

OUR

MOST HOLY FAITH

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A compilation of outstanding articles
And sermons by

PASTOR CHARLES TAZE RUSSELL

First Printing, 1950
Second Printing, 1958
Third Printing, 1994
Fourth Printing, 2000

Chicago Bible Students
P. O. Box 6016
Chicago, Illinois 60680

Pastor Charles Taze Russell
1852-1916

First Printing

PUBLISHERS' FOREWORD

IT IS with a deep sense of gratitude to the Lord that we are able to publish this collection of choice articles from the pen of Pastor Charles Taze Russell, whose sermons, just before his death in 1916, were being published weekly in nearly 3,000 newspaper throughout the United States, Canada, and Great Britain. Pastor Russell was far ahead of this time in exposing many of the erroneous traditions of the Dark Ages, and, because of religious prejudice, was often misunderstood and misrepresented, despite the tremendous circulation of the Gospel of divine love which he so zealously sponsored and promoted.

Without doubt this ardent defender of the Word of God did more than any other single individual to impress upon the minds of thinking people the awfulness of the God-dishonoring doctrine of eternal torture for the wicked, in a hell of fire and brimstone. Now, only a small minority of Protestant church members believe in hell-fire and damnation. This represents real progress in the minds of the thinking public, and every true believer in the Bible is glad to look forward to knowledge of God's of God's love and glory will be filling the whole earth as the waters cover the sea.

Another important teaching of the Bible brought to the fore by Pastor Russell, is the fact that God has a plan, in keeping with which he is working out his loving purpose of salvation for the sin-cursed and dying human race. In this plan there are divisions of time; such, for example, as the world that was before the Deluge, the "present evil world," and the "world to come" wherein dwelleth righteousness. These worlds, or dispensations, are divided into ages during each of which God has been accomplishing a particular feature of his plan. This present Gospel age is the time during which the true church of Christ has been separated from the world and prepared to live and reign with him during the thousand years of his kingdom, during which all the willing and obedient of the dying race will be restored to human perfection and life everlasting on the earth.

In the divine plan there are differences of reward provided for those who turn to God and devote themselves to the doing of his will. During the Gospel age the followers of the Master are promised a future in heaven with him, and assured that through patient continuance in well-doing while here on earth, they may obtain "glory and honor and immortality, eternal life" (Rom 2:7) These receive this high reward because of faithfulness in meeting the difficulties of the narrow way of self-sacrifice which they tread as they follow the Master.

During the Millennium, the faithful of the Lord will be walking over a "way of holiness" which, as compared with the narrow way of the present time, will be an easy one in which to walk. Satan will then be bound, and no longer will it be necessary to suffer for righteousness' sake. The reward of righteousness, then, however, will not be immortality and a home in heaven with Jesus, but restoration to human perfection and the privilege of enjoying everlasting life on the earth as human beings. It was this great hope of "restitutions" (as well as the Christian's hope) that Pastor Russell proclaimed so widely and so continuously throughout the many years of his faithful ministry. It is this fundamental teaching of the Scriptures that helps those who understand it to realize that God has blessings for others besides themselves. It helps us to appreciate as never before that God truly is love, and the blessings for all the families of the earth are provided in his divine plan of the ages.

In the article which follow, we have endeavored to select choice ones bearing on all the various phases of the Christian life, as well as those which deal with the doctrines of the divine plan; including of course, the ransom sacrifice of our Redeemer and his second presence on earth during the thousand years of his kingdom. The articles have been grouped in keeping with the

subjects with which they deal. Thus, for example, the articles which discuss prayer will be found in one group, while those which deal with Christian growth and character development will be in another.

We commend the book to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ and who are seeking a closer walk with God. We pray that all who read these inspiring articles may be encouraged to press on in the Christian way more energetically because of having gained a clearer understanding of the will of God for themselves, and a better knowledge of his plan for blessing the world during the thousand years of Christ's kingdom.

THE PUBLISHERS

July 1950

PREFACE

The Writings of Pastor Charles Taze Russell, particularly his six volume set of *Studies in the Scriptures*, have formed the framework for the topical study of the Word of God by the Bible Student movement for the past hundred years.

The voluminous additional writings of Pastor Russell in his journal *The Watch Tower* and other collections, such as *Pastor Russell's Sermons*, have also been very popular amongst these same students.

By 1950, thirty-four years after his death, most of these writings had gone out of print. In an attempt to satisfy the demand for these works. But lacking the ability to completely reprint all of them, the Dawn Bible Students prepared a 710-page book, *Our Most Holy Faith*. They Chose a selection of 25 articles relating to Christian Doctrine; 49 concerning Christian Living and an additional 11 from the book, *Pastor Russell's Sermons*.

Not long after the second printing, a tragic fire struck the shipping department at The Dawn and the remaining supply of these books went up in flames. Since there was insufficient demand to reprint, once again these writings were out of print.

In the 1960's the Chicago Bible Students undertook the publication of the entire set of *Zion's Watch Tower* magazines, better known as The Reprints, as well as other of the Pastor's writings.

Many ecclesias of Bible Students, however, had begun to utilize *Our Most Holy Faith* as a study guide in their meetings, while others liked the convenient size and shape of the smaller book as compared to the Reprints.

It is in the attempt to fill this need that the Chicago Bible Students have undertaken to publish this current edition.

Much of the Harvest Truth Database material already on computer was utilized in preparing this book. As the Database is input using the original Towers there are some changes in text and pagination from the first printings of *Our Most Holy Faith*.

Extensive indexing has been attempted to make this book of greater value to the reader. In addition to the Table of Contents, an alphabetical list of Article Titles is found in the back along with both topical and scriptural indexes.

We trust and pray that this collection of articles may continue to be a blessing to the Lord's people as they walk steadfastly along the narrow way that leads unto life.

PUBLISHERS *of the 1994 edition.*

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PART I

CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

THE DIVINE PLAN OF THE AGES IN BRIEF

GOD proposed in himself before the foundation of the world the great Plan of Redemption, because he foreknew man's fall and the death penalty he would put upon it. For the first 1656 years up to the flood God permitted the holy angels to demonstrate their inability to recover the sinner to righteousness. On the contrary, the contagion of sin spread to some of the holy angels. As the Scriptures declare, "The sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair, and they took unto them wives of such as they would. And there were born unto them children, which were giants and men of renown. (Gen. 6.) And the earth was filled with violence and sin--to such an extent that God declared that the imagination of the human heart had become only evil and that continually. Foreknowing this God had already arranged that one of the aqueous "rings," still suspended above the earth, should descend, causing the flood, which wiped out that order of things, destroying every human being, except righteous Noah and his family, of whom it is written, "Now Noah was perfect in his generation (there was no admixture of angelic seed).-- Genesis 6:9.

