

the matter for them, saying, The wisdom of man is as foolishness with God, for the world by its wisdom knows not God and does not take into consideration the boundlessness of his wisdom and power. The Christian, on the contrary, recognizing divine power and wisdom and coming into accord with the same, is thereby blessed. Whatever was the measure of his wisdom and prudence as a natural man, this would be certainly intensified by his participation in the wisdom which cometh from above—"the spirit of a sound mind," the spirit of the Lord.

As soon as the king learned that Elisha was at the little town of Dothan he sent an army, including horses and chariots, to surround the city and to make sure of capturing the prophet. The latter doubtless understood in advance, but working in harmony with the Lord's arrangement he did not flee the city. He was entirely restful in mind respecting the matter, but his servant was greatly alarmed—he thought of the Prophet and himself being carried prisoners to Syria to thenceforth be bondmen, etc. Elisha, however, comforted him with assurances respecting the divine power which encompassed them, much greater than the power of their enemies. Then, not only as a lesson to the servant, but also doubtless intended of the Lord as a lesson for his people all the way down through the ages, Elisha prayed that the young man's eyes might be opened that he might see and realize the true situation. At once the servant perceived that all around the city the entire hill was amply protected against the surrounding hosts—"horses and chariots of fire" around and about Elisha and himself. We must assume that the horses and chariots of fire were in the nature of a vision granted to the servant and to us, as illustrative of the divine power and protection given. Thus viewed, what the servant saw was an active parable, a picture similar to the symbolic pictures of Revelation—serving the intended purpose most thoroughly, most completely, and giving to the eyes of his understanding a proper conception of the divine power present with the Prophet.

DIVINE PROVIDENCE ALL ABOUT US

This is the center of our lesson and is in full accord with other Scripture statements, as, for instance, the Golden Text, the latter giving a picture, not of horses and chariots representing power, but an encampment representing a continued and abiding presence of the divine representatives, safely guarding all the interests of the Lord's faithful ones. The Apostle assures us that the angels of God are ministering spirits sent forth to minister unto and to serve those who shall be heirs of salvation, the saved ones of this Gospel age—not only the overcomers of the little flock, but also the overcomers of the great multitude. All of these, because believers in Christ, because at heart faithful, because fully consecrated to the Lord and begotten of his Spirit, are the special and happy objects of his grace, ministered to and served by the invisible messengers. Our Lord Jesus sets forth practically the same thought in his declaration, "Their angels do always behold [have access to] the face of my Father." (Matt. 18:10) The Master's words seem to imply at least one or more angels having charge over the consecrated ones, the very elect. He uses a still different figure of speech in illustrating the matter, as though he would assure us that these messengers would not be delayed in caring for our interests, would not be hindered by more important heavenly business, but would at once have direct access to the divine presence and attention, so that our interests would have all needed consideration.

Gathering together these various pictures, we have as a whole before our minds something like this: Our great all-wise, all-powerful heavenly Father has numberless messengers at his command, and has deputized and appointed many of these to care for the interests of his cause on earth—especially to watch over and minister unto the very elect. Nothing can by any means, therefore, harm these, except as the heavenly Father sees that the earthly injury or disadvantage would prove profitable either to the individual new creature or to the Lord's general cause. This is in full accord with his general assurance that all things shall work together for good to them that love him.

Such a use of the heavenly messengers by no means invalidates the thought that the Lord's earthly children are frequently used of him as ministers, servants, the one to the other. Indeed we may be assured that the invisible messengers or servants, generally if not always, are required to act through human instrumentalities—preferably through the very elect. Of this kind of service done by the brethren one for the other under the supervision of divine power and messengers, we have illustrations in the harvest work: for instance, supervised by our present Lord and his heavenly hosts, yet in the main carried on by the members of his body still in the flesh. Again we have illustrations of the same in the declaration of Psalms 91:11, 12, "He shall give his messengers charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." Doubtless the heavenly messengers are connected with this work, yet nevertheless the work itself is apparently, we may say surely, done through human instrumentalities—the church in the flesh. For instance, the Lord in this present harvest time has given his messengers, the leaders of his consecrated people, "a charge," a message, a word of warning, counsel, advice,—an opening of the Word of Truth, an enlightenment of their understandings,—that they should bear up all the members of the "feet" class, all of the very elect in this time of serious trial, testing and stumbling, lest at any time of this class should stumble through the peculiar trials of the present time. How manifestly this is fulfilled: the harvest message in its various features, bearing on every phase of truth now due and every phase of error now being brought forward, is God's keeping power by which, according to his guarantee, we know that nothing shall by any means hurt the "feet" members of the true "body of Christ."

It is for us to rejoice in these blessings and favors of the Lord and to increase our faith; and the lesson under consideration is a help in this connection, as showing us how even before the house of sons was organized, the Lord had power and exercised it in the house of servants in a way that illustrates to us the abundance of that power.

With the morning light the Syrian soldiers drew near to the village of Dothan, making inquiry for the Prophet, who, by prayer, brought upon them "blindness." The original word, however, does not signify total blindness, but rather a visual indistinctness, somewhat akin perhaps to mesmeric or hypnotic conditions as they are known today. The Prophet proposes to lead them to Elisha and his home, the latter being in the city of Samaria and thither he led them. When they were within the walls of the city and completely, therefore, at the mercy of the king of Israel and his warriors, the Prophet dispelled the illusion, and, opening the eyes of their understanding, made himself known to them and introduced them to the king of Israel, etc. The latter inquired of the Prophet whether he had led them there to be smitten, to be destroyed as the enemies of the Lord and of the kingdom, but his answer was, No; that he should set a feast before them of royal bounties and send them back to their king and friends—in a word, that he should figuratively "heap coals of fire on their heads." This was done, and the result is given us in a few words, "So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel."

The closing incident of our lesson is worthy of appropriation by spiritual Israelites. So long as we are the Lord's we may have absolute confidence respecting the results in all of life's affairs, and this confidence in God should tend to make us more generous and kind toward our enemies—to all those who would spitefully use us or persecute us. So far from seeking to do them injury in return or to speak evil of them in return, the admonition of the Lord is, "If thine enemy hunger feed him, if he thirst give him drink, for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." "A soft answer turneth away wrath." A return of good for evil may not at once make a friend of an enemy, but it will at least bring blessing to our own hearts, and is much more likely to bring blessing to the enemy than if we should return him evil for evil.

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER

THE OFFICIAL PRAYER OF RUSSIA FOR DIVINE AID AGAINST JAPAN

The *Official Messenger* of St. Petersburg, Russia, published the following prayer appointed by the Holy Synod.

"By virtue of an imperial ukase to the effect that during the present trials of our dear country more ardent prayers should be offered for the victory of the Russian troops, who are worshipers of Christ, over a cruel enemy, full of guile, the Holy Synod pronounces the time ripe for special prayers to be

offered in all of the churches in the empire on Sundays and holidays, after mass, beseeching that heavenly aid should be sent to the Russian army, which is sacrificing its life for its faith, its emperor and its country, for long life for the victorious troops and for the repose of the souls of the warriors who fall."

