WHO WILL GAIN THE VICTORY?

"For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him."—2 Chronicles 16:9.

When the words of this text were written the new creation was unknown, except to Jehovah. He had made provision therefor in his plan before the foundation of the world. The prophets of old diligently inquired concerning this plan, but it was not his due time to reveal it. The angels of heaven searched and desired to look into it, but to them also was it hidden. It has pleased the Lord to disclose the various features of his plan from time to time to members of the new creation. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." (Proverbs 4:18) With light comes responsibility, therefore corresponding tests and trying experiences.

The words of our text were spoken by Hanani, the seer, to Asa, king of Judah, neither of whom had opportunity to become members of the new creation, because they lived and died before the beginning of the church class. The words of the text, however, announce a fixed principle or governing law of conduct which Jehovah has arranged for the benefit of all of his intelligent creatures with whom he deals. His governing laws of conduct or principles do not change, because God is unchangeable. (Malachi 3:6; James 1:17) Jehovah dealt with the people of Judah and Israel for many centuries, and used them to make types and pictures and illustrations for the benefit of others who should follow after. As St. Paul puts it, all these things occurred to them typically and were written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the ages have come.—1 Corinthians 10:11, *Diaglott*.

Clearly, then, the principle or governing law of conduct announced in this text applies to the members of the new creation and we may read the text as words spoken directly to the church. This is indeed an exceeding great and precious promise to the new creation. What does it mean to the Christian? It means almighty wisdom enlisted in one's behalf. It means almighty power pledged to one's help and protection. It means to be the object of boundless love. To the saint who realizes and appreciates the import of this promise it is a great comfort of heart.

PERILOUS TIMES

Through the Scriptures, and through the instruction the Lord has given the church at the hands of his "wise and faithful servant," we have been again and again warned against the times of peril which would accompany the overthrow of Satan's empire and the setting up of Messiah's kingdom. During the entire period of the selection of the church the saints have suffered many trials and hardships, but the Lord has permitted them all for a good purpose.

It was the great Master who said that in the last days of the church's earthly pilgrimage the way would be fraught with many fiery trials, which would test the patient endurance of each one to the utmost. He further said that those who in patience possess their souls and cheerfully endure unto the end shall be saved—such will gain the victory. "He that endureth unto the end the same shall be saved." (Matthew 24:13) Thus he indicated that, while the trials and experiences would be severe, yet to those who would patiently endure he would manifest his presence, his aid, his comfort and strength.

OUR ENEMIES

If we inquire, Who are our enemies, the answer is, They are legion. Our arch-enemy, however, is Satan the devil. In fact he is the great enemy of mankind. It is true that he often advocates what seems to be a righteous cause, yet his real purpose is ever and always evil. He often masquerades under a robe of righteousness, which cloak hides his wicked purpose. He has ever put forth error for truth, attempting to make the truth appear as though it were error and error as though it were truth. Many have seen the effects of his regime and have looked forward to a better time, but have not known the real cause nor the divine remedy. The poet thus expresses it:

"Truth forever on the scaffold;
Wrong forever on the throne.
But that scaffold sways the future,
And within the dim unknown
Stands the form of Christ the Savior,
Keeping watch around his own."

Because wrong has so long triumphed over truth, millions have fallen in despair. They have not appreciated the cause of the battle and what will be the result. But the Christian who has been privileged to see and appreciate God's plan and who has watched the unfolding of it in recent years sees a reason for this conflict and sees the certain victory in it and rejoices in hope for the blessings that are coming not only to the church, but to all mankind.

Wrong is represented in Satan, the Prince of Darkness, and right is personified by Christ Jesus, the great Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. When Jehovah expelled Adam and Eve from Eden he spoke to Satan, who had deceived Mother Eve and caused the downfall of man, saying: "I will put enmity between thee [Satan] and the woman, between thy seed and her seed, and it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel." This statement of Jehovah seems plainly to indicate that until Satan's overthrow there will be constant warfare between him and his agencies and all the agencies of light employed to the glory of God and to the spreading of his Word.

GOD AN ECONOMIST

The Scriptures show that Satan uses many agencies or instruments for carrying out his purposes. He is a wily and subtle foe, and his course is calculated to deceive all, and will deceive all except the "elect". The "seed of Satan", as the Lord most clearly showed, is ecclesiasticism, led by a dishonest clergy. (John 8:44) It was so in the days when Jesus was on the earth in the flesh. It is so now when Christ is present gathering unto him his "jewels". The "seed of the woman" is the "seed of promise"—the offspring of the Abrahamic (Sarah) covenant, which is the Christ, Jesus and the church, his body. (Galatians 3:16, 29) By and through this seed God has promised to bless all the families of the earth. Before the blessing comes, however, this seed must bruise the head of the serpent, Satan. It must put wrong on the scaffold and lift the truth to its proper elevation.

God is a great economist. He causes the wrong of others to result finally to his own glory and to the good of those that love him. While he is not the author of evil he permits it, ultimately overruling the final result for good. By permitting evil he has allowed Satan to manifest the wicked depths of a totally depraved character, and has demonstrated to men and angels the baneful effects of sin. Those who have fought on the side of right and truth, who have fought valiantly and faithfully to develop a character pleasing to the Lord, and continue thus to the end of their course, have the promise of the great reward of an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

It was evident that Satan thought the promised seed which was to bruise his head was a natural seed, hence he sought to destroy everyone who seemed to him a possible seed. He caused the murder of Abel. When God had made promise to Abraham that he should have a son Satan connived at the debauchery of Abraham's wife that he might thwart God's purpose. When the promise came to David and he was anointed king, Satan vainly endeavored to destroy him. When Mary had conceived by the power of the holy spirit and was looking forward to the birth of the man-child Jesus, Satan sought to have her put to death under the terms of the Mosaic law.

SATAN AND OUR LORD

When Jesus had emerged from the wilderness after his forty days fast and Satan recognized that he was the promised seed, he sought by various means to destroy him. God thwarted all Satan's purposes, but when Jesus was crucified Satan probably thought he had accomplished his purpose. He must have been disappointed and chagrined when Jesus arose from the dead. Evidently Satan then first began to recognize the fact that the promised seed, "the seed of the woman," is the Christ, head and body. This is proven by the fact that throughout the Gospel age the adversary has endeavored by various means to destroy the church—the faithful followers of the Master.

St. Peter gave warning to the church, his words seemingly written for the very close of its earthly career: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour, whom resist, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world". (1 Peter 5:8, 9) The Apostle emphasizes the word "sober", meaning to be calm, possessing sobriety of mind. He further calls attention to the desirability of being vigilant in our watching, and of conducting our resistance of Satan with steadfastness in the faith—"the faith once delivered to the saints." It follows that one who takes an opposite course

would be in greater danger of being overcome by the adversary.

While Satan is the arch-enemy, he has many allies; namely, the fallen angels. We have long been advised that these would exercise greater power near the end of the church's earthly career. Addressing himself especially to the church of this time St. Paul says: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. For ours is not a conflict with [mere] flesh and blood, but with despotisms and empires, the forces that govern and control this dark world, the spiritual hosts of evil arrayed against us in the heavenly warfare."—Ephesians 6:10-12, *Wey.*

The organism of the new creature this side the vail is the body of flesh which we early recognized to be an enemy of the new creature; "for the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." (Galatians 5:17) "But I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members."—Romans 7:23.

OTHER ENEMIES OF THE NEW CREATURE

Another enemy of the new creature is the world—the spirit or disposition controlling those of the world with which the new creature must come in contact. The world is in darkness because under the control of the prince of this world. Darkness hates the light, and particularly hates the children of the light. Therefore, those who, either knowingly or unknowingly, are aligned with the adversary hate the followers of Jesus. "Marvel not if the world hate you; ye know that it hated me before it hated you." (John 15:18) It is not to be expected that those who are controlled by hate would conduct a warfare along honorable lines. The adversary uses such persons as instruments to war against the "seed of promise." Such put darkness for light and light for darkness, choosing to misrepresent the children of the light, even when telling the truth would better serve the purposes of the adversary.

