

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER

CHURCHES AS SOCIAL CLUBS

Rev. John Watson, widely known in "orthodox" circles (as "Ian Maclaren," his literary *nom de plume*), wrote for publication recently, that in his judgment the churches of various denominations are rapidly becoming social clubs—ceasing to appreciate or use the place hitherto considered the true position of the church. The text for his criticism was found on a printed postal card sent out by an American Y. M. C. A., which read word for word as follows:

"DO NOT FORGET

"The next Social.
 "The next Candy-pull.
 "The next Entertainment.
 "The next Song Service.
 "The next Gospel Meeting.
 "The next meeting of the Debating Club.
 "The next Chicken-pie Dinner.
 "The next date when you ought to make the secretary happy with your cash."

Commenting upon this card, he says:—

"This remarkable list of operations, combining evangelistic zeal, creature comforts, and business shrewdness, requires no commentary; the items give us a convincing illustration of an up-to-date religious institution—a veritable hustler of a Y. M. C. A.

"The Christian church and a Y. M. C. A. are of course very different institutions, and the latter is free from any traditions of austere dignity, but one is not surprised to find that the church has also been touched with the social spirit and is also doing her best to make religion entertaining. One enters what is called a place of worship and imagines that he is in a drawing-room. The floor has a thick carpet, there are rows of theater-chairs, a huge organ fills the eye, a large bouquet of flowers marks the minister's place; people come in with a jaunty air and salute one another cheerily; hardly one bends his head in prayer; there is a hum of gossip through the building.

"A man disentangles himself from a conversation and bustles up to the platform without clerical garb of any kind, as likely as not in layman's dress. A quartet advances, and, facing the audience, sings an anthem to the congregation, which does not rise, and later they sing another anthem, also to the congregation. There is one prayer, and one reading from Holy Scripture, and a sermon which is brief and bright. Among other intimations the minister urges attendance at the oyster supper, when, as is mentioned in a paper in the pews, there will be oysters and meat—turkey, I think—and ice-cream. This meal is to be served in the 'church parlor.'

"No sooner has the benediction been pronounced, which has some original feature introduced, than the congregation hurries to the door, but although no one can explain how it is managed, the minister is already there shaking hands, introducing people, 'getting off good things,' and generally making things 'hum.' One person congratulates him on his 'talk'—new name for a sermon—and another says it was 'fine.'

"Efforts have been made in England also to make church life really popular, and, in one town known to the writer, with some success of its own kind. One church secured a new set of communion plates by the popular device of a dance; various congregations gave private theatricals, and in one case had stage property of their own. Bible classes celebrated the conclusions of their sessions by a supper; on Good Friday there were excursions into the country accompanied by a military band, and a considerable portion of the congregational income was derived from social treats of various kinds. This particular town is only an illustration of the genial spirit spreading throughout the church in England. One minister uses a magic lantern to give force to his sermon; another has added a tavern to his church equipment; a third takes up the latest murder or scandal; a fourth has a service of song; a fifth depends on a gypsy or an ex-pugilist.

"If this goes on, the church will soon embrace a theater and other attractions which will draw young people, and prevent old people from wearying in the worship of God.

[Contrasting these modern and irreverent and unscriptural methods with those of the past, Dr. Watson continues:—]

"Perhaps it may be the perversity of human nature which is apt to cavil at new things and hanker after the good old times—which were not always good, by any means—but one is not much enamoured with the new departure, nor at all convinced that what may be called for brief the 'candy-pull' system is any improvement on the past. After a slight experience of smart preachers, and church parlors, and ice-cream suppers, and picnics, one remembers with new respect and keen

appreciation the minister of former days, with his seemly dress, his dignified manner, his sense of responsibility, who came from the secret place of divine fellowship, and spoke as one carrying the message of the Eternal. He may not have been so fussy in the aisles as his successor, nor so clever at games, nor able to make so fetching a speech on 'Love, Courtship, and Marriage.'

"There are no doubt many points in which the congregation of the present has advanced on the congregation of the past, but it has not been all gain, for the chief note in the worship of the former generation was *reverence*—people met in the presence of the Eternal, before whom every man is less than nothing. And the chief note of their children, who meet to listen to a choir and a clever platform speaker, is *self-complacency*."

—The Ladies' Home Journal.

We have frequently pointed out these same tendencies, but we are glad to be able to quote the words of another—of one who stands so high in Churchianity. But Dr. Watson will ere long find that he must not criticize "Babylon;" and that if he persists he will lose caste with the lords thereof. So conservative a journal as *The Advance* has already intimated that "Candy-pulls" and other *modern methods* of making Christianity attractive must not be interfered with by "old fogies."

And so say we! Let the innovations proceed—they are essential to the very existence of "Babylon." And besides, the sooner the social Churchianity clubs act out their real sentiments all along the line, the better it will be for *true* Christianity, whose separation from Churchianity is now due to be accomplished in this harvest time—"wheat" from "tares." The more it becomes apparent that, with the vast majority, religion is merely "a form of godliness," the more will those who have the power of it as well realize the width of the gulf which really separates the two classes in divine estimation. The louder grow the revelry and irreverence and the scoffing at God's Word by "higher critics" and the boasts of Evolution, the louder in the ears of the Lord's true saints will sound the Master's command: "Babylon is fallen, is fallen! Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."—Rev. 18:2, 4.

The Editor of the Washington City *Times* gives his opinion of some of the methods of Churchianity, thus:—

"A sensational Brooklyn preacher lately discoursed on subjects like these: 'Would Christ Belong to a Labor Union?' 'Would Christ Go to a Brooklyn Theater?' and so on. It is rather difficult to conceive the moral status of people who actually approve of sermons of this sort. Undoubtedly a large part of the audiences which they attract come from mere curiosity, as they might come to any other sort of show; and they might as well be at the theater for all the good that it is likely to do them. One of the most deplorable features of modern American life is the tendency toward sensationalism in the pulpit. It is bad from every point of view. It excites emotions which are in no way religious, and are all the worse for passing under that name. It is in execrable taste, it misleads people to a sort of contempt for religion, and it makes the churches which indulge in it odious.

"It has grown out of another bad feature of our modern life—the plutocratic ideal. Any sensible person may easily understand that when the attraction of a church for its members depends on this sort of thing, and on the ability of the people of the church to dress well and pay for a handsome building and a showy choir, there is no more real religion in the whole business than there is in a circus. . . .

"It would be much more to the point for the sensational preacher above quoted to ask himself, in private, whether his church is the kind which Christ would be likely to approve, or if it is full of money-changers and the sellers of doves.