The following prayer has been specially ordained:

"Although unworthy, we implore thee who art strong in

battle, for aid, and humbly beseech thee to accept our weapons in thy cause, to give thy Christ-loving army victory, and to permit it to subdue the enemy.

"Send from on high thy hand and touch the hearts of the enemy so that they shall make supplication to thee, the God of peace, who loves his creatures.

"Strengthen us with thy might, defender of the orthodox faith, send thy arrows to confound the enemy.

"Strike them as with lightning and give them into the hands of thy faithful troops.

"Thou who hearkened to Moses, bless the emperor's doings, multiply his glory and confirm his empire. By thy almighty hand preserve his army. Send thy angel to fortify his troops and give them salvation.

"Send peace upon us. May thy invisible finger defend thy servants, show them the right path, forgive them their sins, and bestow upon them the crown of glory.

"Grant the emperor peaceful life and well-being, the fulfilment of his desires and a conquest of his enemies."

The prayer also appeals to the virgin, and concludes by beseeching eternal rest for the dead and for all those who have laid down their lives for their faith and their country.

A secular journal editorially comments on the prayer thus:

"Those who remember the horrid barbarities of the Russian troops on the way to Pekin will shudder at the blasphemous bigotry and assurance which calls the Russian army Christ-loving. If they were Christ's they would do his works. Moreover, instead of a prayer for divine guidance, these mistaken ones call on God for reinforcements. They do not ask him to guide the Czar aright, but merely to endorse his policies. There is one tiny clause, evidently an afterthought, which asks that the Russians may be shown the right path, but its position, following as it does an appeal to the Deity to smite the enemy and to deliver them into the hands of the suppliants, shows they don't want this asked-for guidance until they have settled with the Japanese. They seem to forget that the same God made both the Japanese and the Russian."

Poor, blind priests and people! although nominally "Christians" how sad sadly they need the true eye-salve! How glad we are for them and for the whole world that God's promise is soon to be fulfilled: "All the blind eyes shall be opened"—"the blind shall see out of obscurity."

The Apostle says that "the god of this world [Satan] hath blinded the minds of them that believe not." We see this illustrated in the present instance. False doctrine is blinding the Russians just as it does other nominal "Christian nations."

That false doctrine had its start in the third century, when faith in the coming kingdom of Christ began to fade,—when the Millennial kingdom promises began to be interpreted as signifying the church's control of world power. Under this error the Papal hierarchy rose into power until it controlled practically every nation in Europe. These nations have since broken away from her, except Austria-Hungary, but the Popes still claim temporal power, assert that they represent Christ and that his Millennial reign has been in process of fulfilment in Papacy.

Russia coalesced with the Greek Catholic church which, through the Holy Synod, recognizes the Czar as the head of the one and only true church of Christ. From the Russian standpoint, therefore, the success of Russia in conquering China and Japan means the prosperity and spread of Christ's kingdom, which ultimately, all-conquering, shall fill the whole earth.

The same error poisons all the remainder of Christendom; for although the casting off of the Papal yoke seemed to mean the overthrow of this error amongst the masses of Europe it really meant nothing of the kind: the error merely took another form. At first each sect of Protestants proposed that it was the kingdom of Christ and must prevail and conquer the world. But as splits and factions increased the number of these spiritual kingdoms of Christ and demonstrated that none of them could conquer the world single-handed, a truce was called in 1843, when the Evangelical Alliance was formed. Since then the theory is that "all the sects as well as their Papal mother" constitute the kingdom of Christ which must conquer the world.

This thought still dominates, and under it every civilized government which favors the church styles itself a kingdom of God. The union spirit grows, and soon, according to the Scriptures, will bring to Protestantism and Catholicism, co-operating, the old-time power over secular affairs formerly exercised by Papacy during the dark ages.

It is time for all of God's true people to discern this error,

which in various ways has misled, is misleading and will yet further mislead all those blinded by the Adversary on this subject.

What is the antidote for this poisonous blinding error, do you ask? We reply that the remedy is a return to the primitive faith of the church; namely, a recognition that all these man-made institutions are pseudo kingdoms—false, deceptive misrepresentations of Christ's kingdom: that Christ himself will be the great King in that Millennial kingdom, and that his true saints of the entire Gospel age, after sharing in the first resurrection, will constitute the Holy Synod or royal priesthood promised. How this truth frees us from the blindness which once afflicted us even as it still afflicts others! and how it inspires us with true ideals and the best and most powerful aspirations! The faithful all down these eighteen centuries have waited for God's Son from heaven and for his kingdom, for which we still pray: "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth even as it is done in heaven."

TOLSTOI'S SERMON ON THE WAR

"All over Russia, from the palace to the remotest village, the pastors of churches, calling themselves Christians, appeal to that God who has enjoined love to one's enemies—to the God of Love himself—to help the work of the devil to further the slaughter of men. . . . Christian pastors continue to invite men to the greatest of crimes, continue to commit sacrilege, praying God to help the work of war, and, instead of condemning, they justify and praise that pastor who, with the cross in his hands on the very scene of murder, encouraged men to the crime. The same thing is going on in Japan.

Japanese theologians and religious teachers no less than the military in the techniques of religious deceit and sacrilege, but distort the great Buddhistic teaching by not only permitting but justifying that murder which Buddha forbade. The Buddhistic scientist Soyen-Shaku, ruling over eight hundred monasteries, explain that, although Buddha forbade manslaughter, he also said he could never be at peace until all beings are united in the infinitely loving heart of all things, and that, therefore, in order to bring into harmony that which is discordant it is necessary to fight and to kill men.

"It is as if there never had existed the Christian and Buddhistic teaching about the unity of the human spirit, the brotherhood of men, love, compassion, the sacredness of human life.

"Stupefied by prayers, sermons, exhortations, by processions, pictures and newspapers, the cannon's flash, hundreds of thousands of men, uniformly dressed, carrying divers deadly weapons, leaving their parents, wives, children, with hearts of agony, but with artificial sprightliness, go where they, risking their own lives, will commit the most dreadful act of killing men whom they do not know and who have done them no harm. And they are followed by doctors and nurses, who somehow imagine that at home they cannot serve simple, peaceful, suffering people, but can only serve those who are engaged in slaughtering each other. Those who remain at home are gladdened by news of the murder of men, and when they learn that many Japanese have been killed they thank some one whom they call God. . . .

"The frightful work commenced is continued. Loot, violence, murder, hypocrisy, theft and, above all, the most frightful fraud—the distortion of religious teachings, both Christian and Buddhistic—continue. . . .

"This evil which is leading men to inevitable destruction has manifested itself with special power in our time, because, having lost all rational guidance in life, and having directed all efforts to discoveries and improvements, principally in the sphere of technical knowledge, men of our time have developed in themselves enormous power over the forces of nature; but, not having any guidance for the rational adaptation of this power, they naturally have used it for the satisfaction of their lowest and most animal propensities.

