

THE FREEDOM OF CHRIST'S BOND-SERVANTS

"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."—John 8:36.

"For the slave, being called by the Lord, is the Lord's freedman; in like manner, the freeman, being called, is Christ's bond servant."—1 Cor. 7:22.

The love of freedom is inherent in all of God's intelligent creatures. And under certain limitations it was manifestly the divine purpose that all enjoy liberty, the limitations in every case being those of righteousness: of respect for the submission to divine law, and mutual love and respect for the rights and liberties of fellow-creatures. Within these metes and bounds, and within these only, is the rightful exercise of individual liberty.

But many have very different ideas of freedom from this, and are anxious to cast off all restraints of God and man to pursue a selfish course untrammelled and without regard to either their obligations to God or the rights of their fellow-men. Such ideas of freedom lead only to riot, anarchy and destruction. And those who hold them look upon all the wholesome restraints of law and order as infringements of their rights and consider themselves in bondage under them. This is the rapidly growing sentiment all over the world today among the masses of men. And this is what makes the outlook for the future so ominous, threatening the utter wreck of the present social order in world-wide anarchy.

The reason for all this is that men have neither perfect hearts nor perfect heads. Having imperfect hearts, which do not love God supremely nor their neighbors as themselves, each is selfishly grabbing after all the advantages and privileges he can get without regard to the interests of his neighbor. And having also imperfect heads, they seem unable to reason correctly and to judge rightly between self and the neighbor. In fact, the whole human family is mentally unbalanced and morally deformed. We cannot therefore expect that, without superhuman aid, they will reach correct conclusions and learn to deal righteously.

Among men there are many grades of intellectual ability; some are broad-minded, and, reaching out, can compass many conditions and their operations and foresee the ultimate results; while others are by inheritance narrow minded and can only view present circumstances apart from their general bearings and relationships. Then again, some minds are deep, able to probe and solve intricate problems with accuracy; while others are shallow, merely skimming the surface of great questions, not seeing nor seeking foundation principles. The broad and deep minds are but few, while the narrow and shallow are far more general; consequently, men are very far apart in their ideas and conclusions on every subject, and generally far astray from sound judgment. These things

are, however, a part of our undesirable inheritance through sin, which polluted the fountain of our being, and left the entire race in this deranged condition.

Our only help under these circumstances is in God, who will give us the spirit—disposition—of a sound mind, if, in his appointed way, we come to him for it. (2 Tim. 1:7) In his Word he lays down certain principles to guide us in judgment (Psa. 25:9) and helps us to right conclusions. He tells us first that as a race we have fallen from our original perfection through the sin of our first progenitor, and that in consequence we are imperfect and unworthy of eternal life; but that through Christ he has redeemed us, so that if we repent of our sins and believe on him, we may now have eternal life, being made free from the condemnation which passed upon all men through Adam.

Thus we are made free from condemnation to death; and not only so, but now it is also our privilege to be liberated, through Christ, from the bondage and tyranny of Sin. As a hard task-master, Sin is driving all men to deeper degradation and death, and Christ undertakes to loose his fetters from all those who submit themselves to him for this purpose.

Dearly as we may love liberty, there is no man that actually possesses it now; for as the result of the fall all men became the slaves of Sin, and, to a great extent, the tools of Satan; and never, until the promised restitution of all things is completed, will men enjoy the precious boon of liberty in its full sense. This is one of the elements of the gospel—that Christ is to bring liberty to the captives of sin and death, and to let all the oppressed go free.—Isa. 61:1.

To fully emancipate all the slaves of Sin and Death is a work which will require the full thousand years of Christ's promised reign on earth; and the blessings of that emancipation will therefore not be fully realized until the thousand years are finished, when sin and Satan will be destroyed, never again to mar the face of God's fair creation. Then men can again be entrusted fully with the precious boon of liberty; and the liberty of one will not infringe upon the liberties of another. The perfect freedom of the entire race necessitates such restraints upon each individual of the race as brotherly love would dictate; and such restraint every man will impose upon himself when he has regained the original likeness of God, for God is love; and then it may also be truly said that man is love. And when man is love, it is God's purpose to give him fullest liberty to act out every impulse of his loving

nature. And since "love worketh no ill to its neighbor," but delights itself rather in deeds of kindness and benevolence, this glorious liberty will fill the earth with peace and joy. And since love also delights in rendering honor to whom honor is due, and adoration to whom adoration, and praise to whom praise, and gratitude to whom gratitude, such will be the attitude of all men toward Jehovah, the giver of every good and perfect gift, and toward our Lord Jesus, whose self-sacrificing love became the channel for Jehovah's grace toward us, even while we were yet sinners.

Thus earth will be filled with the music of according hearts: and heaven and earth will be in perfect harmony when love, which is the fulfilling of the law of God, reigns supreme in every heart. Then the natural impulse of every heart will be to love God with all the heart, soul, mind and strength, and the neighbor as itself. This supreme love to God, even beyond the love of self, is entirely presumable when we consider that the elements of reverence and adoration must enter so largely into the love that is centered upon such a glorious object—glorious in his personality, glorious in his character, glorious in his wisdom, glorious in his power, and glorious in his benevolence and love and grace.

"Oh! what beauty

Beams in his all-glorious face."

Then indeed, and not till then, will the whole human race enjoy fullest liberty: a thing which will be simply impossible until then. Now, liberty to one class of men brings slavery to another; and the striving of classes, of nations and of individuals in the past, to throw off the yoke of bondage which the selfishness of others imposed upon them, has resulted occasionally to such classes and nations in a measure of release from the hand of tyranny; but *individual liberty* is still unrealized. Though the world has made some progress in this direction, so that limited monarchies have displaced the absolute, tyrannical monarchies of former ages, and republican forms of government have in some notable instances superseded these, yet Sin, as a hard master, still rules the world. Even under this republican government—the most free and liberal civil institution in the world—witness the party strifes and animosities, and the tyranny of class rule, and hear how the cry of the oppressed individuals comes up and enters into the ears of the Lord of armies. The whole world is oppressed under the hard taskmaster, Sin, who rules everywhere. He takes his seat in legislative halls, in executive mansions, in all political, financial and social counsels, and even in the solemn assembles of God's professed children; and everywhere his tyranny is felt and his subjects suffer.