Nor do evil spirits and the world constitute all the enemies of the new creature. Our Lord warned us that we might expect foes from among ourselves. We read: "A man's foes shall be they of his own household;" evidently meaning that those of the household of faith would find enemies therein. Such were Simon Magus and Diotrephes. St. Paul called attention to the fact that he was in peril from false brethren. All these foes are brought against the new creature, and Satan directing the warfare, attacks from many quarters. His method is frequently to inject into the mind evil thoughts, attempting to turn the Christian to a course of evil; again he often attempts so to magnify the Christian's own weaknesses before him that he will become discouraged and give up the fight. At another time he will pamper to and foster the spirit of pride, ambition, desire to be applauded by others; and by this means lead some away into the paths of error and darkness. If one does not love the truth for the truth's sake, and love it above anything of the earth, he will very likely stumble into strong delusion, that he should believe a lie.

SPEAKING PERVERSE THINGS

St. Paul called before him the elders at Ephesus and gave them special warning concerning the wiles of the adversary. "Of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them." (Acts 20:30) The church had particular warning of this very thing through THE WATCH TOWER in one of the last articles written by the Laodicean messenger.—Z '16 p. 327.

Knowing well the methods of the adversary and his devices, knowing the constant effort to destroy "the seed of promise," it is to be expected that he would use every possible means to divide the Lord's sheep, to scatter them, to stir up strife among them, and divert their attention from the great prize of the high calling and put them in such a condition that they could not win it. Commenting upon this subject Brother Russell in Z '09 p. 283 said:

"We may be sure that as the Adversary specially opposed the Lord, so he marks out and specially assaults the faithful members of his body, and the greater their prominence the more severe would naturally be the attack. We are not ignorant of his devices, nor of the fact that we wrestle not against flesh and blood merely, but against wicked spirits in influential positions. Without divine assistance surely all would be led captives at his will, misled, ensnared by him who puts darkness for light and endeavors to show the light to be darkness. Our thought is that for the testing of this hour the Lord permits Satan to come very close to the tempted, so that the slightest inclination of their hearts toward evil would quickly put them in contact with the influence of the Adversary."

Bitterness and love are diametrically opposed to each other; ambition and humility are opposites. Unless love prevails there cannot be a clear vision of the truth (Colossians 2:1-3); and where the root of bitterness springs up from any cause many may be thereby defiled. (Hebrews 12:15) The Apostle seems to indicate that where there is a lack of humility God would withdraw his protecting power; "for God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble." It is not for us to judge the cause of one's deflection. We can only judge from the spirit manifested as to whether or not one is pursuing the truly Christian course.

Perversion means a turning from the truth, a misapplication of the truth. Speaking perverse things means to misconstrue or misapply the truth. The Apostle, as above stated, warned us that there would arise within the church those who would speak perverse things, drawing away disciples after them.

"STANDFAST" BIBLE STUDENTS

Our attention has been called to a pamphlet entitled "The Ship" and purporting to be a discourse by one who was formerly a pilgrim in the service of the Society. For convenience we designate this former pilgrim as "Brother H." Our purpose in calling attention to this is not for controversy, but in the hope that we may enable some who have been disturbed to regain a proper equilibrium. As a pretext for turning aside, serious objection is taken to certain articles appearing in THE WATCH TOWER of May 15th and June 1st, 1918. We quote from said pamphlet:

"The June 1st TOWER came into my hands with the infernal article [from the infernal region—Satan and his hosts] and I shuddered more than ever. . . . I don't believe in intuition, that belongs to Jehovah, but something came to my mind just that instant—the ship spoken of in the 27th chapter of Acts. It came almost the day that I got TOWER No. 2, objectionable article No. 2."

Who injected this thought into the mind of Brother H? The apostle tells us that there are but two masters, the Evil One and our Lord. Brother H. then states that he reached the conclusion that the Lord had cast off the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society and THE WATCH TOWER, and called upon everyone to leave it and go with him, declaring that anyone who did not obey his call would be deprived of the glories of the kingdom. Quoting him:

"Because God has made a statement that we can't disobey, 'Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins', and that pertains to the I. B. S. A. just as much as it does to the nominal church, because they are doing the very selfsame thing that the nominal church is doing."

THE SOCIETY THE SHIP?

Hunting for some Scriptural grounds upon which to base his conclusion, the brother takes the 27th chapter of Acts relating the experiences of St. Paul, while being taken by ship as a prisoner to Rome, and attempts to make a typical application of this account. He states that the ship typified or represented the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. He says: "The only reason that we apply the ship and make the application we do is because it fits." Brother H. further cites Matthew 14:22-24 in proof that the Society is represented by a ship, saying:

"Matthew 14:22 I believe was meant by the Lord to represent the same ship that was meant in the 27th chapter of Acts, namely, the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, and I know why Jesus constrained them to come into it."

Clearly here is a fulfillment of St. Paul's statement: "Of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them." All who recognize Brother Russell as the messenger to the Laodicean church, will, we believe, prefer to take his interpretation as against that of any other brother in the truth; for we recognize that the Lord would be more likely to direct through his specially chosen servant an interpretation of the Scriptures than he would to give this direction through another. Brother Russell, in treating Matthew 14:22-24, stated that the ship represents the church as a whole, and that being true it could not represent a corporation organized for the purpose of carrying on a religious work. We quote Brother Russell as follows:

"But the boat and the twelve toiling rowers, and the storm and darkness of the night all picture still more perfectly the experiences of the Lord's people as a whole—not the experiences of a sectarian church, but the experiences of the one true church of which the Lord is the head, the 'church of the first born whose names are written in heaven.' This true church has indeed had a stormy time since parting with her Lord, who ascended to the Father. The darkness came down upon them—the darkness of error and superstition; and the

great Adversary, through the Antichrist and many less Antichrists, has aroused all through this Gospel age a great storm against the Lord's faithful."—Z '00 pp. 185, 186; Z '01 p. 148.

OCCASION FOR REFLECTION

This perversion or misapplication of Scripture by Brother H. should of itself be sufficient to enable every thoughtful student of God's Word to see that the brother is certainly taking a wrong course; and the further we examine his remarks the more we are convinced that he has been overreached by some influence other than that of the Master. For instance, when the ship in which St. Paul and the other prisoners were being conveyed to Italy stuck fast on the sand and the hinder part was broken off, he says that this represented the destruction of the Society and its being cast off by the Lord, and that this occurred in the Spring of 1918.

One proof of the wrongful interpretation is that the Society still exists and the Lord is continuing to use it to give witness to the truth. Now it follows that if the Society was pictured by the ship, those in the Society or closely allied with it would be pictured by the 276 souls in the ship. Brother H. states that all in the ship who escaped and afterwards got to shore because they were strong swimmers represent those who, together with himself and others, have withdrawn their allegiance to the Society and have designated themselves as "Standfast Christians." We hardly believe that any careful Bible student would want to agree that this interpretation is correct: for Paul, Luke and Aristarchus were the only ones on that ship who made any pretense of being Christians, and according to Brother Russell's interpretation of this same event all the others on the ship were of such a swinish disposition and character that they were in no attitude to receive the message of the truth, and for this reason St. Paul and his companions did not attempt to preach the Gospel to them. See WATCH TOWER 1903, p. 175.

We quote Brother H.:

"Now comes the final thought—they all got to land. Who are these all? They are the loyal standfast Bible students who are willing to go through water—anything—to get to land, and the Bible says that all got to land; so when we shake hands tonight I am going to believe that everyone of you who shakes hands with me tonight is going to get to land."

These few citations indicate what perverse things have been used to draw aside several of the Lord's dear sheep, some of whom, we are glad to say, have seen the error of their way and have returned to follow after the Lord. We pray that others may do likewise, if that be his holy will.

