

SOME INTERESTING LETTERS

Dear Brother Russell:—

I am writing you a few lines to tell you I am one happy man now.

My wife bought the first three volumes of *STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES* and read them and proved them to be Bible truth. She wanted to read them to me, but I would not listen to it. I had been converted, but had lost all faith in so-called preachers, that claimed to be called of God, and I believed you to be a false prophet. The light had almost gone out of my heart, and I told my wife I did not want your stuff in my house.

As the time went on I was like a mad man. At last I went with my wife to the class, still believing they were deceived and deceiving us; but they told me you were just pointing out the Bible truths to us. I had persecuted them, but God soon melted my hard heart and I repented of my past sins and made it right with my brethren. Now we are dwelling together in unity and love.

I feel I have also persecuted you, for which I am very sorry and ask your pardon. When "one member suffers all suffer with it"; and, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of these, ye have done it unto me," says our Lord. So this has troubled me, and I want to stand clear before God. I may never see you in the flesh, but expect to meet you when we pass beyond the veil.

Will close, waiting at the bar for pardon. May God's Love and blessing be with you now and forever.

Ever your brother and co-laborer in the harvest work,

JOHN WELCH.—*Mich.*

Dear Pastor Russell:—

I cannot hope to express much of my gratitude to the Lord or much of my regard for you, as the channel through which he has so wonderfully blessed me, with light and knowledge and peace such as I never thought to possess.

For ten years an officer in the Salvation Army, engaged in "rescue" work, my heart has been terribly burdened, not

only with my own inability to live up to the divine standard, but also with the apparently hopeless condition of others less favored than myself.

Dissatisfied for a long time, and having lost almost all faith in God and in the Bible, I did not know what to do or what to believe. In my extremity I continued to pray like this: "O God (if there is any God) help me! Help me now! Send me a little light (if there is any light). Let me know what is the truth—the truth (if anything is true)." And in his infinite love, he answered that prayer, by sending me the *STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES*. Since that time the language of my heart is expressed exactly in the words of the hymn, beginning—"My life flows on, in endless song."

I made the vow my own some months ago. How glad I am of anything that helps me to carry out my consecration vows.

Your sister by his grace, M. STROUD.

Dear Brother Russell:—

We think it proper to write you, to tell you we have taken the vow, and to tell you of the many blessings we enjoy as a result of your labors as the Lord's honored servant.

Three years ago, by the Lord's arrangement, we commenced reading Vol. I, *STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES*, finding it gave us a view of God's character and Plan that enabled us to "comprehend with all saints the height and depth and length and breadth of the love of God." We were attracted and drawn onward to feast more and more on the truth.

Before then we were Socialists, full of discontent. How thankful we are that we were unable to buy the books that we then so much desired, for these very writings would no doubt have only ensnared us more, by leading into evolution, higher criticism, etc.

We pray the Lord's continued blessing upon you and all the dear friends, having much comfort because of our share of interest in the prayers of all the Lord's people.

Yours,

FRED AND LIZZIE MYERS.—*Okla.*

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A GENERAL VIEW OF THE MESSIANIC KINGDOM

"And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven."—Rev. 21:2.

Through the Prophet Daniel and others, the divine promise was given to Israel that at some future time the God of heaven would set up a kingdom on the earth; that this kingdom would be world-wide—"under the whole heaven"; and that it would last forever. (Dan. 2:44; 7:27; Isa. 2:2-4; etc.) This Messianic kingdom is to be established to meet the exigencies of the case of fallen humanity and to bring mankind back into harmony with the divine arrangement. This kingdom will intervene between the divine government and mankind, because the fallen race of Adam in its weak condition is unable to meet the requirements of the divine law.

The great Emperor of the universe, Jehovah, has given the Messianic kingdom to our Lord Jesus, who was the first representative of that kingdom. While on earth, our Lord was treated with violence and ignominy. All down the Gospel age, his disciples have been used in a similar manner. Yet the kingdom which they represent will surely be established. Already the Father has appointed our Lord as king (Psa. 2:6), and will soon deliver to him the power and glory of his office.

The object and purpose of this kingdom is clearly set forth in the Scriptures. When it shall have been established, some of its subjects will be asleep in death and others will be awake. At that time none of the fallen race will be recognized of God as having any life whatever. The control of the whole world will be in the hands of our Lord, as the One who purchased it with his own precious blood, and who is competent to bless it, according to the promise made four thousand years ago to Abraham, that in him and in his seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.—Gen 12:3; 22:18; Gal. 3:8, 16, 29.

The kingdom of heaven, as foretold by our Lord, will come about without manifestation—outward show. (Luke 17:20, margin) But with all these suggestions, let us not suppose that the kingdom is to be an earthly government. On the contrary, the Scriptures instruct us that those who inherit it must become spirit beings before they can enter into it. (1 Cor. 15:50-52) The living members will all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and the dead members must be raised to receive their change before they can be forever with the Lord.

The Lord and the glorified church will all be spirit beings, fully able to administer the world's affairs and yet be unseen by mankind. They will be manifest in the rewards, punishments and judgments of that day. The difference between the king and the kingdom is, that the king is the person who has authority; but the kingdom includes both his dominion and his associates. In this case the latter are the church, who will sit with him in his throne.

The church will always be in the heavenly condition. Nothing in the Scriptures indicates that she will be restricted to one place rather than to another. The intimation is that after the church has experienced her change, she will be absent from the earth for a while and will be brought into the presence of Jehovah, the great King. She will be arrayed in glorious clothing of wrought gold—"in raiment of needlework." (Psa. 45:13-15) These statements are figurative expressions indicative of the beautiful character wrought out in all who become actual members of the body of Christ.

THE SEAT OF DIVINE GOVERNMENT

Whether the new creation are afar off or on the earth, they will ever be of the spirit nature. Their particular place is on the divine plane. The various orders of spirit have each its own sphere, but the church of Christ has no place among them. She is invited to occupy a position next to her Lord, who is on the right hand of the Majesty on high (Heb. 1:3)—higher than all other planes of spirit being.

At the time of the first advent, this place had not been prepared for the church, although the Father evidently had it in mind. Our Lord ascended on high in order to prepare that place. (John 14:2, 3) This he did by making an imputation of his merit on behalf of the church, thereby permitting them to become participators with him in the sufferings of the present age, that they may also become sharers with him in the glories to follow. Thus he has prepared the way for the church to enter the highest of all planes.

We are not sufficiently informed respecting the spirit condition to know just how possible it will be for the Lord and the church to remain in the Father's presence and at the same time maintain the government of the earth. While this may be possible, yet perhaps it may not be a wise arrangement. Perhaps it will be necessary for them to be absent

from the immediate presence of the Father, and approximate the earth.

Our thought is that The Christ will be very closely associated with the earth, just as Satan's kingdom is. Satan's seat of government is in Tartarus—the atmosphere. He and his associates, the fallen angels, are near the earth, whither they were cast down, separated from their own plane because of sin. They are invisible to mankind, however, amongst whom they have done an evil work. Satan has also his human agents—wicked men and women, who are under his control, sometimes through ignorance and superstition, and sometimes through mesmeric influence. The Scriptures inform us, however, that shortly Satan is to be bound for a thousand years; and the place which he has occupied will then be vacant.—Rev. 20:1-3.

St. Paul informs us that the church is to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, during the time of his second advent. (1 Thess. 4:15-17) This does not necessarily mean, however, that they will occupy Tartarus. We are told that they will be forever with the Lord; wherever he is, there the church will be also, in harmony with the divine will and executing the divine purposes. Men will not see the Lord and the church, even as they do not see Satan and the fallen angels. The Christ will be very closely associated with the earth—as before intimated—though invisible to mortal eyes. They will be doing a good work, a powerful work on the spirit plane. They will be kings and priests unto our God, and they shall reign on the earth.—Rev. 5:10.

With The Christ will be various agencies. The great company will undoubtedly be associated with them. Then there will be the earthly agents, just as Satan has his assistants. These agents of The Christ will be the faithful ancient worthies, who will render intelligent and willing service in the kingdom of Messiah.

FUTURE SUFFERINGS OF THE ANCIENT WORTHIES

In Isaiah 11:9, the statement is made: "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain." Comparing Daniel 2:35 with verses 44 and 45 of the same chapter, we perceive that in prophecy a mountain is the symbol for a kingdom. Isaiah's statement, therefore, seems to imply that under the Messianic kingdom there will be a restraint placed upon all who do wrong. At the same time we are to remember Daniel's statement that the kingdom is to grow. The prophecy is that the stone became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. Many years will doubtless pass before the prophecy will be fulfilled.

As soon as the kingdom shall have been set up in power, the ancient worthies will be raised from the dead as perfect human beings. Psa. 45:16 evidently refers to these faithful servants of God, who are to be princes in all the earth. Presumably they will have a great work of instruction to do for the rest of humanity. While they will have this service to perform, nevertheless they will have great honor in doing it; for it is always an honor to serve the Lord.

