

The Signs of the Times.

"Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Rev. 22:12.

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The Signs of the Times.

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THE SERAPH'S TOUCH.

"Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar."—Isa. vi. 6.

BEFORE the great white throne on high,
Their faces covered, veiled their feet,
They stood, who on Love's errands fly
With swift precision, strong and fleet,
In light to make the noontide dim,
These golden ranks of seraphim.

Than theirs, a glory greater far
O'erhung the wide and stately place.
As the sun veils the brightest star,
Before the Lord they veiled the face,
And waited, fair, serene and still,
Till came the time to do His will.

And ever bursts of music sweet,
With sudden triumph swayed the bands,
When thrice they would the Name repeat
Of Him who ruleth sea and lands,
And "Holy, holy, holy," cry,
"Art Thou the King, the Lord Most High!"

There faltered on the outer verge
Of that rich throng a trembling soul,
From whom there broke, in weary dirge,
A moan of bitter grief and dole:
"Ah, woe is me, for I, so clean,
The King, the Lord of Hosts, have seen."

A shining seraph heard his plaint,
The cry of shame and quivering dread;
Beheld him shrinking, terror-faint,
And to the glowing altar sped,
Thence bore a burning coal away,
And touched him where he abject lay.

A sudden bolt of sternest pain
Shot quickly through him like a dart,
And then, like softest summer rain,
The seraph-voice fell on his heart;
"Lo! this hath touched thy lips," he said,
"And sin and wrath from thee have fled."

In rapt, ecstatic gratitude,
The man arose, by Love set free
From servile fear, and straight he stood
Where glittering throngs of seraphs be,
To do their work his strong desire,
Sealed unto God with sacred fire.

"Send me," he cried, when spake the King
For one to go with words divine.
O seraph watcher, haste, and bring
To us the fiery, burning sign:
We, too, would feel the blessed pain,
And lift our foreheads, pure of stain.

We, too, would know the joyous thrill
Of consecration unreserved,
And, set apart to do His will,
With hearts by nothing earthly swerved,
Would still, whate'er Love's message be,
Say each: "O, Lord of Life, send me!"

—Margaret E. Sangster.

General Articles.

The Sufferings of Christ.

BY MRS. E. G. WHITE.

(Concluded.)

CHRIST felt much as sinners will feel when the vials of God's wrath shall be poured out upon them. Black despair like a pall of death will gather about their guilty souls, and then they will realize to the fullest extent the sinfulness of sin. Salvation has been purchased for them by the suffering and death of the Son of God. It might be theirs if they would accept of it willingly, gladly; but none are compelled to yield obedience to the law of God. If they refuse the heavenly benefit, if they choose the pleasures and deceitfulness of sin, they can have their choice, and at the end receive their wages, which is the wrath of God and eternal death. They will be forever separated from the presence of Jesus, whose sacrifice they had despised. They will have lost a life of happiness, and sacrificed eternal glory, for the pleasures of sin for a season.

Faith and hope trembled in the expiring agonies of Christ, because God had removed

the assurance he had heretofore given his beloved Son of his approbation and acceptance. The Redeemer of the world then relied upon the evidences which had hitherto strengthened him, that his Father accepted his labors and was pleased with his work. In his dying agony, as he yields up his precious life, he has by faith alone to trust in Him whom it has ever been his joy to obey. He is not cheered with clear, bright rays of hope on the right hand nor on the left. All is enshrouded in oppressive gloom. Amid the awful darkness which is felt even by sympathizing nature, the Redeemer drains the mysterious cup to its dregs. Denied even bright hope and confidence in the triumph which will be his in the near future, he cries with a loud voice, "Lord, into thy hands I commit my spirit." He is acquainted with the character of his Father, his justice, his mercy, and great love. In submission he drops into the hands of his Father. Amid the convulsions of nature are heard by the amazed spectators the dying words of the Man of Calvary, "It is finished."

Nature sympathized with the sufferings of its Author. The heaving earth, the rent rocks, and the terrific darkness, proclaimed that it was the Son of God that died. There was a mighty earthquake. The vail of the temple was rent in twain. Terror seized the executioners and spectators as they beheld the sun veiled in darkness, and felt the earth shake beneath them, and saw and heard the rending of the rocks. The mocking and jeering of the chief priests and elders was hushed as Christ commended his spirit into the hands of his Father. The astonished throng began to withdraw, and grope their way in the darkness to the city. They smote upon their breasts as they went, and in terror, speaking scarcely above a whisper, said among themselves, "It is an innocent person that has been murdered. What if, indeed, he is, as he asserted, the Son of God?"