This tyrant, Sin, must be routed, before the world can ever enjoy the boon of liberty—of liberty to appropriate, manage, rule and enjoy their God-given possessions in the earth.

While the actual freedom or liberty of the sons of God is not yet enjoyed by any, the inheritance of it being lost by the fall, a few have regained their *title* to that inheritance through faith in Christ, who purchased it with his own precious blood for all who will accept it as the free gift of God's grace, through faith in him. And these few have, by faith, passed from death unto life (John 5:24; 1 John 3:14), and are now, therefore, *reckoned free*—free from sin and its condemnation, death, the righteousness of Christ being imputed to them by faith. Thus they hold a *sure title* to this glorious liberty, which all the sons of God will possess when fully restored to the divine likeness. Those who have this title the Apostle Paul urges to hold it fast, saying, "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."—Gal. 5:1.

This exhortation can mean nothing more nor less than to hold on, by faith, to our justification—our *title* to life through Christ our Redeemer. This he was urging the Galatian church to do, the exhortation being prompted by the efforts of some Judaizing teachers to bring them again under the bondage of the Law Covenant.—Gal. 3:1.

But while the full liberty of the sons of God is not yet ours, except by faith, let us consider what measure of that liberty is ours now. While in Christ we are *reckoned* of God as free from sin, and while we are therefore free from condemnation—justified—yet actually we realize the law of sin still working in our members, so that while our purpose and effort are to be perfect, the law of sin working in our members makes us realize continually that our actual liberty as sons of God is not yet possessed. And in this painful realization even we who have the first-fruits of the spirit, do groan being burdened.—Rom. 8:23.

But we have in Christ not only a Redeemer who paid our

death penalty, but a Saviour who in due time will *deliver* fully from every element of imperfection all who put their trust in him. The work of emancipation he will do for *the world* in the appointed times of the restitution of all things; and he will begin it at once with all those who then willingly and patiently submit themselves to his leading, acknowledging him as their Lord and King, as well as their Redeemer. In thus acknowledging Christ as Lord and King, both Christians now, and the world in the times of restitution, will, if fully loyal, render to him prompt and loving obedience, and that without questioning either his authority or his wisdom, in the full assurance of his loving purpose to finally and fully deliver from the terrible bondage to Sin, which has become so interwoven with the very fiber of our being that the process of emancipation must of necessity be long and painful.

In other words, before we can fully realize the actual liberty which God designed for all his sons, we must first become the willing servants of a new master, Christ, in order that he may accomplish our deliverance.

But although Christians are now, of their own free will and choice, under the authority of Christ, and their constant effort should be to bring every thought into captivity to his perfect will, even in this sort of bondage they are able to realize their freedom to the extent that they are able to partake of the spirit or mind of Christ; for, "Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." (2 Cor. 3:17) In the same way, when a man is sick, he must give up his will and personal liberty to the physician who undertakes to restore his health. The physician may prescribe nauseous doses; he may forbid certain coveted articles of diet; or he may subject his patient to painful surgical operations: but to all this severe treatment the man *willingly* submits, in hope of regaining his health. He and the physician are of the same mind, having the same object in view. Consequently, the patient does not feel that he is a slave forced under this treatment; but, having the same mind or spirit in the matter as the physician, he realizes his personal liberty. A child, on the contrary, unable to see the necessities of the case, and therefore unable to enter fully into the spirit of the physician and of the parents who must act for him, does not feel this liberty of his own will, but realizes that he is compelled to submit by those in authority over him. Such will be the case with the world, especially in the early experiences of the Millennial age. A difference will be that unless their wills are ultimately submitted restitution cures will never be granted. But with the consecrated children of God, now, the case is more like that of the matured and intelligent patient.

Let us, then, while we willingly submit ourselves to Christ our Lord, partake largely of his spirit, and fully co-operate with him as a wise and skilled physician; and in so doing we will surely realize our liberty of mind as sons of God, even while we are undergoing the tedious and painful processes which are designed to accomplish our complete emancipation from the bondage of Sin.

"If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed"—even now while our standing as free men in Christ is only a reckoned one. The freedom which we gain through Christ is (1) freedom from the condemnation of sin, and consequent access to God in whose favor is life eternal; (2) freedom from the bondage of fear concerning the future, and consequent rest and reliance upon him who has said, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he will sustain thee;" (3) and daily as we submit ourselves to Christ we come to realize more and more of a release from the hereditary bondage of Sin. One after another, under the treatment of the Great Physician, we find the symptoms of the old disease of Sin disappearing, and we rejoice to find it so.

We find healing for our unsound minds in the balm of divine counsel. We find unerring standards of judgment by which to measure our own; and from the unerring precepts of righteousness and truth we drink in the spirit of a sound mind. And with this sound mind viewing all the experiences and conditions of life from the standpoint of the divine plan of the ages, we are enabled to weigh and properly estimate all present values and to count the good things of this present life as of no consequence in comparison to that for which we have covenanted to sacrifice them. We can even rejoice in tribulation for righteousness' sake.

But while we enjoy this blessed freedom in Christ, we are nevertheless under strictest bondage to Christ. As the Apostle Paul states it, we are bond-servants of Jesus Christ, and, like him, we glory in being so branded. (Gal. 6:17) We realize that we are not our own, but that we are bought with a price, and that the consecration of our lives to him who purchased us is but a reasonable service.

THAT I MAY KNOW HIM

PHIL. 3:8-10.

