

Father, because faithful in bearing the iniquities of the many, therefore, "God will divide him a portion with the great." How great a portion is not here stated. Other Scriptures inform us that the Father has given him a portion with himself—he overcame and sat down with the Father in his throne. He has indeed been granted a portion with the great—the great Jehovah. In turn he shall divide the spoil with the strong, the spoil of his great conquest over sin and death at the cost of his own life, the spoil of victory, the reward of his own high exaltation far above angels, principalities and powers, and every name that is named—the reward of his high relationship with the Father, the reward of his Millennial kingdom and its opportunities and privileges of blessing the whole groaning creation, the reward of the Father's smile and favor eternally.

This "spoil," which all came to the dear Redeemer as the one who kept the Law and redeemed the world with his own precious blood, this spoil he proposes to share with the faithful of his followers, the overcomers, here called "the strong." O, what a thought! In all our weaknesses and imperfections we are by the Lord's grace enabled to come off conquerors and more than conquerors through him who loved us and bought us with his precious blood.

With the Apostle we can say, "When I am weak, then am I strong;" when I realize my own imperfections and shortcomings then, by faith realizing the strength and perfection of my dear Redeemer and his provision for all who are his, I can be

strong in faith and trust and love, and realize that the exceeding great and precious promises of God's Word are yea and amen to me. In the present life, then, by faith we have a portion with the Lord, and may reckon ourselves as having passed from death unto life, as heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord. But the attainment of all these things, their fulness and completeness, lies beyond the grave, beyond the resurrection, when all the faithful shall be with him and, like him, share his glory, for "he will divide the spoil with the strong."

THE CAUSE OF THE MATTER

Our lesson closes with a reiteration of the general facts stated. All of this greatness given to our Lord and shared with his faithful followers is *because* he poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors, and bore the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. How emphatically the Scriptures point out to us that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins, that without the ransom price being paid there could have been no release of Adam and his race from the sentence of death, no hope of any of them attaining life everlasting. As we appreciate this great central thought of the divine plan, let us reverence our dear Master the more as the author of our faith, who, by and by, will be the finisher of it, and let us seek more and more to be faithful to him and to walk in his steps and to lay down our lives for the brethren.

THE CHATTANOOGA CONVENTION

Although we were unfortunate in the selection of the date of this Convention, June being a very busy time for the Southern farmer, nevertheless we had a delightful season of fellowship. The gathering numbered about 150 from every quarter of the Southland, with a fair representation from more northerly States. The Sunday afternoon session was for the public and had an attendance of between 500 and 600. We have reason to hope that some true Israelites profited by the discourse on The Oath-bound Covenant, "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." The dear friends of the Chattanooga church managed the arrangements so well that we heard not a single murmur. Everybody looked happy with a holy joy that lit all faces. The testimonials, too, corroborated this. Nearly

all told of a share of the opposition promised to all who seek to closely follow the Savior, and of joys from the truth which made opposition seem light afflictions in view of the hopes of future glory with our Lord. Two Baptist ministers were in attendance at nearly all of the sessions, and one of these at the close of the Love Feast, told the writer of his proposed methods for extending the knowledge of the "good tidings of great joy for all people" to many whom he has been serving hitherto as a Baptist. Eleven brethren and ten sisters symbolized their consecration by water immersion. It is our hope that all present were richly repaid for their expenditures of time and money and that the blessings of the Lord poured upon their hearts will extend to their friends and brethren at their various homes.

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VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER

LUTHERAN VIEW OF BAPTISM

The clipping below from *The Young Lutheran* is not, as some might suppose, from a couple of centuries back, but from the January, 1905, issue:

"Often we are asked questions concerning Baptism, the proper time and place for it, who should be the sponsors, etc. It may be well to explain at this place:

"Baptism is that act, commanded by God and promised his blessing, by which we are forgiven our sins (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3) and are made children of God. A person who wilfully neglects baptism is surely lost, as we read John 3:5: 'Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.'

"This may seem hard, but God simply says: 'If you wish to enter my kingdom you must enter the way I want you to by being baptized,' just as any society can say: 'If you wish to belong to this society you must go through the order adopted by us to become a full member.' Surely all would say they have a right to do that; just so God has a right to say how he wants us to enter his kingdom.

"So we see that it is very important for every one to be baptized. Neglecting to have our children baptized as early as possible is taking a risk which none of us can afford."

Some have thought that in treating the subject of Baptism in MILLENNIAL DAWN, Vol. VI., chapter 10, we were rather severe in our strictures upon the views of "Christendom" which make a child liable to enter torment because its parents neglected to have some drops of water put on its head with a formula of words. The above shows that we were quite within the truth, however strange it may seem that seemingly safe and sane people can so believe and teach. Would that all might see the true meaning of this important ordinance! How much it would assist them to an understanding of the divine character and plan. Get your friends in all denominations to read that one chapter.

RISING OF RUSSIAN PEASANTRY

The Russian landowners are alarmed at last. All over the great middle belt the peasants are murdering the landlords, pillaging and burning houses and refineries. The inhabitants of the country towns who belong to the reactionary little bourgeoisie are frightened for their own safety and that of their property. Even in Moscow and Nijni Novgorod there is great uneasiness. One result has been the demand of the nobles who met at the old capital that some small concessions in the way of popular representation should be made in order that the rising flood of disorder may be stemmed in time.

As long as the outbreaks were confined to the big cities there was not much to fear. There the trouble was as much industrial as political. But many of the workmen have gone back to their villages as political propagandists. These persons act as agents for the revolutionists. They are successful, however, because they found the conditions favorable. . . .

This dangerous Jacquerie, or peasant uprising, is called *pugachevshchina* in Russia, after the eighteenth century rebel leader, Pugachev, who championed the autocracy against the officials and the landlords. In the same way the peasants of today have no grievance against the Emperor. To the *mujiks* he is still the "Little Father." It is the *Tchornomiks* who, in the opinion of the peasants brought on the war, who precipitated the strikes, who attacked the people. The official class is blamed for supporting the landlords against the cultivators and the manufacturers against the workpeople.

When the decree of the Holy Synod called on the loyal population to combat the enemies of the Czar and the government the ignorant peasants were told that it was directed against the nobles and the landed proprietors. Mysterious leaflets were circulated, stating that Nicholas was in danger and had been deposed and thrown into prison by the nobles. The appeal continued: "Hasten to help him, plunder the landlords, slay the enemies of the Czar and the Fatherland." . . .

The situation in certain details suggests the early stages of

the French Revolution. The Paris mob that went to Versailles, when it started back with the King, Queen and Dauphin, said: "We are bringing the baker, the baker's wife and the baker's little boy." In the provinces popular hatred was vented on the good-for-nothing nobility. It was only later in the uprising that the popular leaders determined to get rid of the sovereign in the most radical way.

The most conservative Russian newspapers say that the growing domestic disorders are as serious as the repeated defeats of the army in Manchuria. So the empire now fairly stands between two fires.—*New York Evening Sun*.

* * *

Poor Russia! All things seem to be working together for evil to her of late. Nevertheless the *retribution* seems to be well deserved. For long centuries human rights have been trampled upon by those in power. Practical slavery has long held the place of brotherhood, and now those so long kept in ignorance and superstition can be expected to do nothing less than take vengeance to the extent of their ability. By and by all will discern the wisdom as well as the justice of the divine law—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy mind, being and strength, and thy neighbor as thyself."

CRAZED BY CITY LIFE

Chicago, Ill.—Dr. H. N. Moyer, one of the most noted experts in mental diseases in the city, has made an answer to the charge that "Chicago is going crazy." He shows that the other big cities are going crazy as fast as Chicago. He says:

"The fact is that the insanity ratio in both New York and Boston is increasing faster than in Chicago. New York's proportion is 1 out of every 340; Boston and New England 1 out of every 320, while Chicago has only one out of every 400."