NO RULE LAID DOWN BY US

The pretext for Brother H. and a few other prominent brethren taking the course they have was the publication in THE WATCH TOWER of May 15th and that of June 1st, 1918, of a statement relative to Liberty Bonds. All of us recognize that no doctrinal question was here involved. It was a time of great stress; the government was calling upon the people to lend their money; many friends thought that they should do it; others thought that they should not. Had the Society attempted to make a fast rule that anyone should or should not buy bonds then there might have been an occasion for protest, but nothing of this nature was ever suggested. On the contrary the position of the Society is clearly summed up in the following quotation from May 15th WATCH TOWER above mentioned:

"The Association has no power to direct members thereof with reference to buying Liberty Bonds. It certainly will not and has not advised anyone to refuse to buy Liberty Bonds. That is an individual matter which each one must determine for himself according to his ability. The Association believes in supporting the government in every way it can [meaning conscientiously, of course; all Christians are law-abiding] and each one should do so according to his ability and his conscience."

The June 1st, 1918, TOWER merely explains that a person should be governed by his conscience, and that his conscience today might preclude him from doing what tomorrow he could conscientiously do after having a clearer and better understanding of a subject. There was not one word in that article to the effect that anyone in the Society should purchase bonds or refrain from purchasing them. THE WATCH TOWER would consider that beyond its province, to tell anyone what he should or should not do. It has never followed that policy; and it is to be hoped it never will.

EDITORS NOT INFALLIBLE

The question discussed was not a vital one to Christian character development, nor vital to one in making his calling and election sure. But let us suppose for the sake of argument that it was vital, involving a vital doctrine, and that THE WATCH TOWER stated it improperly. Should then anyone arrogate to himself the authority to determine whether or not the Lord had cast off the Society as an instrument for his use because members of the editorial committee had made an erroneous statement? Suppose THE WATCH TOWER was entirely wrong on this point. Would it not have been the spirit of the Master for the other brother to call the attention of the editorial committee to the error and ask for a correction instead of pursuing the course he did? That seems to be the Apostle's direction in Galatians 6:1.

We here mention the fact that Brother Russell, who edited THE TOWER from its inception until his death, occasionally made misstatements concerning such vital doctrines as the sin offering, application of the ransom price, the covenants, the Mediator, etc., and almost each time some prominent elder withdrew and took the position that the Lord had cast off his servant, notwithstanding the Lord continued to use him.

Probably it would be better to have said nothing in THE WATCH TOWER about Liberty Bonds, probably a mistake was made; but if so we are quite sure there was no intention of wrong-doing, and we believe the Lord would overrule under such circumstances any or all mistakes to the blessing of all who are properly exercised by the experiences that come to them by reason of the mistake even as he has done in respect to the treatment of the Covenants, etc., in the past. We recall that from time to time, as shown from THE WATCH TOWER, there have been those who arose among us perverting and misapplying Scriptures or the construction of them as given in THE WATCH TOWER, and that these have usually drawn some followers after them. A good answer to all such we find in the words of Brother Russell relative to those in antagonism to certain other statements in THE TOWER which led to their withdrawal from the Society. He said in the issue for February 1st, 1909:

"To this end let it be noticed that the split is coming from those who oppose the Vow. They are not opposing an attempt to force it upon them, for no such attempt has been made. They are opposing this feature of present truth, trying to hinder others from taking the vow, forcing an issue on the subject and arousing, so far as their influence goes, an evil, malicious spirit antagonistic to the Vow and the channel through which it came. To this end circulars are being printed and scattered abroad to prejudice and poison the minds of all who will come under the influence. As there are but two masters, which are these serving? Our question is not, Which do they say they are serving, nor Which do they think they are serving? We say to God's people, Judge for yourselves what sort of spirit is this which is seeking to cause division amongst the followers of Christ, and that is willing to hint all manner of evil and to surmise and to backbite. We do not believe this is the spirit of Christ. By their fruits ye shall know them. . . . We are firmly convinced that they are serving the cause of the Adversary—ignorantly. We are sorry for them; we pray for them."

HOUR OF TEMPTATION HERE

Truly the great hour of temptation is upon the church. Who shall be able to stand? (Malachi 3:2, 3) The Scriptures tell us that the angel of the Lord encampeth around about them that reverence him, for their deliverance or protection. They intimate also that Satan and the fallen angels are very desirous of invading our hearts and minds and bodies with evil suggestions. To a greater or lesser extent we must surely believe that divine providence, through the human will, has raised a considerable barrier for the protection of the natural man from evil spirits. Otherwise, surely through evil promptings and oppositions, the world, centuries since, would have gone mad.

We may be sure, however, that as the adversary especially opposed the Lord, so he marks out and specially assaults the members of the body, and the greater their prominence the more severe would naturally be the attack. Without divine assistance surely all would be made captive at his will—misled, ensnared by him who puts darkness for light and endeavors to show the light to be darkness. Seeing, then, that we are encompassed about by such a great host of enemies; towit, Satan, the evil spirits, our own imperfect flesh, the spirit of the world and other evil instruments, and observing our own imperfections and weaknesses; we cry unto the Lord: How shall we ever be able to overcome our adversaries and gain the victory that will admit us to thy glorious presence? We at once realize our own insufficiency and sweetly comes to us the comfort of our text, 'I will make myself strong in your behalf,' and we know that if the Lord be for us none can prevail against us.

CONDITIONS OF HELP

The Lord does not say he will manifest this strength in our behalf unconditionally, but he does say he will show himself strong in behalf of them whose hearts are perfect toward him. Had he stated that his strength would be manifested for us only provided we could speak and write properly and without mistakes, then all of us would fail. Had the condition been that our conduct must be perfect, or even our thoughts perfect, again we would fail. The condition he does require for all who will be able to stand in this hour of fiery testing is that such must have a pure, perfect heart. Thus realizing, we cry: "Create within me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." (Psalm 51:10) The heart is the seat of the affections. To have a pure heart means to have a pure, holy desire and intention to do the Father's will, a sincere desire to be led by him through our Master. It finds expression in the words, "I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is written within my heart": (Psalm 40:8) The poet has beautifully expressed it:

"If clearer vision thou impart,
Grateful and glad my soul shall be;
But, oh, to have a purer heart
Is more to me, is more to me."

When we come to the Lord and offer ourselves in full consecration, having been accepted by him and adopted as a son, he says to us, "My son, give me thine heart." (Proverbs 23:26) When we give him our hearts, we give him all. We set our affections on things pertaining to the heavenly kingdom and not on things of the earth. This means an unreserved, an unconditional giving to our heavenly Father our undivided love. It means we have adopted the words of the Master: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy strength and with all thy mind." At the hour of coming to the Lord the heart is not perfect. It requires time for this. Jesus said: "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy Word is truth." It means, then, that the new creature must grow in knowledge and in appreciation of the divine character and plan, and it means that this growth shall increase his love for the Father. A perfect heart means a pure heart toward God and the Lord Jesus, toward the brethren, toward the world, including our enemies. It means that if we love God we shall know him. We cannot love him without knowing him. It means that we shall prize his love and approval above the love and approval of any other.

A MISNOMER

The name taken by Brother H. and those who follow after him, seems to be inconsistent. Their position is that the Lord has forsaken the Society; that the Society is broken up, and that only those who flee from it and make desperate efforts to reach the land can reach the kingdom at all. And yet they designate themselves as "Standfast Bible Students," seemingly a misnomer. That a misguided brother has arisen and perverted some of the Scriptures is quite clear; that he has drawn away other disciples after him is also admitted; that such have abandoned the Society, for a time at least, seems to be true. The fact that St. Paul prophesied that of "your own selves men shall arise speaking perverse things to draw disciples after them" would seem of itself to indicate that that from which they turn away, the body of Christians from which they turn, are the very ones that are pleasing to the Lord.