Thus the angels were tested by contact with sin for centuries--so that all of those who desired had opportunity to transgress the Divine Laws. The disobedient ones are referred to in the New Testament as those angels who kept not their first estate or spirit condition, but who preferred to live on the earthly, animal plane. These were restrained in chains of darkness until the great Millennial morning--cut off from fellowship with God and the holy angels and no longer permitted to materialize and thus to commingle with humanity.--2 Peter 2:4.

When God's due time came he called Abraham to make of him a type of himself, and to give him a son, Isaac, to be a type of Christ, and to call for Isaac a Bride, Rebecca, who would be a type of the elect Church of this Gospel Age. And as with Rebecca came maids, so with the elect Church comes the "great company" class. As Abraham offered Isaac on the altar in a figure and he was recovered from death in a figure, so God really offered his Son in death and recovered him out of death actually by resurrection from the dead. As all that Abraham had he gave to Isaac, so it is that all the blessings that God has to give to all others of the human family who will become his people will come through the antitypical Isaac. And when Rebecca became Isaac's bride and joint-heir, she became sharer with him in all the joys and privileges which were his. Thus was represented the future glory of the Church with Christ in blessing all the families of the earth.

Moreover a double figure is used to represent The Christ, namely, Jesus the Head and the Church his Body. In the fulfilling of this figure the Apostle tells us that all of the consecrated overcomers are members of the Isaac class, saying, "Ye, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of the promise." The Church as the Bride is pictured in St. Paul's statement, "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's Seed and heirs according to the promise"-- the promise that through us the world shall be blessed.-- Gal. 3:29.

ABRAHAM'S WIVES TYPICAL

While the foregoing is a brief synoptical picture of the whole, the details of Abraham's life represent the details of the Divine Plan of the Ages. As Abraham had the promise that he should be the Father of many nations, it implies that, eventually, many peoples of the world will become God's children--but only through Isaac and through the promise made respecting Isaac's work. Furthermore, the Seed of Abraham, it was foretold, would be as the stars of heaven and as the sand of the seashore. The stars of heaven represent the spiritual Seed of Abraham. The sand of the seashore represent the multitudinous earthly seed, the human family brought back to life during the Millennium, the result of the redemptive plan.

St. Paul gives us the key to the entire situation in the suggestion that Abraham's wives were typical of Covenants and this explains to us the seemingly harsh treatment of Hagar. Abraham was obeying Divine instructions, and the Divine instructions were so shaped as to constitute the matter in type a picture and lesson for our instruction. Abraham's first wife was Sarah. St. Paul explains that Sarah typified a fundamental promise, and her name, Sarah, signifies princess or chief one. This princess Covenant, the one upon which all the others depended for their fulfillment, is the one which fulfills its mission or purpose in the development of the spiritual Seed—Isaac—"We as Isaac was are children of the promise." This Covenant has nothing whatever to do with the development of any other children of God except through the Isaac class, the Mediator class, the great Prophet, Priest and King class, through which all of God's blessings are to descend to humanity.

Because Sarah was to serve as a type of spiritual things she was barren for long years, to teach that God's primary Covenant with Abraham would be barren (unfruitful) for long centuries. Meantime, in order to make another type, Sarah's bondmaid, Hagar, was given to Abraham for a wife, Sarah seeking to appropriate the child of Hagar as the Seed of promise--as her own. Hagar represented the Law Covenant made with Israel at Sinai, as St. Paul explains. The child or offspring of that Covenant was the Jewish nation, Israel in the flesh. The fact that Sarah sought to recognize Ishmael as her son and held Hagar in her arms at the time of his birth, implied that the Law Covenant with Moses as its Mediator would, for a time, seem to constitute Israel the heir of the original Covenant--which included the blessing of all the families of the earth. But this was not the Divine will.

APOSTOLIC EXPLANATION OF COVENANT TYPES

And so, in God's due time, Sarah brought forth Isaac, who typed the true heir of the Covenant or Promise. This birth of Isaac was represented primarily by the begetting of our Lord Jesus Christ by the holy Spirit to the spirit nature; and, later on, by his resurrection to the perfection of spirit nature; and in a larger sense, as St. Paul explains (Ye, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise), the birth of Isaac represented the begetting by the holy Spirit of the entire Church, which is the Body of Christ. Then came the persecution, the mocking of Isaac by Ishmael and the subsequent casting out from Divine favor of the Hagar or Law Covenant and her child, the Jewish people. They have been outcast for centuries and were about to die--about to lose their national identity, about to be absorbed by other nations, just as Hagar and Ishmael, after being cast out, wandered through the desert until they had eaten their loaf and had drank the water they had with them and Ishmael was ready to die. Then the angel of the Lord drew their attention to a spring of water in the desert and, after their refreshment, counseled their return and submission to the Divine arrangement--their recognition of the Sarah Covenant and spiritual Israel. We have come close to this very point of time now. The poor Jews, losing hope, were about ready to die, to give up all faith in the promises. But, behold, at the opportune time, a well-spring of hope revives them and the message to them is that there is a spiritual Israel and also a natural Israel and that their blessings are along natural lines and must come to them through the recognition of the glorified Mediator of a New (Law) Covenant.

The Apostolic explanation of this wonderful system of types stops here. And we would be inclined to stop here also, were it not that other Scriptures clearly point out that later on, after the death of the Hagar Covenant and after the principal Covenant shall have accomplished its purposes in the bringing forth of spiritual Israel, the antitypical Isaac, a New Covenant is due to be introduced "after those days"--after the interim of this Gospel Age specially set apart for the development of the antitypical Isaac. That New Covenant is referred to by St. Paul. When discussing this very subject he says respecting natural Israel's restoration to Divine favor, "This is my Covenant with them when I shall take away their sins; as concerning the Gospel they are enemies for your sakes; but as touching

the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes,...for as ye in times past have not believed God, but have now obtained mercy through their unbelief; even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.”--Rom. 11:26-32.

The same great Covenant, future for Israel, is referred to by the Prophet Jeremiah. (31:31) Israel is there told that after certain days God will make a New Covenant with them, not the Sinaitic Covenant--not the Hagar Covenant--and just as surely not the Sarah Covenant, which gives birth only to a spiritual Israel. The prophecies respecting that New Covenant are earthly, restitutionary. Under it, "after those days," God will take away the stony heart out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh--he will make them tender-hearted human beings, loving, kind, etc. But he will not make of them spirit beings or New Creatures.

The Mediator of that New Covenant, Israel understood, will be a greater Mediator than Moses, though like unto him in the sense that Moses was the type or small fore-finger of him. Even so the Mt. Sinai Covenant, with Israel as the Ishmael class gendered thereunder, were typical of the greater blessings and upliftings to be accomplished by the New (Law) Covenant. For these reasons the Lord did not confuse the types by reinstating Hagar as Abraham's wife after the death of Sarah, as representing a renewal of Divine favor toward Israel and the use of natural Israel as the earthly channel of Divine favor and blessing to all the families of the earth. Instead, God permitted Hagar to cease as a type after showing her subserviency to Sarah and the recovery of her child, the Jew, from perishing. When Abraham, after the death of Sarah, took another wife, Keturah, we have every reason to believe that she, also, was a type and represented a third Covenant. And her many children represented typically the many people, kindreds and tongues of the world which will ultimately become, under the New Covenant arrangement, children of the Highest.