"It is time that sensible and thoughtful religious people in this country understood what a church is really intended to be. It should not be a bad imitation of fashionable society, with all the meannesses, caste distinctions, pettiness, and jealousy of that society, veneered over with a coating of formal religion. . . ."

CHRISTIANITY IN JAPAN

Not long since Japan was considered the brightest example of progress in Christian missions, and with good reason. Everything coming from Europe or the United States was looked upon with favor—the Christian religion included. In a few years the number of converts to various shades of nominal "Christianity" ran up to 40,578 in 1878. However, a great change has occurred there: and within the past two years the total converts claimed by all the sects is only 403.

The beginning of this change of sentiment seems to have dated from the time that the different denominations began more or less to *compete*. It would seem that at first denominational and creed differences were considerably hidden from the Japanese, and they seem to have embraced Christianity in something of its simplicity of spirit if not of doctrine. However, when they began to send some of their young men to American and English colleges, the fact of the great varieties of contradictory doctrines, all claiming to represent Christ's teachings, became known, and was naturally followed by denominational reappings, chiefly, we believe, Presbyterian.

The Japanese are a *practical* people, and concluded that, if Christians of the West were so confused and divided respecting the teachings of the Bible, the Japanese could properly exercise their own judgments on the subjects also. In doing so they are rapidly tending toward agnosticism, doubt, uncertainty, unbelief, just as thinking people everywhere are doing, except as they get the truth and with it the spirit of a sound mind. How we would like to put into the hands of these Japanese and all truth-seekers the light of present truth showing forth the divine plan of the ages. We are on the lookout for the Lord to bring forward to the light some earnest, fully consecrated Japanese capable of presenting the plan by translating DAWN, VOL. L., presenting it to his Christian countrymen. We thought we had found the one two years ago, but it proved otherwise;—Christianity was unpopular, but the truth much more so—too unpopular for him.

Rev. Dr. Christlieb, for years the representative of the "Evangelical Protestant Mission Society" of Germany, discussed the set-back in Japan in a volume just published, entitled, "The Tendencies of Japanese Civilization and Christianity," in which he explains:—

"The opposition now generally entertained by the Japanese

against the Christian church is due to the changed attitude which they have in recent years developed in so marked a degree to all influences from abroad—a conservative reaction of a pronounced type. This return to nativism is largely due to the easy success in the war with the Chinese. This reaction from the former enthusiasm for innovation has assumed a particularly determined character. The Japanese have reached the conclusion that they had been too hasty in discarding the old in favor of the new, and this spirit has found its way even into the Christian elements of Japan, which aspired to the establishment of a church independent of the churches in countries that had been Christian for centuries. Although the Japanese have known Christianity only for thirty years and there is scarcely a single adult native who has been a Christian since his childhood, yet they began to regard themselves more capable to develop a Christian culture and life than those who brought them the new faith.

"These ideas and ambitions are largely due to the fact that attempts were made to build up a Christianity wholly divorced from the national character of the people. The reaction is, to a certain extent, the result also of the radical anti-Japanese type of life that representatives of Western Christianity aimed to develop, completely ignoring the many excellent traits that make up the national character of the people.

"Still another element that has entered into this reaction is the fact that the Japanese, who is naturally not too deep intellectually and who is but half civilized, has been made acquainted with Western agnosticism and atheism as found in the writings of Schopenhauer and Herbert Spencer. Through these a certain dangerous contempt for the supernatural has been developed, especially among the younger generation. All these factors and others have united to produce the modern opposition to Christianity in the Japanese empire."

PREACHING OF JOHN THE BAPTIZER

JAN. 21.—LUKE 3:1-17.

"Prepare ye the way of the Lord."

Doubtless many commentators on this lesson will claim that John the Baptizer's ministry began with the year A. D. 26, and by positiveness of assertion seek to make up for their lack of evidence on this subject. Let all therefore bear in mind that such a dating of John's ministry will be purely arbitrary, to make it conform to the erroneous view which prevails among scholars in respect to the date of our Lord's birth. It should not be forgotten, however, that, although it is well established from the Scriptures that our Lord was six months younger than his second-cousin, John, there is no other Scriptural date which so closely and definitely connects the history of our Lord and of John the Baptizer with general history, as does the statement of this very lesson, that John began his ministry (when he was thirty years of age) in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar. Those who claim that Jesus began his ministry A. D. 27, instead of A. D. 29, claim that John's ministry began in A. D. 26; and in order to make this fit with the statement of the first verse of this lesson, they are obliged to count the reign of Tiberius Cæsar two years before its admitted date. For a particular discussion of this subject, however, we must refer our readers to MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. II., p. 54.

Of John it is written that he was filled with the holy Spirit from his birth. But we must not misunderstand this to mean that he was begotten of the holy Spirit, in the sense that Christians are begotten of it, for he lived before the time of spirit-begetting—in the Jewish age, not in the Gospel or Christian age. Thus our Lord said of him that, although there had not arisen a greater Prophet than John, nevertheless, the least in the kingdom of God is greater than he—the least one in the house of sons is on a higher plane than the greatest one in the house of servants. (Matt. 11:11; Heb. 3:5, 6) The Apostle again explains that "the holy Spirit was *not yet given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified."—John 7:39.

In harmony with this we must understand that John was filled with the holy Spirit, holy power or influence from God from his birth, after the same manner that the other prophets throughout the Jewish age had been under that holy spirit. The expression would lead us to understand that, although John was not born immaculate, as was Jesus, he nevertheless was well born, under holy influences, which tended to develop in him natural characteristics suitable to the mission he was intended of God to fulfil. This does not involve the thought of divine interference with the free will of the individual, for Paul tells us that he also was chosen of God from his birth to be a special servant to do a special work. (Gal. 1:15) Nevertheless, the Lord did not interfere with his exercising his own free will, even permitting him to go so far into blind

error as to become the persecutor of the church. And even when the Lord rebuked him in the way to Damascus, that was not an interference with his *will* or nature, but merely a removal of his blindness, his ignorance, permitting his true will to come into exercise. And so no doubt others of the Lord's people from time to time have been from earliest childhood special subjects of divine Providence which has guided and shaped their experiences without interfering with their wills, so as to make of them *special instruments* for the accomplishment of divine purposes.