St. Paul says: "Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions [doctrines, instructions] which you have been taught, whether by word or our epistle." Brother H. and his followers admit that the great doctrinal truths relative to the ransom, which is the keynote of all Christian faith, the doctrines of the sin offering, the covenants and mystery, etc., are taught by the apostles and by the word of the Lord's servant to the Laodicean church, and that for more than forty years the Society has been used as the channel through which this message has been brought. And now since the Society has not deviated one jot or tittle from these great fundamental doctrines, but is still holding fast thereto, would it not seem to a reasonable mind that the one who would flee away and call to others to flee with him would be disobeying the Apostles' injunction last above quoted? As to whether or not the Lord has abandoned the Society, would it not be well to leave that judgment to the Lord himself?

OUR GOAL IS CHRIST

The only thing worth while is the kingdom. Having enlisted under the banner of our King, our chief purpose is to be victors in the fight and have his approval and be received into the kingdom. Everything else is in comparison unworthy of consideration. Knowing that this is the Christian's goal, the chief purpose of the enemy is to prevent him from being a victor and being forever with the Lord Jesus Christ in glory. Through the Revelator the great Master tells us that the closing experiences of the church will mark a deadly conflict between the Lamb and the Beast, and that the Lamb will be victorious, and that in this great victory there will be with him certain ones; namely, the called, chosen and faithful. Beast symbolizes governing power exercised over the people in a beastly manner. The Beast of Revelation 17:11 means the dominant ecclesiastical systems exercising, directly or indirectly, persecuting power under the semblance of legal authority and using that power to restrain, persecute, imprison or kill those who are the true followers of Christ as prospective members of his body—the "seed of promise."

That this conflict has been on for some time and is now on, is quite clear; and since this is one of the instruments used by the adversary in his attempt to destroy the seed of promise, we may expect him to employ every means or device to turn aside those who are running for the prize. By suggesting to the mind certain thoughts, he opens the way to accomplish his desired end. Let us remember that the mind is the battleground, and that "the heart" is merely an expression referring to that portion of the mind having to do with the affections.

BITTERNESS, PRIDE, AMBITION, FEAR

The Scriptures show that several things are used by the adversary as hindrances which, if yielded to by the runners in the race course, will prove to be of gravest danger unless recovery and speedy victory is had. These instruments are: bitterness of heart, pride, ambition, and fear. Anyone who is overcome by any of these hindrances cannot be with the Lord in his final victory over Satan and his emissaries. The new creature has no cause to fear if he abides close to the Lord. The promise of our text is that the strength of the Lord will be manifested in his behalf. What then could men or demons, or the adversary or anyone else do unto him if the Lord's power is engaged in his behalf? One who permits fear to have a dwelling place in his heart will be led to take a compromising position with regard to the Lord and his service.

Such a position would show a degree of unfaithfulness to the Lord and would also show a lack of purity of heart, hence would deprive such a one of the benefit of the Lord's strength in the hour of great need. For the one who holds to the promises and trusts implicitly in the Lord there is no occasion for fear, "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the spirit of adoption whereby ye cry Abba, Father." (Romans 8:15) Here the Apostle shows a complete and abiding confidence in the Lord. And as for such, none can separate them from the Lord. (Romans 8:35-39) He who has a pure heart will not fear. "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."—1 John 4:18.

Pride and selfish ambition are an abomination, and he who permits them to have an indwelling in his heart could not have the pure heart required to guarantee that the strength of the Lord be used in his behalf in time of stress. Where there is pride and ambition one's consecration vow unto the Lord is largely forgotten and the soul is lifted up unto vanity.

Bitterness of heart from any cause drives out love, and without unfeigned love there can be no purity of heart. "Looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled." Compare also Hebrews 12:14, 15; Colossians 2:1-3, *Diaglott*.

CLEAN HANDS AND PURE HEARTS

The question asked by the Psalmist, clearly in behalf of the church, seems here appropriate: "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, and who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart, who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing of the Lord and righteousness from the God of his salvation." (Psalm 24:3-5) Without a pure heart no one can have clean hands. And he who lifts up his soul to vanity, that is, lacks meekness, humility and aspires to be greater and wiser in the eyes of others, he who has sworn deceitfully, who has made a consecration to be fully submissive to the Lord and then abandons it, such cannot have a pure heart. The test of a pure heart, therefore, is a test of perfect love; and perfect love toward God means a joyful submission to his holy will. There can be no division of our highest love between God and any creature. Our love for him must be supreme. It must be such that will enable us to strive above all things else to please him. Such love will prompt us to dare to do anything in his service which we recognize to be according to his holy will. It means that where opportunity for ser-

vice is open, there will we delight to go at any cost. It means that we would be anxious to glorify his name at all times and to remain steadfastly devoted to him and his Word at all cost of honor, fame, reputation or of life itself. For this proves our love of God if we keep his commandments with a joyous heart.

OTHER TESTS

In order to maintain this purity of heart we must love the brethren, because that is the commandment to the new creation. "This is my commandment, That ye love one another as I have loved you." (John 15:12) This purity of heart toward the brethren will mean sacrifice of ourselves in their behalf. It will mean rendering justice to the brethren. It will mean watching for opportunities to do them good, and shunning everything that would have a tendency to do them evil. "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."

If we fail in this test of intense love for the brethren to the extent of gladly laying down our lives for them, then we fail in our purity of heart toward God. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because Christ laid down his life for us; and we ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren." "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth." "But whoso keepeth his Word, in him is the love of God perfected." Hereby we know that we are in him.

Purity of heart will prevent us from searching out the defects in the brethren and magnifying them. On the contrary, the pure in heart will seek to cover the defects of his brethren with the mantle of love. (I Peter 4:8) Long ago we were warned that "one of the final and most searching tests that would come to the church and the one under which probably most of those awakened and armed will fall, will be love for the brethren." (Z '99, p. 88) Again, Jesus said that in the hour of final tests injustice would abound, causing the love of many to wax cold. "And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another and shall hate one another."—Matthew 24: 10-12.

It is easy, therefore, to see that the victory is not with the wise, nor with the mighty, nor the strong, nor necessarily with those who have shone forth in prominent places while in the flesh; but the victory will be with those who are pure of heart. In the great and final conflict now on, soon the Lamb will be completely and forever victorious over Satan and all his emissaries. The Scriptures indicate that some start in the battle having been called and chosen, and have fought valiantly for a time, then prove unfaithful. Those who stand with him in the holy place, complete victors, wearing the crown of life, will be the faithful, the loyal in heart, the true the pure in heart, those who love him and the Father supremely and who have willingly and joyfully followed the Lamb whithersoever he led them. "Keep thine heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life."

THE ISSUE LIFE OR DEATH

The great question, or great issue now at stake for everyone who is fighting the good fight of faith, is the issue of life or death; and the one who gains this victory, who has the issue determined beneficially to him, will be the one who has diligently kept his own heart pure. He cannot win this fight alone, but the Lord will win it for him; for "the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth to show his strength in behalf of them whose hearts are perfect toward him." This class that, with the Lamb, triumphs over the beast will be the members of the victorious High Priest, and will be used of the Lord to establish and maintain righteousness in the earth.

For six thousand years truth has been on the scaffold and wrong upon the throne. Christ Jesus at Calvary lighted the torch of truth among his followers, endowed them with his spirit, and sent them forth with the startling announcement: "Ye are the light of the world." Satan throughout the age has diligently sought to debauch the church, to inject wrongful thoughts into the minds of its members, and to poison their hearts. Satan has used many instruments, enemies of the new creation, and in the name of religion the most cruel and wicked deeds have been done against them. The Lord could have prevented this. He permitted it for a purpose. Soon now all the suffering will be over, and there will be no more opportunity to participate in it. Those who abide now patiently, cheerfully and faithfully in the Lord will be the ones to be victors, and then he will take truth off the scaffold and place it forever on the throne and the faithful will share in the work with him. These will have the oportunity, with Christ, of undoing what Satan has done and beyond that, blessing and uplifting mankind. And above all these things, in the ages to come they will be the special recipients of God's favor, for the Lord has spoken it.—Ephesians 2:7.

