

of worldly business with sectarian Christians and others. The Apostle seems to imply this point in 1 Cor. 5:10.

But we would sincerely regret to be understood as advising countenancing or having any sympathy with the kind of boys' clubs described by our sister's letter. Far better that the Christian boy should have no use of gymnastic appliances, or

that he should construct some for his own use; far better that he should never mingle with other boys at all, than that he should run the least risk of having his heart polluted; for we remember how broadly applicable are the Apostle's words, "Evil communications corrupt good manners."—1 Cor. 15:33. —EDITOR.]

VOL. XXI

ALLEGHENY, PA., FEBRUARY 15, 1900

No. 4

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER

PULPIT VIEWS ON THE MILLENNIUM

The Philadelphia press recently interviewed the ministers of Pennsylvania and New Jersey on the subject of the Millennium, asking:—*Do you believe that the Biblical Millennium is at hand?* The majority of the responses denied faith in a Millennium, some expressed an expectation that the churches would bring it about by missionary effort, and a few declared faith in a reign of Christ near at hand, as follows:—

Rev. William McNally, Harrisburg, Pa., has made a careful study of the "Millennium" question. He says:—

"I believe that the millennium period is near—that we are living in the 'last days,' foretold in the Bible. The prophecies are all being fulfilled and the signs of the time all indicate it. There are 'wars and rumors of wars' now; there is moral laxity everywhere; the average church attendance is startlingly small, only 36 people out of every 100 attend any church in this country. There is moral and political corruption.

"All of these things indicate the approach of the millennium, as anyone may see by looking up the references in the Bible on this subject.

"The millennium will not be brought about by any human agency. We are not growing better."

Rev. Clarence E. Eberman, Lancaster, Pa., pastor of the Moravian church and president of the Pennsylvania Christian Endeavor Union said:—

"Sentiment or speculation can decide very little on this great question. The Bible alone offers the authoritative teaching. I believe confidently that Christ is coming again and that his second advent will usher in his kingly reign of a thousand years upon this earth."

Rev. George Fulton, Lebanon, Pa., pastor of the Fourth Street Presbyterian church, said:—

"I believe that the evidence of the nearness of the millennium is stronger than ever before. Signs have been found in every generation since Christ's ascent that pointed to his coming. The principal proofs are wars and earthquakes, distress of nations, sea and waves roaring, lawlessness and iniquity prevailing to an alarming degree. The Bible says 'When the Gospel of the kingdom shall have been preached to all the world as a witness unto all nations, then cometh the end.' This is a sign. It belongs only to our own age and the evidence here is strong. Another sign is the prophetic movement,—the restoration of Israel which has begun."

Rev. Sydney N. Ussher, West Chester, Pa., rector of the Church of the Sure Foundation, said:—

"The Millennium is a divine conception, with Scripture the only source of light and authority. No definite time is stated therein. I believe, however, the world is fast preparing for it."

Rev. William J. Houck, Carlisle, Pa., pastor of Grace United Brethren church, says:—

"I believe that the Biblical millennium is at hand."

Rev. M. E. McLinn, Bloomsburg, Pa., pastor of St. Matthew's Lutheran church, says:—

"I am certain that a great change is imminent. Everything points clearly to a mighty social and religious upheaval and reconstruction. The very fact that this subject occupies men's thoughts so largely and that the 'secular press' asks the question is proof of it to me."

Pastor F. Jonte Stanley, of the First Presbyterian church, Atlantic City, N. J., believes "that the signs of the times, as I read them, point to the millennium as not being far off. One of the indications is the gathering of the Jews at Palestine; another that the Gentiles hear the Gospel the world over, and still another is that the nations are coming together commercially, intellectually and religiously."

Rev. W. W. Moffett, D. D., Lambertville, N. J., pastor of the Centenary M. E. church, says:—

"The trend of revelation on the subject of the millennium seems to teach that a time will come in the history of the world when the Gospel shall dominate all nations and Jesus shall reign in the majority of human hearts. To the close student of the world to-day there seem to be many indications

that this happy period may be enjoyed in the near future."

Rev. Dr. James Lusk, Bordentown, N. J., pastor of the Baptist church, says:—

"As to your first question, I certainly do so believe. However students of the Word may interpret your phrase 'Biblical millennium,' there can be little doubt that some great change is soon to take place. The divine programme is being rapidly completed, so far as the present order of things is concerned. Prophecy is rapidly being fulfilled."

* * *

The majority of those who saw no evidence of a Millennium meant that they saw no evidence of the speedy conversion of the world to such a condition that God's will would be done on earth even as in heaven. And in this we must commend their judgment as sound. But alas! that so many should be so deluded by human theory as to so misunderstand the plain statements of God's Word—that Christ's Millennial reign is for the very purpose of *subduing* all things. (1 Cor. 15:25, 26, 28) False ideas of the "kingdom" and of the "judgment day," and imperfect views of the character and scope of the atonement, are at the bottom of this blindness to the signs of our times.

METHODIST FIGURES FOR 1899

Rev. A. B. Sanford, D. D., editor of the "Methodist Year Book," says in "*The Philadelphia Methodist*,"—

"Your readers may be interested to hear concerning the total membership of the church for 1899, as the statistics have been prepared for the new "Methodist Year Book," now passing through the press. In some measure, the result is preliminary, since the receipt of the figures from a few recent fall conferences will slightly change the additions that later appear in the General Minutes. The "Year Book" totals will not, however, be greatly affected, and show a decrease in members and probationers during the past year amounting to 21,934. In the analysis of this result, several interesting facts appear.

"1. The increase in full members through the whole church has been but 6,661. It is a serious fact that such strong bodies as the New England, the New York, the Philadelphia, the Central Pennsylvania, the New Jersey and the Wilmington Conferences suffered considerable losses, the decrease in these instances varying from the minimum of 1,368, to the maximum of 2,436.

"2. The decrease of probationers in the year 1899 has been 28,595.

"3. This decrease in members and probationers is accompanied by a decline in Sunday School scholars during 1899 of 16,716. It is a noticeable fact that the decline in Sunday School scholars thus occurs in the spring conferences, which as a body contribute a total loss in probationers of 22,572.

"It may be said in conclusion, that the net decline in members and probationers of 21,934 is the first positive decline that has occurred since 1881, and, with that exception, since the year 1863. The above facts are serious, but are such as it may be wholesome, for the church to know."

* * *

We do not rejoice in such evidences of a decline in denominationalism: nor do we expect it to continue. If the losses of denominationalism meant that God's children were getting out into the liberty wherewith Christ makes free in deed, then we would rejoice. But only a small proportion of the present decline can be credited to the spread of present truth. It means, therefore, indifference, worldliness.

It will not surprise us if in the near future a Trust Churchianity will have a season of great prosperity, lasting until the grand collapse which the Scriptures declare will be sudden.

PROPOSED FEDERATION OF PROTESTANT CHURCHES IN GERMANY

Prof. Beyschlag has issued an appeal to German Protestants which is being regarded favorably by many of them. It tends in the direction of the general religious federation we have long been expecting—which will revive religious tyranny and suppress religious liberty and stifle present truth; but

not until it has borne its witness and gathered the "wheat" of the Gospel "harvest." The *Literary Digest* gives a summary of the proposed plan as follows:—

"There is to be no formal union of the various state churches, nor are these to lose their historical identity in the proposed new arrangement. Not a union is proposed, but a federation of the state churches, with the Prussian church which represents the Emperor, the *summus episcopus* of the Protestant church of that kingdom, as the head. The confessional status of each church shall remain undisturbed.