Of John's life from infancy to manhood we know nothing except the bare record, "The child grew and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the desert until the day of his showing unto Israel" (Luke 1:80)—not in the sandy deserts, but more properly in the wilds, the uncultivated regions, perhaps in the "hill country," where his parents resided at the time of his birth. Possibly a part of the Lord's providence in respect to John's training for his work consisted in the ordering of the affairs of his parents, so that possibly they were forced by circumstances to reside in such a wilderness-home, where they would have comparatively little intercourse with others, and where John, probably as a forester, would have the experiences which the Lord saw would best fit him for the work intended. All Christians should learn to trust to the Heavenly Father's guidance, remembering his special promise, which is applicable to each one who is in Christ, *viz.*, that "all things shall work together for good to them that love God," and remembering this they should be content with the lot which Providence seems to mark out for them—not indolent, but content, when they have done all that their hands find to do,—not restless, peevish, dissatisfied, complainers against God and his providence. "Trust in the Lord and do good." It may be that the Lord is fitting and preparing us individually for some special service, and that the permitted experiences alone will prepare us for that service. Indeed, we know from the Word that God designs his "elect" for joint-heirship with our dear Redeemer in the glorious Millennial kingdom; and we can well realize that because of our imperfection we need much moulding and fashioning, chiseling and polishing to make us "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." We are to remember also that we are incompetent to judge of our own imperfections, and hence incompetent to judge of the experiences which would be most helpful to us. It is difficult for us sometimes even to see ourselves as others see us; much more difficult, undoubtedly, it would be to see ourselves from the divine standpoint. Here faith in God comes to the front—"This is the victory which overcometh the world, even your faith."

The time of John's "showing" or presentation to Israel

was undoubtedly the time when he reached the legally required thirty years of age; and then it was that the word of the Lord came unto him, causing him to begin his mission. We are not to think of this expression as having to John the same signification as it has to us who are of this Gospel age. The word of God came to John as a prophet, for our Lord declared,—“There hath not arisen a greater prophet than John the Baptist.” The Lord made clear to John that the time had come for the beginning of his ministry, not merely by an impression or surmise, but with positiveness, as in the case of all the prophets. In harmony with his commission he went to the thickly settled regions in the vicinity of the River Jordan, preaching repentance—that the people should reform—and baptizing in the Jordan those who professed a reformation. For this reason John sought the pools or deep places of the river;—for instance, he went to Enon, near to Salem, “because there was much water there”—a pool sufficiently deep for the purposes of immersion.

We are not to fall into the too common error of supposing from the record that John preached to the people that *repentance and baptism* would work for them a *remission of their sins*. To so interpret these words would put them in direct conflict with the entire testimony of the Scriptures, which is to the effect that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. The usual representation of this subject is therefore clearly in error. To the contrary, we are to understand this verse to mean that John preached a baptism signifying repentance *unto*, or *preparation for*, a remission of sins. The time had not yet come for the blotting out of the sins, and John neither had nor could have obtained authority to declare sins remitted because of repentance and baptism. Had it been possible for him to have made such a proclamation, truthfully, it would have proven that there was no necessity for the coming of our Lord Jesus to *give himself a ransom* for Israel and for all the families of the earth. If repentance and immersion in water would bring the forgiveness of sins, the “Saviour and a great one” whom God had promised to Israel for so long would have been wholly unnecessary. But when we view John’s work and preaching as merely a preliminary one, to make ready a repentant people, desiring to have their sins forgiven, desiring full at-one-ment with God, and expecting a Saviour to accomplish all this,—then all is harmony.

And this thought, that the remission of sins was a work future from John’s day, a work to be accomplished by Christ, is fully borne out by the succeeding context, a quotation from Isaiah the Prophet, which has not even yet been fulfilled, but includes the entire work of the Millennial age. That age will be one for *remission of sins* and *blotting out of sins*, and the full reconciliation of so many as will accept God’s grace in Christ under the New Covenant. (Compare Acts 3:19-21) In that time, under those favorable conditions, and not before, will the statement be fulfilled, “All flesh shall see the salvation of God.”

We are to bear in mind that John’s work as a messenger was exclusively to Israel, and had nothing whatever to do with any of the Gentiles. To Israel he acted as the Elijah or Forerunner of *Messiah in the flesh*, seeking to induce that nation, in its “harvest” time, to accept the formal offer of God’s kingdom by accepting Jesus as the King. But John’s mission was not successful to his nation, and profited only a few of the people; those few who believed John’s testimony, and received it into good and honest and repentant hearts, were prepared to *receive* Jesus and to appreciate and *receive* the remission of sins offered by God through him. The remainder of that nation, rejecting John’s teaching, and being in an unrepentant condition of heart, were not properly exercised, were not ready for Jesus, and did not appreciate the offer of remission of sins through his blood as a consequence, and as a nation were rejected of God and wholly overthrown.

While John thus acted as the Elijah in introducing Jesus in the flesh to fleshly Israel, and gathered out a certain class who were ready to receive Jesus, and who were blessed by him, so we see that in God’s plan there is a greater antitype of Elijah than was John, as there is a greater Christ than was our Lord Jesus. The greater Christ is the spiritual one, “The Lord from heaven”—“Now the Lord is that Spirit.” And this glorified spirit Lord is the Head of “the church which is his body,” and this body of many members will, in “the first resurrection,” be made like him and to share his glory, and with him and under him constitute the *great Messiah*, who shall take unto himself his great power and reign, establishing God’s kingdom amongst men, and causing his will to be done “on earth as it is done in heaven.” (Matt. 6:10) The coming into power of this great Christ, the spiritual Christ (head and body) constitutes the second advent to mankind—“the

manifestation of the sons of God” for the deliverance of the groaning creation. (Rom. 8:17-19) Thus the second advent of Christ the Head (with the church his body) will be seen to be on a very much higher plane than was the first advent of our Lord in the flesh, although the first advent was all-important in that without it and its sacrifice for sins there could have been no second advent of Jesus, the Head, in the glory of kingdom power, and there could have been no glorified members of his body to be associated with him.

After thus noting the relationship of the two events, it is proper for us to note also that as the blessings of the first advent were offered to nominal fleshly Israel so the presentation of the blessings of the second advent will be to nominal Spiritual Israel (“Christendom”), and as a Forerunner or herald was appropriately sent to fleshly Israel, to prepare them for the first advent, likewise it would be appropriate that a proportionately greater Forerunner should precede the second advent, and seek to make ready therefor all nominal Spiritual Israelites. As we have already shown,* this greater Elijah, who heralds the spiritual Christ, is composed of many members; Jesus in the flesh was himself the Head of this Elijah class, and all of his true followers, who will be, when glorified with him, members of the glorious Christ, will have previously been in their earthly lives members with him of the Elijah class, whose mission it is to show forth the principles of righteousness and true holiness, and to exhort both by word and conduct all men to repentance and to preparation for the second advent—the glorious appearing, the setting up of the Messianic kingdom, the actual blotting out of sins, the straightening of every crooked way, the leveling up of deep crevices of character, the leveling down of the hills of pride to the proper level of humility; and in every sense of the word *seeking to prepare all flesh* to see the salvation of God.