* * *

The above, brought out by a desire to free Chicago from the charge of being the most crazy city, is a sad commentary on the so-called evolution that has lifted man to almost the plane of gods. Alas! How much the poor world needs the times of restitution of all things spoken by the mouth of all

the holy prophets since the world began. Restitution would not land them in monkeyhood either, but in the safe and sane condition of father Adam, who lived 930 years without doctors, pills and plasters, and had no need of an asylum. Let God be true and let men know of it, even though it requires that our race pass through terrible experiences to learn of its own unwisdom and of God's grace in Christ.

A FORM AND "YELL" OF GODLINESS

Before his regular meeting last night, Evangelist Tilman Hobson at Olivet Congregational church, spoke to the "Sunbeam Society," composed of boys and girls of the Sunday School of Olivet church.

"You know, boys and girls," said the speaker, "that it is quite the thing nowadays for the schools to have a 'yell.' I have a 'yell' for you to learn tonight. It is this:

"'Rah, 'rah, 'rah, have you seen Second Timothy, two fifteen'?"

"The words of that particular verse are these: 'Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.'"

* * *

How peculiar it does seem to teach the little ones such formalistic piety of which they can know really nothing, and at the same time to send their older brothers and sisters to schools where they will be systematically taught by higher critics that the Bible is not the Word of Truth.

Alas! how little studying of the Word there is today. The possession of a Bible and the committing to memory of a few texts is all that is thought necessary. What wonder that it has no "power" to keep in the present time of falling.

PREPARING FOR THE "TARE" HARVEST

"Did Adam and Eve ever live? If so, how did they originate?"

With these and similar questions University of Chicago medical students are in a perplexing frenzy. A hundred prospective physicians gathered in the physiological lecturing room yesterday and heard Dr. A. P. Mathews, professor of physiological chemistry, declare that there was no such thing as divine creation.—*Des Moines Capitol*.

DO NOT URGE THE UNREADY TO COME OUT OF BABYLON

Preach the Word, tell the good tidings, loan, sell or give the literature, and by word and example commend it to your friends. Let it take effect before urging your friends to quit Babylon, etc. Remember that it is the truth that makes us free, and that it took time in your own case to grow strong and free and obedient to the truth. If you urge the matter

too strongly and too soon it may result in one or other of two bad effects: (1) It may deter your friend before the nutriment of the truth has given the necessary grace and strength, or (2) It may bring "out" one too weak to stand the oppositions sure to follow, and by defeat may make him timid every way for the remainder of life.

"BECAUSE THE DAYS ARE EVIL"

"See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil."

Eph. 5:15, 16.

The word "circumspect" is from *circum*, signifying *around*, and *spectus*, signifying *to look, to watch*. The true Christian pathway is so narrow, so beset with tests and pitfalls and wiles of the evil one, that, if we walk carelessly even (not to say wickedly), we will be in great danger of mishap. It requires not only that we look all around at every step, but, more than this, it requires that we be wise,—wiser than our fellow creatures of earth,—wise with the wisdom that cometh from above, which is pure, peaceable, loving; yet first of all loyal to the Lord and his Word.

At a centre to which flow by mail the records of the trials and difficulties through which many of the Lord's people are called to pass, we are in position to know that their trials are now more numerous and more severe than for a long time at least. Appeals for prayer on their behalf and for counsel respecting the *way* of the Lord come by nearly every mail from tried ones who are anxious to "walk circumspectly." These are gladly answered, to the best of our ability,—pointing out the Scriptural lines that must guide all who would walk with the Lord.

We now wish to call attention to some general principles, applicable to every member of the body of Christ, at every time; and especially necessary to be remembered and practiced at the present time, because of the special activity of our adversary;—"because the days are evil." For it would appear that, as in the "harvest" of the Jewish age, so in the present "harvest" of the Gospel age, opposition prevails not only in the synagogues, from the Scribes and Pharisees, but in the home circle—between parents and children, and husbands and wives—and among the Lord's people. And in proportion as

the adversary seeks to stir up strife, let each of the consecrated be the more on guard to give no avoidable offense either in word or deed. "Walk circumspectly, . . . because the days are evil,"—days of special trial and testing.

HELPFUL RULES FOR DAILY LIFE

The rules we have to suggest are as follows:—

I. Let each resolve to mind his own business.

The Scriptural injunctions along this line caution us not to be busy-bodies in other people's affairs. Everyone of experience in life has learned that this is a good rule; yet few walk by this rule, circumspectly. If we have not sufficient of our own business and of the Lord's service to fill our hands and moments and mouths, there is something wrong with us that needs careful prayer and study of the divine Word to set right.

This does not mean that we should be indifferent to the welfare of others under our care, or for whom we are in any degree responsible; but, even in doing for these we should be careful to recognize their rights and the rights of others, and specially careful not to exceed our own rights. Let us never forget that *justice* must govern in our interferences with the affairs of others, though we may not require full justice in respect to our own interests, but exercise mercy.

II. We should exercise great patience with others and their faults—more than in dealing with ourselves and our own short-comings.

When we remember that the whole world is mentally as well as physically and morally unsound through the fall, it should make us very considerate for their failings. Since the Lord is graciously willing to cover our blemishes with the

merit of the precious blood, we cannot do less than be "very pitiful" and of tender compassion towards others;—even though their failings be greater or different from our own. This general rule is specially applicable to your own children. Their defects to some extent came from you or through you; hence, in dealing with their faults, you should do just as in correcting your own faults,—earnestly, rigorously, for their correction in righteousness, but sympathetically, mercifully, lovingly.

III. Do not be touchy and easily offended. Take a kindly, charitable view of the words and acts of others. A trifling slight or rebuff could well be passed unnoticed—covered with the mantle of generosity and love. A serious offense should be assumed to be *unintentional*, and inquiry should be kindly made in words that would not stir up anger, but in "speech seasoned with grace." In a majority of cases it will prove that no offense was meant.

This rule in the Scriptures comes under the instructions not to indulge in "evil surmisings,"—imagining evil intentions and motives behind the words and acts of others. "Evil surmisings" is ranked by the Apostle as contrary to the words of our Lord Jesus, opposed to godliness, and of the same spirit as envy and strife—of a corrupt mind, works of the flesh and the devil.—1 Tim. 6:3-5; Gal. 5:19-21.

LOVE THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT

The other side of this subject is brought out by the Apostle's injunction respecting the elements of the spirit of love, of which God's people are begotten and which they are to cultivate daily,—the development of which is one of the chief proofs of their being "overcomers." He says, "Love suffereth long and is kind, . . . is not easily offended, *thinketh no evil*, . . . beareth all things, believeth all things [favorably], hopeth all things, endureth all things."

It may be urged that such a disposition would be imposed upon frequently, by the evilly disposed. We reply that those who possess this spirit of love are not necessarily obtuse nor soft: their experiences in cultivating this degree of love have served to develop them and make them of "quick understanding in the fear of the Lord." They will be *cautious* where there is even the appearance of evil, even while avoiding the imputation of evil intentions until forced to concede them by indisputable evidence. Besides, it would be better far to take some trifling risks and suffer some slight losses, many times, than to accuse even one innocent person. And the Lord who has directed this course is abundantly able to compensate us for any losses experienced in following his counsel. He is both able and willing to make all such experiences work together for good to those who love him. He places *obedience* to his arrangements first (even before sacrifice) saying, "Ye are my disciples, *if ye do whatsoever I command you*."

Whoever neglects the Lord's commands along this line of "evil surmisings" weaves a web for his own ensnarement, however "circumspectly" he may walk as respects other matters; for a heart impregnated with doubt and suspicion toward fellow creatures is more than half prepared to doubt God; the spirit of sourness and bitterness implied is at war with the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of love. Either the one or the other will conquer. The wrong spirit must be gotten rid of, or it will defile the new creature and make of him a "castaway." On the contrary, if the new nature conquer, as an "overcomer," it will be along this line: if evil surmisings are overcome, half the battle against present difficulties and besetments is won. The surmisings are from the heart and lead us either to good words and acts, or to evil words and acts.