"Bereft of religion, men possessing enormous power over the forces of nature, are like children to whom powder or explosive gas has been given as a plaything. Considering this power which men of our time possess, and the way they use it, one feels that, considering the degree of their moral development, men have no right, not only to the use of railways, steam, electricity, telephones, photography, wireless telegraphs, but even to the simple art of manufacturing iron and steel, as all these improvements and arts they use only for the satisfaction of their lusts, for amusement, dissipation and the destruction of each other. . . .

"Man has no choice; he must be the slave of the most unscrupulous and insolent among slaves, or else the servant of God, because for man there is only one way of being free—by uniting his will with the will of God. People bereft of religion, some repudiating religion itself, others recognizing as religion those external, monstrous forms which have super-

seded it, and guided only by their personal lusts, fear, human laws and, above all, by mutual hypnotism, cannot cease to be animals or slaves, and no external efforts can extricate them from this state, for only religion makes a man free. And most of the people of our time are deprived of it."

Again he says: "Christian nations are all in one and the same condition of having rejected religion; and therefore, notwithstanding dissensions among themselves, they are all united and form one confederate band of robbers, among whom theft, plunder, depravity and murder, individually or collectively, go on without causing the least compunction of conscience, and even with the greatest self-complacency, as occurred the other day in China. Some believe in nothing, and are proud of it; others pretend to believe in what they for their own advantage hypnotize the common folk into accepting as a faith; while others, again—the great majority, the common people, as a whole—accept as a faith the hypnotic suggestions to which they are subjected, and slavishly submit to all that is demanded of them by the dominant and unbelieving hypnotizers."

THE NEW PROTESTANTISM

From the following it is apparent that the cleavage or split which we have predicted is already under way in Germany. Infidelity, masquerading under the name of higher criticism, has for a time deceived many and will continue to appeal to all the "tares" and to confuse some of the "wheat;" but the time is at hand when the latter must recognize the deception and not be bound with the tares in their "bundles" or organizations. Alas that the wheatfield is so overgrown with "tares" that the "wheat" is but a small minority. We quote from the *Christian Intelligencer* (N. Y.) as follows:—

"That there is a reaction from the rationalistic and critical character of the Protestant church in Germany is apparent, not only from the attitude of some of the leaders of thought in the empire, but from the rapid increase and growing influence of an organization known as 'Association Agitation.' Pastor Zeller of Stuttgart describes it as to all intents and purposes a pietistic agitation, and directed against the type of theology that prevails in the universities and in the pulpits. It is a protest of the heart against the head, and is accordingly one of the ever-recurring reactions that put in their appearance in the ups and downs of the church history. It is not positively new, but its earliest beginnings date to the days of Professor Christlieb of Bonn, and it has largely been influenced by the ideals of the practical Christianity of England and America, especially of the latter. It is largely a movement of the laity, who find that the pastors, with their intellectual university training and their views, do not reflect the piety and the positive Christian conviction that the 'associations' consider as belonging to the essentials

of Christianity. The prejudice against the church and its pastors has extended so far that in some circles pastors are prohibited from membership or participation in the meetings of the association. The associations are largely controlled by a remarkable religious enthusiasm. The agitation is undoubtedly healthful, and betokens the vital hold the Bible as an inspired authority has upon the common people in the land of Luther. The evil and danger of the movement is in the disposition apparent in some quarters to cut loose from the church and regard all the logical studies as useless if not harmful."

ST. PAUL MINISTERS DISCUSS PRAYER

"I don't want to make a sensational statement, but I will say, and I won't qualify it, that in your congregations not more than half the people believe in prayer."

"Rev. John Copeland, pastor of the East Presbyterian church was not contradicted when he declared this opinion yesterday afternoon at the rooms of the Bethel association before two dozen members of the St. Paul Ministers' association. Mr. Copeland said he knew that people didn't believe in prayer when they assumed irreverent attitudes during invocations. Only last Sunday he had been obliged to announce that no child would be allowed thereafter in a Sunday school class unless he would bow his head during prayers."

"Mr. Copeland was commenting upon a paper entitled 'The Problem of Prayer.' Rev. R. M. West, of the First Baptist Church, who read the paper, thought that people that didn't believe in prayer didn't have the proper conception of prayer. 'Prayer,' he said is not a mere petition, a mere asking for something, but it is the spiritual communication between man and God. Yet many persons are so sure that God's will and that Christ's name is a blanket privilege covering everything those people happen to want, that they seem to regard God as an unthinking being whose chief happiness is to do what they'd like to have done. Other persons pray with a view to assisting God in the government of the universe. That's a bigger burden, I fear, than the average supplicant can carry. Sensible Christians will remember always the limitations of prayer as fixed by the divine order, by the sovereignty of God, and by his fatherhood; they will never fail to add 'Thy will be done.'"

"Rev. David Morgan of the Bethel, agreed that laymen, even ministers, are losing some of their faith in prayer. 'It's a fact,' said he, 'that ministers in this city have said they didn't want any more revivals, which were only attended by hired girls and by people that didn't pay anything.' Mr. Morgan himself remembered the time when he felt himself hanging over hell-fire by a hair—a hair ready to break any instant,' was the way he expressed it. His thought used to keep him awake nights, 'but it doesn't disturb my rest now,' he said."—*St. Paul Globe*.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL VERIFICATION OF BIBLE RECORDS

Certain findings of the higher criticism are assailed in a volume from the pen of the Oxford professor, A. H. Sayce, on "Monument Facts and Higher Critical Fancies." In this volume the author marshals the facts of recent archaeological discovery, and points out their bearings upon the conclusions of Old Testament critics. So high a value does he place upon the character of his evidence as to lead him to affirm that "the more archaeological and the philological our evidence is, the greater will be its claim to scientific authority." The reason for this claim is given as follows:

"For purposes of history, philology can be only accidentally of service, so far as it throws light on the meaning of a literary record, or assists in the decipherment of an ancient inscription. It is the linguistic sense of the record, and not the history it embodies or the historical facts to be drawn from it, with which alone philology is properly concerned. We must not go in for dates or for the history of the development of civilization and culture."

"Still less can we look for help to what has been called 'literary tact.' 'Literary tact' is but another name for a purely subjective impression, and the subjective impressions of a modern European in regard to ancient Oriental history are not likely to be of value. It is quite certain that an ancient Oriental author would not have written as we should write, or as we should have expected him to write; and, consequently, the very fact that an ancient Oriental document does not conform to our modern canons of criticism is an argument in favor of its genuineness. . . . So far as the historical side of the question is concerned, the philologist, pure and simple, is ruled out of court. It is the archaeological evidence of Egyptology and Assyriology, and not the

philological evidence, which can alone be applied to the settlement of historical disputes."

One of the first strongholds of the philological critic assailed by archaeologists was the assumption, current for more than half a century after the publication of Wolf's "Prolegomena," concerning the late use of writing for literary purposes. But the clay tablets found at Tel-el-Amarna, says Dr. Sayce, establish that:

"The Mosaic age, instead of being an illiterate one, was an age of high literary activity and education throughout the civilized East. Not only was there a widespread literary culture in both Egypt and Babylonia which had its roots in a remote past, but this culture was shared by Mesopotamia and Asia Minor, and more specially by Syria and Palestine."