THE SUPERIORITY OF THE SARAH COVENANT

Nevertheless it should be continually borne in mind that in this series of types the Lord everywhere showed the superiority of the Sarah Covenant. In one sense of the word Sarah was Abraham's only wife, because Hagar and Keturah are mentioned merely as concubines. Thus the Divine Plan all centered in the promise, "In thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Nevertheless the Jew and his Law Covenant have been used of the Lord as a supplementary means of blessing and instruction to the Church and to the world. Likewise in the future the blessings that will go to Israel and through Israel to the world under the New Covenant will all depend upon the first Covenant, the Sarah Covenant, the spiritual one and its spiritual Seed--The Christ, Head and Body. The New Covenant can go into effect as a better Covenant than the Mosaic one only by reason of having a better Mediator than Moses, "The Mediator of the New Covenant"--The Christ. And he will become the Mediator of that Covenant and put it into effect for the blessing of all through or by means of his "better sacrifices." First, the sacrifice of Jesus, the foundation of all reconciliation with the Father—"and we through him." Secondly, the Father's acceptance of the Church as members of the Body of Christ, upon the condition mentioned by St. Paul, "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies living sacrifices, holy, acceptable unto God." These are the better sacrifices which the great Mediator presents to Justice, all founded upon the merit of the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. His merit will be shared in, through God's arrangement, by the "little flock," the Royal Priesthood, who not only by faith accept the Redeemer's merit, but who, by grace, also lay down their lives. They become dead with him, that they may also live with him and share his glory, honor, immortality, Kingship, Priesthood, Mediatorship, etc.

"Ah, these are of a royal line,
All children of a King,

Heirs of immortal crowns divine,
And lo, for joy they sing!
"Why do they, then appear so mean?
And why so much despised?
Because of their rich robes unseen
The world is not apprised."

Reprint 4682

THE WORLD CALLED TO REPENTANCE

“God now commandeth men everywhere to repent: because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained.”--Acts 17:30, 31.

WHEN GOD sentenced Father Adam to death He very properly said nothing about repentance, for He offered Adam no hope of a future life. If, then, no hope of a future life was known to Adam or revealed to him, why should God deal with him at all? Adam was sentenced to death, to destruction. There is no basis upon which to command a man to repent unless something is offered him as a reward for repentance.

God had put upon Adam the sentence of death, which could be removed only by the payment of a ransom-price. God fully intended that some day all mankind should have an opportunity of coming into harmony with Him and of having another trial, or judgment, for life; but it was not His due time to explain His program. Therefore, Adam lived and died without any command whatever to repent. And so did his children.

The first intimation of what God might do was given by the Prophet Enoch. But the revelation made by Enoch was not a sufficient basis for offering hope to mankind nor for telling them to repent.--Jude 14, 15.

A SUGGESTION OF HOPE FOR THE WORLD

So years passed by until the time of Abraham. Then God told Abraham that He would reveal a secret to him, because Abraham was His friend. That secret was not a message to be preached, but to be believed by himself and by those who would be heirs of that promise, which was not yet applicable to any outside of Abraham's descendants. The secret was, "In thee and in thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 28:14.) I intend to bless the world, Abraham. If you are obedient to My instructions, your Seed will get the blessing and transmit it to the world in general. It was only by implication, therefore, that Abraham had any suggestion that a life of repentance would be rewarded.

In due time God called the children of Israel and dealt with them through Moses. Practically He said, "Do you wish to be My people? If so, come now, enter into a covenant with Me; I will be your God and you shall be My people."--Lev. 26:12.

Israel was not commanded to repent, nor were any of the rest of the world. It was an *invitation*, not a command. God was ready to make a covenant with them. That covenant was that they were to obey the Law, and that by their obedience to the Ten Commandments and the spirit of their covenant they would become God's people. But when they tried to keep the Law they found that they could not do so, because of inherited weakness. Hence there was nothing more to be said to them along that line. They had had their opportunity and they had failed.

THE CALL TO REPENTANCE

When Jesus came He kept the Law, and inherited all the promises of the Law Covenant. Then He offered a share of the Kingdom which God had promised to set up (Dan. 2:44), and blessing, honor and glory to as many of the Jews as would come into harmony with Him, as many as would walk in His steps of self-sacrifice and thus have God's favor. (John 1:12.) In substance He said, "This

is the way. Trust in Me and walk in My steps. Thus you shall be My disciples. You shall share in My sufferings now, and by and by in My glory and Kingdom."

In due time, after a certain number had been gathered from the Jews, this message was extended to all the Gentiles who were in the right condition of heart. The Gentiles not having indicated their desire to come back into harmony with God as the Jewish nation had done, God then commanded them everywhere to repent. (Acts 17:30.) This He did through those who were the representatives of His teaching, the Apostles and the Church. In proportion as they understood the Plan of God and were in harmony with it, they could tell their neighbors that a new condition had been established and that God would deal henceforth with the Gentiles.

THE RANSOM THE BASIS OF HOPE FOR THE WORLD

Why should God deal with the Gentiles now, when He had refused to deal with them before? The explanation of this new condition is that Christ had died, and God's great Plan had now matured enough to be made applicable to all men everywhere. God had appointed a day in which to judge the world in righteousness. (Acts 17:30, 31.) That great Day is the next Age, the Day of Christ, the Day of Messiah's Kingdom. God has made this provision for the redemption of all through the death of Christ. Mankind were all under the death sentence, and God could not deal with them until that sentence was lifted, or until provision was made for lifting it. He has not annulled the death sentence, but He has provided a Ransom for all.--I Tim. 2:6.

Whoever knows of this Plan of redemption knows that God intends to give every individual of Adam's race an *individual* trial for life. That trial will not be merely to determine whether mankind will try to do right and battle against all the evil influences of the world, but God will subdue sin and uplift all of Adam's race who are desirous of being uplifted.

God has declared that no member of Adam's race need die. Everyone who will may return to God through the great Atonement to be effected by the Redeemer. He has not completed this work yet, but to those who have an ear to hear, the word has gone out that there is to be a future trial, and that the manner of one's life *now* will have a bearing upon that trial. It is proper to tell this now, because the provision has been made through Christ's death.

THE PRESENT MESSAGE TO THE WORLD

Prior to the Gospel Age it was of no use to tell the people to come into harmony with God. But now the whole world is to be brought into a trial to help them and not to condemn them--a trial to see whether they are worthy to have the everlasting life that God will provide for them and assist the willing to attain. Wherever people are willing to hear, the message is, Repent! repent! Cease from sin, and this reformation of character will have an influence upon your everlasting life.

If one is not of the Church class he is not on trial for life or death. But it will be to his advantage to live uprightly, for there is a time of reckoning coming. God has provided for this day of trial in the death of Christ. Beforehand, however, the Lord is selecting a Church class. The Lord is thus preparing a great class of missionaries who will do everything possible to assist men out of sin and degradation back to harmony with God.