Jesus did not yield up his life till he had accomplished the work which he came to do, and exclaimed with his departing breath, "It is finished!" Satan was then defeated. He knew that his kingdom was lost. Angels rejoiced as the words were uttered, "It is finished." The great plan of redemption, which was dependent on the death of Christ, had thus far been carried out. And there was joy in Heaven that the sons of Adam could, through a life of obedience, be finally exalted to the throne of God. Oh, what love! What amazing love! that brought the Son of God to earth to be made sin for us, that we might be reconciled to God, and elevated to a life with him in his mansions in glory. And oh! what is man that such a price should be paid for his redemption?

When men and women can more fully comprehend the magnitude of the great sacrifice which was made by the Majesty of Heaven in dying in man's stead, then will the plan of salvation be magnified, and reflections of Calvary will awaken sacred and living emotions in the Christian's heart. Praises to God and the Lamb will be in their hearts and upon their lips. Pride and self-worship cannot flourish in the hearts that keep fresh in memory the scenes of Calvary. This world will appear of but little value to those who appreciate the great price of man's redemption.

All the riches of the world are not of sufficient value to redeem one perishing soul. Who can measure the love Christ felt for a lost world, as he hung upon the cross, suffering for the sins of guilty men? This love was immeasurable, infinite.

Christ has shown that his love was stronger than death. Even when suffering the most fearful conflicts with the powers of darkness, his love for perishing sinners increased. He endured the hidings of his Father's countenance, until he was led to exclaim in the bitterness of his soul, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" His arm brought salvation. The price was paid to purchase the redemption of man, when, in the last soul-struggle, the blessed words were uttered, which seemed to resound through creation, "It is finished."

Many who profess to be Christians become excited over worldly enterprises, and their interest is awakened for new and exciting amusements, while they are cold-hearted, and

appear as if frozen in the cause of God. But here is a theme, poor formalist, which is of sufficient importance to excite you. Eternal interests are here involved. The scenes of Calvary call for the deepest emotions. Upon this subject you will be excusable if you manifest enthusiasm. That Christ, so excellent, so innocent, should suffer such a painful death, bearing the weight of the sins of the world, our thoughts and imaginations can never fully reach, so that we can comprehend the length, the breadth, the height, and the depth, of such amazing love. The contemplation of the matchless love of the Saviour, should fill and absorb the mind, touch and melt the soul, refine and elevate the affections, and completely transform the whole character. The language of the apostle is, "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified." And we may look toward Calvary, and also exclaim, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

Considering at what an immense cost our salvation has been purchased, what will be the portion of those who neglect so great salvation? What will be the punishment of those who profess to be followers of Christ, yet fail to bow in humble obedience to the claims of their Redeemer, and who do not take the cross, as humble disciples of Christ?

Some have limited views of the atonement. They think that Christ suffered only a small portion of the penalty of the law of God, and that while the wrath of God was felt by his dear Son, they suppose that he had, through all his painful sufferings, the evidence of his Father's love and acceptance, and that the portals of the tomb before him were illuminated with bright hope. Here is a great mistake. Christ's keenest anguish was a sense of his Father's displeasure. His mental agony because of this was of such intensity that man can have but faint conception of it.

With many the history of the humiliation and sacrifice of our divine Lord does not stir the soul and affect the life any more, nor awaken deeper interest, than to read of the death of the martyrs of Jesus. Many have suffered death by slow tortures. Others have suffered death by crucifixion. In what does the death of God's dear Son differ from these? It is true he died upon the cross a most cruel death; yet others for his dear sake have suffered equally, as far as bodily torture is concerned. Why, then, was the suffering of Christ more dreadful than that of other persons who have yielded their lives for his sake? If the sufferings of Christ consisted in physical pain alone, then his death was no more painful than that of some of the martyrs.

But bodily pain was only a small part of the agony of God's dear Son. The sins of the world were upon him, and also the sense of his Father's wrath as he suffered the penalty of the law. It was these that crushed his divine soul. It was the hiding of his Father's face, a sense that his own dear Father had forsaken him, which brought despair. The separation that sin makes between God and man was fully realized and keenly felt by the innocent, suffering Man of Calvary. He was oppressed by the powers of darkness. He had not one ray of light to brighten the future. And he was struggling with the power of Satan, who was declaring that Christ was in his hands, and that he was superior in strength to the Son of God, that God had disowned his Son, and that he was no longer in the favor of God any more than himself. If he was indeed still in favor with God, why need he die? God could save him from death.

Christ yielded not in the least degree to the torturing foe, even in his bitterest anguish. Legions of evil angels were all about the Son of God, yet the holy angels were bidden not to break their ranks and engage in conflict with the taunting, reviling foe. Heavenly angels were not permitted to minister unto the anguished spirit of the Son of God. It was in this terrible hour of darkness, the face of his Father hidden, legions of evil angels enshrouding him, the sins of the world upon him, that the words were wrenched from his lips, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

We should take larger, broader, and deeper views of the life, sufferings, and death of God's dear Son. When the atonement is viewed correctly, the salvation of souls will be felt to be of infinite value. In comparison with the worth of everlasting life everything else sinks into insignificance. But how have the counsels of this loving Saviour been despised by many. The heart's devotions have been to the world, and selfish interests have closed the door against the Son of God. Hollow hypocrisy and pride, selfishness and gain, envy, malice, and passion, have so filled the hearts of many that Christ can have no room.