"The object of the federation is to unite the churches of the empire for practical purposes. Chief among these purposes is co-operation in providing for the religious needs of the Germans in the Diaspora, *i. e.*, those who are scattered in the various foreign lands and need religious care. Then, too, the Protestant church of the empire must have some means by which it can, as a body, be represented, just as the Catholic church has a representative in the Pope. A further but later purpose is to secure unity in church government and polity. In other words, it is to be, with the necessary changes, a federation for the good of the church such as the organization of the empire has been for the state.

"This federation is to find its expression in an imperial Protestant synod, which shall consist of representatives of the various state church governments, as also of the congregations, in such proportions as shall be agreed upon. The officials of this synod shall be the representatives and the executive board."

A CONGRESS OF RELIGIOUS HISTORY

This, at the coming Paris Exposition, is proposed as instead of a Parliament of Religions such as was held at the

Chicago World's Fair. It is proposed to avoid *doctrines* and merely to show *works*—missions, charities, etc., and in all these matters Catholicism hopes to make the chief showing, and reap the greatest advantage.

Disapproving of the proposed Congress *The Midland*, a United Presbyterian journal, refers to the Chicago Parliament of Religions as follows:—

"Missionaries tell us that their work has been made more difficult, in India at least, by the boasts of devotees of the false systems of religion there that in Chicago they had met and triumphed over Christianity. Tho not intolerant, the Christian religion is absolutely exclusive. It can have no fellowship with systems which insult the true God and know nothing of that blessed Name by which alone salvation comes to any human soul. Its mission is to expose and uproot all other systems and rescue men from their delusion and destructive influence. We are convinced that these parliaments tend to obscure the distinction between the only true religion and the systems of error it must seek to destroy. One such experiment was one too many. If a second is to be attempted we hope the good sense of Christian people will keep them from participation."

We are pleased to note an expression of so much loyalty to the Gospel, and the only Name in which is salvation. It is as rare as it is refreshing in these days of evolutionary *unbelief* and Higher Criticism *infidelity*. Would that this editor and his readers might see that the blessed day of Christ's Millennial kingdom is near, in the which all the deaf ears shall be opened to hear the joyful sound of salvation and to know of that only name and of the eternal life offered to all who will obey him.

"WITHDRAWAL LETTERS"

These are not samples to be copied by pen, but regular letter all ready to date and sign and can be posted unsealed for one cent each. It is a kind but plain statement of our view of the true invisible Church and its head Christ Jesus and its bondage of love as contrasted with human institutions under Synods, Conferences and Presbyteries and held together with creed-bondage. All who get free from "Babylon" should send one of these letters to *each* church member with whom he as-

sociated in "Babylon." It will do them good and it will insure that you will not be misunderstood and misrepresented *unintentionally*. Otherwise your withdrawal is almost certain to be misrepresented as "Infidelity"—as leaving the *true* church and not merely leaving a *human* organization never recognized by the Lord nor instituted by him, but by fallible men.

Order all you need with tracts and envelopes accompanying *free*—after getting a *sample* and deciding you wish to use them.

"THIS CHARGE I COMMIT UNTO THEE, SON TIMOTHY"

1 TIMOTHY 1:18.

More than a year ago we intimated a desire to do something more than has been hitherto attempted to assist God's dear "sheep" in Great Britain and Ireland to hear the great Shepherd's voice and thus to be led into the green pastures of present truth. Our thought was to send over one of the "Pilgrim" brethren, but the Lord's providence did not seem to open the way for it, and instead Brother Hemery, already there, was started as a "Pilgrim," and we believe with beneficial results, for which the Lord be praised.

Still we are not satisfied that all is being done there that could be done, and since our last annual report we have been seeking to know the mind of the Lord respecting the great increase of his work in the spread of the "harvest" message, which we believe we may reasonably expect in the next few years. While we expect that most of the increase will as usual be in this land, specially prepared and specially favored and favorable it seems to us that the thirty-five millions of Britain for several reasons deserve special consideration and special effort. (1) Because of our unity of language and religious ideals. (2) Because of the prevalence of a religious sentiment among the masses. (3) Because we have reason to hope that the present lamentable war is not only awakening the people, as wars always seem to do, but additionally because some of the reverses met with may prove to be blessings by bringing to the people a larger degree of humility and specially causing the religious to ponder over the evidences we present respecting the completion of the "elect" church and the speedy inauguration of the Millennial reign of righteousness. (4) Because so large a population of one tongue being within comparatively so small a space should make efforts there doubly effective of results, all other considerations being equal.

Accordingly we have planned, and from the first of the year have been arranging to send to Great Britain a representative to look the field over, with a view to the establishment of a branch office in London from whence that whitening field could be more thoroughly harvested. The proposition is, that the "Colporteur" work, the "Volunteer" work and the

"Pilgrim" work could be much better carried on there from such a home office and by one thoroughly familiar with the methods the Chief Reaper has been pleased to bless here. True all these branches have already been started in Great Britain, but none of them work as smoothly and efficiently as we believe they will operate under the proposed plan. Many, we believe, hesitate to order tracts, papers, and books because of the distance, difference in money, etc.

The next question naturally was, To whom shall so important a mission be entrusted? And the question, under the requested guidance of our Lord, seems to be satisfactorily answered. With his hearty consent we have chosen our dear Brother Hennings, in whose efficiency for this service we have fullest confidence and who has given many proofs of his loyalty to the Lord and his cause, and of whose full consecration of heart to the Lord we have no doubt. He has had personal experience in all departments of the work for the past eight years—the last seven of which he has spent in the Watch Tower office and as a member of the Watch Tower family, whose "table talks" are in the nature of Bible schools.

We could not send you, dear British brethren, anyone in our judgment better qualified to assist you in carrying on the work we all so dearly love to serve. We trust that you will welcome him heartily and co-operate with him to the extent of your judgments and opportunities. We shall greatly miss him here, but will feel a pleasure in sacrificing our own conveniences for your sakes—that the grace of our Lord may abound toward many who have not yet "tasted that the Lord is gracious." May he always abound as at present in the knowledge of the truth and in its spirit of love for the Lord.

We have been in correspondence with the British Postmaster General and find that the postal rates and terms are less favorable there than we had expected—less favorable than ours; but having gone thus far we are not yet discouraged—hoping for some good results from a personal inspection of the field anyway. Brother Hennings will go direct to London, view the situation and write us,—meantime awaiting our reply, he will make a "Pilgrim" visit to various cities and

towns where already there are little gatherings of Watch Tower readers; and this alone we believe will justify, should the London "branch" proposition prove to be infeasible.

Of course, Sister Henninges will accompany her husband, not only as his natural help-mate, but as his helper in the Lord's work. We commend our dear sister very highly to you all as a very earnest and faithful child of God and servant

of his cause; full of the spirit of self-sacrifice, and firm for every principle of righteousness as she discerns it. Sister Henninges has been a member of the Watch Tower family for twelve years; joining in the office work with her brother when quite young. May God's blessing continue with both these dear members of our family, making them blessings in various ways to the household of faith across the great deep

THE GOOD TIDINGS DISCREDITED

FEB. 25.—LUKE 14:16-20.

