

QUESTIONS OF GENERAL INTEREST.

ABRAHAM'S WIFE – HIS NIECE?

Question. – In the *Tower* for July 15, 1901, p.233, Sarah is mentioned as Abraham's niece. How can this be harmonized with Gen. 20:12, "She is my sister; she is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother"?

Answer. – In olden times it was customary, instead of speaking of grandchildren, to call them children, as, for instance, "the children of Israel." "All the souls which came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy souls" – yet some of these were grandchildren and some great grandchildren. The thought is that Haran was the eldest son of Terah; that he had two children, Lot and Sarah, and that these were near enough their uncle Abraham's age to be his companions. Under the rule above mentioned Sarah, if the daughter of Haran, would be counted the daughter of Terah, not by his wife, but by Haran's wife. We would not insist that this view of the matter is beyond question, however, and those who think differently have full right to do so.

PALESTINE AS A REFUGE.

Question. – What are the facts respecting Palestine at the present time? Is it being rapidly settled by the Jews in colonies or otherwise? Would it be a good place for those who have a knowledge of present truth to emigrate to? Would it be a good place for serving the truth, or would it be a favorable place as respects escaping the coming time of financial and social trouble?

Answer. – We could not recommend friends of the truth to emigrate to Palestine. They would find almost no opportunity for serving the truth, and, as respects the time of trouble, we might say that the poor of that land are continually in trouble enough, and that even in the future the Scriptures assure us that the time of trouble will reach

Palestine. Furthermore, not only would it be impossible to circumvent the Lord and thus escape the coming trouble, but additionally the Lord encourages his *faithful* people to believe that he will deliver them from the trouble wherever they may be. As respects the resettlement [R2934 : page 11] of the land; it progresses very slowly; first, because few of the Jews are interested deeply enough to live in such a country under present conditions. Second, because Jews have not been permitted to settle there since the Sultan's ukase prohibiting their settlement in 1892. Jews going thither are only permitted to land if provided with permits, which allow them to remain about 30 days. The Zionists are hoping to report some new and more favorable arrangement at their next Congress.

CONVENTIONS ARE "HOLY CONVOCATIONS."

Question. – Are the conventions, such as the one recently held in Cleveland, and the One-Day Conventions mentioned from time to time in the *Watch Tower*, of real benefit? Do they not reach merely the rich, who can afford to make the journey, etc.? Are they in harmony with Scriptural precedents?

Answer. – Yes, we have every reason to believe that the Lord's blessing is with this department of the work, as well as with the other departments. Of course all of the friends are not able to attend the conventions, but this is not, we think, an argument against them. All are not able to attend the regular gatherings of the Church every time, sometimes because of sickness, and sometimes for other reasons. If both husband and wife cannot attend a meeting it should be to the advantage of the absent one that the other does attend, because of the rehearsal of truth upon his return. Similarly with the Conventions. Our experience is that those who attend the Conventions and return home are greatly blessed themselves, as they endeavor to repeat to the brethren some of the precious thoughts they have gleaned, and to inspire their hearts with the letter and sentiment and spirit of the truth.

Furthermore, it would be quite a mistake to suppose that those who gather at these Conventions are wealthy; very few of the Lord's people are rich in this world's goods. We never advise anyone to spend for travel money that is needed for bread or clothing; but as a rule those who are in attendance find themselves abundantly rewarded for the time and money expended. In our judgment the Conventions are indeed a great blessing, and it is for this reason that we are extending the One-Day Conventions in various directions. The Pilgrim visits are somewhat similar; they cannot visit every town, but friends from nearby places, seeing mention of their coming to the vicinity, can attend at small expense, upon writing us for any particulars necessary.

As to Scriptural precedent: We remind you that the Jews had numerous Holy Convocations; and that our Lord and his disciples frequently attended these, especially the Feast of the Passover. The Apostle Paul also hastened in his journey that he might be present at the Passover, and *en route* we remember that he sent on for the elders of the Church at Ephesus to meet him, and hold a little by-convention. However, in matters of this kind, where the spirit of the truth is being carried out, it would not matter if we had not an exact correspondence in deed in the early Church. For instance, they had neither books nor tracts nor journals, nor Bibles with marginal references, or otherwise. Some of these things are blessings which accrue to us because we are living in the most favored day which the world has ever seen. As our day brings many additional trials, besetments, enticements and cares, to "choke the Word," so, by God's grace, it brings also many opportunities for assembling ourselves in little and in larger groups. For all of these we give thanks, and all of them we endeavor to use to the Master's praise and to the comfort and upbuilding of one another.

THE FATHER DRAWS NOW, THE SON THEN.

Question. – In the *Watch Tower* you have pointed out that in the present time only a limited number are drawn, and they by the Father, to the intent that, following on, they may become members of the

Church, which is the Bride of Christ; you have also pointed out as Scriptural that during the Millennial age the drawing will be general – "all men" – and that it will be done, not by the Father, but by the Christ. I recognize that these statements are in full accord with the presentations of Scripture, but am at a loss to know in what manner the drawing of the future will differ from the drawing of the present time, and this is my question.

Answer. – The drawing or influencing of all men, by and by, will be through the truth; and the same is the drawing power now. Few are drawn now, because darkness, ignorance, prejudice and superstition prevail, the god of this world blinding the masses and keeping them deaf to the voice of righteousness and truth, so that only they can now hear and appreciate the truth who have "an ear to hear." The majority of the race are fallen, and their appreciation of the principles of righteousness is too warped and twisted to permit the truth to have its proper weight and influence upon their hearts in drawing them to Lord. Yet this is the only class that God wishes specially to draw now, and even of those who are thus amenable to the influences of righteousness now, and somewhat drawn by it, comparatively few are so in love with truth and righteousness that they are willing to sacrifice every other interest as respects the present life, on its behalf. Yet *only such* are now sought by the Heavenly Father to be joint-heirs with his son. [R2935 : page 11]

But by and by, when under the Father's arrangement the Son shall begin his reign as King of the earth, he will exercise a drawing influence upon all, by restraining Satan from deceiving, and by opening the eyes and ears of understanding, and by causing the knowledge of the truth to fill the whole earth as the waters cover the great deep. Thus, although the drawing of that Millennial age will be very similar to the drawing of this present time, as to kind, it will be much more general, reaching every class and every condition, and helping each and all, who will respond, out of degradation and ignorance and sin and death, back to full harmony with the principles of righteousness. The special

drawing which the Father accomplishes is in connection with what is called "the *election* according to favor," while the drawing which Christ will accomplish in the next age will be the operation of *free grace*, upon all and for the benefit of all.