In times past God acted as though He did not notice when sin was committed--unless it was a grievous sin. Then He merely took the lives of the sinners under unpleasant conditions--they went to sleep. The Prophet Ezekiel says that God took all of the Sodomites away as He saw good. (Ezek.

16:50.) After the Church's trial, or judgment, shall have been finished and the overcomers shall have been found worthy, then, in that time of the world's judgment, the Sodomites will have an opportunity as had the Jews who heard Jesus at the first advent. And it will be much more tolerable then for the people of Tyre and Sidon and Sodom and Gomorrah than it will be for the people of Chorazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum, etc.; for the latter had had opportunities of knowledge, against which they had sinned; they therefore had more wilfulness in the matter than did the Sodomites.--See Matt. 11:21-24.

At that time God had sent no command to the Sodomites to repent. So God merely "winked at" (overlooked) the ignorance and sin of that time. (Acts 17:30.) He neither threatened nor did anything else in the matter. He merely blotted the Sodomites out of existence. Their fate served as a foreshadowing, as the Apostle says, that God will not forever permit mankind to remain in sin, but that He will destroy the sinner. None shall be destroyed, however, until first he shall have had the opportunity for everlasting life, secured for every member of Adam's race, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

JESUS' RESURRECTION THE ASSURANCE OF GOD'S FAVOR

The Apostle recognizes the fact that the judgment had not begun in his day. He points forward to the Day of Christ and declares that God's assurance now set before the world of mankind is that there will be a future time of judgment. Through Christ's sacrificial death the opportunity for everlasting life will come to all. Mankind have already been condemned in Adam. They could not have another trial until the condemnation of the first trial was lifted. Therefore, not until God had provided a Redeemer would He command any to repent. The Apostle says that God's assurance to mankind in this matter is based upon the fact that He had raised Christ from the dead.--Acts 17:31.

When God had raised Jesus from the dead it became a testimony that His was a sacrificial death, an acceptable offering. And Jesus' ascension was a still further demonstration that this One whom the Father had raised from the dead by His own power, was to be the great King to rule, the great Priest to succor, assist and instruct, and the great Judge to direct and order the affairs of the world and to give proper rewards in the great Day of God.

Whoever therefore hears about Jesus' death and resurrection should understand that this was God's redemption arrangement. They should also be informed that mankind are all sinners and that death is the penalty of sin. If any should ask, How does Jesus' death affect humanity? we show that God has highly exalted Him to be a Savior. In God's due time, as soon as the elect class shall have been completed and the reign of six thousand years of sin and evil shall have ended, then He will grant redemption from sin to all--to the Jew first and afterwards to the Gentile.

As many as hear *now* should *repent*; but as many as do not hear in the present time are not commanded by God to repent. St. Paul's thought seems to be, Repent now and thus influence your future conditions, even if you do not wish to become a member of the Body of Christ. Thousands of millions of mankind have gone down into death. When they are awakened during the period of Messiah's reign, this will be the great message --"God has opened up a fountain for cleansing from sin and uncleanness. Whosoever will may partake of the blessing and reconciliation with God and thereby attain everlasting life."--See Zech. 13:1; Rev. 22:17.

At present the god of this world hath blinded the world's eyes of understanding (2 Cor. 4:4), but soon their eyes will be opened. The time is coming when all shall see and hear, and when none, from the least to the greatest, will need to say, Know ye the Lord, for all shall know Him. Then when

they know, each will be responsible. At the end of the Millennial Age when they shall have received their full blessing through the Mediator they will be required to do God's will on earth even as it is done in Heaven.--Jer. 31:33, 34.

FUTURE LIFE INFLUENCED BY PRESENT CONDUCT

It is a very important feature of our work to let our light so shine that men may see our good works and glorify our Father which is in heaven--not *their* Father, but *our Father*. (I Pet. 2:12) The present time is not the world's, but the Church's visitation. God is seeking the people who are in a voluntary condition of righteousness. This is not the time for dealing with the world, but for God's people, as burning and shining lights, to reprove all sin. In proportion as the light shines out it will reprove darkness.

If we speak at all about a future Age it is a special part of our duty to make clear to our hearers that the conduct of life at the present time will have a bearing on the future life. To say that there are *two* chances-- a chance now and a chance by and by--is wholly *wrong*. We say to them that during this Gospel Age there is only one chance, and the only way to get that chance is to walk in the footsteps of Jesus.

But for those who are by and by to be under the Mediatorial Kingdom it is proper to tell them that a life of obedience to God in harmony with the principles of righteousness will be a blessing to themselves in the present, and also in the future. There are a great many people who are living upright and honorable lives and who are doing a great deal of good in this present time. If they thought they were not doing good, they would be discouraged. An incentive to a high standard of life would be taken from them; for they believe that righteous living now has a bearing on the future. In this they are right. But their standard is not so high as that set forth in the Scriptures for the Church. That standard is necessarily high; for saints, and saints alone, are to be joint-heirs with Christ and members of the Bride class.

A great mistake was made in the past when Brother Calvin declared that the non-elect were to be roasted to all eternity. On the contrary, we find the teaching of God's Word to be that the non-elect are to be blessed by the Elect with an opportunity for life on the earthly plane. God will use the elect class for the purpose of blessing the world of mankind. God has a loving, sympathetic Plan for all of His creatures, which will be revealed to them in His own due time.

Reprint 5083

SAVIOR OF THE WORLD

-- 2 CORINTHIANS 5:14-21--

“Far be it from me to glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”--Galatians 6:14. R.V.

TODAY'S Bible Study reminds us afresh of the fact that Jesus is not merely the Savior of the Church, but that He is also the Savior of the world. In the past, Bible students have overlooked this great truth, to their confusion. Now we see that God has provided two distinctly different salvations --the one for the Church in the Gospel Age, and the other for the world in the Age to follow this--the period of Messiah's Kingdom.

Not only do we see that there are two different salvations, but also that they are wholly different, totally different in kind. They are alike in some things, however. Both are salvations from sin and from its power and its penalty, the curse--sorrow, pain, crying, sighing, dying. Both are salvations to an everlasting happiness. But there the similarity ends; for the Church is to be saved by a change of nature, while the world is to be saved without a change of nature--by a resurrection to the perfection of human nature.

The Church's salvation, which is now in progress, has its beginning in the "hearing" of faith. The Message of God's grace is proclaimed here and there by stammering lips, which do not appeal to many of the great or wise or learned, but chiefly to the poor of this world, rich in faith. Such of these as are of humble mind, of "broken and contrite heart," are charmed with the Message of forgiveness of sins and reconciliation to God through the Redeemer. As they approach and seek to draw near to God, He through His providences draws near to them. If they continue to hunger and thirst after the Lord and His Message, He will satisfy them.