IV. If you have been slandered, you may explain, to set yourself right either publicly or privately; but surely avoid doing more than this. If you slander in return you make two wrongs out of one. Let no man render evil for evil to any one;—no, not even if what you should tell be the truth, while what your neighbor told was falsehood. And in contradicting and explaining false charges, remember not to go beyond this to make counter-charges against your defamer; for thus you also would become a slanderer.

THE GOLDEN RULE

This is the Scriptural rule. We are to do unto others as *we would* that they should do unto us, and not *as they do* unto us. The wrongs done toward us will never justify wrong doing on our part. God's true children are to have no sympathy with Satan's delusion—"Do evil that good may result." But while no Scripture forbids our explaining away the errors and false statements of slanderers, experience proves that, if we followed Satan and his deluded servants of unrighteousness around, to contradict every adverse criticism and evil report, we should be kept more than busy. And if Satan found us willing to do so, he would no doubt lead us

such a chase as would prevent our having any time to tell forth the good tidings of great joy; thus he would gain a victory, and we should lose one.

Rather let us commit our reputation to the Lord, as a part of the sacrifice we laid at his feet when we surrendered all in obedience to the "call" to run the race for the great prize of our high calling. If thus we suffer some loss of reputation, by reason of our resolution not to neglect the King's business to fight for our own tinsel, we may be sure that it will count with him as so much *endured* for Christ's sake; and so much the more will be our reward in heaven, when the battle is over and the victors are crowned.

Meantime, however, it behooves each of the Lord's people to be as circumspect as possible at every step of the way. Remember that in proportion to faithfulness and zeal in letting the light shine we will have the malignant opposition of our great Adversary, who seeks to turn and twist and maliciously distort and discolor our every word and act;—because the accuser of the brethren can find no real charges; and because he is exceeding mad against the humble servants of the truth, as he was against the Chief Servant—our Lord. He, let us remember, was crucified as a law-breaker, at the instance of the prominent ones of the church, and betrayed to them by one of his own disciples.

"Consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your minds" when attacked by the adversary,—whoever may be his agents and whatever their missiles. He cannot harm but will only increase our reputation in the Lord's sight, if we endure faithfully; and he can do no outward harm that God cannot overrule for the good of his cause—though that good may sometimes mean "siftings" of chaff and tares from the wheat.

V. Evil speaking, backbiting and slandering are strictly forbidden to God's people, as wholly contrary to his spirit of love—even if the evil thing be true. As a preventive of anything of the nature of slander, the Scriptures very carefully mark out *one only way of redress of grievances*, in Matt. 18:15-17.

Even advanced Christians seem to be utterly in ignorance of this divine ruling, and hence professed Christians are often the most pronounced scandal-mongers. Yet this is one of the few special specific commandments given by our Lord; and considered in connection with the statement, "Ye are my disciples *if ye do* whatever I command you, its constant violation proves that many are not far advanced in discipleship.

FOLLOW THE LORD'S WAY

Let us look carefully at this rule, which, if followed, would prevent gossip, "evil-speaking," "backbiting."

Its first provision, for a conference between the principals *alone*, implies candor on the part of the accuser who thinks that he has suffered; and whom here we will call A. It implies his thinking no evil of the accused, whom we will style B. They meet as "brethren," each thinking his own course the right one, to discuss the matter; to see whether they can come to the same view. If they agree, all is well; the matter is settled; peace prevails; the threatened break has been averted, and no one is the wiser.

If they cannot agree, A may not start a scandal by relating his version;—not even to confidential friends may he disclose the matter, saying, "Don't mention it; and especially don't say I told you." No; the matter is still "*between thee and him [A and B] alone*." If A considers the matter important, so as to wish to prosecute the subject further, he has but one way open to him, namely, to ask two or three others to go with him to B and hear the case from both sides and give their judgment respecting its right and wrong sides. These should be chosen (1) as persons in whose Christian character and good sense and spirit of a sound mind A himself would have confidence, peradventure they should favor B's view of the matter. (2) They should be chosen as with a view to B's appreciation of their advice, if they should give their judgment of the matter in A's favor.

It would, however, be wholly contrary to the spirit of justice as well as contrary to the spirit of the Master's instructions here, for A to "talk it over" with several friends from whom he desired to select these "two or three witnesses," to make sure that they favored his story (without hearing the other side) and would go to the conference *prejudiced*,—with their minds already determined against B. No; the matter is between A and B *alone*, until the two or three friends are brought in to hear both sides of the dispute in the presence of both parties.

TO ASSIST, NOT TO INJURE

If the judgment of the "brethren" is against B, he should hear them, should accept their view of the matter as the just,

reasonable one;—unless it involves some principle in which he cannot conscientiously acquiesce. If the "brethren" see the matter from B's standpoint, A should conclude that in all probability he had erred; and, unless conscience hindered, should accept the position and apologize to B and the brethren for the annoyance caused by his poor judgment. But none of the parties are at liberty to turn scandal-mongers and tell the matter, "confidentially," to others.

If the decision went against A, and he still felt that he was injured and had failed to get justice through a poor choice of advisers, he might (without violence to the principles laid down by our Lord) call other advisers and proceed as before. If their decision were against him, or if he felt that he could not trust to the judgment of any, fearing that all would favor B, he should realize that part at least of his trouble is self-conceit, and would do well to fast and pray and study lines and principles of justice more carefully. But A has gained no right to tell anything to the church nor to anyone, either publicly or privately. If he does so, it marks him at once as disobedient to the Lord and exercised by a bad spirit, a carnal spirit,—contrary to the spirit of the truth, the spirit of love.

If the committee decide partly against B, and only partly in favor of A, the brethren (A and B) should endeavor to see the matter thus, and to arrange matters amicably. In this case there would be nothing respecting the matter to tell;—nothing that is anybody's business.

If the committee decide wholly against B and wholly in favor of A, and if B will not heed them and make reparation for the wrong or cease from injuring A, the latter is still not at liberty to become a scandal-monger; nor are the brethren of the committee. If A considers the matter of sufficient importance to justify further action, there is just one course open to him: he with the committee may lay the matter before the church. Then the church shall hear the matter, both sides, and *whichever* (A or B) shall refuse to recognize the advice of the church shall be thereafter considered and treated by all as an outsider—as not of the church, not to be fellowshiped; as dead, until such time as he may repent and reform.

The duties of one member cannot be undertaken by another,—each must act for himself according to the Lord's rule. But if in violation of the Lord's command a matter become a scandal and be troubling the church and disgracing it as a whole, then the properly chosen representatives of the company should take the matter up. They should not only investigate the principals in the difficulty, but with equal diligence they should investigate the real troublemakers who had *circulated the scandal* and should reprove them.

But all reproofs should be in love, remembering that all are imperfect in some particulars. The object in every case should be to *correct* not to *punish*. The Lord alone has the authority to punish. At very most the church may for a time withdraw fellowship with the unrepentant, and must as publicly restore it when repentance is manifest. Our love, joy, peace are the ends sought by the Lord, and these we must follow as his disciples. Any other course will surely work injury.

Thus did the Lord guard his true disciples from the insidious sin of slander, which leads onward to other and grosser works of the flesh and the devil, and stops growth in the truth and its spirit of love. And let us note, too, that those who *hear* slanders and thus encourage slanderers in their wrong course, are *partakers of their evil deeds*; guilty partners in the violation of the Master's commands. God's true people should refuse to listen to slanders and should point the offender to the Lord's Word and the *only* method therein authorized. "Are we wiser than God?" Experience teaches us that we cannot trust to our own judgments and are on safe ground only when following the voice of the Shepherd implicitly.

RATHER REPROVE THEM IN LOVE

If any brother or sister begins to you an evil report of others stop him at once, kindly, but firmly. "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness but rather *reprove* them." Refuse to have any share in this violation of our Master's commands, which does great mischief in the church. Supposing the brother or sister to be only a "babe" in spiritual matters, call attention to the Lord's ruling on the subject, Matt. 18:15, and 1 Tim. 5:19. If the conversation is not directed to you but merely in your hearing, promptly show your disapproval by withdrawing.

