

OUR CONVENTION IN CHICAGO

From present indications it seems evident that our convention will be well attended;—addresses of intending comers are from every quarter of the Union, and from Canada. Let all come hungering and thirsting for righteousness (for a right life, as well as for a right faith); for only such have the promise of being filled. Come prepared to do good to others as you may find opportunity, as well as to get good from contact with others of like precious faith.

Some of the colporteurs write that they long to be there, but many of them fear that they cannot incur so much expense—boarding and lodging, in addition to railroad expenses. To all regular colporteurs, who for more than a month past have been giving their time exclusively to this work, we would say: This will be a special occasion! We want to meet and greet *every one of you!* It will be profitable to you, not only spiritually, but temporally; for after the meeting you can get instruction in the successful methods of colporteur work: instructions which will help you in coming years to make the work a success, and thus will greatly increase your talents as stewards. Therefore, if necessary to the meeting of your railroad fare, we will give you a little

longer credit on DAWNS. And, if you need it, your boarding and lodging expenses during the period of the Convention will be paid out of the *Tract Fund*. Surely come!

To all we would say: Bring none with you that you have not previously mentioned to us by letter, as our lodging quarters must be arranged for in advance. And please remember that only those who believe in Christ as man's redeemer, substitute, corresponding price, are at all invited. For what communion hath light with darkness, or believers with unbelievers? Make a distinction, therefore, between the clean and the unclean;—between those who stand washed by faith in the precious blood, and those who stand uncleansed, in the filthy rags of their own righteousness.

Uncertainty as to the number who will attend, and other matters, have prevented our completing arrangements so as to be able to give particulars at this date. But cards with instructions will be mailed, in due time, to all who write accepting the invitation. These should be preserved and brought along to the Convention. They will serve to identify you to the person having the lodging arrangements in charge. For further particulars see July Tower, page 216.

THE OFFICE OF REASON

IN THE FORMATION OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER AND FAITH

In these days, when rampant Infidelity and stolid Conservatism are each striving for the mastery among professed Christians, it would be well for all to carefully observe the divinely appointed metes and bounds of human reason, especially in its relationship to divine truth.

The reason is the noblest faculty of the human mind. It is the prominent mark of the divine likeness in humanity; it is this which gives to man his superiority over the brute creation: it is this which makes him a creature worthy of eternal life: it is this which also makes him capable of communion with God, and capable of knowing and loving and serving him. "Come, let us reason together," says the Lord, because we are thus created in his own likeness.

To ignore or depreciate the human reason is, therefore, to greatly undervalue God's gift—our greatest blessing and highest endowment. That God would not have us do so is very manifest from his constant appeals to the human reason in the presentation of his truth. Divine truth is set before us a complete and philosophical system, consistent with itself and with the divine character in every element and feature; and when God would reveal it to his people, he inspired his specially chosen and prepared Apostle (Paul—Gal. 1:15; Acts 9:15) to present it to us with all the power and force of logical deduction, so that our faith in his plan might be a *reasonable faith*, and that we might be able to give to our

fellow-men a *reason* for the hope that is in us.—1 Pet. 3:15.

The Apostle Paul, it will be noticed, was an acute logician. From the text books of the law and the prophets, and the histories of God's typical people, Israel; and from the teachings and the life and death of Christ, and the special revelations made to himself as an apostle, he reasons out the whole plan of redemption, and shows how, step by step, its various features logically follow. He points to the original perfection of man and to his fall into sin; and shows how, by the law of heredity, all the race were involved in the fall and in the sentence. (1 Cor. 15:21, 22; Rom. 5:17-19) He then vindicates the justice and wisdom of God in instituting such a law for the propagation of the race as would involve all in the Adamic fall and penalty and all the present distresses, pointing out the final and glorious outcome by means of the redemption of all by the one offering of Christ, and the wisdom whereby the blessed results of redemption and restitution are secured for all.—Rom. 11:32, 33.

He shows how necessary was the death of Christ to this grand scheme of salvation. (Heb. 9:15-28), and, by logical deductions, how far-reaching will be its results (1 Tim. 2:3-6); and how, on philosophical principles, those results are as sure to follow that cause as the results of mathematical propositions follow their antecedents. (Rom. 3:10, 21-26, 29. See also 1 John 1:9) Then he forestalls any charge of injustice on

God's part in permitting the sacrifice of his Son, by pointing to the fact that the Son of God undertook the heavy task of his own free will, and "for the joy set before him" by the Father, who in consequence highly exalted and abundantly rewarded him.—Heb. 12:2; Phil. 2:9.

