

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER

DANGER POINT IN GERMANY NEAR

Years ago the German Emperor, although ostensibly the head of a Protestant church, found it necessary to conciliate the representatives of the Centrist-Catholic Party, which previously had been decreed by his government to be the "powers of darkness." By now the Socialists and other radical parties in Parliament are numerically so strong and so opposed to the Kaiser's schemes that his government policies would fail without the Catholic support.

Socialists in the Reichstag (Parliament) twit the Emperor and the Catholics with the suggestion that as the Catholics were once officially known as the "powers of darkness," and opposed to the government which represents the divine will, so their coming into power with the government should be understood as a return of divine favor toward them; and that now that Socialists are coming into power, this should be regarded by the Emperor and all as the latest manifestation of divine will.

The Emperor is seeking to impress the people with the thought that they are his subjects, and that he is responsible to God for their government. Thus politics and religion are more strongly than ever united. And the Pope's wishes become practically the law in Germany.

Meanwhile the present Pope is asserting himself against what he styles modernism—higher critical infidelity, etc. He has recently issued an edict that all ministers of the Catholic church shall be examined and sworn as respects their loyalty to the Bible and to the church of Rome—the tests extending even to theological students, and requiring of them an oath annually.

The Catholic priests of Germany receive support from the German treasury, as do the Protestant ministers. The latter are resenting the Pope's demands, while the Emperor inclines to support them. Thus a new cause of friction is introduced into German affairs. The Emperor must stand by the Catholic party in Parliament, in order to have passed his schemes for a great navy and militarism in general.

The Socialists and Liberals in Parliament are demanding separation of church and state, such as we have in the United States; such as has recently been established in France and Portugal.

The conflict between Parliament, the law-making body, and the Emperor and his executive board of administration of government grows in intensity. The Emperor's pronouncement that he reigns not by the will of the German people, but by the grace of God, is publicly declared in Parliament to be an attack upon the people and their Parliament. The theory opposed to the Emperor is that he holds his authority in the State of Prussia by the gift of the people there, and that his title as emperor of all the Germans came to him from the German Parliament, which, having created him an emperor, is his superior and fully qualified to take from him the Emperorship, and, if it choose, to create a Republic.

Dr. David recently declared in Parliament that the Kaiser had written into the "gold book" of the German people, as intended for eternity, the message, "by divine right I am king; hence, am responsible to the Lord alone. The weighty responsibility, therefore, which the king bears for his people gives him the right to expect faithful co-operation on the part of his subjects."

"But," said Dr. David, "we are no subjects. We are free citizens of a State. The people gave the Prussian king his crown in the battles of liberty, and, as for the crown of the Empire, the matter is clear that the Kaiser received it from the Reichstag" (Parliament).

Another representative, Ledebour, said that German citizenship is standing face to face with a question of destiny. "Perhaps this question is being raised for the last time," he continued. . . . "We could fight our battle alone, and the result would be that all the men of people's parties who disdain the divine right of kings, etc., would ultimately come on our side. If we (Socialists) fight together with you (Liberals) we will still maintain our aims. We hold fast to our Republican demands. As in other lands, so in Germany. Republicanism must be fully developed. The spirit of the times, which the Kaiser had declared pernicious, must be victorious. . . . If you will fight with us, we will ultimately win. And if the world were full of devils, we would, nevertheless, succeed."

The approaching issue in Germany is equal and unlimited franchise to rich and poor alike. The Socialists believe that this point gained will mean a peaceable revolution in Germany. Others fear that rather than permit the Parlia-

ment to be thus freed from the imperial control, the Emperor, acting upon his claim of divine right to reign, would put the country under imperial law without a Parliament, and reign as an autocrat. It is further feared that such a move would mean civil strife, anarchy, bloodshed. All seem agreed that the issue between the Kaiser and the people cannot long be deferred of solution.

The German Chancellor is quoted as using the following language: "The revolutionary character of the Socialist party becomes more pronounced and brutal in its character. Dr. Carl Liebknecht, a Social-Democrat of the Prussian Diet, in an address delivered in the United States recently, said that the conditions in Germany were such as might cause the German crown to be blown away in a single night, just as was the case with Portugal. Our nation must have a clear answer to expressions of such character. The Socialists and all those teaching the masses that prosperity can come to them only after the overthrow of the present form of government, are responsible when the masses draw practical conclusions from such teachings. For this reason I hold the Socialists responsible for the excesses that were recently committed and the strife in Moabit, Berlin, and elsewhere. 'Whoever sows wind will reap a whirlwind.'"

CONSCIENCE IN ACCUSATION

It is a fact that in their offensive tactics many of our public men are deficient either in conscience or in manner, or in both. They make charges against their opponents recklessly. They say things which they cannot prove and which it is only charitable to their intellectuals to assume they do not believe.

It seems to be the idea that if you throw enough mud some of it will stick, and none of it will spatter yourself; that if you throw enough clubs some will land, and none return, boomerang fashion, on your own head.

We say this notion is wrong. We believe that men who are careless in their words are equally careless in their acts. The man who, without justification, calls another a rogue is the man who will bear watching, for too often he credits the other man with the same motives that control himself, and assumes that the other man has done what, with the same opportunities, he would do himself.

Bearing false witness, however, is more than an unfavorable symptom. It is itself an offense almost equal—in the scales of eternal justice probably held entirely equal—to the offense charged.

The habit is not even good politics. It goes against average human nature, which is sportsmanlike and fair; and even the brutalized atmosphere of the ringside instinctively hisses the foul blow. What does it profit one to exhibit himself as a man eager to win, regardless of everything else? There is real chivalry in human nature. Every manifestation of it has a universal response. Why should it be considered bad politics?

Maybe we are wrong, but our theory is that conscienceless accusation derives as much from ignorance as from malice. Many public men conduct campaigns on personalities because they have not qualified to conduct them on issues. It is easier to accuse, to clamor, to rail, than it is to get clear to the bottom of a political or economic issue, understand it yourself, and then so present it that others can understand it.

The most sobering thing in the world is adequate knowledge of a subject, an appraisal of it from all sides. Those who achieve this knowledge necessarily speak words of truth and soberness. They have neither the inclination nor the time to utter anything else.—*New York Evening Mail*.

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The lack of conscientiousness noted by the *Mail* amongst politicians seems equally noticeable amongst theologians and others who, in professing the name of Christ, imply that they respect the standards of God's Word, while their words and conduct give the lie to their professions.

PRESBYTERIAN MINISTERIAL UNBELIEF

The New York Presbytery not long since licensed Rev N. M. Thomas to preach the Gospel as representative of the Presbyterian denomination. The vote granting the license was thirty-four against ten who protested—and the ten are not active Pastors in charge of churches. The mental attitude of the Presbyterian Ministers of the New York Presbytery is, therefore, reflected in the faith of Rev. Thomas, which may be judged from the following items of protest:—

"He did not accept the authority of Holy Scripture as the only infallible rule of faith and practise as sufficient to finally determine his faith. This appeared in his re-

peated refusals to affirm his faith in the virgin birth of Christ, the raising of Lazarus from the dead and the raising of Christ's own body from the grave.

"Second, in answer to questions, he twice declared his readiness to lead a congregation in the repetition of the Apostles' Creed, including the phrase 'born of the Virgin Mary,' which he had told the Presbytery that he really did not believe."

From this it appears that it is no longer Presbyterian doctrines in New York that we have a sinless Savior—"holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." (Heb. 7:26.) Indeed, it is safe to assume that these ministers are higher critics who have no use for the Bible, and do not believe in Jesus as a Savior, because they have abandoned the theory that man fell from God's image and likeness and needed to be redeemed. They have probably all accepted the evolution theory that Father Adam sprang from a monkey, and that his race has been doing nobly since and needs no Redeemer. They would probably acknowledge Jesus as a noble sample of manhood for his time, but not up to our day and standards, which are to be sought rather amongst college professors.