COMING CONVENTIONS

Throughout the war considerable restriction was encountered in one direction and another to the holding of Conventions. Especially did these restrictions affect friends residing in Canada and for a time cut them off from the services of traveling speakers from this side the border. No doubt they have been ably exhorted and stimulated to greater faith and love by faithful Canadian brethren, and doubtless, too, all feel that the hand of the Lord has been manifested in ways which would have been impossible had not trying circumstances existed.

Now, however, that some measure of communication is opened up across the border we believe all will rejoice at the prospect of a series of General Conventions intended to give opportunity to the majority of the friends in Western Canada and the States to assemble for seasons of spiritual rest and refreshment. All of the General Conventions named below are expected to be addressed by Brother Rutherford and one or more of the other seven brethren recently released from prison at Atlanta—as well as by other experienced and capable speakers.

The Local Conventions listed below will be addressed by two or more Pilgrim brethren and experience has often shown such gatherings to be means of grace and encouragement hardly less notable than the larger assemblies.

Probably no urging is necessary on our part; for all surely recognize the desirability of Christian fellowship and of the discourses on Scriptural doctrine and ethics. But we do remind the friends that the most sacred thing we have on earth is God's word, and that word dwells in the hearts and lives of his people—"Ye are the light of the world."

GENERAL CONVENTIONS

ST. PAUL., MINN., June 18-22. A five-day General Convention is being arranged for at the Twin Cities and the Metropolitan Opera House, St. Paul, has been engaged for all the sessions. Address H. B. Morrison, 987 Laurel Ave., St. Paul, Minn., for further details.

WINNIPEG MAN., June 19-22. Four days will be spent in Convention here. For further information address Convention Committee, 143 Donald Street.

CALGARY, ALTA., June 24-26. American friends planning to attend this gathering of the Lord's people may communicate with E. Bennett, 810 Third Ave., East.

VANCOUVER, B. C., June 28-July 1. The friends at Vancouver expect a large number of friends from the American side. Those planning to attend can secure information from S. A. Carter, 620 Seventeenth Ave., West.

Other General Conventions will, if the Lord permit, be held at SEATTLE, WASH., July 3-6; SPOKANE, WASH., July 8-10; PORTLAND, ORE., July 11-13; DENVER, COLO., July 17-20. Details in next issue.

LOCAL CONVENTIONS

BINGHAMTON, N. Y., June 27-29. There will be a convention at Binghamton on the above dates. The friends are prepared to take care of a large number of visitors, and expect a goodly attendance. Several Pilgrims and one of the released brethren will speak. Address all communications to W. M. Moore, 38 Mason Ave.

SAN ANTONIO, TEX., June 27-29. All sessions will be held in the regular meeting place, 117½ North Floris Street. For further information write to T. A. Black, 612 Avenue C.

Local Conventions in July as follows: ERIE, PA., July 3-6; LOS ANGELES, CALIF., July 4-6; ROCHESTER, N. Y., July 4-6; KALAMAZOO, MICH., July 4-6; ST. LOUIS, MO., July 4-6. Details later.

"THY SHIELD AND THY REWARD"

[This article was a reprint of that published in issue of Sept. 15, 1895, which please see.]

"THE GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE"

JUNE 22.—1 CORINTHIANS 13.

[This article was a reprint of that published in the issue of June 1, 1909, with extracts from previous articles on the same subject.]

RESPONSE TO GOD'S LOVE

JUNE 29.—PHILIPPIANS 3:7-14.

HIGH SOCIAL AND POLITICAL POSITIONS ACCOUNTED BY THE APOSTLE AS UNWORTHY TO BE RETAINED IN COMPARISON TO THE PRIVILEGE OF WINNING CHRIST AND BEING FOUND IN HIM—FELLOWSHIP IN CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS—PURSUING ALONG THE NARROW WAY—NOT ALREADY PERFECT—THE PRIZE OF THE HIGH CALLING.

"I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with my whole heart."—Psalm 86:12.

One of the things which gives interest to the writings of the Apostle Paul is the fact that they breathe forth the very spirit of the writer. There is nothing artificial about them; for the Apostle either had lived through or was in process of living through all of his own teachings on the Christian life.

His letter to the church at Philippi is unique, not merely that it was written from his Roman prison, for that was also true of some of his other epistles, but in its spirit of tender fellowship with and solicitation for the welfare of the Philippian brethren. No word of censure is anywhere noted in all the letter, but he does compliment them, perhaps most of all in that he speaks freely of the most advanced Christian experiences.—Chs. 1:21, 29; 2:3; 3:15; 4:8.

Our today's lesson begins with the statement: "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ"—i. e. the things which I once looked upon as marks of distinction in the social and ecclesiastical world I have come to look upon as lost, and not only lost but happily so. The external privileges which Saul had had were in the nature of correct circumcision, the earliest of church rites, of membership in the most honored race on the face of the earth, and of one of the two most honored tribes of that race, of clean Hebrew blood, of scrupulous religiosity, of being a thorough-going and entirely respectable reactionary—he persecuted the church—of blamelessness in such righteousness as could be produced under the Law.

Certainly this is no mean list of advantages. No mention is here made of wealth, but many things imply that he was at least above the average in that respect, else he would hardly have had all the advantages of schooling under Gamaliel which he did have. Considerable color is lent to this view by the hope of Felix, that money would be given him by Paul for his release from the prison at Cæsarea.—Acts 24:26.

LOSS AND GAIN IN CHRIST

Even after a review of the things which Christ had cost him the Apostle felt that he was happy not only because there were losses in the past but was happy and perfectly willing to have those losses continue to the end, because he realized that unspeakable treasures of wisdom and knowledge, unthinkable heights of honor and distinction, and unsearchable depths of religious experience lay before him, if he could but enjoy the priceless privilege of acquaintanceship with Christ Jesus, his Master.—Philippians 3:8.

All the losses which the Apostle had encountered were encountered because of his connection with the despised Jesus. But he did not waste time and energy repining over the loss of things which he had once gladly foregone. So far from having this attitude, he looked upon all those worldly advantages of the past as mere refuse—things which did administer something to life at one time, but the usefulness of which had been exhausted and which had better be gotten rid of than retained. One serious trouble with many Christian people is spiritual constipation—the retention of those things which have long since ceased to give sustenance.

The privilege of winning Christ, or the final anointing and installation into office, of being found among those who have been made meet for the inheritance for the saints in light, is a goal for the attainment of which no personal sacrifice can be too great, no zeal too warm. Elsewhere the same Apostle says: "What we now suffer I count as nothing in comparison with the glory which is soon to be manifested in us."

RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD BY FAITH

The formalistic righteousness which the Apostle had had as a Jew by virtue of his conformity to the ceremonial demands of the Law did not help him to gain everlasting life. That typical arrangement of the Law which seemed reasonably to promise life eternal, was found, when actual attempt was made to attain the life, to condemn one to death because of the Jew's inability to meet the demands of Jehovah as expressed in the Law. (Romans 7:10) But God, the same God who established and maintained the dignity of his justice by manifesting its unchangeability through the Law Covenant, also introduced a way of mercy through Christ Jesus his Son. His beloved Son gave himself in furtherance of the Father's purpose as a ransom price for the sin of Adam and his children. He finished his sacrificial course on Calvary, ascended on high and "purged our sins" by the presentation of his merit on behalf of the church, which included not only the Apostle Paul, but also all other apostles and every other one who has come to God through Christ during this Gospel age.

This provision included the Apostle for the same reason that it includes others; because he believed in God's arrangement for redemption through Christ and in response to that faith God counted him as acceptable through Christ—Christ making such legal satisfaction for him as he was unable to make for himself, because of an imperfect or unbalanced character. Perhaps no words can express this great central truth more clearly than those of the Apostle himself in Romans 5:18: "As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life."