The service which the ancient worthies will be given will be more than God would ordinarily entrust to a perfect human being. It will be a part of this service to deal with the imperfect, fallen creatures and to help them up out of sin and imperfection. While in one sense of the word this work is desirable, yet it is not what a perfect human being would prefer. These ancient worthies will come forth from the tomb perfect; but during the entire Millennium, they will be amidst imperfect surroundings. The world of mankind will be imperfect then as now, although gradually these imperfections will come to an end.

Adam was seated perfect. After he had sinned, he was cast out of Eden to delve in the imperfect earth, and to struggle with the thorns and thistles until he returned to the dust, whence he was taken. Surely he must have suffered because of his surroundings. Our Lord Jesus was perfect. Not only did he leave the heavenly glory, but for thirty-three and a half years he was amidst imperfect surroundings, constantly witnessing the pain and sorrow of the fallen race. To be in such surroundings must have comprised a large share of his sacrifice; for the fact that he was perfect would increase his sufferings.

In the case of the ancient worthies, who as perfect human beings, will be in an imperfect environment for a thousand years, it would seem as if they will undergo much suffering. Knowing what we do of our heavenly Father, we are inclined to believe that, if they are faithful in serving the Almighty, he will abundantly reward them, more than they could have asked. Should any one inquire, What reward will the Father give them, if they maintain their obedience? we answer, During the Millennium they will receive no special reward for their

service, so far as we can see; but we think that from God's standpoint, theirs will be a meritorious service which he will be pleased to reward. This seems to be his method of dealing with his faithful servants. Although our Lord Jesus delighted to do the Father's will, yet God rewarded him. Our God is gracious!

We cannot think of any greater reward than to bestow the spirit nature upon these faithful ancient worthies. Long ago they proved their loyalty by choosing to suffer rather than to indulge in sin. There is nothing in the Scriptures, however, which says distinctly that they will ever be made spirit beings. Whatever we may suggest on this subject is purely inferential.

FUTURE REWARD OF THE FAITHFUL PRINCES

A part of the evidence leading to the deduction that the ancient worthies will be made sharers of the spirit nature and become members of the great company class is built upon the fact that they seem to be represented typically by the tribe of Levi. The fact that this tribe had no inheritance in the land seems to imply that the ancient worthies will have no earthly inheritance. We might think that their exaltation to be princes in all the earth (Psa. 45:16) would be an abundant reward; but inasmuch as God will give the spirit nature to the great company, who passed through no more severe experiences than did the ancient worthies, and inasmuch as the lowest form of life on the spirit plane is higher than the highest form on the human plane, it follows that the great company would receive at the hands of the Lord a greater blessing than would the ancient worthies.

Since the heavenly Father has been pleased to arrange for the great company a place on the spirit plane, and since he is operating according to some general principles of righteousness, we are inclined to think that he may have something more for the ancient worthies than will come to the remainder of mankind. So far as we can perceive, the great company have not demonstrated that they are any more loyal to him than were the faithful ancient worthies. When Abraham was called upon to offer up his son Isaac, he exhibited a degree of loyalty greater than the great company will be called upon to manifest.

Furthermore, in Gen. 17:8, God said unto Abraham, "And I will give unto thee and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God." Two thousand years later, St. Stephen said that God never gave Abraham so much as a foot of the promised land (Acts 7:5); but he implied that Abraham will yet receive that land and afterward leave it to his posterity. If the land is to be given to Abraham and his coadjutors, and then to be left to his seed and mankind in general, the thought would seem to be implied that the ancient worthies will pass to the spirit nature.

This same thought seems to be pictured in the Revelation. At the end of the thousand years, Satan will be loosed, that he may go forward to test the people that are on the earth, to manifest to what extent their hearts are loyal to God and to the principles of righteousness. The result of this test will be that some will fall away.—Rev. 20:7-10.

We read, "And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." (Rev. 20:9) The "beloved city" is the New Jerusalem, the church in glory, not the church in the flesh. The rebellion incited by Satan will be not only against the earthly princes, but also against The Christ.

By that time having reached perfection of organism and powers, the people will assert themselves in thus going up to encompass the camp of the saints. That the church cannot be meant is evident from the fact that human beings could not attack an unseen force of spirit beings, as the church will then be. Just as in Great Britain, the people have gone to Parliament to protest, so the rebellious faction of mankind will protest against their faithful princes. We fancy that we hear them say, "It is time that this government was turned over to us. We protest against your remaining in power any longer." In rebelling against the earthly phase of Messiah's kingdom, however, they are rebelling against the Lord. Consequently divine judgment will overtake them—"fire from heaven."

Since this rebellion is to occur at the close of the Millennial age, and since mankind will at that time have reached perfection, therefore, this separation of the ancient worthies from the rest of the world seems to imply that God has some special purpose in respect to them. The term camp itself implies that theirs is only a temporary condition or arrangement, and that God has some better thing in store for them.

If our surmise that the ancient worthies will some day attain the spirit nature be true, we can readily see that it

will not be necessary for them to die in order to attain that plane of existence. If those members of the body of Christ, who are living in the time of his second presence can be changed "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," so could the ancient worthies have their change. If they were thus changed from the human plane to the spirit plane, they would be exchanging a perfect human nature for a perfect spirit nature as a reward for faithfulness in the service of the Lord.

THE GLORY OF THE LORD THE LAUDABLE AMBITION IN THE KINGDOM

Under the beneficent rule of the kingdom, we may be very sure that the Lord's arrangement will be an equitable one—a fair chance for every one of the human race. It is reasonable to suppose that the general line laid down in the Scriptures will be followed respecting the earth. It is written, "The earth hath he given to the children of men." (Psa. 115:16) The race as a whole will have possession of the earth. God has not made any allotments. Every man will have a share in the commonwealth.

The changes will come about gradually. There will be inequalities of brain and muscle; but the kingdom will even up these differences. There will always be some kind of incentive to energy. Either there will be an impetus of some sort, or else there will be some sort of punishment to help people along. The Lord will hold out certain inducements to those who are willing to co-operate along the line of advancement, and will impose stripes, punishments, to assist those who will not be induced otherwise. Both rewards and punishments will be in operation during the Millennium.

Looking back over the history of the world, we see that selfishness has been a great evil; yet at the same time it has worked wonders. If it were not for ambition and acquisitiveness, man would not be much above the animals. We are, therefore, to consider these qualities to be great blessings, when rightly exercised. Under the rule of the kingdom, all possible blessings of mind and body will be held out to the obedient, so that the trend of selfishness will be offset by a more laudable ambition than at present; and as mind and body develop, the standards of humanity will rise higher, and selfishness will be more and more seen to be contemptible. When perfection is attained, everything will be done for the glory of the Lord rather than for earthly name and fame.

Gradually all mankind will come into fellowship with the kingdom, and indirectly become associated with the kingdom itself. Just as any good man helps the government, so all mankind will be blessed in proportion as they approve and uphold the divine arrangements. Thus the kingdom will be spreading for the thousand years, not only from one individual to another, but gradually back to full perfection. We read that "of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end." (Isa. 9:7) It will conquer everything before it; nothing shall stop it. After every evil thing has been destroyed, every creature in heaven and in earth will be heard praising God. (Rev. 5:13) Every knee shall bow and every tongue

confess (Phil. 2:10, 11), and his kingdom shall be without an opponent "from the river unto the ends of the earth."—Psa. 72:8.

FUTURE WORK OF THE CHRIST

After the thousand years shall have been finished, the kingdom will cease in the sense that Christ will deliver the authority over to the Father. (1 Cor. 15:24) This will not mean, however, that law and order will be disregarded as they have been during the reign of sin and death. The Messianic kingdom will by that time have helped mankind out of their fallen condition; and therefore it is the divine purpose that Messiah relinquish this subordinate kingdom, in order that it may merge into the empire of the great Jehovah, of which it will ever after be a part.

Justice then will operate. Mercy will no longer be required; and the heavenly Father will not then be pictured as a merciful king to his creatures. They will by that time be perfect so that they will need no mercy; and they will be glad to meet all the requirements of the divine government, and in so doing will be blessed.

Having terminated this work of the restitution of mankind to the plane of human perfection, our Lord and the church will not be left without an occupation. Our Lord will continue, according to the Scriptures, to be at the right hand of the Majesty on high—next to the Father. After he has relinquished the oversight of earthly affairs, he will assume once more the position of Associate Administrator of the universe, in connection with the heavenly Father.

We are not to suppose, however, that the Father and the Lord will be kept busy hearing and deciding cases and in administering justice. Nothing of the kind will be necessary. The equilibrium will be such that there will be no necessity for deciding cases. The government of the universe will go on so smoothly as to be practically without a head, and yet there will be the Head—Jehovah himself. Next in authority to the Father will be the Son, and next to the Son will be the church. What work will thenceforth progress is not revealed to us, except in a very indefinite manner.