Is it any wonder that Christian character, unsupported by a message recognized as divine and upheld merely by expediency, is crumbling everywhere? What will the end be? The majority of Presbyterians will follow their leaders and soon Christendom en masse will be without God and without hope. Faith in a nature god and in laws of nature can have no such influence upon heart and life as has faith in a personal God, a personal Redeemer, a personal salvation and an inspired Bible.

Thank God that the terrible confusion and anarchy which the Scriptures show to be imminent will be speedily followed by the inauguration of the kingdom of God's dear Son, a reign of righteousness backed by power divine, as well as by love and justice. In that strenuous hour nature as a god will not succor and faith in the God of nature will not comfort. But evidently, as the Scriptures show, all the "blind eyes" will be opened; all the "deaf ears" will be unstopped; and the wisdom of man, in contrast with the wisdom of God, will be manifested as foolishness.

THE MARK OF THIS AGE

Judge Connine says: "The mark of this age is irreverence. Reverence and respect for age, for office, for intellectual attainments, for uprightness, ability and honor are on the wane. Some of the causes can be named; among them are encroachments by the executive branch of our states and nation upon the legislative and judicial and the belittling, impugning and assailing the acts and motives of those in authority, particularly by the press. No motive is now clean, upright and honorable, no act found grand or commendable. Traveling with this is a growing irreverence for the law, and the end of all this is detriment and danger."

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Back of disrespect for human laws and customs lies disrespect for the divine law. And for this disrespect of the Bible, the Christian ministry, colleges, and seminaries are chiefly responsible. The colleges have led the way in teaching higher criticism, infidelity and evolution theories. They have within the last fifty years gradually molded the opinion of the ministry and generally educated classes to these anti-Biblical teachings. They were led on in this wrong course by the opinion that they were taking their stand for truth as against ignorance and superstition. So far as their own minds were concerned they repudiated the creeds of the "dark ages," which they still laughingly profess to adhere to. And as the creeds were repudiated the Bible went with them, under the assumption that it was to blame for the absurdities of the creeds. All the same they have gradually, systematically undermined the Word of God as a divine authority in the judgment of millions.

A comparatively few ministers have known better than this. These have stuck to the Bible as the sheet-anchor of their faith. More or less clearly they have seen the conflict between the Bible and their creeds. Yet they have feared to mention it lest they should be identified with the higher critics and be considered faith-breakers. And some of them, alas, have shunned to declare the whole counsel of God, because of fear of losing their bread and butter and honorable name and standing. Their refraining from telling their people the truth respecting the teachings of the Bible left their flocks in ignorance and just ready to fall into higher criticism or some of the bad religions which wrest the Scriptures, instead of interpreting them.

All the same, the general shaking of the public faith, and especially that of the literary "upper-crust," is being

reflected everywhere in the growingly prevalent spirit of irreverence above commented upon. Soon this will lead, as the Scriptures point out, toward atheism and toward anarchy—the great time of trouble Scripturally foretold as near.

Those of us who realize the true situation should be doubly earnest in our outward manifestation of religion and upholding of the Bible, as well as in our heart appreciation of the Almighty and our worship of him and service of his cause.

DEBTS OF CIVILIZED NATIONS

The below figures show the public debts and annual interest charges of the principal nations of the world. These debts represent chiefly monies expended for war, war equipments, battleships, etc. The amounts continue to pile up year by year.

The public scarcely understand the situation; they wonder to whom the amounts are owing and what can be done when pay-day comes.

The wealthy know that these bonds represent their money and they feel satisfied to get even a small interest with such good security and no trouble.

Of late, however, a certain fear is taking hold upon the rich—what if Socialism should gain control? And what if, by and by, the national treasury should go into bankruptcy and repudiate its bonds?

Evidently the world needs just such a good, strong Government and just such wise and just laws as the kingdom of God's dear Son will shortly bring to them. How significant is the Scriptural statement respecting that—"The desire of all nations shall come." (Hag. 2:7.) Following are the figures:—

	Public Debt.	Annual Int. Charged.
France	\$5,898,675,451	\$186,802,380
Russia	4,558,152,565	204,766,421
German Empire	4,270,488,716	179,778,179
Austria-Hungary	3,703,235,511	133,925,824
United Kingdom	3,669,931,350	152,759,411
Italy	2,602,299,757	96,941,138
Spain	1,817,674,327	78,709,000
British India	1,346,999,187	41,681,212
Japan	1,287,604,261	76,283,536
Australia	1,184,192,157	46,883,998
United States	1,023,861,531	21,803,836
Portugal	864,561,212	29,907,983
Brazil	657,097,561	32,390,824
Belgium	663,325,145	27,022,108
China	601,916,605	92,375,017
Turkey	527,983,636	36,494,753
Argentine Republic	545,712,120	29,594,251

These are all the nations whose public debts exceed \$500,000,000, but every government on earth has been for years, and still is, borrowing to cover the deficits that are annually created by spending more money than the revenues will justify. They are compelled to issue bonds in order to make up the difference. It is a serious question how long this extravagance can be continued.

FINANCIAL PROSPERITY AND RELIGIOUS DECLINE

Newspaper reports tell us how great is the financial prosperity in Germany, as per the following clipping:—

"Germany today is one of the most prosperous nations in the world, and both the farmers and mechanics, the land owners and the manufacturers, have shared the benefits of a protective tariff. Nowhere have the results of the protective policy been so conspicuous as in Germany. During the first ten years after it was adopted the national income increased 19 per cent; during the last ten years it has increased 56 per cent. The aggregate incomes of persons who pay the income tax in Prussia increased during the last ten years from \$725,000,000 to \$1,650,000,000."

But the reports tell us also of great religious decline there. Prof. Rudolph Martin, German philosopher and political prophet, refers to the decline in religion in Germany as remarkable and notes the almost complete disappearance of religious influence among the peoples of Europe. He considers it a striking symptom of this age. He notes a growing anti-religious feeling and a profound indifference, with marks of hostility, toward the clergy.

The professor asks what will take the place of religion in checking the inherent tendencies of mankind, when this indifference and opposition shall have gained a little further headway. He dreads the removal of such a potent safeguard and fears danger to humanity in general.

Pointing to England as once the home of piety he declares that it is now drifting toward extreme worldliness.

He remarks on the empty churches; declares that nine-tenths of the people never enter a house of worship, and that Sunday observance has given way to golf, tennis, bridge-poker and concerts. He wonders if the same is true of America. In Germany he sees that despite the Kaiser's pious utterances and his wife's pious utterances, the masses of the

people are being alienated from the old forms of religious belief rapidly. What, he inquires, will be the effect? Will mankind sink into depths of wickedness? Will there be outbreaks of wrong-doing?

The Scriptures answer, Yes; "there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation."

ZIONISM IN PROPHECY

Many of our readers are aware that on the Editor's return from Palestine last June he delivered a discourse entitled "Jerusalem." Many Jews were attracted by the theme and considerable interest amongst them was aroused. That sermon and several others were published in Jewish papers. Then came interviews with editors, etc., and, finally, an invitation to address a Jewish mass meeting at the New York Hippodrome, with signatures on three sheets of paper.

Accordingly on Sunday, October 9, the Editor was met by a committee of five prominent Hebrews, Brother Rutherford also accompanying us. The party went in automobiles. The meeting was an enthusiastic one. The number present was estimated at four thousand, and we were told that no finer representative class of Hebrews had ever before come together in one assemblage in New York.