If, after having his attention called to the Lord's command on this subject, the slanderer still persists in "evil-speaking," "back-biting" and telling you his "evil surmisings," reprove him more sharply, saying as you go,—I cannot, must not hear

you; for if I did, I would be as criminal in the matter as you are—violating the Lord's command. And even if I were to hear your story, I could not believe it; for the Christian who does not respect the Lord's Word and follow his plan of redress for grievances, shows so little of the Lord's spirit that his word can not be trusted. He who twists and dodges the Lord's words would not hesitate to twist and misrepresent the words and deeds of fellow-disciples. If to any extent you listen to such conversation or express "*sympathy*" with it or with the gossip or slanderer, you are a partner in the sin and in all its consequences; and if a "root of bitterness" is thus developed, you are more than likely to be one of those "defiled" by it.—Heb. 12:15.

SLANDERERS ARE THIEVES

A slanderer is a *thief* according to worldly standard: as Shakespeare wrote:

Who steals my purse steals trash;
But he who filches from me my good name
Robs me of that which not enriches him,
And makes me poor indeed.

According to the Christian standard, still higher, as voiced by the Great Teacher, slanderers are *murderers*. (See Matt. 5:22; 1 John 3:15, Revised Version) Thus seen, the very suggestion to slander is to be shunned, as of the spirit of Satan.—Jno. 8:44.

VI. God's people should beware of pride as they would avoid the most deadly plague.

This rule, always good, and well backed by Scripture, seems doubly needful to those who are blessed with the light of present truth. This may seem strange: it may be reasoned that the receiving of so much grander views of God's character and plan would make his people feel the more insignificant and humble, the more dependent on divine goodness, the more trustful of God and the less trustful of themselves. And this should be the effect, always and ever: but alas, with very many it is not so.

Many get to feel that the knowledge of the plan of the ages proves them specially wise or great or good: they seem to forget that God hides the truth from the wise and great—that no flesh should glory in his sight. They love the truth selfishly, as dealers love their merchandise, for the sake of what they can get for it. If they cannot hope for wealth in exchange for the truth they can hope for small notoriety—to appear wiser than others, that they may dole it out in fragments and thus perpetuate their notoriety for wisdom, and gratify their pride or vanity. Such people do little to help circulate the present truth. If they cannot avoid it, they may mention *MILLENNIAL DAWN* or *ZION'S WATCH TOWER* or *Tabernacle Shadows* or *Food for Thinking Christians* or *About Hell* or *About Spiritism*; but when they do so it is usually with some disparaging remark; as for instance, that they "disagree in a good many things;" or that "they pin their faith to no man's coat sleeve, but go to the Word of God direct."

GRACE FOR THE HUMBLE

Beware of all such people; sooner or later, unless they reform, they will fly the track entirely, and injure more than they ever helped. God does not wish such people to serve his cause, and will surely permit their vanity to stumble them,—however much their natural ability—and it is generally people of real or fancied ability who are thus afflicted with the spirit of pride and vanity. God opposeth the proud, but showeth his favor to the humble. We call every reader of our publications to *witness* that the author has never boasted of his *wisdom* or *originality*, either publicly or privately. We have boasted in the *truth*, and shall continue to boast of it—that no human philosophies can hold a candle to its brilliant electric ray; but we have never boasted of being its originator. On the contrary, it is because we did not manufacture it, but because God has revealed it "in due time" as "meat in due season," and because it is so much more wonderful than we or any other human being could originate or concoct, that we have confidence that none other than God is its Author and its Revealer.

If by the grace of God we have in any degree been used by him in serving present harvest truths to others, we rejoice in the *service*, and will continue to strive to be faithful to our stewardship: but as for vanity on this account, we see no room or reason for it. We are well aware that our Master could readily have found many others as fit and worthy of the service, and many more capable naturally: we can only suppose, therefore, that herein as previously—"God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of this world to confound the things that are mighty, . . . and the things that are despised . . . to bring to naught things that are; that no flesh should glory in his presence."—1 Cor. 1:27-29.

We therefore caution all who by the grace of God have been translated out of darkness into God's marvelous light, that they walk proportionately the more humbly before the Lord: because, if the light received should become darkness, how great would be the darkness, and how hopeless the condition! It would, as the Apostle declares, be better for such never to have known the way of life. If salt lose its flavor it is good for nothing more than sand.

"BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART"

VII. Be pure: maintain a conscience void of offense toward God and men. Begin with the heart—the thoughts: harbor no thoughts that in any sense of the word would be evil. To make sure of this, have Christ Jesus as your pattern, well and much before your mind. When evil is obtruded upon you, either from without or from within, lift your heart to him in prayer for the grace promised to help in every time of need. Keep constantly near you the thought and prayer, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer."

VIII. While treasuring and seeking to follow the various specific commands of Scripture, let us seek more and more to understand and come into sympathy with the *principles which underlie* the divine law: this will enable us to judge of the right and the wrong of such of our words, thoughts and acts as may not be particularly specified in the Lord's Word. Indeed, as we get to understand and sympathize with the principles of divine law, to that extent we are getting at the spirit of the divine Word.—See Psa. 119:97-105.

IX. Shun a contentious and fault-finding disposition as contrary to the spirit or disposition of Christ—contrary to love.

A certain amount of combative courage is demanded in overcoming the world, the flesh and the devil and their various snares, and this fighting disposition may become a valuable aid to ourselves and the Master's cause if rightly and wisely directed;—against sin, first in ourselves and secondly in others; if used for the Lord and his people, and against Satan and all his powers of darkness and superstition. This in the Scriptures is called fighting the good fight: and we all should be gallant soldiers in this battle for right and truth, lovingly defending our Captain's honor and his people's liberties.

FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT

But such a good use of combativeness is not pleasing to the prince of this world, and he will seek to pervert what he

cannot directly use. Consequently he attempts with some to make combativeness appear a chief virtue: he encourages them to fight everything and everybody;—the brethren more than the powers of darkness;—nominal churchmen more than the errors and ignorance which blind them and make them such. Indeed his desire is to get us to "fight against God."

Let us be on guard on this point. Let us first of all *judge ourselves* lest we cast a stumbling block before others: let us fight down in our own hearts the wrong spirit which seeks to make mountains out of trifles and disposes us to be capacious and contentious over littles and nonessentials. "Greater is he that ruleth his own spirit than he that taketh a city." Let us guard ourselves that our defense of the truth be not from motives of self glorification; but from love for the truth, love for the Lord and love for his people, the brethren. If love be the impelling spirit or motive, it will show itself accordingly, in loving, gentle, patient, humble efforts toward the fellow-servants; and let us be "gentle toward all." Let "the sword of the spirit, the Word of God," which is quick and powerful, do all the *cutting*.

X. Beware of all thoughts, feelings and conditions directly or remotely connected with malice, envy, strife, hatred. Give these no place in your heart even for a moment; for they will surely do *you* great injury, aside from leading to the injury of others. Keep your heart, your will, your intentions and desires full of love toward God and all his creatures,—the most fervent toward God, and proportionately toward all who have his spirit and walk in his directed way.

XI. Do not trust your conscience. If it were a sufficient guide you would have no need of the Scriptures. The majority of people have as good as no conscience; for they are blind to the principles and laws of God given to guide conscience. And still worse off than these are those mentioned in 1 Tim. 4:2. Hence the imperative necessity for carefully heeding the Lord's Word, and walking *circumspectly* according to its light.

XII. Do not be bold, except for the right, the truth. So far as yourself is concerned preserve a reverential *fear*—of sin, and of displeasing the Master, and of losing the great reward—"the prize of our high calling." Nearly all who "fall away" first lose all fear and become *self-confident*. They forget that it is only "If ye *do these things* ye shall never fall." (2 Pet. 1:5-10) "Let us fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of us should seem to come short of it." (Heb. 4:1) Partly because of the loss of this proper *fear*, "It is impossible to renew them again unto repentance."