Through the aid of the telescope, we understand that the fixed stars are suns, each of which seems to have its own planetary system. It is only reasonable for us to infer that, if God made this earth a planet to be inhabited, all other planets will sometime be inhabited also; and that they will be under obligation to the heavenly Father as a part of his wonderful universe. So far as we can understand, the power of Jehovah is boundless. When we consider the hundreds of millions of suns and planets beyond the power of human mind to comprehend, then it is reasonable to assume that the work of The Christ will be limitless; and that some such work for creatures yet unborn will be their blessed privilege to all eternity. We wonder in amazement at the magnitude of God's goodness to us, who has lifted us up from our low condition and who will exalt to future glories interminable those faithful ones who make sure their calling and election to glory, honor and immortality.

THE ARCH-ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

"Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith."—1 Peter 5:8, 9.

The Authorized Version of the New Testament makes frequent use of the word devil, and leaves the impression that there are many devils; but this thought is not borne out by the Scriptures in general. In the New Testament two Greek words are thus translated, daimonion and diabolos. Of these two words, the first should be properly rendered "demon"; and the second "devil." The demons are the unclean spirits, the familiar spirits, the fallen angels; while the devil is Satan. The term Satan signifies adversary, opponent; for the devil is the opponent of righteousness and of Jehovah.

Whoever has failed to discern that there is a devil is all the more liable to come under the influence of this great, malevolent being, who is portrayed in the Scriptures as the greatest foe to God, to men and to righteousness. St. Paul speaks of the "wiles of the devil" and warns the church that her warfare is with "wicked spirits in the heavenlies." (Eph. 6:11, 12, margin) He also mentions "the prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2), and intimates that it would be impossible for us really to contend with him; for he is too wily, too wise for us.

There is an evil influence constantly exerted in the world, operating against truth, righteousness and purity, and therefore operating against God. The Scriptures inform us that this influence is exerted by the devil, Satan, who was once a holy angel. It was by permitting pride and ambition to gain

control of his heart, that Satan became an opponent of God and of righteousness.—1 John 3:8; 1 Tim. 3:6; Isa. 14:12-14.

Although mankind cannot see Satan, yet he can see them, and by means of mental suggestion can gain control of them. He has a variety of ways by which he exercises his influence. The most potent way is through human agents—using one person against another. His favorite method of operating is by putting darkness for light. This he does by making the good appear evil, the true, false, and the right, wrong.

St. Peter tells us in our text that Satan goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. The lion has a very stealthy walk. On his feet are soft cushions, which enable him to come very near to his prey before his approach is recognized. It is said that, at this point when the beast is about to spring upon his prey, he roars so loudly that the victim is paralyzed with fear and thus is easily caught.

Satan, the adversary of the church, is strong and lion-like, vigilant and fully awake. As the Apostle Paul declares, he seeks to use every opportunity against us. He lies in wait, seeking to devour us. Although he is alert, yet he never approaches us with a roar, but creeps stealthily upon us in some unlooked for place or time, to devour us, to overcome us, to crush out our spiritual life, and particularly to destroy our faith in God. As those whose ears are trained to detect the footfalls of the lion will hear his steps, while those who are

unfamiliar with his habits will not hear the slightest sound, so may we, whose ears the Lord has opened, and whose eyes have been anointed with the eyesalve of consecration and submission to the Lord's will, be of quick perception to recognize the approach of our arch-enemy and to resist him. Let us stand, clad in the full armor which the word of God supplies, and in his strength wielding the Sword of the Spirit.

St. Paul shows that the most subtle attacks of the adversary are to be expected through human agencies. Satan works in the hearts of the children of disobedience; and the more honorable they are, and the more closely identified with the Lord and his people these children of disobedience may be, the greater service they may render to the adversary. For this reason, Satan presents himself as an angel of light, and not as a messenger of darkness; for well he knows that error and sin will repel the children of light.—Eph. 2:2; 2 Cor. 4:4; 11:14, 15; Eph. 6:11, 12.

Satan uses various methods against those whom God is seeking and calling. As an angel of light, he has done much harm. His constant endeavor is to lead the people of God astray from the Lord and from their covenant of sacrifice. While we know that God is able so to succor his people that the adversary could not touch them, yet his providences inform us that this is not his way. He permits Satan seemingly to gain a great triumph over the Lord and his people; but in no way does this seeming interruption affect the divine plan of the ages.

By this we do not mean that God is co-operating with Satan and his evil work. God is testing his people, by permitting those conditions that make the way so narrow that only the faithful will walk perseveringly to the very end. All others will sooner or later fall out of the way.

PROPER METHOD OF RESISTANCE

The Christian's warfare is a fight of faith. St. James' statement, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7), does not mean that we are to battle with him in order to confound him. Whoever thinks that he is able to battle alone with Satan surely must possess great self-conceit, or else must overestimate his own ability and underestimate that of the adversary. In any contention, Satan would surely gain the victory.

Malice, envy, hatred and strife, the Apostle says, are the kind of works which Satan supports and into which he endeavors to lead mankind. (Gal. 5:19-21; 1 John 3:8) His methods are deceptive. His suggestions come along the line of pride and self-conceit. The mental suggestion, "You can do it; you are a person of great ability; do not be afraid; show people what is in you," has led to the downfall of many.

In order to deceive the children of light, Satan transforms himself into an angel [messenger] of light; for well he knows that he would not deceive them, if he were to present himself as a representative of sin. Ever since the fall of Adam, the devil has sought to entrap mankind. Particularly for the past eighteen centuries, he has been endeavoring to introduce error into the church, in order to produce false Christians—Christians who would be a detriment to the cause of Christ. Evidently he has had much to do with formulating the creeds of Christendom.

The Lord's people are to resist the devil by not allowing his seductive arguments to have weight with us. We have the sure word of prophecy and the instructions of our Lord and of his apostles; and if we love the Word of the Lord, we shall seek to be guided by it. "He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not."—1 John 5:18.

The experience of our Lord in the wilderness affords a good example for all the people of God to follow. He did not seek to keep up the controversy, the discussion with the adversary; but when the evil thought was presented, he promptly resisted it. Satan was well versed in the Scriptures, portions of which he presented with a view to misleading our Lord into taking a wrong course. Jesus did not say to the devil, "Merely because that is a Scripture, I yield to your argument." On the contrary, he immediately thought of the principle involved, and showed the adversary wherein he was mistaken. When prophecies were quoted out of order, our Lord made very positive statements to that effect.

This course is a very good one for us to follow. If one of the Lord's people should be drawn by Satan into a discussion about some Scriptural text, and if he should recall, or if another brother should suggest, a text which would answer right to the point of discussion, he should decide, "The Scripture which tells me to 'resist the devil' is the proper guide to my course of action. I will not stop to discuss what I do not

understand." Thus he would "resist," and at the same time rebuke the adversary.

St. Paul urges the Lord's people to put on the whole armor of God, that they may be able to withstand the wiles of the devil. His statement seems to imply that none will be able to withstand Satan without divine aid. The Apostle points out that fact that these are the days when the whole armor of God will be necessary. (Eph. 6:13-18; Rev. 3:10) The question may be asked whether those only who are furnished with the whole armor will be able to stand. The answer is that the Lord is supervising the affairs of his people and that he will see that all who are putting their trust in him shall have opportunities for putting on the whole armor of God.

Many devote to frivolity the time which they could employ in putting on the armor which God has provided for his people. The Lord is so arranging the matter that such will not be able to withstand the darts of the adversary; for he wishes none to stand in this evil day except those who are thoroughly consecrated to his will. To these he will render assistance, so that all things shall work together for good to them. His grace is sufficient to carry all through who have come to a knowledge of him and have made a consecration to him. This grace may be supplied through the Scriptures, through reading matter, through a service or through a hymn; but the protection will be along the lines of the truth. When we lose the Sword of the Spirit, we lose our only protection against error.

THE LESSON OF CONFIDENCE IN GOD'S WISDOM AND LOVE

The adversary's method of attack is well illustrated in the fall of our first parents. Mother Eve should have resisted the suggestion which came to her through the serpent—that God had forbidden that which was for their highest interest in life. She should have said, "I will not entertain such a thought; for to do so would be disloyal to my Creator." When the suggestion to eat came to father Adam, apparently the thought came also, "You may as well join with her in the partaking of the food. It will be better to die together, for there will be no pleasure in life without her." Adam stopped to reason on the matter, but he did not have a sufficiency of knowledge to permit him to do so successfully. He should have said, "God knows; he arranged it. What he has said is enough for me. I will be true to him, and trust the results to his wisdom and love."