He will show them His Covenant. He will enable them to understand the terms and conditions upon which they may be received back into fellowship with God as dear children--no longer aliens, strangers, foreigners--no longer condemned to death, but on the contrary justified to life.

Here comes to them another test of their love of righteousness, their hunger for fellowship with God; for the requirements made of them seem at first to be exacting. These requirements, as stated by the Master Himself, are: "If any man will be My disciple, let him deny himself [renounce his own self-will], take up his cross [begin to live contrary to his own preferences in that he will do according to the Divine will, instead of according to his own will, where it crosses the Divine], and follow Me." Then he must continue to follow in the Master's footsteps--faithful unto death.

Some, upon learning of these stringent conditions of discipleship, turn back and follow no longer in pursuit of the Lord's favor, forgiveness, reconciliation, blessing, begetting of the Holy Spirit. It is their option; and their course will decide their worthiness or unworthiness to be counted in with the special class whom the Lord is now selecting from the world to be the Church--"the Bride, the Lamb's Wife."

THE BLESSINGS OF FAITH

We are not to think of those who reject the Lord's cross and refuse to make a full consecration of their lives as being, therefore, condemned either to eternal torment or to anything else. The call of the Gospel Age is a favor and a privilege. Those who respond get a special blessing; those who reject miss that special blessing. They are not condemned (damned) in any sense of the word because of

rejecting the privilege of walking in the Master's steps. On the contrary, as the Scriptures declare, they were already condemned--condemned in Adam, because members of his family, sharers of his weaknesses and unworthiness of life--sharers of his death sentence. They failed to escape from that condemnation, and thus they continue under it.

It is of the Church class only that St. Peter writes, "Having escaped the corruption that is [still] in the world." (2 Peter 1:4.) As the Apostle Paul wrote, "We were children of wrath, even as others [still are]." (Ephesians 2:3.) By believing in Christ, by accepting His terms, by becoming His disciples through full consecration, we secure forgiveness for the sins that are past, and additionally secure relationship with the Heavenly Father through our Redeemer, our Advocate. Now His acceptance of us is by and through the begetting of the Holy Spirit, and this is granted to none others than those who come by His appointed way.

Those begotten of the Holy Spirit are Scripturally styled "New Creatures in Christ." To them, "old things have passed away, and all things have become new." They have new aims, new objects, new hopes in life. To them, earthly things have no value, except as they can be used to glorify the Lord and to serve Him. Earthly learning, reputation, honor, titles, are valuable only as they can be used in some way to the glory of God--in the service of His Cause or for the benefit of fellowmen, especially those of the Household of Faith. To these, earthly prospects, political hopes and ambitions, etc., are nothing; for they have before their mind's eye Heavenly prospects, which include joint-heirship with Christ in His Messianic Kingdom of a thousand years and, after that, additional glory and honor in the ages to follow.

But all these blessings, you note, are heard with the ear of faith, seen with the eye of faith. Thus the Lord selects and draws only those who can and do exercise faith; for "without faith it is impossible to please God."

Those who either never hear, or hearing fail to respond, or responding go for a little way and then stop when they come to the crucial test of self-denial, self-renouncement --these lose all those spiritual blessings which the others, if faithful, will attain--Heavenly honor, Heavenly glory and immortality through the change of nature begun at the time of their begetting and to be consummated in their complete change in the First Resurrection. These the Apostle describes as "sown in weakness, raised in power; sown an animal body, raised a spiritual body; sown in dishonor, raised in glory."

But even those who lose God's highest blessings and rewards will still have open before them great and wonderful favors of God, all of which were purchased by the Redeemer's precious blood--by His sacrifice for our sins, by His submission of His life for the forfeited life of Adam, for the recovery of Adam and all his race from the sentence, or the curse, of death. These blessings for the world, however, are not to be clearly seen or appreciated yet, except by those who are especially taught of God--those who have been begotten of the Holy Spirit and thus enabled to understand "the deep things of God." --1 Corinthians 2:10.

"THE COMMON SALVATION"

The point we are here especially making is that God has provided a salvation for the world, as well as a salvation for the Church. The Bible tells us of the general facts of these salvations. It assures us that "God so loved the world [as well as the Church] that He gave His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16.) We noticed at first that the penalty that is upon the world is not an eternal torment penalty, but a penalty

of destruction. Christ died that the race might not perish, but in due time recover from the death penalty through faith in Christ and obedience to Him.

Only the few can exercise the great faith that is necessary to a place in the Heavenly reward as members of His Bride class. By and by, when the knowledge of God shall fill the whole earth as the waters cover the great deep, all will understand; all will hear and be able to believe in God's goodness and in His wonderful arrangement on man's behalf. Those who will then believe, and who will then accept God's favor on its terms of loyalty and obedience to the best of their ability, will be blessed by Messiah's Kingdom.

The blessing, as the Bible describes it, will be the rolling away of the curse and the rolling on, instead of the curse, "the blessing of the Lord, which maketh rich; and He addeth no sorrow with it." This work of rolling away the curse and rolling on the blessing is the appointed work of Messiah's Kingdom for a thousand years.

We may be sure that by the time His Kingdom shall end, and shall be delivered up to the Father, our Lord will have fully accomplished all the great work which was committed to Him of the Father and for which He has shown His worthiness by His co-operation in the Father's Plan, to the extent of dying for the race. And this King of Glory, Messiah, will have for associates those who, like Himself, delight to do the Father's will-- those who delight to walk in His steps. His perfection, His sacrifice, making good for their defects through the fall, enables them to become joint-sacrificers with Him. Of these the Apostle writes, "For if we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him; and if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him."

NEW CREATURES IN CHRIST

In today's Study St. Paul deals especially with the Church class. He explains to us that it is the love of Christ that has exercised the constraining, or drawing, power upon our hearts. The love of Christ is merely the love of the Father, but as men we would not be able to understand the Father's love. We are enabled to understand that love as it was manifested by our Redeemer; and thus through Him we look upward to the Father, and are able to appreciate something of the love that is beyond all human understanding. As St. Paul points out, Christ's love was manifested in that He died for all. When we say "for all," it means that the whole race was dead, that none had a right to everlasting life, and that none could commend themselves to God so as to be worthy of everlasting life.

The Apostle explains that all who realize this matter fully, clearly, should indicate the fact by consecrating their lives to the Lord, to live unto Him, to know His will, to lay down their lives in the service of Him who died for them and who rose again. These have a special love for the Lord and they, properly, have a special love for each other. They are seeking to live, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit--in harmony with the begetting of the Holy Spirit, which they have received.

Hence they more and more are thinking of Christ, not as the Man Jesus, but as the glorified Lord. So also they are learning to think of each other, not according to the flesh, but according to the heart; for "if any man be in Christ, he is a New Creature." To such, earthly things--earthly hopes, aims and prospects--have gone, and all things have become new. They have new hopes, new ambitions, new relationships. If faithful, they will receive the glorious things which God has in reservation for those who love Him.