Nevertheless, we are to remember that the Scriptures distinctly indicate that the testimony of this greater Elijah will be equally unsuccessful with that of the lesser antitype of Elijah, John the Baptizer. The church in the flesh has not succeeded in making straight the paths of the Lord for a triumphal entry to his kingdom upon the earth. A few have heard, but the message has utterly failed as respects the vast majority, even those who profess respect for and to be waiting for the kingdom. Nevertheless, all God’s good purposes will be ultimately accomplished, though necessarily introduced by troubles, calamities, distress upon “Christendom,” in the end of this age or “harvest” time, similar to those troubles which came upon fleshly Israelites who were unready for the Saviour, and “knew not the time of their visitation,” at his first advent. All this unreadiness, however, shall not hinder the work of the Messiah. As at his first advent he gathered all Israelites indeed to the new dispensation, so now he will gather his elect “little flock” to himself; his kingdom will be established; it shall rule over all; it will accomplish the straightening of every crooked path; it will level up the path of righteousness and holiness, and make of it “a highway” freed from stumbling blocks of error and from Satan’s deception. (Isa. 35:8, 9) All mankind then brought to a knowledge of the *truth* will have the privilege of progressing through the times of restitution up this grand highway of obedience to the grand perfection lost for himself and his race by father Adam’s transgression, but redeemed for Adam and his race by the precious blood of Christ. All flesh indeed shall see the salvation of our God, and so many as will may share therein, for this is the blessing which God has provided for all the families of the earth, through the true spiritual Seed of Abraham—Christ and his elect church.—Gal. 3:16, 29.

It would seem that John’s ministry at first was somewhat popular, notwithstanding his probably uncouth “backwoods” appearance and great plainness of speech; so that great multitudes came to him: amongst these were some who seemed to John to be so vile that he could not properly accept them until they had given some proofs of reform. These he denominates “children of vipers”—very harsh language, we would be inclined to say. We are not to understand that such language is proper to be copied by the Lord’s people of today. We are rather to suppose that there were special conditions at that time which made this language appropriate, and that John, as a prophet, was divinely guided into giving this sharp reproof. The Lord’s people of the Gospel age are instructed on the contrary to speak with meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, etc.—“in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves”—“reproving with all long-suffering.” The Lord’s people of today are under general instructions of God’s Word, as regards all their conduct, and are not to depart therefrom unless it would be under special divine direction, as were the

* MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. II, Chap. 8.

prophets of old—such as is not given to any at the present time so far as we are aware.

When John speaks of his hearers "fleeing from the wrath to come," we are not to get the thought that he preached, or that the people believed in, the doctrine of eternal torment, and that the words referred to this. Quite to the contrary, there is no such teaching in the Scriptures. The "wrath to come" referred to by John prophetically was the trouble that was about to come upon that nation unless they would receive Messiah, who had not yet been offered to them, but who would shortly appear, and for whose appearance they were to make ready by true repentance and baptism. The "wrath to come" did come upon the nation because of its rejection of Messiah, as our Lord and the Apostle Paul specially testify. (See Luke 21:23; Rom. 9:22; 1 Thes. 2:16) It burned fiercely against them in the great time of trouble which led to the collapse of their national polity in A. D. 69-70, and they have been under that wrath and unable to reestablish themselves as a nation from that day to the present time. We shall find confirmation of this interpretation of the "wrath to come" further down in this lesson.

In John's preaching he found one difficulty, and that was that his hearers were imbued with the thought that they were God's specially chosen, "elect" people, whose glorification had been foretold in the prophets, and that since there were no better people in the world it was unreasonable to suppose that God would pass by the very best. They reasoned that he must take some, in order to fulfil his promises; and that they were not only the most obedient to his law outwardly, but also were the natural seed of Abraham, to whom the promises were made. Likewise the principal opposition to the teaching of holiness, entire consecration to the Lord, today throughout "Christendom," is the same error. A false theory has gotten into the minds of Christian people, which leads them to reason that holiness cannot be essential to the Lord's favor. Their process of reasoning is this: Out of the sixteen hundred millions of the world's population there are only about three hundred millions that make the slightest profession of Christianity, and this includes all the Greek Catholics, Roman Catholics, and what Bishop Foster (M. E.) designated the "ring-straked and speckled" of Protestantism—infants and all. Now, say they, God must certainly intend to have some, and if he takes all kinds of Christians he will have only comparatively few, and if merely an ambition to be ahead of the devil were to move him, he could scarcely reject any who claim to be Christians, and who are even half-way decent. Consequently they reason that holiness to the Lord, sanctification of thought and word and deed, cannot be essential to divine favor, and is therefore rather carrying matters to an extreme. The declaration that only "the pure in heart shall see God," and that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord," are, to them, extreme statements, and must be passed by, or else the word "holiness" must be considered as used in olden times in a very restricted sense, as meaning not openly or violently wicked.

Thus we see that the antitypical Elijah to the Jews encountered the same difficulties that are encountered now by the antitypical Elijah ministering to nominal spiritual Israel. But note John's answer; he laid down the conditions very strictly: Do not permit yourselves to be deceived into thinking that God is under compulsion to accept such as you, and that otherwise his word would become void; do not think that he could not get children of Abraham that would be purer than you, and therefore that he must take you; God is unlimited in power and unlimited in resource, and, if necessary, he could raise up children to Abraham out of these stones—out of some that you consider as far from the possibilities of being Abraham's children as though they were these stones at your feet. And similarly we answer "Christendom" today, that God utterly rejects hypocritical Christianity, as represented by the vast majority of its professors, still blinded by the god of this world, and ignorant of the true character of God and of Jesus Christ whom he has sent; because not pure in heart, not consecrated fully to the Lord. Would that we had a trumpet voice that we might tell the millions of nominal Christendom the true state of the case, and would that they had circumsised ears to hear and reform, and be prepared for the glorious events now due to be ushered in,—without being obliged to pass through the great trouble time. All we can assure them is that God will find the full number of his elect, and that the full number is nearly complete now, and that in all it is but a "little flock" to whom it is the Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom; and that soon these will all be glorified with their glorious Head and Lord, and that then the kingdom established will be revealed to bless all the families of the earth. Nevertheless, we deeply

sympathize with them in the fact that their condition necessitates that the introduction of the kingdom shall be with a time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation, and, thank God, shall never again be.—Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:21.