Obedience is the lesson for us to learn from the experience of Adam and Eve. We have not a sufficiency of knowledge with which to reason on some subjects, even if our reasoning faculties were fully developed. Consequently when a suggestion of evil of any kind is made, our only proper course is to say, "No! The Lord our God has said that we must not touch it, lest we die." Mother Eve allowed reasoning to come in and thus was persuaded. We should profit by her mistake. A proper confidence in God and a recognition of our own lack of wisdom should decide us immediately. There should be no controversy. We should say, No!

Evidently God is seeking those who are in this attitude of mind. Christ and the church have been called for this very work of bringing mankind back to perfection of character. Many times the divine plan may not seem to us to be the wisest course; and if we should not learn the lesson of absolute trust in the divine wisdom, justice, love and power, we could not trust God in everything. The Father seeketh such to worship him as will do so in spirit and in truth, and who have perfect confidence in him as the One who is all-wise and all-loving to direct and guide their affairs. Those who do not learn this lesson of trust, will not be fit for the responsibilities to be put upon the glorified church. Let us learn this lesson and be very positive in our endeavors to be in harmony with God.

Faithfulness in trial will develop the overcomers. The Lord does not wish to have in the little flock any who are disloyal in any sense of the word. They may be weak in many of the essentials of character, but they are all loyal to God. The Lord is seeking those who will remain loyal under trials and difficulties, and thus develop characters pleasing to him. These are not alarmed at Satan's onslaughts, which are seen to be an occasion for an increase of faith; for greater is he that is on our part than are all that are against us!

In Pilgrim's Progress this inability of the wicked one to touch the faithful people of God is very beautifully pictured. While walking in the narrow way, Christian beheld two lions; and for a moment he was terror-stricken. Christian studied the situation and decided to go forward. When he came near the lions, he found that they were chained. So it is with our adversaries. They can do no harm to the children of God. Although they may roar, yet they cannot injure them.

The new creature may develop even when the outer man is perishing. Satan succeeded in having the chief priests and

Pharisees cause the death of our Lord; but this was the very means by which he entered into glory. In his dealings with our Lord the Father has given us an illustration of his dealings with us. So we may know that even if Satan should appear to get the victory over us, these "light afflictions" will, as we are told, "work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."—2 Cor. 4:17.

ST. PETER'S EXHORTATION TO THE ELDERS

"Humble yourselves . . . under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time."—1 Peter 5:6.

As those who have received divine grace and the knowledge of the divine purpose, the Lord's people have certain ambitions which are right and proper, and which should be rightly exercised, regulated and governed. No one should be without a laudable ambition. We cannot imagine God to be without ambition. Those who have little or none pass through life in a kind of maze, accomplishing very little for themselves or others, and usually fail in all they undertake.

There are, however, noble and ignoble ambitions. Some people are ambitious to become great, renowned; others are ambitious to rule; still others are ambitious for wealth, for social distinction, or for titles and honor amongst men. These are all selfish ambitions, yet they are the power that moves the world today—in business, social, political and even religious circles. These are all wrong ambitions; and though they may not all result in evil, yet they are all selfish, and tend toward evil. Many are seduced by selfish ambitions into doing those things of which their consciences do not approve.

The Christian has set before him the most noble ambition possible. God is calling from the world a people for his name. Before these he sets the loftiest ambition. These are invited to become joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord. This is an ambition which inspires them to develop all the higher qualities of mind and character, in order to prepare themselves for the society, friendship and fellowship of the heavenly Father and the Lord. Let us have this high ambition ever before us, as an incentive to the most earnest endeavor to heed the Word of the Lord.

Those who take this course are very pleasing to the Father. He has a great work to be done, and is seeking a people who will do it. Christ Jesus is the Head of this great work, and his kingdom is to rule and bless the world, that in the ages to come, God may show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us. (Eph. 2:7) Those who appreciate this high calling wish to be where God has invited them to be. Those who do not care for what God has offered or who do not wish to conform to the terms should not enter the race for the prize.

Those who have the heavenly ambition should not forget that they have the treasure of the new nature in earthen vessels. To this class it becomes a laudable ambition to serve one another and to build one another up in the most holy faith. The bride is to make herself ready. (Rev. 19:7) So these should seek to get ready themselves and to help others of the dear family of God.

DANGER INVOLVED IN THE ELDERSHIP

To desire the office of a bishop, a shepherd, is a good ambition. (1 Tim. 3:1) If one properly attends to the shepherding of the flock, he will not have time for other interests. Those who have been called to the position of eldership amongst the Lord's people should consider this an honor and a privilege from the Lord; and they should be very careful to seek it, not for filthy lucre's sake, but with a ready mind. (1 Peter 5:1-4) But in seeking this position let each one remember that there is danger of the development of pride and the assumption of power.

Those who have the high privilege of serving as an elder brother should watch themselves to see that they do not lord it over God's heritage. They should remember that they are not the Chief Shepherd, but only under-shepherds. If any should lord it over the flock, he would bring injury to himself as well as to the church; for in thus doing he would be cultivating a spirit of pride.

St. Peter tells us that "God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble." (1 Peter 5:5) Therefore if in the Lord's service one is humble, his course not only inures to the benefit of the class, but it is the only way by which anyone will gain a position in the kingdom. The eldership is an honorable office which not only has great privileges attached to it, but has also great temptation and great danger. St. James says, "My brethren, be not many [of you] masters [teachers], knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation."—James 3:1.

The Apostle exhorts those that are elders doing a work

We know that we have no power with which to oppose Satan. None is sufficient for these things except the Lord. But he is greater than are Satan and all his angels. We are looking forward with the eye of faith to the things that are unseen. So it behooves us to be steadfast, immovable, full of faith, and therefore able to meet whatever the Father permits to come upon us.

that is necessary to be done, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God." Everything is being done by the mighty power of God, by which he is causing all things to work together for good. We cannot interfere with the divine will. We might permit pride or fond desire to hinder our own progress, but we cannot hinder the plan of God.

We all desire to seek the best way to serve others and yet to gain the great reward. St. Peter shows us that way—"Humble yourselves." As the poet has expressed it,

"I am afraid to touch
Things that involve so much."

This spirit will make us very fearful of developing any pride or bombast or desire of lording it over others. So, then, we humble ourselves and remember that God will especially bless those who are more lowly, more trustful in the Lord, and in due time will exalt them—at the second coming of our Lord.

Sometimes, indeed, the humble-minded of the Lord's people may be less esteemed in the church than are some who lack this important quality of character. There is in mankind a general tendency toward brow-beating. They would rather have some one who will ride rough-shod over them than one who is gentle and moderate. Therefore they may not like us. But we are not to seek what they would like best in us. Rather we are to remember that we are to serve the Lord in his way, and that our chief responsibility in the Lord's sight is for ourselves. We are to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God that he may exalt us in due time.

PRIDE IN KNOWLEDGE OF TRUTH INJURIOUS

All these matters show us that our proper attitude is that of humility. The sentiment of our hearts should not be that of pride, but of meekness, humility, faithfulness.

Pride is selfishness gone to seed. The selfish spirit greedily gathers to itself as much as possible of all that it esteems good and valuable—wealth, learning, honor, fame and distinction among men. A measure of success in the acquisition of these treasures leads the selfish soul to a feeling of complacency, independence and indifference to the well-being of others. This spirit, gradually, but rapidly developing into arrogance, self-assertive pride, will continue to ripen with every gleam of the sunlight of temporal prosperity. As selfishness continues to ripen, it swells itself to ridiculous proportions and delights to vaunt itself, and gloats over its imagined importance and worthiness of honor and praise.

How much easier and how much wiser is the course of humility! The humble spirit seeketh not its own, is not puffed up, does not attempt to speculate upon inflated values, does not think of itself more highly than it ought to think, but thinks soberly—neither overrating nor underrating its own acquisitions or achievements. Humility strives always to do business on a solid basis, though it contends lawfully to acquire a real worthiness and to achieve the true glory of the divine commendation and favor.

There is a disposition on the part of many to be rather boastful on account of the truth, as though we had originated the truth. How foolish this is! We have made no truth. We have merely gotten rid of some of the errors that formerly blinded our eyes. The truth is God's. He has allowed us to see out of the darkness of ignorance and superstition into the truth of his plan. If a man who had seen a beautiful picture should then boast as though he had painted it, we would say, "Foolish man! You did not make that picture. You merely looked at it. You have nothing to boast of concerning it."

We did not make any part of God's plan of the ages. If we had attempted to do so, we would have made a failure of it. Our attitude of mind, then, should be, "Come, we will show you what God has arranged, what God has pictured." Thus we would glorify God and be helpful to others; for to whatever extent we manifest pride or self-consciousness in the truth, to that extent we do injury to ourselves and to others. The world would say, "We have just as able doctors of divinity in our denominations as you have—just as wise to teach us the truth."

Our proper course, therefore, is to make it plain at the

very beginning that we are of the right spirit—the meek, humble spirit of the Master. God is permitting us to see things in his Word, concerning which it is His due time to turn on the light. The picture was there all along, but the clouds and darkness made it so dim that we were not able to discern its beauties. Now the light is being turned on, and, as the poet has expressed it,

“Wonderful things in the Bible we see.”