Furthermore:

"Moses not only could have written the Pentateuch, but it would have been little short of a miracle had he not been a scribe. . . . Egypt, where the Israelites dwelt so long and from which they fled, was a land of writing and literature, and the Canaan which they invaded was even more so, for here three literary cultures met, as it were, together—the culture and script of Egypt, the culture and script of Babylonia, and the culture and script of the Philistines from Crete."

Another discovery, that of the Babylonian code of Khammurabi, has overruled the denial of the critical school that a legal code was possible before the period of the Jewish kings. The position which the archaeological critic is enabled to take is that "the Mosaic code must belong to the age to which tradition assigns it, and presupposes the historical conditions which the Biblical narrative describes. Not only has the code

of Khammurabi proved that the legislation of Moses was possible, it has also shown that the social and political circumstances under which it claims to have arisen are the only ones under which it could have been compiled.

From the papyri and temples of the Nile valley come other corroborative evidence; this evidence, Professor Sayce claims, establishes the fact that "the story of the Exodus, as it is set before us in the Old Testament, must have been derived from contemporaneous written documents, and must describe events which actually took place." It is no fiction nor myth, no legend whose only basis is folklore and unsubstantial tradition, but history in the real sense of the word.

Driven from the first assumption of the late use of writing for literary purposes, the "higher critics" began to apply

the theory of evolution to the religious and moral ideas, the political conceptions and theological dogmas of the ancients, and then declared that they knew "precisely how religious ideas must have developed in the past," and could "consequently determine the relative age of the various forms in which they are presented to us." They decided that "certain conceptions of the priesthood or the sanctuary are older than others," and, consequently, where "there are books or passages which do not conform to the critic's ruling," the critic "forced them to do so by an alteration of the traditional dates." The fallacy of such procedure lies in the inability of the European critic to think in common with the Oriental mind.—*Literary Digest*.

THE ST. LOUIS CONVENTION

Brethren and sisters from every State in the Union and from Canada gathered in a big crowd at St. Louis in answer to the convention announcement published in these columns. All classes and conditions of life were represented, but, as usual, not many rich, not many great, not many wise, according to the course of this world: chiefly the poor of this world, rich in faith. It was a joyful gathering, a kind of foretaste of the kingdom, and seemed to direct all hearts to the General Assembly of the Church of the Firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. The general testimony was, "It is good to be here." Some said, "If fellowship of kindred minds is so precious under present limitations and imperfections what will the heavenly fellowship be when we all shall have been clothed upon with our perfect and complete spirit bodies; when we shall see as we are seen of the Lord and know as we are now known of him." The thought gives great refreshment to the "pure in heart," who, however weak and stumbling their flesh and efforts, are at heart desiring and seeking the Lord's will in all things.

The three days allotted to the convention were crowded full of spiritual refreshments with brief intervals for temporal food and rest. Various brethren from various quarters participated in the social meetings in prayer, testimony and singing—as leaders and otherwise. The preaching services

were conducted by the following "Pilgrim Brethren": McPhail, Raymond, Draper, Hay, Barton, Johnson, Bundy and Van Amburgh. The Editor spoke on two occasions, besides conducting a question meeting.

The Monday (Oct. 3) sessions were all held in the "Disciple Church," Locust St. Following the afternoon discourse on Baptism, 148 symbolized their consecration by water immersion. There were adults, 65 males, 79 females, and 4 minors.

The Love Feast of that evening closed the convention, and it was surely an inspiring occasion. The dominant thought of the hour was the blessed privilege of being accounted worthy to suffer with Christ now and the glorious prospect of reigning with him in the near future, and the necessity for trials and tests and faith in him who has promised us grace to help in every time of need.

The convention was the largest yet held by our Society. About ten to twelve hundred "believers" were present. The Sunday afternoon service was the most largely attended, about 2,000 being present. If these gatherings continue to increase in size what will we do for accommodations? But who knows?—the Lord may permit some "snare of the Adversary" to sift and test these, and thus thin out our ranks. Who shall be able to stand all the "harvest siftings?"

CHRISTIANITY VS. MODERN CULTURE

Professor Bousset's views on the essence of religion are thus epitomized by the *Digest*: "Modern culture is worldly. It is marked by a decided self-consciousness and a feeling of strength and a joy in life. It is positive and aggressive and keenly feels its own importance and value. Its typical representatives are such characters as Goethe and Bismarck. The former has made it clear that modern culture, while it involves depth of feeling and calls into activity the higher powers of life, is rooted in the interests and concerns of this world. Bismarck, too, though a model of modern manhood, was entirely concerned in the affairs of this earth. The dominant ideals of our age are reflected in such phrases as 'the duty of self-preservation,' 'self-assertion,' 'the struggle for the control of the world.' Everywhere we find a strenuous life, a pushing forward, a struggle for existence, a contest of the classes.

"Over against these ideals Christianity in its traditional form stands out in decided contrast. Christianity is at heart a religion of salvation, and is controlled by the idea of a redemption. It proceeds from the standpoint that the whole human race has been corrupted from Adam onward; that it is sunken in the darkness of sin. It centres around the two ideas of sin and grace, and came into existence to meet the universal longing for salvation.

"It is clear that these two forces represent opposite tendencies of thought. To insist upon the principles of traditional Christianity is to rob modern culture of its very life; it opposes a pessimism to the optimism of modern thought. And yet a reconciliation between the two is not absolutely impossible. It can take place, however, only as the result of a modification of the current view of Christianity. A new conception of religion must make itself felt, and this change can be readily effected. It must center around the person of Jesus and must abandon its dogmatic system. In the person and in the preaching of Christ, as an historical phenomenon, we have the basis for an understanding between Christianity and the culture of our day. Jesus himself never accepted the total corruption of man as the basis of his preaching. Rather it was an ideal of moral perfection that he held up to his hearers—of life in God and activity according to his will.

Such we find to be the kernel of the Gospel proclamation. Deliverance from sin and forgiveness of sin were indeed emphasized in his preaching; but his dominant thought was that of struggle toward an ideal moral life. This is the idea that must take possession of modern Christianity, if it is to be reconciled with modern culture and civilization and to win for itself the educated classes. Not as a dogmatic system, but as a moral power, based on the powerful personality of Jesus, must Christianity be proclaimed to the thinking people of our times."

* * *

Thus is illustrated the desire of many to unite the church and the world. They desire to retain some faith in Christ and some hold upon him, but at any cost must "win the educated classes," and must drop every feature of the doctrines of Christ that would interfere with "modern culture." Union numbers, honor of men are prized above truth: and the latter is sacrificed—almost to the death—for the former, though not without pangs of regret.