These things are of God. They are not of the Apostle's making up, nor of Jesus' origination. The Father Himself originated the whole Plan and arrangement. He has already reconciled us to

Himself by Jesus Christ. We are fully given over to Him. We have no rebellion in our hearts. He has reconciled us to Himself through His Son; and God has nothing against us. "There is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." Their sins are forgiven. Instead of condemning them, God justifies them. As St. Paul says, "It is God that justifies; who is he that condemns? It was Christ that died," giving full satisfaction for our sins.

THE SERVICE OF RECONCILIATION

These New Creatures, begotten of the Holy Spirit, are given a work to do. They are not only to have a work in the future as kings and priests, joint-heirs with Christ in the blessing of the world, but they have a work to do at the present time, a work for God. They are to be ambassadors for God. They are to be His representatives amongst men. They are to seek to tell the Message of God's Love to those who do not understand it. They are to tell the way of return to God to those who know not the way and to those who give evidence of a desire for reconciliation. They are thus ministers, or servants, of the way of reconciliation even in the present time. All those reconciled in the present time by faith and obedience are privileged thus to become members of the Bride class--joint-heirs with Christ in His Kingdom.

In the 20th verse it will be noticed that the word "you" is in italics, indicating that it is not in the original. The passage does not read properly with the word "you." It should be omitted. God is not beseeching the Church through the Church, or through each other, to be reconciled; for all of the Church are reconciled.

The Apostle is telling us that God through us is beseeching or urging mankind--all who have the hearing ear--to be reconciled to Him, telling them that He is willing to be reconciled to them, and explaining the basis of this reconciliation; namely, that Christ took the sinner's place, that He personally knew no sin, but was holy, harmless, separate from sinners, and that those who receive this Message may have the privilege of coming into the righteous condition acceptable to God, and thus of being inducted into the Bride class, who will complete the Royal Priesthood beyond the Veil, and for a thousand years have the glorious work of blessing all the families of the earth.

Reprint 5596

“WHAT IS MAN?”

“When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained, what is man, that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, that Thou visitest him? for Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor; Thou madest him to have dominion over the work of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet; all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas; O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth!”--Psalm 8:3-9.

THE SUGGESTION of the Prophet respecting man is one which we believe has occurred to every intelligent being. As one upon the deep looks out upon the vast expanse of water and the riding of the vessel upon it, he thinks, How little *is* man! How small a speck in the Universe! When we look up into the heavens and realize that they represent *so much more* of Divine power, we are still more surprised. When we *consider* the heavens, and realize that all these stars, except the planets which belong to our own system, *are really suns*, and that around each of these suns revolve planets, as our earth revolves around our sun, and when we think of the number of these suns and their planets, we are *amazed*, and we feel our own littleness all the more!

We ask astronomers as to the *number* of these suns, and they tell us that there are a hundred millions of them in sight. And if we would average the planets around these hundred million suns at ten, it would be ten hundred millions of planets. And then they tell us, further, that if we could take our stand upon the very farthestmost one of these we would see still beyond us as many more, and as many more.

Our minds are appalled as we begin to think of the heavens, the work of God's fingers, and then consider *man*, how small a work in God's sight! We have an appreciation then of what the Scriptures say man is like in God's sight--as "the dust in the balance," that is not worthy to be taken into account. We have all been in the grocer's shop and noticed that he pays no attention to the dust in the scoop of his scale. So man is so small in the sight of the great Creator that we wonder that God should have any interest at all in humanity.

“THOU MADEST HIM TO HAVE DOMINION”

Except for the Bible we should have no knowledge of God's interest in us, and we might think that God is so great that He would pay no heed to us. But, when God reveals Himself to us in the Bible, we begin to see that there is not only Divine power exercised and manifested in the creation of all these worlds, but we see also this Divine power manifested in God's dealings with us, and also the *love* of God, which the Scriptures state "passeth all understanding." What wonderful condescension on the part of the Creator that He should give heed to us!

But our text goes on to give us further information on this subject: "What is man that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that Thou visitest him? for Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels." *Only a little* lower is the thought! Of the holy angels the Scriptures give us to understand there are various ranks, some higher and some lower, but all perfect. Then in the world we have various orders of animal life--the beast of the field, the fish of the sea, the fowl of the air--and man, as the highest of these earthly beings; and he stands related to all these lower creatures as God does to the entire Universe; and this is the honor with which our great Creator endowed His human creatures!

So we are told in this Psalm, "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet." What a wonderful creature man is, then, from *this* standpoint! While he is a little lower than the angels, so far as his nature in connection with the earth is concerned, and whereas the angels are more excellent so far as their natures are concerned, this Psalm speaks of man as being superior in that he has a dominion. The angels do not have dominion over other angels, but all are subject to the great Creator, God.

But man, in the likeness of his Creator, has been given a dominion over the lower creatures, and in this respect it is a wonderful honor with which he has been crowned --"Thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and hast set him over the works of Thy hands."

It might be asked with great propriety, If God is thus careful of humanity and has so highly honored His human creatures, why should He not have made a still better preparation for them in the world? Why is it that they are subject to the unfavorable conditions under which they now exist? Why are there sorrow, pain, sighing, crying and dying? Why are there tempests, storms, cyclones and tornadoes, famine, drought and pestilence-- why all these things if God is so careful of us as His creatures?

We would have no answer for all these questions were it not provided in the Bible. In this wonderful Book of all books, we have the key to the matter, the explanation, and that is: God provided originally that man should be subject to none of these difficulties and disasters. Man was made perfect and placed in favorable and perfect surroundings, in a perfect garden, eastward in Eden, with everything necessary for his welfare--no storms, no sickness, no tempests, no difficulties--and he might have lived forever. Such was the wonderful dominion of this human son of God.

Why, then, the change? This wonderful Book answers that the change all came about because of sin. And so we read: "By one man's disobedience sin entered into the world (there was no sin in the world before), and death as a result of sin." (Rom. 5:12) There was no dying on the part of man until sin came. So all the aches, pains, sorrows and sicknesses which we experience are parts of this dying process. And so the difficulty with us all is that by nature we are "children of wrath."

Is Divine wrath eternal torture? No, indeed! That teaching was handed down to us, perhaps, by our well-meaning forefathers. The wrath of God, we see on every hand; as the Apostle Paul declares, "The wrath of God is revealed"--in our own bodies, our aches and pains, mental imperfections, physical imperfections and moral imperfections--these are all parts of this great penalty for sin. We read that when man became a transgressor God sent a holy angel to drive our first parents out from the Garden of Eden, away from the trees of life that were to sustain them in perfection, out into the unfinished earth.