"He came unto his own, and his own received him not."—John 1:11.

Remembering the proverb, "A prophet has no honor in his own country," our Lord did not begin his ministry in Nazareth where almost twenty-eight years of his life had been spent and where consequently he was well known to the people. His ministry began in Judea, and the people of Nazareth undoubtedly heard considerable respecting the marvelous works and words of their suddenly notable fellow-citizen, before he came thither. All this would be in their favor, and tend to prepare them to receive Messiah and his message, offsetting the familiarity which so frequently begets contempt.

Our lesson shows that our Lord had been in the habit of attending the religious services of the synagogue every Sabbath day, and intimates that it had been his custom to do the reading of the law—which implied an education far beyond that of the majority of his day. As synagogue-attendance was not strictly a part of the law, our Lord's example in thus seeking to associate as far as possible with the most religious people of his day, and his willingness to take part in the public services, are a lesson to his people everywhere, in harmony with the words of the Apostle that we should not forget the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, for the Lord's worship.—Hebrew x:25.

The passage of Scripture read by our Lord from the prophecy of Isaiah was quite probably the stated Scripture lesson for that day, for it would appear that it was a custom of the Jews to have Scripture readings each Sabbath day, taking up various parts of the Old Testament Scriptures alternately. At all events, the lesson read by our Lord is easily identified as a Greek translation from Isaiah 61. He read the first verse of the chapter, and stopped reading in the middle of the second verse, closed the roll, and returned it to the servant having charge of the closet in which the rolls were kept, and then, according to the custom of the time, as an indication that he was ready to make remarks, Jesus sat down. How much of an explanation of the Scriptures he gave his hearers we are not definitely told, but doubtless he commented liberally upon the various features of the prophecy, summing up his remarks with that which is recorded, viz., that the prophecy was in process of fulfilment at that very moment.

The audience, composed chiefly of his acquaintances, had a mixed sentiment as respects him; with the natural feeling of irreverence for those with whom we are intimately acquainted was blended another feeling of pride in a fellow-citizen, who had attained such renown; and as they listened to his exposition of the prophecy they were filled with admiration, "and all bear him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth." They said within themselves and to each other, "We have never heard such wonderfully good tidings before in our lives, and this from our neighbor, the carpenter. Little did they realize, when thus admiring his gracious message, that something would occur in a few moments which would completely frenzy them, and lead them to desire to murder the one who now declared himself to be the fulfiller of this prophecy, the Anointed of the Lord, the Messiah, ready to give in due time the blessings mentioned by the prophet.

The people of Nazareth were more interested, however, in the miracles of Jesus than in his claim to be the Messiah. The miracles were practical, and they could appreciate them, but his teaching that he was the Messiah seemed far-fetched, when they had known him for so long as the son of Joseph, the carpenter. They therefore began to wonder, and possibly to question, how soon he would do in Nazareth some of the wonderful miracles done by him at Capernaum and elsewhere, of which they had heard. Knowing this to be the attitude of their mind our Lord anticipated their request for miracles, and explained that they must not expect miracles from him—though they evidently expected more miracles amongst his friends than they had heard of his doing amongst strangers. This made necessary a little explanation, which was not at all flattering to them.

Our Lord does not say that he was not permitted of the

Father to do miracles at Nazareth, although this is implied in the fact that he did none, and implied also in the explanations and illustrations which he gave. Doubtless he was guided in the matter by certain principles governing his use of the power from on high. As we have already seen he might not use this power selfishly in his own interest; we may likewise suppose that he would not be at liberty to use it simply as a gratification to curiosity, but that it could be used only in response to proper faith. The people of Nazareth evidently were not in the attitude of faith, not therefore in the proper attitude of heart, to receive God's blessing—the wrong condition of their hearts was manifested by their actions, when our Lord refused to gratify their curiosity. We note the difference between this curious and unbelieving desire for miracles, and the course of action following it, in contrast with the faith of the Syro-Phoenician woman, her humility of heart, and the manner in which she received our Lord's first refusal to grant her request. (Matthew xv 22-28) We can but suppose that had the people of Nazareth been in a proper attitude of heart they would have accepted our Lord's refusal to work miracles in a different manner, and would have said, "Well, we enjoy the gracious words from his mouth anyway, for they have brought a healing and blessing to our hearts." And if such had been their attitude no doubt later our Lord would have performed miracles of healing in their city also.

By way of explaining to them why he might not perform his miracles in their midst, as well as toward others, our Lord cited two illustrations from the prophets of the past—Elijah sent to the poor Gentile widow, to be a blessing to her home, while widows of Israel were passed by; and Elisha healing Naaman of leprosy, while many lepers in Israel were passed by. These apt illustrations were unkindly received by his hearers, because, drawing the parallel, it likened them to starving poor and diseased lepers and implied our Lord's comparative greatness and superiority to them as a dispenser of divine bounty. After the same manner our Lord elsewhere told the Pharisees that he, as the Good Physician, had come to heal the sick and that the well needed not a physician. That this was their attitude of heart and feeling no need of him, and the blessings he dispensed, they did not realize their sin-sickness, and their deadness in trespasses and sins, and hence did not realize their need of redemption and deliverance from the power of sin and death.

The effect of our Lord's illustrations was almost electrical upon the proud hearts before him, whose only interest in him from the first had been that of pride in him as a fellow-citizen and hope for miracle-proofs of his power. Now, however, this pride was turned to bitterness, and they would murder the one who had spoken so disrespectfully of them as to compare them to hungry widows and lepers, needing his aid. The congregation immediately became a mob, filled with angry passion; and surging forth with him the crowd led in the direction of a precipice with a view to casting him headlong from it. But by the exercise of some power, possibly a power natural to a perfect human being, our Lord mastered them with his mind, and passed from their midst, none daring to stay him, and went on his way.

Let us note carefully the message which our Lord declared was in process of fulfilment that day. He declared himself to be the Anointed One mentioned by the prophet—the anointing of the holy spirit dating from the time of his baptism when John bore witness that the holy spirit descended upon him and abode with him. The anointing was for a purpose, as the prophet declared, and our Lord confirmed the same, saying that he was anointed to preach the gospel.

THE GOOD TIDINGS BORNE BY THE MESSENGER OF THE COVENANT

We are to distinguish between the preaching of the gospel or "good tidings" and the good things promised, which are to come to pass in due time. The preaching was begun by our Lord and has been continued throughout the Gospel age by all those who by the grace of God became "members in particular of his body," the church over which he is the head

forever. (1 Cor. vii. 27; Eph. i: 22-23) After this preaching of the Gospel shall have been given, and shall have accomplished its purpose and intention, then will follow the glorious actualities referred to in it. And if the mere description of the coming blessings is called the Gospel, good news, good tidings for all people, what may we not hope respecting the blessings themselves, of which only the message is now given to the hearing and sight of faith?