It is of the divine ordering that matters are thus: "The Lord would judge his people." He would apply to them the very tests which he declared during his ministry, saying—"My word shall judge [test] you in the last day" [in the dawning of the new Millennial day.] "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon;" "Ye are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." "If ye were of the world the world would love his own, but now ye are not of the world even as I am not of the world: therefore the world hateth you." "If any man would be my disciple, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

As in the Jewish "harvest" "there was a division of the people concerning him," so it must be in this Gospel age "harvest." As in that testing time only a remnant were found to be "Israelites indeed in whom was no guile," so it will be found here—the great masses of professed followers of Christ are insincere; they love self and the world and its things more than they love God and his spiritual favors.

But is not this a serious charge?—that the masses are insincere. Yes, it is serious, but it is also true. They show their "guile" by their willingness to sacrifice truth for almost any-

thing—any mess of pottage. However, "the Lord knoweth them that are his," and will keep his own who "love not the world," who love the Lord himself supremely, who love the truth, whose consecration is sincere. "They shall be mine, saith the Lord, in the day when I come to make up my jewels."

Note, too, how love of the error is willing to compromise the truth, and really blinds itself to it to have its own way. In the above Prof. Bousset says, "Jesus himself never accepted the total corruption of man." We presume this means that Jesus never taught the Adamic fall and the consequent depravity of the entire race. We reply, that he surely did teach that all are so undone that the divine sentence rests upon all as unworthy of everlasting life, hence as all "lost." Hark to his words: "The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost." And again he indicates that all are under the ban of death, saying, "Ye will not come unto me

that ye might have life." "The Son of man came . . . to serve, and to give his life a RANSOM [corresponding price] FOR ALL." "I am come that they might have life." "I am the resurrection and the life—no man cometh unto the Father but by me." "Without me ye can do nothing." If these Scriptures do not teach that all men were lost, helpless, undone without the great sacrifice for sins which our Lord offered, pray then what do they teach?

Let us, dear friends, lose no opportunity for serving the truth to the brethren, even to the extent of laying down our lives for them and it; but let us not compromise with the world nor with error to gain numbers. Let us rather be co-workers with the Lord, and knowing that now is the "harvest" time let us expect the very separations which we see taking place. We could not frustrate the Lord's plans if we would, but we could do injury to our own interests by disloyalty to him, his Word and his brethren.

THE RANK OF THE ANCIENT WORTHIES

In DAWN, Vol. VI., there appears to some of us to be a confusion or contradiction respecting the relative order of resurrection and honor attaching to the ancient worthies and the great company. The passages in question are found at top of page 121, first paragraph on page 129, and at top of page 131. Kindly help us over our difficulty.

We are pleased to show the accord of these statements. On page 121, at top, we are discussing the natures, and show that the little flock, of the divine nature, will be above all others; that the great company will be next, of the spirit nature, not divine; and that the ancient worthies will be next in grade of nature—"a little lower than the angels."

On page 129, first paragraph, we are endeavoring to show the relative ranks of these classes—in dignity, in honor of position. Here we rank the ancient worthies higher than the great company. This seems to us the logical order, since the ancient worthies—in their overcoming more particularly—resemble the little flock, who voluntarily lay down their lives for the truth. This logical order seems to be supported, too, by the Scriptures—not only the type of the order of the Levites referred to on page 129, but additionally we have the Scriptural declaration that these ancient worthies are to be princes in all the earth, which implies a special dignity, or honor of position as the earthly phase of the kingdom. Again, in Rev. 20:9, these ancient worthies seem to be marked as still a special, separate and distinct class in the earth, represented by the camp of the saints [holy ones], and the beloved city. The fact that at that time, at the close of the Millennium, they will have reached perfection, and the fact that

these ancient worthies will be still a markedly separate class, implies to us a higher honor of rank, over and above the perfection of human nature. What the Lord may have of special reward for those in the everlasting future beyond the Millennium, we are not told; but as we consider the heavens, the work of God's hands, and the innumerable worlds therein under preparation for inhabitants, we may reasonably suppose that these ancient worthies, who were faithful during the reign of evil, even unto death, will have some further honorable service, not only during the Millennial age, but subsequently. For various reasons, therefore, we rank them higher in honor than the great company, though of a lower nature.

On page 131, at the top, we are discussing the time order of resurrection for these three classes, and present the thought that the ancient worthies will be perfected in resurrection next after the little flock—that they will be the first to share in the general resurrection. For be it remembered that only the little flock share in the first resurrection. "They shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." (Rev. 20:6) Without any positive Scripture to fix this matter, it is our expectation that the resurrection of the ancient worthies will occur about 1914, or shortly thereafter, while we understand that the great company will not be complete for at least a little while after these—some of them passing through the great time of trouble, of anarchy, following the end of Gentile times.

We trust a careful examination of the above, and with the suggestions, will make the matter clear to all.

THE GREAT COMPANY

Have any members of the "great company" class existed prior to the harvest period of the Gospel age? If so, how can we apply Rev. 7:14 to such?

We reply: This class is composed of consecrated believers who fail to go forward in the narrow way of self-sacrifice and who, failing to sacrifice, fail to attain joint-heirship with the Lord as members of the bride company: nevertheless, having been sincere in their consecration, the Lord in much mercy does not count their lack of courage in turning back in the sense of denying him, for those who so draw back, the Apostle explains, "draw back unto perdition and destruction," second death. In mercy the Lord brings upon such persons trials and difficulties which they uncourageously attempt to escape. Since they have consecrated unto death and God has accepted their covenant and granted them the first-fruits of the Spirit, and since they neglected to sacrifice the flesh, the only alternative for them is the Lord's providential interference in their affairs leading to the "destruction of the flesh," or failing this their portion will be the second death.

Why not grant them a share of restitution, do you ask? We reply that that which is begotten of the Spirit cannot be born flesh; it must be born of the Spirit or not at all.

These conditions which prevail today have prevailed in some measure since the beginning of the Gospel age. The Apostle speaks of such a one. Writing to the church at Corinth, he says, "I, being absent in person and present with you in spirit, judge such an one, and have delivered him over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."—1 Cor. 5:3, 5.

It is safe, however, for us to assume that the proportion of the consecrated unworthy of a place in the bride company is greater today than it was in past times, because in the

past the line of demarcation between wheat and tares, between the children of God and the children of this world, was much more marked than at the present time, when many have a form of godliness without its power—many have Christian mannerisms who do not claim to have been begotten of the Spirit. Today, therefore, it is more difficult than ever for the consecrated to see where duty lies and to follow its course of self-sacrifice, when so many good, noble and moral people are taking the opposite course. The narrow way is, therefore more difficult to walk in today than it was some time ago. Hence, while the number of consecrations has increased rather than diminished, the number who appreciate the real meaning of their consecration and who joyfully lay down their lives in the service of the truth is probably smaller. It therefore follows that the mass of the "great company" belong to the closing end of the Gospel age.