The address was well received, but apparently it was unfortunate that some of the pamphlets, entitled "Jewish Hopes and Prospects," were given away at the conclusion of the meeting. Some of the Jews, without recognizing that that pamphlet was gotten out for our Christian readers, considered that by it we were endeavoring to entrap the Jews into Christianity. And Christianity to the Jews, especially Catholicism, means many persecutions which have come against their people for many centuries. Some understood the matter aright. Others felt offended, and during the Editor's absence in Europe last fall he was attacked as a "missionary"—which, in the Jewish mind, means everything mean, underhanded.

On our return from Europe in November we corrected the misunderstanding, so far as possible, through the Jewish newspapers. We informed them that we were not trying to "mission" the Jews, nor to make them members of either Catholic or Protestant Christian bodies. We were not even preaching Jesus to them. Our message was to the Jews as Jews, from Isaiah 40:1, 2—"Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people; speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem; cry unto her

that her appointed time is accomplished; that her iniquity is pardoned, for she hath received of the Lord's hand double." We declared that it was not our expectation that the Jews would return to Palestine as Christians. On the contrary, God's call and promises as respects Jerusalem are earthly promises to natural Israel.

To a few who asked quite deeply we explained that our understanding is that the Messiah of prophecy is a great spirit company composed of many members, including English, French, German, Jews, etc.; that God is gathering this Messianic company to heavenly glory from every nation, people, kindred and tongue, and that only the saintly will be in and of it. We explained: We do not understand that Christians in general, any more than Jews in general, will have part in that Messianic body and that it would be the furthest from our thought to have the Jews get as mixed up on different matters as are the majority of Christian people.

Since then several Jewish papers continue to publish our writings and we have had two more Jewish mass meetings. One of these was in Chicago. It was somewhat of a disappointment as to numbers, until we noticed that the Saturday on which it was held was a particularly unfavorable time. Many Jews expressed their disappointment in not being able to attend, because it would deprive them of their principal business day. Nevertheless the audience was estimated at fifteen hundred and we had excellent attention.

Our last meeting with the Jews was held in Philadelphia. It was not at all advertised in the secular press. In other words, it was a Jewish meeting. Garrick Theater was full to the limit, with about three hundred standing, when the police, following the fire ordinance, forbade others to enter, and several hundred were turned away disappointed. That meeting was the most enthusiastic held thus far with the Jewish people. Their confidence in the Editor seems to be growing. Zionism from a prophetic standpoint seems to stir the Jewish heart as the subject never did politically.

WHAT CHRIST, AS OUR ADVOCATE, IMPUTES

In speaking of our Lord as our great Advocate, through whom we have justification, and considering what he does for us that makes us acceptable to the Father, a variety of expressions are sometimes heard. One may say that he imputes to us his life-rights. Another may say that he imputes to us his righteousness. Another may say that he imputes to us the merit of his sacrifice. Let us try to get this matter clearly before our minds. What is the thing that is really imputed?

First of all, we suggest that what Christ imputes to us is not the heavenly nature nor the divine life nor the right to divine life. None of these things are imputed. These things come to us from the Father. To these things we are begotten by the holy Spirit. It is as the result of our becoming new creatures that we have a right to these things. What our Lord Jesus, as our great Advocate, does for us is to make us acceptable sacrifices; because it is only upon our becoming acceptable sacrifices that we can present our bodies; this being done, the Father accepts them. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."—Rom. 12:1.

We see that our Lord Jesus was the first that responded to this call. We see that he was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." We see that there was a merit in laying down that life which he had a right to retain. We see, on the other hand, that we who will to walk in his steps and to accept a share of that same call to enter into covenant relation with God by sacrifice, are imperfect; therefore, that we have no right to life, and having no right to an earthly life, we could not offer our earthly life in sacrifice to God. It is then—when we realize our condition—that we are drawn by divine grace unto Christ and it is indicated to us that he has merit and is willing to appropriate of this to us, so as to make our sacrifices acceptable.

It is not the divine proposition that our sacrifices shall be set aside and counted as nothing. The divine proposition,

on the contrary, is: You have something, but it is imperfect. Now, if Jesus will appear as your Advocate, he has the ability to make your sacrifice acceptable—because he has the power of imputing to it of his merit. If you have the perfect mind, the perfect will, you have then, to begin with, the most important thing in my sight in the form of sacrifice. But the whole difficulty lies in the fact that you have imperfection inherited from your first parents. Christ will do something for you that will make your sacrifice acceptable to me.

But what will he do for us? What will he give us? Will he give us his righteousness? No, if he gave away his righteousness he would not be righteous. He maintains his own righteousness. What, then, will he give us? We answer that he has already made the gift, so far as Justice is concerned. Eighteen centuries ago he appeared to satisfy the demands of Justice against our race. The demands of Justice were "A life for a life"—a ransom-price. He laid down his life a corresponding price. He did not, however, appropriate the merit of that life to the world. It is still his to control and to dispense. He did not, when he ascended up on high, appropriate that merit to the church in the sense of giving it up. But he did impute, to all of those who willed to come unto the Father, a sufficiency of the merit of his sacrifice to make them whole and complete.

How could he do this? Because he had a sufficiency of merit to have applied it, had he chosen so to do, for the satisfaction of the sins of the whole world. But instead of doing so, he has loaned the merit of that righteousness, and all the rights that go with it, to all those who, during this age, desire to become his footstep-followers. So, when they take this position, he becomes their Advocate by virtue of the application of enough merit to cover all their defects. His merit appropriated to these imperfect sacrifices, makes each one of them acceptable to the Father. Thus each one of the church is enabled to suffer with him—sharing of his cup and being baptized with him into death. When the

Father begets them of the holy Spirit, they need the great Advocate to stand as their Advocate, and in every time of need he still stands ready. As the Apostle says, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the Righteous."—1 John 2:1.

OUR LORD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS AS A MAN AND HIS RIGHT TO HUMAN LIFE IN THE HANDS OF JUSTICE

What, then, was it that he gave? The answer is, that when he sacrificed himself he was righteous as a man. It was, then, that righteousness and consequently that right to human life that he possessed when he consecrated and then gave up. It is that which is in the hands of Justice. In this is included life-rights for all the world. And the basis was his own rights as a man. But he does not give those things up to us, but merely imputes to us the benefit of them.

Suppose we had in the bank a thousand dollars, and suppose we said to the banker, "I wish to leave this in your hands in favor of certain notes which I am going to endorse." We then, accordingly, endorse notes for you. Now, our thousand dollars that was in the bank is merely a security. We are imputing the merit of that thousand dollars to you on the notes which we endorse.

Thus Christ imputes to us his merit; and the great One to take note of this and act upon it is the Heavenly Father. The Father immediately accepts the sacrifice and the person is begotten of the holy Spirit and that person is reckoned, so far as his flesh is concerned, dead. This means that this merit of Jesus will continue to be imputed to such persons until they shall have either been born of the Spirit or become subjects of the second death. And so they must each one die, in one or the other way, that every bit of merit that was used in the case of any one of them will be released, to be used for the world in a different way; namely, to give them, under the terms of the New Covenant, the rights which Jesus sacrificed at Calvary.

We have not a sufficiency of merit for the Father to accept it as a sacrifice. To illustrate: He that is guilty of the violation of one point of the law, is guilty of the one hundred points. Any one with ninety-nine points in his favor would fail just as thoroughly as the one who had only fifty.

Now, then, that is just the position of mankind as a race. Justice cannot accept anything but a perfect sacrifice. We might say that we are in various degrees of imperfection, and that we range all the way from twenty-five points to seventy-five points. What must be done to make us acceptable? The one with twenty-five points needs seventy-five points; and the one who has seventy-five points would just as much need the Advocate and just as much need the imputation of Christ's merit as the one with only twenty-five points; but he would not need so large an amount. The Lord placed the full amount in the hands of the Father, and then made it applicable to all such as recognize their need, and it is just as free to the one with twenty-five points of character as to the one with seventy-five points.