While the whole earth could just as easily have been made perfect, God left it unfinished, unprepared for man, and merely "prepared a garden eastward in Eden" for the trial of our first parents, because Divine wisdom foresaw that man would sin; and instead of making the whole earth perfect, God left it in an imperfect condition, except the Garden of Eden. So we read that when God thrust our first parents out of the Garden of Eden, He said, "Cursed is the earth [not I will *make* it unfit, but it *is already*] for thy sake, thorns and thistles shall it bring forth, and in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread until thou return to the ground; for out of it wast thou taken, for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

In other words, the great penalty against our race is a *death penalty*—"Dying, thou shalt die." (Gen. 2:17.) This has been upon our race for six thousand years, from the time that sin entered into

the world. So all the pages of history from Adam's day to this are marked with sin and sorrow, pain and sighing, because we are all sinners; and *because* we are sinners, God is treating us according to His own purpose, "Dying, thou shalt *die*."

But this is the sad side of the matter. Is there no other side, is there no *hope* for us? The same blessed Book--the Bible--tells us. The Gospel Message, which signifies "good tidings," declares that God has some good message for those whom He condemned to death.

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL MESSAGE?

We inquire, What is this good message? The Scriptures answer that the good message is that He who condemned us as unfit for eternal life has provided for our redemption; that His Son became our Redeemer; that Christ died, the "Just for the unjust," that He might bring all back into harmony with God. O, some may say, but did not Jesus die eighteen hundred or more years ago? Yes, truly. And have we not the same reign of sin and death as then? Yes. Where, then, is the blessing which was to come through Jesus? Well, we answer, a two-fold blessing has been provided. First of all, there is a blessing of hope, which some of God's people enjoy, a blessing of knowledge, that in God's "due time" He will bring in the wonderful things of which this Gospel Message tells.

God having provided a Redeemer, there will be a resurrection of the dead; they shall not remain dead, but come forth. There shall be a New Dispensation, a glorious morning, in which all sin and sorrow will be done away. So the Scriptures assure us of that time that there shall be no more sighing, no more crying, no more dying, because all the former things, all the things of sin, the things of death, will have passed away.

"THE CHURCH'S ONE FOUNDATION"

And, we inquire, who is so powerful as to overthrow sin and death, and lift up humanity and bring them back from sin and weakness and imperfection and death? The Bible answers this question, that the One who will do this is the Great One who sits upon the Throne of God; as we read, "He that sitteth upon the Throne said, Behold, I make all things new!"

But who is this? O, the very same One, who, by the grace of God, became our Redeemer--Jesus. He is to be the great King of kings and Lord of lords, and is to "reign from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth." And under the blessed influence of that Kingdom the full blessing of God will come to the earth again! "All the blind eyes shall be opened, and all the deaf ears shall be unstopped." "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together." These are words of the Prophets given to us for our hope and the strengthening of our hearts, that we might turn from sin and become more and more the children of God.

We have referred to the world and how it is to be blessed by the Messianic Kingdom, the Kingdom of God's dear Son, the Kingdom for which Jesus taught us to pray, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." But we see not all these things accomplished yet. We see not mankind brought back to perfection, nor the promise of the good tidings fulfilled amongst men. But we have a word from the Apostle upon this subject. He said, "But we see not yet all things put under man"; they are still out of harmony. But, says the Apostle, we see a beginning of God's work; we see Jesus, who, "by the grace of God, has tasted death for every man." We see more than that. More than eighteen hundred years have passed. Not only has Jesus tasted death, but a great many have been going into death, in answer to the call to be of the Bride of Christ, the Church of the First-born, to be associated with our Lord. This is the Church we sing about in our hymn:--

"The Church's one Foundation,
Is Jesus Christ her Lord;
She is His New Creation
By water and the Word.
From heaven He came and sought her
To be His holy Bride;
With His own blood He bought her,
And for her life He died."

This, then, is the first work of God in the redemption of mankind--the gathering of the Bride of Christ, the Church, to share in His glory, honor and immortality. We hope to be of this class; and to this class belong the great promises that they shall share with Him in the First Resurrection, and then bless all the families of the earth with restitution. The world of mankind is to be restored to all that Adam had and lost, for all of which Jesus died at Calvary; and associated with Him will be the Church, called out of the world, a saintly class who have been walking in the footsteps of Jesus; as we read again, "Blessed and holy are they who have part in the First Resurrection, on such the Second Death hath no power; they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."--Rev. 20:6.

This will be the thousand years of Messiah's reign, the thousand years of the world's uplift, the thousand years in which Satan will be bound, the thousand years in which knowledge shall fill the whole earth, the thousand years in which the earth shall be brought to the Paradisaic condition, which was symbolically represented in the Garden of Eden--and when every creature in heaven and earth and under the earth shall be brought to that glorious condition where they will sing praises to God that sitteth upon the Throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever.

And yet there is another side; for the same Scriptures which tell of the exaltation of the Church to glory and the blessings of the world through the Kingdom of Messiah, which tell that the earth will be the Paradise of God--these Scriptures also tell us of a class of incorrigibles who will be punished. After this class shall have been brought to a full knowledge of God and shall wilfully sin against Divine light and blessings, the punishment against these will be, not eternal torment, but *destruction* from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power. --I Thess. 1:9.

Reprint 4972

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH AND HER MISSION

THERE CAN be no question that the Church of Christ is an *Ecclesia*, a *Body*, and that Christ Jesus is the *Head* of the "Church, which is *His Body*." (Eph. 1:20, 23) There can be no question that the different members of the Church are being called--drawn by a selective process--from the world of mankind. The testimony of the Scriptures as to the object of the call seems also to be clear. The Apostle Peter says that the Church is a people *for a purpose*; that is, God has a special object or purpose in selecting the Church. They are to "show forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of *darkness* into His *marvelous light*," "that men may see their good works and glorify their Father which is in heaven."--I Pet. 2:9; Matt. 5:16.

We ask respecting the object of this shining of the light, and the Scriptures answer that it will have an effect upon the world, reproving mankind and setting before them an example of better living, better thinking. We ask whether this is the ultimate object of the call. The Scriptures answer that it is not; that the Church is called out to be a privileged people and to become joint-heirs with her Lord in His Kingdom. We ask further, whether He really is to have a Kingdom. The Scriptures answer, Yes; at the end of this Gospel Age He will come, not as a Sin-Offering, but as a great King, Prophet, Judge, to *dispense* the blessings *secured* by *His death*. We ask respecting the share of the Church at the present time. The answer comes that those who faithfully follow the Lamb through good report and evil report, who take up their cross and follow Jesus, will be accounted worthy to be His associates in the Kingdom.

THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

We ask whether the Church will be able to combat the evil tendencies in the world. The answer is, Yes; Satan will be bound for a thousand years, that he shall deceive the nations no more till the thousand years shall have been fulfilled. During those years the Savior's mission will be to bless mankind as the "Sun of Righteousness," with "*healing*" in His beams; and the Church is to have a share with Him in the blessing of the world. We ask whether this is some *new proposition* God has made; and the answer comes, No; this was God's Plan and purpose from *before the foundation of the world*. This is the Gospel, or good tidings, first declared to Abraham: "In thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."-- Gen. 12:3, etc.

