

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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ROWING AGAINST THE TIDE.

It is easy to glide with its ripples
Adown the stream of time,
To flow with the course of the river
Like music to some old rhyme;
But ah! it takes courage and patience
Against its currents to ride,
And we must have strength from Heaven
When rowing against the tide.

We may float on the river's surface
While our oars scarce touch the stream.
And visions of early glory
On our dazzling sight may gleam;
We forget that on before us
The dashing torrents roar,
And while we are idly dreaming
It's waters will carry us o'er.

But a few—ah, would there were many,
Row up the "Stream of Life,"
They struggle against its surges
And mind neither toil nor strife.
Though weary and faint with labor,
Singing triumphant they ride,
For Christ is the hero's captain
When rowing against the tide.

Far on through the hazy distance
Like a mist on a distant shore,
They see the walls of a city
With its banner floating o'er;
Seen through the glass so darkly
They almost mistake their way,
But faith grows light on their labor
When darkness shuts out the day.

And when shall we be one of that number
Who mind no toil or pain?
Shall we mourn the loss of earthly joys
When we have a crown to gain?
Or shall we glide on with the river,
With death at the end of our ride,
While our brother, with Heaven before him,
Is rowing against the tide?

—Sel.

General Articles.

Mission of Paul and Barnabas.

BY MRS. E. G. WHITE.

THE apostles and disciples who left Jerusalem during the fierce persecution that raged there after the martyrdom of Stephen, preached Christ in the cities round about, confining their labors to the Hebrew and Greek Jews. "And the hand of the Lord was with them; and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord." When the believers in Jerusalem heard the good tidings they rejoiced; and Barnabas, "a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith," was sent to Antioch, the metropolis of Syria, to help the church there. He labored there with great success. As the work increased, he solicited and obtained the help of Paul; and the two disciples labored together in that city for a year, teaching the people, and adding to the numbers of the church of Christ.

Antioch had both a large Jewish and Gentile population; it was a great resort for lovers of ease and pleasure, because of the healthfulness of its situation, its beautiful scenery, and the wealth, culture, and refinement that centered there. Its extensive commerce made it a place of great importance, where people of all nationalities were found. It was therefore a city of luxury and vice. The retribution of God finally came upon Antioch, because of the wickedness of its inhabitants.

It was here that the disciples were first called Christians. This name was given them because Christ was the main theme of their preaching, teaching and conversation. They were continually recounting the incidents of his life, during the time in which his disciples were blessed with his personal

company. They dwelt untiringly upon his teachings, his miracles of healing the sick, casting out devils, and raising the dead to life. With quivering lips and tearful eyes they spoke of his agony in the garden, his betrayal, trial, and execution, the forbearance and humility with which he endured the contumely and torture imposed upon him by his enemies, and the Godlike pity with which he prayed for those who persecuted him. His resurrection and ascension, and his work in Heaven as a Mediator for fallen man, were joyful topics with them. The heathen might well call them Christians, since they preached of Christ, and addressed their prayers to God through him.

Paul found, in the populous city of Antioch, an excellent field of labor, where his great learning, wisdom, and zeal, combined, wielded a powerful influence over the inhabitants and frequenters of that city of culture.

Meanwhile the work of the apostles was centered at Jerusalem, where Jews of all tongues and countries came to worship at the temple during the stated festivals. At such times the apostles preached Christ with unflinching courage, though they knew that in so doing their lives were in constant jeopardy. Many converts to the faith were made, and these, scattering to their homes in different parts of the country, dispersed the seeds of truth throughout all nations, and among all classes of society.

Peter, James and John felt confident that God had appointed them to preach Christ among their own countrymen at home. But Paul had received his commission from God, while praying in the temple, and his broad missionary field had been presented before him with remarkable distinctness. To prepare him for his extensive and important work, God had brought him into close connection with himself, and had opened before him enraptured vision a glimpse of the beauty and glory of Heaven.

God communicated with the devout prophets and teachers in the church at Antioch. "As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." These apostles were therefore dedicated to God in a most solemn manner by fasting and prayer and the laying on of hands; and they were sent forth to their field of labor among the Gentiles.

Both Paul and Barnabas had been laboring as ministers of Christ, and God had abundantly blessed their efforts; but neither of them had previously been formally ordained to the gospel ministry by prayer and the laying on of hands. They were now authorized by the church, not only to teach the truth, but baptize, and organize churches, being invested with full ecclesiastical authority. This was an important era for the church. Though the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile had been broken down by the death of Christ, letting the Gentiles into the full privileges of the gospel, the veil had not yet been torn away from the eyes of many of the believing Jews, and they could not clearly discern to the end of that which was abolished by the Son of God. The work was now to be prosecuted with vigor among the Gentiles, and was to result in strengthening the church by a great ingathering of souls.

The apostles, in this, their special work, were to be exposed to suspicion, prejudice, and jealousy. As a natural consequence of their departure from the exclusiveness of the Jews, their doctrine and views would be subject to the charge of heresy; and their credentials as ministers of the gospel would be questioned by many zealous, believing Jews. God foresaw all these difficulties which his servants would undergo, and in his wise providence, caused them to be invested with unquestionable authority from the established church of God, that their work should be above challenge.

The brethren in Jerusalem and in Antioch were made thoroughly acquainted with all the particulars of this divine appointment, and the specific work of teaching the Gentiles, which the Lord had given to these apostles. Their ordination was an open recognition of their divine mission, as mes-

sengers specially chosen by the Holy Ghost for a special work. Paul witnesses, in his Epistle to the Romans, that he considered this sacred appointment as a new and important epoch in his life; he names himself, "a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God."

The ordination by the laying on of hands, was, at a later date, greatly abused; unwarrantable importance was attached to the act, as though a power came at once upon those who received such ordination, which immediately qualified them for any and all ministerial work, as though virtue lay in the act of laying on of hands. We have, in the history of these two apostles, only a simple record of the laying on of hands, and its bearing upon their work. Both Paul and Barnabas had already received their commission from God himself; and the ceremony of the laying on of hands added no new grace or virtual qualification. It was merely setting the seal of the church upon the work of God—an acknowledged form of designation to an appointed office.

This form was a significant one to the Jews. When a Jewish father blessed his children, he laid his hands reverently upon their heads. When an animal was devoted to sacrifice, the hand of the one invested with priestly authority was laid upon the head of the victim. Therefore, when the ministers of Antioch laid their hands upon the apostles, they, by that action, asked God to bestow his blessing upon them, in their devotion to the specific work which God had chosen them to do.

The apostles started out upon their mission, taking with them Mark. They went into Seleucia, and from thence sailed to Cyprus. At Salamis they preached in the synagogues of the Jews. "And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus; which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith."

The deputy being a man of repute and influence, the sorcerer Elymas, who was under the control of Satan, sought by false reports, and various specious deceptions, to turn him against the apostles and destroy their influence over him. As the magicians in Pharaoh's court withstood Moses and Aaron, so did this sorcerer withstand the apostles. When the deputy sent for the apostles, that he might be instructed in the truth, Satan was on hand with his servant, seeking to thwart the purpose of God, and prevent this influential man from embracing the faith of Christ. This agent, of Satan greatly hindered the work of the apostles. Thus does the fallen foe ever work in a special manner to prevent persons of influence, who could be of great service to the cause, from embracing the truth of God.

But Paul, in the Spirit and power of the Holy Ghost, rebuked the wicked deceiver. He "set his eyes upon him, and said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord."

The sorcerer had closed his eyes to the evidences of truth, and the light of the gospel, therefore the Lord, in his righteous anger, caused his natural eyes to be closed, shutting out from him the light of day. This blindness was not permanent, but only for a season, to warn him to repent, and to seek pardon of God whom he had so offended. The confusion into which this man was brought, with all his boasted power, made all his subtle arts against the doctrine of Christ of none effect. The fact of his being obliged to grope about in blindness, proved to all be-

holders that the miracles which the apostles had performed, and which Elymas had denounced as being produced by sleight of hand, were in truth wrought by the power of God. The deputy was convinced of the truth of the doctrine taught by the apostles and embraced the gospel of Christ.

Elymas was not a man of education, yet he was peculiarly fitted to do the work of Satan. Those who preach the truth of God will be obliged to meet the wily foe in many different shapes. Sometimes it is in the person of learned, and often in the person of ignorant, men, whom Satan has educated to be his successful instruments in deceiving souls, and in working iniquity. It is the duty of the minister of Christ to stand faithfully at his post, in the fear of God, and in the power of his strength. Thus he may put to confusion the hosts of Satan, and triumph in the name of the Lord.

Paul and his company now continued their journey, going into Perga, in Phamphylia. Their way was toilsome, they encountered hardships and privations, and were beset by dangers on every side, which intimidated Mark, who was unused to hardships. As still greater difficulties were apprehended, he became disheartened, and refused to go farther, just at the time when his services were most needed. He accordingly returned to Jerusalem, and to the peace and comfort of his home.

Mark did not apostatize from the faith of Christianity; but, like many young ministers, he shrank from hardships, and preferred the comfort and safety of home to the travels, labors, and dangers of the missionary field. This desertion caused Paul to judge him unfavorably and severely for a long time. He distrusted his steadiness of character, and his devotion to the cause of Christ. The mother of Mark was a convert to the Christian religion; and her home was an asylum for the disciples. There they were always sure of a welcome, and a season of rest, in which they could rally from the effect of the fierce persecutions that everywhere assailed them in their labors.

It was during one of these visits of the apostles to his mother's that Mark proposed to Paul and Barnabas that he should accompany them on their missionary tour. He had witnessed the wonderful power attending their ministry; he had felt the favor of God in his own heart; he had seen the faith of his mother tested and tried without wavering; he had witnessed the miracles performed by the apostles, and which set the seal of God upon their work; he had himself preached the Christian faith, and had longed to enter more fully into the work, and entirely devote himself to it. He had, as the companion of the apostles, rejoiced in the success of their mission; but fear and discouragement overwhelmed him in the face of privation, persecution, and danger; and he sought the attractions of home at a time when his services were most needful to the apostles.

At a future period there was a sharp contention between Paul and Barnabas concerning Mark, who was still anxious to devote himself to the work of the ministry. Paul could not at that time, excuse in any degree the weakness of Mark in deserting them and the work upon which they had entered, for the ease and quiet of home; and he urged that one with so little stamina was unfit for the gospel ministry, which required patience, self-denial, bravery, and faith, with a willingness to sacrifice even life if need be.

Barnabas, on the other hand, was inclined to excuse Mark, who was his nephew, because of his inexperience. He felt anxious that he should not abandon the ministry, for he saw in him qualifications for a useful laborer in the field of Christ. This contention caused Paul and Barnabas to separate, the latter following out his convictions, and taking Mark with him in his work.

Mark, therefore, accompanied Barnabas to Cyprus, and assisted him there. Paul was afterwards reconciled to Mark, and received him as a fellow-laborer. He also recommended him to the Colossians as one who was a "fellow-worker unto the kingdom of God," and a personal comfort to him, Paul.

Again, not long prior to his death, he spoke of him as profitable to him in the ministry.

Paul and Barnabas next visited Antioch in Pisidia, and on the Sabbath went into the synagogue, and sat down; "and after the reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on." Being thus invited to speak, "Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience." He then proceeded to give a history of the manner in which the Lord had dealt with the Jews from the time of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, and how a Saviour had been promised of the seed of David. He then preached Jesus as the Saviour of men, the Messiah of prophecy.

When he had finished, and the Jews had left the synagogue, the Gentiles still lingered, and entreated that the same words might be spoken unto them the next Sabbath day. The apostles created a great interest in the place, among both Jews and Gentiles. They encouraged the believers and converts to stand fast in their faith, and to continue in the grace of God. The interest to hear the words of the apostles was so great that the whole city came together on the next Sabbath day. But now, as in the days of Christ, when the Jewish priests and rulers saw the multitudes that had assembled to hear the new doctrine, they were moved by envy and jealousy, and contradicted the words of the apostles with blasphemy. Their old bigotry and prejudice were also aroused, when they perceived great numbers of Gentiles mingling with the Jews in the congregation. They could not endure that the Gentiles should enjoy religious privileges on an equality with themselves, but clung tenaciously to the idea that the blessing of God was reserved exclusively for them. This had ever been the great sin of the Jews, which Christ, on several occasions, had rebuked.

They listened, on one Sabbath day, with intense interest to the teachings of Paul and Barnabas, who preached Jesus as the promised Messiah; and upon the next Sabbath day, because of the multitude of Gentiles who assembled also to hear them, they were excited to a frenzy of indignation, the words of the apostles were distorted in their minds, and they were unfitted to weigh the evidence presented by them. When they learned that the Messiah preached by the apostles was to be a light to the Gentiles, as well as the glory of his people Israel, they were beside themselves with rage, and used the most insulting language to the apostles.

The Gentiles, on the other hand, rejoiced exceedingly that Christ recognized them as the children of God, and with grateful hearts they listened to the word preached. The apostles now clearly discerned their duty, and the work which God would have them do. They turned without hesitation to the Gentiles, preaching Christ to them, and leaving the Jews to their bigotry, blindness of mind, and hardness of heart. The mind of Paul had been well prepared to make this decision, by the circumstances attending his conversion, his vision in the temple at Jerusalem, his appointment by God to preach to the Gentiles, and the success which had already crowned his efforts among them.

When Paul and Barnabas turned from the Jews who derided them, they addressed them boldly, saying, "It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the ends of the earth."

This gathering in of the Gentiles to the church of God had been traced by the pen of inspiration, but had been but faintly understood. Hosea had said, "Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God." And again, "I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God."

During the life of Christ on earth he had sought to lead the Jews out of their exclusiveness. The conversion of the centurion, and that of the Syrophenician women, were instances of his direct work outside of the acknowledged people of Israel. The time had now come for active and continued work among the Gentiles, of whom whole communities received the gospel gladly, and glorified God for the light of an intelligent faith. The unbelief and malice of the Jews did not turn

aside the purpose of God; for a new Israel was being grafted into the old olive-tree. The synagogues were closed against the apostles; but private houses were thrown open for their use, and public buildings of the Gentiles were also used in which to preach the Word of God.

The Jews, however, were not satisfied with closing their synagogues against the apostles, but desired to banish them from that region. To effect this purpose they sought to prejudice certain devout and honorable women, who had great influence with the government, and also men of influence. This they accomplished by subtle arts, and false reports. These persons of good repute complained to the authorities against the apostles, and they were accordingly expelled from those coasts.

On this occasion the apostles followed the instruction of Christ: "Whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily, I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of Judgment than for that city." The apostles were not discouraged by this expulsion; they remembered the words of their Master: "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad; for great is your reward in Heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

The Return of the Spirit to God.

"THEN shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." Eccl. 12:7.

This text is the exact counterpart of Gen. 2:7: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

One text teaches how man was first formed. The other text makes known the process of his dissolution. What God did in creating, death undoes by dissolving. How did death get the power to step in and undo the Creator's work? Man forfeited his right to live by sinning against God. Death entered by sin. Rom. 5:12. Death, then, has an evil parentage. In fact, it has a bad character in the book of God; it is not a friend, but an enemy; and so serious and formidable a foe is it that its destruction is made the subject of special promise to the people of God. 1 Cor. 15:26. The power of death Satan himself has controlled. Heb. 2:14. Death came from the devil, just as life came from God.

God gave to man life, and instructed him that if he would obey him he should continue to live. Gen. 2. The devil, telling Eve that she should by sinning be introduced to a higher life, brought death upon our race. Milton's idea that death is the child of sin and Satan, is strictly true.

But many at the present time believe death to be the gate to endless joys! Death, as they imagine, is the door whereby the Christian enters Heaven! By what means was this door created? By man's rebellion against God. Who was the chief agent in promoting this transaction? The devil. What does Jesus call him because of this work? A murderer. John 8:44. If death is the door of Heaven, Satan has acted the part of door-keeper of Heaven, for he has had the power of death.

One of the principal proofs that men reach Heaven by dying, is found in our text which is so often quoted: "The spirit shall return unto God who gave it." Does this prove that death ushers men into Heaven? Please consider before you answer. If so, please observe that this text is not descriptive of the case of the righteous only; it is spoken of death as the common lot of man. Then we get all men into Heaven by dying, whatever may become of them afterward. Can it be true that every wicked man is to enter the gates of the holy city when he dies? See Rev. 21:27; 22:14, 15.

But does not this text really teach the entrance of the righteous into Heaven at death? Not unless it does that of the wicked also, for the text is descriptive of the common portion of mankind. The infirmities of old age are first described, and then the dissolution of man in death. The fact is, Solomon is admonishing the young men to attend to the service of God before these infirmities come on which lead to final dissolution. If it were only one class spoken of, it would be rather the wicked than the righteous; for Solomon would not have a young man grow up to these infirmities and consequent dissolution, unprepared.

It is the unbuilding of the man after the infirmities of old age have worn out all his strength, that Solomon describes; it is not his translation to Heaven. The Lord God

formed the man out of the dust of the ground. Death causes that dust to return to the earth as it was before it formed the man. If God does the first work it is not God that destroys it. No; indeed. An enemy is the doer of all this.

"The spirit shall return unto God who gave it." There is a record of the giving of the spirit by God. When he had formed the man from the dust, he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. Now when death dissolves the man, this very thing which God gave to man, returns. What comes from God returns to God, just as what comes from earth returns to earth. Then what better proof can we have that men are happy with God when they die? Who can deny a blissful existence to the spirits of men in the presence of God? And what will you do now with all the texts that you have adduced to show that in death there is no remembrance of God; that the thoughts of men perish in death; that they sleep in silence till the Heavens pass away; that they are to be satisfied when they wake in Christ's likeness; and that if there were no resurrection there would be no advantage obtained, even by faithful Paul? Do not set these ideas aside too hastily; they are all ideas of men inspired of God. See Ps. 6:5; Isa. 38:18, 19; Ps. 146:4; Job. 14:12, 13; Ps. 17:15; 1 Cor. 15:32.

But if the spirit goes back to God, must it not be happy in its presence? And must it not know infinitely more than while the man lived? Those who ask such questions overlook one point in the text, and that point is the key to the whole subject. That which goes to God once came from him. You infer that in returning to God the spirit enters upon a blissful existence in his presence. Have you well considered the point? It exists in God's presence after it has returned, with just as conscious an existence as it had before it came from him. No more goes back than came. It is no more exalted when it leaves man to go back to God than when it left God to come to man.

Did the spirits of the dead once live with God, then leave him and come and live with men, and then return to live again with God? It would be very absurd to affirm it. Somebody ought to remember something about living once in the presence of God before living in this world of sorrows. Why not some one recollect about this?

But if that be so, how much better to have allowed us to stay in Heaven when we were there, than to send us into this world of sorrow, pollution, and crime. To be sure, if this text be rightly expounded by the popular interpretation, the just all get back to Heaven when they die; but even then how much better is dissolution than creation? How much more beneficent the work of Satan in introducing death, which returns us all to Heaven, than the work of the Creator which took our happy spirits all out of Heaven to live in sorrow, sin, and pain!

The reader will see that there is just as much of blissful existence for the spirit after this life as before it. What came from God to enable the man to live, returns to God when he ceases to live.

There has been one grand act of the Creator in which he bestowed that upon man which at death he takes from him. God gave to Adam, when he formed him, the breath of life, and man, thus formed, became a living soul. The record says God breathed this into man's nostrils. This was what gave Adam life. Elihu tells us that "the breath of the Almighty" gave him "LIFE;" i. e., by giving it to the common father of mankind. Job. 33:4.

What God gave to Adam was not an angel of glory to dwell in his body formed of dust. If it had been, what a misfortune to that heavenly being! No; it was simply "LIFE." Having made the man, God gave him life. When man had forfeited his right to live, God told him he must return to the ground out of which he was taken. Gen. 3. And so when Adam closed his eyes in death, the great Creator took again to his own keeping that life which Adam gave up. God designs that men shall live again. He holds all in his hand till the hour shall arrive to give them life the second time. Jesus said that he laid down his life that he might take it up again; John 10; and so, when dying, commended his spirit, or life, to his Father's hands.

Adam had his life from God. We have ours from Adam. Adam forfeited his right to live, or God would never have taken from him that breath of life by which he was made alive. That being taken from him, he had just as much life as he had before it was given him, which was none at all. That which God breathed into his nostrils being taken from him by the Au-

thor of his existence, has just as much thought and knowledge as before being given to Adam, which was no knowledge at all.

He did not put within Adam a living, conscious, organized being from glory, but the man being organized out of dust, God put the principle of life into him, i. e., he made him alive.

Our life is from Adam. It is not immortal life. The facts are too palpable to believe thus of ourselves. Life is transmitted from parents to children. What vast multitudes of living beings perish without ever seeing the light, i. e., without ever being born. Yet they had life. And so life exists in that which precedes embryotic existence. But in all this there is no immortality. We cannot take from the first Adam what he had not to give. Nor can we find in death, which is the fruit of sin, the door back into that paradise from which sin caused us to be expelled. But, thank God, the second Adam can give us a life that shall never end. "For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." John 5:26. Death cannot convey us to the presence of God; but the resurrection shall show us the path of life, and "so shall we ever be with the Lord."

SHALL OUR EARTH BURN ETERNALLY?

By no means. The fire shall melt it. Every part of it shall be subjected to the refining heat. The fire shall devour the earth; but its elements shall all remain. When it has answered the great purpose of furnishing the fiery oven, or furnace of fire where the wicked shall receive their dreadful doom, the second death, it shall, like Sodom, be reduced to ashes by the eternal fire, and cease longer to burn. Then, by the power of the great Author of its existence, it shall be re-created. New heavens and earth shall exist, formed out of the elements of the old thus purged of sin and sinners, and therein shall the righteous have the promise fulfilled that they shall be recompensed in the earth. 2 Pet. 3:10-13; Mal. 4:1.

J. N. A.

"Reading the Law."

WE have in this nineteenth century many talented priests and teachers, who, gifted with eloquence and power, draw to their presence crowds of eager listeners and admirers, who sit entranced and delighted with the words of truth and wisdom that fall from the lips of these truly remarkable men.

But where is the minister or teacher who can command the closest attention of a dense throng of men, women and children of to-day, from dawn until mid-day, simply by reading to them the law of God, and explaining its meaning in simple language, as did Ezra and the Levites? We are told that all the people gathered together as one man, that they stood up for prayer and remained standing from dawn till mid-day, listening attentively to the reading of God's word by Ezra and its explanation by the Levites. Our ministers and teachers now realize the necessity of a brief and hurried explanation of perhaps a single sentence or passage of God's book if they wish to retain the interest and attention of their audience, and should they exceed but a few moments their allotted time, the restlessness and lack of interest of their hearers is manifest. The multitudes who thronged the street before the water-gate, cared little for the luxuriously cushioned pews, the subdued light that falls through stained glass windows, or the general comfort and elegance that prevail in the churches of to-day, and is offered to those who will but come and hear the word.

No thought of personal weariness or discomfort came between them and the great vital truths they were hearing; filled with grief and anguish when they learned of their great and numerous transgressions and bowed down with grief and fear, until comforted by their teachers who gave them the meaning of God's wondrous promises. They became once more joyful and happy, and thanking God for his great mercies they went about doing good. Would that such a day might come to us; and while we thank God that his holy word is now within the reach of every one who will receive it, and not as in days of old, in charge of a chosen few. Let us read more diligently; strive to understand properly, and listen with eagerness and attention to those who are appointed to teach it to us.—*Del.*

ONE of the Japanese students at Yale was accosted by a Sophomore with the question "What's your name?" The gentleman from Japan answered politely, giving his surname. "Oh," was the rejoinder, "you heathen don't have but one name. I see." "What was the first name of Moses?" was the ready reply.