Lord, let me talk with thee of all I do,
All that I care for, all I wish for, too.
Lord, let me prove thy sympathy, thy power,
Thy loving oversight from hour to hour!
When I need counsel, let me ask of thee:
Whatever my perplexity may be,
It cannot be too trivial to bring,
To one who marks the sparrow's drooping wing,
Nor too terrestrial since thou hast said
The very hairs are numbered on our head.
'Tis through such loop-holes that the foe takes aim,
And sparks, unheeded, burst into a flame.
Do money troubles press? Thou canst resolve
The doubts and dangers such concerns involve.
Are those I love the cause of anxious care?
Thou canst unbind the burdens they may bear.
Before the mysteries of thy Word or will,
Thy voice can gently bid my heart be still,
Since all that now is hard to understand
Shall be unraveled in yon heavenly land.
Or do I mourn the oft-besetting sin,
The tempter's wiles, that mar the peace within?
Present thyself, Lord, as the absolving priest,

To whom confessing, I go forth released.
Do weakness, weariness, disease, invade
This earthly house, which thou, thyself, hast made?
Thou, only Lord, canst touch the hidden spring
Of mischief, and attune the jarring string.
Would I be taught what thou wouldst have me give,
The needs of those less favored to relieve?
Thou canst so guide my hand that I shall be
A liberal "cheerful giver," Lord, like thee.
Of my life's mission do I stand in doubt,
Thou knowest and canst clearly point it out.
Whither I go, do thou thyself decide
And choose the friends and servants at my side.
The books I read, I would submit to thee,
Let them refresh, instruct and solace me.
I would converse with thee from day to day
With heart intent on what thou hast to say;
And through my pilgrim walk, whate'er befall,
Consult with thee, O Lord, about it all.
Since thou art willing thus to condescend
To be my intimate, familiar friend,
Oh, let me to the great occasion rise,
And count thy friendship life's most glorious prize.

Selected.

"PERFECTING HOLINESS"

"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."—2 Cor. 7:1.

Holiness is moral purity; and it is written that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14); and again, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." (Matt. 5:8) Purity of heart signifies purity of the will or intention, the main-spring of life. To be perfectly holy or pure in every sense of the word would signify absolute perfection, which no man can now claim; but those who by faith are clothed with the righteousness of Christ are now *reckoned* "holy and acceptable unto God" (Rom. 12:1), the righteousness of Christ being imputed to them by faith. These, whose hearts are fully consecrated and loyal to the Lord, are "the pure in heart," whose privilege it is to see God.

While *the heart* of every accepted child of God must be pure from the very beginning of his Christian life (otherwise he is not accepted or owned as a child), yet, as the Apostle suggests above, there must be from that time onward a gradual work of *perfecting holiness* in the fear (filial fear) of God. That is (*being graciously reckoned of God as holy* through Christ, from the hour of our entire consecration to his will, because our will and effort are to be so), we are to go on striving daily against our natural imperfections, and endeavoring as nearly as possible to make the *reckoned* holiness more and more *actual*. Thus we should continue to *grow* in grace and in the actual likeness of the Lord.

Some Christians make the very serious mistake of supposing that they, as merely passive subjects, may receive instantaneously the blessing of holiness as a mark of God's special favor. But such a conception is very far from the Apostle's idea, as expressed above. He represents the attainment of holiness as a life work, and the individual Christian as the active, and not as the passive, agent in accomplishing it. From the standpoint of a *reckoned* holiness he is to go on day after day, and year after year, in the work of actual cleansing of himself from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit—of person and of mind—"perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord."

In the exceeding great and precious promises we have abundant incentives to strive daily to perfect holiness; but these must be held before the mind that they be not crowded into the background by the cares of this life and the deceitfulness of its pursuits. The pure in heart—whose will is only to serve and please him—do see God by faith and with the eyes of their understanding. They see him in his Word and his plan, as he graciously opens it up to their minds as meat in due season; they see him in his mighty works—of creation, and of redemption and salvation; they see him in nature, whose open book is ever eloquent in his praise to those who have eyes to read; by faith they see him in the

secret closet communions when there is no eye to see and no ear to hear but God's, where the heart may freely unburden itself of its load and lay down its cares and feel that unutterable sense of divine sympathy and love which only those can understand who have taken the Lord as their personal friend and counselor. They see him, too, in his providences; for, having entered into their closets and shut to the door and prayed to their Father in secret, the open reward of his sure and safe leading always follows, according to his promise.

How blessed it is thus to see God—to realize his presence and power and his abiding favor in all the vicissitudes of life; to watch him and see how, as the days and years go by, he makes all things work together for good to them that love him, and to see also, from the grand standpoint of observation he gives us, how glorious a destiny he has carved out for us and for all the willing and obedient subjects of his authority.

If we cultivate acquaintance with God and with our Lord Jesus, communing with them through the divine word and prayer, almost unconsciously to ourselves the work of perfecting holiness progresses. To be thus in communion with them is to receive more and more of their mind and disposition. And having the mind of God thus in us, as the controlling principle of our actions, to what purification of the flesh it will also lead!

It begins at once to clean up the whole man. Old unclean, as well as sinful, habits are put away; unseemly conversation is not permitted to pass the door of the lips, or if, by force of old habit, slips of this kind occur, they are promptly repented of and rectified; and unholy thoughts are not entertained. The same spirit of holiness prompts also to the cleansing and purifying of the body, the clothing, the home, and all with which we have to do; for the outward man must be in conformity with the pure heart within, and with the heavenly guests that make their abode with us.—John 14:23.

It is quite possible, however, that the more we succeed in purifying ourselves of the old carnal nature, the more we may realize the imperfections that still remain; for the purifying process is also an educating one: we learn to appreciate and admire purity, holiness, the more thoroughly we assimilate it, until "the beauty of holiness" becomes the most desirable of all possessions, that which is lacking of its glory is our deepest concern and the great work of perfecting holiness becomes the chief business of life. Let the good work go on, dearly beloved, and, in the end, the Lord himself shall be your exceeding great reward.

THE PROGRESS OF RELIGIOUS UNION

The movement in the direction of religious union, which received such a marked impetus from the World's Parliament of Religions last year, has been making very rapid strides for some months past.