The church's sacrifice is not to get the world free, but to get herself into a sacrificial condition. In God's arrangement, in God's purpose, our sacrifice is not necessary for the world. Christ's sacrifice is all that is necessary for the satisfaction of justice for the sins of the world.

All this arrangement is purely for us, in order that we may, through it, have an opportunity of entering into the "high calling." But actually we are not anything, because

the whole thing is arranged for us in the Father's hands. We add nothing to it. Our sacrificing is that we may suffer with the Lord; and, consequently, reign with him. "For unto you it is given in behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake."—Phil. 1:29.

But one asks if in any way, either individually or collectively, the church in any sense of the word purchases the heavenly inheritance.

HOW THE SPIRITUAL NATURE IS OBTAINED

The glory, honor and immortality which the Lord purposes to give to the church, is not given free. Jesus never purchased for the church the divine nature or any spiritual thing whatever. The only things that he did purchase were the human rights and the human nature. This which we get free, through the imputation of his merit, we may use and purchase with it that with which we may obtain the spiritual nature. This is the Father's "high calling." He invites us to make the exchange, or barter, giving up our all.

In the case of our Lord, the matter is somewhat different. He received it as a reward, and besides, held a certain merit which he had to give away as he pleased. We make consecration, and are acceptable to God by means of the imputation of Christ's merit, which covers our imperfections, in order that we may share with our Lord in his great work of uplifting mankind and with a view of sharing with him his kingdom glory, as members of his body—members of the royal priesthood.

Above we used the expression twenty-five, fifty and seventy-five points of character. We did not mean to say that principle is to be sacrificed, that good character is to be sacrificed. No; we used the word character in the sense of proper conditions or elements of character, elements of a proper human character. With the thought in mind that we have seventy-five elements of character and twenty-five that are blemished (and all humanity is blemished twenty-five, fifty or seventy-five points, as the case may be) we realize our helplessness, our necessity. Now this that our Lord imputes to us, is to make good our deficiency; then all that we have would stand for or represent a perfect human being—nothing more, nothing less. It was an imperfect human being the moment before; but the imputation of Christ's merit constituted it a perfect man or woman.

The divine terms upon which life might be enjoyed perpetually were the keeping of the law; so any one who could keep the law perfectly could have claimed life eternal—"The man that doeth those things shall live by them." (Rom. 10:5.) God has given this law to the Jewish nation, whose typical sacrifices foreshadowed the real sin-offering.

The middle wall of partition being broken down, there was an opportunity for each member of that race to present himself in sacrifice; none being totally depraved, all had some elements of character and possessed some degree of merit, even though not a sufficient degree to claim life under the Law. It was to such of these, then, as had willing minds and honest hearts, that Christ applied of his merit for the very purpose of enabling them to be sacrifices. God has no dealings with those who are rebellious in their minds; they are out of the list. Christ has not appeared for them at all, and has never proposed to do so. He is proposing to be the Advocate of those only who have first turned away from sin desiring to be in harmony with God. It is the man whose mind is fully submitted to God, and only such a one, who is being dealt with.

"LOVE NOT THE WORLD"

"Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."—James 4:4.

This text brings to mind another one somewhat similar—"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 John 2:5.) From these Scriptures we should not get the thought that we are to have no worldly people as our friends, nor to have them consider us as their friends; otherwise it would imply that we were their enemies and they our enemies. But we are to be the enemies of none, and are, therefore, to be the friends of all.

One can, however, scarcely read the above advice from two of the Lord's Apostles without having another Scripture suggested to his mind—and this, too, from the lips of our dear Lord himself—which at first sight may seem contradictory, viz., "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him

should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16.) The two, however, are not antagonistic, but are in full harmony when rightly understood.

How, then, shall we understand that we are not to have friendship with the world, and yet are to love the world? The key is found in the word "world." As, for instance, if one should go into politics, he would find that politics is so interlaced with evil things that it would be practically impossible for him to engage in it without compromising his relationship with God. In former times no one could associate very much with any one in the world unless he were, more or less, in politics. Therefore, it would mean being in accord with sinful practices—not, perhaps, directly, but indirectly.

Very few people know how political affairs are carried

on. A man in politics forgets his conscience; he is almost compelled to "give and take" with others. Otherwise, the district or ward or state that he represents would proportionately lack representation, because he would be ignored; and anything that he would be inclined to say, would result in driving him out of politics, which would cause his ward or district or state to suffer injury. So, then, the broad thought connected with this text would be that God's people will recognize the things of the world in general, as being in opposition to the service of God, and that they are not in sympathy with the chicanery and methods of the prince of this world.

There is a worldly side to every question, every business; and for us to conform ourselves to these arrangements and to co-operate with them, would be sin on our part. Nevertheless, as the Apostle says, we cannot go out of the world, and must, more or less, have contact with worldly people. The proper course is, therefore, as indicated in the Scriptures, that the Lord's people walk circumspectly, seeking to keep themselves loyal to God and to all of his principles; seeking to separate themselves from the world and to be burning and shining lights that the world may see their good works and glorify their Father in heaven.

WE ARE TO DO GOOD TO ALL MEN AS WE HAVE OPPORTUNITY

If God so loved the world, even while they were yet sinners (Rom. 5:8), as to sacrifice the dearest treasure of his heart in order to redeem and save them, then such love and such benevolence toward the world on our part cannot be out of harmony with his will. Indeed, such is the direct teaching of the Word—"As you have therefore opportunity, do good to all men; love your enemies, do good to them that hate you; pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."—Gal. 6:10; Matt. 5:44-48.

To love the world as God loves it, is not the sentiment

against which the apostles warn the church. That is a grand and ennobling love which, without having the least fellowship with the impure, pities the fallen and longs for the time when they may be rescued from their degradation. The love which is worthy of our emulation is that which benevolently ignores personal antagonisms and animosities, and, overleaping all selfish considerations and vengeful feelings, considers only the possibilities and the ways and means for peace and reformation and salvation.

But the love of the world, the friendship of the world to which the Apostle refers, is the love of fellowship, which implies the partaking of its spirit—its aims, ambitions and hopes, and its methods of pursuing them. If any man love the world in this sense, surely the love of the Father is not in him.

As children of God we have been called to a position of great favor and advantage. Our Heavenly Father has revealed to us his plans and purposes and has condescended to take us into his fellowship and active co-operation; and so grand and glorious and extensive is the outlook of the future that we are able to view the things of the present life in a vastly different light from that in which the world views them.

So we are not to love the present order or arrangement, nor the things that are part and parcel of it, identified with it; but rather we are to love the kingdom of God and its righteousness, for which we pray, "Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth." We are to love the world only in the sense of having sympathy with it, as our Heavenly Father has, while we are unsympathetic with its arrangements.

According to God's arrangement, we must take our choice between the divine friendship and fellowship, and worldly friendship and fellowship. The things which the Lord loves are distasteful to the world; and the things which the worldly love—evil deeds and evil thoughts—are an abomination to the Lord, and those who love and practice such things must lose the fellowship of the Lord and his spirit, must go into the outer darkness of the world.

THE LOVE TO BE DESIRED

"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently."—1 Peter 1:22.

The word "souls" in this text stands, as usual, for the being, and not merely for the physical being, which is included. The purifying, therefore, refers to a thorough cleansing of the heart (the mind, the will, the actuating intentions, or motives), as the effect of such purification will be manifest in the outward life and conduct.