The Gospel was to be preached by the Anointed Head and by the anointed members of his body, to all who have ears to hear it, in the special interest of one particular class, viz., the poor, the broken-hearted—not the literally poor any more than the literally broken-hearted, but the “poor in spirit,” the humble-minded, who are also the sympathetic, the tender, the heart-broken, as in contrast with the hard-hearted. We make this distinction as between the poor in purse and the poor in spirit because it is a very necessary one, which some failing to discern have been misled into grievous errors. True, not many rich, either in purse or intellect, will attain the kingdom, the majority, being chiefly the poor of this world in purse and intellect, but rich in faith. (1 Cor. 1: 26-29; James ii: 5) However, it is not because of their poverty of intellect and of purse that there will be more of this class chosen, but merely because poverty of purse and intellect are much more favorable to the development of humility than are riches of any kind; and humility is a prime essential to an inheritance with the saints in light.

While all of the anointed gossellers may during this age bear their message without restriction as to nationality or color or sex, to whosoever has an ear to hear, Jew or Gentile, bond or free, and while they may not be able to discern in advance which will prosper, this or that—nevertheless they will not waste time and effort upon those whom they find to be mentally “rich and increased in goods, and feeling that they have need of nothing.” (Rev. iii: 17) No: they are rather to take note of those who, when they hear the good tidings, give evidence of proper “ears to hear,” the meek, the poor in spirit, realizing that it is this class that the Lord is specially seeking during this age.

Similarly, the anointed ones are not to spend their time endeavoring to break the hard hearts of the worldly, for this is not a part of its commission. God himself, through various providences, is attending to the work of breaking the hard hearts; some are broken and softened by the trials, difficulties, perplexities and adversities of the present life; some are torn and bleeding through severe trials of life and earthly disappointments; and the time of trouble fast approaching is specially designed of the Lord as the time for breaking and melting many hard hearts, in preparation for the Millennial kingdom and its blessings of restitution, etc. Now, however, the message is to “bind up the broken-hearted.”

How much there is of this very kind of work that needs doing! The poor in spirit, contrite and mellowed of heart, disappointed with the world, vexed with the flesh and the adversary, are to be found in nearly every quarter of the world; and whosoever has received the anointing of the holy spirit should realize that this power upon him is given to be exercised upon this needy class—pouring in the oil and the wine of the divine promise, to cheer and comfort and bless, and prepare for joint-heirship in the kingdom, some of the very class whom the Lord will be pleased to accept. To these the gospel may be preached freely; they will not turn again and rend the messengers, but will hear it, and it will comfort and bind up their wounded hearts.

If then we have found the class to whom the anointed ones are to specially address themselves, what is the special message of peace and blessing which they are to bear, and which the Prophet and our Lord denominate the “Gospel”—the good tidings? Is it the announcement of the election of a handful to glory, and the reprobation of all the remainder to an eternity of torment? No, this is not the Gospel which the Prophet and Jesus declared. Is it the message of God's goodness of intention, but incapacity of execution, which will result in a very few being saved and the great mass of humanity being eternally tormented? No, not so. Evidently our Lord was not sent to preach this gospel (?) of damnation, so common to-day—for it is no part of the message here declared, nor would such a reprobation to eternal misery be called “gospel” truthfully.

Let us see what is implied in this “Gospel” message set forth in the Scriptures. Let us know how widely it differs from the various messages of heathendom, and from the commonly accepted messages of “Christendom.” Let us note the true Gospel message that should be proclaimed by all who have been anointed with the holy Spirit. It is divided by the Prophet into five parts: (1) Deliverance to the cap-

tives; (2) recovering of sight to the blind; (3) setting at liberty them that are bruised; (4) the announcement of the acceptable year of the Lord, as preceding these blessings; and (5) the announcement of a day of vengeance in the close or end of the acceptable year of the Lord,—a “time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation.” This last part, tho proper to be proclaimed by the anointed “body,” was not due to be proclaimed by the anointed “Head” at the time of our Lord's discourse. All mankind are captives, all are blind, all are bruised; hence it is a universal blessing that is announced in this Scriptural “Gospel” message.

(1) The captives are the slaves of sin; Adam and all his race, “sold under sin.” (Rom. 7: 14) Through disobedience in Eden the race was born in this slavery, “born in sin, shapen in iniquity.” Some of the sin-enslaved race have already been remanded to the great prison-house of death, while all others are on their way thither. The “good tidings” which Jesus preached and which all his followers under the same anointing of the spirit must preach, is the resurrection of the dead, or as the Apostle expressed his teaching, it is “Jesus and the resurrection.” (Acts 17: 18) Jesus, the Redeemer, Jesus the anointed Head of the spiritual Seed which, as God's kingdom, is shortly to bring to mankind full opportunity of release, not only from the prison-house, but from all the other incidents of their slavery through the first Adam,—he having redeemed the first Adam and his posterity with his own precious life.

None but the anointed body of Christ are commissioned to preach this good tidings, and every member of that body is so commissioned irrespective of human distinctions of “clergy” and “laity;” and whoever does not fulfil this mission is unfaithful to his commission. And alas! as we look around us, throughout the length and breadth of Churchianity, falsely called Christianity, we find that evidently very few indeed have been anointed, because very few indeed know this message of the resurrection,—indeed that the majority of ministers in all denominations are heartily opposed to the doctrine of the resurrection because it is in direct conflict with their unscriptural theories.

(2) The promised recovering of sight to the blind has a far deeper signification than mere natural eyesight. It refers to the blindness which sin has brought upon the hearts of men, perverting their mental vision, hindering them from seeing the divine being and his divine attributes in their true light,—as loving, gracious and true, just and wise. The blindness that is upon mankind, and “the gross darkness that covers the people” in general, is described by the Apostle as being the work of the great adversary Satan, who by false doctrines not only amongst the heathen but also amongst Christians, has misrepresented the divine character, the divine Word, the divine plan, “putting light for darkness, and darkness for light,” and has thus deceived the whole world, all nations, with the very small exception of the few whose eyes of understanding have been enlightened with the true light. We have no hope for this general opening of the blind eyes in the present age—only the few now get the eyesalve. In some respects indeed it is better that the majority should be permitted to remain blinded until by the establishment of the Millennial kingdom the condition shall be much more favorable than at present, that when then the eyes of their understanding have been opened, and their responsibilities proportionately increased, it may be under circumstances more favorable to them.

(3) “To set at liberty them that are bruised” gives the thought of sin's captives sore and distressed from the manacles with which they are bound. This figure fitly represents the bondage of corruption, infirmity, etc., which are concomitants to the death penalty. The promise for such a deliverance means “restitution” in active operation (Acts 3: 19-21), in the assistance and uplifting of the world of mankind during the Millennial age—to all the glorious perfections lost for all through father Adam's disobedience, and his sentence of death. What a glorious hope is here! No wonder this also was included as a part of the good tidings. How comparatively valueless would all the other features of blessing be, if sickness and pain and imperfection continued. It is when we see not only Sin, the taskmaster, itself removed, but also all of its results counteracted, and all the sinner-race privileged to return to the full liberty of sons of God, and that all this is provided for through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, and through the kingdom which is to be established in his hands for the blessing of all the families of the earth—then we discern why it is called “good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people,” and hear the echo of John's prophecy from the standpoint of the future perfection, saying, “There shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying,

neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away."—Rev. 21:4.