Last spring an important movement began in the Episcopal churches of Cleveland for the purpose of unifying the

various Christian denominations. A little later a plan for the federation of the various branches of the Presbyterian church was agreed upon by a representative committee at their meeting in Philadelphia to be recommended to their appointing bodies for adoption.

"In Australia, by the action of the General Quadrennial

Methodist Conference, a committee was appointed to carry into effect the proposals for the reunion of the various Methodist divisions, so that there, as in Canada, the consolidation of the various Methodist sects into one church will soon be completed.

"The manifesto of the Congregational State Association of New Jersey, issued last spring, is another important contribution to the reunion movement. It practically proposes an alliance of the Reformed and Presbyterian churches, five in all, and a basis of formal union with the Free Baptists and 'Christian' churches, and in its 'Quadrilateral' formulates also a plan for the federation at least of the various Protestant churches of the United States.

"The federation of churches for common religious and social work has gained a decided impetus in recent months, especially in England, and to some extent in this country. In the former, the Nonconformist churches of Surrey and Hampshire, and in the midland counties about Nottingham, in municipal centers like Birmingham and Manchester, have united for federated efforts.

"Still another sign of the progress of the desire for union is found in the wide appeal made for the observance of last Whitsunday as a day of special intercession for the reunion of the churches of Christendom. The archbishop of Canterbury and the archbishop of Dublin, together with four bishops of the English church and a number of dignitaries of the Irish church, joined in this appeal. The moderator of the church of Scotland, the presidents of all the Methodist conferences, the chairman of the Baptist Union, and leading Congregational ministers, preached on the subject.

"The Grindewald Conference for 1894 discussed the subject of reunion and related church problems. As on similar occasions, representatives of all branches of the Protestant church spoke on this absorbing theme; and the new contribution thus made to the literature of the question serves to augment the interest already awakened throughout Christendom.

"The American Institute of Christian Philosophy, at its summer meeting, July last, at Chautauqua, devoted two days of its session to the reunion question."

CARDINAL GIBBONS ON THE SUBJECT

Not only are the various subdivisions of the leading Protestant denominations of Christendom drawing together, but they are seeking also a closer affiliation with the church of Rome, which also strongly reciprocates the sentiment, and with all its characteristic subtlety and energy is enlisted in the scheme.

Cardinal Gibbons recently preached at the Cathedral in Baltimore on the subject of Christian unity. He said:—

"Thank God there is a yearning desire for the reunion of Christianity among many noble and earnest souls. This desire is particularly manifested in the English speaking world. It is manifested in England and in the United States. I myself have received several letters from influential Protestant ministers expressing the hope of a reunion, and inquiring as to the probable basis of a reconciliation. Reunion is the great desire of my heart. I have longed and prayed for it during all the years of my ministry. I have prayed that as we are bound to our brethren by social and family and by natural and commercial ties, so may we be united with them in the bonds of a common faith."

Addressing the "prodigal" protestants, whose return to the Catholic fold he invites, he says:

"The conditions of reunion are easier than are generally imagined. Of course there can be no compromise on faith or morals. The doctrine and moral code that Christ has left us must remain unchangeable. But the church can modify her discipline to suit the circumstances of the case.

"Every well-organized society must have a recognized head. The mayor and governor hold this position in the municipal and state governments; the President is the head of the republic; the Pope is the head of the church. The Papacy is as necessary to the church as the Presidency is to the republic.

"In coming back to the church, you are not entering a strange place; you are returning to your father's house. The furniture may seem odd to you, but it is just the same as your fathers left three hundred and fifty years ago. You worship as have your fathers worshiped. You kneel before the altar at which they knelt. You receive the sacraments which they received. . . . You come back like the prodigal to your father's house, and the garment of joy is placed upon you, and the banquet of love is set before you, and you receive the kiss of peace as a pledge of your filiation and adoption. You can say with the Apostle, "We

are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens of the saints [of the calendar of the Roman church]."

"One hearty embrace of your tender mother will more than compensate you for all the sacrifices you may have made. The leaders of the Reformation . . . dismembered the Christian flock. They scandalized the Gentile world by the dissensions which have prevailed, and have retarded the onward march of Christianity. . . . May the day be hastened when the scattered hosts of Christendom will form an army [literally, no doubt—EDITOR] which infidelity and atheism cannot long resist; and they would soon carry the light of faith and Christian civilization to the most remote and benighted parts of the earth."

PAPACY AND THE EASTERN CHURCHES

The most recent remarkable feature of the reunion movement is seen in the efforts now being made for the reunion of the various branches of the Catholic church.

"Pope Leo XIII. has recently been occupied with a conference in Rome of the patriarchs of the oriental churches, the final intent of which is the reunion of all churches in the East with the church of Rome. This, if accomplished, will be the greatest achievement of the pontificate of the present pope, and will make the name of Leo XIII. one of the most famous of this century.

"The most important oriental churches now separate from Rome are the Chaldean, under the patriarch of Babylon, which has its adherents in Mesopotamia, Persia and the island of Malabar, and which separated from the Catholic church in the fifth century; and the Abyssinian church, with branches in Egypt, depending on a patriarch in Cairo, which separated in the fifth century also. There are also other sects from Mesopotamia and Armenia. The most important of all, however, is the Greek church, which extends through Greece, European Turkey, Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, and Palestine. She has still her four patriarchs at Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem, each being independent. This church was united to Rome until the twelfth century and reunited by the councils of Lyons and Florence. When Turkey took Constantinople there was a definite separation.

"The Eastern or Greek church is really the parent stock; the Catholic church seceded from it when the Eastern patriarchs refused to acknowledge the supremacy of Rome. Some small conflicts of doctrine precipitated the division; but the main reason why the Christian church split in two in 1054 was the claim of the Eastern patriarchs for absolute independence, and the contention of the Pope that he was the paramount authority in matters ecclesiastic.