Thus peace is brought to the consecrated follower of Christ (Romans 5:1) who disavows his own righteousness as having any saving merit, and looks to Jesus, the author and finisher of his faith; for, "the just shall live by faith." (Romans 1:17) "For on the ground of obedience to the Law no man living will be declared righteous before him. The Law simply brings the sure knowledge of sin. But now righteousness coming from God has been brought to light apart from the Law, both the Law and prophets bearing witness to it—the righteousness coming from God, which depends on faith in Jesus Christ and extends to all who believe."—Romans 3:20-22.

The Apostle knew that the Pharisees, of which sect he was a member, were the most punctiliously religious, the most scrupulously moral people that ever trod the earth; yet our Lord had said of them that they were "hypocrites," "whited sepulchers," "brood of vipers", and "of their father the devil." No wonder the Apostle cheerfully forewent whatever righteousness he may have had as a Pharisee and even more cheerfuly accepted God's gracious arrangement through Christ.

Of course, none but Jews were ever subject to the Law Covenant; but the remainder of the believers of this age have been obliged to come to God through Christ Jesus, because first, "There is none righteous, no not one," and second, because no man can come unto the Father but by the Anointed. Those who have thus come have "ceased from [their] own works, as God did from his." They have ceased to believe in the effectiveness of human theories of self-perfection.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

All the words from the middle of the eighth verse to the end of the ninth are parenthetical, so that the hopes of the tenth verse really furnish the groundwork for his willingness to suffer the loss of all things. He was willing to undergo deprivations of any temporal character if only he could know Christ better, and experience his dynamic resurrection unto glory, honor and immortality. This exalted resurrection is obtainable only in case we participate in his sufferings, and are conformed to his sacrificial death.—2 Timothy 2:12.

Another view of this tenth verse is that it constitutes a brief outline of the Apostle's course from the very start of his Christian experiences. He, "not disobedient to the heavenly vision" had cheerfully given up his previous standing as a Pharisee and probably a member of the Sanhedrin, that he might know the wonderful Christ who had appeared to him in the way toward Damascus shining above the brightness of the sun at noonday. The power that could thus meet and strike him blind was well worth knowing. But it was not mere acquaintanceship with him that was desired; the acquaintanceship brought knowledge of the fact that certain advantages might accrue from the work of Christ Jesus, especially from his resurrection, for "he was raised for our justification." To be brought into a state of acceptability before God was all that was ever hoped for under the Law, and here it was to be had for the confident asking—bought by the precious blood of Christ.—1 Peter 1:18, 19.

An acquaintanceship with the love which prompted Jehovah to devise this benign plan for justification unto life, and acquaintanceship with the love of our Lord Jesus which

prompted him to give himself in death on our behalf in furtherance of the Father's design, stimulates in us a desire to make some return. We begin to feel that as Christ died for us we ought also to lay down our lives for Christ's brethren; and when we begin to follow this holy impulse, under the direction of his Word, we begin to share in his sufferings, moderately at first, but in proportion to our zeal and opportunities our fellowship in his sufferings becomes more keen and our consecrated walk in the narrow way brings us more and more fully into contact with the fire which destroys our human hopes, aims, and ambitions; and finally we may follow our Lord under the second vail into the holiest of all, and attain to the first and most honorable resurrection of the dead.—Revelation 20:5, 6.

NOT ALREADY PERFECT

But though such were the high aspirations of the Apostle, he disclaims having already participated in that glorious change. Elsewhere he does indicate that faithful followers of the Lord live a resurrection life now, have already been raised to walk in newness of life (see also Colossians 3:1), yet that newness is only very fragmentary, since we have only an imperfect organism. "When that which is perfect is come, then that which is fragmentary shall be supplanted" by the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

The perfectness referred to in the twelfth verse is evidently different from that mentioned in the fifteenth verse of the same chapter: the former is manifestly connected with the first resurrection, when that which is sown in weakness is raised in power, when that which is sown in dishonor is raised in glory. But in the latter instance reference is had to maturity of Christian character, a state of high development and sturdiness in growth. The Apostle knew he was not elected in the final sense of that word, but he was busily engaged in doing his part so that he might win in the election for which he had been nominated by Christ Jesus.

The absence of any "cock-sureness" on the part of the Lord's most honored Apostle can well be a lesson for us all, and can well give us assurance in following him, even as he followed Christ. He did not arrogantly assume that everything must be all right for him since he was an Apostle. So far from that attitude of mind, he was submerged in the spirit of love and devotion, and in working out his own salvation with conscientious caution and self-distrust, being energized in will and stimulated in work by God.—Philippians 2:12.

The prize, the grand consummation of all his hopes and strivings, was ever before Brother Paul's mind. What was glorious enough for God to offer him was glorious enough for him to look forward to with keen expectation. It was a steady view of that reward which made his temporal losses seem so insignificant. Because that prize of joint-heirship with Christ seemed to him worthy of every effort which he could possibly put forth he ceased to allow side issues and the ephemeral things of life to have any dominating influence over him. True, he had to give some attention to provision for the body, but such provision was not with the end in view of mere personal gratification—all those things were consecrated means to a sanctified end.

THE MARK AND THE PRIZE

The things behind were not forgotten in the ordinary sense of that word, because the Apostle remembered them sufficiently well to enumerate some of his former advantages, but they were forgotten in the sense that they were discarded and no longer allowed to dictate his course of action. Just one thing stood out in the zealous Apostle's life and that was 'the being with Christ', which was far better than anything else.—Philippians 1:23, Diaglott.

The fourteenth verse of our lesson has occasionally given rise to some confusion because of the unfortunateness of the King James wording. It has been associated in the minds of some with the picture of a modern race course, as made use of in the sixth volume of Scripture Studies. (F. 187) No citation is there given to this text and it is not necessary to suppose that it was meant, merely because a similarity of language is employed.

The literal Greek text is very simple and understandable. It reads: "According to a mark I pursue towards the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." In other words, in this text, the mark is the course over which the runner pursues, but the prize is the object of his striving, and not the mark. Either thought, however, is helpful and probably the Apostle would not object to his words being made use of in either way, but our only knowledge of what he really meant is by what he said. The grammatical structure of "according to a mark" is identical with that of our Master's words: "According to thy faith be it unto thee."

The word translated "press" does not mean press in the sense of squeeze, or push down, but rather with the meaning of pursue, or press on. The work or course along which the Apostle was pursuing was the narrow way, because it is the only way that leads to the life, the prize of immortality. He was not trying to reach that glorious station by moralistic or humanitarian roads, however smooth or respectable they may have appeared to be; for he well knew that his Lord and Forerunner had said: "Many will say to me in that day, Master, Master, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name expelled demons, and in thy name performed many mighty works? And then I will tell them plainly, I never did recognize you; begone from me, you that work lawlessly"—regardless of and even contrary to my instructions.—Matthew 7:22, Luke 6:46.

LETTERS FROM AFIELD

"THE LORD KNOWETH THEM THAT ARE HIS"

DEAR SIR:

For some time I have been most interested in the teachings of Pastor Russell, and have read the first volume of "The Divine Plan of the Ages" or "Millennial Dawn," but would like to have the whole set from No. 1 to No. ..... I do not know if this is the same as STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES. I see that there are six of these. Will you please send me "The Divine Plan," complete, and advise me the price, which I will forward in one payment or more. I am engaged in missionary work, and have food and raiment, but little money—none from the work. If you still have a copy of the BIBLE STUDENTS MONTHLY, Vol. 8, No. 5, I should much like one, also any other papers whereby I could get to know more about Pastor Russell's teachings, his followers, etc. If it is not too discourteous, I would so much like to know why some of Pastor Russell's followers were cast into prison a few months ago.

May God keep us from being bound to "doctrines," but also from being led away from the fundamental truths of the Bible! Surely what we need is a baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Yours in the King's service,

MRS. ALICE VAN EMMERIK-CLEVERLY.—*Java.*

"FOLLOW THOU ME"

MY DEAR BRETHREN:

I have just finished reading the May 1st TOWER, and I beg just enough of your valuable time to express to you my sincerest appreciation of your kind services to God's dear Israel.