(4) "The acceptable year (or acceptable time or epoch) of the Lord" is this Gospel age, which began with our Lord's consecration at his baptism, and his anointing with the holy spirit, and which will continue until the last member of the body of Christ has "filled up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ"—until all the sufferings of Christ (head and body) are complete, when the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.—Isa. 40:5.

This Gospel age is called the acceptable epoch, because during this time God is willing to accept sacrifices for sins. First he accepted the sacrifice of his only begotten Son our Lord, and secondly he has been accepting throughout the age all those who come unto the Father through Jesus, and who, justified by his merit, present their bodies living sacrifices to God as a reasonable service, and thus become joint-sacrificers with Jesus, and joint-heirs with him in the coming kingdom, as it is written, "Heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."—Rom. 8:17.

WE WALK BY FAITH AND NOT BY SIGHT

However, it is well to notice that while the "Gospel" includes all the foregoing blessings for mankind in general, it brings a sooner and still greater blessing to the "little flock" whose ears are blessed that they hear, and whose eyes are blessed that they see, in advance of the world. To these all of the coming blessings are anticipated, not literally, but by faith, for "We walk by faith, not by sight." Already the true church ("whose names are written in heaven" Heb. 12:23) is not only justified by faith, and thus reckonedly released from captivity to Sin and Death, but also reckonedly is risen with Christ, reckonedly has become "new creatures" in Christ, reckonedly, under the New Covenant, are no longer in the flesh but in the spirit, and so accounted of God, and so accounted also of each other, who henceforth know each other, not after the flesh, but after the spirit—as new creatures.—2 Cor. 5:16.

See Tabernacle Shadows of Better Sacrifices

"AND HE HEALED MANY THAT WERE SICK"

MARCH 4.—MARK 1:21-34.

Jesus made Capernaum his home and the center of his work in Galilee for a considerable time. It will be remembered that it was here that the Roman centurion, whose servant Jesus healed, lived, of whom the Jews testified that he was a friend of their nation, and had built them a synagogue or house of worship and Bible study. (Luke vii:5) Some ruins in that vicinity have recently been exhumed which are supposed by scholars to be the remains of this synagogue, because they seem to be on the site of Capernaum, and represent the most substantial synagogue structure in all that region, the walls being ten feet thick, seventy-four feet nine inches long, and fifty-six feet nine inches wide, with a roof supported by four rows of columns.

As indicating our Lord's strict attention to the Father's business, we have the statement that "straightway," at once, on arriving at Capernaum from Nazareth, our Lord went into the synagogue (probably the one built by the centurion), and began his teaching. This reads peculiarly at the present day, when custom has completely barricaded every opportunity for free expression of opinion in almost all places devoted to worship. The Jewish arrangement was certainly a liberal one, and every way favorable to the truth, because whatever errors might creep in, the truth always had an opportunity for challenging them and exposing their weaknesses and referring to the divinely inspired oracles. Who can doubt that if we had just such simplicity or arrangements today, by which truth could challenge the various errors which have crept into all sectarian teaching, the result would be favorable—not favorable to sectarian systems, it is true, but favorable to the establishment of each individual in the truth, as presented in the divine oracles.

The people who heard our Lord's discourse were astonished (1) At the things which he taught, and (2) at the manner in which he presented them. He taught with authority, that is to say, our Lord had a clear understanding of the subjects he handled, and his presentations were not vague suppositions and imaginations, and foundationless hopes and speculations; but were clear-cut and distinct; and well proven by the testimonies of the Law and the Prophets, so that they were conclusive in the minds of his hearers, who hitherto had been used to hearing the scribes guess, wonder, suppose, etc. Since the Lord has not seen fit to provide us with even a condensed

These have a new sight, seeing with the eye of faith things that are not visible to the natural sight. They are guided into all truth, as it becomes due; yes, they discern "the deep things of God," because they possess the spirit of God (1 Cor. 2:9, 10), seeing with the eye of faith things which the natural eye hath not seen, hearing with the ear of faith things which the natural ear has never heard, neither has entered into the heart of the natural man to conceive of or imagine—the things which God hath in reservation for them that love him.—and who manifest their love by their devotion to him and his. The eyes of their understanding being opened, they are enabled to "comprehend with all saints the length and breadth, the height and depth, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth (human) knowledge."—Eph. 3:18.

Altho this special class is not set at liberty from the bruises and imperfections of the mortal body during the present life, but require in this as in other things to walk by faith and not by sight, nevertheless, in one sense of the word they are set at liberty from these imperfections, because under the terms of the New Covenant* they have the assurance of the Lord that none of the natural blemishes and imperfections and physical weaknesses are henceforth counted against them, their standing being reckonedly that of new creatures, and their judgment in the Lord's sight being according to their intentions of heart, and not according to the weaknesses of their flesh, which is reckoned dead.

We exhort all of the redeemed who have made a covenant with the Lord, "a covenant of sacrifice," to remember why they are reckoned as members baptised into the body of the anointed one (the Christ)—here plainly set forth by the Head of our body, viz., that each one is to be a preacher of this Gospel and not of another Gospel. Let us be faithful for yet a little longer, until the great High Priest shall fully qualify us as the "royal priesthood" in the glory of the kingdom, that then it may be our privilege with him to bring to mankind all the wonderful blessings forestated in his gospel, for the blessing of all the families of the earth, with a full opportunity of attaining the truth and the liberty of the sons of God.

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

statement of his discourse, it implies that a full knowledge of it would not be specially advantageous to us. However, a hint or inference respecting a portion of the sermon is furnished in the statement that during its progress a man present, possessed by an unclean spirit, cried out—evidently opposing something Jesus had said, saying, "Let us alone: what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us?"

The clear inference is that Jesus had been speaking against sin, and the power which it exercised over humanity, involving all in the death penalty, with its sickness and pain and trouble; and incidentally no doubt he had mentioned demoniacal possession, so common at that time—and more common today than most people suppose. It is our guess that the gospel preached at Capernaum must have followed somewhat similar lines to the gospel preached at Nazareth, declaring the time at hand in which God would be pleased to receive back into harmony with himself those who had been alienated through sin, and who had thus been brought under the bondage of corruption. He no doubt declared himself to be the great Life-giver, the Good Physician, sent to heal earth's woes and to reveal to mankind the Heavenly Father, and to become to as many as would avail themselves of it, "the Way, the Truth and the Life," by which they might return to divine favor in fullest measure. The language of the evil spirit, speaking through the man as its mouthpiece,* clearly implies that these fallen spirits had at least a general understanding of the time when their evil course would be run, and that they knew that the just wages of their sinful course is destruction—not eternal torment. They recognized Jesus and his mission and his holiness, and that he was the representative of the Heavenly Father, but they had no hope for themselves—no expectation other than that when the time should come they would be utterly destroyed, annihilated. From various Scriptures, however, we learn that these fallen angels, demons, wicked spirits, will not be destroyed without first being given an opportunity for repentance and reconciliation with God.*

Our Lord did not deign to hold conversation with these spirit beings, who had fallen under the ban of divine con-

* See *What Say the Scriptures About Spiritualism?*—Price 10 cents, this office

demnation, and with whom the Heavenly Father could no longer have intercourse. He did not, therefore, explain to them that his first advent was merely to pay the ransom price, and to start the gospel message which would select the "little flock" to be members of his "body" and joint-heirs with him in the kingdom, that when complete and glorified should bless and judge the world and judge the fallen angels also. (1 Cor. 6:3) And our Lord's course in having nothing whatever to do with these fallen spirits, but on the contrary commanding them to hold their peace, should be a lesson to every one of his followers, who should seek in this and in every other matter to walk in his steps. We have known some to get themselves into serious difficulties through curiosity—which led them either to spiritualistic seances or to privately have communication with these fallen ones. Their cunning and deceitfulness is far too deep for humanity, and he who seeks communion with them in any manner or degree does so in violation, not only of the Scriptural command (Lev. 20:6; Isa. 8:19), but in violation also of Jesus' example; and such run great risk of thus being entrapped and falling from their own steadfastness. The Apostle gives us to understand that even unwillingly and unwittingly we frequently wrestle, not with flesh and blood, but with these evil spirits, who inspire and use fallen fellow-creatures—Eph. 6:2.