"In the main the doctrines of both were the same. In form and rites differences crept in and a wide gulf between the two was opened by the final settlement of the controversy over the marriage of priests. Before the eleventh century celibacy or marriage were open questions which each Bishop regulated in his own diocese according to his judgment of the best interest of the church. Some time after that date the church of Rome adopted the law of priestly celibacy and made it obligatory. The patriarchs of Alexander, Antioch and Constantinople took a different view. They not only allowed priests to marry, but unmarried priests could not be ordained; though, if their first wives died, they could not marry again. But it was established as a rule of the church that a bishop must be a monk sworn to celibacy. Both rules are in force today.

"The effect of a reunion of the two churches would be to add about 90,500,000 members to the Catholic church and to cause the Greek church to pass out of existence.

"The Russian government has recently ordered all priests of the Roman Catholic faith now imprisoned in Siberia to be liberated. Orders have been given to stop all interference with the Catholic churches in Poland. At Athens, Belgrade and Bucharest, which are headquarters of the Greek church, the scheme is noticed approvingly. On the other hand the Pope has endowed a Greek church seminary in Italy with a large annual sum. Pope Leo has also endowed the Armenian and Greek colleges at Rome and the Greek church seminary of St. Anne's at Jerusalem. Cardinal Vanutelli, one of the most eminent prelates of the Papal court, has recently published a book going to show that reunion, far from weakening either church, would strengthen them both.

"The general belief that the Czar is the head of the Russian church is not exact, he being simply her protector.

"To the Greek faith belong the Russian, the Servian, the Roumanian, the Georgian, and the Bulgarian churches. She even has adherents among the Slavs in Austria.

"Finally, there is a Greek-Albanese sect, which has a small number of believers in Sicily and Calabria, in the south of Italy.

"This immensely important meeting, which now takes place, is one of the greatest events in the history of the relations between Rome and the East. There is no precedent to compare it to in the annals of Catholicism. To obtain this reunion of the oriental churches with the Roman the pope intends to create a special congregation for them, quite separate from the propaganda, with a cardinal for prefect whom he would nominate. The pope would leave to the oriental churches all their privileges and rites, only demanding that the patriarchs elected by the synod of bishops should submit their election for the approbation of the Roman pontiff, to whom the examination of all questions of dogmatic and ecclesiastic rights would be reserved. For asking so little it is believed that Leo XIII. will succeed, as the principal point of discussion in the eastern churches has always been the fear of being sacrificed to Rome and the Latins. The pope wishes to show that the papacy is neither Latin nor western, but universal. After the meeting he will issue an encyclical to the eastern church, which will be a development of what he recently wrote in the *Praeclara* encyclical about the union of the churches.

"The union would be followed by the institution of three great papal-oriental colleges at Corfu, Athens, and Smyrna.

In addressing the conference on Oct. 24, '94 the pope said:

"Above all we note the absence of the Patriarch of the Armenians. We shall not on this account, however, recede from our purpose. . . . Nothing will prevent us from solving the grand problem from the religious side, while awaiting more propitious times for the rest of the work."

PROSPECTIVE CHARACTER OF THE PROPOSED RELIGIOUS UNION

While we thus view the rapid strides in the direction of religious union, it is no less interesting to note the prospective character of the proposed organization or church of the future.

The points to be specially noticed are, (1) The willingness of Catholics as well as Protestants to make concessions in the interest of reunion. This might be considered a favorable sign, were the motives and considerations good ones. But they are selfish motives. Not brotherly love, but fear, is the mainspring of this desire for union. The fear is that mentioned by our Lord in his prophecy concerning our day. "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven [religious powers] shall be shaken." (Luke 21:26) It is a part of the general fear that has taken hold of the leaders in financial, political and religious circles. The leaders of Catholicism note the shaking as surely as the leaders among Protestants, and all feel that *union* is the only means of increasing their influence, or even of preserving their existence.

Especially is this true on the part of the church of Rome. She still boasts of the infallibility of her teachings, which declare most positively that there is no escape from everlasting torment outside of her communion. Does she confess the errors of her past course and teachings, and claim to be reforming? If so, that would be a step in the right direction. But no, she still boasts of her unchangeableness; and consequently we must believe that her present attitude and recent utterances respecting Protestants and the Bible as Jesuitical and hypocritical, and for her own purposes merely.

Protestants have less policy and more sincerity in their desire for union. They too, however, desire it chiefly for strength and prestige before the world, and not from heart-love of Christian fellowship. Each sect is anxious to hold its own traditions and doctrines and name, although all confess that there is really little in their confessions of faith worth contending for anyway. Indeed, we could rejoice in this feature were it not that with the mass of musty error they are discarding also the very root and essence of Scripture doctrine; viz., faith in Christ as the Redeemer who paid the ransom for all at Calvary. But all is going, good and bad, and gentility and morality are soon to be the only tests of Christian name and fellowship—all this to keep nominal Christianity popular with the world and to insure the continuance of its outward show of prosperity, in which thrifty "tares" are mistaken for "wheat."

The leaders of the World's Parliament of Religions, of a year ago, it will be remembered, suggested even the dropping of the name Christian, and the use of the term Religious Union, so as to unite, not only all the denominations called Christian, but also the various heathen systems, in a universal church; and this suggestion should awaken all true believers to the real situation. As they see all the "tares" being thus bound together, they should the more forcibly realize the meaning of our Lord's words, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and receive not of her plagues."

But all this only confirms us in the correctness of our interpretation of prophecy. It will be remembered by old readers that, so long ago as 1880, we pointed out in these columns that the Scriptures foretold a combination or federation of Protestants and their subsequent co-operation with Papacy. Every step of the way now, as this union develops, will be watched by us all with interest.

But from the same Scriptures we learn that the union will last but a short time, and that instead of its being favorable to the truth and the Lord's saints, it will be the reverse, except as He shall overrule it in their special interest. Therefore,—“Say not ye [God's consecrated people], a confederacy [a union], neither fear ye their fear nor be afraid.”—Isa. 8:12-16.

IMPORTANT NEWS ITEM

Since writing the above we have received the following important announcement:

Rome, Nov. 29.—“The Pope has appointed a theological commission to inquire into the validity of ordinations in the Anglican church from the viewpoint of the Roman doctrine. His Holiness has invited Cardinal Vaughan to Rome to discuss the union of the Anglican and Roman churches. He also proposes to submit a specific scheme to a conference of Cardinals, as in the case of the Eastern churches. The Pope is still engaged on the encyclical on the English church question.”