He then sets forth the high calling of the Gospel church, to follow in the Lord's footsteps of humiliation and sacrifice, with the prize in view of being joint-heirs of his glorious inheritance. (1 Cor. 1:26, 27; 2 Tim. 2:11, 12; Rom. 8:17) He shows that their consecration to the Lord's service is "reasonable" (Rom. 12:1), and how the glorious end will more than compensate for the present comparatively "light afflictions" (2 Cor. 4:17) Thus reason is continually appealed to and satisfied with reference to divine truth; and law and prophecy and type and history are all brought forward to minister to the same end; for, for this very purpose they were given—that in due time for the instruction of the church, all should bear their parts in confirming the faith of God's elect, the bride of his dear Son.

Thus we see that the faith which God expects his people to exercise is a *reasonable* faith: it is drawn by logical deductions from established premises, and there is no cause for uncertainty or superstition in it. It is a reasonable confidence in that which God has done, or offered, or promised, backed by a knowledge of his general character and grand plan, which inspires a full reliance upon his promised providence and leading, even when our short-sighted judgment cannot trace all his doings.

It is further noteworthy that when the Lord Jesus opened his mouth in parables and dark sayings, and even when he gave a special revelation to his church in strange and difficult symbols, he left it for reason to discern their deep significance, when in due time they should be made manifest.

Thus we see how the Lord honors the human reason, and that while it is true that without *faith* we cannot please God, it is none the less true that without *reason* we cannot please him. Jesus expected his disciples to draw the reasonable inference from his parables, and on one occasion, when they asked for the interpretation, he reprovingly inquired, "And how then will ye know [understand] all parables?" (Mark 4:13) And to some of the Jews who accused him of performing his miracles by the power of the devil, instead of by the power of God, which was so manifest in their good and benevolent character, he administered a severe rebuke for so unreasonable and therefore unjustifiable a conclusion. (Matt. 12:24-34) Again says the Lord by the mouth of the Psalmist (Psa. 32 S. 9). "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will counsel thee; mine eye shall be upon thee. [But] be ye not as the horse or as the mule, which have no understanding, whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle."—i. e. God would have his reasoning creatures serve intelligently and without force.

Since God thus honors the human reason, this likeness to himself which he has bestowed upon his human creatures, who are we that we should despise it, ignore it, or degrade it, or teach others to do so? Rather let us give it its appointed place, and thus honor our Maker; for we are awe-fully and wonderfully made (Psa. 139:14): we are noble creatures, in the image of our God, except as marred by sin. We cannot, therefore, despise or degrade these human faculties without dishonoring our Maker, whose workmanship we are, or were originally, the defects resulting from the fall being no part of his work, but a marring of it.

But while we honor the human reason as the workmanship of God, and recognize its present nobility and use, as did the Lord, even under the circumstances of our present lapsed condition, we show a great lack of both wisdom and humility if we do not recognize the manifest limitations of human reason; that it can only exercise its power within the range of human perception and conception, and that though it is an image of one of the attributes of God, it is of necessity vastly inferior in scope and power to his reason. This would be the reasonable inference of the creature in comparing himself with his Maker; but, in addition to this reasonable inference, we have the Lord's own statement—"As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."—Isa. 55:9.

In view, therefore, of this superiority of the Creator over the creature, and also of the filial reverence and subserviency we owe to him as our benevolent and loving Father, it is right that we should always hold the deductions of our reason in abeyance to God's superior wisdom, as he may reveal it. Especially is this our proper attitude in our fallen condition, when we remember that all our faculties have suffered a decline of power.

In failing to recognize this limitation and subserviency of the human reason to the divine, many have gone to an opposite extreme of error from that of ignoring the human reason, to that of unduly glorifying it. The former error tends to superstition, and places its subjects at the mercy of the adversary's many deceptions, while the latter tends to egotism, pride and infidelity. A large class of the professed children of God are bound by the former error, and an increasingly large number are rapidly drifting to the latter extreme; among them recently some of the most prominent of the clergy of all branches of the nominal church.

This error, however, is the inevitable reaction which always follows in the wake of the error of ignoring reason. Thus, for instance, in France, when reason, long fettered by Papacy, had given place to wide-spread superstition, and superstition had reigned until its absurdities became palpable, a terrible reaction followed, in the French Revolution, which shook the domains of superstition from center to circumference, and led to an extreme glorification of the fallen human reason under the control of ignoble and selfish principles, finally enthroning a profligate woman as the Goddess of Reason and producing a reign of terror. Infidelity soon stamped out the hated superstitions with which the people had been surfeited, and with it reverence for God and religion. Poor human reason soon lost its balance; and insane results followed, when it forgot to recognize the superiority of the divine and to submit thereto.