Instead of self-confidence, wisdom dictates a distrustfulness of self, remembering its weaknesses and imperfections, and correspondingly the greater reverence for God and reliance upon him, which more than anything else will strengthen us and enable us to depart from the evil of our fallen estate.

HUMILITY AN ELEMENT OF TRUE COURAGE

“Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord and depart from evil.”—Prov. 3:7.

Nothing is more dangerous to the child of God than self-conceit; it hinders reformation of heart, as well as true usefulness to others and especially usefulness in God's service; for the Word declares, “God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.” (James 4:6) The Scriptures everywhere make prominent the fact that those who would be in harmony with God must be humble. The Lord bestows blessings upon the humble, the meek, the teachable. Jesus said, “Blessed are the meek.” (Matt. 5:5) The Apostle exhorts, “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.”—1 Pet. 5:6.

The Word of God points to the fact that Jesus was meek and lowly. (Matt. 11:29, 30) This humility of mind and heart was, in many respects, the secret of his success. If he had not been humble, he would not have attained to the glorious station to which he was exalted.

There is a marked contrast between Jesus and Satan. The one thought to exalt himself, and the other to humble himself. (Isa. 14:13, 14; Phil. 2:8) Satan said, “I will elevate myself above the other angels; I will be like the Most High, and exert such a power as he does. I could show the angels very great wisdom if I were in control of affairs.” Inspired by this wrong spirit, Satan became ambitious to make an exhibition of what he could do.

The Scriptures give us to understand that Satan's inordinate desire to gain distinction was the secret of his fall. Ambition is good, but only when it is based upon humility. Any spirit that does not respect God's wisdom is indeed foolish.

Satan's spirit was one of ambition and pride. Already highly favored of God as one of the highest rank of angels, he was not content with his great honors and blessings, but was desirous of attaining still greater influence and power than God had been pleased to grant him. This unlawful aspiration to obtain control led him not only to rebel against the divine government, but also to become the “murderer” (John 8:44) of our first parents, that he might gain control over them—the object of his ambition.

How short-sighted was the adversary, that he should think to out-general Jehovah, and to exalt himself and erect a rival kingdom! Soon Satan's folly will be manifested. When the Lord's due time shall come, the One who humbled himself in obedience to the Father's will shall be exalted to kingly power and authority, to the position at the Father's right hand in the kingdom of the universe; but the one who attempted the usurpation shall be bound and utterly destroyed.

HUMILITY PRECEDES EXALTATION

Our Lord Jesus took a different course from that of Satan. Instead of trying to exercise power he had supreme reverence for Jehovah. He said, “I delight to do thy will, O my God.” (Psa. 40:8) Following this course of humility in the presence of the great eternal One, Jesus was led of the Father as he would not have been if he had had a self-sufficient spirit. Under the Father's guidance he was humiliated. He “learned obedience by the things which he suffered” (Heb. 5:8); and after his death and resurrection he received the reward of the

It is indeed no easy matter to tread the pathway of humility, to continually check the human aspirations, and to keep the sacrifice on the altar until it is fully consumed. But thus it is that we are to work out our own salvation to the divine nature with fear and trembling, lest we come short of worthiness for the prize promised to the faithful overcomers who tread closely in the footsteps of our blessed Forerunner, who was meek and lowly of heart.—Phil. 2:8, 12.

It is when we are thus humble and faithful that the Lord makes us his chosen vessels to bear his name to others. Thus, emptied of self and filled with his Spirit, and with his truth, we can go forth, strong in the Lord of Hosts and in his mighty power do valiant service as soldiers of the cross.

divine nature. He became heir of all the gracious promises of God's Word, “heir of all things.”—Hebrews 1:2.

These two great examples afford us an impressive lesson. They show us that if we copy the ambitious and self-wise attitude of Satan, it will estrange us from God. We should realize the wisdom of God and submit ourselves fully to his will. If we walk obediently in the footsteps of the Master, we shall attain glory and honor with our Lord.

The wisdom of God is foolishness with men. The people of this world are leaning to their own understanding. People sometimes boast along this very line, saying, “I have some ideas of my own.” We all find that what we know is but very little and generally very incorrect. Experience is an excellent teacher.

The lessons that we have learned in the school of Christ are to a great extent those of humility, a great deal of which is required of pupils in that school. The path of life is so narrow that those who love the broad garish way would not think of walking in the narrow one. The Lord is allowing those who are self-conceited to turn aside. Even though they started out to walk in his way, they are permitted to go after their own foolish misunderstandings. If they continue in this course it will lead to their destruction.

WISDOM OF THIS WORLD FOOLISHNESS WITH GOD

As for the world, whether they live in Christian or in heathen lands, all shall come to a knowledge of the truth. (1 Tim. 2:3, 4) This knowledge will not be theoretical, for mankind will be brought to it through practical experience. In fact the whole world is getting a great lesson now. When the new dispensation is ushered in and the truth is made plain, mankind will perceive how very foolish they have been. They will see the unwisdom of the greater part of their course. “For the wisdom of their wise men shall perish.”—Isa. 29:14.

It will be a hard experience for mankind to realize what clumsy efforts they have made along different lines. If scientists and philosophers, when asked as to God, had said, “We do not know,” they could have been respected for their honesty. But they have boasted about geology, evolution, etc., and have pretended to know all the secrets of the universe. What shame will be theirs when confronted with the facts! It will be a severe chastisement for them to perceive how foolish they have been and to know that others are aware of their folly.

The truly noble soul feels humbled upon the borders of the vast unknown, thankfully accepts the divine revelation as to his nature, origin, destiny, etc., and patiently awaits the Lord's good time for a fuller understanding of all the mysteries of his wondrous grace.

We may well fancy that some of the great theologians who have taught with such positiveness what they do not know and what is contrary to the Bible, will feel very strange when they learn the truth. Already this is true to some extent. They are ashamed of the teachings of Calvin and of many of the theories of the past. Yet they still hold on to the creeds of nominal Christianity, but cover these up; accordingly, with such an attitude of heart, they make very little progress.

DECORUM IN THE HOUSE OF GOD

“Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil.”—Ecclesiastes 5:1.

The wise man was undoubtedly not talking about literal feet or literal steps, but giving some wise counsel, which his hearers might appropriate, just as we do. They understood him to mean that they must be circumspect in their daily lives.

“Keep thy foot.” Notice where you are going. Do not go to the house of God as you would go to the market-place or to some place of amusement. Go as to the place where God

will meet with his people. The wise man goes on to assume what would be heard in the house of God. Be not ready “to give the sacrifice of fools.” This would seem to refer to laughter, levity, foolish talk and jesting.

This Scripture is one which may very properly be taken to heart by all of God's people at the present time. Reverence is very becoming. We have lost the fear that God will

cast us into eternal torment. We know our heavenly Father better than to suppose that he would have any such evil intention toward any of his creatures. But we should not go to the house of God as we would go to the market-place. Many of the Lord's people do not appreciate the fact that decorum is necessary in every place where God is worshiped.

REVERENTIAL CONDUCT TO BE CULTIVATED

It is for us to realize that we have God in the church today in a sense that he never was in the typical temple. Wherever there is a meeting of the members of the church, the Lord has declared that he will be there. The living stones constituting the temple of God should be as fully revered as temples made of literal stones.

Whether we meet in a parlor or in a church or in an opera house, the fact that God's people are there, makes that building, whatever it may be, a holy place. Therefore whoever approaches it should do so with a watchfulness of his feet. When he arrives, he should be appreciative of the place where he is, and should be ready to "hear"—listen—not full of mirth. All conversation should be of a kind that would edify—build up—along spiritual lines. If we cannot talk along such lines, it would be better for us to hear the discourse, join in the singing, and then withdraw.

Whatever conversation be carried on, it should be with reverence, not merely for the place, but for the occasion. There should be no turning about and saying, "Here comes Brother So-and-so, Sister So-and-so. We shall hear them sing." Such conduct is very improper.

We do not know any lesson the Lord's people need to learn more than that of reverence. The Lord will not call any one devoid of reverence, and he wants that quality to grow strong. But when fear is banished, the tendency is to less reverence. Special care in this respect is to be observed when we go to the house of God, or to any place where divine service is to be held.

CONSIDERATION OF THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS

Not only should we watch our feet in going to the house of God, but we should watch what we take with us. We should see that we go there clean; that we take no vermin in

our clothing; that we have no bad odors about us. We should also see that we do not take children who are not properly trained. Thus we shall not be in danger of annoying others.

There may be occasions when children may be left alone at home. When this is impossible, it would be better for the parents to take turns in coming to the meetings. No one has a right to take children to the meeting, when their presence would be detrimental to the spiritual interests of others. We believe, however, that a way could be devised whereby the child could be left at home until of such an age as not to disturb the class. The majority of parents become so accustomed to the ways of their children that they do not realize that others are being annoyed—when probably every motion of the child is disturbing others. The others have their own trials to tax their patience.