John, proceeding with his discourse, points out to his Jewish hearers that the time of judgment had come upon *their nation*. The axe was laid at the root of the trees; every Israelite who was not an Israelite indeed was to be overthrown, and to be cast into the "fire" of trouble with which that age and national polity terminated. The three and a half years of our Lord's ministry to the Jewish nation, and their final rejection by him, are represented by the barren fig tree parable, in harmony with the statement of John foregoing.—See Luke 13:6-9.

John evidently struck the chord of fear to some extent, but he struck it properly. There is a proper presentation of the truth, and a proper fear of God and his retribution, which may properly be kept before the mind of the transgressor; but this is wholly different from the terrorizing fear of eternal torment, which plays so important a part in all the theological teaching, directly and indirectly, today, and which has driven some to insanity, some to skepticism and infidelity, and has hindered the great majority even of saints from appreciating the true character and plan of our God. Let us present the wrath to come, truthfully, not misrepresenting the character of our God; for assuredly God will not hold them guiltless who blaspheme his holy name.

Under John's preaching the people began to inquire what course they should pursue, and summing the matter up John's instruction was that they should practice justice, mercy, love, generosity; they should avoid violence, extortion, etc.; and should seek to be content with such things as they had. This was excellent advice, and undoubtedly those who followed it would be in just the right condition of heart and mind to welcome the Lord Jesus, and his good tidings of *remission of sins through his blood* and thus to become reconciled with the Father. And similarly if any now inquire respecting the coming trouble, the wrath that is to come in the end of this age upon "Christendom,"—what must we do? We answer them.—Practice righteousness, truth, godliness, kindness, benevolence, justice, trust in the Lord, seek to walk in his ways. Or we may quote them the words of the prophet, specially bearing upon this time, viz., "Seek meekness, seek righteousness; it may be that ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger." (Zeph. 2:3) And furthermore, we may rely upon it that those who thus seek righteousness, etc., will be the ones most ready to welcome our King, and his kingdom, and we may be sure that when in this harvest time some fail to make their calling and election sure, and prove themselves unworthy of the crowns apportioned to them, the Lord will be pleased to select from among such penitent seekers of righteousness some as substitutes to complete his elect church.

So powerful was John's presentation of the truth, that the people began to wonder whether or not he might be the Coming One, the Messiah, but he set the thought at rest speedily, assuring them that he was so inferior to the Messiah that he would be unworthy the honor of doing toward him the most menial service of removing his sandals. Then, having given them a little glimpse of the character of Messiah, he proceeded to tell them respecting his work, that it would be higher than his own, and that those who received him would receive a higher baptism also: "He shall baptize you with the holy spirit and with fire"—some of them (the few) with holy spirit, the remainder (the mass) with the fire—judgments, the great time of trouble which destroyed their national life and many individual lives.

He gave them an illustration of the matter, showing them that they had reached the harvest-time of their age, and that now a separating was to be expected—the separating of the true wheat from the chaff; and he represented our Lord's work with Israel as being that of a reaper winnowing the "wheat," freeing it from the "chaff" element. How forceful was the figure! how true the facts! Our Lord indeed gathered from that nation all the true "wheat" we may be sure that not a solitary grain was lost. All that wheat was gathered into his barn, into a place of safety, into a higher dispensation,—they constituted the beginning or first members of the Gospel church. It was upon this wheat class that the holy spirit came at Pentecost, and it has abode with this true church since. After the separating (winnowing) of the "wheat," and the gathering into the barn, and its baptism of the holy spirit, in due time, the "chaff" of that nation was burned up with *unquenchable fire*—a time of trouble which *nothing could stop or hinder*. It will be remembered that various steps were taken to hinder the destruction of the nation of Israel, but all failed: even the Roman Emperor was desirous of preserving

the nation, and of establishing order there, and the Roman army went not to destroy them but to establish peace in their midst; but the Lord had declared that the fire of trouble which he kindled should not be quenched by any power, that it should do its work to the full; and it did.

Likewise it will be with the great "fire" of trouble with which this Gospel age shall end, and into which the "tare" class of Christendom will be cast; it will not be an utter destruction of life (although many lives will perish in the

great trouble of this Day of Wrath), but it will completely consume earthly governments and Churchianity in a fire of anarchy. Nothing shall quench that fire, or hinder that utter destruction of present systems. But praise God that when this fire shall have consumed the stubble and the falsities and deceptions of present institutions, it will have but prepared the way for the great blessing which he has designed and provided for in his coming kingdom. This "fire," and the blessing to follow it, are particularly referred to in Zeph. 3:8, 9.

CONSECRATION FOLLOWED BY TEMPTATIONS

JAN. 28.—MATT. 3:13-4:11.

"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

After John had been preaching and baptizing for about six months, about September, A. D. 29, Jesus, who had been residing in Galilee and was nearing his thirtieth birthday, set out to find John and to be baptized of him and to begin his public ministry at the earliest possible moment. He was to be a Priest as well as a King for his people, "a Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec," and the law required of a priest that he be at least thirty years of age. Hence Jesus' ministry was hindered from beginning until this age was attained, but he was free to begin it at the earliest possible moment after that time.

He was of course acquainted with his second-cousin, John the Baptizer, who evidently well knew of his upright life and unimpeachable character, and who was astounded to have him apply for baptism, whereas the class John was seeking was the renegade and sinful. According to the original reading, John "would have hindered him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" Realizing that Jesus had no sins to wash away, it seemed to John inappropriate that this ceremony should be performed upon Jesus, for we are to remember that John's baptism was merely a baptism unto repentance—reformation—and not Christian baptism.—See Acts 19:4, 5.

Our Lord did not attempt to explain to John that he was introducing a new baptism, not for sinners but exclusively for holy ones, and not, therefore, in any sense of the word symbolic of the cleansing from sin, but symbolic of a *sacrificial death* for the sins of others. It was not then due time to explain Christian baptism, and to have done so would merely have confused John and those who might have heard, without profiting him any, because the new baptism belonged to the new dispensation which did not begin until Pentecost, except in the person of our Lord Jesus himself. And in any case the force and meaning of the symbol is merely what is understood by the *baptized one*. It is perhaps well that we call special attention to this point, in view of the fact that a large and influential body of Christian people* are even today practicing John's baptism, "for the remission of sins," wholly failing to realize the import of the new baptism—Christian baptism—first symbolized by our Lord Jesus himself.