We purify our souls—that is, our souls are purified (have been purified if we are saints)—by obedience to the truth through the spirit; that is to imply that it is necessary for us to know the truth; not necessarily that we know all truth, but necessary for us to know the great truth on this subject—the truth that God condemned sin; to know the truth that the whole world of mankind came under this condemnation; to know the truth that God has provided a way of escape from the condemnation that is upon the world; to know the truth that there is but one particular way in which any can avail themselves of this divine provision, namely, that of being justified by faith in Christ, and taking up the cross and following in his footsteps. When we presented ourselves in spirit and in truth, through faith, our sins were forgiven; we were accepted as new creatures in Christ; our souls were purified; we were started in a new career.

In our text the Apostle proceeds to say that, having had this glorious transformation of character, through the knowledge of and obedience to the spirit of the truth, we have learned to love the brethren with an "unfeigned love," a love that is genuine, without pretence—not merely an outward profession, to have a smile upon the face or to give a cordial grasp of the hand, but that through this spirit we have recognized that all who trust in the precious blood and are consecrated to the dear Redeemer, and are seeking to follow his leadings, are "brethren," regardless of race or color or education or poverty or homeliness. We have reached the point where our hearts are so full of the Spirit of the Master that we can truthfully say we love all the brethren with a love which is sincere and not at all feigned.

Now, having gotten along thus far in the good way, the Apostle shows us that there is yet an advance step of love, and states what next we must do in order to keep our hearts pure: "See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently." We must not only regard them as brethren and give them "unfeigned love," but should recognize the principle underlying

our relationship to the Lord and their relationship to the Lord; how they, like ourselves, are new creatures in Christ; and this should give us great sympathy and a desire to do everything we can to encourage them, to help them.

DISINTERESTED LOVE—STRONG AND INTENSE

This love is different from the other love—brotherly love. It is disinterested love; so warm, so intense, that we should be willing to lay down our lives for the brethren. This love is the kind exemplified in our Heavenly Father. While we were yet sinners he loved us. So the love of Jesus is unselfish, pure, benevolent; a love which undertakes to do good for us for our own sakes, not from a hope of getting anything from us.

The Apostle proceeds to say that we should not only have this love, but that we should have it with fervency, warmth, ardor; not with a semi-indifference, but with a real interest in each other's welfare—the rich as well as the poor; the educated as well as the ignorant. Our love should go out to these as we see any lack in them that we could supply—rendering assistance of any kind; using always, of course, discretion, for love learns to be wise, and to take into consideration our motives while we endeavor to do them good.

The Apostle suggests that we see to it that this is our own experience; not merely that it is a principle which we recognize, but that we should give heed to ourselves that this should be accomplished in us, in our own lives. It would not be natural to have that benevolence of mind which would practise forgiveness of those who trespass against us. But when we think of the fact that the whole race is fallen and degraded through heredity, it should make us sympathetic; if some are more depraved, we should have the more sympathy for them. As we think sympathetically along those lines, our sympathetic love will increase; as we practise sympathetic love the new creature develops.

Our Lord Jesus says, "Love one another, as I have loved you." Set this standard before you. Our love for the brethren might, at first, be merely obedience in following this command; but as we follow on, obeying the divine command, our love increases, our sympathy expands. The Apostle says we must see to it that we do not neglect this. If we fail to heed this admonition we are not of the kind that the Father is choosing; for the Apostle also tells us that he predestinated

that all those who should be members of the body of Christ should be copies of him; copies in having an unfeigned and fervent love.

STRENGTH IN THE LORD PROPORTIONATE TO KNOWLEDGE OF HIM

No one can grow strong in the Lord unless he grows also in knowledge. We properly esteem most highly those whose love for the Lord and for his truth are evidenced by their zeal in the study of his Word, and whose favor with God is manifested by their being guided more into the deep things of God.

Nevertheless, the weaker ones of the household of faith are to be cared for and loved and helped that they may grow strong in the Lord. And just here the Apostle offers another word of counsel, saying, "We, then, that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves." (Rom. 15:1.) This does not imply that we should not expostulate with such a one and endeavor to help him get rid of his infirmity. This we should do, in the spirit of meekness and kindness, while we endure with gentleness the trial

of our patience, not seeking to please ourselves, but rather to help a weaker brother or sister. "Let every one of us," as the Apostle enjoins, "please his neighbor [brother] for his good, to edification"—i. e., not by simply ignoring his fault as though we considered it all right, but, while kindly urging him to strive against it, still humbly and patiently submitting to the discomfort it brings to us.

If this spirit prevails among the members of the Lord's body, the members will all have a mutual love and a mutual care one for another—a care which seeks to encourage and strengthen all that is good and to discourage all that is unbecoming, and a love which throws its mantle over a deformity and endeavors to conceal a fault, rather than to expose the weaker brother to the reproach of others.

For such self-sacrificing love how necessary is the spirit of humility and gentleness and patience and faith! How forceful are the Master's words, "Except ye be converted [from the spirit of the world to the Spirit of Christ] and become as little children [in meekness and teachableness], ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."—Matt. 18:1-6.

CAN EVIL BEFALL THE NEW CREATURE?

"There shall no evil befall thee." (Psa. 91:10.) "Pilate took Jesus and scourged him. . . . They crucified him and two others with him; on either side one, and Jesus in the midst."—John 19:1, 18.

Such combination of Scripture, apparently contradictory, is quite a stumbling-block to worldly people; and some of those who have inclinations toward the Lord, but have not much knowledge of his Word and Plan, experience all kinds of trouble in a vain attempt to reconcile them. To these God's Word is apparently proven to be untrue. Only from the standpoint of faith can it be recognized as always true and harmonious. Yet the standpoint of faith may not always be exactly the same. We might use the word "thee" in the text, as applying to the Lord (the new creature) and the members of the body (the new creatures) and consider that the flesh is the great enemy, the great opponent, to be gotten rid of. Or we might think of the flesh as their earthly tabernacle for the time, and take the matter in a more figurative way.

We, however, prefer to consider the new creature entirely apart from the flesh. "No evil shall befall thee." Applying this to our Lord, we see that no evil befell him as a new creature. All the things that happened to him were necessary. Without these he could not have fulfilled the calling that was given him. Similarly we, as new creatures, as his followers, could never have attained to this calling except by the crucifixion of the Lord. "Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth."—Col. 3:5.

Our Lord's followers have to some extent lost the esteem of their friends and neighbors; they have been counted as the offscouring of the earth. They have been tested in every possible manner. These things were necessary for them; therefore, they were not evil.

"THE CAPTAIN OF THEIR SALVATION MADE PERFECT THROUGH SUFFERINGS"

Our Lord asked, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory?" (Luke 24:26.) To be fitted for the priestly office to which he was called, our Lord must be proved beyond all peradventure. His loyalty was put to the extremest test in the Garden of Gethsemane. Possibly he himself did not realize the strength of his righteous character until brought face to face with this last trial. There he was tried and proved to the uttermost, and under the trial his character—always perfect to the full measure of its testing—gained, by divine grace, its glorious perfection of completeness.

Thus, through suffering, he learned obedience to the perfect will of God, down to the lowest depths of self-abnegation; and God permitted it so to be, because such proving was necessary, both for the development and the manifestation of that perfection of character which would be worthy of the high exaltation to which he was called.

And so we also must suffer if we would be footstep-followers of the Lamb. Character cannot be developed wholly

without trial. It is like a plant; at first it is very tender; it needs an abundance of the sunshine of God's love; frequent watering with the showers of his grace; much cultivating through the applied knowledge of his character, as a foundation for faith and an inspiration to obedience. Then, when thus developed under these favorable conditions, it is ready for the pruning hand of discipline, and is also able to endure some hardness. And little by little, as strength of character is developed, the tests applied to it serve only to develop more strength, more beauty, more grace, until it is finally fixed, developed, established, perfected through suffering. Thus we learn to realize that "All things work together for good . . . to the called according to his purpose," to those who are to be members of his body.—Rom. 8:28.