The unclean spirit "tore" the man in coming out, that is, caused violent convulsions, and used the man's mouth in uttering a loud cry. Our Lord, of course, could have forbidden such manifestations of the demon spirit, but preferred to allow it to be so, that thus might be manifested the malignant disposition of the evil spirits, as well as the power of his command which, with all their malignity, they could not disobey. The effect of the miracle upon the audience of course was wonderful. They saw "the man Christ Jesus" exercising in their very presence a superhuman power—controlling spirit beings. No wonder they were amazed, and no wonder his fame spread throughout all Galilee.

Leaving the synagogue, our Lord, accompanied by James and John, went with Simon Peter and Andrew, his brother, to their home, where Peter's mother-in-law lay sick of a fever. Jesus visited her, and "rebuked the fever," took her by the hand and helped her up (Luke 4:39), and immediately the fever was gone, and even the usually accompanying prostration of strength did not remain, but on the contrary, she was able to entertain and serve her company.

The fame of Jesus spread rapidly, and at sundown, in the cool of the day, many sick were brought to him to be healed, and many possessed of devils, to have the evil spirits cast out. The concourse was a great one, from all parts of the city, and again our Lord manifested his mercy in healing ailments, and casting out demons; again, however, refusing to converse with the demons and even refusing and forbidding their giving testimony respecting him. Praise and commendation from an evil source are never to be desired.

The question naturally arises, Why did the Lord perform such miracles? If they were merely from benevolence and with a desire to help the afflicted, why did he not do more of them?—for instance, in the city of Nazareth, regardless of the condition of the hearts of those who were afflicted. Why did he not at one word rebuke all the fevers and all the other diseases which afflicted humanity, throughout the whole of Galilee, the whole of Palestine, the whole of Asia, the whole of Africa, the whole of Europe and the whole of America? Quite evidently the performance of these miracles was not merely from benevolence toward mankind.

Indeed, we have reason to question whether or not it would be a benevolent act to cure all the ills of humanity in the present time. The aches and pains, the troubles and sorrows, of humanity are in many senses of the word blessings in disguise, just as was the part of the original sentence of Adam, which declares: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." He who succeeds in avoiding the earning of his daily food by some kind of toil has succeeded in placing himself in an unfavorable condition, for idleness is not only the mother of vice, but the father of discontent. Similarly, there is a ministry of instruction in sickness and trouble which should not be overlooked. The Prophet refers to this blessing that inheres in tribulation, saying, "Before I was afflicted I went astray," and many of the Lord's people can if they will trace some of their greatest blessings and greatest helps in the development of true character to their experiences in various kinds of troubles and disease. Note where we will throughout the world the finest and the noblest and the best balanced characters, and trace these characters in their development, and we find that much of the chiseling and polishing which has made them what they are was done by affliction of one

kind or another—guided, if they were consecrated Christians—by the unseen hand of Providence.

The miracles which our Lord performed in the little country of Palestine, by which a small proportion of their sick were relieved temporarily, was merely a prophecy of the great healing blessing, freeing from the power of Satan and sin, which he preached, and which is to be fulfilled in due time—during his Millennial kingdom.

His object in performing these miracles was not, however, merely to thus prophesy the future and greater universal blessings of his reign, but more particularly as signs, as evidences, as witnesses respecting his teachings. It was his doctrines or teachings that were to move men; so that as the power of God these might draw to him that certain class which the Father has given him during this age. If he would utter things respecting a heavenly condition, a birth of the spirit to a spirit nature, a spirit kingdom, etc., it would be eminently proper for any hearer to enquire respecting his authority for making such statements and promises, unknown to others and unproven from any earthly standpoint. It was therefore proper that our Lord should anticipate such enquiries respecting his authority for his teachings by giving miraculous demonstrations of his superhuman power, which he explained to be of the Father and witnessing to his integrity.

But someone may say, If such miraculous manifestations were proper and reasonable to the generation in personal contact with our Lord, why would not similar miracles be proper and reasonable for us of the present time, and for others all down through the Gospel age? We reply that some evidences, proofs or miracles would be proper now, and that greater miracles are before us today, as witnesses to the truth of Christianity. These are not of the same order as those which introduced the Gospel age in the "harvest" or end of the Jewish age; they are, indeed, of a far higher order, and more in harmony with the age in which we live. They are none the less real than the miracles of Jesus' day, though they may be less obtrusive and less likely to be noticed, except as attention shall be called to them. Our Lord seems to refer to these present-day miracles when he said to his disciples, "Greater works than these shall ye do, because I go unto my Father"—Jno. 14:12.

Which is the greater work—the opening of the eyes of the naturally blind, or the opening of the eyes of the understanding? Which is the more valuable? In the end of the Jewish age our Lord healed eyes that were blinded either by accident or poison or a sting or what not, and that was a miracle, but today the Lord's disciples, under the guidance of the holy spirit, and through it, are able in many instances to open the eyes of the understanding, that those who are blind to spiritual things might see them—and this blindness, the Apostle tells us, is not a mere trifling thing or accident or sting, but is the skillful and intentional injury of the mental eye by the god of this world, Satan. (2 Cor. 4:4) Do we not, therefore, see many more miracles of this kind—the opening of the eyes of the understanding with the eye-salve of the truth in this harvest-time of the Gospel age—than are recorded of the natural sight restoration amongst the Israelites in the harvest of the Jewish age? And which is the more serious of the two blindnesses? Whether would we prefer to be blind naturally or to be blind to the spiritual things? Whether, therefore, is it the greater miracle to be relieved of natural blindness or to be relieved of spiritual darkness? Undoubtedly the latter.

Similarly with all the diseases, we might draw parallels and find these the greater miracles. Peter's mother-in-law was being consumed with a fever which the word of the Lord rebuked. But how many men and how many women throughout Christendom today are being consumed of a fever of ambition or pride or discontent, to whom the word of the Lord comes, through some of the household of faith, speaking peace, release from burdensome anxiety and cares of this life, lust for riches, and consuming ambitions and pride of life? How many have been restored to normal conditions and granted to have the peace of God ruling in their hearts, with thankfulness, and how many such have found their strength renewed, so that being released from these fevers they arose to do vigorously the Lord's business, to minister, to serve, the Lord and his "brethren"? Similarly also we might trace the lamenesses and impotencies of the past, and find analogies in the present—dead hands, worse than dead, used actively in the service of evil, have been recovered for activity in the service of the Lord; men and women dead in trespasses and sins, awakened to newness of life in the service of the Lord and of the truth. Such miracles as these, far greater than the ones of Jesus' day in the flesh. He is now performing through his willing servants and handmaidens, and these are the greatest witnesses imaginable to the reality of the Lord's gracious message that

he is the Messiah, the Sent of God, to bring salvation to the race of mankind.