Respecting your last question concerning the proper applicability of Rev. 7:14 to this class, if it has existed throughout the age, we suggest that the majority of the class being here may be spoken of properly enough as though it were the whole, since the treatment it receives will represent the treatment accorded to all others of this class in the past, only in a more intensified form. All such have surely been called upon to pass through troubles—forced through them as it were because they did not freely sacrifice and lay down their privileges, interests, etc., in the service of the truth. Similarly in the same chapter we have the entire 144,000 of the little flock spoken of as though it were filled and made up in this present time, whereas these also have been in process of development throughout the Gospel age. That is to say, the original Abrahamic promise descended to the twelve tribes of Israel, but

those twelve tribes were typical of spiritual Israel. At the first advent spiritual Israel was started with those of each tribe who were Israelites indeed in whom there was no guile. There were not enough of these to fill the elect number, 144,000 and hence the Gospel call was extended to the Gentiles to bring in from the Gentiles a sufficient number to complete 12,000 to each tribe.

This filling up of the tribes from those who were by nature Gentiles is similar to reenlistments made in the United States to fill up vacancies in military regiments in the Philippines. Thus a man from Ohio or Illinois might enlist in a New York or Pennsylvania regiment and become a regular member of the same, though the regiment would still be known by its original name. So with our incorporation into the elect

twelve tribes. We know not to which tribe the Lord assigns us when we become his.

This is the same thought which the Apostle develops in Rom. 11, where he speaks of the original promise of God made to Abraham as the root of the olive tree, and the twelve tribes of Israel the tree itself. The branches of this tree are the individuals, and the Apostle explains that all except the Israelites indeed were broken off when that tree became spiritual at our Lord's first advent. He further explains that we who were by nature Gentiles are being engrafted into membership into this Israelitish tree, and are partaking of the richness of its root, the Abrahamic promise.—See Galatians 3:29.

STUMBLING STONES OR STEPPING STONES

I have been sorely tried, dear Lord, been sorely tried today,
The sun has veiled his brightness and a cloud hangs o'er my way.

Why is my heart so heavy, and the daylight cold and gray?
I've tried to please thee; I have striven to faithful be and true;

I've sought for heavenly wisdom in the thing that I should do,
Yet I've been "put to grief"; and oh, can I have grieved thee, too?

A fellow-pilgrim on the road a wound has given to me,
Its sting and smart I keenly feel, its need I cannot see.
Stumbling stone or stepping stone, O Lord, which shall it be?

A sorrow came to me today—a grief so dense and deep,
The shades of deepest darkness about my heartstrings creep;
The tears have flowed unceasing till no power is left to weep.
I bow beneath my weight of woe, speechless and stunned; my heart

Sinks down like lead within my breast; its bitter ache and smart

Seem almost more than I can bear. A sharp and cruel dart
Has pierced me, and I prostrate lie. O Father, speak to me!
Thy hand lies hard upon me: can this trial come from thee?
Stepping stone or stumbling stone, which shall this sorrow be?

A blessing came this day to me, a joy surpassing sweet.
A glad way opens up to me, wherein my willing feet
Turn joyfully; how blest am I within this dear retreat!
My way had dark and lonely been for many a weary year;

My Lord has brought this gift to me when all was sad and drear;

Now, where my path was bleak, the flowers of love and bliss appear.

And yet, dear Lord, this blessing which thy love has given to me

May fill my heart too fully, and may wean my soul from thee.
Then, stepping stone or stumbling stone, my God, which shall it be?

Momentous question! on its answer my eternal joy
Hangs trembling; shall I be refined as gold without alloy?
These woes and blessings potent are to save or to destroy.
The time flies on! the "harvest" wanes, the glorious end is near!

O Master, shall I lose e'en now the "prize" I hold so dear?
Shall I be lured by siren song, while strains of heaven break
On ears attuned? Oh, guide me, Lord, and keep me still awake.

May I rejoice to walk with thee, and suffer for thy sake.

But I am weak; O Master dear, do thou my spirit thrill,
Grant me thy grace, and strength impart to do thy perfect will,

And in affliction or in joy obey and love thee still.

Almighty Lord, to thee I fly—no other help I know;
Oh, aid me in my need, I pray, and make my heart to glow
With holy fire, and on me, Lord, thy precious love bestow!

I hear thee speak, I will obey, I stretch my hands to thee,
In every providence of thine thy changeless love I see,
And stepping stones to heavenly heights each pain and joy shall be.

Alice G. James.

JOASH, THE BOY KING

2 KINGS 11:1-16.—NOVEMBER 6.

GOLDEN TEXT:—"When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice."—Prov. 29:2.

This lesson of itself contains very little of the spiritual "meat" for the household of faith. Nevertheless historical portions of the Scriptures, such as used in this lesson, have their special place and render service to the general cause. The connections of history are as necessary to the Bible as bones are to the living body. For this reason let us give special attention to the connecting history, that we may have before our minds a general view of the conditions in Israel at the time of the incidents of this lesson.

Going back, we remember Elijah's great work as the prophet combating the influence of King Ahab and his heathen queen, Jezebel, and the Baal idolatry which they introduced. Although Elijah did not succeed in making a complete reformation in Israel, he did succeed in turning back to a considerable degree the influence of Baalism. As we have seen, not only did true religion prosper more in the kingdom of Judah but also in the kingdom of Israel and it was respected during the period of Elisha's ministry as the Lord's Prophet. Although it was not the religion of the court it was the religion of the Israelites indeed. The prosperity of the cause of Jehovah in Elisha's day is best seen in contrast with the conditions which prevail in the earlier part of Elijah's ministry.

Mention the influence of Baalism extended from the court of Israel, and especially from the heathen queen, to the court of Judah: the son of the king of Judah marrying the daughter of the heathen queen, who, in character, evidently had a strong resemblance to her mother, Jezebel. From the time of her association in the kingdom of Judah the idola-

trous influences there began to gain strong foothold and a Baal temple was built, and under the royal protection the licentious worship of Ashteroth found favor with many of the people.

Upon the death of her husband, the king of Judah, his queen, Athaliah, daughter of Jezebel, continued her influence in the kingdom with her son, who then became king, and at his death, contrary to the law of usage of the Jews, she determined to make herself sovereign, and, to accomplish this, caused all her grandsons to be put to death. That is, she supposed that she had accomplished this end; but her daughter, who had become the wife of the high priest and was evidently under his influence, saved the life of the youngest of the king's sons—her nephew, Joash—secreting him with a nurse in one of the apartments adjoining the Temple set apart for the use of the priests.

Our lesson relates to this boy, the heir of the throne of Judah, who at seven years of age, under the guidance of his uncle-in-law, the high priest, was anointed and proclaimed the king of Judah. The lesson gives the particulars of the transaction by which the Temple guard became the king's guard—how the king's grandmother, the usurping queen, was first attracted to the Temple by the commotion amongst the people, and then quickly realizing the situation, cried, Treason, Treason, and fled to the palace, where she was executed.

A few years before the incident of this lesson, under the Lord's direction, Jehu had been anointed king over the sister kingdom of Israel, and although in many respects himself a bad man, he served as the sword of the Lord to execute retri-

bution upon King Ahab and Queen Jezebel, who had wrought so much injury to the cause of true religion in the kingdom of Israel. Now, by the death of the usurping queen, Athaliah, the daughter of Jezebel, the same pernicious influence was overthrown in Judah: that is to say, the reign of Jehu in Israel and of Joash in Judah marked a period of backset to Baalism.