DELIVERED OVER TO THE ADVERSARY FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF THE FLESH

But some one may ask, "We see how these experiences of life are working out good for the new creature; but is there no way in which experiences could work out evil things that would be bad for them?"

We are to recognize that there are two classes of spirit-begotten ones, and that our text has reference to only one class of these. There is the body of Christ, representing the priestly order, the antitypical Melchisedec—Jesus the Head and the church his body. They have kept nothing back of their love and devotion; things may happen disastrous to their fleshly interests; but they remember that they are "not in the flesh, but in the spirit," and realize that no outside influence can mar their real interest as new creatures, nor hinder them, if faithful, from attaining to the glories of the kingdom with their Lord and Head. They have entered into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, and do not withdraw; they "abide in the secret place of the Most High"; they will continue unto the very end. It is to this class, and to all the things that may befall them, that the assurance is given—"There shall no evil befall thee."

As for the other of the two classes—the "great company"—some evils do befall them. They will be put into great tribulation. It was an evil on their part that they neglected the Lord's Word and the privileges of the "high calling." This coolness brought them into a condition which must be made right. They loved "father or mother or houses or lands," or something else, to such an extent that they failed to keep their covenant of sacrifice, and will be accounted unworthy of a share in the kingdom, and will, instead, be subjected to the great time of trouble—"the day of wrath." It will be necessary that these evils come upon them to bring destruction of the flesh.

A HOLY NATION PICTURED

MARCH 26.

"Happy the people that fare thus! Happy the people whose God is Jehovah."—Psalm 144:15.

At the time God accepted Israel to be his people he entered into a Covenant or agreement with them. He gave them the law, represented in the Ten Commandments, as the basis of the covenant which Moses mediated. Israel agreed to be faith-

ful to God, and to keep those commandments perfectly. And God agreed that in that event he would bless them. They should be his people and by doing the things contained in the Law should live everlastingly—not die. Not only so, but he

promised to bless them in all the temporal affairs of life; in their homes, in their families, in their flocks and herds and fields they should be prospered.

Israel failed to get these blessings, for the same reason that any other people would have failed; namely, because God's law is perfect, the measure of a perfect man's ability: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, mind, being and strength; and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Hence, the Israelites continued to die, as their fathers had done, and as all mankind die—not being able to keep the divine law perfectly. For the same reason Israel experienced wars, famines, pestilences and drouths, in proportion as they were negligent of the terms of their Covenant.—Lev. 26:14-33.

HAPPY IS THAT PEOPLE

In our lesson the Prophet David pictures the holy, happy, blessed nation of the Lord. It is a picture of the future and not of the past. It is an ideal picture. It will be realized when Messiah's kingdom shall have been established amongst men—when Satan's power shall be restrained, when he shall be bound, when the blessings of restitution shall have uplifted mankind from sin and degradation and shall have brought them back to the image and likeness of God lost in Eden, but re-acquired for our race through the sacrifice of our Lord on Calvary.

But that happy nation will acquire, additionally, a happy home and world-wide Paradise. Even human perfection would not bring happiness if cyclones, tornadoes, blizzards, tidal waves, earthquakes, famines and pestilences continued. Thank God, the Bible's assurances are that the blessing of the Lord shall be, not only upon mankind, but upon all their earthly home. The earth shall yield her increase. The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad and blossom as the rose. The Lord will make his footstool glorious.—Acts 3:19-21; Isa. 11:9; 65:25; Ezek. 37; Isa. 35:1; 60:13.

PARTICULARS GIVEN BY THE PROPHET

Incidental to the blessed condition of the holy nation of the future, the Prophet mentions a deliverance from strange children: "Rid me and deliver me from the hands of strange children, whose mouth speaketh vanity, and whose right hand is the right hand of falsehood."—Psa. 144:11.

In the church of the present age there are some whom the Apostle styles "bastards," or strange children. All may make the same profession and confession, but "the Lord knoweth them that are his," and in his due time shall separate the false or strange children from the true and will glorify the saintly ones as members of the great Messiah, the Christ. Then will come the time for dealing with humanity in general—the time described in our text, when humanity in general, under the Messianic kingdom, will be privileged to become the holy and happy people of God—when Satan and sin will be banished and righteousness and truth will flourish and the knowledge of the glory of the Lord will fill the whole earth.

The great Messiah undertakes to be the world's Life-Giver, Father, Regenerator. All mankind will be awakened from the tomb and have the opportunity for regeneration and full attainment of human perfection and God-likeness. How-

ever, for quite a time there will be strange children amongst men—those who will experience the blessings of that glorious time without giving proper heart responses. Not until the world shall have been rid of these, by their dying the second death, will the fullness of happiness prevail amongst the children of men. With the wrong spirit they utter vanity, foolishness, and their right hand, their best powers, prove disloyal to the King of kings, of whom King David was merely a type.

"TIMES OF REFRESHING SHALL COME, AND HE SHALL SEND JESUS CHRIST"

"Then your sons will be like plants, grown up in their youth; your daughters like corner-pillars sculptured in the model of a palace." The grace and beauty of the children of Messiah, partakers of human restitution blessings (Acts 3:19-21), will be marvelous. They will attain to more than Adamic perfection, for they will have an increase of knowledge.

Then the garner will be full, furnishing all manner of provisions. Then your sheep will bring forth thousands and tens of thousands in your open pastures. The earth shall yield her increase under the blessings of Messiah's kingdom.

Then the oxen will be strong to labor. Then there shall be no breach—no rupture of the happy relationships. Even death will be destroyed.

Then there will be no migration—no further seeking for better or more happy conditions. Then there will be no complaining in our streets. Discontent is now rapidly increasing with every added blessing of our wonderful day. The difficulty lies in the fact that sin and selfishness are reigning in the hearts and minds of men. Under the wonderfully changed conditions of Messiah's kingdom, peace, happiness, contentment will take the place of selfishness and discontent.

No wonder the Prophet declares that happy will be the people who fare thus—happy are the people whose God is Jehovah. We need to correct our ideas, our theologies. God does not acknowledge himself the God of the wicked and he declines to treat evil-doers except as rebels, aliens, foreigners, strangers, as respects his promises and favors. Our entire race was originally thus estranged. But divine grace provided a "Savior and a great One." This Savior is already reconciling a saintly, faithful church, who will be his associates in the Heavenly kingdom. Shortly he will apply of the merit of his sacrifice on behalf of all mankind.

The Scriptures assure us that this will be fully acceptable to the Heavenly Father, who will enter into a New Covenant with Israel, of which Messiah will be the great Mediator, the antitype of Moses. (Jer. 31:31.) Under that New Covenant all mankind will be privileged and assisted to come back to divine favor under the processes of Restitution, in connection with the judgments and disciplines of that Messianic Kingdom. The result of the thousand years of that reign of righteousness will be the development of mankind as one holy nation or people, whose happiness will be complete and everlasting. There shall be no more sighing, no more crying, no more dying; for all the former things shall have passed away, and he upon the Throne shall have made all things new.—Rev. 21:1-5.

GENERAL NAAMAN'S LEPROSY CURED

THE PLAGUE TRANSFERRED TO A HEBREW GRAFTER, GEHAZI

2 Kings 5:1-14.—APRIL 2.

"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else."—Isaiah 45:22.