We learn also, upon good authority, that it is the intention of the Pope to issue in January, 1895, two or three encyclical letters; one freeing the papal delegate of the United States (at present Satolli) from the supervision of the congregation of the propaganda of Rome, making him responsible to the Pope only; another relating to the relationship of the Roman church in South America to secular governments; and another to the bishops in England, discussing the position of the church of Rome, possibly suggesting terms of union with the church of England.

A few days ago the “Guild of St. James the Apostle” was organized in Cincinnati, O. The *Cincinnati Enquirer* says:

“Their endeavors will be to bring the Episcopal churches back to the old ceremonial of the mediæval days, when the church was still in communion with the Roman Catholic church, and a very considerable and influential part of it. They do not disguise the fact that it would be their highest realization to have all the Catholic churches reunited under one and the same head—the Pope of Rome—the Greeks, who for several centuries have been separated from it by schism, and the Episcopalians, who were separated from the Mother church during the reign of Henry VIII.

“Rev. Robert A. Gibson, pastor of Christ Episcopal church, was seen and said: ‘The proposed movement is not for a consolidation of the Episcopalian, Greek and Roman churches alone, but of all denominations—Catholic and Protestant. It is in the distant future, and we may not live to see it, but it will come. The Episcopal church first proposed it 1886, and asked for a general conference to come to an understanding upon the matters of baptism, sacrament and local episcopate. At first none of the churches gave it much consideration, but now the Presbyterians have appointed a committee to confer with the Episcopalian, and it is receiving the careful attention of other denominations.’

“The Episcopalian church and the church of England, numbering 10,000,000 people, are virtually pledged to it. The object is, organic union of all denominations, to present a solid front against heathenism. We are a long way in advance of the days when heretics were burned, and are rapidly approaching the time when a universal church will be possible, although it may take a good while yet.”

CHRIST TEACHING BY PARABLES

IV. QUAR., LESSON X., DEC. 9, LUKE 8:4-15.

Golden Text—“The seed is the Word of God.”—Luke 8:11.

This parable needs no further explanation than that which the great Teacher gave. But his words should be carefully pondered and should lead to self-examination, as not the

hearers only, but the doers of the Word, are acceptable with God.

It is worthy of special notice, however, that the Lord expected his disciples to see the drift of this parable without

inquiring for an explanation. "And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables? Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God, but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables, that seeing, they may see and not perceive; and hearing, they may hear and not understand, lest at any time they should be converted and their sins should be forgiven them."—Mark 4:10-13. See also Isa. 6:9, 10; Matt. 13:12-17; John 12:39, 40; Acts 28:25-28; Rom. 11:7.

While our Lord thus indicated that his disciples should have been able to interpret this parable, because of their knowledge of the truth it was designed to illustrate, it is not to be inferred that all his parables were so simple as to be promptly understood at the time they were spoken. Many of them illustrated truths not revealed at that time, and hence they could not be understood then. The expression, "To you it is given," etc., applies, not only to the disciples of that day, but to the disciples all through the age. While the truth is made

manifest gradually, more and more, as meat in due season, the parables which illustrated those truths can only be seen as illustrations as the truths they illustrate become manifest.

To "them that are without"—outside the pale of the believing disciples—which included the whole nation of Israel except a small "remnant," these illustrations of the truth were, of course, as dark as were the truths themselves to which they allowed their prejudices to blind their eyes, greatly to their own detriment. And it was for this very reason—because their hearts were not right, and they were therefore unworthy of the truth and its blessings—that the Lord opened his mouth in parables and dark sayings, so that they might fail to perceive the blessings of which they were prying themselves unworthy. It was because of this unworthiness that blindness came upon Israel, and that it will continue until the fulness of the Gentiles shall have come into possession of those blessings which were first offered to Israel and rejected by them—the prize of the "high calling."

THE TWELVE SENT FORTH

IV. QUAR., LESSON XI., DEC. 16, MATT. 10:5-16.

Golden Text—"As ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand."—Matt. 10:7.

In this lesson we have an account of the method which the Lord pursued in the harvest work of the Jewish age. This is a topic which should be of very special interest to those who recognize the present as the harvest time of the Gospel age, and who believe that the same Lord of the harvest is now present directing and superintending the work of this harvest as he did that (See Rev. 14:14; Matt. 13:30; Mark 4:26-29); and who see further that the two ages correspond to each other as type and antitype.*

In the two harvests we see a remarkable correspondence, not only in the exactly equal time allotted to each—forty years—but also in the character of the work to be done and the methods of doing it. The present harvest work has now been in successful operation for twenty years (1874-1894), and the methods which the Lord's providence has indicated and blessed have been very similar to those of the Jewish harvest. Though the Lord is not visibly present here, as he was there, we have the assurance of his Word, as above cited, that the work is his—under his direction, supervision and full control; and he who does not believe this has no authority for engaging in it; he is not sent. But he who is sent, and who goes under the Lord's direction, is appointed to one of the grandest privileges that was ever offered to any man, although now, as in the Jewish harvest, the present reward is nothing that the world would envy.—Matt. 10:16-28, 34-36.

While the methods in this harvest and the Jewish have been similar, there is no reason to believe that they ought to be exactly alike; for the Lord of the harvest is surely at liberty to adopt in either case the methods that please him best: and in each case he has evidently taken cognizance of the conditions and circumstances of the times and adapted his methods accordingly. The following points of similarity and dissimilarity in the methods of the two harvests are worthy of comparison as indicating first, the similarity of the work, and, secondly, the freedom of the Lord in adapting his methods to the circumstances of the times.