Students of history, not seeing the divine plan of the ages, have been perplexed at the prosperity of evil doers in individual affairs as well as national, and the perplexity of such is increased when they consider the fact that Israel and Judah were nations with which God had made a special covenant and over which he exercised a certain measure of control. If heathen nations were allowed to go as they would into idolatry, etc., why was it that evil doers, evil practices, false worship, etc., were permitted to prosper in the nations over which God claimed oversight, control, etc.?

The answer and the only answer is that God's time for taking active control of the affairs of the world, subduing evil and advancing righteousness, had not yet come. The entire Law dispensation, from Moses to Christ, was introduced during a period when nothing else could have been brought in. The Gospel could not have been proclaimed at that time because the foundation for it had not yet been laid—the foundation being the redemption accomplished by the death of Christ. Nor could the death of Christ have been properly accomplished sooner, or the Gospel age and its work been begun sooner, because in the divine plan and foreknowledge that great event was arranged to take place just long enough in advance of the Millennial kingdom to permit of the gathering out the church of the first-born, the bride class, Christ's joint-heirs in the kingdom.

For these reasons God introduced the Law dispensation, as the Apostle declares,—“The Law was added because of transgressions, until the promised seed should come.” The Law Covenant made with Israel served two particular objects: (1) In its laws and Atonement Day sacrifices, typical jubilees, etc., it foreshadowed or typified glorious and great things to be fulfilled during this Gospel age, some of them during the Millennial age. (2) It served to show the constantly downward tendency of sin, and how impossible it would be for the world to lift itself out of present degradation and sin and weakness even if God should release the whole world from original sin and the original death penalty. Moreover, we are

to remember that although Israel and Judah exhibited great weakness along the lines of idolatry, nevertheless they were by no means as corrupt in these respects as were the nations round and about them—the remainder of the world. Whatever peculiarity there was consisted in the fact that they still maintained some reverence for the *invisible* Jehovah, some semblance of worship for him whom other nations regarded not at all.

The whole history of Judah and Israel shows us that, notwithstanding the trend of the majority towards sin and idolatry, there were still amongst them Israelites indeed whose hearts were sincere towards God. We have examples of this in Elijah and Elisha, the sons of the prophets, the Shunammite, and others. Nevertheless, in thinking of all these we are to remember that they were still in the dark as respects the divine plan. No revelation of God's great salvation had yet been made: only a dim light of a hope of the resurrection of the dead and everlasting life for those obedient to God had reached even the wisest and best of them. In harmony with this is the statement of the Apostle, “The law came by Moses, but grace and truth by Jesus Christ,” and again his declaration that “Christ brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel,” and again the statement that this “salvation [in which we now rejoice] began to be spoken by the Lord.”—John 1:17; 2 Tim. 1:10; Heb. 2:3.

We are not, therefore, to compare present-day conditions amongst those who profess to be spiritual Israelites, with the old-time conditions referred to in this lesson, because in the meantime the true Light, the Lord Jesus, has come into the world; and although the world as a whole has not recognized him, the Israelites indeed have had the eyes of their understanding opened, so that they are blessed and benefitted by this true Light, which in God's due time shall lighten every man that cometh in to the world—when the Millennial day shall dawn and the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his beams. Then, in the fullest sense of the word, the righteous shall be in authority—Christ, the great King, and the church, his bride and joint-heir in the kingdom—and then the people will rejoice. They will rejoice in a manner not possible at present, for now, as the Apostle declares, even under the best of rulers, while Satan is at the helm, “The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together.”—Romans 8:22.

REPAIRING THE TEMPLE

2 KINGS 12:4-15.—NOVEMBER 13.

GOLDEN TEXT:—“We will not forsake the house of our God.”—Neh. 10:39.

The death of Athaliah, the usurping queen, quickly following the anointing and proclaiming of her grandson, Joash, as the proper heir to the throne of Judah, was noticed in our last lesson. Joash, the new king, being but eight years of age at this time, was properly under the care of his uncle-in-law, the high priest, who had secreted and protected him from infancy. The choosing of this particular time for bringing forward King Joash was no doubt influenced by the affairs of the neighboring ten-tribe kingdom of Israel. In the latter, by the Lord's direction, Jehu had been anointed as the king to supplant the weak and wicked Ahab and to punish the wicked and idolatrous Jezebel, his queen—thus to rid the ten-tribe kingdom of iniquitous rulers, whose influence seems to have been evil continually to the extent of their opportunities. No doubt the success of Jehu encouraged the high priest, Jehoiada, to overthrow the usurped dynasty of Jezebel's daughter and to re-establish the line of David upon the throne. More than this, we may properly assume that as the Lord directed in the anointing of Jehu to succeed Ahab, so he directed in the anointing of Joash to succeed Athaliah, and that the priest was guided by the Lord in the matter, though perhaps unconsciously.

The high priest Jehoiada, we sponsor, made the coronation the occasion for a general revival of interest in true religion and for the reviving of corresponding opposition to the idolatrous worship of Baal, which the pseudo queen had introduced. Inspired by the counsel of the priest, inspired also by the circumstances surrounding the coronation in the Temple court with its reminder of Jehovah, the true God, of their past history as a nation under his care, the assembled people reached such a fervor of excitement for the Lord and against idolatry that they surged forth, and as a mob tore down the adjacent temple of Baal, slaying its chief officiating priest, breaking its statuary, etc.

Mobs are rarely if ever to be encouraged, but in the present case we are to remember that, under special divine ar-

range, just such a course of opposition to idolatry was directly commanded, and that, besides this, the people were keeping under and obeying the direction of the lawfully constituted government of the Lord, in the hands of his representatives, the king and the priest, which government had been illegally suppressed for a long time, and was now merely assuming its proper position and overthrowing its illegal opponent.

The new government, seizing upon the newly awakened religious fervor of the people, proposed the immediate repair of the Temple and the re-instituting of its service by the true priests of God, who during the period of Baal worship had been unable to give their time and attention to the religious services of the Temple and to the instruction of the people in the matters of the Law. Because, being opposed by the usurping government, and the revenues of the people being directed to the support of Baal worship, the true priests of God and the services of the Temple had been neglected and practically out of commission.

All this was now to be changed, and the government gave commands for the raising of the money necessary. (1) There would be the tax which the Law of Moses enjoined, a poll tax, a half shekel. (Exod. 30:13) (2) “The money every man is set at,” possibly the tithes—one tenth of all the profits of the year. (3) “Money that cometh into every man's heart to bring”—voluntary donations above those required under the Law. The priests were to collect this money, each in the neighborhood and from the persons with whom he was acquainted.