PUNCTUALITY A MARK OF CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

It would seem that some need to watch, not only their feet, but also their watches. To come into the meeting late is out of harmony with the principles of both justice and love. All who attend ought, in justice to others, to see that they arrive in time. They ought so to arrange their affairs that they can be at the meeting promptly at the hour.

Doubtless the Lord would view our efforts to be punctual and not to annoy others as marks of Christian character-development, which would have his approval, and which would help to prepare us for the kingdom. He who is indifferent to the rights of others manifests that he is lacking in the spirit of love, the spirit of Christ. And whoever has not the spirit of Christ, well developed, will not have a place in the kingdom.

Hence these matters—unruly children, tardiness at meeting, etc., will have to do with our fitness for a place in the kingdom. By this we do not mean that we are being judged according to our work, or that we have any right to judge others according to their work. The Lord said, "Judge not." We should show that our endeavors to do the Lord's will are equal to the desires of our hearts. If we exercise determination in trying to live up to these, we shall be glad when we experience our change in the resurrection.

A PECULIAR MARRIAGE

MARCH 23.—Genesis 24:58-67.

"In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."—Proverbs 3:6.

When Abraham was 140 years old and his wife Sarah had been dead three years, his son Isaac was forty years old. This heir of the most wonderful of the divine promises did not go to seek a wife for himself, probably because too bashful. Then Abraham called Eliezer, the steward of his household, and directed that he take ten camels and go a distance of about 500 miles to the vicinity in which Abraham was born, and where his brother Nahor and family still lived. Eliezer went under the general direction that he should find a wife suitable for Isaac and bring her to him.

The entire story is told with a beautiful simplicity quite convincing to the unprejudiced. The characters described by the historian were not savages, much less cousins of monkeys, as evolutionists would have us think. And the story itself is peculiar enough in its setting to assure us of its truth. A fabricator of such a narrative will scarcely picture his hero as obtaining a wife under the circumstances here set forth, nor was this the custom of that time nor of any time, nor of any people, so far as we have knowledge. The procedure was in every way unique.

Only recently have Bible students learned why the matter was so arranged. It was evidently to illustrate to us a great spiritual design, which has been more than eighteen centuries in process of accomplishment. The type fits to its antitype in a manner not to be misunderstood.

Abraham typified the heavenly Father, Isaac typified the Lord Jesus (his forty years typified in due time), and Eliezer typified the holy Spirit. In due time, the Father sent the holy Spirit to gather the elect company which will constitute the bride, the Lamb's wife. As in the type Abraham did not take a wife for his son from amongst the heathen, so in the antitype God did not select the bride of Christ from the heathen. As Eliezer went to those who were related to Abraham, and believers in God, so the holy spirit was sent only to believers, to select from them the bride class.

THE BRIDE CLASS ORIGINALLY JEWISH

The Jews were in fellowship with God under their Law Covenant, and to them only the holy Spirit originally went. Later, in God's providence, the door was opened to the Gentiles. This was not in the sense of accepting all Gentiles to the bride class, but merely of permitting them to hear the Gospel, in order that such as heard and responded might as

believers draw nigh to God, and be permitted to join the bride class when they fully consecrated themselves to God—the antitypical Rebecca enduring the trials and perils of the journey to the antitypical Isaac. From this standpoint, today's study is not only beautiful and interesting, but highly instructive.

REBECCA AT THE WELL

Abraham's servant, loyal to his commission, faithful both to the father and to the son, sought earnestly the proper person of Abraham's desire, assured that Isaac, the heir of such precious promises, should have a suitable companion and help-mate. When he came to the place appointed, the city of Abraham's brother, Nahor, he was alert. He found Rebecca, the daughter of Bethuel, the grand-daughter of Nahor, at the well, caring for the sheep. This is interpreted to signify that those approached by the holy Spirit with the suggestion of becoming joint-heirs with Christ are usually found in some way connected with the service of God's sheep—God's people—giving them water from the well, which symbolically would mean giving refreshment from the Bible and its words of life—"water of life."

The first test put to the maiden was in respect to her willingness to give of the water. Eliezer asked for a drink. Rebecca replied, "Drink, and I will give thy camels to drink also." Here was manifested the spirit of generosity—of service—just as the holy Spirit indicates that those who constitute the bride of Christ must have meekness and humility as primary qualifications for acceptance with the Lord to the high calling.

Immediately Eliezer hastened to put upon Rebecca some jewels, symbolic of spiritual blessings, which come to those who first hearken to the Spirit of the Lord and show a willingness and humility. Eliezer was received into the home. The friends of Rebecca received the blessings of the spirit which she had received; and they all, representing the household of faith, rejoiced with her.

Eliezer promptly made known his business. He was there on a special mission, and this he set forth. He explained that Abraham was very rich, and that he had made Isaac heir of all that he had, and had sent him, his servant, to find a suitable bride for Isaac. Under the guidance of divine providence, he had met Rebecca and believed her to be the Lord's choice for his Master's son. The question now was, Would

she accept the offer, or would she reject it, and should he seek another? The question was put to Rebecca herself: Would she go into a far country under the guidance of Eliezer, and become the wife of Isaac? Her prompt answer was, "I will go."

All this well represents the question which comes before those called to be of the bride of Christ. They hear that he is "the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." They hear that he is Lord of all, the Inheritor of the "exceeding great and precious promises." They learn that union with him will mean the pleasures of his fellowship forevermore and participation with him in all his great and wonderful future. Such as are rightly exercised answer, "I will go," as Rebecca did, with great promptness.

It meant something to Rebecca to leave her father's house, her own people, her own country with which she was familiar; and so it means considerable for all those who accept the Father's call through the holy Spirit and become members of the bride of Christ. The Prophet addresses these, saying: "Forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty; for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him."

Only a whole-hearted love for the Lord and a well-grounded faith in the "exceeding great and precious promises" will carry us through to the end of the journey, joyful in anticipation to be finally accepted into glory with our Beloved, the King of Glory. We are to remember that during this Gospel age millions have heard of the message of the holy Spirit, inviting to membership in the bride class; but not all have promptly said, "Yes, I will go." Rebecca types only the successful ones, who will finally make their calling and election sure, and become members of the bride, the Lamb's wife.

MORE JEWELS FOR REBECCA

Another part of the record tells us that, when Rebecca decided to accept the offer of marriage with Isaac, Eliezer opened his treasures and gave her still further jewels of adornment. How beautiful a figure! The bride class receive an early blessing of the holy Spirit, and a later one. The latter comes to those who have made a full decision to be the Lord's at any and every cost—"to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." The graces of the holy Spirit come more and more

to them. As the Apostle suggests, we add to our faith fortitude, knowledge, patience, experience, hope, joy, love. And each of these jewels of character, in proportion as we put them on, enhances our beauty of character.

Up hill and down, through sunshine and shadow, the camels finally brought Rebecca to her journey's end. So with the antitypical Rebecca. They start in the pathway of obedience and self-denial, leaving their father Adam's house. After they accept the holy Spirit's suggestions and decide to go to Christ, they begin promptly to take up their cross and follow him. Through sunshine and shade—trials and difficulties of the journey—they travel down through the centuries of this Gospel age.

As Eliezer brought Rebecca and her maids safe to the end of their journey to the presence of Isaac at Lahai-roi, so the holy Spirit will guide the church to the end of the journey to the presence, *parousia*, of Christ. The camels which bore the treasures and jewels to Rebecca's home, and which afterward brought her and her maidens and Eliezer back to Isaac's home, would seemingly represent well the Holy Scriptures, by which the faithful are borne along—the agencies sent by the Father and the Son for the comfort and assistance of the prospective bride on her journey.

As Eliezer met Rebecca at the well and handled the water, symbolical of truth, so on the return journey Rebecca met Isaac at the well Lahai-roi.

Following the custom of the time, she put on a veil and alighted from the camel to meet Isaac. So the Scriptures tell us that the church must pass beyond the veil before she will be fully received by the antitypical Isaac into all the holy associations foretold.

Rebecca's maidens doubtless typified the blessings of the consecrated class, now following with the bride class but not living up to their full privileges and opportunities. The blessing pronounced upon Rebecca, "Be thou the mother of thousands of millions," represents the future of the church; for as the Redeemer will, during his Messianic kingdom, become the Father or Life-giver to thousands of millions of Adam's race, bought with his precious blood, so the church, his bride, will become the mother of those same thousands of millions of humanity, in the sense that she will be their care-taker and supervisor, to assist them forward to full perfection.

THE ANCIENT WORTHIES

MARCH 30.—Hebrews 11:1-19.

"Our fathers trusted in thee; they trusted, and thou didst deliver them."—Psalm 22:4.