All along the way I have earnestly, yet soberly and calmly encouraged head and heart loyalty to the WATCH TOWER, because of the multitudinous evidences we have that it is the Lord's channel still, just as effectually as ever; and now comes the May 1st issue which is the best ever.

Oh, how could any one reject its wholesome and timely food! How we look forward to its coming as a means of sweet communion with the Lord, a wise counsel in perplexity, a fortification in battle, and a mighty Tower of strength in times of weakness! Daily, yea many times do we bear you up to our Father's presence that you may have heavenly wisdom and guidance to feed the dear flock of God; and how it rejoices our hearts to see our prayers answered in a manner that far transcends our loftiest expectations!

If we should repudiate such wholesome food, would it not indicate a greatly impaired spiritual digestion on our part? I think it would. There is an old adage which says: "When the mouse is glutted no flour tastes sweet." To me this plainly represents some of our former dear friends, who through an apparent feeling of self-complacency, think it no longer necessary to feast with us at the Lord's table. Of course, our Master would say as in times of old, "What is that to thee, follow thou me." And indeed, we do so gladly. We can pray for them, and then leave it all in our Father's hands, for he knoweth best.

Be assured, dear brethren, there are many who have never bowed the knee to the idols so astutely erected by misguided brethren in our day. More and more do the many friends all over this country appreciate your very efficient services in this capacity. We are sure that the secret of your success lies in the fact that "God is with you." And we all want to stay with you and the Lord. Truly our recent experiences have proven that our safety as new creatures depends upon our staying with the Lord and his arrangement.

May the dear Lord richly bless your hearts too, as you so

greatly water and refreshen others. I beg to remain lovingly and sincerely, your brother in him.

A. J. ESHLEMAN.—*Pilgrim.*

FROM A WAR CAMP IN FRANCE

[The following letter addressed by a soldier to his mother has been handed to us.]

DEAR MOTHER:—

A few days ago there happened something here that made me very happy and of which I must tell you. A German engineer (prisoner) here in our mess hall had a picture in his hand. I made occasion to see what the picture was, and to my surprise I found it to be none other than a picture of Pastor Russell. The prisoner could talk English a little—sufficiently to make ourselves understood. I asked him what he thought of Pastor Russell, and he replied: "Oh, he is my pastor"! I then asked him if he had any of the volumes. He replied by holding up six fingers—meaning Volumes I to VI inclusive. I then asked him what the German government thought of Pastor Russell. He responded: "No good; they say he is a seducer of the people."

I then found that he did not know Pastor Russell was dead. He had been drafted into the German army at the outbreak of the war and had not heard about it. When I told him of the Pastor's death he nearly cried. I next told him about the seventh volume, and of the imprisonment of Brother Rutherford and the other officers of the Society on account of it. He knew nothing about it, and said he thought it strange that such things could occur in America. He said he would try to get the volume through some of his brethren. He was compelled to leave shortly thereafter, and as he departed from me he was on the verge of tears. I thought I would tell you of this strange experience; perhaps many of the friends would like to know of it.

Just received two new TOWERS. Will read them tonight by candle light. Much love,

BERNARD L. PORTER (A. E. F.)—*France.*

KEPT ABLE THROUGH GOD'S GRACE

DEAR FELLOW WORKERS:

Please find enclosed my personal check of ....., which please use to help forward the above named work.

Dear friends, I fully sympathize with you in the many trying difficulties of your calling. The road to the kingdom is fraught with deep perplexities, trials and difficulties for us all, but the final is all glorious. The WATCH TOWER comes to us each half month bringing comfort, instruction and encouragement; so we praise God daily for what you do for us and that His work is placed in such good hands.

Dear friends, we know that it is only through the grace of an infinite God that you are kept able to do your great work, so we remember you daily at his august throne.

Your sister in His service, MRS. S. A. OWENS.—*Pa.*

EXPECTATIONS MORE THAN REALIZED

DEAR BRETHREN:

We enclose herewith 550 more petitions. This makes in all from our section a total of 3650, which much more than exceeds our expectations. We greatly rejoice in the privilege of joining with others in doing this wonderful work!

Much Christian love and sincere prayers for your guidance.

Yours in Him, ARIEL H. HEMPHILL.—*Mo.*

APPRECIATING RECENT SERVICE

DEAR BRETHREN:

I have just finished reading for the fourth time, the grand article in the May 1st TOWER "The Harvest Ended," and greatly appreciate the enlargement of thought associated with the words of the fifth chapter of James as applicable particularly at this time.

What carefulness of thought, word and action should permeate our lives in the realization of the coming events that will shortly sift out such as have not used the past opportunities judiciously, or do not fight vigilantly in the battle raging now.

It is sad to see that, no doubt, many have surrendered to the enemy Fear—though it may be under the cover of some other pretext.

In the realization of our own weaknesses, and as we by faith lay hold upon the many promises precious to those who endeavor loyally to exercise faith, we are strengthened by the Apostle's words: "When I am weak, then am I strong," in the Lord.

Our class has faithfully circulated "The World has Ended" Labor Tribune edition, and we have had the joy of receiving some encouraging comments from some of our citizens.

Praying the Lord's continued guiding hand over our mutual service, and rich blessings upon the dear ones at the Watch Tower office, and especially upon the dear brethren that have suffered and are yet suffering in bonds for the word of God, I am yours in the sweet bond of Christian love,

N. A. LINDERBERG.—*Minn.*

MANY ENJOYED PETITION WORK

DEAR BRETHREN:

Greetings in the name of our Lord and King!

I am sending my petition sheet. I have labored earnestly and at every opportunity with this to secure all that I possibly could. I am sure it has been a wonderful witnessing of the truth. We did quite well until some of our opponents warned the people that they would get into trouble if they signed the petitions. But we secured quite a number of names after that.

Yes, we have received a blessing as we noticed many questions asked concerning the truth and they have inquired about books and tracts.

We are glad to have had this opportunity of witnessing to the truth and believe we would have missed a blessing had we not worked with tracts and petitions. With much Christian love, I remain, Your sister in his service,

HARRIET A. DOAK.—*Ia.*

DEAR BELOVED BRETHREN:

Greetings in the name of our blessed King and Master!

Our class is rejoicing that the dear brethren who were in Atlanta are back in the office once more; truly God is good. Surely it is a great privilege to serve the King of Kings that knows no defeat!

Enclosed you will find another filled petition list, and we have another list about half filled, mostly business people's signatures on the latter. They are signing quite readily here, the big majority being willing to lend their aid by signing.

It will surely arouse the interest of many people; thus God can make the wrath of man to praise him. Let us continue the good work by the Lord's grace. How badly the world needs the truth; and if this will help some of them to get it, we should not hesitate to take advantage of this opportunity to get the glorious message before them.

May the Lord continue to guide and direct you in doing his will, blessing your efforts to serve him.

With much Christian love, Your sister in the blessed hope,

ETHEL THORNBURG.—*Mont.*

DEAR BRETHREN:

Christian Greetings! Enclosed find petition sheet which I am very glad to send, but would have liked to send more.

I did certainly enjoy the privilege of doing something in the service of our brethren and also of bringing the people's attention to our Lord's wonderful blessings to come in due time to all the groaning creation.

I received many blessings and did have the privilege of loaning one First Volume to some people who were very much awake to the condition of the churches. Surely it is more blessed to give than to receive; and may the blessings of the Lord be with you all in the days to come.

Your sister by his grace. MISS EMMA MILLER.—*Mass.*

CONVICTIONS REVERSED

We clip the following item from page 1, of *The Brooklyn Eagle*, of May 15, 1919:

"Russellite Verdict Reversed by Appeal; 'Trial was Unfair'
"Circuit Court Criticises Judge Howe's Conduct

"Judges Ward, Rogers and Manton of the United States Circuit Court of Appeals for the New York Federal District today reversed the convictions of the leaders of Russellism, who were found guilty last June before Judge Harland B. Howe of Vermont, sitting in Brooklyn, of conspiring to obstruct the draft, discourage enlistment and foment insurrection and insubordination among the armed forces of the Nation.