The trend of the present times is in the same direction: the reaction from a state of lethargy and of blind superstitious reverence for religious teachers and their teachings, and for the Word of God from which all the various conflicting creeds of "Christendom" claim to emanate, has commenced, and is making rapid headway toward open and world-wide infidelity. The reason, so long divorced from faith, has come to be regarded as a separate and antagonistic element. And, vice versa, faith is regarded as antagonistic to reason. Many devout souls are striving to hold on to their blind faith, and to silence the protests of their reason against it, while others—a constantly increasing number—awakened to a sense of the absurdities of their professed faith, cast it away entire, and determine to follow reason. They then set about laying down certain principles which seem to them reasonable, and make these their standards in judging every thing, even the Word of God not excepted.

Miracles, say they, are absurd and unreasonable: therefore we cannot accept the miracles of the Bible as true. Prophecy, they regard as merely human judgment forecasting the future, sometimes correctly and sometimes erroneously. The Law of Moses, they esteem merely as the culmination of the human wisdom of that time, gained in the school of past experience. The teachings of the apostles, they regard as the counsel of well-intentioned men, to be heeded only in so far as seems to them reasonable. The doctrine of the atonement, through the vicarious sacrifice of Christ, which the various creeds have taught, they regard as absurd and unreasonable, and therefore reject it. The doctrines of the fall of man, and of the necessity for an atonement, they reject as incompatible with their, to them, more reasonable theory of evolution; and so they proceed through the entire volume of the sacred Scriptures, expunging from it everything for which their untutored and short-sighted reason cannot account. And since the spiritual things therein revealed cannot be understood by those who have not the mind of the Spirit of God, it is manifest that their inability to grasp and reasonably comprehend the deep things of God is an evidence, not of the unreasonableness of divine truth, but of the lack of the power to comprehend its reasonableness. Thus do these blind leaders of the blind arrogantly exalt human reason above the divine wisdom set forth in the Word of God.

Thus these two extremes, of *underrating* and of *overrating* human reason, are seen to be fraught with evil consequences— with the loss of the truth, of the divine favor, and of the blessings which can reach us only through the channels of inspired truth. Let us, therefore, heed well the counsel of the holy Scriptures on these two extremes—"Be ye not as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding, whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle;" but, "I [Paul] say to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly." "See, then, that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise." (Psa. 32:9; Rom. 12:3; Eph. 5:15) The truth of God, when clearly understood, is seen to be in accord with the highest development of human reason; but let us not forget that human reason cannot attain full development except under the divine instruction; and only the meek can receive

such instruction and be truly wise; and it is these wise that the Prophet Daniel said should understand. (Dan. 12:10) Human reasoning which fails to recognize the metes and bounds of divine revelation is earthly, selfish, and eventually devilish, leading to envy, strife, confusion and every evil work.

But the wisdom that is from above, that reasons on the basis of a proved divine revelation, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.—James 3:15-17, Romans 13:10.

CATHOLICS, METHODISTS AND BAPTISTS TOGETHER

New York papers give lengthy accounts of a peculiar blending of three creeds under the roof of the East Avenue Baptist Church of Long Island City. It appears that St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church of that city was recently destroyed by fire; whereupon the pastor and trustees of the Baptist Church tendered them the use of the Baptist Church until such times as they can rebuild or repair their edifice.

The Catholics accepted the invitation, and celebrated mass in the Baptist Church last Sunday (July 31) four times—a temporary altar, erected for the purpose, surmounted by holy candles and crucifix, being used. The altar, candles, etc., were removed in time for the service of the Baptists and Methodists, which followed the 9:30 A. M. mass.

The presence of the Methodists is explained by the fact that the Baptist and Methodist pastors had arranged that, during their vacations, their congregations would unite, and the services be held in the two churches alternately.

No wonder Infidelity laughs at Christianity, and asserts that they are either fools or knaves: fools, if they believe their unreasonable creeds; knaves, if they profess what they do not believe.

Roman Catholicism has written her view of Protestantism in characters not to be mistaken;—with sword, and fagot, and rack in the past, and with threats, curses, anathemas and declarations of eternal torment in modern times.

Baptists and Methodists both have professed to recognize Papacy as the very Man of Sin—Anti-Christ—pictured in the Scriptures; and the mass has been seen, by some at least, as the very center of error (See M. DAWN, VOL. III., pages 64, 98-104), the "abomination that maketh desolate."

Not only so, but Baptists have long claimed that in their view *immersion* is essential to a membership in Christ's church, and hence that all not immersed, and not members of the saved church, would be eternally lost.

While, therefore, many will applaud the action of the Baptists as *liberality*, thinking people will see in it *inconsistency* and a denial of all the principles involved in the names Christian and Protestant. It is significant of the coming federation foretold in the Scriptures, as one of the signs of degeneracy of faith of this harvest time of this Gospel age, and frequently pointed out in these columns.

