 Tim. 2:5.) And lawfully means: in harmony with our Lord, the great Chief Reaper, and the arrangements he has provided. It is noticeable that the "slothful servants," when entrapped by the adversary, seem to become very energetic for the error. With sorrow we say it: we know of some who have long been favored of God with a knowledge of the truth, who seem less clear in it than they were ten or twenty years ago, and who show less fruitage than they then did. Such, unless they become awakened, will be just in the condition to be ensnared. Would that we could arouse such. But if they are deaf to the Lord's words how little may we hope that ours would influence them.

(2) The under-nourished spiritually are liable to "catch" errors, or rather to be caught by them, at any time. We may well suppose that, "as new born babes," they have the Lord's special care for a time, that they may grow strong in the Lord. But we must also expect that such as refuse and neglect the various provisions and exhortations of the Master for their development, will not be counted worthy of a share in the kingdom, and will therefore be permitted to stumble and fall "with the hypocrites," though they are not hypocrites and eventually will have a different portion. First one thing and then another will be permitted of the Lord to prove and test and sift his true people; whom he will thus refine and purify for himself, for his companionship in the coming glory.

A QUERY ANSWERED

"Is this poison?" asks one dear reader, who sends us a postal-card recently received from "The Home Preacher." The card alludes vaguely to "the third watch of harvest," "the midnight cry" and "a cake of barley bread." Yes, dear sister, it is intended to poison many and may poison an occasional one here and there, of such as are of the "catching" sort described foregoing. But it will not poison those who are truly the Lord's, for "they shall never fall."

The inconsistency of confusing the *third watch* of the morning with a *midnight cry* is not enough—the *harvest in the night* only adds to the confusion and leads to wonderment as to the mental calibre and make-up of the "Home

Preacher." It is time, high time, that some one gave him a real barley cake, for he evidently needs more substantial food than he has yet had.

Briefly: this effort of the adversary to hinder the truth and to ensnare the Lord's followers is served by two who were once in the truth *slightly*. The one was in "mission work" some years ago in St. Louis. The mission failed and he became interested in present truth. Later he got into conflict with the St. Louis Church, because he entertained the idea that *God had appointed him* its lord and master, regardless of the will of the church as expressed in its vote. The racking and splitting of the church ran over three years and resulted in its standing fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free. As the Editor of this journal could not support the brother in his unscriptural endeavor to lord it over God's heritage, he became our enemy and maligner and has for a year or more been doing what he can to destroy the harvest work. But he can have no power at all except as permitted by the Father.

The other "Home Preacher" professed considerable interest in the Truth some years ago. He would have been glad to be one of the "pilgrims," but the Society could not conscientiously aid his aspirations. He started to do

colporteur work, but made no success of it. He objected to being styled a colporteur—preferred to be called a minister, etc. We assured him that we regard all servants of the Lord as "ministers," but that "colporteur" merely signified a minister who served the cause in a special manner, and hence that we preferred that cognomen. We were, however, quite agreeable to his striking his pen through the word *colporteur* on the Order and the Report blanks. Later on his accounts got behind, because, instead of colporteur-ing, he undertook the writing of a novel "along the lines of the 'truth,'" he explained. We objected, and urged that consecrated time and money could be more wisely used. Unable to pay his own way, he concluded to get married; but of course this made matters worse. He became very bitter toward the Society and its President, because we could not supply him with all the financial aid he thought was his due.

These gentlemen having found that their past methods have not prospered, are now practising on the gullibility of the truth people, selling five-cent pamphlets for fifty cents each and attracting the money their way by sending out to all of our addresses obtainable postal-cards referring to the *Dawns, Midnight Cry, Harvest*, etc. Compare 2 Tim. 3:8-13.

"GIVE ME TO DRINK"

John 4:19-29.—FEBRUARY 9.

Golden Text:—"If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink."—John 7:37.

John the Baptist had testified of Jesus, "He must increase, but I must decrease." (John 3:30.) It is in harmony with this that we read that Jesus (at the hands of his disciples) baptized more than did John and his co-laborers. (John 4:1.) The growing popularity of Jesus aroused to bitter opposition the Scribes and Pharisees, and they sought to kill him. Hence, we read that "He would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him." (John 7:1.) They had greater animosity toward Jesus than toward John, for in him they recognized a superiority over themselves, and because the ignorant, common people heard him gladly and said, "Never man spake like this man." Thereafter we hear little of Jesus being in Jerusalem except on festival occasions, when great multitudes gathered in accordance with the requirements of the Law.