He was eternally rich, "yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich." He was clothed with light and glory, surrounded with hosts of heavenly angels awaiting to execute his commands. Yet he put on our nature, and came to sojourn among sinful men. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." Here is love that no language can express. Our souls should be enlivened, elevated, and enraptured with the theme of the love of the Father and the Son. "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." The followers of Christ should learn here to reflect back in some degree that mysterious love, preparatory to joining all the redeemed in ascribing "Blessings, and honor, and glory, and power unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever."

The Immortality of the Soul.—History of the Doctrine.

(Continued.)

ANCIENT PERUVIANS.

THE Peruvians were among the oldest and most civilized of the nations of South America at the time of its discovery by the Spaniards. A high authority thus states their faith: "They did not understand that the future life was spiritual, but believed it to be corporeal, like this one." "The Incas believed in a universal resurrection, not for glory or punishment, but for a reward of this temporal life. They took extreme care to preserve the nail-parings and the hairs that were shorn off or torn out with a comb, placing them in holes or niches in the walls; and if they fell out, any other Indian that saw them picked them up and put them in their places again. I very often asked different Indians, at various times, why they did this, in order to see what they would say; and they all replied in the same words, saying, 'Know that all persons who are born must return to life, and the souls must rise out of their tombs, with all that belonged to their bodies.'" (Garcilassode la Vega, First Part of the Royal Commentaries of the Incas [1609], London. Book ii, chap. 2.)

They believed in the sleep of the dead and the resurrection.

THE CHIBCHAS.

The Chibchas were another nation of South America. They believed the same as the Peruvians on this point. They "acknowledged that there was something immortal in man, but they did not distinguish the soul from the body." (Descriptive Sociology, by Spencer, No. 2, p. 43.)

"These Indians had the tradition from their ancestors that there would be a universal judgment. They believed that the dead were then to be raised and to live forever in this earth in the same way as they live now." (Ibid.)

They received these doctrines from tradition, and how remarkably their views harmonize with the Bible!

THE AFRICANS.

Even among some of the degraded negro tribes of Central Africa, the notion of a resurrection is still held from tradition.

"The negroes in Ardrach carefully preserve nails and hair which have been cut off, in order that souls, which on rising out of their graves have to be united with their former bodies, may not need to search long for them." (Bastian Mensch, ii, p. 357.)

The Ashantees "supposed that their friends live over again in the other world the lives which they led on earth." (Beecham, p. 180.)

The Signs of the Times.

Can ye not discern the signs of the times?"

OAKLAND, CAL., FIFTH-DAY, AUG. 28, 1879.

JAMES WHITE,
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Worldly Wisdom and Clerical Folly.

A SERMON was recently preached against the Sabbath in East Oakland (Brooklyn). The minister dealt out to his hearers the views drawn directly from the work of Dr. Junkin, which he seemed to think are conclusive on the Sabbath question. We were requested to notice the sermon. We will notice the foundation of it.

Were it not that people with honest intentions look up to the educated in the ministry and are thereby led astray by their vagaries, we might be amused at the absurdities of many of their utterances. But the subject is important. It is solemn in its importance, and in its consequences. We cannot find it in our hearts to tolerate the trifling in which learned men indulge when treating of the Sabbath, or rest day, of the Lord God.

"Sabbatismos" is the title of a small book by a person of the imposing appellation of "George Junkin, D. D., LL. D." Such a trumpet-flourish of names is well calculated to bespeak respect for the production; but we find in it an essay only worthy of the unfledged theological belligerent. The author seems, however, to have a high sense of the appropriateness of means to accomplish the end he has in view. Thus, to convince an opponent of the correctness of his counting of the days, he resorts to the following logic:—

"If we fix the start-point of the count on Tuesday, and call that *first-day*, we shall call Sunday *seventh-day*. And this could be insured in individual cases by a little artifice. Suppose you hold a sponge saturated with mesmeric power to the nose of a seventh day advocate, or lay him up in sleep, by an opiate, for a whole day; when he awoke to consciousness, having lost a day out of his count, his seventh will be Sunday."

Surely this is appropriate for his work. "A little artifice," with a due degree of "mesmeric power," is all that is required to transfer the homage due the seventh day to Sunday! The man who could devise this plan is worthy of the titles Mr. J. wears. We are ready to acknowledge that we should be ashamed if a mere beginner in Bible reading would use such an argument in behalf of the true Sabbath; but the cases of the two days are vastly different. For the seventh day we have the example and commandment of Jehovah, with all revelation, to sustain it. For the Sunday "a little artifice" and "mesmeric power," are the best dependences. In the entire absence of Scripture evidence *anything* is allowable in behalf of Sunday, on the principle that "Necessity knows no law."

But we remember that "the Sabbath was made for man,"—for the human race; and it was made in the infancy of the world. It will take more than a few grains of morphine to change the rest-day of the Creator from that day on which He rested when the heavens and earth were made. We would that the field of theology could be forever free from such irreverent nonsense.

We next copy a statement as presumptuous as the preceding one is irreverent. It is professedly a reading of the fourth commandment:

"Wherefore the Lord blessed, not the seventh, but the Sabbath day and hallowed it."—*Junkin*.

Compare this with the Bible:—

"And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it, because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made." Gen. 2:3.

It is true that the Lord blessed the Sabbath day; it is also true that he blessed the seventh day. Is it then true that he blessed two days? No; he did not. The harmony of these two statements is found in these words of the Lord himself: "*The seventh day is the Sabbath.*" The truth that he blessed the Sabbath day lies in the truth that he blessed the seventh day. Had he blessed any other day than the seventh day he would not have blessed the Sabbath day. Sabbath means rest. The Sabbath day of Jehovah ("my holy day," Isa. 58:13), is the rest day of Jehovah. We pity the man who professes to teach the word of God, and who presumes so directly to contradict the word of God. His responsibility is great.

And we pity the people who, accepting him as their teacher and leader, are so blindly misled by his misrepresentations of the sacred Scriptures. "God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it." Let no one "handle the word of God deceitfully," and say God did "not bless the seventh day."

The following paragraph contains all the errors and inconsistencies we have time, or care to notice in this work:—

"The change of the name and day—not of the thing, for the observance of the holy day is the same with all Christians; but on what ground do we vindicate the Sunday as the day of sacred rest? We admit that any other day, Tuesday, Thursday, if agreed upon over the whole country, and the whole world, would answer as well. We deny any holiness in time: the thought is absurd. The holiness lies in the heart of the worshippers. With the unbelieving world, Sunday is the most polluted of all days. In all popish-governed countries, their Sabbath is the devil's day. The interests of Satan's kingdom are more abundantly advanced on that day than on any one of the seven. But some day is indispensable. This must be agreed upon, or public worship is impracticable. Instead, however, of leaving man to settle this question by experiment and consultation, conventional adjustment and agreement, God was pleased to decide it for us. The first law he gave to man was the Sabbatic law—the day following the six days' labor is sacred to God by his own command. In imitation of the Creator's own example, he has given us also the glorious and blessed privilege of resting, and worshiping himself. And Paul tells us, God the Son, in imitation of God the Creator, when he had said, "It is finished," bowed his head, and gave up the ghost and entered into his rest. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his." Paul had just said, "There remaineth therefore a Sabbathismos for the people of God." Heb. 4:10, 9. Christ's finishing his work, for the salvation of lost men, is followed by his entering into his rest and securing a Sabbathismos for his people. Thus the creation example is imitated, and this is a most satisfactory reason of the change. Jesus rose from the dead and went to his heavenly glory, and thus consecrated the first day to holy services. His church obeyed his command, and followed his example."

Note some points of the above.

1. "Jesus rose from the dead, and went to his heavenly glory, and thus consecrated the first day to holy services." This is designed as the "entering into his rest," spoken of in Heb. 4. But did Jesus ascend on high, to the glory of his Father, on the first day? He did not. *The whole statement is a deception.* It was no doubt framed to carry the inference that Jesus entered into his rest when he "went to his heavenly glory." But this was on the fifth day—not the first.

2. There is neither example or command from the Lord to devote "the first day to holy services." Jesus honored the Sabbath day by word and action, but, as "the seventh day"—not the first—"is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God," it was the seventh-day Sabbath which he honored. In the Scriptures no other weekly Sabbath but the seventh day is recognized.

3. Notwithstanding Jesus "consecrated the first day to sacred services," "any other day, Tuesday, Thursday, if agreed upon over the whole country, would answer as well." And in keeping the first day "his church obeyed his command;" and yet if Tuesday or Thursday, or any other day were agreed upon, it "would answer as well!" Surely, the consecration and commandment of the Saviour cannot be worth much if it may properly be set aside by human agreement! That he does not believe there is any consecration or commandment binding us to the observance of the first day is further evident in that he argues, in another place, that, in consequence of the rotundity of the earth, it is impossible to keep any day in particular. We know that in arguing thus he only shows himself ignorant of the truth on the point; but that does not destroy the evidence contained in the argument that he does not believe it either necessary or possible to keep the first day, notwithstanding his claim of a consecration and commandment of the Saviour in its behalf. If the apostle's injunction were obeyed, to avoid "vain babblings," such works as this of Dr. Junkin would have few admirers.

4. He contradicts all that he says on this point of agreement, by saying that God did not leave "man to settle this question by ex-

periment and consultation, conventional adjustment and agreement." What did the learned doctor really believe? No one can tell by his expressions.

5. He says there is no "holiness in time; the thought is absurd." But God says, the seventh day is holy. It was made so by his own action. Why are we commanded to "remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy?" Because God sanctified, hallowed, or *made it holy*. Therefore Jehovah speaks of it thus: "If thou turn away thy foot from *the Sabbath*, from doing thy pleasure on *my holy day*." Isa. 58:13. Here is another scripture which Dr. Junkin contradicts in direct terms. The fitting rebuke for such recklessness as the Dr. has thus manifested is found in Eze. 22:26,— "Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things; they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they showed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my Sabbaths, and I am profaned among them."

These words again prove that there is a difference between the holy and profane,—God has a holy day; a day which is "holy to the Lord." Ex. 31:15. Men may hide their eyes from it,—they may profane it—but it remains God's holy day.

6. Closely related to the above is the declaration that the "holiness lies in the heart of the worshippers." That is to say, that if people do not make a day holy by worshiping on it, then it is not holy! A man who is entirely ignorant of the teachings of the Bible might be presumed to be honest in making such a statement. Look at Ex. 16:23. Speaking of the seventh day of that week, which was yet in the future, it was said, "To-morrow is the rest of *the holy Sabbath*." If Mr. Junkin's words are true, "to-morrow" was not yet the "holy Sabbath," because "the hearts of the worshippers" had not yet taken cognizance of it! More than two thousand years before that time God blessed and sanctified the seventh day. People might hide their eyes from it, and profane it, or put it under their feet, and still it was God's holy day—"the holy of the Lord." But now arises Dr. Junkin, and says that this is all a mistake; the idea of a day being holy is absurd; God has not made any day holy; the holiness is only in the heart of the worshippers.

It is not left to men to choose the day, nor to make it holy. God chose the seventh day as his own, "because that in it he had rested from all his work." It thereby became his rest day, or, which is the same thing, his Sabbath day. For this cause he hallowed it; thus it became the hallowed rest—the holy Sabbath—of the Lord.

7. As far as any sabbatic nature or obligation of Sunday is concerned, we can readily allow what Dr. Junkin says of it,— "it is the devil's day." But what then becomes of the Saviour's "consecration" of which the Dr. speaks? The seventh day is holy—the holy of the Lord—whether men keep it or profane it. But it appears that the "consecration" and "command" claimed for Sunday is not of that nature. They do not prevent it becoming "the devil's day," in the estimation of Dr. Junkin! The doctor's expression is harsh—we do not like it. Yet, under the circumstances, we do not know that there is great irreverence in it. But we are glad to know that the Lord's claim to the seventh day, in the decalogue and in other places in the Scriptures, is so plainly established that such language cannot be used in reference to it. While the strongest advocates of Sunday have to confess that, even in the hands of its originators, it has become "the devil's day," the seventh day remains "the Sabbath of the Lord God," "the holy of the Lord," and "honorable." Isa. 58:13.

Blessed be the Lord for the clear light of truth. How brightly it shines over the record of the holy Sabbath. Made when the great Creator founded the heavens and the earth; "made for man;" blessed and sanctified before man fell from his innocence; guarded by the commandment of God, given in the majesty and glory of the divine presence; written by the finger of Jehovah; observed by all the "holy men of God" in all the ages; honored by the Saviour in precept and example; and still kept by his church through the darkness of the apostasy, when "the mystery of iniquity" triumphed over the consciences of men—when the "man of sin" compelled "all the world" to bow in honor of "the venerable day of the sun." May the Lord give his people grace to still cling to the sacred day in the

dark hours of worldly rule which lie between us and the day of redemption. Not long have we to wait for the coming glory. Soon the Son of man will come to vindicate the truth of the divine word, to save all those "who keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."

At some future time we will comment on Heb. 4:1-9.

The Book of Revelation.

IS IT SEALED? OR CAN IT BE UNDERSTOOD?

THE last book in the inspired volume is entitled, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." Our translators in styling it "The Revelation of St. John, the divine," contradict the very first words of the book itself, which declare it to be "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass;" and Christ, it is added, "sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John."

The source from which this revelation comes is thus plainly given. God, the author of all things, makes it known to Jesus Christ; Christ, through the ministry of the heavenly angels, his divine assistants, signifies it to his servant John; and John, evangelist and apostle, and now prophet, acting as amanuensis, makes it known to the church.

The book itself has been described to be a "panorama of the glory of Christ." Certainly whoever reads it with any effort to form a mental conception of the imagery which it introduces, can but be deeply impressed with the grandeur, sublimity, and importance, of the scenes which are made to pass, in fascinating array, before the mind. Themes of thrilling and impressive interest, grand and lofty conceptions, sublime and magnificent description, the whole enhanced by the fact that these take hold upon the issues of the eternal world, are here calculated to awaken in the mind of the reader the most absorbing interest.

And the question that will first arise, is, For whose benefit are these scenes described? Can we ascertain our relation to them, or possibly our part in them? Can they be understood?

We answer, Yes; or the title of the book is itself a deception: yes; or God has declared his purpose to accomplish a work which he foresaw could never be fulfilled: yes; or he has solemnly pronounced a blessing upon an impossibility.

1. The book is called a revelation. A revelation is something which is revealed or made known. Moses has said, Deut. 29:29, that "the secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but the things which are revealed, belong unto us and our children forever." The very title of the book, then, is a clear refutation of a view which is alas! too popular at the present day, that this book is a part of the hidden mysteries of God, and cannot be understood. A revealed mystery is a contradiction both of ideas and terms. A revelation is not something hidden and concealed; and if this is the nature of the book, it should have been called *The Mystery*, or *The Hidden Book*; certainly not, *The Revelation*.

2. It is declared that God gave this Revelation to Christ, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass: The expression "his servants," is very comprehensive. It includes all the followers of Christ in all time. And wherever and whenever there are any persons who are the servants of Christ, the Revelation is for them, designed to be a lamp unto their feet, and a light unto their path. But how can it show anything to Christ's followers if it cannot be understood? If, as some contend, it is an unfathomable mystery, dark and incomprehensible, so that all search for its meaning is labor lost, how does it show to the seeker after truth what is coming to pass? It would be worse than useless; for it would only create an anxiety which it would do nothing to relieve. Human tyrants have been known to post their laws so high that the people could not read them, and then punish mercilessly their violation. But God does not act thus. Would he undertake to make known to mankind some important truths, and yet fall into the worse than earthly folly of clothing them in language or in figures which human minds could not comprehend? Would he command a person to behold some distinct object, and then erect some impenetrable barrier between him and the object at which he was bidden to look? Would he give his servants a light to guide them through the gloom of night, and then throw over that light a pall so thick and heavy that not a ray of its brightness could be discovered through

the obscuring folds? If he has dealt thus with us in the Revelation, then the expressly declared object of the book never can be attained, and he knew it; never could be attained, when he solemnly put upon record that it was to show to his servants things which must shortly come to pass. He does not thus trifle, either with himself or us.

3. The third verse of the first chapter reads: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein; for the time is at hand." A blessing pronounced upon the reading of this prophecy, when the time spent upon it would be thrown away? A blessing upon hearing it when no man can comprehend it? A blessing upon a man who will understand it, when it is impossible that any one can understand it? This would be charging God with folly. Men may assert as some have asserted, that "the study of the Revelation either finds or leaves a man mad." This is a specimen of man's judgment; but the word itself assures us that whoever undertakes the study of this book with a calm and teachable spirit, and with a sincere desire to know the truth, that he may glorify God therewith, will find himself, at length, not mad, but in the rich possession of a heavenly blessing.

Yes, the Revelation may be understood. We may drink into the spirit of its soul stirring themes till our understandings are enlightened to comprehend and appreciate them. We may gaze upon its scenes of glory till our hearts glow with the foretaste of their blessedness. We may listen to the invitation so tenderly given by the Spirit and the bride, when they say to all, Come, till our beings are fired with new zeal and new determinations to be with that enraptured throng that shall make Heaven ring at last with ascriptions of blessing and honor and glory to God and the Lamb.

Let us study with new interest the sacred word; and, having laid hold upon the blessed hope which it sets before us, let us be very thorough in the work of purifying our hearts and lives, that this hope may in due time,

—"change to glad fruition,
Faith to sight, and prayer to praise."

U. S.

The Cause on the Pacific Coast.

It is well understood that since Eld. Loughborough left this coast, the Conference in California has been without an acting President. He was a father to the cause here, being acquainted with all; and understanding the wants of the cause in every particular, and ever ready to bear responsibility, it seemed as if he was an indispensable help. As a natural consequence a lack has been felt since he left.

The active ministers are young, inexperienced, and therefore do not feel like going ahead and taking responsibility. The cause itself is young, and has not had the benefit of the experience of many who were in this work in its early history, as our eastern Conferences have had. Hence, they have known but little of the dangers, trials, and personal deprivations and difficulties which give a deep experience in the third angel's message.

I have now been upon this coast about three months; have held general meetings in the largest churches, and have become acquainted with nearly all of the leading brethren. I have never found brethren more willing to take advance steps when they understand how to move forward. I think no truer hearts to the cause of God can be found than in this Conference. As a Conference, considering the amount of instruction they have had, the Vigilant Societies are doing as well, in the number of copies of the SIGNS taken, and are receiving as many interesting letters, as those east of the Rocky Mountains. Yet there are some things of importance which are neglected, which I would here mention, that would be of great benefit to our brethren on this coast, and are essential to their advancement in the progressive steps of present truth.

1. Subscribing for the *Review* and *Good Health*. The *Review* is our church paper. It contains the appeals to our missionary societies, explanations of the missionary work, which are not found in any other periodical. Also there is much in the progress department which is of interest. All this keeps before the readers those facts which are of especial interest to those who believe in present truth. Many of these things would not be of interest in a pioneer paper, which the SIGNS OF THE TIMES is especially intended to be.

The matter in the *Review* which is not published in the SIGNS, is the very matter which every believer in the Sabbath Reform needs to read. The Quarterly Supplement, contain-

ing the reports of the missionary societies from every Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in America, showing the work performed in every district, and also from England, Switzerland, Italy, and Egypt, is worth the year's subscription for the *Review*. I have traveled throughout the country for ten years, and held general meetings among our brethren, and I can accomplish more in two days where they are readers of the *Review* than in four days where they are not. In one case they are posted in reference to the character and nature of the work; they know what we want to accomplish, and are ready to co-operate. When appeals are made from the *Review* Office, or from the Secretary of the General Tract Society, there are ten responses from those who read the *Review* to one from those who are told what these appeals are, but do not take the paper. We speak understandingly when we say it is for the interest of the cause on this coast for each family of believers to become a subscriber for the *Review*. You cannot afford to do without it. It will give life and interest in your missionary work. When new churches are raised up they immediately should be instructed in the missionary work and take a club of the SIGNS for that purpose. But if you would have the company realize the speciality of this work and permanently converted to its interests, induce each family to subscribe for the *Review*.

The *Good Health* should also be taken. It has the largest circulation of any journal of its kind in the country. We cannot speak of it in too high terms. The *Good Health* and *Review* will cost but \$3.00 per year. Those in straightened circumstances can order it through the tract society and pay for them monthly; 25 cents each month will pay for them, and in this way all can take them.

2. The *Testimonies* and *Spirit of Prophecy* should be read until all become familiar with their contents. Each company of our brethren should have a library of Mrs. White's writings. Many of our churches already have them. Those who are most familiar with them are always the most devoted to the service of God and his cause. These are helps, and none but those who have read them know how to appreciate them.

3. Have order in all your meetings, and promptness in your attendance. Do not fail in this respect. Let not your missionary meetings be turned into a social talk. This we have seen done greatly to the detriment of the meeting. At the camp-meeting we hope to establish the labor of the ministers on a more systematic basis.

God will work for his people as they walk forward in the light. Sacrificing efforts put forth in the right direction will certainly insure success in the cause of Christ. We should ever realize that this is God's work, and, although there may be serious difficulties to encounter, and it may require great efforts to surmount them, yet, in the name of the Lord, we are well able to move forward and see a glorious triumph in behalf of the cause of present truth.

We say to our friends on this coast, have courage in God. This cause has been purchased by the precious blood of the Son of God, and if we, with humility and consecration, move forward in this work, success will attend our labors.

S. N. HASKELL.

The Closing Messages of the Gospel.

NUMBER THIRTEEN.

THE COMMANDMENTS.—If we take the testimony of the New Testament, there is no difficulty in finding what the commandments of the message are; for the term refers invariably to the moral code of ten commandments, unless it is qualified by the context, as, "The law of commandments contained in ordinances," referring to the ordinances of the Jewish church. To the young man inquiring the way to eternal life Jesus said, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." He refers to the commandments of the Decalogue; for he quotes a part of them. Matt. 19:16-19.

Paul speaks of this law when he says, "Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law; for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." The tenth commandment convicted him of sin; and of this law and this commandment he says, "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, and just, and good." Rom. 7:7-12. Again he says, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right." And then, to prove his assertion, he refers to the fifth commandment of the ten as "the first commandment with prom-

ise." Eph. 6:1-3. These testimonies show that the apostle used the word commandment as referring to one of the ten.

When the Pharisees asked our Lord, "Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders?" he replied, "Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition. For God commanded saying, Honor thy father and mother." This is one of the ten; and he further says, "Ye have made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition." "But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Matt. 15:1-9.

These ten precepts therefore are the commandments of God according to the New Testament, as well as the Old; and consequently they are those which are kept by the last generation of the true church, those who hear and heed the last message of the gospel. Need we labor to prove that these commandments are still binding upon all men? The fact that the last of God's people on earth are prophesied of as keeping them is of itself sufficient proof. The commandments of the message are not those peculiar to the gospel; for these are included in the faith of Jesus, which they also keep. They keep both the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus Christ.