GOD'S WAYS HIGHER THAN MAN'S WAYS

ISAIAH 55:1-13.—JULY 23.

GOLDEN TEXT:—"Seek ye the Lord while he may be found."

Today's lesson is often seriously misapplied. It is supposed to be a picture of the blessings of the Lord upon the Israelites returning from the Babylonian captivity. But whoever will examine the whole matter in the context will clearly discern that if it were a prophecy of that event it signally failed of fulfillment. So far from Israel's return from Babylon being accompanied by the running of nations to them and the Lord's glorification in them, the very reverse was true—they had a very struggling existence for years under very adverse conditions, and never secured their national independence, let alone authority over other nations. Verses 12, 13, representing the hills and trees and the pouring forth of blessings do not fit the return of Israel nor their experiences at that time.—See the accounts given in Nehemiah and Ezra.

The proper application of this prophecy is in line with the interpretation already given in chapters 52 and 53. Chapter 52 describes our time, the awakening of Zion and the putting on of the beautiful garments in the resurrection morning. It describes the harvest time, when the watchmen lift up the voice together and the feet of the church are seen to be beautiful upon the mountains, bringing the message, "Thy king reigneth," and the further message that the Lord's people should depart out of Babylon. (Vs. 11, 12. Compare Revelation 18:2-5) Then follows a description of how highly exalted Messiah will be during his Millennial reign. Chapter 53 calls attention to the fact that the report, the teachings of the Lord through various mouthpieces, has not been regarded, has not been "heard," not been "believed," and the arm of Jehovah has not been appreciated during this Gospel age, and an account of why this was—because of the ignominy and suffering under which it pleased the Father to develop the new creation, Head and body. Chapter 54 continues the thought saying, "Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear," etc. This the Apostle applies to the Gospel church, or rather to the

original Abrahamic Covenant. (Gal. 4:27) The prosperity of this original covenant as superior to the Law Covenant which temporarily succeeded it is shown, and the result is pictured, namely, that ultimately the fruitage of this Covenant shall be great. The church is pictured as the glorious New Jerusalem built of precious stones, and the declaration is made that "no weapon formed against it shall prosper."

"WHOSOEVER WILL MAY COME"

Then Chapter 55 describes the condition that shall obtain after the Gospel church shall have been selected from the world and glorified. Hence the lesson before us pictures the Millennial age and its blessing upon the world of mankind through the glorified church. "Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price." This verse is in close agreement with the picture of the Millennial blessings given us in Revelation 22:1, 17.

We have already pointed out that according to the Scriptures there is no river of life flowing at the present time—nor will there be until the church is glorified, the kingdom established, and that then the river of life will flow from the throne, from the Millennial kingdom power and authority established in the earth, and then it will be the glorified bride with the Spirit that will give the invitation to the world of mankind in general. We have already pointed out the Lord's words to the effect that now whoever has the water of life receives it not from a fountain or river or pool but from the Lord. "a well of water springing up in you." Since there is no water to which to invite any at the present time, the invitation of this lesson must belong to the time when there will be such a flow of living waters.

There is a certain sense in which now any who thirst may come to Christ and find him a fountain of life, and all of the

Lord's people are thus refreshed in the present time by partaking of Christ and thus having formed in them the well of water that will spring up into everlasting life. The statement of our lesson, however, seems to be a more general one, an invitation to every one such as the Millennial invitation will be, for the invitation of the present time has limitations.

The water of life which our dear Redeemer offers us now is not without price, for he himself stipulates that none can be his disciple except he take up his cross and follow him—he who loves father or mother or lands, etc., more than me cannot be my disciple. The cost of the water of life in this present time is self-denial, self-sacrifice, a walk in the narrow way and baptism into Christ's death. Who shall say, then, that the present offer is without price, without conditions, without cost? The Master said that those desirous of being his disciples should sit down first and count the cost. The meaning of all this is that the Lord is selecting during this Gospel age a peculiar people, a special class, those who would be copies of the Son of God and count it all joy to lay down their little all in the divine service because of their appreciation of the wonderful words of life, the exceeding great and precious promises coming to us through our relationship with Jesus.

"A WELL OF WATER IN YOU"

On the contrary, with the end of this Gospel age there will be no more suffering for righteousness' sake, the narrow way will no longer be. It will give place to the highway of holiness upon which all the redeemed of the Lord, during the Millennial age, may go up to life, restitution, perfection. We are glad for the world and for the favorable opportunity which will then come to all mankind through the merit of the precious blood. We are glad that the way shall then be so clear that a wayfaring man may not err therein; we are glad that then the knowledge of the Lord will fill the whole earth as the waters cover the great deep. But, on the other hand, we are glad also for the narrow way and for the high calling which is ours, preferring it with all its difficulties because of the exceeding great and precious promises connected therewith—promises of association with our dear Redeemer in his kingdom and its glorious work for the world of mankind—promises of glory, honor and immortality, if so be that we suffer with him that we may also be glorified together.

HIS MERCY ENDURETH FOREVER

Many seem confused to think that the opportunities of the future will be so much greater than those of the present time. The reason for this distinction can only be seen by those who recognize the Scriptural teaching that the bride of Christ now being selected is a very peculiar class in the Lord's estimation, and that it is a special favor toward them that they are now counted worthy to suffer for Christ's sake, to be sharers in his death and sharers also "in his resurrection"—the first resurrection. Once the difference is seen between the reward of the church and that of the world it will be easy to account for the difference between the fiery trials which shall try *you* and the more favorable environments of the world in the next age. The world will indeed be called to come to the waters of the river of life and to partake thereof freely, without money and without price, without our walking in the narrow way or taking up a cross of self-denial and suffering for righteousness' sake. All that will be required of the world at that time will be that they shall be thirsty, shall be desirous of the life offered, that they shall be hungry for the bread of life. All such may indeed delight themselves in the fatness, the fulness, the glorious provision which the Lord has made for them and which will then be opened before them.

In the third verse we have the representation of the Master's gracious invitation as it will soon reach the world of mankind through the glorified church, "Incline your ear unto me: Hear and your soul shall live." This testimony is in full harmony with Peter's statement of the conditions of the Millennial age. (Acts 3:22, 23) "A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me [Moses]; him ye shall hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it will come to pass that every soul that will not hear [obey] that Prophet, shall be destroyed from amongst the people." "Hear [obey] and your soul shall live," shall be the watch-word of the Millennial kingdom.

The New Covenant, the Everlasting Covenant, the sure mercies of David [the beloved], is to be proffered to all. That New Covenant, as the Apostle points out, is the divine agreement to be merciful—to forgive, to cancel sins that are past—"I will put my law in their minds and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God and they shall be to me a people. . . . I will be merciful to their unrighteousness and their sins and iniquities I will remember no more." (Heb. 8:8-13; Jer. 31:29-34) "The sure mercies of David" are the

mercies guaranteed to Israel and the world through his greater Son, our Lord. The real David (the real Beloved) shall be the divine channel for the outpouring of the blessings and mercies of the Abrahamic Covenant.

DAVID, "BELOVED OF THE LORD"

Of this antitypical David it is written, "Behold I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people." This is the great Prophet, the great Priest, the great King, typified by Moses and Melchizedek and the kings of the line of David. Behold he shall call a nation not previously known—the new nation called during this Gospel age, a holy nation, a peculiar people, a royal priesthood, to show forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light. (1. Pet. 2:9) And ultimately as a result of this calling of spiritual Israel as a holy nation and as a result of the establishment of the kingdom and the glorification of this holy nation with himself at its head, because the Lord, the holy One of Israel, will glorify these, therefore many nations that previously knew him not shall run unto him because of his being glorified.

Throughout the Millennial age there will be a grand opportunity for every member of Adam's race to seek the Lord while he may be found, to call upon him while he is near. The opportunity will last for a thousand years and all will be invited to drink of the water of life freely. All appreciating the situation fully may attain to all that was lost in Adam—attain it through the processes of restitution.