"A PECULIAR PEOPLE"

"Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."—1 Pet. 2:9.

During the Gospel age, which is now drawing to a close, the Lord has been making ready a peculiar people for a very peculiar and very glorious purpose. The purpose is nothing less than that of a joint-reign with Christ for a thousand years, by means of which, not only shall all the families of the earth be blessed, but angels also shall be brought to a righteous judgment and reward, and all things in heaven and in earth will be brought into perfect harmony with and conformity to the divine will, and universal peace and joy and praise shall abound to the glory of God.

This peculiar people is a new and chosen generation. They were first chosen out from among men, "through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth." (2 Thess. 2:13) Or, in other words, having believed the message of salvation through Christ the Redeemer, and having gratefully accepted the same, and being earnestly desirous of perfect personal conformity to the divine will, and having therefore humbly submitted themselves entirely to God, they were chosen of God to be his peculiar people.

That which renders this people peculiar as compared with all other people in the world is a very radical change—a change of nature, from the human to the divine. (2 Pet. 1:4) This change of nature has been brought about by the power of the truth, which leads those who are rightly exercised by it to a full consecration of heart and life to the will and service of God, even unto death. This change of nature is, however, only begun in the present life and consists as yet only of a change of mind and a consequent change of character and action in harmony with the new hopes, aims and aspirations generated by the "exceeding great and precious promises." No wonder is it that a people actuated by such hopes and aims should be a peculiar people—a people separate from the world—in the world and yet not of it.

They are indeed a *new "generation"*—*i. e.*, a new race, of a new and noble nature, distinct and separate from the human race, although as "new creatures" they are as yet only begotten and developing in the embryo state, the full development or birth being due at the resurrection. Wonderful indeed is this truth—"Ye," brethren, "are a chosen generation"—a new order of beings and chosen of God as the heirs of his special favor. And not only so, says the Apostle, but ye are a priesthood, a royal priesthood—a people to be clothed with authority and power to stand between God and fallen humanity to lift humanity up from its degradation and restore it to the divine likeness and favor. Ye are indeed a royal priesthood, whose power and glory will appear in due time to the glory of God and the blessing of all the families of the earth.

But further, says the Apostle, Ye are "a holy nation." In what sense can this people be called a nation? A nation is a body of people united under one government and having com-

mon interests and bound by mutual obligations and mutual consent, either expressed or implied, to conserve those interests. Truly such a people, such a nation, are we under Christ Jesus our King, and our interests are indeed one: they are the interests of the truth concerning the establishment of Christ's kingdom in all the earth. Our national policy is aggressive, and contemplates the complete subjection of every other power; but its object, unlike that of all other ambitious powers, is not the glorification of selfishness, but the exaltation of meekness and righteousness and the establishment of universal peace and happiness. Every loyal citizen of this nation is deeply interested in its politics, and is ready to take up the sword for its defense at any moment. However, we remember that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but they are mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strongholds. Our sword is "the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God," and an every-day exercise and drill in its use makes us able soldiers.

Let all the members of this "chosen generation," this "royal priesthood," this "holy nation," this "peculiar people," seek more and more—by vigilance, by faithfulness and by holiness—to separate themselves from the spirit of the world, to submit themselves to the transforming influences of the spirit of God, and to discipline and drill themselves in the use of the sword of the spirit, that so they may "show forth the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvelous light."

BABES IN CHRIST

This peculiar people the Apostle likens, in the beginning of their life of faith, to babes. Though they may be men of mature years, they are but babes beginning a new life. And the Apostle counsels them, as new born babes, to earnestly desire and seek for the sincere milk of the Word of God—the simple truths, the foundation doctrines. These are the plain clear statements of the Scriptures—(1) of the original perfection and glory of humanity, created in the image of God—Gen. 1:27, 31; (2) of the fall of Adam and the race represented in him in trial—Gen. 3; 1 Cor. 15:22; (3) of the death penalty—Gen. 2:17; 3:19; Rom. 6:23; (4) of the redemption of Adam, and therefore also of the race represented in him, by the payment of an equivalent price—the sacrifice of "the man Christ Jesus who gave himself a ransom for all—1 Cor. 15:22; 1 Tim. 2:6; (5) of the actual deliverance of the redeemed race in God's due time and order.—Acts 3:19-21.

Those who in simple faith accept these truths and who, laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speaking, endeavor to live worthy of this salvation, esteeming it as only a reasonable service to devote themselves thenceforth to the service of God, are accepted of him as sons and heirs—as spiritual sons. And precious indeed

are these little ones in the Lord's sight. It was with reference to such that the Lord said to Peter, "Feed my lambs;" and again that he gave warning to false teachers, saying, "Whoever shall ensnare one of the least of these who believe in me, it would be better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were sunk in the depth of sea." (John 21:15; Matt. 18:6) And again, under the figure of a tender shepherd caring for a weak and straying lamb, he shows his tender solicitude for these babes of the family, saying, "It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish."—Matt. 18:14.