En route to Galilee, the home country of the majority of his apostles, the journey took them through the country of the Samaritans, concerning whom we remember that our Lord charged the disciples, saying, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Matt. 10:5, 6.) The Samaritans are thus classed with Gentiles—aliens, strangers, foreigners from the commonwealth of Israel. We recall their history—that at the time when the king of Babylon took the Israelites captive into Babylon, he planted some Gentiles in the land of Israel—immigrants. Cut off from their former idolatries, these people became interested in their new home country, its theology, traditions, religious sentiments, etc. Furthermore, some of the careless, ignorant and vicious amongst the Jews, disregarding their divine law on the subject, intermarried with the Samaritans. Thus an element of Jewish blood was intermingled amongst them. They called themselves the children of Jacob, and trusted that this meant some special blessing for them.

A sharp religious controversy was thus established between them and Jacob's natural progeny, the Jews. The latter, following the Law given by Moses, recognized Jerusalem and the Temple as the centre of all acceptable worship to God. The Samaritans, being thus excluded, claimed that they had something better—that right in their own country they had the very mountain in which Jacob worshiped God, and towards this mountain they went or looked in their worship of God, esteeming it as a great natural temple and superior to anything else on earth. These facts account to us for some of the Lord's expressions connected with this lesson, and also show us why his message excluded the Samaritans, as well as all Gentiles, from the call which he was giving, the kingdom invitation, which was exclusively for the Jews. It was not until the Jews had as a people neglected their opportunity that the special privileges of the kingdom were taken from them and subsequently tendered to such as would have an ear to hear in every nation, people, kindred and tongue of the earth—including the Samaritans.

"GIVE ME TO DRINK"

The road leading to Galilee branched off at Jacob's well, and the disciples went to the nearby Samaritan village, Sychar, to purchase food, while Jesus rested at the well, which was 75 feet deep and whose mouth was so walled up as to form a circular seat at its top. A Samaritan woman, laboring in the fields nearby, came to draw water, and was intensely surprised when Jesus asked her the favor of a drink. So tightly were the lines of social etiquette drawn that under ordinary circumstances no self-respecting Jew would ask a Samaritan for any favor, and especially for a drink of water. A gift of water or of food, extended or received at that time, signified fellowship, a covenant of good will. The woman asked an explanation of the Lord's peculiar conduct, but he gave none. We perceive in the entire Gospel narrative the humility of our Lord, that he was quite ready and willing to mingle with any class, that he shunned no opportunity for doing good to any class, publicans or sinners—and that he reproved and rebuked the Scribes and Pharisees for their aloofness. One of his parables was especially directed towards the self-righteous sentiment which feared even to touch garments with the outwardly more degraded. Our Lord, without approving of the outward degradation, showed that God looketh upon the heart, and that some of those highly approved amongst men were more abominable in his sight than some despised of men.

TACTFULNESS EXEMPLIFIED

Our Lord displayed great tactfulness. Instead of replying to the woman's query, he attracted her attention to a deeper truth. This lesson of tactfulness many of the Lord's people need to learn. We know some who mistakenly believe that they must use no tact—that to do so would be dishonest. Hence, they are frequently blunt to the extent of injuring the feelings of others, and hindering their own usefulness. Such should note in this lesson, and in many others, our Lord's tactfulness. He did not feel that it was necessary for him to answer the woman's question. On the contrary, he said, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." (John 4:10.) Similarly, let us in all the affairs of life try to turn the attention of those with whom we have contact towards the heavenly, the spiritual things—not that we should obtrude religious matters on every occasion, nor that we suppose our Lord would have done so. Quite probably he saw something in the way of honesty of character in the woman he addressed, else he would not have conversed with her. So we should be on the lookout for every opportunity to speak a word in season, to be helpful to others, to honor the Lord.

The woman understood the expression "living water" to mean fresh water, as distinguished from stagnant water. The woman perceived that our Lord was not provided with the necessary lowering bucket and camel's hair cord, and

said, If you had ever so much desire to give me to drink, it would be useless for me to ask you, since you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep, and there is nowhere else that you can hope to procure better water than this. Where would you get it? "Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children and his cattle?" (John 4:12.) Again our Lord tactfully ignored the question in the woman's interest—not to deceive her or take advantage of her, but for her benefit. He was instructing her, and leading her mind up from the natural water to the spiritual, and from the natural foundation to the spiritual. He said, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst," for that water "shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." (v. 14.)