Our "Disciple" friends will not dispute the Scriptural statement that our Lord Jesus was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and hence that he had no sins to wash away, and consequently that for him John's baptism of reformation would have been worse than meaningless; it would have been a contradiction of fact and contrary to faith; and "whatsoever is not of faith is *sin*." Hence it would have been wrong for our Lord Jesus to have been baptized for the remission of sins—John's only understanding of baptism. We may be sure, therefore, that since "in him was no sin," his act of baptism was the first of a new order of baptism—practiced by his followers after Pentecost. (Acts 19:4, 5) We here note the fact that Christian baptism is only for believers in Christ—not for unbelievers, *not for sinners*. Faith in Christ is the justifying power; we are justified through faith in his blood. When justified we are ready for Christian baptism, and not before, but when justified we have no sins to wash away, being "justified freely from all things." To the Christian believer, baptism symbolizes precisely the same thing that it did to his Lord, viz., *consecration*—the full surrender of his will, his life, his all, to the Heavenly Father's will. By such a surrender of his will he becomes *dead to the world*, to earthly hopes and aims, and becomes *alive toward God*, to walk in newness of life, and by and by to have that newness of life actually, as a sharer with Jesus, his Lord, his Redeemer, in the "first resurrection." All this is *symbolized* in the proper Christian baptism.

Our Lord, being free from sin, required no justification by another, and when he had reached manhood's estate presented

himself wholly, unreservedly, to do the Father's will. At the moment of *consecration* his earthly life was yielded up as a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world,—and this was symbolized by his immersion in water. The remaining three and a half years of his life were already on the altar, and he merely waited for his sacrifice to be consumed, crying with his last breath, "It is finished!" Likewise he has invited all of his faithful, elect church to become *joint-sacrificers* with him, and ultimately to become also his *joint-heirs* in the kingdom to be given to the Royal Priesthood. As Jesus' baptism, therefore, signified his death *sacrificially for sins*, so the baptism of Christians symbolizes their participation with the Lord in *his sacrifice* (after they have first been justified by faith freely from all things by the merit of his blood). In our Lord's case the consecration was quickly followed by the symbol, and with his followers the consecration should be followed by the symbol as quickly as they *recognize the meaning of the symbol*,—which for centuries has been beclouded and obscured.

Quickly following our Lord's consecration and its symbolization came the evidence that his *sacrifice* was accepted of God: the heavens were opened unto him. This probably signifies that he was granted a vision of heaven, confirming to him his relationship to the Father, and connecting up the interim of his experience as a man with his prehuman experiences; and there came a voice declaring him to be God's well-beloved Son, and he as well as John (John 1:34) witnessed a manifestation of the divine blessing descending upon him like a dove. We are not informed that the people saw the heavens opened, heard the voice and saw the dove; on the contrary, the records seem to indicate that only Jesus and John saw and heard, and that the latter was granted the privilege to the intent that he might bear witness to the fact.

A dove was a favorite figure with the Jews as an emblem of peace and salvation. Indeed, Noah's dove, with its olive branch, seems to have become a symbol to all civilized peoples. It was most appropriate, therefore, that since some figure was to be used as an outward evidence of divine blessing, the dove should be that figure. Yet we are not to suppose that the holy spirit is a dove, nor that it has bodily shape like a dove, but as instructed in all the Scriptures, that it is a divine power or influence. The dove represented fittingly the meek and quiet spirit which is one of the striking ornaments of all those who possess the spirit of holiness unto the Lord. Such experiences as these which our Lord enjoyed are not granted to his followers nor to be expected today,—neither the voice nor the opened heavens, nor the dove. The coming of the holy spirit to the church at Pentecost was signalized by an outward demonstration, *which serves the entire church* throughout the age. Such outward demonstrations were essential at the beginning, as assurances to us that we are not following some vain imaginations of our own or other men's minds in respect to the holy spirit, and now we merely have the realities, which at first were symbolized or represented in tangible form. All who, after believing unto repentance, are justified from their sins, and subsequently present themselves to the Lord to be baptized into his death (Rom. 6:3), receive an opening of the heavens before them in the sense of an opening of their minds to see heavenly things, to appreciate spiritual matters; as the Apostle declares, "God reveals them unto us by his spirit; for the spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God,"—things which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of [the natural] man." (1 Cor. 2:10) They also by faith hear the voice of the Father, speaking unto them, saying that, having thus come unto him through Jesus, and having thus consecrated their lives to him, they are now beloved sons, accepted in the well-beloved One. They also receive the blessing of the holy spirit, in the shedding abroad in their hearts of the peace-giving, meek and gentle spirit of holiness, and this becomes more and more a reality with them as they become more and more "filled with the spirit."

* The Christian denomination, otherwise termed "Disciples"

Jesus was led of the spirit—his own spirit, illuminated by the spirit-baptism which he had just received—to go apart from John and the concourse of people into quiet solitude, and for this purpose he chose a wilderness place. Mark says he was impelled or “driven” of the spirit into the wilderness. The thought we get is that there was a great pressure upon our Lord’s mind at this time. In a previous lesson we noted his study at Jerusalem at an early age respecting the “Father’s business,” and how he should go about it. We found the Law instructing him that it would not be proper for him to engage in the Father’s business until he was thirty years of age, and that in consideration of this fact he desisted and served his parents. The momentous time for which he had been waiting for eighteen years had come. He hastened to present himself at the earliest moment, that his service should not be delayed; but now, under the enlightenment of the holy spirit, instead of beginning his ministry precipitately, he felt that he must know definitely the proper course to pursue: he must not make a mistake at the very outstart of his service; he must know the Father’s will, that he might render his service in harmony therewith. Such motives impelled him to seek solitude for thought and prayer, and for reviewing the various Scriptures which hitherto he had studied and but imperfectly comprehended, but which now began to be luminous under the influence of the holy spirit which he had received.

How proper it would be that all of the Lord’s people, when they have made a consecration of themselves to the divine service, should be impelled by the new mind, the new spirit, to go apart first and to commune with the Father, and to study his Word respecting how they should render their lives most acceptable in his service! Were this course pursued how many lives would be totally different from what they are; how many failures and changes and turnings, hither and thither, would be avoided! Our Lord expressed the matter in one of his parables, when he said that anyone taking up his cross to follow him should sit down first and count the cost—learn what the Father’s will would be, as well as the results to be sought. And if any of God’s dear children have neglected thus to seek the right path at the beginning of their consecration, we refer them to the example of our dear Master, who was wise in this as in all things, having not only the spirit of a sound mind, but a sound mind itself, through which that spirit operated perfectly. However, our study of the divine will need not be so completely alone as was our Master’s—we have “brethren,” he had none, being himself the forerunner. We may profitably take counsel of such as give evidence of faith in and consecration to God, that we may learn the more quickly and the more thoroughly the Father’s will concerning us—especially may we have the aid of the words and example of our elder Brother, Jesus. We must never forget, however, that our consecration is to the Father’s business, and that brethren can only be really helpful to us as they assist us in understanding the Father’s plan and our part therein: otherwise they might become hindrances by substituting their own or sectarian plans and seeking our consecration thereto.