The transformations of life and character, hopes and aims, by which some in the present time are blessed, like the physical healings in the harvest time of the Jewish age, are prophesies of what the grace of God can and will do for humanity when God's due time shall come, when his kingdom shall come, and through its administration of love and justice his will shall be done on earth as it is done in heaven. He who can

see now the earthly blessings and healings, accomplished by our Lord, were but foretastes of the coming general blessings to be accomplished during the Millennium, should be able also to see that the regenerations of heart and transformations of character now in progress in the "elect" church are merely foretastes or a first-fruits, illustrative of the blessings of transformed character which the kingdom will accomplish for all who will come into subjection to its righteous arrangements.

"THE SON OF MAN HATH POWER ON EARTH TO FORGIVE SINS"

MARCH 11.—MARK 2:1-12.

Following the miracle of our last lesson and probably other miracles not recorded in this connection, our Lord apparently made another preaching tour; after returning to his home city of Capernaum the incidents of this lesson transpired. Evidently our Lord, with his mother and brethren, had been making Capernaum his home for some time, and it is entirely probable that the house mentioned in this lesson was our Lord's own home. Dr. Schaff suggests that according to the Greek text this might read "at home," instead of "in the house." As we saw in our last lesson, however, Capernaum was the home also of Peter and Andrew, and the incident of this lesson might possibly have occurred there, though this is less probable.

The return of the young and wonderful Teacher to his own city and home was soon widely known—"noised;" the result was a considerable concourse of people, not only filling the house and the courtyard, but even the door or gateway. Amongst these callers were Pharisees and Doctors of the Law (rabbis, scribes), who came out of the various towns of Galilee and Judea to hear Jesus, and to note his miracles.—See Luke 5:17-18.

Our Lord's mission was the preaching of the Gospel, and, as already pointed out, the healings, miracles, etc., were incidentals, and not by any means his chief work or object—the "times of restitution" (Acts 3:21) not having come, the miracles of our Lord were merely attestations to and corroborative of his teachings respecting the kingdom and the kingdom class which he had come to call and gather—out of Israel and from amongst the Gentiles. Undoubtedly he preached the same message delivered in Nazareth respecting the Lord's spirit being upon him, anointing him to preach the good tidings to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted and to declare a coming deliverance to the captives of sin and death, and the restoration of sight to those blinded by Satan, and the setting at liberty of all the captives subject to the bondage of corruption, but probably this one message was presented from various standpoints at various times, and various texts used, as also various parables introduced in illustration of it. This, however, was the "Word," the message, which our Lord was commissioned to deliver, and we may be sure he did it faithfully.

While our Lord was in the midst of his discourse a paralytic, evidently full of faith, borne on a stretcher of some kind by four friends, sought opportunity to reach him, with full faith in his power and willingness to heal. Finding no opportunity of making their way through the crowd, the bearers took their burden onto the roof by the outside stairway, customary in that country—the buildings being usually but one story in height. It is not at all probable that the building and roof were of the ordinary kind that would have obliged that lifting of stones and cement and dirt, and the breaking of the plaster beneath, for this would involve an absurdity, and the falling of the stones and debris and dust upon our Lord and the congregation would have been insufferable as well as dangerous. The more reasonable supposition is that the house was one of the less common kind, enclosing a courtyard capable of accommodating quite a large audience, the living rooms being built around the wall of the courtyard at one end, and a veranda or porch-roof over a part of the open court, covered with tiles, which could be removed without much difficulty. The thought would be that our Lord stood under this veranda, preaching; that some of his audience were likewise under it and others standing out, exposed to the sunshine in the court. Dr. Thompson makes the following comment:

"The whole affair was the extemporaneous device of plain peasants accustomed to opening their roofs and letting down grain, straw and other articles, as they still do in this (Eastern) country. I have often seen it done, and have done it myself, to houses in Lebanon. I have the impression, however, that the covering, at least of the lewan (court) was not made of earth, but of coarse matting, or boards, or stone slabs,

that could be quickly removed."—Compare this with Luke 5:19.

Our Lord was not offended by this intrusion. He doubtless remembered that all things work together for good to the Lord's people, who will accept them thus. So far from feeling offended at the intrusion and persistency, he entirely overlooked these when balancing them with the quality which he so much admires—faith. All of the Lord's people can well take note of this lesson, and learn more and more to accept the affairs of life as they come as being all subject to divine providence and all guaranteed in advance to be profitable, to work out some good result, if we will but so permit, by receiving them in faith. Let us learn also to overlook and forget rudeness, especially where there is evidence of sincerity of heart, faith, good intentions.

In various ways we learn that under the head of "paralysis" in olden times, in Oriental countries, various diseases were included, which are now specified under different names. For instance, titanus (lockjaw) would at that time and in that country be described as paralysis—indeed, any disease which would render the individual helpless, powerless—whether merely a deadness or accompanied by violent cramps. The incidents connected with this miracle would seem to indicate that it was a serious case, and had in it something of the element of urgency—necessity for seeing the Lord quickly and obtaining his help promptly. Otherwise propriety would have dictated a different course.

It might be questioned whether the faith was that of the palsied man or that of his friends, but we think the circumstances warrant the belief that the sick man himself exercised the faith and prompted his friends to take the steps they did in obedience to his request. This is implied in the fact that our Lord does not speak of the faith of the bearers, but does speak directly to the paralytic respecting his personal faith. Our Lord must have seen a very proper condition in the young man's heart, else he never would have said to him, unsolicited, "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee." Nor was this expression unpremeditated; our Lord evidently wished that the miracle he was about to perform should not detract from the preaching which it interrupted, but, on the contrary, should impress it as well as illustrate it. He foreknew also that such an unusual statement would awaken in his hearers questionings respecting his authority, and thus the miracle subsequently performed would emphasize the fact that he was the Messiah, and that the redemption of sinners and the forgiveness of sins had been committed to him by the Father.

The question of the scribes (that is, the Rabbis, the Doctors of the Law), Is not such a statement blasphemy? was a very proper one, and they are not to be blamed for making the enquiry. Our Lord did not deny its propriety, but answered it by saying, It would, of course, be easy for anybody to make the claim of forgiving sins, and it might be impossible to dispute his claim, but in my case I will substantiate my claim to be able to forgive sins by my power to heal this man physically; when, therefore, you shall perceive his miraculous cure of a physical ailment, it will be a lesson respecting the truthfulness of my statement in regard to his sins—that you may know that as the Son of Man I have power, authority, to forgive sins. (Compare Luke 5:24) Then came the healing of the paralytic, which, put in this form, became a proof, not only of our Lord's healing power, but also of his power to forgive sins. And when the sick man, in obedience to our Lord's command, took up his couch or stretcher and went forth in the presence of all, no wonder they were amazed and praised God.