In the Jewish harvest the Lord sent out first the twelve, and then the seventy, and was ready to send as many more as might become ready; for, said he: "The harvest is great and the laborers are few." (Luke 10:1-2) He sent them out two and two under his direction and supervision. He also gave them a message to declare and instructions how and to whom to declare it, and required that those going forth should be fully consecrated to the work, being filled with his spirit. Indeed, such were his forewarnings of the present wages they should receive, that none would undertake it except such as had learned to walk by faith, who were willing to "endure hardness as good soldiers," and whose "treasure" was "laid up in heaven."

In the present harvest the same course is manifest. Since its beginning, in 1874, the Lord has been instructing his consecrated disciples in the truths of another new dispensation, revealing the glorious harmony and beauty of his plan in outline and detail, and also its orderly times and seasons; and as they have become prepared he has been sending them out—generally two and two, where they have been able to give their whole time to the work—to declare, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand!" (in its glory and completeness now, as, at the time of the Jewish harvest, it was at hand in its embryo condition) and to explain and prove the truth of the message.

As in the Jewish harvest the Lord's instructions confined

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

the special work of those messengers to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, so his instructions here confine the special work of his messengers to the household of faith—spiritual Israel.—Gal. 6:10; Isa. 52:7.

Here, too, as there, they have been forewarned of that which their experience bears out; viz., that there is no earthly gain in it, no ease or worldly honor, no present reward except the blessed consciousness of being a co-worker with God and of knowing the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ, the joys of heart-communion with him now, and the hope of future glory in his presence. Only those who accept of these conditions, and who are willing to endure hardness as good soldiers, being impelled thereto by the spirit of the Lord abiding in them, have any desire or incentive to this service; and if any such grow weary in well doing and look longingly back to the things left behind, it is not long before they drop out by the way.

In the respects just mentioned the methods in the two harvests are very similar; but there are also points of dissimilarity which we should not fail to note. For instance:

(1) Those sent out in that harvest preached the truth orally, and attention was drawn to them and their message by reason of the miracles which they were empowered to perform; while in this harvest the preaching is done largely by the printed page, disseminated through the agency of traveling colporteurs sent out generally two and two to bear the message.

The propriety of this feature of the change is very manifest, since now education has become general and the printing press has largely multiplied the influence of every one of the harvesters. By taking advantage of this modern invention they magnify the influence of the truth a thousand fold. And in consequence of these improved facilities of printing and of general education, and the still greater advantage of nineteen centuries of Gospel privilege and blessing, the truth now needs no such endorsement as the miracle-working power given at first, and so necessary then to the awakening of attention and the confirmation of the truth. In fact such methods now would be out of harmony with the thief-like presence and mission of the Lord here. (Rev. 16:15; Matt. 24:43, 44; 1 Thess. 5:2) If he comes as a thief, it is not to sound a trumpet before him, calling the world's attention to his work. Those gifts gradually disappeared from the church as the necessity for them decreased. When faith gained a sure and substantial footing, such helps were taken away, and believers were expected to walk by faith, and not any longer by sight.

(2) Those sent out in that harvest were instructed to depend upon the people to whom they went for support in temporal things, while the reapers of this harvest are independent of such means, greatly to the advantage of the work. The reason for this variation is also manifest. In the Jewish harvest the reapers were sent exclusively to a consecrated people. The entire nation had bound itself by a solemn covenant to the Lord (Exod. 19:8), and in consequence had been specially favored in many ways, but chiefly in that to them were committed the oracles (the law and the testimonies) of God. (Rom. 3:1, 2) According to their covenant, therefore, it was the duty, and it should have been esteemed by them a privilege to receive and entertain any messenger of the Lord whose credentials warranted such a claim and thus protected them from impostors—as theirs did, their personal character and demeanor and the divine testimony of miracles thus endorsing them. It was because of this preparation of Israel as

a people for the reception of the gospel (whether they had profited by it or not), that they were expected to recognize both the harvest message and the appointed and attested messengers; and their opportunity for either receiving or rejecting them was the first applied test of their worthiness of the special favors then about to be offered to them. It was on this account that the harvesters were instructed to go to that people in a manner to impress them with a sense of their obligations as a covenant people to receive and gladly to entertain the messengers of the Lord to them. Throughout the whole nation the fame of the Messiah and the divine attestations of his power and authority had spread (Matt. 4:23-25; Mark 1:28, 32-34, 45; 6:31-34; 8:26, 27; Luke 4:14, 15, 36, 37; Matt. 9:26, 31; 14:1, 2), and these now sent forth in his name represented him, so that in receiving them they were receiving him, and in rejecting them they were rejecting him. Hence the blessing promised on their reception, and denunciations that followed their rejection. (Verses 11-15) When they departed out of the city or house that rejected them, they were to shake off the very dust of their feet for a testimony against them, because that in so doing they were violating their most solemn covenant with God and bringing upon themselves the just condemnation of such a course. That condemnation, however, was not to eternal death, but to deprivation of the privileges and blessings of the new dispensation then about to be offered to them, but of which they proved themselves unworthy. Nor was the condemnation, either then or at the full end of their age, an individual one; for, although the nation as a whole was cast off from divine favor and blinded, and destined to remain so until the gospel favor had passed over to the Gentiles, yet during this time, if any individual of the nation repented and severed his ties with the nation and family (which the persecuting spirit of the nation has always compelled) he might, through such tribulation, enter into the embryo kingdom—the Gospel church.

In this harvest the circumstances attending the work are in many respects quite different. Though here also the Lord has a consecrated people—nominal spiritual Israel—they are not a local nation within a circumscribed boundary, but they are scattered here and there as wheat in the midst of tares. The reapers here must therefore search them out singly, while there they were grouped in cities and families and a nation.

Again, the circumstances here are the reverse of those there in that the testimony to the truth is given in the midst of a very babel of voices, all claiming to teach the truth; and so great is the confusion that only the consecrated and faithful souls, whose practiced ears know the Master's voice from all others, are able to discern it. They have an affinity for the truth: the holy Spirit within them recognizes the same spirit in the message, as well as in the messengers, and it satisfies their longings as nothing else can do.