The good intentions of the king and the high priest failed, for fifteen years after this, when the king was twenty-three years of age, the Temple had not yet been repaired, as our lesson shows. The reasons we are left to surmise, but the inference seems to be either that the people did not trust the priests with the money, fearing that they would use it upon themselves and not upon the Temple, or that the moneys paid

and donated were largely consumed, and perhaps not improperly, in the maintenance of the priests, their families, etc. At all events, at the time mentioned, the king called for the high priest and the under priests to make report why the commission given to them fifteen years before had not been accomplished.

The result of the conference was that the priests in general agreed that the repairing matter should be taken out of their hands and left wholly under the care of Jehoiada, the high priest. The latter arranged a method by which the people of Israel might know that the money contributed by them for temple repairing would not be diverted to other uses: he prepared a chest securely locked, with a slot in the top, into which donations for temple repairs could be put. This plan worked successfully and the repair of the Temple proceeded in the hands of competent workmen and faithful overseers. The repairs and their cost must have been considerable, for the Temple was now more than one hundred and fifty years old and had long been in disuse, and it is presumed that many of the stones from it had been taken and used in the construction of the temple of Baal near by. Verse 13 merely signifies that none of the money was used for furnishings of the temple until the Temple itself had been thoroughly repaired, because 2 Chronicles 24:14 shows that ultimately a sufficiency of money was donated to furnish the temple utensils.

CONSIDERED AS A PARABLE

The foregoing is all interesting to us as an item of history and as an illustration of the sameness of human nature in all periods amongst all peoples. But now let us see what lessons we can draw from these experiences of natural Israel, beneficial to us as spiritual Israelites.

One lesson is that while the High Priest, our Lord Jesus, can be thoroughly trusted in connection with the entire work, nevertheless some of the under priests have less of the self-sacrificing spirit and are more or less inclined to use upon themselves for their own comfort and pleasure means which otherwise might have been better used in the repairing of the house of God—the true temple, the true church.

The spiritual temple and its doctrines, hopes, practices, etc., have become seriously deranged during the long period of the triumph of sin, the "mystery of iniquity," the "mother of harlots," during the dark ages. The Reformation movement of the sixteenth century was bold and courageous, and promised great things in the way of repairs needed in the spiritual temple. But, alas, the Protestant clergy have used the means and opportunities connected with this reformation for their own personal advantage. Considerable has indeed been done, considerable stir has been made amongst the people, considerable money has been raised, and yet withal comparatively little has been done in repairing the faith and hope and love of the church, the true temple—comparatively few of the gross errors have been eradicated.

But here, as in the lesson, the temple shall be repaired—

the High Priest has taken full charge of the matter. The people of God, when they once see the need of repairs and the safety of the channel, will be encouraged to do everything necessary on their part for the accomplishment of the work and in this work the clergy of nominal Christendom, who should have been active in the service, are being ignored—our great High Priest can do his work without them.

Another lesson we may learn is the association between faithfulness to the Lord and the service of the Lord. As soon as the people of Israel had consecrated themselves to the Lord, and in proportion as they did so, their every source of income would gladly cooperate in the building up of the interests of the Lord's cause. And just so with spiritual Israelites: in proportion as we realize in our hearts a fulness of consecration to the Lord, in the same proportion everything that we possess is subject to corresponding responsibility. There are the proper taxes or demands upon our time, talents, influence and means for the service of the Lord, and then each may give additionally, over and above this responsibility, a free-will offering to the Lord, according to the abundance of his love, according to the zeal of his heart. And this love, this zeal, and the self-sacrifice to which it leads, measures our devotion to the Lord. Thus the Lord is gauging all who have named his name and professed a full consecration to him—he is gauging their love not merely by the dollars and cents contributed to his service, but also by the time, influence, etc., which they possess and their willingness in the use of these in his service and in the opposition to Satan, and to all the errors of which he is the father and author.

Another harmony in this illustration is that the work mentioned in our lesson was done for and upon the Temple; and so any work we may now do as spiritual Israelites, and any sacrifices which we may now make, are to and for the church, which is the Temple of God. The work of the present age is the preparation of this Temple; the work of the next age will be the blessing of all the families of the earth through it and its then glorified royal priesthood. It is in harmony with this thought under a different figure that the Lord declares, "His wife hath made herself ready." Her chief energy or self-sacrifices are to be on behalf of the church—as the Apostle declares, we may "do good to all men as we have opportunity, but especially to the household of faith."

It will be noticed that we are not using this lesson as an occasion for the solicitation of money. But while we never solicit, we do realize that there is a special blessing of the Lord upon the voluntary giver, as the original signifies, "The Lord loveth a hilarious [merry] giver." He appreciates, he loves to see in us such an interest in him and his cause that everything else in comparison seems worthless, that our best talents and powers of every kind we will delight to use, not grudgingly but heartily, joyfully, in association with himself and under his guidance and direction, according to our best understanding of his will, in the service of his truth and his brethren.

ENCOURAGING WORDS FROM FAITHFUL WORKERS

DEAR BROTHER AND HONORED SERVANT OF GOD:—

It is with gratitude that I acknowledge the blessing the Lord has seen fit to bestow upon me through your last labor of love, DAWN VI. I wish to thank you as the instrument used of Him and pray you may have the grace sufficient to keep you faithful even unto death.

With so many chapters of good things, it would be difficult to say which is best; but I believe, to me, the chapter on judgment has been as helpful as any, giving me a keener sense of the repulsiveness of the evils of the tongue, and I hope I may learn to be dumb until I can use my tongue only to sound his praises and honor his name.

The beautiful clearness with which you have shown us the type of man and woman has also helped me much. It was a new thought to me that approbateness was more peculiar to women, and I trust I may set a double picket on that line, so that I may use it without abusing it. I also hope hereafter when privileged to sit in a congregation, of saints to do so with more reverence. I thank you also for mentioning the covering of the head.

It has been my privilege to be with the Los Angeles church for two years, and I wish to tell you something of the show-ers of blessing that have come to me through them. Their fervent love and unceasing efforts on my behalf have helped to teach me the way of God both by precept and example.

I have learned something of the narrowness of "this way," and I would ask an interest in your prayers that I may more

fully appreciate the privilege of walking therein.

With Christian love from one who hopes ever to be able to subscribe herself.

Your Sister in Christ,

HATTIE L. WOODWARD,—Cal.

FRIENDS:—

I received the tracts you sent me. Thanks be to the Lord and you for all they have revealed to me. Let me tell you how it all came about: I picked up a tract on the stairs one day when I came home from work, called "The Hope of Immortality." I never knew who put it there, but I know it was the Lord who sent it. I read it and it showed me very clearly my need of a Savior, and through it I have given my heart to the Lord Jesus and am now trusting in his finished work.

At the bottom of the tract it is said that if the reader was interested he could by making application have "What is the Soul?" which you sent me, and a few more with it which looked as though they were especially for me. I took great pleasure in reading them, for I do hunger and thirst after righteousness. Yours in Christ, C. WATT,—R. I.

DEAR FRIENDS:—

I enclose a copy of a letter I addressed to about sixty ministers of St. Louis. As yet I have received no returns, as they are so wrapped up in World's Fair entertainments and civic reforms that they have no time to spare to point the inquirer the way to life: