

"WHO SHALL ASCEND"

[This article was reprinted under the title "The Mountain of the Lord's House" in issue of December 1, 1902, which please see.]

"THINK IT NOT STRANGE"

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."—1 Pet. 4:12, 13.

Perhaps few have learned to value the discipline of the Lord as did the faithful Apostle who wrote these words. While he, as well as others, realized that no affliction for the present seemeth joyous, but rather grievous, yet knowing the ministry of such discipline, and recognizing it as an additional evidence of sonship to God, he rejoiced in being a partaker of it.

But why is it that fiery trials must come to us? Is there no way of gaining the crown without these crosses? No, there is not; for if ye receive not the discipline of trial whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons; for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? Trials of faith and patience and love and endurance are as necessary to our development and our fitting for the high position to which we are called, as are the instructions of divine grace. The blessed sunshine and shower have their benign influence, but none the less the cloud and the storm; but we need ever to bear in mind that God is in the whirlwind and in the storm.

Like water upon the parched earth, and like sunshine to vegetation after winter snows, so the message of divine truth comes to us and with it the blessed realization of divine favor. In the joy of our new-found treasure we are apt to think at first that we have actually entered the Beulah land of joy and peace where sorrow and trial can never more come to us. But no; there are sorrows ahead and trials beyond, and you will need all the strength which the truth can give and all the blessed influences that divine grace can impart to enable you to endure faithfully to the end.

But do not stop to worry about the trials until they come; only remember the Apostle's words—"Think it not strange," when they do come. They come to prove you and to strengthen

your character and to cause the principles of truth and righteousness to take deep root in your heart. They come like fiery darts from our great enemy—Satan, whose wrath against the children of light is permitted to manifest itself in various ways; but his darts cannot injure those who securely buckle on the divinely provided armor of truth and righteousness. "Wherefore," says the Apostle, "take unto you the whole armor of God, . . . above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."

The Christian life is thus set forth as a warfare—a warfare, "not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (Eph. 6:12) In other words, as Christians imbued with the spirit of our Master, we find the principles of truth and righteousness which we have espoused to be at variance with the whole present order of things, which is to a very large extent under the control of "the prince of this world"—Satan. And when sin is thus so inwrought throughout the whole social fabric of the present age; and not only so, but when we also find the flesh, our own old nature, in harmony with it, we see into what close quarters we must come with the enemy, and what a hand to hand and life-long struggle it must needs be. Yet our weapons are not carnal, but spiritual, and the Apostle says *they are mighty* for the pulling down of the strongholds of error and iniquity.—2 Cor. 10:4, 5.

When, therefore, the fiery trials and darts from the enemy come upon you, be ready as an armed soldier of the cross to meet and withstand them. If you run away from them, you are a coward, and not worthy to be called a soldier.

"A THORN IN THE FLESH"

"And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong."—2 Cor. 12:7-10.

This was the language of an overcoming saint, meekly bowing to the divine will. Noble and loyal and true and strong in character as the Apostle Paul was, he yet realized that he was a member of the fallen race, and, in common with all humanity, subject to frailties. God had called him to a most important and glorious work—that of bearing the Gospel to the Gentiles; and, for the benefit of the whole church, to him were granted special and wonderful revelations, even above all the other honored and beloved apostles. He was caught away in mental vision to the third heaven—the new dispensation, the Millennial reign of Christ, and shown things (doubtless the plan and purpose of God, as now made manifest to us, largely through his writings, in the light of this harvest period, but) not lawful to be uttered then, because not then due to the church. (2 Cor. 12:4) Upon him devolved the care of all the churches of the Gentiles, and great were the responsibilities of his office. Though the position was a most laborious and trying one, requiring great fortitude, zeal, energy and self-denial to fill it, it was also one of great honor.

And Paul appreciated the honor of such intimate fellowship of service with the Lord, and manifested his appreciation by untiring zeal and enthusiasm. But even in this the Lord recognized a personal danger to his beloved and faithful Apostle—a danger of pride and self-exaltation, which, if it should develop, would soon unfit him for further service and rob him of his future reward. So the thorn in the flesh was permitted to come. It came, not from the hand of the Lord,

though by his permission; but, as the Apostle affirms, it was "the messenger of Satan to buffet" him.

A thorn in the flesh is always a painful thing; and whatever this may have been, it was something severely trying to Paul. At first he thought only of the pain and annoyance it caused him, and of its hindrance to him in the Lord's work: it was a messenger of Satan that he was anxious to get rid of. Three times he besought the Lord for its removal. But no, it had come to stay, and the Lord mercifully made him to realize that through it was very undesirable to the flesh, it was nevertheless profitable to him spiritually; for otherwise he might become exalted overmuch.

The implication of weakness the Apostle humbly accepted. He did not resent it and begin to boast of his strength and to reproach the Lord for not exerting his power for its removal; but, on the contrary, with grace and gladness he accepted the Lord's judgment of his heart, and his estimate of his strength, and appreciated the love that thus cared *for him personally*, while through him he was ministering to the whole church. Yes, praise the Lord! He chooses his own instruments, and whets and grinds and polishes them for the more effectual service, and wields them with force and power in the service of his people; but in all the painful and laborious service he has special care also for the willing and faithful instrument. He will not suffer it to be tried beyond that which it is able to endure; nor will he suffer it to be exalted without some counterbalancing thorn in the flesh to preserve its equilibrium.

The answer to the Apostle's prayer, although not in accordance with his request, was a blessed consolation—"My grace [my favor] is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect [made manifest] in [your] weakness."

This is also the blessed consolation of every truly submissive heart. How many of the Lord's people are tempest-tossed and sorely tried in these days; and doubtless many of them have earnestly besought the Lord to remove this or that trial or affliction; but the piercing thorn still remains for their discipline and perfecting. Let all such, like Paul, give ear to the Master's voice—"My favor is sufficient for thee." What if other friends forsake thee, if thou hast my favor, my love: is not that sufficient? And what, though the flesh be weak and the heart sometimes faint, my strength shall supply your lack; and while you walk in the way of my appointment, your weakness shall only the more manifest the power of God.

What sincere child of God has not realized, in times of greatest need and felt weakness, the power of God on his behalf supplementing his weakness with strength from above? And when the task was accomplished to which the Lord had called him and for which he felt so incompetent of himself, has he not realized in the outcome the wonderful power of God?

In view of such a gracious provision to supplement his weakness with divine strength, the faithful Apostle meekly responded, "Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." Hav-

ing put forth all his own energies and faithfully used his own ability to its fullest extent as a wise steward, it was his joy to recognize the hand of the Lord working with him—by miracles and signs and with demonstrations of the spirit and of power. (Heb. 2:4; Acts 19:11; 1 Cor. 2:4) These demonstrations of divine power supplementing Paul's faithful use of his natural abilities were the Lord's endorsement of all he did—the manifestations of divine approval both to himself and to others, and consequently cause for great rejoicing.

With the Apostle it is also the privilege of all God's children to have their weakness supplemented by divine grace, while they meekly and faithfully use their talents in the Lord's service. And so all the faithful may rejoice in tribulations and infirmities, while God overrules the former and supplements the latter to his praise.

But to rejoice in tribulations, to endure meekly and patiently a sore thorn in the flesh, and even to glory in such personal infirmities as make the power of Christ the more manifest, is not possible except to those whose hearts are in fullest accord with the loving purposes of God. If the heart be influenced by pride or ambition, or love of fame or wealth or any worldly ambition, joy in tribulation is impossible. But if the old ambitions and desires of the flesh are kept under, and faith, love, hope and zeal are all alive and active, we shall have the consciousness of the divine favor, and then we can rejoice in every experience.

"THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD"

"The Lord is my Shepherd: I shall not want."—Psa. 23:1.

In comparing himself to a shepherd, the Lord made a very apt illustration of his care for his people—a care which is always solicitous for their welfare, watchful for their interests, patient with their youth and inexperience and untiring in its ministry of love.

But it is only when the individual can say in his heart, Thy Lord is my Shepherd, that this blessed ministry of the good Shepherd can be realized. It is when we become his sheep that we learn the value of the Shepherd's care; and the man who has had experience under the care of the good Shepherd can truly say with the Psalmist, "I shall not want." He shall not want for the temporal necessities of the present life—"Bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure." (Isa. 33:16; Matt. 6:33, 34) He shall not want for light and be

left to walk in the darkness of this world, but unto him shall be given the light of life. (John 8:12) He shall not want the necessary care and discipline to fit him for the future life; "for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." (Heb. 12:6) He shall not lack the consolations of divine grace in times of trial and affliction; for it is written, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." (2 Cor. 12:9) He shall not want for fellowship and sympathy; for the Lord himself hath said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5); and again, "Lo, I am with you always."—Matt. 28:20.

Surely no good thing will be withheld from them that walk uprightly—as true sheep. He will protect them in every danger, and guard them with a shepherd's care.

Z. W. T. TRACT SOCIETY'S ANNUAL REPORT

It is with great pleasure, deep gratitude and profound recognition of the great Master's providential leadings that we summarize and lay before our readers the results of their labors and ours with and under the great Chief Reaper in the present harvest work, for the past year—from December 1, 1893, to December 1, 1894.

We congratulate our readers that, although the year has been marked by Satan's fiercest assaults upon the Lord's work and upon us of the WATCH TOWER as his and your representatives in the supervision of that work—and notwithstanding, top, the fact that the year has been one of unprecedented pinch in financial affairs, nevertheless it has been the most successful year of the Tract Society's experience in the amount of money received and expended, and in the tract pages circulated, as you will see from the reports of the Secretary and Treasurer subjoined. True, the work is small—very small is the sum at our disposal for the spread of the truth compared with the immense sums donated to other tract societies for the promulgation of what we believe to be chiefly error. The Lord in his wisdom has seen fit to limit the means at our disposal, and no doubt for good reasons—quite probably to draw out to greater activity and self-denial each one who has the cause at heart.

"It is required of a steward that he be found faithful." We at the WATCH TOWER office are in several respects stewards of the Lord's goods, "stewards of the manifold grace of God," and it is his approval which we crave. We trust that as he reviews the efforts and results of the year—your efforts and ours—that he can approve both you and us, saying: "Well done, good, faithful servants." But we of the TOWER office are not only the Lord's stewards, of goods both temporal and spiritual, but we are also your stewards—stewards of those monies which you have contributed to the Tract Fund—and as your stewards this report is due to you, and submitted accordingly.

If we cannot congratulate you that the sum is a large one, we can congratulate you that it has accomplished more than

double as much as the same amount generally accomplishes in the hands of other Tract Societies, where salaries and office rent consume a large proportion of the receipts. Twenty-three millions of pages of tracts is a good showing; and if the DAWN pages circulated were added, it would represent over thirty millions of pages more. Thank God for the privilege of having a share in this, his work of gathering together his elect unto him, preparatory to the setting up of his kingdom in power and great glory. Compare Psa. 50:4, 5; Matt. 13:30, and Matt. 24:31.

The colporteur work has been considerably interfered with by reason of the financial depression. Tens of thousands of people who have the time to read, and whose minds are more than ever open to the message of God's kingdom coming, have been obliged by necessity to refuse to purchase DAWNS, and have been supplied with free tracts instead. This in turn has worked unfavorably to the colporteurs, many of whom have been obliged to receive credits and some assistance from the Tract Fund, while others have been forced to quit the work entirely until times improve, which we expect will not be before next spring. These dear co-laborers have many trials and discouragements by the way, and need our prayers. Let all who feel an interest in the cause remember in their devotions these whose labor of love has been God's instrumentality for carrying the good tidings of great joy to so many of you, and this branch of the service, which has been specially attacked by the adversary during the year just closed.

Impressed with the fact that a number of school teachers, ministers and business men who had tried the colporteur work had failed to make it a success, we have devised a new method of work specially suitable for them. A few are already using it with success, and we hope that it will enable many to engage in the harvest work in a self-supporting way during the coming year. The new method is not at all adapted to the use of the average colporteur, who succeeds best with the usual methods: indeed, the new method is suited only to those who by the grace of God can respond that they possess the eight

qualifications for public ministry, mentioned in our issue of September 1; and it is consequently explained *only to such as can and do thus respond.*

The "New Branch of Service," started some time ago, but mentioned and enlarged recently, viz., the arrangement for the holding of meetings, by traveling representatives of the Tract Society—is proving spiritually profitable to the church, as indicated by letters received from various quarters, which tell of spiritual good derived, and truth more clearly discerned.

This work is carried on economically, too, that the means supplied by the Lord may reach as far and accomplish as much as possible. A reference to the Treasurer's report will show that only \$403.88 has been expended in this way; and this was nearly all spent during the past three months. Bro. M. L. McPhail only has been giving all of his time to this work, and he alone has all of his expenses paid out of the Tract Society's fund, the other laborers in this branch of the service, Brothers Antoszewski, Austin, Bell, Blundin, Bohnet, Draper, Merrill, Murphy, Owen, Page, Ransom, Richards, Thorn, Webb, Weber, Weimar, West, Williams, Wise and Witter being traveling salesmen colporteurs or business men, whose expenses are met by their business or otherwise, and who delight to give an evening or a Sunday, as they can arrange it, in serving the Lord's flock—pointing to the green pastures and the still waters and feeding and rejoicing with the "sheep."

During the past five months Brother McPhail has visited groups of WATCH TOWER readers in fifty-three cities, and has held about one hundred and fifteen meetings in the states of Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, Ohio, Kentucky, Delaware, Indiana, Illinois and Michigan. The other brethren, all together, have probably held as many more meetings—some in New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Massachusetts, Iowa, Wisconsin, Indiana, Canada, Illinois, Texas, California, Oregon and Florida. Several others expect to engage in this branch of the work early next year. This branch of the service also deserves our sympathies, co-operation and prayers. The blessings attending these meetings will depend largely upon the sympathy and co-operation of those visited; and the Lord will not be unmindful of your labor of love and service in such co-operation, in however humble the capacity; and he will reward with grace now and with glory hereafter. All who desire such meetings, and who would co-operate in making them a blessing to themselves and others, are invited to let us know of their desires. And any who make use of the "Good Hopes" blanks which accompany this issue may, if they so prefer, designate what proportion of their donations they wish to have applied to the forwarding of this special branch of the service.

In view of the activity of our great Adversary, and his endeavor to counterfeit not only the light of truth, but also the ministers of the light, it is well that the Lord's people should be on guard against the agents of another gospel, which denies that our Lord *bought* them (2 Pet. 2:1) and claims that he was merely an *example* and *teacher*. No such error need be feared from any of the brethren who bear our Letter of Introduction and Commendation.

Concerning the spiritual condition of the church in general, we have exceptionally good opportunities for judging, being in communication with many of the household of faith the world over; yet only the Lord can read the hearts—"the Lord knoweth them that are his." However, we are glad to be able to report that while the love of many waxes cold, we have many cheering evidences that the spiritual warmth of others is constantly increasing; and, although Satan is permitted to sift out some, as we were forewarned, others are by the same trial only the more firmly rooted and grounded and built up in the

most holy faith. And for every one who leaves the ransom and the light of present truth, another, more earnest and zealous, comes forward—reminding us of our Lord's words, "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."—Rev. 3:11.

Not only do the letters received, and the reports from the traveling brethren and the colporteurs, testify to much earnestness and love for the truth, but the Treasurer's report, which follows, testifies to the same in no uncertain tones; for where the poor give their hard-earned dollars, their hearts must be also—especially in the recent close times. While the sum contributed would be small indeed for wealthy people to spend in forwarding the grandest tidings that ever reached the ears of man, yet we know that the donations of some have not been without considerable self-denial; for among our readers are not many great or rich in this world's greatness and riches.

SECRETARY'S ACCOUNT

During the year from December 1, '93, to December 1, '94, there have been circulated, *free*, the following:

Copies OLD THEOLOGY TRACTS.....	1,159,091
Copies ZION'S WATCH TOWER.....	125,892

Since tracts vary as to the number of pages, it is customary to reckon their circulation by pages. The foregoing, so stated, represent 23,321,900 pages.

TREASURER'S ACCOUNT

RECEIPTS—	
From "Good Hopes".....	\$5,664.56
From other sources.....	4,076.00

Total\$9,740.56

EXPENDITURES—	
For balance due from last year.....	\$ 478.60
For tracts, TOWERS, etc., sent out free.....	5,738.97
For postage, freight, wrappers, etc., for same.....	658.55
For labor, mailing same.....	572.00
For foreign translations, plates, etc., tracts and DAWNS.....	1,025.26
Assistance to colporteurs, DAWNS to the poor, etc....	553.30
Interest on colporteurs indebtedness to T. P. Co.....	310.00
Expenses of traveling evangelists.....	403.88

Total\$9,740.56

Thus, by the grace of God, we start upon the new year free from all debts and hopeful of great privileges and opportunities just before us. Let us each do with our might what our Master has placed within our reach; and let us do it promptly and zealously, remembering that nearer and nearer comes the night when no man can work.—John 9:4.

It is but our duty to mention that the foregoing statement takes no account of some five thousand dollars of credit extended to colporteurs by the TOWER PUBLISHING COMPANY, for which our Tract Society is pledged; and the most of which it is to be hoped the colporteurs will soon be able to settle for themselves. Those who can do so should have their accounts paid ahead or else send the money with their orders, as our Society is obliged to pay interest on these balances. In this connection it is proper to mention that the items of rent, light, heat and clerical work are not omitted by accident from our account of expenditures. These are donated by the TOWER PUBLISHING COMPANY.

While the colporteur work for the circulation of MILLENNIAL DAWN is under the supervision and patronage of this Society, it is self-supporting to a very large degree—the only liabilities being the guarantee of their accounts above mentioned and in the preparation of foreign translations. An item on this last account appears in the Treasurer's report, above.

THE PRINCE OF PEACE

IV. QUAR., LESSON XII., DEC. 23, ISA. 9:2-7.

Golden Text—"Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end."—Isa. 9:7.

The standpoint of the Prophet here is that of the dawn of the Millennial age, immediately after the setting up of the kingdom of God in the earth—both its earthly and its heavenly phases.

Verse 2. "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light." The reference here is to the world of mankind, all of whom will at that time recognize the presence of the Lord and his kingdom established; for it is written that "every eye shall see him." (Rev. 1:7) The world that has walked in the darkness of ignorance and superstition for six thousand years will then begin to see the glorious light of truth and righteousness, and in the earthly phase of the kingdom they will see the grand illustrations and rewards of righteousness.

"They that dwell in the land of the shadow of death [*i. e.*,

fleshly Israel under the condemnation of their law covenant*], a light shineth brightly over them." Yes, the light will shine with special brilliancy upon fleshly Israel: then their blindness will be turned away and the favors of the new dispensation will again be—"to the Jew first, and also [afterward] to the Gentile;" and through the secondary instrumentality of the fleshly seed of Abraham shall all the nations of the world be blessed. The ancient worthies of that nation will be the visible rulers of the world, and their new work will begin at Jerusalem, bringing order out of confusion, peace out of discord and making Jerusalem a praise in the whole world. It was with reference to this that the Prophet wrote again, saying: "Arise, give light, for thy light is come, and the glory

* See our issue of November 1 and 15, '94.

of the Lord is shining forth over thee. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and a gross darkness the people; but over thee the Lord will shine forth, and his glory will be seen over thee. And nations shall walk by thy light, and kings by the brightness of thy shining. . . . And the sons of the stranger shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee; for in my wrath did I smite thee, but in my favor have I had mercy on thee."—Isa. 60:1-3, 10.

Verse 3. "Thou hast multiplied the nation [Israel—a reference to their gathering together again as a nation after the long dispersion of nearly two thousand years as fugitives among all the nations; and also to their reinforcement by the resurrection of their ancient worthies and heroes], made great their joy: they rejoice before thee as with the joy in harvest, as men are glad when they divide the spoil." Such, indeed, will be the joy of Israel when the blessings of their restoration to divine favor begin to be realized.

Verses 4, 5. "For the yoke of their burden, and the staff on their shoulder, the rod of their oppressor [the heavy burdens of oppression imposed upon them and the persecutions inflicted by their Gentile enemies during the long period of their blindness and exile], hast thou broken, as on the day of Midian"—when a great victory was won for them by Gideon's small band of 300 under the Lord's direction, without bloodshed and without strife. (Judges 7:1-23) Even so shall it be when the Lord shall again fight for Israel: it will not be by their own power that the victory of the final battle will be secured.—See Ezek. 38:11, 15-23. Also compare verse 4 with Ezek. 39:8-15.

Verse 6. Why is all this return of divine favor to Israel? Is it because of worthiness in them? Surely not; for to this day they are a stiff-necked people, and their blindness and hardness of heart continue, although we are within only a score of years of the time when all these things shall be fulfilled. The reason for it is that the Lord hath remembered his Covenant with their fathers (Lev. 26:42, 45; Jer. 31:34), and that in fulfillment of that Covenant a child has been born unto them who was destined to be a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Israel; and now (at the time indicated in the prophecy) "the government is placed upon his shoulders." Dimly this light of the world shone upon Israel at the first advent of Messiah; but when "the light shined in the darkness, the darkness comprehended it not." "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." It is only at the second advent that they recognize him as the promised seed of Abraham and their long-looked-for Messiah. They shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and shall mourn for him.

"And his name is called Wonderful [What a wonder indeed to Israel specially, that the despised Nazarene, the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, whom they hated and crucified and reviled, even to this day, was indeed their Messiah, and they knew him not. What a wonder, too, to them specially, will be the forgiving love that so meekly bore their reproaches and sacrificed even unto death to redeem them from

the curse of the law, and that now returns to restore and bless them! Wonderful, wonderful love, wonderful condescension and grace, and wonderful exaltation and glory and power!] Counsellor [not counsellor of the mighty God, as some translators have rendered it; for Paul significantly inquires concerning Jehovah, "Who hath been his counsellor?" (Rom. 11:34) He needed no counsellor, but poor fallen humanity does need such a wise counsellor, and he will teach them and they shall walk in his ways.—Isa. 2:3], The Mighty God ["a Saviour and a great one"—Isa. 19:20], The Everlasting Father [the new life-giver to our dead race—the second Adam—1 Cor. 15:45]. The Prince of Peace [whose glorious reign shall be one of righteousness, bringing with it all the blessed fruits of righteousness—peace and joy and satisfaction and everlasting rest]."

Verse 7. His dominion shall increase until all things are subdued under him. It shall extend, not only to the ends of the earth, but eventually all things in heaven and in earth are to be united under his headship as the representative of Jehovah, who would have all men honor the Son, even as they honor the Father.—Psa. 72:7; Eph. 1:10; John 5:23.

"The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." Such is Jehovah's purpose, and thus he declares that it shall be accomplished; and our hearts leap for joy as we realize, not only the glorious import of this prophecy, but also the fact that the time is at hand, and that a score of years future will see the kingdom established and its blessings beginning.

The common interpretation of this prophecy regards it as fulfilled upon Israel at the first advent, and the kingdom of God as established then in the Gospel church; and the great increase in the numbers and power of the nominal church of all denominations, Papal and Protestant, as the predicted increase of Christ's government.—Verse 7.

Such a fulfillment would not be worthy of the record. Christ does not reign in Christendom: its general character is anti-Christian. The only sense in which Christ's kingdom was begun at the first advent was in its embryo condition; and this, the only true kingdom of Christ in the world, has, like the Lord, been unrecognized in the world, except, like him, to be despised and forsaken and to suffer violence. Its numbers have always been small and its circumstances humble; for not many rich and great, etc., are called.—1 Cor. 1:26-29; Jas. 2:5.

Nor did the nation of Israel at the first advent see or comprehend the light of Christ, nor did he at that time break their yoke or deliver them from the rod of their oppressor; for in consequence of their failure to recognize the light when it began to shine upon them, they were blinded, the rod of the oppressor came upon them with increased force and they have never yet been relieved, nor will they be until their Messiah is recognized as having come again, a second time; this time without a sin-offering unto salvation.—Heb. 9:28.

Let us rejoice for them and for all mankind that the blessed day is nigh, even at the doors. Rightly viewed, this prophecy is full of rapturous inspiration.

ENCOURAGING WORDS FROM FAITHFUL WORKERS

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:—Of the books I brought with me to Denmark there are now none left, and several Christian friends are anxiously waiting with me for the new lot to arrive. The lady class leader of a large Methodist church, to whom I sold a copy of DAWN soon after coming here, has read a good part of it and has liked it so much that she is recommending it to Sunday school teachers and pupils, and has sold several copies. People are not so prejudiced against it here, as some seemed to be in the United States.

This is a very lively place, and everybody looks happy and contented. There are many churches. The state church is Lutheran, a dead, formal thing, which, as intelligence increases, is losing more and more of its influence over the people.

There has been much talk among the dissenters—Baptists, Methodists and others—concerning a church union. A Mr. Edwards of England, one of the members of the Sunday school committee in London, has been here several times, speaking in various churches upon the subject of joining all the Sunday schools into one large body and using the "International Sunday School lessons."

I have attended three of these meetings, the last one being held in the Baptist church; and for the first time here ministers of various denominations were seen and heard from the same platform. They seemed united to work their own scheme of "saving the whole world" before the Lord's kingdom is set up. Oh, how blind the guides! and the people are in gross darkness concerning the Lord's real, glorious plan. May his kingdom soon come!

I would like very much to have a companion in the canvass,

and am in hopes soon to get a young man, a clerk in a large book store, who is reading the DAWNS and likes them, to start out with me in the harvest work. I have not regretted that I left America, but am well pleased here in every way. I delight in doing some good work for the Lord, in finding and sealing his dear people, and feeding the truth-hungry with good meat from his table. Truly it is a glorious work, when rightly understood and appreciated, and I thank the dear Lord for the opportunity of being used in it. I remain,

Your brother in Christ,

JOSEPH WINTER.

DEAR BROTHER:—Christian love and greetings from me and mine to you and yours. The "transforming" influence of the "renewing of our minds" draws us nearer in love to all who are probationary members of the church, as well as to Jesus and those with him who have been changed.

The work of preparing the bride is wonderful, and the new plan of sending out brethren to strengthen and help those who are striving seems very wise, though the *risk* is apparent. From a little experience of our own it seems timely. We have found that the lack of many is systematic Bible study.

In our reading my wife and I came across the best proof we have yet found that the "remnants" of the so-called "ten lost tribes" were really in Palestine. Paul, in his speech before Agrippa, says: "And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God to our fathers; unto which promise our *twelve tribes*, instantly serving God day and night, *hope to come*."—Acts 26:6.

Yours in the love of Christ,

CHARLES C. BELL.

ON TRIAL FOR LIFE

"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye, through the spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."
Rom. 8:13.

There is no intimation in this scripture of a second probation for any of those addressed: the words were spoken and written for those who, in the *present* existence, are on trial for life. It does not say, If ye live after the flesh, ye shall have another trial; neither does it say, Ye shall be punished with eternal torments; but it does speak of a *present probation*, the issue of which shall be either life, or death—the extinction of life, cessation of existence.

Neither does the text say anything about faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ as a requisite to salvation: it says nothing whatever about what we believe or do not believe, but simply and only about *how we live*. Shall we, therefore, spring to the conclusion, as many do, that it teaches that it makes no difference what we believe if we only live righteously? By no means; and those who consider it to be in conflict with either the doctrine of restitution (the Millennial age of judgment or trial for the world) or the ransom, or who have failed to observe its contradiction of the theory of eternal torment, have taken but a shallow observation of the Apostle's teaching, and in fact have lost its entire force.

Not noticing that the words are addressed to the church, and not to the world, the heedless Christian applies the admonition to the world, and allows it to lose its force upon himself. This is the very reverse of the Apostle's intention: he is talking to *the saints, to consecrated believers* in the redemption, who have been begotten of the holy Spirit and become new creatures in Christ Jesus. (Rom. 8:1-8) And it is for this reason that he says nothing here about faith in the ransom, that being conceded; nor about the Millennial age of trial, because those addressed are on trial *now*, and their trial will be over and their reward obtained before the world comes into judgment.—1 Cor. 6:2.

The warning, therefore, is not at all applicable to the world, but is full of solemn import to the church—to the consecrated believers, new creatures of Christ Jesus, who, having been begotten of the holy Spirit, have now a spiritual nature, the old human nature having been consecrated to death. Such, having solemnly covenanted with God to present their bodies—their human nature—a living sacrifice (which was acceptable through Christ, and therefore accepted of him), and to henceforth live after the Spirit, are not at liberty now either to annul that covenant, or to ignore it. They cannot claim again that (redeemed human nature) to which, by their covenant, they have given up all right, claim and title. And if they endeavor to do so, either by ignoring or despising their covenant, they thereby forfeit their claim to the new, spiritual nature, which can only be attained by faithfulness to the covenant of sacrifice, even unto death.

It is therefore *logically* manifest, even if the Apostle had not said it, that if *we*, consecrated believers, turn back again to live after the flesh, *we* shall die; that for us to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. (Rom. 8:6) Our Lord's words in Matt. 16:24, 25 are to the same effect—"Whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it."

An important question then is, What is it to live after the flesh? We answer, It is to live after, or in conformity to, and in gratification of, the inclinations and cravings of the fallen human nature. And it is the easiest thing possible to do this. All we have to do is just listlessly to abandon ourselves to the current of our old nature, and cease to strive against it. As soon as we do this, we begin to float down the stream, and by and by we find the current more and more rapid and resistance more and more difficult.

The death to which our text points as the inevitable end of such a course, is manifestly the "second" death. We were redeemed from the first death and then placed on trial for eternal life, and in the event of failure, the loss of that new life will be the second death,—from which there can be no redemption and no deliverance.

The Apostle defines the works of the flesh thus (Gal. 5:19-21)—"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these,—Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath,

strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings and such like." What moral filth and pollution this describes; but such is the tendency of the fallen human nature. Just cease to strive against the old nature, and presently some of these noxious weeds will be flourishing and crowding out the good that remains.

"Ah, well," says one, "I have not all those mean qualities." Well, we are glad you have not: very few people have all of them; but beware, you may not know what manner of spirit you are of. Be sure that your old nature is not without an inherited and perhaps a formerly cultivated bias in some of these directions. Watch and pray against them, that ye enter not into temptation.

On the other hand, consider the blessed fruits of the spirit (Gal. 5:22, 23), which are "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. Against such there is no law." To live in the cultivation of these graces is to "live in the Spirit." And "if we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit"—make progress in the spiritual life. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh; for the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other."—Gal. 5:25, 16.

Thus the Christian life is of necessity a warfare, a battle, between the new and the old natures, a hand to hand conflict which we dare not relinquish; for, not only is the prize of our high calling dependent upon it, but also the issues of life and death are in it. How solemn a thing is it, therefore, to live under these circumstances; for daily and hourly we stand before the bar of judgment. The words of our text have no application to the world now, but to *us* who are now on trial: If *we* live after the flesh, *we* shall die; but if through the Spirit we do mortify [put to death, refuse to gratify] the deeds of the body [the tendencies of the old nature], *we* shall live." And all who are truly the sons of God will do this: "for," says the Apostle (verse 14), "as many as *are led* by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." If we *willfully* refuse the leading of God's Spirit, we forfeit the relationship of sons; if we listlessly disregard it, we endanger that relationship, and as surely as we are sons we shall receive chastisement for our correction and discipline.

But while we should be very grateful for the chastening, restraining hand of the Lord which thus helps to keep us in the strait and narrow way in which the Spirit of God leads his own, we should be very careful to require just as little of it as possible. "If would judge ourselves, we would not be judged of the Lord" and chastened. (1 Cor. 11:31, 32) But, nevertheless, with the most careful and prayerful watching against the uprisings of the old will of the flesh, we will doubtless make some missteps and need some of the Lord's chastening; for, says the Apostle (Heb. 12:5-12), "What son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons, but if ye be without chastisement whereof all are partakers, then ye are bastards and not sons; for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. Let us, therefore, not forget the exhortation which speaketh unto us as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him."

In the difficult course before us, and in view of all the dangers that beset it, how blessed is the promise that our heavenly Father is ever willing to give the holy Spirit to them that ask him, and the assurance also that if we be filled with the spirit we shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. How necessary is it, therefore, to live near the fountain of divine grace, to pray without ceasing—especially in these last times when our great adversary is so active and so cunning in his devices to deceive and lead astray the Lord's people.

The words of the poet are most appropriate to every one at this particular time:

"Leave no unguarded place,
No weakness of the soul;
Take every virtue, every grace,
And fortify the whole."

ALL THIS BE THY PORTION

New mercies, new blessings, new light on thy way;
New courage, new hope and new strength for each day;
New notes of thanksgiving, new chords of delight,
New praise in the morning, new songs in the night;
New wine in thy chalice, new altars to raise;
New fruits for thy Master, new garments of praise;

New gifts from his treasures, new smiles from his face;
New streams from the fountain of infinite grace;
New stars for thy crown, new tokens of love;
New gleams of the glory that waits thee above;
New light of his countenance, full and unpriced—
All this be the glory of thy new life in Christ.

—Selected.