That our Lord talked to no ordinary woman is evidenced by the quickness with which she grasped his presentation, and her earnestness to get the living water he had described. She said, "Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw." (v. 15.) Again we note our Lord's tactfulness. He turned the subject. It was necessary that the woman should appreciate the fact that she was a sinner and under the death sentence and needed water of eternal life, which God alone could give, and which he has provided only in Jesus, the Fountain. Our Lord turned her thoughts inward very quickly by saying, "Go, call thy husband." (v. 16.) The answer was, "I have no husband" (v. 17), and with that reply came a flood of thought, which our Lord riveted upon her by declaring, You have well said that you have no husband, for you have had five husbands, and he whom you now have is not your husband. The woman was now thoroughly aroused. She perceived that she was in the presence of one who knew her very deepest heart secrets. Yet she feared him not. She fled not from him. His kindness, his gentleness, his willingness to talk to a Samaritan woman, indicated that she had "found a friend, oh, such a friend." Her answer was, "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet."

Shrewdly then the woman led the conversation away from matters too personal to herself, and too solemn and too tender for discussion, and our Lord did not follow up the subject, but left it. Many of his followers need to learn this lesson of first awakening in the hearts of their hearers a consciousness of sin, and then leaving it to work for them, at greater leisure, sorrow and repentance and reformation. It is not for us to break the hearts of those around us, but to find those who are broken-hearted. The command is, "Bind up the broken-hearted." (Isa. 61:1.) In many instances, as in this one, the broken heart needs to be touched in connection with the binding-up process, in the application of the healing balm of grace and truth, but the touches should be gentle. If more breaking of the heart is necessary, it is not for us to do.

SALVATION IS OF THE JEWS

Not only would the woman escape a discussion of her personal character and affairs, but she would embrace this opportunity of settling in her own mind, with the aid of this one whom she had proven to be a great prophet, a question which had long troubled her—were the Jews or were the Samaritans right as respected religion and worship? Before her was a proven prophet, and one in whose words she could have great confidence; hence her inquiry, Who are right—our fathers, who claim that this mountain is the place of worship, or you Jews, who say that Jerusalem is the only place? Our Lord was not bent upon making of her a Jewish proselyte: the time for that was past; the harvest time had come. He would tell her something that would be to her advantage, and through her to the advantage of others in the near future, when the middle wall of partition would be broken down which still separated the Jews, in God's favor, from all others. His answer, therefore, applied to the Gospel dispensation in general, and this was already beginning so far as some of the Jews were concerned, and would later reach Samaritans and all Gentiles. He said, "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father."—v. 21.

That hour began after the Jewish house had been left desolate, after the new dispensation had been inaugurated, and it still continues. Believers do not have to go to a certain place, a certain mountain, a certain city, a certain house, but may approach the living God, through the great Redeemer, at any place and find him. That coming hour had already begun, since our Lord himself was the first of the Spirit-begotten ones; and his disciples, accepted of the Father through him, were taught to pray, to seek, to knock, to find.

Those who worship under this Spirit dispensation will not be accepted along the lines of former worship and places—not in families, or nationally. Their acceptance will be as individuals, and because they come unto the Father through his appointed way, the Redeemer, and come "in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him." (v. 23.) During past times he did indeed prescribe forms of worship and times and places, but now all that come unto the Father "in spirit and in truth" through Christ are accepted.

While it is most absolutely true that forms and ceremonies are not commanded, but the true worship of the heart, nevertheless we feel that some still maintain too much of a relationship to forms and ceremonies, and thus lose much of the spiritual blessing of prayer and communion. But, on the other hand, we seem to see a danger into which some of the Lord's dear people fall, through ignoring all regularity in prayer, and sometimes through too little formality in approaching the throne of heavenly grace, without a sufficiency of humility and reverence for him who has granted us so great a favor as to receive us into his presence and to hearken to our petitions. While thankful that we can call upon the Lord in every place and at any time, let us approach his courts with reverence, with an awe of heart befitting to us in our humble, lowly condition, and to him in his great exaltation. Thus we enter into the real spirit of prayer, which should recognize our complete dependence and the greatness of the Almighty.