Verse seven shows how the Lord may then be sought and found, namely, the wicked must forsake his ways of unrighteousness, the unjust must abandon unrighteousness even in thought. Under such conditions during that thousand years all may return unto Jehovah and find mercy and abundant pardon through the great antitypical David. But it will require all of that thousand years of Christ's reign to restore and make fit for presentation to Jehovah those who will hear the voice and apply for the water of life, forsake unrighteousness and seek the Lord. How glorious the prospect!

Verses 12, 13 set forth the blessings and peace and favor of God which will then be upon the whole world of mankind. It will no longer be true that whosoever will live godly shall suffer persecution, for then whosoever will live godly shall go out with joy and be led forth in peace by the great Shepherd of the flock, who, after telling us that we, his flock of this present age, are like sheep amongst wolves, assures us that "other sheep I have which are not of this fold." (John 10:16) It is these other sheep of the Millennial age which are referred to and whose leading out and in peace and joy is assured. There will be no wolves there, no "lions or any ravenous beast," is the assurance.

In grandly poetic language mountains and hills and trees and fields are represented as all rejoicing in that glorious day when Satan shall be bound, when the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth, when the darkness of sin shall have fled away before the glorious beams of the Sun of righteousness. Instead of the thorns of the present time, the wicked who lurking seek to injure the unwary foot, there shall then be the fir tree, an evergreen—symbolical of a man possessed of life everlasting. Instead of the briar with its thorns reaching forth to attack and ensnare those attracted by its sweet odor, shall come up the myrtle tree, beautiful and harmless. Thus does the Lord contrast the condition of the world today, full of men and women who are really thorns and briars in word and deed, injuring others, and the peaceable, strong, stalwart ones full of life and vigor in the next age.

THE LORD SHALL BE GLORIFIED

The conclusion of the chapter is that by that time, when the Lord's work of salvation for our race shall have been fully accomplished, the results will be to the name or honor of Jehovah, and this sign of his greatness and goodness will be perpetual—it will never be cut off. Evil doers, we are assured, shall be cut off—it would not be to the glory of the Lord that they should be permitted to continue. It will be to the Lord's glory that he should save from amongst mankind all who have a love for righteousness, all who under favorable conditions would prefer harmony with God and with righteousness, with truth and with goodness and purity.

Verses 8-11 point out that such wonderful blessings as these will be beyond the thinking of mankind—they will be unready to believe that God's plan as it shall ultimately be developed will be so grand, so broad, so high, so deep. The Lord, therefore, explains in conjunction with these promises. "My thoughts are not your thoughts; neither are my ways your ways, saith the Lord." Many have thought it strange that earthly parents and generous and benevolent members of the human family should conceive grand and noble beneficences for each other, and especially for the more degraded of man-

kind, and have wondered how it could be that men's ways would be so much higher and grander than God's ways. The difficulty has been that they have not known the mind of the Lord; they have supposed that God had predestinated a little handful to eventually attain glory—saints favored by his grace and possessing much advantage every way over the majority of mankind. They have supposed, and in all the creeds of Christendom still teach, that all the remainder of mankind are according to the divine purpose to be eternally tormented. They have thus imagined that a good man's ways and a good man's plans are much higher than the ways and plans of the Almighty. Alas! How the Lord's holy name and character have been traduced and blasphemed by those who really sought to serve him and honor him. Alas, how shortsighted we have all been!

Not until the Millennial kingdom and its work are seen—not until the eyes of our understanding discern something of the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of God's wonderful provision for every member of the human family—not until then can we realize the meaning of this assurance before us. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my plans than your plans."

SHOWERS OF REFRESHING

The Lord gives us a word picture respecting his dealings with us as a race—respecting his word of promise which has been with us for 3,500 years, assuring us of the ultimate

blessing of all the families of the earth but whose fulfilment is not yet apparent except to the eye of faith. The illustration offered is that as the rain cometh down from heaven and returneth not thither until it have watered the earth, causing it to bring forth and bud and to give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall it be with the Word of the Lord which has gone out of his mouth: it shall not return unto him void, empty, without fruit, but it shall accomplish that which he pleased and shall prosper in the thing whereunto he sent it.

Isaiah evidently realized, as did Solomon (Eccl. 1:7), that the rain coming down from the clouds returned thither again, and it therefore furnishes us a faithful picture of the Lord's Word, promise, which, as his messenger, comes into the world charged with a certain duty, obligation and purpose, which will ultimately return to the Lord to make report. The report, the result of the promise, shall not be other than that which the heavenly Father in his greatness and mercy and love designed; the report of the results of the divine plan shall not be such as would be a discredit to the Creator, a shame or blot upon his work, his character, his plan. The results shall be worthy of the one who conceived the plan: they shall show not only to restored humanity in the Millennial age, especially at its close, but they shall show also to all the holy angels, the wisdom, justice, love and power of God, and how grand and noble and loving are his thoughts and plans toward his creatures.

A DISHONOR TO HIS FATHER

2 CHRONICLES 33:1-13.—JULY 30.

GOLDEN TEXT:—"Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people."—Prov. 14:34.

A previous lesson showed Hezekiah to have been in many respects a model king—obedient to God and faithful. This lesson evidences the fact that good men and loyal to the Lord may be poor fathers, careless of their responsibilities to their children. Alas, that it is so to this day, and that even amongst the children of God, begotten of the holy Spirit, there are some who still fail to acquire the spirit of a sound mind in this particular.

The Scriptural declaration is, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." (Prov. 22:6) The thought seems to be that if the plastic mind of a child be properly cared for, properly impressed with the principles of righteousness, that impress cannot be wholly effaced even though the child might temporarily try forbidden paths of sin. Would that this important matter could be clearly discerned by all of the Lord's people, and that all could realize that in bringing children into the world a serious responsibility is undertaken, a responsibility which cannot be shirked, a responsibility which no right-minded person would desire to shirk.

If this thought could be impressed upon all readers of ZION'S WATCH TOWER it surely would profit them and their children greatly. Indeed we are glad to know in various ways that the truth is having great influence in the lives of WATCH TOWER readers and also upon their families. This is the practical outworking of the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of a sound mind, the spirit of love and truth and righteousness. May it abound more and more, telling not only in the present life in the welfare of the children, but witnessing also to friends and neighbors a good testimony to the wisdom that cometh from above, first pure, then peaceable, easy of entreatment, full of mercy and good fruits.

HEZEKIAH'S WICKED SON

The story of Manasseh's reign is briefly told and is abominable. A boy of twelve years of age, properly reared, should have possessed considerable reason and sound sense and should have been considerably established in the ways of righteousness, in appreciation of the Lord and of the responsible position he occupied as his representative in Judah. It is a mistake that many parents make when they suppose that reasonable and sensible thoughts cannot be entertained by their children until they are twenty to thirty years of age. On the contrary, the most lasting impressions of life are frequently received before ten years of age, and the lessons should begin when the child is a month old—lessons of loving obedience to law and order, to the parental authority as representing the still higher power of the Creator. The child that does not learn to respect his parents and the proper laws and regulations of his home will be disadvantaged as respects his appreciations of his responsibilities to the Lord and his covenant laws, etc.

It is all a mistake to suppose that childhood years must

be spent in sowing wild oats or even in frivolity and play. From early infancy the thought should be instilled that life is a great privilege, a great blessing, and that every day and every hour should be used wisely and should bring some returns—to the glory of God or to our own advantage or to the advantage of others. From earliest infancy each should be taught that it is a shame and a sin to kill time, to waste time, to allow hours and days to slip by without improvement, without use in some worthy manner. The child who learns to waste time or to fritter it away in a useless and unprofitable manner is being permanently injured, and if ever he becomes useful in the world must do so by counteracting, by fighting against the wrong lessons learned in childhood.