But while the babes in Christ, because of their very feebleness and inexperience, have much special care bestowed upon them, and are dearly beloved of the Lord, and while their meek and teachable spirit is commended to all (Matt. 18:4), it is not the will of God that they should always remain babes. The very object of his commending to them the milk of the Word is that they may *grow thereby* out of this infantile state, up to the maturity of spiritual life—"that we be no more children tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine." (Eph. 4:14) There should come a time in the experience of every healthy growing child of God, when he should be able to leave the principles of the doctrine of Christ—the foundation doctrines—having them firmly established and settled in his mind, and therefore not needing to dig them up and lay them over again—and go on growing in grace and in the knowledge of the truth unto perfection.—Heb. 6:1.

The Apostle Paul reproved some of his day because they did not thus grow, saying, "For when for the time [spent] ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk and not of strong meat: for every one that useth milk [only] is unskilful in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe." (Heb. 5:12, 13) We are not to live continually on the milk diet, "but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Matt. 4:4) Some of these words are the simple truths above noted—the milk; and others are deeper truths, the strong meat for those who, nourished by the pure milk, had grown and had developed considerable firmness and strength of Christian character. This "solid food," says the Apostle (Heb. 5:14), is for adults—for those possessing faculties habitually exercised in the discrimination of both good and evil. He also warned them of the dreadful result to them if they should fall away.—Heb. 6:4-6.

If the babes in Christ are fed on adulterated milk—a confused mixture of truth and error concerning the above mentioned foundation doctrines—the result will be that they will sicken and die, unless the unwholesome diet is speedily removed and the sincere, pure milk is sought after and used. As a general thing there is not sufficient care on the part of the babes in Christ about seeking the *pure* milk of the Word; and many of the adults are too careless about setting the impure milk before them. Let those who are truly the Lord's little ones bear in mind the Apostle's counsel to desire and seek after only the *pure milk* of the Word and to resolutely discard all else. Any theological views which will not rest squarely upon the above named foundation doctrines, so plainly enunciated in the Scriptures, but which attempt to pervert and to shift and to make them void, do not constitute the pure diet for the Lord's children. Let them cautiously beware of all such adulterations, and feed only upon the *pure* milk, and by

and by upon the more solid food—that is food indeed to those who have their faculties exercised—and thus grow up to maturity, to a full development of Christian character and faith.

THE SPIRITUAL HOUSE

The Apostle then shows (1 Pet. 2:4-8) that such consecrated and faithful children of God have the privilege of becoming members of a grand spiritual house, of which Christ Jesus is the head. The shape of the building to which reference is made, evidently, is that of a pyramid, and was probably suggested to his mind by the words of the Prophet Isaiah (28:16) to which he refers, saying, "Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious; . . . the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the Word, being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed."

The chief corner stone in a pyramid is the top stone, which is also the model after which the whole building is being fashioned. The Prophet Zechariah (4:7) calls it the head-stone, and Isaiah (28:16) calls it a foundation-stone. At first thought these figures seem incongruous, but they are not really so when we consider that this building is not an earthly, but a heavenly building, having a heavenly foundation, and that it is held together, not by earthly, but by heavenly attraction. And it is in accordance with this thought that we are invited to come unto Christ, the chief corner stone, to be built up under him and to be fashioned for our places as living stones in this building, in accordance with the lines and angles seen in him who is the model.

The great work of preparing these living stones for their places in this building of God is still in progress, although it is almost completed. This is the painful part of the work to every one of the stones. The blows of the hammer and the chisel—the hard discipline of experience—are not desirable except for the effects—the peaceable fruits of righteousness. And if we would have the results, we must patiently submit to the painful processes, and see to it that no cross-grained wilfulness on our part shall interfere with the work; for such interference would sooner or later be the occasion for abandoning us, and the builder would substitute another stone more pliable and easily worked; for the time is short, and what is to be done must be done quickly.

The Prophet further showed that the foundation stone of this great building would be a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to many until the time of its exaltation. Those who will stumble over it, says the Apostle, are not those faithful and loyal to the Word of God, but those who stumble at the Word, being disobedient, and who will not accept its plain and simple teaching relative to the great foundation of our faith—Christ Jesus, who gave his life a ransom for many. (Matt. 20:28) And this class, he assures us, were appointed to stumble—that it does not happen so, but that God designed that they should stumble, because they are unworthy to stand, being disobedient.