"WE KNOW WHAT WE WORSHIP"

Very pointedly, though we are sure in no rude manner, our Lord declared the truth to the woman when he said, "Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship; for salvation is of the Jews." (v. 22.) The Samaritans, not being of the stock of Israel, were in no sense of the word heirs of the Abrahamic Covenant. Not discerning this cardinal truth in its true light, they were confused as to every feature of the divine plan. The Jews, on the contrary, understood that they were the natural seed of Abraham, and that from them must come the great Messiah, and that eventually, through him and some of their nation associated with him, all the families of the earth should receive a blessing. Our Lord said, "Salvation is of the Jews." He did not say, For the Jews, nor, To the Jews, exclusively. It was of them in the sense that the Master was of that nation according to the flesh. It was of them in the sense that the promises were exclusively to that nation, so that Messiah could not have been born of any other nation and yet inherit those promises. It was of that nation also, in that from them our Lord selected the earliest members of his church, his body, through whom the invitation to membership in that body has during this age been extended to every nation, people, kindred and tongue.

We would not say that the Samaritans were typical of a certain class of people here—typical would be too strong a word. We would see, however, that as there were true Israelites there in the type, and a class of people somewhat resembling them, who were not of them, so here in spiritual Israel we find some like the Samaritans, who are strangers from the covenant and promises, because not of the same family—not begotten again of the holy Spirit. Some of these are estimable people, honorable, and with a form of godliness, but denying its power. Then amongst the true Israel, all begotten of the holy Spirit, all therefore related to the Lord and the promises, there are two classes: the little flock of Israelites indeed, whose love and zeal the Lord approves, and a great company whose love and zeal are not sufficient to gain them the distinguished title, "More than Conquerors"—joint-heirs.

In our conversation on religious subjects with those corresponding to the Samaritans, it may not be using the wisdom of serpents for us to say, "Ye worship ye know not what," even though this be strictly true. Nevertheless, to those of this class who give evidence of desire to know the truth, it would be proper for us to kindly attempt to show them this matter—to show them how different are the hopes and aspirations and promises which apply to the consecrated saints of Spiritual Israel from anything they have ever known or thought. In all of our dealings with the Israelites and others, let us remember the Master's words, "Be ye wise as serpents and harmless as doves."—Matt. 10:16.

WHEN MESSIAH COMETH

The mind of the Samaritan woman swept forward in thought. She recalled the expectation of her own people and of the Jews that God would provide a great Messiah, an Anointed One, who would be all-wise and all-powerful to the relief of all perplexity and to lift out of all difficulty. She wondered whether the Messiah could be more wonderfully wise than the prophet, the teacher, to whom she talked. She did not like to ask the question direct, but suggested it sidewise, saying, "I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things." (v. 25.) Seeing

her readiness of mind, our Lord expressed to her—more plainly, perhaps, than to any other person during his ministry—the great fact that he was the Messiah: “I that speak unto thee am he.” (v. 26.)

The disciples, returning at this time, marveled that he talked with the woman, but had too great respect for him to question him; and many since, all through the Gospel age, reading the account, have marveled at the Master's humility thus displayed. It has brought a good lesson to many of the Lord's followers—that they are not to despise opportunities for service, for preaching of the truth, even though they have an audience of but one. And indeed the opportunity of speaking to one earnest listener should be esteemed far greater than that of addressing a thousand inattentive ones. Doubtless our Lord saw in this woman something that indicated her worthiness of the time and energy thus bestowed upon her.

But from another standpoint, what worthiness could she have? what worthiness do any of us possess by nature? Fallen and imperfect, the only thing remaining that could in any way be pleasing to the Lord would seem to be our honesty of heart. Honesty this woman evidently had, and hence we believe she was favored, and many of the Lord's dear people have received this message since. Here, too, we have another illustration of the importance of using every opportunity that may come to us. Time and energy spent in the assistance of some worthy one may, as in this case, flow out in widening influence to many. Eternity alone will show the value of some of the little things, the feeble efforts put forth in the name of the Lord; and this reminds us that our Lord is judging us by our faithfulness in little things and small opportunities rather than by our great achievements. His own words are, “He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in that which is least is unjust also in much.” (Luke 16:10.) Remembering this, let us be careful in the little things, little opportunities, the hours and the moments, that we may show ourselves zealous for the Lord and his cause, and have his eventual approval, as well as his present blessing.