Some claim to be guided by the New Testament, and want testimony from it. We will give it. But the testimony of God to any truth in the Old Testament is just as good as it is in the New. There is no contradiction in all the word of God. In Ps. 19:7 we read.—"The law of the Lord is perfect." If we have any better law in the New Testament, than that which existed at the time this testimony was written, it must be more than perfect. How can that which is absolutely perfect be improved or exchanged for a better? In Ps. 111:7, 8 we read, "The works of his hands are verity and judgment; all his commandments are sure. They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness." Ps. 119:142,—"Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is the truth." That which was right, or righteousness, once is so now and forever. Abolish that law, and you abolish the truth. Verse 151,—"Thou art near, O Lord, and all thy commandments are truth." Change one of these commandments, and you "change the truth of God into a lie." See Rom. 1:25. By referring to Neh. 9:13 it is seen that these commandments, which are affirmed to be the truth, are those which were spoken by God at Sinai; and those were the ten, no more nor no less; for we read that he spoke these commandments there with a great voice, "and he added no more. And he wrote them in two tables of stone." Deut. 5:22.

Of Christ it was prophesied, "He will magnify the law and make it honorable." Isa. 42:21. This he did in his sermon on the mount. Said he, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 5:17-19.

The apostles taught the same doctrine, the perpetuity of the law of God. Says Paul, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid. Yea, we establish the law." Rom. 3:31. The Lord knew that there would be those who would teach that the law is superceded and made void by the faith of the gospel; and this text was written to forestall that heresy.

Says James, "If ye fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well. But if ye have respect of persons ye commit sin, and are convicted of the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law." Here the apostle teaches his brethren, the Christians, to keep every precept of that law which forbids adultery and murder, which is no other than the ten commandments.

But though Christ was to magnify the law—praise, extol, exalt it—as he has done in teaching its perfection in every jot and tittle, its perpetuity and universality till heaven

and earth pass, obeying it in his life, so that he was without sin, and then dying for our transgressions of it, thus making it honorable, yet there was another power prophesied of in Dan. 7:25, the antichristian power, that should, as we have seen, "think to change" the times and laws of God. This would not magnify, but would blaspheme the law and, to the extent of its influence, make it dishonorable. We have pointed out that power in the fulfillment of the prophecy, and have shown conclusively that the Roman papacy has done this very thing, and that that church boasts of having changed "the Sabbath into Sunday," "a change for which there is no Scriptural authority." A Roman bishop at Belfast, Ireland, recently said, "We, the church, did that astonishing feat."

Now which shall we follow?—Him who magnified his Father's law and made it honorable, or him who with sacrilegious hands attempted to exalt himself above God by changing it, or, in other words, to supersede it by a law of his own? Shall we worship God by obeying his law as he himself gave it? or shall we worship that wicked power which thinks to change it, by keeping the law that he has given in its stead? These things are placed in contrast before us in the third angel's message, and all are called upon to choose between the two.

The Christian world are observing what they truly call the first day of the week as the Sabbath. But the Bible says, "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord." Here the question is often asked, "If this is so, why has it never been found out before?" If this is so!—why, the Bible says it is so. This hypothetical, doubtful, skeptical question suggests the true reply. Our fathers were trained in the tradition of the first-day Sabbath, as well as we; and they had not quite enough faith to believe the Bible in that in which it contradicts the tradition of their fathers. Some few there were in every age who held the Sabbath of the Bible; and without doubt it was thought strange that those few Sabbatharians should set themselves up to know more than all the learned world beside; and probably the same question was then asked, "If this is so, why have none of our learned men discovered it long ago!" All that is wanting is to believe what God says on the point in question.

Are you acquainted with the history of the world and of the Christian church since the days of Christ and the apostles? If you are, you know that the great majority of those claiming to be the only true church departed from the faith of the gospel, as it had been foretold by prophets and apostles, and that this great Roman apostasy bore rule over men, in the place of God, and persecuted those who followed the teachings of Christ and the apostles, wherever they could be found. Those times are very properly called "the dark ages." The people were not allowed to read the Bible. Copies of this sacred and costly book were burned; and it was utterly impossible for the poor and the common people to have it. The apostate church assumed the right to make laws for all, claiming power, as we have seen, "to institute festivals of precept," and she still boasts of putting Sunday, the first day of the week, in the place of the Sabbath, the seventh day, and this without any Scriptural authority.

The Reformation commenced three hundred years ago; but owing to the inclination of men to follow tradition, instead of the truth, it is not yet completed. The great work of the Protestant Reformation has been to give the Bible to mankind. Without the Bible, how are men, as individuals to be tested upon its commandments? These three hundred years the Lord has been preparing the way to bring men to the final test of the third angel's message—a test between obedience to this great power of apostasy, and the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

Now every person who desires a Bible can have it. That Book which in the dark ages could not be bought with the labors of a lifetime, can now be had for twenty-five cents, or even free. The time has thus come in the providence of God for men to be tested by the third angel's message. The message is already here, according to God's promise, and is being heralded to many nations. The reason why this test has not come before, is because now is the time, according to the promise of God, for this work to be done; and his providence has prepared the way. Instead then of skeptically inquiring why this blessed truth has not been discovered before, let us thank God that it is now plainly seen, and yield a willing obedience to what we know to be the truth of God as revealed in his word.

R. F. COTTRELL.