God lays great stress upon loyal and loving *obedience* on the part of all his children. It was only a little matter of disobedience that cost Adam and his posterity so dearly; and that will bring similar results to all those who, having once escaped the condemnation of death through faith in Christ the Redeemer, thereafter refuse to stand before God in the robe of his righteousness, but prefer to appear in their own. All such were appointed to stumble; but blessed are the meek, for they shall stand. "The Lord knoweth them that are his," saith the Scripture.

PAUL BEFORE AGRIPPA

III. QUARTER, LESSON IX., AUG. 27, ACTS 26:19-32.

Golden Text—"Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God."—1 Cor. 1:24.

For two years Paul remained a prisoner in Cæsarea, during which time Porcius Festus was appointed in the place of Felix, as governor of Judea. As a judge, he evidently desired to do right, and also to conciliate the people and maintain peace.

As soon as Festus was installed in office, he was besieged by leading Jews to send Paul to Jerusalem for trial, their intention being to murder him on the way. (Acts 25:1-3) But Festus preferred to have the man tried before him, and told them they might come down to Cæsarea and prefer their charges against him. This they did, but their false accusations were all refuted by Paul, who was permitted to answer for himself. Then Festus, anxious to conciliate the Jews, answered Paul, and proposed that, since the accusations pertained principally to the Jewish religion, he go up to Jerusa-

lem to be tried. But Paul was on his guard, and having in his hand, as a Roman citizen, the power of averting the danger of the governor's compliance with the desire of the Jews, viz., the right of appeal to Cæsar, he refused to be tried at Jerusalem, saying, "I stand at Cæsar's judgment-seat, where I ought to be judged. To the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest: for if I be an offender, or have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die; but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Cæsar." (Acts 25:4-11) The case was therefore postponed for a hearing at Cæsar's judgment-seat, and Paul was to be sent to Rome under military protection.—Acts. 25:12; 27:1.

Before the prisoner had been dispatched to Rome, Herod Agrippa, king of the country east of the upper Jordan, came to pay his respects to the new governor of Judea, and on hearing from him of the peculiar case of the Christian

prisoner, against whom the Jews were so incensed, but against whom Festus was unable to formulate any charge to present before the court of Cæsar, Agrippa consented to have Paul brought before him, that they might determine what charges to make against him.—Acts 25:25-27.

Accordingly, at a set time, Paul was permitted to speak for himself before the assembled royalty. (Acts 26:1-29) With the respect and decorum due to the civil powers, Paul began his address; but he seemed to forget that his life trembled in the balance, while he used the opportunity to preach Christ. The address was full of logic, eloquence and pathos. He recounted the circumstances of his conversion, declared his zeal for the cause of Christ, showed this to be the cause of the opposition from the Jews, and attributed his protection thus far, and his liberty to preach the gospel in Cæsarea for the past two years, to divine interposition and providence. So mightily did he show forth the truth and with such vehement eloquence, that with a loud voice Festus cried out, "Paul, thou art beside thyself: much learning doth make thee mad."—Verse 24.

The Apostle's reply was a clinching exhortation which almost persuaded even Agrippa to become a Christian; but how hardly the rich enter into the kingdom! During the two years in Cæsarea Paul had witnessed to both small and great, but as usual with more effect among the small—the poor and middle classes.

His preaching was from the text book of the prophets, and was shown to be in harmony with all their teaching, so that

those who truly believed the prophets must of necessity accept the fulfilment of their predictions in Christ. The force of this truth is seen in Agrippa's reply to his searching question—"King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian"—for to believe the prophets is to believe in Christianity. The Lord's prophecy and promise of Matt. 10:18-20 was strikingly fulfilled to Paul.

As we read this account, the burning eloquence of this Christian orator seems almost to fall on our ears, and we seem to see the light of a countenance radiant with heavenly enthusiasm as the Apostle exclaims, "I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds:"—Verse 29.

The conclusion of the examination was that no true charges could be made against the Apostle; and had he not appealed to Cæsar he might have been immediately released. But nevertheless it was well that he had appealed to Cæsar; for had he been released, he would again have been at the mercy of the Jews. During the two years of his detention in Cæsarea he had enjoyed the greatest liberty to preach the gospel, all the while under the protection of the government as an imperial prisoner. And now he was to be conveyed under the same protection to Rome, to enjoy similar privileges for the truth. Thus all things worked for good in the furtherance of the gospel of the Kingdom. God is able to overrule everything to his praise.

PAUL SHIPWRECKED

III. QUARTER, LESSON X., SEPT. 3, ACTS 27:30-44.

Golden Text—"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."—Psa. 46:1.