St. Paul in this lesson throws upon the screen vivid pictures of the wonders wrought by faith in ancient times, and then he gives a partial roll-call of the heroes of those faith-battles, and a hasty word-painting of the nature of their triumphs. The broad foundation for his dissertation is found in the first verse of this study—"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." As water is not a solid upon which our feet can travel, except it be congealed in the form of ice, so likewise belief, in the ordinary sense of the word, is not sufficient as a foundation for our trust and onward progress, unless that belief be congealed, solidified, into a substantial faith.

Thus we should always clearly differentiate between credulity and faith—credulity, which is reprehensible, and faith, which is commendable. A crystallized faith, such as will carry us safely over the quicksands of ignorance and superstition, and bring us safely to the goal which God has marked out for us, needs more than human assurances, more than our own or other men's imaginations. True faith seeks for a positive message from the Lord. It requires diligence in its endeavor to find that message. Then it becomes an evidence, or proof, of things invisible.

By such a faith in God and his promise to give Israel the land of Canaan, the two elders sent to spy out the land brought back a good report. Their companions, lacking that faith, looked merely to the strength of the Canaanites, and brought back an unfavorable report. By faith we believe in the divine power which created the planets, and the divine power which has ordered the ages and dispensations of human affairs, and which will bring out of these, results which were not at first apparent, except by the eye of faith.

ABRAHAM, ENOCH AND NOAH

By faith Abel offered to the Lord a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, and obtained the witness of his approval by God's acceptance of his offering. His acceptance still speaks to us in Abel's favor, although he is dead. Abel's faith, no doubt, was the result of an endeavor to draw nearer to God—to appreciate what sin is and why the death penalty had come.

From this standpoint of faith, he was led to offer sacrificially animals which typified the better sacrifices by which reconciliation will eventually be effected between God and humanity.

On account of faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death. He "walked with God, and . . . God took him." The story of Enoch's translation is vouched for more than once; and by faith we may accept it. There is no record as to where he was taken, except that he was not taken to heaven. (John 3:13) For aught we know to the contrary, God may have protected his life through all these centuries as an illustration of how human life could have been prolonged by divine power, if God had not placed the curse of death upon the race. Indeed, Enoch could be no exception to that curse. He is under the death sentence and could come to full perfection and divine justification to life only through the merit of the Redeemer, even as others.

Noah's faith manifested itself by his obedience in the building of an ark, at a time when there was no apparent excuse for such a building, since not a drop of rain had fallen from the time of man's creation until that time. (Genesis 2:5) God blessed his faith, and made him a channel of blessing to his family.

THE FAITHLESS NOT ACCEPTABLE NOW

St. Paul makes a sweeping statement—"Without faith it is impossible to please God." On the basis of this statement we may say, then, that a person is pleasing to God in proportion as he has faith, and displeasing in proportion as he lacks faith. Surely here we have an incentive to growth in faith, since all of God's people desire to be pleasing in his sight.

But faith is not alike easy with all mankind. Some can crystallize their faith in God and his promises into what is the same to them as an absolute knowledge, and on this faith-knowledge they can dare and do anything, and increasingly so. But this is not true of all. Many have less faith and are still children of God, and must needs pray, "Lord, increase our faith," and must seek to emulate the faith of others, and to be encouraged by the rewards of faith given to them. There are still others, however, to whom faith seems to be absolutely impossible. They cannot believe anything

beyond their own five senses. They have never developed the sixth sense—of faith, confidence in the Lord.

What shall we say of these? Are they by this natural effect of heredity debarred from divine favor to all eternity, because they do not please God—because “without faith it is impossible to please” him? This is not the teaching of the Scriptures. They teach that a time is coming, under Messiah’s gracious kingdom, when the “knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth,” reaching all classes. It will not be dependent upon faith, nor be merely for those who can exercise faith. The way will be made so clear and so plain that even a way-faring man and a simpleton need not err in his endeavor to find and to know and to appreciate the truth.

But in the present time faith is an indispensable matter according to divine arrangement, because the Father is seeking a special class to be the associates, the bride and joint-heir of his Son. Since these will thus be ushered into positions of great trust, as well as great honor and great service, they must needs be tempted, tested, in all points. Their faith in the Almighty must be implicit. Similarly, as we shall see, God has provided a special work for the ancient worthies mentioned in today’s study; and hence he has recognized as worthy for that work only such as could manifest great faith in him and in his Word.

ABRAHAM LOOKED FOR A CITY

Coming to Abraham, St. Paul recounts the different steps of his faith-demonstration. He responded to the call and came into Canaan, not knowing the particulars respecting it beforehand. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise as a stranger, and dwelt in tents, as did also Isaac and Jacob, who were his associates in the promise, and heirs through him. Sarah also exercised faith. The Apostle declares that she was thus assisted in becoming the mother of Isaac, and became identified with that promise, which declares that Abraham’s seed, through her, shall yet be as the sands of the seashore—numberable.

Summing up (v. 13), St. Paul declares that all these noble characters died in faith, without receiving the things that had been promised to them. Their rejoicing was in the faith-view which they had from afar. So strong was their faith that they were content to be pilgrims and strangers—nomads. Their traveling up and down showed that none of the cities or countries through which they passed from time to time were wholly satisfactory to them. Yet they were not discontented in the sense that they wished to return to their former homeland, Haran. They were merely seeking a better country, a heavenly country, for they “looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”

At first glance, there is room for difference of opinion as respects the Apostle’s meaning by these words. Did he mean

that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were wanting to go to a heavenly country? Did he mean that they were looking for a place in the New Jerusalem, as the bride, the Lamb’s wife, is looking for that city—Messiah’s kingdom?

Such is not our thought. They had no heavenly promises to think about. They had no Word of God to even suggest to them a change of nature from human to spirit being. All of their promises were of the earth, earthy—“All the land that thou seest, to thee will I give it and to thy seed after thee,” etc. To our understanding the country they looked for is the Paradise of the now near future, when “the wilderness shall blossom as the rose and the solitary places shall be glad,” and “streams shall break forth in the desert,” and the blessing of the Lord shall supplant the curse of sin and death. This is the country which God purposes shall be the inheritance of humanity in general, when brought back into harmony with the divine will, during Messiah’s reign of righteousness.

When we read that Abraham sought “a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God,” our minds naturally go to the New Jerusalem, the city of God, which is eventually to come down from God to earth. But that will not be a literal city. The entire passage is symbolical. The New Jerusalem will be the Messianic kingdom. It will be the capital, or center of government, for the reorganized social order of earth. From it will go forth the law of God, the knowledge of God, the blessing of God. From it will emanate power and authority, which for a thousand years will rule the world in righteousness, overthrow sin, death and all who are in sympathy with sin, and uplift all who love righteousness and truth.

The New Jerusalem primarily will be the church in glory, on the spirit plane, the kingdom or rule of God, emanating from Messiah. But it will have its earthly representatives, too. The very ones to whom St. Paul here refers, found faithful in their time—Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the prophets and all the ancient worthies—will be princes in the earth, representatives of the invisible Messiah and his bride, backed by their full power and authority.—Psalm 45:16.

Of these Jesus spoke, saying, “Ye shall see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the holy prophets in the kingdom.” But he himself has said, “Yet a little while and the world seeth me no more.” Of the church the Apostle declares, “We shall be like him.” We all must be changed. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven, on the spirit plane.

In substance, then, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the faithful of the past, waited for the promised resurrection of the dead, to be accomplished under the administration of Messiah’s government—a government being symbolically represented by a city, as St. Petersburg represents Russia; Paris represents France; London represents Great Britain; Berlin, Germany; and Washington, the United States.

“AS DECEIVERS AND YET TRUE”

My suit against *The Eagle* for slanderous defamation of reputation has been decided in its favor. A jury of twelve men have decided that *The Eagle* was justified in making its vicious onslaughts upon me, notwithstanding the Judge’s charge that, according to the law, the cartoon, at least, was a slanderous, vicious libel in fact. I am urged by my attorneys and petitioned by friends to take the case to the Court of Appeals. I quite agree with Justice Kelby, who said, “The case was presented fairly and squarely to the jury.” The rulings of his Honor seem to me equitable. I very highly appreciate the ability and energy of my attorneys, Mr. Sparks and Mr. Rutherford. I have no complaint, nor murmuring against the divine providences which permitted what I consider to be a very unjust verdict. In appealing our case to the Court we have followed the example of the Master, who inquired why he was smitten contrary to law. (John 18:23) Likewise St. Paul appealed for such justice as the law provided. (Acts 25:10) So I have done; and I, like them, have been refused the law’s protection. I murmur not. I am in good company.

I remember, on the other hand, that it has been a part of the divine will throughout this Gospel age to allow His faithful servants to suffer reproaches and losses. This was so in the Master’s case: “Being reviled, he reviled not again.” When it pleased the Father to bruise him and put him to shame, he declared, “The cup which my Father hath poured for me, shall I not drink it?” “Not my will, but thine be done.”—1 Peter 2:23; John 18:11; Luke 22:42.