Our Lord’s temptations may be said to have begun at this point—those temptations in which “he was tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” It was not the boy Jesus, nor the youth Jesus, that was tempted “as we are.” And our Lord’s temptations after his consecration were not like the temptations which beset the world, but like the church’s temptations. In other words, our Lord was reckoned a *new* creature from the time of his consecration at Jordan, as we are counted *new* creatures in him from the time of our consecration; and it was the *consecrated* Jesus who was tempted and tried like as his *consecrated* followers are tempted and tried. We shall see further evidences of this as we proceed to notice the character of our Lord’s temptations, and to compare them with the temptations which come to his consecrated “brethren.” Many have wondered why their temptations seemed to commence after their consecration to the Lord, rather than before: seemingly they expected that after consecration the adversary would flee from them, and they should have little or no temptation—totally misunderstanding the divine arrangement. Such temptations or tests of character as come to the consecrated are not appropriate to the unconsecrated: the present is not the judgment day of the world, but the testing time for the church.

It would appear that our Lord’s temptations progressed throughout the entire forty days, but that the three temptations specifically described were the culmination of that period of testing. We may imagine our Lord in the wilderness solitude, intently thinking over the various prophetic references to himself, and linking these together, as an architect would first draw the outline of a building and subsequently fill out feature after feature of its internal arrangements. The out-

line before our Lord’s mind from the Scriptures, beyond any peradventure, was the kingdom. He was to be the King, the Seed of Abraham, under whose gracious government and wise instruction all the families of the earth were to be blessed. This, the profile, was already clearly delineated in his mind, but other features needed to be properly adjusted. How was he to fulfil the type of the Law which represented the priest as giving up his life for the sins of the people? Where would come in the type of the everlasting priesthood? Where would come in the class of Israelites represented by Rebecca, as he himself was represented by Isaac, and the Father by Abraham, in the type? And if Israel would receive him, and become the Rebecca, where would come in the sacrifice, and how? And then other prophecies no doubt pressed his mind for a place in the plan, viz., the declaration that although Israel were as the sand of the sea only a remnant should be acceptable, and how then would the predestinated number of the “elect” be found, to complete the glorious royal priesthood; and by what process would the blessing come to all the families of the earth, if himself, as the High Priest, and his true followers, as the royal priests, were all to suffer and to die for righteousness’ sake, as sacrifices?

We may well suppose that adjustment and re-adjustment, fitting and refitting, with much reflection and prayer, occupied many of the forty days, and there may have been temptations intermingled with these all; as for instance, questionings respecting the necessity of those features represented in the types and specified in the prophecies of the sufferings of Christ which must take precedence to the glories that would follow. There may have been temptations, too, to deal dishonestly with the records, to “wrest the Scriptures,” and thus self-deceived, to choose a way not in fullest conformity to the divine outline; but we may safely suppose that as soon as such suggestions, one after another, presented themselves, they were promptly rejected,—our Lord being fully determined that he would be absolutely obedient to the Father’s will and accomplish the work which he had sent him to do in exactly the manner prescribed.

So intent had been his study, and so earnest his desire for quiet fellowship with the Father and his law, that forty days were spent under such conditions, and apparently so deeply absorbed was our Lord that he did not even think of food. Nor does this appear so strange to us, when we remember that he was perfect, while we are imperfect, physically as well as otherwise. “He afterward hungered.”

It was at the close of this period of Bible study and prayer, when our Lord was weak from fasting, that the Adversary assaulted him with three temptations particularized in our lesson.

The word here translated “devil” is *diabolos*, and is used with the definite article—the devil. The arch-deceiver is thus Scripturally distinguished from the fallen angels, who throughout the Scriptures are spoken of in the plural, designated by another word signifying *demons*. Here, then, is one place in the Scriptures where the personality of the prince of devils is definitely affirmed, and his person and power acknowledged by our Lord himself. It is not necessary for us, however, to assume that Satan appeared to our Lord in a human form; he may or may not thus have been personally manifest. If personally manifest, we may rest well assured that he presented himself in his very best appearance, as an angel of light. Indeed, we may well remember that our Lord, in his prehuman condition, had, as the Father’s agent, been the Creator of Satan, and we remember that Satan was an angel of very high order, whose sin consisted in an attempt to usurp authority and to become the potentate of earth, by stealing the sympathy, affection and obedience of humanity, and that on this account he fell under divine reprobation. We can imagine that a visit from him to Jesus would not be at all inappropriate, as he undoubtedly knew the facts of our Lord’s consecration, and to some extent knew of the work which the Father had given him to do in the redemption of the fallen race of men. We can imagine him even presenting himself in a friendly manner, and assuring our Lord Jesus that he felt a great interest in him and in his work; that he himself had been painfully surprised to note the penalty of sin upon mankind, and the dreadful degradation which had resulted; and that now he would be glad indeed to have something done by which poor humanity might be delivered from its groaning, travailing, dying conditions. As a friend, thoroughly versed in the situation all around, and interested in its success, and thoroughly conversant with the mental moods and foibles of humanity, he was in a place where he felt qualified to offer some suggestions respecting the very work which our Lord Jesus wished to perform, the plan for which he was now considering.

TEMPTATION TO USE SPIRITUAL FAVORS FOR PERSONAL PROFIT

First, he manifests his personal interest in our Saviour by suggesting his weakness from lack of food and the necessity for taking proper care of his physical health if he would do the great and noble work he had undertaken. He reminded him also of his present power—that he had just been imbued with divine power, and that he had now full ability to supply his wants, and need only to speak the word and have the stones turned into food. Thus also, he suggested, he would be demonstrating to himself the verity of the new power which he witnessed coming upon him, and had subsequently felt. What more cunning temptation could be devised than this? Compliance with it evidently meant, not only the relief of his hunger and the strengthening of his physical frame, but additionally it apparently meant the conversion of Satan, who now seemingly was in a repentant attitude, and desirous of co-operating with him in the undoing of the evil work of the long ago. It was a strong temptation.