This chapter finds Paul under a military guard, in company with other prisoners, on his way to Rome to appear before Cæsar's judgment-seat. The journey which can now be accomplished in a few days with improved steam navigation, then required as many weeks—sails and oars being the only propelling powers. In this case, the journey was an eventful one, and one of special blessing to all on the ship, because one of the Lord's elect was on board, and God was with him, making every circumstance of his consecrated life a blessing.

The strange prisoner, against whom no real charges could be made out (Acts 25:27; 26:31, 32), found favor in the eyes of the captain of the guard, and by his permission enjoyed special liberties which he used for the comfort and cheer of the believers at Sidon. (Verse 3) When a great storm overwhelmed the vessel, threatening shipwreck and death to all on board, this calamity was made the special occasion of a gracious message for all from God, through, and on account of, his faithful Apostle. The angel of God stood by him, saying, "Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Cæsar: and lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee." That is, on his account, all the passengers and crew should escape with their lives from the wreck.—Verses 23, 24, 34, 44.

The lesson which we are warranted in gathering from this circumstance is a very comforting one; viz., that God is not unwilling to let some droppings of his favor fall upon those associated with his saints—not because they know him or seek his favor, but because he so loved the world that he not only gave his Son to redeem them, but he thus sends to them his living witnesses to bear testimony of his love and grace and to call them to repentance, that they may place themselves in a proper attitude to receive his favor. This remarkable interposition on behalf of Paul and his fellow-passengers was an impressive lesson never to be forgotten—a testimony to the power and love of God.

In view of God's willingness, thus manifested, to show favor to those associated with his people, even though they know him not, it is plainly our privilege to request such favor toward our dear ones who are yet aliens to the commonwealth of Israel, and even enemies. But in so doing, let us not forget that severe chastenings of such are often, necessarily, the only marks of favor which divine wisdom can bestow for the good of the wandering and erring. And for these we should therefore be thankful, and not repine against the kind providence which discerns such necessity. While the heavy strokes of discipline fall upon the erring for their correction, God's children, through whose interposition they are thus specially brought under divine supervision, must endeavor to take God's standpoint in viewing the necessities of the case, and thankfully say, Amen! to all his wise, though often severe measures.

Sometimes, as in the instance of this lesson, the favor shown to the unconverted associates of the saints is a *more*

manifest favor, but in either case, like Paul, we should co-operate with God to the end of enforcing and emphasizing the lesson.

VERSES 30, 31 show that Paul understood the promise of God revealed in the vision (verse 24) to be of necessity subject to certain conditions—viz., that the deliverance would not be forced upon them, nor would it be granted to them without their co-operation. The promise presupposed both the desire and the effort of all to obtain deliverance, which desire and effort would, by divine interposition, be rewarded with success. But when the effort of the crew, which had assumed the responsibility of bringing the vessel into port, was directed to a mean and selfish purpose which ignored their responsibility and sought only to save themselves and leave the rest to their fate, Paul understood that God would be a party to no such selfish course, and he therefore told the soldiers that, notwithstanding the revelation of the vision, they would perish unless these pursued the proper course of sticking to the ship and making use of the means for averting the impending disaster. This teaching of the Apostle is quite contrary to the ideas of some Christians today who excuse themselves from active co-operation with God, idly expecting him to work miracles on their behalf. But such is not God's purpose; and the apostles taught quite to the contrary.

The soldiers took immediate measures to frustrate the selfish scheme of the shipmen by cutting the ropes and letting the life-boat drift away, that so the crew would be obliged to use their efforts for the salvation of all; and in the use of their utmost means and efforts God saved all. Doubtless the impression made upon the minds of all was a deep one, which will be remembered when, in the times of restitution, they are brought to a clearer knowledge of Jesus Christ whom Paul preached unto them.—Acts. 3:19-21.

VERSES 33-36 bring into marked contrast the comforting faith of the children of God and the disquiet and unrest of those who lack that faith. Yet the steady faith of the Christian in the midst of trials is an inspiration, as well as a testimony, to those of the world about them. All the frightened and weary passengers and crew took courage from Paul's words and example, and were strengthened. "Ye are the light of the world," said the Master, "let your light shine." The poor world has its heavy load of sorrow. Give them all they will take of your comfort and cheer.

VERSE 42 again reminds us of the contrast between ignoble selfishness and benevolent love. The soldiers were plotting to kill their prisoners, Paul included, lest they might escape, and they, according to Roman law, might have to forfeit their own. From this plot, also, Paul and those with him were saved, through the favor of the centurion, and all by the blessing of God upon their efforts, reached the shore in safety.

In considering this lesson we are forcibly reminded of the Apostle's advice to Timothy (1 Tim. 4:16)—"Take heed unto thyself [unto thy walk and conversation before men], and

unto the doctrine [—Declare it and defend it on every proper occasion]; for in doing this thou shalt save both thyself and

them that hear thee [from sinking into error and sin and reaping its bitter consequences].”