It was so with the apostles, who wrote, “As he was, so are we in this world”—“As deceivers and yet true; as poor, yet making many rich”; “I bear about in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus”—evidences that I am his servant and his follower. As St. Paul said, so we see fulfilled

all through the age, “Whosoever will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” The Master said, “Marvel not if the world hate you. Ye know that it hated me before it hated you; if ye were of the world, the world would love its own.”—1 John 4:17; 2 Cor. 6:8-10; Gal. 6:17; 2 Tim. 3:12; John 15:18, 19.

THE CASE BRIEFLY REVIEWED

I am interested in everything progressive and tending to prove that we are entering the great thousand years of earth’s blessings under Messiah. In the columns of *THE WATCH TOWER* I have noted the coming of divine blessings in fulfillment of the prediction that “the wilderness shall blossom as the rose,” “the earth shall yield her increase,” etc. Five years ago we quoted in *THE WATCH TOWER* columns reports respecting “Miracle Wheat.” We gave the name and address (Mr. Stoner) of the farmer who discovered this new wheat and his reports of its remarkable qualities. We published also the report of Mr. Miller, the Government expert, who thoroughly investigated it and pronounced upon its superior qualities.

Some of our readers purchased seed from Mr. Stoner at \$1.25 per pound and approved it. In 1910 one of the friends of our Society, who had raised some of this wheat, sold it for seed at \$1.00 per pound, and donated the proceeds to our Society. In 1911 the same friend, having raised more seed, asked that *THE WATCH TOWER* give the benefit of this to its readers at \$1.00 a pound post-paid, and appropriate the net results to the furtherance of its work. Another friend, who had some of the same seed, also donated similarly, the total amount being twenty bushels.

For the accommodation of our readers, we allowed this seed-wheat to be put up in pound packages and mailed from *THE WATCH TOWER* Office, just as the U. S. Government

handles such seeds at Washington. We did the business at the request of others and in their interest, and credited them on our books with the results, setting aside to them proportionately voting shares in our Society. We made no claim for the wheat on our own knowledge. We merely gave the report of the Government expert, of the originator, and of our friends who had tried the wheat. We merely acted as intermediary.

Nevertheless, everything that was said respecting the wheat was fully proven at this trial by expert witnesses, interested and disinterested, and their testimony was not shaken. It was also shown that farmer Stoner and his business partner, Mr. Knight, made no sales of this wheat under \$1.25 per pound until September, 1911; and that they had a written contract between them that none of the wheat was to be sold at any price until the following year—1912. Suddenly in September, 1911, they changed their plans, considering that they had wheat enough accumulated, put the price down to \$5.00 per bushel, about the time that THE WATCH TOWER wheat was all sold at a dollar a pound. This *The Eagle's* attorney claimed was proof of fraud on the part of THE WATCH TOWER—sufficient excuse for the slanderous assaults of *The Eagle* upon me.

It was in vain that my attorney sought to show the jury *The Eagle's* malice—that it really was attacking me along religious grounds; that it had set itself as the champion of certain clerical enemies of mine, and was seeking to destroy my influence and, if possible, to drive me from Brooklyn. In the court-room sat about twenty-five of my friends, who had come long distances at their own expense to have an opportunity to speak a word in my behalf. Through some intricacies of the law respecting evidence, these were unable to be heard in my behalf.

Instead, the law gave *The Eagle's* attorney the privilege of saying all manner of evil against me falsely—for the sake of the doctrines of Christ, which I hold and teach. He was allowed to picture me, as *The Eagle* had done in its cartoon—as a thief and robber, masquerading in the garb of a minister of Christ. He was allowed to ridicule the "Miracle Wheat," although I had nothing whatever to do with it, nor with the naming of it; and notwithstanding the fact that its superiority was proven.

He was allowed to inveigh against the fact as criminal, that I hold the office of President of the WATCH TOWER Bible and Tract Society, and to claim that I hold the office in some corrupt or unlawful manner, and that I misuse the Society's income in some unexplained way to my own advantage. Meantime, scores present in the court-room and thousands all over the land, would have been glad to testify that their donations have come to the Society because they have the utmost confidence in my integrity and management of its affairs as its Executive Officer, and that had anybody else been President their donations would have been smaller or none at all.

Presumably because there were seven Catholics on the jury, *The Eagle's* attorney was prompted to refer to the Sisters of Charity and their noble work as nurses in the hospitals, without referring to the fact that those nurses are well paid, and that the hospitals in large measure are supported by State taxation.

The WATCH TOWER Bible and Tract Society was held up to scorn because it did not have any hospital work nor draw any revenue from taxation, and because the female members of the Society do not visit the workshops of the land weekly or monthly on pay-days, and exact donations to its work. Our society was held up to scorn also because we do not send a wagon around the city collecting groceries and provisions for the up-keep of our work; because we do not take up collections even on Sunday; because we have never solicited a penny or a dollar from anybody; and because we never have fairs, grab-bags, "chances" or "raffles." Our Society was held up to scorn and ridicule because it offers its literature free to the poor, while other similar Societies charge both rich and poor for their tracts and other publications. *The Eagle* was pictured by its attorney as a dove, a bird of Paradise. For defending it the Protestants on the jury were led to hope for escape from eternal torment through "the pearly gates" of heaven, welcomed with the words, "Well

done!" for giving *The Eagle* the verdict. Neither I nor my attorneys could offer such inducements conscientiously.

Our home, "Bethel," where some of our Society's workers reside, was held up to scorn—likened to a harem, etc. This surely did cut me deeply to the heart. I am quite willing to suffer, if need be, for my faithfulness to the Lord and his Word; but it gave me great pain that the arrows intended for me did not all center upon myself—that the more than a hundred saintly, earnest men, women and children, co-laborers with me in the Lord's work, should thus be made to unjustly suffer. I can only urge them to apply to themselves the words of the Apostle, "Cast not away, therefore, your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward"; "For ye have need of patience that, after ye have done the will of God, ye shall receive the promise"; "Ye endured a great fight of afflictions; partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock, and partly whilst ye became companions of them that were so used."—Heb. 10:35, 36, 32, 33.

NO COMPLAINT AGAINST THE LAW

I have no complaint to make against the laws of our land, nor against the jury system, nor against the particular twelve men who, in my judgment, gave an unjust verdict. I esteem our laws to be most wonderfully just. I have often marveled that imperfect, fallen men have succeeded in the erection of such excellent barriers against sin and injustice. I cannot see that a more fair method than our jury system of trying a case could be arranged by imperfect men. Neither do I believe that the average jury desires to pervert justice. The miscarriage of justice I attribute rather to the imperfection of human knowledge. Suspicion and evil-surmising are weeds which seem to grow prolifically in every mind. They spring spontaneously in the degraded heart. There is such a disposition to judge others by one's self, and such a realization of sinful impulses that the average man naturally enough imputes evil, on every occasion when it is suggested to him.

St. Paul enunciated this principle, saying, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; . . . neither can he know [understand] them; for they are spiritually discerned." (1 Cor. 2:14) Our Society and its work, our Lord's work and the work of the Apostles and the regenerate since, are so far beyond the concept of the unregenerate as to be "foolishness unto them"—hypocrisies, frauds, impositions. If Jesus and the apostles and the faithful saints of eighteen centuries have all belonged to this class, I will be of good courage and not be ashamed to belong to the same.

I am the more encouraged because I realize that the great day of blessing, the great thousand-year day of Messiah's kingdom, is near at hand—is dawning now. Soon Satan, the "prince of darkness," will be bound for a thousand years, to deceive the nations no more. (Revelation 20:2, 3, 6) No longer will darkness be permitted to masquerade as light, and the light be slandered as darkness. All the blind eyes will be opened; all the deaf ears will be unstopped. That glorious period, as the prophet has declared, shall be "the desire of all nations." (Haggai 2:7) Then not only the church will see eye to eye, and understand God's providences at the present time, but the whole world will see in the light of that happy time for which we pray, "Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as in heaven."

Sincerely, and undismayed, I remain a servant of God.

CHARLES T. RUSSELL.

Brooklyn, January 29, 1913.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust him for his grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy and shall break
In blessings on your head.

His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.

VOLUNTEER MATTER FOR 1913

This year's volunteer literature (PEOPLES PULPIT) is now in course of preparation, and we hope to begin making shipments soon. We doubt not that this issue will be more far-reaching in its effect than any other previous edition. It is for you to say whether our expectations shall prove true.

The year 1912 witnessed the publication and distribution of

thirty-five million copies of PEOPLES PULPIT and EVERYBODY'S PAPER, or totaling more than one hundred million sermons preached by the dear volunteers in a most effective manner. Shall we endeavor to double these figures for 1913?

We suggest that orders be sent in at once, to enable us to calculate as to the quantity to be printed.