Parents owe it to their children to lay for them the proper foundation, to see that their minds are not filled with vanities, foolishness, nonsense, and that their hours and days are not wasted, but that the child shall be sympathetically made to understand that every moment is precious as a fitting and preparation for the great work of life upon which it is about to enter. Every parent owes it to his child also to impress upon the plastic mind noble thoughts, noble ambitions and not merely selfish ones. The child should be taught in a kindly manner by word and by example that any waste is reprehensible, and that hoarding in a miserly manner is likewise censurable; that those people who have merely as the chief end of life the accumulation of money are monomaniacs on the subject, and that the only reasonable and proper course is to use all the blessings and privileges, advantages and opportunities coming to us in God's providence for our own mental, moral and physical uplift and for rendering assistances to all within our reach, in harmony with the Golden Rule and with the law of love, first for God and secondly for our neighbor.

The evils which Manasseh fostered and developed are set forth in the words of our lesson as succinctly as it would seem possible to state them and need no particular comment from us. One sentence covers the matter. "So Manasseh made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err so that they did evil more than did the nations whom the Lord destroyed before the children of Israel." (R. V.) Thus in few words we are given the picture of the depth of degradation attained in a very short period—the heirs of the promises sinned more grievously than the Amalekites, the Perizzites, the Hittites and all those nations whom the Lord drove out of Canaan to make room for them, and whose iniquities, we are told, had come to the full. One lesson we might draw from this plunge into unrighteousness is that sin is constitutional derangement, that through the fall the whole human family is prone to sin as the sparks fly upward, that it requires continual effort under the guidance of the Lord to maintain even a reasonable standing and not to go backward into sin. With such a plunge into sin in such a short time, we can readily see how some of the heathen, not helped by the Lord as Israel

was, reached still lower depths of degradation, as is evidenced in the various heathen nations of today.

A parallel lesson might be drawn for the benefit of spiritual Israel. The new creatures in Christ should realize that there is a continual warfare between the flesh and the spirit, and if the new nature yield the old nature triumphing will run a short course into sin, as the Apostle describes, saying of some that they were turned like a dog to his vomit and like a sow to her wallowing in the mire. The lesson in this connection would be that as new creatures we must be continually on guard. We note the words of the Apostle as valuable instruction along this line, "I keep my body under, lest having preached to others I myself should be a castaway."

CHASTISEMENT AND FORGIVENESS

The Israelites under God's covenant were subject to disciplines for their deflection from the divine law, and these chastisements repeated frequently not only teach us of the perversity of the stiff-necked nation but also teach us of God's faithfulness, and illustrate to us how the judgments of the Lord bring forth a good fruitage. The judgment of the Lord as punishment for sin which came upon Manasseh eventuated in a blessing for the evildoer. When in prison in Babylon in sore distress he besought Jehovah his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers and prayed unto him.

In this we have an illustration of the principle that will go into effect in the Millennial age, only that the retributions of that time will be more prompt than they were in the days of Israel. When Christ shall be King over all the earth and shall lay righteousness to the line and justice to the plummet and sweep away every refuge of lies, his rewards for every good endeavor and intention and punishments for every evil intention and effort will be the establishment of judgment in the world. And the record is that "when the judgments of the Lord are abroad in the earth the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness."

Mercy is one of the grandest and most impressive features of the divine character, as the Apostle has declared, "There is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared." (Psa. 130:4) If God were not forgiving and merciful we might indeed be in terror before him; but we could not love him, neither would we have the same incentives to righteousness, because if he were not willing to forgive where would be the advantage or wisdom of repentance. Manasseh's petition to the Lord and his sincere repentance secured his release from Babylon and his return to the throne of Judah. On his return

to power he apparently did everything he could do to efface the results of his previous wrong course. He endeavored to root out idolatry, cleansed the Temple of abominations, restored the divinely appointed services and issued positive commands that the people should follow his example in the worship and service of the Lord. But a good tree may be more easily and quickly cut down than a new one can be grown, and so it was that the evil effects of Manasseh's reign were never thoroughly effaced before his death, and the son born during the period of his wrong course and tainted with the adverse conditions was an enemy of righteousness, who, after two years' reign, was assassinated by officers of his own household.

One of the important lessons for us to draw from this narrative is respecting the mercy of God to the truly repentant here illustrated. Many who are now spiritual Israelites were once wicked, vicious, idolators of money or of houses or of lands or of other things and alienated from God. His gracious character and readiness to forgive needs to be continually emphasized as we present the message of salvation to the members of our fallen race. Yea, sometimes this element of God's character needs to be emphasized to those who have already become his people, but who through weaknesses of the flesh have erred or strayed into forbidden paths—"There is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared."

No right-minded person will conclude that because God is very merciful and of tender compassion, therefore he may be sinned against repeatedly and forgiveness be relied upon. Rather let us get the thought that even though we should be forgiven and even though God should be merciful to us to the very last extreme, nevertheless every transgression and disobedience shall receive a just recompense of reward in some way or other. He who sins suffers, even though he subsequently repent and be forgiven. The dregs and degradation effected by the transgressions of divine law persist. And this principle applies to us who now have divine forgiveness in this present time, so that many of the Lord's jewels are today suffering mentally and physically for sins that are past and covered by God's mercy. And the same will be true in the next age in God's dealing with the world through the glorified Christ. Sins that are past will be forgiven them as they are forgiven us, but the degradations coming to the world through sin will survive the forgiveness of sins as they do with us and they will have proportionately the more to get rid of, the more to be restored from; they will be obliged to climb from the greater depth to the glorious heights of life and perfection in the image and likeness of God.

SOME INTERESTING QUESTIONS ANSWERED

IS A PLACE IN THE "LITTLE FLOCK" TOO GREAT AN ASPIRATION?

Question.—Who will be found worthy to be of the "little flock"? Is not this aspiring too high? Should we not, rather, hope to be of the great company, who will go through the fire of tribulation?

Answer.—Were it not that God has graciously, in the *New Covenant, made provision for the covering of our unintentional blemishes and weaknesses, under the garment of Christ's righteousness, none of us could hope to be worthy of such a high calling as has been extended to us—a call to the divine nature and to joint-heirship with our Lord and Redeemer. As the Apostle expresses it, "Our sufficiency is of Christ."

This does not mean, however, that we have nothing to do with making our calling and election sure. On the contrary, God having made provision for our justification from the sins that are past, thus fitted us to receive this high calling and prepared us to respond to it in a manner acceptable to himself. But our response must be hearty, as unto the Lord—a full consecration of ourselves even unto death in his service. We cannot claim that our Lord's death secures for us the prize of the high calling. His death secures for us the right to run the race; but the running of the race is our own affair, and only those who run that race will win that prize. Our Lord's sacrifice, in addition to opening for us the race-course, helps us over the infirmities of the flesh, because under the terms of the New Covenant God accepts our will, our heart-intentions, in respect to this race, and not the achievements of our flesh merely. God's grace in Christ making up for our natural imperfections, we are accredited as running the race with all the zeal and fervor of our minds, our wills, our endeavors. God thus judges us according to the spirit of our minds, and not according to the attempts of the flesh.

It is thus, with Christ's righteousness supplementing our fully consecrated wills and best efforts, that the Lord reckons

us "worthy" of joint-heirship with his son, our Lord. And if God counts such "worthy," why should not we count such worthy, including ourselves, if with our hearts we are serving the Lord to the best of our several abilities?

No; it will be easier to get into the little flock than into the great company, so far as experiences are concerned. The difference between the two classes will consist not so much in the experiences as in the willingness to endure those experiences. As justified and consecrated children who endure whatever divine providence may permit, *joyfully*, and who go about the Father's business, doing with their might what their hands find to do, counting it a joy to suffer persecution in his service, these will constitute the "little flock," the "overcomers," the "worthy." Those who hold back from such suffering, and who endure persecution unwillingly, and merely rather than deny the Lord, are the ones whom we may expect to find will pass through the great time of trouble, and be of the great company, who will wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb.

WERE ALL THE MARTYRS OF THE SAINT CLASS?

Question.—Will not first of all the martyrs of the past be of the little flock, and are not they more than 144,000?