General Naaman, of the army of Syria, on the northern border of the land of Israel, was a sick man. He had the loathsome infection and incurable disease called leprosy. Wealth, influence at Court, life's abundance and honors could not offset this terrible plague upon his life. The study of today tells of his miraculous healing by the Prophet Elisha. In Naaman's household was a young girl who had been captured from the Israelites and was a slave, although doubtless well treated. The maid remembered the Prophet Elisha and how wonderfully divine power, through him, had healed diseases. Instead of rejoicing that her captor and master was suffering, she sympathetically inquired why he did not go to the Prophet, who, she felt sure, would be glad to pray for him and heal him.

Although it seemed like catching at a straw Naaman followed up the suggestion; he got a letter from his King to the King of Israel and presented himself to the latter, requesting healing by Israel's great Prophet, of whom he had heard. The King was astonished. He knew leprosy to be incurable. Apparently he knew little about Elisha's powers. He surmised that the King of Syria was intent upon picking a quarrel

as an excuse for sending an invading army to pillage his kingdom. Eventually, however, Naaman was directed to Elisha's place of residence, at a distance from the King's Court.

Here again there was difficulty. Naaman expected great consideration for his rank—that the Prophet would make gestures over him and pray; perhaps offer sacrifice and incense, and, possibly, after a great ado, he might be healed. But instead of this, Elisha, without coming to see him at all, merely sent word by his servant that the General should go to the river Jordan and there wash seven times.

Naaman was angry. He had come several days' journey with servants and costly presents hoping for healing, and he was turned away like a dog with a bone. He fumed as his chariot drove on: Have we not better rivers in Syria than this river Jordan, which is always muddy? It is not bathing that I need!

However, a message of wisdom came to him from his servants, who suggested that he try the Prophet's prescription; that the fact that it was simple and easy of performance should not cause the General to reject the proposal. Although fearful that no good would come from the washing,

and that he would be made the laughing-stock of his own servants, his own people and the Israelites, he concluded, nevertheless to follow the Prophet's direction. He bathed seven times in Jordan and his leprosy was healed thoroughly.

LEPROSY A FIGURE OF SIN

In many respects leprosy corresponds to sin; first, it is incurable; secondly, it is loathsome; thirdly, it is contagious; fourthly, it is destructive; fifthly, it is painless.

As only divine power could heal the leper, only the same can heal the sinner. As the maid could call attention to the Prophet, and the Prophet prescribe the remedy, and the servants exhort compliance, so all those who know of a divine power and arrangement for the healing of sinners may tell the good tidings, even to their enemies. The ministers or prophets of the divine Word may direct as to the proper way to obtain divine forgiveness and restoration, and others may help to impress the lesson; yet no recovery can be made except as the individual himself follows the divine prescription, exercising both faith and obedience.

The number seven in the Bible is used to represent completeness; hence the seven washings in Jordan would signify a complete cleansing, washing. The poet has beautifully referred to this and pictured the cleansing, healing Fountain into which by faith sinners may plunge:—

“There is a Fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.”

It is by faith that we may now wash ourselves completely in the blood of Christ; by faith we may realize that the sacrifice of Christ was for the sins of the whole world, and may appropriate our share thereof.

GEHAZI, THE GRAFTER, A LEPER

Gratitude is one of the most worthy sentiments of the human mind. General Naaman's nobility was manifested in the fact that, after being healed, he retraced his journey nearly forty miles, in order to thank the Prophet for his recovery and to bestow upon him gifts which he had brought. We may assume that if he had not been noble-minded, God

would not have provided for him this healing. “The generous soul shall be made fat.”

To the General's surprise the Prophet declined to take anything. The gifts of God's grace are not to be bartered for earthly good things. How fortunate it would be, and how much to the Lord's glory, if all of God's people would emulate Elisha in this respect! But Gehazi, Elisha's servant, had a different spirit. As he saw the wealth rolling away he thought the Prophet foolish and determined to get something by a process of “graft.”

When the chariot was out of sight he hastened and hailed it and told the General that although his master would take nothing of the things offered for himself, he would willingly accept some of the garments for the young men of the school of the prophets. The General very promptly and gladly assented and gave more than was requested. But God through the Prophet punished the perfidy of Gehazi. He took Naaman's presents; he got, also, Naaman's leprosy.

NAAMAN NOT SAVED—GEHAZI NOT LOST

Many have erroneously assumed, in connection with this lesson, that Naaman was saved to heaven and Gehazi lost. Both conclusions are unsupportable. Naaman was saved to health and Gehazi lost his health. But the eternal interests of neither were settled.

Not until Cornelius' day, three and a half years after the Cross, did any Gentile come into any kind of relationship with God. Previous to that, from the time of Moses, only the Jewish nation had recognition. “You only have I known of all the families of the earth.” (Amos 3:2.) And God's favor to Israel was merely an earthly and preparatory one. No one gained eternal life prior to the Redeemer's sacrifice. Thus the Scriptures declare that Christ “brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel”; again, “So great salvation which began to be declared by our Lord.”

Since Jesus' day immortality has been brought to light—the offer of “glory, honor and immortality” to the saintly followers of Jesus' footsteps who, as the “very elect,” will be the royal priesthood through whom earthly restitution blessings will be opened up to natural Israel and, through Israel, to all nations during Messiah's reign of glory.

SURROUNDED BY HEAVENLY HOSTS

2 Kings 6:8-23.—APRIL 9.

“He shall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways.”—Psalm 91:11.

When war was declared by Syria against Israel the invaders sought to gain an entrance into Israel's army in the mountain passes, but God through the Prophet Elisha forewarned the Israelites. When this had happened several times the Syrian king concluded that there were traitors amongst his counsellors, but was answered, No! the Prophet Elisha surely warns Israel's king of anything that you plan secretly.

Learning that the Prophet was living at Dothan, near the Syrian border, the king sent a detachment of soldiers to capture him. They came by night. Elisha's servant, arising early, saw that the little city was surrounded. He ran to his master in fear, but the latter, unperturbed, answered, Fear not; for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. These words sounded strangely untrue to the servant, until the Prophet prayed for him an opening of eyes, which revealed a vision of angels, chariots and horses, with the appearance of fire.

The lesson to us is that whoever are God's servants, and wherever they may be, divine power, like a mighty army, surrounds them. Modern inventions and discoveries are more and more revealing to us secrets of nature and hinting at far more beyond. Whoever has knowledge of wireless telegraphy, X-rays, radium, etc., can readily believe that the Almighty God may have thousands of agencies and powers invisible to men whereby he can work all things according to the counsel of his own will.

“THE ANGEL OF THE LORD ENCAMPETH ROUND ABOUT THEM THAT FEAR HIM AND DELIVERETH THEM”

Angels are beings of a grade a little higher than man—beings with spirit bodies instead of flesh bodies. “Thou madest man a little lower than the angels.” The Scriptures declare that the angels are sent forth to minister to or serve all those who are heirs of salvation. They encamp around about God's servants in the sense that divine agency and power are everywhere and ready at any instant to be exercised as much as need be for the accomplishment of God's will. The same God who willed that Elijah should flee before Jezebel arranged that Elisha should be specially protected. But we are to remember that only those who are in covenant

relationship with God are under this special watch-care and protection.

We are to remember also that there are fallen angels, called “wicked spirits,” and that these are on the alert to entrap and ensnare humanity through spirit mediums, spirit rappings, tipplings, clairvoyants, ouija-boards, etc. God's people are warned against these, and they in turn should warn the world of the great danger resulting from any association with these fallen angels, who misrepresent themselves to be our dead friends.

Many are being misled by these evil spirits. They have introduced various false doctrines and continually seek to entrap the human will and, if possible, to gain control over it—through obsession. Curiosity is one of the main baits to the hook of spiritism.