Such temptation comes also to all the consecrated; not in exactly the same form, nor in the same language, but somewhat similarly—suggestions that the new relationship with God, and the strength which it brings, may be used to some extent at least in creature comforts—may be utilized for our temporal advancement; may be made to make us shine before men as very honorable and favored of God; may be used to command large salaries, or at least as a means for seeking them, even if never found. We may then all note carefully how our Lord resisted his would-be friend and his worldly-wise suggestions. He flatly refused the suggestion of using his spiritual power to serve his temporal wants. The spiritual gift could no more be used to procure temporal comforts than it could be sold for money to Simon (Acts. 8:18-24); but without going into details, and without boasting that he was too holy to think of such a sacrilegious use of the power entrusted to him, Jesus simply answered the adversary in Scriptural language, that man's life was not wholly dependent upon what he should eat, but that obedience to the Word of God would be a surer guarantee of life. And after this manner each of the Lord's followers should answer every question which in any manner proposes the acquirement of earthly blessings and comforts at the sacrifice of the spiritual. To quote a number of the Lord's "brethren" the adversary has presented this same temptation in this form: If you follow too closely to the truth, and permit the holy Spirit of the truth to make you very zealous in its service, you will soon have no bread, no food, for the world's people with whom you must deal do not appreciate such things. They will discharge you from their employ, or they will cease to deal at your store, or they will dismiss you from being their pastor, or they will withdraw from you their fellowship, their society, etc., and you will starve for all the good things of this present life. The proper answer is that God is able to take care of all those who respect his spiritual blessings too much to sell them for a mess of pottage, as did Esau in the type; and that we are convinced that whoever lives according to the Word of God, tho he may lose some of the comforts of the present time, will eventually gain the far better, the life eternal with exceeding glory.

Our Lord's positiveness of reply shut off the temptation quickly, and discouraged the adversary from further proceeding along that line; and so it is with us, his followers: if we are positive in our rejection of temptation it increases our strength of character, not only for that time, but also for subsequent temptations; and it disconcerts to some extent our adversary, who, noting our positiveness, knows well that it is useless to discuss the matter with persons of strong convictions and positive character; whereas, if the question were parleyed over, the result would surely be the advancing of further reasons and arguments on the adversary's part, and a danger on our part that we would be overmatched in argument, for, as the Apostle declares, the devil is a wily adversary, and "we are not ignorant of his devices." Prompt and positive obedience to the word and spirit of the Lord is the only safe course for any of the "brethren."

TEMPTING GOD BY UNAUTHORIZED EFFORTS

Disappointed in his first effort, the adversary quickly turned the subject, not even dissenting from our Lord's judgment in the matter. The second temptation he presented is like all others that came to our Lord and that come to his consecrated followers, viz., not a temptation to gross wickedness—to steal, to kill, etc.—but a temptation to do the Lord's work in another way than that which the Lord had planned—the misuse of the divine powers given him by endeavoring to accomplish good results in an improper manner.

Satan took our Lord Jesus to Jerusalem and up to the

flat roof of one of the wings of the Temple—not physically, but mentally, just as mentally we can go to various places and do certain things without change of physical location. The suggestion now made was this: I (Satan) can give you a good suggestion respecting a way to bring yourself quickly into prominence before the people of Israel, and you will be pleased with it, because it is a Scriptural way; indeed I have found that it is foretold in the prophecy that Messiah at his coming will do this: and the people will readily recognize it as a fulfilment of the words of the Prophet David, and thus they will embrace your cause quickly, you will become the leader of the people, and your work will go on most grandly: and as I said before, I will rejoice in seeing the prosperity of the work, for I am heartily sick of the degradation which I have witnessed for now four thousand years. My suggestion is that you go to the roof of the southern wing of the Temple which on its rear part overlooks the Valley of Hinnom, towering above it six hundred feet, and which also overlooks the court of the Temple in which there are hundreds of devout Jews: then leap from this eminence, and arise unhurt by the fall. This will demonstrate more quickly than anything else you could do or say that the power of the Highest is upon you, and that you are the Messiah. This, I say, is referred to in the Scripture which says,—"He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone."—Matt. 4:6.

Similar are the temptations which Satan presents to the consecrated followers of Jesus:—Make a great show before the world and the nominal church; attract their attention by any means, and not simply by the preaching of the cross of Christ; use the spiritual powers and blessings that you have received for doing some great and striking work, which will appeal to the natural man, and thus secure quick and great success; do this instead of doing the quiet and less conspicuous work of presenting spiritual things to the spiritual class, which work the vast majority can in no wise appreciate, but will only shun you, consider you peculiar, and which not only will lose you the sympathy of the mass, but will bring you specially the hatred of some of the principal professors of Christendom.

Again our Lord answered promptly and correctly: "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Satan would like to have us walk by sight, not by faith; he would like to have us continually tempting God, and demanding some ocular demonstrations of his favor and protection, instead of accepting the testimony of his Word, and relying thereon implicitly in faith. In the light of the unfolding of the Scriptures we see that Satan, probably unwittingly, quoted a passage of Scripture wholly out of its proper meaning and interpretation, a passage which referred, not to the literal feet of Jesus, and to literal stones, and to literal angels, but to the symbolic feet-members of the body of Christ today, and to the stones of stumbling, doctrinal and otherwise, which are now permitted in the pathway of the faithful, and to the angels or ministers of divine truth who in the present harvest-time would be commissioned to bear up the feet members with such counsels, admonitions and expositions of Scripture as would be necessary for them.—Psa. 91:11, 12.

TEMPTATION TO OBTAIN DESIRED GOOD RESULTS BY COMPROMISE

Satan's third temptation we may presume was presented likewise in a friendly and sympathetic manner, indicative of a desire for co-operation in our Lord's great work. He took him to a high mountain—not literally, but mentally. Indeed, there is no literal high mountain near Jerusalem, nor anywhere in the world, from which all the kingdoms of the world and their glory could be seen. Satan took our Lord mentally to a very high symbolic mountain (kingdom). He pictured before him the immensity of his (Satan's) own power throughout the world, his control of all the nations and peoples to a large extent, and this our Lord subsequently acknowledged when he referred to Satan as "the prince [ruler] of this world." This panoramic presentation of Satan's power and influence throughout the world was designed to impress upon the mind of our Redeemer the thought that Satan's friendship and assistance would be most valuable—nay, almost of vital importance to the success of his mission, and hence that it was very fortunate indeed that at this juncture Satan had called upon him in so friendly a mood, and that he apparently so sincerely welcomed his efforts and was ready to co-operate therewith.

Satan possibly pointed out to our Lord that Messiah was specially referred to as the King of Israel, and to bless Israel, and he may have admitted that a light of influence would extend to all nations through him, but the center of his argument would seem to be that he proposed to Jesus a still larger