Answer.—We have no reason to question that there were faithful saints amongst the martyrs of the past. We may therefore expect such to be classed by our Lord as amongst the overcomers, the 144,000 mentioned in Revelation, the little flock, the elect church. But we are of the opinion that there were fewer of the saints in olden times amongst the "martyrs" than the majority of people are inclined to think. Our reason for this opinion is: The vast majority of those martyrdoms, so far as we are able to read between the lines of history, were in large part at least the results of political and social animosity—comparatively few of them for what might strictly be termed saintship—full consecration and faithfulness to the Lord. So far as the records show many were executed very unwillingly; few willingly, joyfully, laid down their lives as living sacrifices to the Lord and his cause.

* See June 15, 1919, issue for critical examination of Covenants.

Some, from the records, would appear to have gone to martyrdom spurred on by more or less of bravado, others by family or personal pride. Nor need it surprise us if we should ultimately find that a considerable number who were martyrs in the "dark ages" will be of the great company class who laid down their lives unwillingly, unjoyfully—impelled by their unwillingness to deny the Lord.

WHO ARE THEY WHO ARE "DEFILED" BY BABYLON?

Question.—You have already suggested that the expression, "These are they which were not defiled by women" (Rev. 14:4) symbolically refers to earthly church organizations, represented as women—Babylon, mother and daughters. Now, I want to enquire, Have not all or nearly all of us who now enjoy the light of present truth been at one time or another in Babylon, connected with some of these church systems or "women?" If so, have we not all been thus defiled? If not, what is signified by the defilement?

Answer.—To our understanding, the point where defilement begins is after the light of truth has reached the Lord's people, and opened the eyes of their understanding to see the difference between the church whose names are written in heaven and the human organizations whose memberships are written on earth. After we have come to see something at least of the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the divine character and plan, and to appreciate something at least of how the Lord and his plan have been misrepresented by these women (systems) and his character traduced, and after we have heard thus the voice of conscience and of the Lord's Word, saying to us, "Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins and that ye receive not of her plagues;"—then it is that our defilement of conscience begins, if we refuse to obey the light that God has granted us, and the voice of his truth. Whoever, for social or financial or other mercenary reasons, holds to that which he sees is built upon a wrong principle, and upholding wrong theories, in defamation of the divine character, is defiling his conscience, will be unworthy to be counted an overcomer, and will fail to have a part in the first resurrection.

That this is so—that God does not reckon us defiled by our contact with Babylon up to the point of our enlightenment and our intelligent acquiescence in Babylon's wrong condition and course—is evidenced by the Scripture which says, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen [rejected]. Come out of her, my people [this shows that the Lord's people have mainly been in Babylon], that ye be not partakers of her sins [they are not reckoned to this point as being 'defiled'], and that ye receive not of her plagues [all who thus defile themselves with Babylon after seeing her true character prove themselves unworthy of being classed amongst the overcomers, and at very most could only hope to be of those who would come up through great tribulation, and wash their robes (of defilements) and make them white in the blood of the Lamb]."

PRAYERS FOR EARTHLY RULERS

Question.—How should we understand the Apostle's expression (1 Tim. 2:1-4), respecting the propriety of making prayer and supplication on behalf of "kings and all in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty?"

Answer.—We are to feel a keen interest in the whole world, its great and its poor. We are interested in them because they are our brethren and neighbors according to the flesh and because God loved them, had mercy upon them, and redeemed them with his blood, and has made a gracious provision for their reclamation by and by. In proportion as we are in accord with our Lord we must be in accord with all these features of his gracious plan, and this means a love for mankind and a desire to "do good unto all men as we have opportunity, especially to the household of faith."—Gal. 6:10.

Having such a kind feeling for the world it is appropriate that we should have their interests in mind when we pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as in heaven;" indeed, any and everything which bears upon the interests of humanity must of necessity come close to the hearts of those who have the holy spirit of love. It is appropriate, therefore, that on proper occasions prayer and supplication be made on behalf of rulers, indicating our good wishes for their welfare and leading in ways of righteousness—even though we see them hastening in a wrong course toward evil conditions, sure to react to their injury.

The Apostle implies that these prayers for rulers should be to the intent that we may live a peaceable and quiet life—that God's people may have the peace of God at all times ruling in their hearts, and never fearing the anarchistic or hateful spirit of the world, and of the blind leaders of the blind. So that if we cannot speak well of them nor co-oper-

ate with them for conscience' sake we can at least bear them no grudge, but can pray for them, and make sure that we speak evil of no man.

Our Lord's prayer, recorded in John 17, "I pray not for the world," should not be understood in contradiction of the Apostle's declaration in this text, but rather be interpreted to mean, I am not now praying for the world, "but for those whom thou hast given me."

Neither are we to understand the Apostle to mean that we are to pray for something contrary to what the Lord has instructed us; we are not to pray for and to expect the conversion of kings and rulers and nations, so that the time of trouble will not be necessary and will not come. On the contrary, we are to understand that the trouble will come, because the world is not in the proper attitude of heart for the change of dispensation which is now due to take place. It must pass through the baptism of "blood," "fire," "wrath," in order to be ready for the new order of things, and these, therefore, will be so many blessings for the time disguised. Our prayers are to be in full accord with what is written, but this will not hinder us from good wishes for all, and from a sympathetic realization that any are perverse because they are blinded by the god of this world.

PSALM 51:12-16

Question.—Please throw some light on Ps. 51:12-16. We do not see sinners converted, as therein stated. Why?

Answer.—You evidently recognize the Psalms as prophetic, and this is right. The words of the Prophet relate to the body of Christ in the Gospel age, rather than to himself in the Jewish age. Our desires are to be that we may be filled with the Lord's spirit, transformed by the renewing of our minds, and we recognize as a fact that only those who have experienced such a transformation can properly represent the Lord as rebukers of sin and examples of righteousness and assistances for the recovery of the sinners to harmony with God. This is true now as respects the sinners of the present time, who chiefly are those whose eyes have been once enlightened with some measures of the light of truth, and who are not walking worthy of the Lord. The members of the body of Christ are all to be living epistles, known and read of all men—their influence in the world is to be a reproof to sin in every state and condition. This Scripture will have a particular fulfilment in the next age, when the church now under instruction "taught of God," "made perfect through suffering," "filled with the spirit," shall by and by be glorified and become, as members of the body of Christ, the teachers of mankind—kings and priests unto God. In the present some sinners are reclaimed through good example; in the future we hope that many will be turned to the Lord under clearer light and more favorable conditions of the Millennial kingdom.

"BORN OF WATER AND THE SPIRIT"

Question.—In DAWN, Vol. 1., p. 277, and again in the WATCH TOWER, January 1, 1905, considerable has been said respecting the new birth, discussed by our Lord with Nicodemus, but we do not find a particular comment upon our Lord's statement, "Except a man be born of water and the spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Will you kindly give us a word on this statement—what it imports?

Answer.—The Lord seems to have in mind the natural birth as a figure or illustration of the new birth. Our thought is that water is here used, as frequently elsewhere, as a symbol of the truth, and that these words signify that unless one be first begotten "by the word of truth" he cannot be born of the spirit to the new nature. (Eph. 5:26) We believe that the Word does teach a water immersion too, and that all of the Lord's people who discern this teaching would and should be glad to obey it, but we fail to see that the Lord has laid such a stress upon water immersion. One of the best evidences that he has not done so is the fact that so many Christian confessors of the past have given evidence of having been begotten of the holy Spirit and of having participated in the real baptism into Christ's death through a full consecration, and yet being ignorant of the Scripture teaching respecting water immersion they were never thus symbolically baptized. To apply the word "water" in this text to water immersion would, therefore, be to exclude from the kingdom many of the Lord's loyal and faithful ones who have laid down their lives in his service. This fact corroborates our view, above stated, that the Lord did not mean to refer to water baptism, but to the truth which, in the quotation already referred to is mentioned as the begetting power—as primarily related, therefore, to our birth of the spirit.