PAUL AT ROME

III. QUARTER, LESSON XI., SEPT 10, ACTS 28:20-31.

Golden Text—“I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.”—Rom. 1:16.

The apparent misfortune which cast the shipwrecked crew upon the little island of Melita became another occasion to the Apostle for bearing effective witness for Christ, and both Paul and all that were with him, and the simple islanders, also, were blessed. (Acts 28:1-10) Departing thence, other Christians were met, encouraged and blessed—at Puteoli, and possibly at Syracuse and Rhegium; and, nearing Rome, the welcome faces of brethren who had come to meet him were seen at Appu Forum; and Paul thanked God, and took courage—Verse 15.

The Apostle's first step, after his arrival and settlement in Rome, with the large measure of freedom he enjoyed by the favor of the Roman authorities, was to call together the chief of the Jews in Rome, desiring as heretofore to present the gospel “to the Jews first, and afterward to the Gentiles.”

In verse 20 we mark the wisdom manifested in his manner of presenting the subject, declaring and showing that for the hope of Israel he was bearing those chains. And what was the hope of Israel? It was in the promise of a Messiah and the establishment of his kingdom—the very thing that Paul was continually preaching, showing that the promise of his coming had been fulfilled, and that his kingdom would just as surely be established. At the first interview he merely prepared them for a subsequent opportunity to hear the gospel wisely awakening in them a desire to hear more of his doctrine. Then, at the appointed time, he was ready with all his strong arguments, and spent the day from morning till evening preaching Jesus unto them from the text books of the Law and the Prophets.—Verse 23.

It is very noticeable that, though Paul was careful to present the subject in a manner least calculated to stir up Jewish prejudices, his caution did not keep back the truth. He gave it to them in due time and order, but with all its native force, and let it do its separating work, as it always does. His reasoning was close, Scriptural and cumulative in

its power. He reached conclusions, and placed the issue fairly before his hearers; and when they cavilled and rejected the truth he boldly applied to them the rebuke of the Prophet Isaiah (verses 24-27), a rebuke which the Lord so frequently applied to Jews. He then declared his subsequent purpose to be, to turn to the Gentiles, who should enjoy the privilege of which they had judged themselves unworthy. (Verse 28) The rebuke of the Prophet was much more weighty to them than any words of his own would have been; for the Jews had not learned to recognize the inspiration of the apostles. From this suggestion we may all learn the wisdom of using the words of inspiration in preference to our own.

Paul's two years in Rome, awaiting the due processes of the law—the arrival of witnesses from Jerusalem, the formulating of charges, etc.—were years of special advantage to the work of the Lord. Here Paul was for the time safe from his enemies, the Jews, and free, under the protection of his lenient and favorably disposed captors, to preach the gospel to all who would hear both Jews and Gentiles.

The opportunity was faithfully used. Here he preached the gospel of the Kingdom, and taught the doctrines of Christ with all confidence and freedom; from here he wrote and sent letters to distant churches; and he prayed for them (Eph. 1:16; 3:14; Phil. 1:4, 9), and sent messengers and helpers to them. (Eph. 6:21; Phil. 2:19, 25) The epistles to the Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians and to Philemon were all written from Rome.

We have no definite account of the Apostle's course after his liberation from captivity in Rome, except what may be gleaned from his epistles. The meagre references of history indicate that he afterward went to Spain, and again to Greece and Asia Minor; and that it was a second imprisonment at Rome that terminated in his execution. All evidences concur that he was a wonderful soldier of the cross. He was faithful to the truth and to the work of the Lord to the end of his course, and left a shining record for our study and imitation.

“CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY”

[Reprinted in issue of October 1, 1903, which please see.]

SOMETIME WE'LL UNDERSTAND

Perhaps 'twill be in coming years,
It may be in the better land,
We'll read the meaning of our tears,
And thus, sometime, we'll understand.

We'll catch the broken threads again,
And finish what we here began;
Heav'n will the mysteries explain,
And then, ah! then, we'll understand.

We'll know why clouds instead of sun
Were over many a cherished plan;
Why song has ceased when scarce begun;
Ah, yes! sometime, we'll understand.

Why what we longed for most of all,
Eludes so oft our eager hand;
Why hopes are crushed and castles fall—
Anon, sometime, we'll understand.

God knows the way, he holds the key,
He guides us with unerring hand;
Sometime with tearless eyes we'll see;
Yes, there, beyond, we'll understand.

Then trust in God, thro' all thy days,
Fear not, for he doth hold thy hand;
Tho' dark thy way, still sing and praise;
Sometime, sometime we'll understand.

—Sel.