THE MISSIONARY SPIRIT

The character of this woman is further displayed in the fact that, leaving her water-bucket, she hastened to the city to tell her friends and neighbors that she had found a great teacher, possibly the Messiah, and to ask them to come and share the privilege of hearing him. The selfish spirit, which would have bidden her to keep the information to herself, or the slothful, careless spirit, which would have led her to say, I would be pleased if my friends might know, but will not bestir myself to inform them—either of these would have marked the woman as unworthy of the Lord's favor; and

had such been her disposition, we doubt if the Lord would have entered into conversation with her. And so it is with those who have been reached with present truth; they are, as a rule, not only the honest and sincere, but the generous, who love to give the good things to their neighbors, and who, having heard now of the second presence of the Son of man, and the kingdom about to be established, and having come to a clearer knowledge than ever before of the truth of the divine plan—these rejoice to lay down their lives in its service—the promulgating of “good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people.” (Luke 2:10.) This is the true missionary spirit, and home missions come first.

“COME UNTO ME AND DRINK”

Our Golden Text is quite in line with the lesson intimated—that before anyone can come to the Lord he must thirst, he must have an appreciation of that which the Lord has to give—the water, the refreshment, of eternal life. This means that he must learn that he is a sinner, and under sentence of death, and that there is no hope for a future life except through Christ. The coming to the Lord is the approach of faith. Our thirst is our desire. We drink, or appropriate to ourselves the divine message. “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy Word is truth” (John 17:17)—and water is the symbol of truth. The promise of a blessing to those who “hunger and thirst after righteousness” is in full accordance with this. And the promise is, “They shall be filled.” This, too, is in harmony with our Lord's statement in our lesson, “Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst.”—(v. 14).

In the present time our thirst is in one sense of the word insatiable—we are never satisfied—in the sense that the Lord's blessings are so great and so good that we can never in the present day and in present conditions have enough of them. We shall be satisfied thoroughly when we awake in his likeness (Psa. 17:15)—when the “change” of the first resurrection shall have completed our transformation as new creatures into our Lord's likeness—from glory to glory.” (2 Cor. 3:18.) Nevertheless, there is a measure of satisfaction to our drinking, even in the present time—just as with a thirsty one at a fountain, he drinks with relish, with appreciation, with satisfaction, only to take more and more. So with those who are the Lord's. He pours into their cup blessings rich and satisfying, and fills the cup repeatedly, even while they are in their present tabernacle. Let us appreciate more and more the truth, the water of life, and let us see to it that we get it pure from the fountain, and that we recognize no other fountain than the Lord Jesus, however much we may appreciate the channels through which the supply may have come to us.

THE REWARDS OF FAITH

John 4:43-54.—FEBRUARY 16.

Golden Text:—“The man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way.”—John 4:50.

After spending two days with the Samaritans at Sychar, our Lord proceeded on his journey to Galilee. We have already noticed that this was contrary to his instructions to his disciples, and that the Samaritans, not being Jews, could not at that time receive special blessings—not until the seventy weeks of divine favor set apart for the Jews had been fulfilled, and the door opened to the Gentiles. We can imagine, however, that there was some special reason why the people of this little city were distinctly favored by our Lord, particularly when we remember that on another occasion he declined to go into a village of Samaria, and the people of that village refused to sell the disciples food, and thus incensed James and John to the extent of their suggestion to the Master that fire be called down from heaven to consume the village and its inhabitants. (Luke 9:54.) In Acts 8 and 9:31 we have clear indications that the work of grace flourished amongst the Samaritans very promptly after the door of opportunity swung open to them. No doubt that later fruitage developed from the words of grace and truth which our Lord dropped on the occasion of the visit here referred to.

Our Lord and his disciples went into Galilee, notwithstanding the fact that the Lord corroborated the proverb that a prophet has no honor in his own country; but while he would have less honor there in one sense, it was a better field for labor in another sense, because the people, while outwardly less religious than those of Judea, were really in a better attitude of heart to receive the Lord and his truth than those of Judea, who were shackled with sectarianism and the burdens of the Law imposed by the teachings of the Pharisees.

Although our Lord's first miracle was performed in Galilee, his first reputation was gained in Judea and at Jerusalem,

and now on his return to his home country, he had proportionately more honor than if he had remained, for many Galileans, attending the feasts at Jerusalem, had been witnesses of his teachings and miracles there. Thus he returned again to Cana, the scene of his first miracle, with added honors. We remember that on the occasion of his first miracle, the people said, Is not this Jesus, the carpenter, whose kinsfolk we know? How, then, is he a prophet, a teacher? (Mark 6:2, 3.) Now, however, his fame was spread abroad, so that a nobleman living at Capernaum, twenty-five miles distant, learned of his presence at Cana, and made the journey to present a special request for the healing of his son, who was at the point of death. The word rendered nobleman in this text might more literally be rendered king's officer, and the supposition of some is that this was Chuza, Herod's steward or chamberlain, whose wife, Joanna, was one of the women who subsequently ministered to Jesus.—Luke 8:3.