Thus the harvest message becomes a test of faithfulness to God's covenant people here, and as a sickle it accomplishes the reaping. These different circumstances and conditions of this harvest make necessary the very reverse of the former method of the dependence of the messengers upon the hospitality of the people. Now, in order to make manifest that no mercenary motives, or motives of indolence, or love of ease, or popularity, or of desire to impose on others prompt the reapers of this harvest, the Lord in his providence has so arranged the work here that all such motives are manifestly eliminated from the harvest work; and it is seen to be a self-sacrificing labor of love, prompted by that devotion and zeal which the truth alone inspires. And this of itself commends the truth to the attention of the Lord's people where the messenger comes in contact with them, though often it reaches them through the printed page alone, where the luster of the truth is its own commendation.

This difference in the two harvests was aptly illustrated by the Lord when he likened the Jewish nation to wheat and chaff, and his work there to a fan for blowing the chaff away—thus indicating the compactness of that people; while here his professed people are likened to wheat and tares, thus indicating their scattered and confused condition and the necessity of careful searching and gathering out.

It would therefore be entirely out of order for the reapers in this harvest to denounce or shake off the dust of their feet for a testimony against any city now, for no city or community as such is now in covenant relations with God as was Israel; and so different are the customs and circumstances of this time that a man might brush the dust and denounce the people for a week and not be noticed, or, if noticed, merely considered as of unsound mind, so intent are the masses of the people on pursuing their own course and grasping after gain.

The consequence now to those who recognize and yet reject the truth will be very similar to those which followed Israel's

rejection (their complete overthrow in the midst of great tribulation), excepting that the increased light and privilege of this time will merit and receive the greater punishment—"a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation." (Dan. 12:1) Surely, then, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah (Matt. 10:15) in the day of judgment (the Millennial age) than for the condemned house of Israel, either fleshly or spiritual, which are judged unworthy of the grace of God, because they cast it from them. The judgment upon condemned fleshly Israel was a terrible overthrow in the midst of harrowing scenes of war and desolation and famine, leaving them utterly desolate and scattering them as fugitives among all nations; while that which is shortly to come upon nominal spiritual Israel is described as a time of unparalleled trouble, such as never has been and never again shall be.

Another point of contrast which this lesson suggests is that between the Lord's methods for the harvest work of the Jewish age and the subsequent methods of the inspired apostles, equally under the Lord's direction and supervision, which not only winnowed the grain of that harvest, but also sought to systematically store it. The wheat of that dispensation was to form the nucleus of the Christian church—the embryo kingdom of heaven—which as a compact and sympathetic body subject to Christ, imbued with his spirit, and representing his truth, was to stand before the world as a living testimony to his truth and to the power of his grace for nearly two thousand years. It was necessary, therefore, as believers multiplied in the days of the apostles, to adopt some simple method of recognition which would serve to unify them and to make them helpful one to another as members of one body.

But as that work of organizing the church of the new Gospel dispensation was no part of the harvest work of the old Jewish dispensation, so the present harvest work or reaping of the Gospel dispensation is also separate and distinct from the work of the new Millennial dispensation now drawing on. But there is this difference between our days and those of the apostles: the wheat of the Gospel age is not to form the nucleus of another church for the Millennial age; and those gathered out from among the tares are not beginning, but are finishing their course on earth, and the time of their sojourn in the flesh is very short and cannot go beyond the twenty years of harvest yet remaining. Their organization for the work of the new dispensation will be beyond the veil, when they are changed to the glorious likeness of the Lord.

In view of these facts and also of the nature of the harvest work, and the additional fact that each one so gathered is expected to enter into the harvest work as a reaper, and will do so to the extent of his ability and opportunity, it is plain that the forming of a visible organization of such gathered out ones would be out of harmony with the spirit of the divine plan; and if done would seem to indicate on the part of the church a desire to conform to the now popular idea of organization or confederacy. (See Isa. 8:12) The work now is not organization, but division, just as it was in the Jewish harvest proper (Matt. 10:34-36) And this harvest, as illustrated by the natural, is the busiest time of all the age, because the time is short and the "winter" is fast approaching. What is to be done must be done quickly, and there is abundant room in the great field for every member of the body of Christ to reap.

While, therefore, we do not esteem a visible organization of the gathered ones to be a part of the Lord's plan in the harvest work, as though we expected as an organization to abide here for another age, we do esteem it to be his will that those that love the Lord should speak often one to another of their common hopes and joys, or trials and perplexities, communing together concerning the precious things of his Word, and so help one another, and not forget the assembling of themselves together as the manner of some is; and so much the more as they see the day approaching.—Heb. 10:25.

Let us, then, give ourselves diligently to the great harvest work, observing and carefully following the providential lines for the guidance of the work as indicated by the Lord of the harvest—the same Lord, and just as truly present and active in this harvest as in the Jewish harvest, though invisible to mortal sight. What dignity and grandeur and blessed inspiration does the realization of this truth give our humble services! Truly it is not a glory which the world can discern, but faithfulness to the end of our course will bring an exceeding and eternal weight of glory which will appear to all God's intelligent creatures of every name and order: for in the ages to come he will show forth the exceeding riches of his grace in his loving kindness toward us who are in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:7); and, praise the Lord! our exaltation and glory will be for a grand and benevolent service—even the privilege of scattering universal blessings.

JERUSALEM TO BE PROBED

Excavations certain to add to the knowledge of the old city of Jerusalem are soon to be made. The Sultan has granted a firman to the Palestine Exploration Society of London, giving a long-sought privilege. The permission to dig includes a generous strip of land all around the walls on the outside, excluding only Moslem burying grounds and holy places.

The work is to be done under the direction of Frederick Bliss, a young American of considerable reputation as an

archæological explorer. Shafts are to be sunk on the hill of Ophel, where were the royal gardens and the tombs of the kings. It is hardly possible that this ground can be turned up without valuable discoveries being made. One thing hoped for is that the old wall that swept around the southern brow of Zion may be found, said a representative of the society.

The imperial firman grants a two years' privilege, time enough to make the old city of Solomon and the Jebusites tell some of its long hidden secrets.—*New York World*.