Spiritists, including mediums, are being deceived. They think that they converse with the dead. They will indeed acknowledge that there are “wicked spirits,” “lying spirits,” as the Bible says; but they do not acknowledge that they are all wicked. The fact is that they have only partially realized the depth of Satan's power and deceit in this direction. The Bible indicates that shortly, in the ending of this age, there will be a great time of trouble, which, to a considerable degree, will be brought about by these evil spirits. It is the duty of those who know to warn those who understand not the situation.

FROM DOTHAN TO SAMARIA

When the Syrian army corps drew near to Dothan, Elisha with his servant went out to meet them, praying that God would blind them. They were not blinded literally, but, as it were, hypnotized. Doubtless there is a hypnotic power, but as it interferes with the wills of others, none of God's people should have anything to do with it, unless, as in Elisha's case, specially commissioned of God. Elisha met the guard and told them that he knew the man they were seeking and that he would lead them to him in another city, if they would follow him. He did lead them several miles, right into the capital city of Samaria. There, surrounded by Israel's men of war, with the king at their head, Elisha again prayed and

the hypnotic spell dissolved, and they beheld themselves prisoners and that the Prophet had fooled them. At Elisha's suggestion the King made them a feast and sent them on their way back to Syria. The effect of this treatment was that for a long time, at least, there were no further incursions into Palestine from Syria.

The King's suggestion was that the King of Syria should be killed. But the Prophet in reply said, If you had captured them in war at the risk of your life, you would not kill them. Now, seeing that God's providence has placed them where they are, consider them as your guests and treat them kindly. How many enemies could be won by kind treatment, who would be made bitter by what might even be termed just treatment! After all, love is the great conquering power of the world—love is the greatest thing in the world. It is the "love divine, all love excelling," which constrains or draws us to God.

COMPARATIVELY FEW HAVE YET LEARNED OF GOD'S LOVE

Only God's consecrated people have yet learned of his love, and they very imperfectly. The tactics of Satan and his demon hosts for centuries has been to blind the whole world and, as much as possible, God's people respecting his true character. By misrepresentations of the Scriptures and some

interpolations and some mistranslations they have succeeded to a wonderful degree in putting light for darkness and darkness for light. This is shown in the creeds of all denominations—some in a greater and some in a less degree.

A century or more ago, when the creeds were believed more fully than today, the effect was terribly demoralizing. Good men and women, under the delusions of those creeds, tortured one another, often to death, with thumb-screws, racks, burning-irons, the stake, etc. Their hearts were not so much worse, perhaps, than ours; but their heads were more deluded. Believing thoroughly in the doctrine of eternal torment, etc., they sought to copy this misconception of the divine character and dealing.

More and more let us see, realize, appreciate, the love of God which passeth all understanding. More and more let us appreciate the length and breadth and height and depth of this love of God. Let us get the proper focus upon the divine Word. Let us obtain the reading of the most ancient manuscripts. Let us secure the best translations, that we may not be deceived, but understandingly appreciate the love of God in full co-operation with his justice, wisdom and power—all co-operating now for the blessing of the saints with heavenly salvation, as it will by and by bless all the world of mankind, through this Seed of Abraham.—Gal. 3:29.

WHAT "CORRUPT COMMUNICATION" SIGNIFIES

"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth; but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."—Eph. 4:29.

Corrupt communication is the spreading of evil report or message instead of good. Our text might be understood to mean a corrupting communication according to the course of ordinary conversation. Our minds might get us into all kinds of difficulty with ourselves and with others, if we did not keep a rein upon them and hold them within certain bounds; but our tongues might do even more injury than our minds. What we may think injures only ourselves; but if our tongues come into the matter, not only are our own minds defiled, but there is contagion, there is rancor; for the tongue spreads the matter all around. And whether the matter be true or false, the influence is corrupting, degrading, tending, perhaps, at times even toward immorality.

It would appear that not only amongst the worldly, but amongst the Lord's people there is a tendency to relate little incidents or make little remarks which, while not necessarily sinful, tend to cause sprouts of evil to develop. It is along this line that the Apostle says we should let no corrupt communication proceed out of our mouth. If, by any mischance, any corrupting information has come to our attention, we should see to it that it goes no further. We have sometimes wondered whether it is the quality of the natural mind to use the tongue to the disadvantage of others, or whether evil spirits have something to do with it.

Let us, as the Apostle enjoins, drop evil communications; shun them, and hold fast only to that which is edifying—the word "edifying" having in it the thought of an edifice, a building, the up-building of each other.

BROAD SCOPE FOR CONVERSATION ON RICHES OF GOD'S GRACE

But some, even of those who profess to love the Lord and to be trying to walk in his footsteps, will say, "I never speak

anything but the truth; and I mean no harm to anybody; but I must have something to talk about when my neighbors come in, and many of them would think me tiresome if I should try to interest them in religious matters." But it is evil speaking, slander all the same, and the scandal-monger, however refined his methods or words, well knows that so far from the scandal ministering grace to the hearer, it ministers evil; that the hearer, impelled by the forces of his fallen human nature, goes out to tell the scandal to others. The fallen nature feasts and revels in just such things, deluding many that they are thus moralizing, preaching against sin, and that in thus discussing and impliedly denouncing the transgressions of another, they are mentioning matters abhorrent to themselves. Alas! their reasoning is seriously defective when the Lord's counsels in righteousness are ignored.

There is surely broad scope for conversation among Christian people on the subject of the riches of God's grace in Christ Jesus our Lord, expressed in the exceeding great and precious promises of the Divine Word. In these things we have indeed that which not only ministers grace to the hearer, but that which adds also to the grace of the speaker. It showers blessing on every hand so far as the new creature is concerned, and assists in deadening the old nature with its evil desires, tastes and appetites.

This, evidently, is what the Apostle had in mind when he said that the Lord's people should "show forth the praises of him who called us out of darkness, into his marvelous light." And a heart filled with the spirit of love, the spirit of God, the spirit of the truth, and overflowing with the same will be sure to bestow it upon others; for, "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh"; "Blessed are the pure in heart."—1 Peter 2:9; Matt. 12:34; 5:8.

SOME INTERESTING LETTERS

Dear Brother Russell:—

I have greatly enjoyed the past two weeks in the blessed service. None can know the blessedness of the harvest work but those who are doing their little all in co-laboring with the Chief Reaper.

None can understand your faithful course of self-sacrifice but those who, like yourself, are seeking the Lord's sweet approval day by day. Even as none but Abraham and Isaac could appreciate what the sufferings of Isaac meant, so only our Father and "we, brethren, as Isaac was," can appreciate what the "sufferings of Christ" are.

Be assured of my Christian love and prayers for you and the work the Chief Reaper has entrusted to your willing hands. Many, many friends along the way desire to be remembered to you, and send words of confidence in your labor of love.

Brother Rutherford suggested DAWN-STUDIES and Berean lessons to take the place of discourses. This surely is a wise procedure in many classes, even where they might have talent for speaking.

I would like, however, if more could be done to awaken

thought in the importance of testimony meetings. Many classes have not even talent for leading Berean studies (at least they think they have not the talent), and I think where only one meeting can be held, the testimony meeting, up-to-date, considering the past week's experiences, would be the best meeting possible.

I have been hoping that at some time you would consider it profitable to advance this specially in the TOWER and suggest a subject for each week's meditation and for testimonies (each Wednesday night); or, possibly, that the MANNA verse and comment for Wednesday be read in advance at the previous testimony meeting and be considered as the subject for the following week.*

The classes which I have visited and which have Wednesday evening testimony meetings seem to be more up-to-date in both knowledge and spirituality.

God bless you, my dear Brother. Much love to you.

BROTHER SAPHORE.

* Some of the friends follow the plan of using Brother Russell's sermon text of the week, which the majority of them get through the newspapers.