"The decision holds that the attitude of Judge Howe was unfair in his treatment of the witnesses, Mrs. Mabel Campbell, Mrs. Agnes Hudgings and her husband, William F. Hudgings. . . . Inasmuch as the decision sustains the legitimacy of the claim of the Russellites that their organization, which forbids members to kill, entitled its members to exemption from active service with the Army, there seems little likelihood that the leaders of the cult will ever again be placed on trial. Federal Attorney James D. Bell refused to say whether he contemplates a retrial of the case. . . . All served nine months before they were recently released on bail, granted by the United States Supreme Court on application of Jesse Fuller, Jr., and Frederick Sparks, of counsel. . . .

"Judge Martin T. Manton dissented from the majority

opinion, which was written by Judge Henry G. Ward. . . . Referring to the treatment of the witnesses, Mrs. Campbell, Mrs. Hudgings and Hudgings, the decision says:

"'We think that the attitude of the court in regard to the testimony of these three witnesses and the action it took in the presence of the jury in the case of the witness William F. Hudgings was most prejudicial to the defendants. It was very likely to intimidate witnesses subsequently called, to prejudice the jurors against the defendants and to make them think that the court was satisfied of the defendants' guilt. What a judge may say to the contrary on such an occasion may not necessarily prevent such consequences.'"

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GOD'S COVENANTS AND BLESSINGS

"Let them curse, but bless thou."—Psalm 109:28.

Clear understanding of every feature of God's plan, while desirable, is not necessarily essential to our blessing thereunder. Most of us believed in the precious blood of Christ and were justified freely thereby from all things when we did not at all understand the philosophy of the atonement—even as the majority of Christian people do not understand it now. While increasing knowledge did not bring increasing justification, it did bring increased appreciation, devotion and love, together with greater opportunities for harmony and co-operation with God's purposes, as those purposes were better understood.

Likewise a clear appreciation of God's covenants is important and valuable to the Christian. In the knowledge of these he possesses the key to the understanding of the entire plan of God. That which we believe the Lord has allowed us to see more distinctly than most Christians is manifestly our duty and privilege to lay before the household of faith.

The Apostle's statement that God "will have all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth," together with the inspired allusion to God's disposition quoted at the head of this column, shows us that the heavenly Father prefers to bless, rather than to curse. But for the maintenance of justice, the stabilizing attribute of God's character, he will curse, or remove the blessings already possessed or remove the opportunity for additional blessings, if favors already shown are unappreciated and unused.

Adam, God's perfect earthly image, was fairly engulfed in divine blessings. He was perfect socially, mentally, morally, and physically; more than this he had a perfect environment and perfect dominion. He was the climax of all Jehovah's wonderful creative work on earth and was included in the general statement of approval: "And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold it was very good." Thus "God blessed them" by making every arrangement for their well-being and happiness.

HOME TIES BROKEN

But man disobeyed God and so severed the bond of fellowship and communion between them, the tacit agreement between man and his Maker to render mutual love and appreciation. God's blessing or favor was withdrawn, and since only "in his favor is life" (Psalm 30:5), the curse or disfavor of Jehovah rested upon Adam. (Genesis 3:19) What now? Could nothing in the shape of divine blessing be looked forward to as the disobedient pair were driven from their home in Eden? Yes, there was a glimmer of hope given in the curse upon the serpent: "it [the seed of Eve] shall bruise thy head." (Genesis 3:15) It must have been humiliating to Adam, who should have been the head, to have his only ray of hope expressed in God's communication to the serpent, and that in a promise where his own name was not even mentioned; but the realization of that fact could not have been half as humiliating as the consciousness of the utter ingratitude with which he had treated the benign providences of his Maker.

Adam's failure to keep God's law had cut himself and his race off from divine favor and placed them under divine sentence; and nothing that man could do would restore that favor. The initiative toward reconciliation must come from God, if at all; and God's covenants are his statements of his proposition for a reconciliation, and indicate how, with whom, and by whom it shall be accomplished.

COVENANT, AN ARRANGEMENT OR CONTRACT

Before taking up a review of God's three most prominent covenants we will perhaps do well to bring clearly to mind the meanings of the important terms used, especially the words of Covenant and Mediator.

The word in the Greek which is translated covenant or testament is *diatheekee* and is derived from *dia*, thoroughly, and *theh-o*, to place. From this we get the thought of disposition, arrangement, bequest, testament, or covenant. Professor Young gives "arrangement, covenant"; Strong's Concordance gives "disposition, i. e., (specifically) a contract (especially a devisory *will*)." The English word covenant is probably well understood, but a few citations will not be out of place:

Covenant; an agreement entered into by two or more parties. A written agreement between parties under seal. *Standard Dictionary.*

Covenant; A written contract under seal; "covenant" is frequent in religious usage, as "contract" is in law and business. *Fernald Synonyms.*

Covenant; A covenant is usually a national and public transaction; a solemn engagement on the one hand and faith in that engagement on the other, enter into the nature of a covenant. *Crabb's Synonymes.*

Covenant; A mutual contract or agreement of two or more persons to do or to refrain from doing some act. In general (law), an agreement under a seal. In Biblical usage, the free promise of God, generally, though not always, expressly accompanied by the requirement of fulfillment of certain conditions on the part of man. *Century Dictionary.*

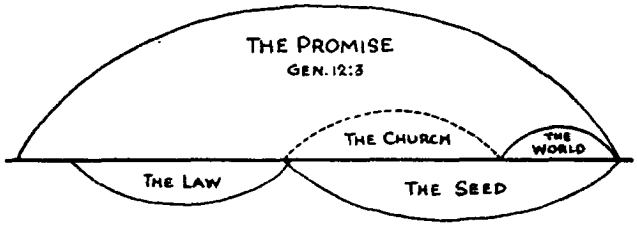
A contract or covenant may be unilateral, i. e. onesided, or bilateral, i. e. two-sided. A covenant may be conditional, or unconditional. Where a covenant is conditional each contracting party is bound to fulfill certain conditions, and a mediator is appointed to see that each keeps his covenant. Where a covenant is unconditional, no mediator is necessary.

Mediator; (Greek *meseetees*) middleman. *Young's Concordance.*

Mediator; a go-between, i. e. (simply) an internunciator, (by implication) a reconciler. *Strong's Concordance.*

The Greek word means simply a betweener, but is used in the Scriptures for one who interposes between parties at variance in order to reconcile them or to see that justice is done to both parties.

THE OATH-BOUND COVENANT



"Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred and from thy father's house, into a land that I will show thee; and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed."—Genesis 12:1-3.

Any blessing ever coming to any human being comes as a fruitage of that promise. On this point we quote from THE WATCH TOWER of June 1st, 1916, page 169, first column:

"The Abrahamic Covenant is an all-embracing arrangement. Everything that God has done and will yet do for our race is included in that Abrahamic Covenant. . . . . All kindreds and families of the earth will be blessed by the privilege or opportunity of becoming children of Abraham, children of God, whom Abraham represented in a figure. 'I have made thee a father of many nations' (Genesis 17:5; Romans 4:17), said the Lord to Abraham. These will be blessed under the New Covenant, an arrangement whereby the Abrahamic Covenant will be fulfilled as relates to Israel and to all. The Abrahamic Covenant, then, embraces all the other covenants, those covenants being merely different features of God's arrangements by which the work implied in the great Abrahamic Covenant or promise is to be accomplished."

The original covenant, or promise, includes all that its added, or dependent covenants include in the way of blessing; while the latter constitute but proper and reasonable limitations and regulations by which the blessings may become everlasting to all the worthy.

Little is said of Abraham prior to God's making the cov-