Apparently all were fully satisfied with the demonstration, Luke saying that they were all filled with fear—reverence—in view of so mighty a demonstration of divine power in their midst. It was not a lesson of fear toward God in the sense of a dread of an unthinkable everlasting future torment, but a fear, in the sense of respect for the God whose love and sympathy and compassion had been so wonderfully manifested—a God who not only was willing to forgive sins, but also willing to help and to relieve his creatures from the difficulties

which sin had brought upon them. Say what we will about the depravity and crookedness of human reasoning, there is, after all, a power of common sense in humanity which, if properly actuated, is the strongest possible lever in moving them in the right direction—far more influential with reasoning people than all the false and unreasonable theories which could be concocted.

One lesson for us, found in this incident, is that we, like our Lord, should seek to turn every earthly matter to some good account as respects our real mission in the world—the declaration of the good tidings, and the selection of the kingdom class to be joint-heirs with our Lord in his Millennial glory. Another thought is that in every instance the healing of the soul from the sickness and condemnation of sin should be placed first, as the highest and most important thing, far outweighing physical conditions and blessings.

Although our Lord proved to his hearers that his pronouncement of forgiveness was evidently backed by power and authority, as evidenced by the miracle, nevertheless he did not explain to them the how and the why of his conduct, and hence, while giving them proof, he left the questions of their minds unanswered. His hearers belonged to the house of servants, and not to the house of sons—the holy Spirit of begetting and adoption not having yet been given because Jesus was not yet glorified (John 7:39). To the house of sons, however, this matter is explained in the Scriptures in the light of the holy Spirit so that we may understand the how and the why as well as the fact, thus:

There was a provision under the Jewish law for the forgiveness or covering of the sins of the people, through the offering of special sin offerings by the priests, but our Lord Jesus was not a priest of the Atonement, and the palsied man before him had not brought a sin-offering, under the terms of the Jewish law. However, we see the situation in a new light when we realize that the paralytic evidently brought to the Lord the sacrifice appropriate to the new dispensation, "a broken and a contrite heart," full of faith, and remember also that our Lord at his baptism assumed the office of the antitypical high priest the moment he was anointed with the holy spirit, and that his sacrifice of himself was counted as given by him and as accepted by the Father, from the moment of his consecration to death, symbolized in his water baptism. Hence we see that our Lord's authority to pronounce the forgiveness of sins was in virtue of his having sacrificed his humanity (which was in process of consummation upon the altar) while he, as a new creature, was a priest of the new order, the "royal priesthood," fully empowered to forgive sins.

Furthermore, this willingness of our Lord to forgive and to heal gives us a suggestion of his willingness and ability to do these same things (forgive the sins and heal the body) when the times of general refreshment shall come from the presence of Jehovah—"the times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began"—Acts 3:19-21.

The various difficulties under which humanity labors, called

diseases, illustrate sin in various respects; for instance, palsy or paralysis represents a condition of sin in which the individual loses his power—sometimes merely becoming impotent, in the sense of helpless; at other times, in combination with this may come an insensibility of conscience, a deadness to all principles of righteousness, such as the Apostle describes as "past feeling." In this condition are quite a good many at the present time; they are not only helpless as respects all ability to go to the great Physician, but additionally they are devoid of any desire, any appreciation of their need; they have no feeling on the subject. These must be left for the present, but we may rejoice that the time is coming, according to the promise of the Lord's Word, when all shall come to a realization, a sensibility of sin, and to a knowledge of the way of escape from its condemnation and its penalties. In the present time, however, some, like this paralytic, are not past feeling, and yet are so helpless as to need the assistance of friends in bringing them to the Lord.

Every true Christian should be such a friend to every fellow-creature who has a desire for the Lord's blessing, and healing from sin-sickness; and such should be not only sympathetic but helpful in bringing their friends to the good Physician of the soul. Nor should they be readily stopped by impediments, obstacles, but like those in the illustration, they should be ready and willing to take advantage of every proper circumstance and condition to place their friend near to the Lord and his power, that the blessing might result. And will not the Lord be pleased with our faith as well as theirs, if we persistently do all in our power in their aid?

"True faith, like truest love, invents;

Denied the door, it circumvents."

Another thought here is that the first and most important thing for all is the forgiveness of sins. It is in vain that any would endeavor to avoid this first essential step toward acceptable Christianity. Some are inclined to put doctrine instead of faith and repentance, but this will not do. There is no use whatever in endeavoring to grow a crop of wheat on soil whose sod has not been broken. The fallow ground must first be broken up ere the seed can find proper root and bring forth fruit. So only those whose hearts have been plowed and brought into the condition of meekness and contriteness, and a desire for fellowship with the Lord—these alone are proper subjects to be brought to the Lord. True, it is not within our power to break the stony hearts, nor to plow the fallow ground; all that we can do is to note those in whose lives experiences have produced such results, and to sow the good seed of the kingdom in such hearts. This being the case, we must not be surprised that not many are ready for present truth; but toward those who give such evidence we are not to make the mistake of leading them to suppose that repentance and forgiveness are nonessential, but rather we are to point them to these as primary conditions upon which alone they can properly make progress, both in knowledge and in grace, so as to attain ultimately to the gracious things which God has promised to them that love him.

THESE MANY YEARS

[This poem was a reprint of that published in issue of September 15, 1894, which please see.]

INTERESTING LETTER

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL.—Enclosed find order for £5—being £2 10s. expenses incurred by bringing Bro. Houston to our October conference, which he handed back to us as a donation to the Tract Fund, to help defray the cost of "*Bible vs. Evolution*." The remainder is from the church in Glasgow.

Sister Ferrie will tell you about our method of carrying out the Volunteer movement. Up to date we have given the books at 73 churches, and have distributed 10,093 copies, being an average of about 138. We have been greatly surprised at the smallness of the congregations. We distribute only at the forenoon service, which in most cases has the smallest attendance, but it invariably includes the more earnest portion of the congregation, and we are of the opinion that by this method the ripe wheat will be reached. There have been a few inquiries for further literature, from whom we hope to hear again. We have suffered no other annoyance than an occasional refusal to accept the booklet.

All the brothers and sisters who are able take part in the work, and some occasionally travel a considerable distance in order to enjoy this privilege. A few of us meet in the morning for a season of prayer before going out, and have found it most refreshing and helpful.

We note with pleasure your promise of another pamphlet for distribution at the churches which have received the one

on Evolution. The church here feel very grateful for what you have given us, and deplore their inability to take a larger share in the financial responsibility. We are deeply interested in the work and are willing to do anything in our power to lessen your burdens.

Assuring you of the continued affection of all the members of our little company, and their high appreciation of your noble work, I am

Yours in the one hope, ALEX. TAIT,—Scotland.

[The "Volunteer" work in Great Britain naturally commenced later than here, but we are glad to note that it progresses splendidly. Ours is a campaign of blood—"the blood of the cross," and is far more worthy of time, energy, treasure and our life-blood than any other known in the world. Courage! dear fellow-soldiers. Steady! the eye of our Captain is for victory only by "laying down our lives for the brethren" as he set us an example. We regret that we are out of our error-destroying and new-hope and new-life-infusing ammunition. "Good Hopes" for this year justify us in beginning the work for this year liberally and paper mill already has our order for forty-six tons of paper for "Volunteer" work for immediate delivery. We hope to be able to begin filling orders about April 1.—EDITOR.]