CHUZA'S MANIFESTATION OF FAITH

The essence of this lesson is faith, and it well illustrates degrees and development of faith. Knowledge is necessary as a basis for faith, and this Chuza possessed. His faith was manifested in his coming to the Lord and publicly acknowledging his confidence in the Lord's ability to heal his son. We may well consider that this indicated a good measure of faith to begin with, but our Lord—with no lack of sympathy for a father's interest in his dying son, but with a desire to develop Chuza's faith—hesitated to go with him, and seemingly objected to so doing, saying, “Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.” (v. 48.) Had Chuza's faith been small, or had he been lacking of humility, he might have

had opportunity for a manifestation of incredulity and indignation.

He might have said, I did not believe in you anyway. It was merely a haphazard matter, because the physicians can do nothing further for my son, and I thought that your coming might possibly accomplish something. But now, sir, I see your hesitancy, and interpret it to mean that you occasionally pick out cases where you can effect a healing, where you can apparently effect a miraculous cure; but that in the general run of diseases, where death is at the door, you are as helpless as our physicians. I have at least demonstrated the fraudulency of your general claims. Adieu. But no; Chuza's attitude of heart was different. Our Lord's delay merely increased his urgency. He supplicated, and finally said, "Sir," Rabbi, "come down ere my child die." Don't, please don't wait to discuss a matter of faith if you realize my position as a father and my interest in the subject, but do come now, and render me the assistance, and discuss the philosophy of faith and tell me of my further needs subsequently.

Our Lord's point had been gained. He had tested the nobleman's faith, and had led his mind upward from the mere healing operation to something higher, to the divine power behind it, and to the fact that our Lord's miracles were merely intended to introduce him as the Messiah. But the test of faith was not yet finished, for our Lord, instead of accompanying Chuza to his son's bedside and there performing a cure, merely told him, "Go thy way; thy son liveth"—he will not die at the present time, he will recover. (v. 50.) The word was believed, the importunity ceased, and instead, no doubt, gratitude, thankfulness, was expressed. It is noted that the miracle took place in the seventh hour—1 p. m. It may be presumed that Chuza came the twenty-five miles on horseback that very morning in great haste. It is notable, however, that while he might have returned the same evening at the same speed, that he did not arrive at home until the next day—evidently taking the journey leisurely. Meantime, his servants met him with the pleasing information that his son was out of danger. He inquired particularly for the time, and they promptly answered, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him;" so Chuza knew that the recovery was the result of our Lord's word and power.

ANOTHER KIND OF FAITH

We read that Chuza "believed, and his whole house." But did he not believe before, when he started to see the Master, when he was speaking with him, when he accepted his reply and started home? Yes, all of those were steps of faith, of belief and obedience in harmony therewith, and attesting the same; but when he arrived home and realized the miracle, it led to a belief in the Lord of a still higher and of a still deeper kind. He now believed, not only that Jesus was able to work miracles, but that he was indeed the Redeemer, the Messiah. His faith at last had reached the heart. No doubt it was as a result of this that his wife, Joanna, in harmony with his wishes, became one of the active supporters of our Lord's ministry.

What lessons of faith can be learned today along the lines of this lesson? We answer that faith today has its various gradations or steps. First of all, we could have no faith except as some knowledge would serve as its foundation. It is written, "Without faith it is impossible to please him [God]" (Heb. 11:6), and only those who please God, who have his approval, will have eternal life. Hence, we know that the heathen, who have no faith in God because they have no knowledge of him, are not accepted, are not justified, are not in any sense of the word saved or approved of God as worthy of eternal life. This settles at once, to all who are guided by the Scriptures, the erroneous supposition that the heathen are going to heaven, because of their ignorance. As the Apostle points out, "How can they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" and how could they hear without some proclamation, either oral or printed? and how can the proclamation reach them except as God be back of the matter and direct it to them, and grant the opening of the eyes of their understanding?

But an elementary knowledge and an elementary faith built upon it is not sufficient—faith must grow, and before it can grow it must lead to some kind of works. Chuza's primary faith led to his journey to our Lord, by which he attested his faith. But generally there must be a necessity, as in Chuza's case—his sons' illness. Some might hear of Christ, though they might never approach did they not realize the necessity; but the same message that tells of Christ points him out as a Savior, and implies that all men are sinners. Only those who realize that they are sinners, only those that desire to escape from sin and death, will be led to investigate and approach the Lord, that they may find relief from their burden of soul.

FAITH COMETH BY HEARING—THE MESSAGE OF GOD

In the first approach of a soul to the Lord it may be necessary that the feeling of need should be intensified; and hence, although the Lord is very merciful and compassionate and forgiving, he permits the penitent one to supplicate, and delays his assurances of forgiveness until matters seem vital to the one who is hungering and thirsting for the divine favor he seeks. Then, as in the case of Chuza, the Lord does not do something outwardly, miraculously proving to us that our prayer has been answered and that we are forgiven, but he merely tells us so, saying, "Thy sins be forgiven thee!"

Where the proper faith is, the results will be similar to those in the case of Chuza—the penitent one will believe, trust, and go his way, thankful and rejoicing. Whoever cannot trust has not yet come to the place where it is proper for him to have the relief. He must first cultivate more faith in the Lord, and to this end he may need a larger knowledge of the Lord and his goodness. He may need to call to mind the Lord's character, that he is very merciful and of tender compassion; that while declaring that we are sinners, he declares also that he so loved us while we were yet sinners as to give our redemption price. (John 3:16.) He must consider how graciously the Lord has already dealt with many in the forgiveness of their sins, and in the granting to them of his holy Spirit, whereby has been wrought in them the glorious transformation of character, so that the things which they once loved they now hate, and the things they once hated they now love. With these lessons before the heart, and with confidence that the Lord changes not, that he is the same yesterday, today and forever, all sincere seekers of divine favor have an abundance of foundation for faith in their forgiveness and acceptance, and are authorized to have "strong consolation."—Heb. 16:18.

What should be the result of a true faith which after various difficulties has reached the degree of justification and come to realize the forgiveness of sins, reconciliation to the Father, and the merit of the precious blood, covering all blemishes, future as well as past? As in Chuza's case, his faith bringing him to a condition of discipleship—to a position of believing on a still higher plane than ever before—so it should be with us. A realization of the grace of God in the forgiveness of our sins should lead us to that faith in him, that confidence in his Word, that acceptance of him as the great Teacher, the Messiah, which would believe in him to the extent of accepting all of his gracious provisions and propositions. This would mean that we would turn from the world to become his disciples, to lay our little all on the altar of sacrifice, with full confidence that he who has begun a good work in us is both able and willing to complete it in the day of Christ, in the Millennial age—early in the morning of which the church, the bride, is to be helped, delivered, "changed."—Phil. 1:6; 1 Cor. 15:51, 52.

We trust that the majority of our readers will be able to trace in this lesson their own experiences of justification and sanctification. And what further remains? We answer that next in order comes the testing—a testing of the degree of our consecration, of its genuineness, of the sincerity of our consecration. This is the Christian's life. The earlier steps of faith and justification were merely primary to our standing upon this plane of sanctification—begetting of the holy Spirit to a new nature. The Lord's special dealing during this Gospel age is with these new creatures, Spirit begotten—not that they are many as compared with the world, or even as compared with those that take the first step of faith unto justification. They are a little flock, to whom it is the Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom—to as many of them as prove faithful. (Luke 12:32.) The Apostle declares of them,

"ALL THINGS ARE FOR YOUR SAKES"

—2 COR. 4:15—

Everything in the realm of nature and of grace must for the time so operate as to be most favorable to this class, for the Lord has declared that all things shall work together for good for these—"the called according to his purpose." (Rom. 8:28.) Whatever cannot be overruled for their good must be hindered, must be stopped, cannot proceed. Little does the world realize the important place in its affairs and interests occupied by this little flock; indeed the world knoweth them not, even as it knew not their Lord (1 John 3:1)—the world reckons them as a part of the filth and off-scourings of all things, knows them as fools for Christ's sake. But by and by the veil will be lifted, and the whole world shall understand the mysterious workings of divine providence, for, as the Apostle declares, God, in the ages to come, will "shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."—Eph. 2:7.

Whoever has a sufficiency of faith to be accepted of the Lord in this class and to be begotten of the holy Spirit, will