God intended to bless all the members of the human race, all nations and kindreds and tongues, and purposed that the blessing should come to them through the Seed of Abraham. The Jewish nation were merely the *typical seed*; the *antitypical Seed* is The Christ (Jesus the Head and the Church His Body), who will "bless all the families of the earth." But the world must wait for its blessing until the Church shall have been completed, shall have passed the veil, and shall sit with Christ in His Throne.

Asked as to the success of the blessing which will attend the work of the Church, the Scriptures answer that "Every knee shall bow and every tongue confess"; and that the knowledge of God shall fill the whole earth. As to whether this means a *universal salvation*--that everybody will be saved--the answer is that God has provided that as all died in Adam, so all are to be revived, brought back to the privilege of attaining everlasting life, through the merit of Christ's sacrifice; but that the *attainment* of everlasting life will depend upon the manner in which the *privilege is used*. None will be *coerced* or compelled.

The majority of mankind have such respect for righteousness that if its rewards were as sure and as desirable as are those of sin, unquestionably they would prefer to do right. Many tell us that

they have been almost *forced* to do evil. Only the very few are willing to renounce sin and to walk in the narrow way of obedience and self-sacrifice. While those who do so in this Age are to have a very special reward, others who love righteousness and hate iniquity will, under the rule of Christ's Kingdom, have every *assistance* without *compulsion*. They will have co-operation in their endeavors for righteousness. The Scriptures, however, with equal force declare that as *death* was the *original penalty* of sin in Adam's case, so it will *always* be the penalty for sin; and that whoever during the future Age sins wilfully shall die the Second Death, from which there will be no resurrection, no redemption, no hope of recovery.

THE EARTH IS TO BE MAN'S FUTURE HOME

Before sin had entered into the world, the Divine provision for our first parents was the Garden of Eden. As we think of this, let our minds turn to the future, guided by the Word of God; and in mental vision we see Paradise restored--not a *garden* merely, but the *entire earth* made beautiful, fruitful, sinless, happy. Then we recall the inspired promise so familiar to us--"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain," for the former things of sin and death will have passed away, and all things will have been made new!--Rev. 21:4, 5.

Recalling St. Peter's words of assurance respecting these glorious "Times of Restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy Prophets since the world began," we see that in God's "due time" the earth is to be brought to the perfection primarily designed for it, and *typed* in *Eden*. We believe that time to be near at hand. We see the promised blessings coming. What are our vast irrigation schemes by artesian wells and by aqueducts but fulfilments of the prophecies pertaining to the reign of Christ and the blessing of the earth! "In the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose."--Isa. 35:6, 1.

The Scriptures tell us that after God had created various orders of *spirit beings* He made *man*, "a little lower than the angels." (Psa. 8:5) The human race began with Adam and Eve, who had ability to grasp and appreciate the Divine arrangement, as the brute creation have not. God made man in His own likeness. The fact that sin came in and brought Father Adam under the sentence of death does not signify that the Heavenly Father had changed His arrangement. The *purpose* which He had "in the beginning" *has never changed*.

We can see a reason why the entire world was not made an Eden; namely, God intended to give the race a *trial*. According to the record of the Scriptures, if the first pair had maintained their righteousness, their holiness, they would have continued to be perfect and would have propagated a *perfect race*; and if sin had not come in, God would have been responsible for their maintenance. But God, foreseeing that sin would come in, merely made Eden perfect, and allowed the remainder of the earth to continue in an unfinished condition. Consequently God said to Adam, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread."--Gen. 3:17-19.

EARTH'S IMPERFECTION IS FALLEN MAN'S BLESSING

God could have made the entire earth perfect as easily as He "planted" the little garden in Eden. But He foresaw that if the earth were perfected the *death-struggle* would be *longer*, and the *degradation* of man *greater*. The poverty of the world has assisted in keeping mankind back from

greater depths of iniquity. The sentence, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread," was evidently intended as a blessing, that man might learn lessons of experience by battling with the earth for his living. As the Creator said to the man regarding the curse of the earth, it was "*for thy [man's] sake.*" So man has learned that "*The wages of sin is death.*" The Heavenly Father has not, however, changed His Plan. When the Kingdom is set up, the earth shall yield her increase; and God assures us, "I will make the place of My feet glorious."--Isa. 60:13.

Edison has been the instrument of Providence in giving us wonderful electrical devices. Burbank and others have, under Divine guidance, worked miracles in horticulture. What beautiful fruits and flowers have followed as results! It is difficult to imagine anything nearer perfection either in Eden of old or the world-wide Eden to be established! In referring to the "Times of Restitution" the Prophet declares that "the earth shall yield her increase." (Psa. 67:6) We behold preparations for the fulfilment of this promise.

A few years ago a Virginia farmer found an abnormal stool of wheat--one hundred and forty-two stalks, each bearing a well-developed head--the offspring of a single grain of wheat! Under the name of "Miracle Wheat" it is now being developed slowly in various parts of the country. The average yield appears to be about twelve hundred grains from one kernel. This very year the same peculiarity in oats has been found, a stool growing wild by the roadside. The same Divine Providence is, additionally, guiding our chemists in economical methods of extracting nitrogen from the atmosphere for feeding the soil, and thus to increase earth's blessings, in fulfillment of God's promise that He will make His footstool glorious.

Why has not the earth been already made glorious? The answer is that God is allowing the race to propagate first. Had mankind been perfect, they might have learned the lesson of the sinfulness of sin in the same way that the angels have learned. But hastening to commit sin, they have learned *evil* first and have been subject to all the vicissitudes of sin and death. The angels have learned the other lesson--what righteousness is, what good is-- not merely in the abstract, but in an appreciative sense.

MANKIND WILL LEARN A SECOND LESSON

God is now selecting the Church. As soon as the *Church* shall have been completed, then *mankind* will have opportunity to learn the lesson of righteousness, the knowledge of God, and will be raised up out of sin and death, out of the weaknesses that have come to them through sin. This uplifting time is definitely marked out in the Scriptures as "Times of Restitution"--the restoration of that which was lost. Since that which was lost was *human perfection* and *Edenic bliss*, mankind will not get *heavenly* things, but *earthly* blessings. God's will shall be accomplished. The world will be brought to perfection during the thousand years of Messiah's reign. The most important piece of Restitution work relates to man. The hard, stony selfishness of heart, which is world-wide, is neither God-likeness nor to God's glory.

"Man's inhumanity to man
Makes countless thousands mourn."

Nineteen centuries of preaching show that the cure for this malady is not in our power; and that only the few even desire to seek for the Lord's spirit of gentleness and tender-heartedness. But the great King of Glory is also the Good Physician. He alone can cure the disease of sin and its results. Through Him God's promise to Israel will be fulfilled: "I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh." (Ezek. 36:26) This work will proceed from Israel to all the families of the earth, uplifting all the *willing and obedient* out of sin and death to all that

was lost in Eden and redeemed at Calvary. Thank God, the *unwilling* and *disobedient* will not be consigned to endless torture, but to the “Second Death”—“everlasting destruction.” The perfected earth will abide forever for the glorious being, *man*.

THE HEADSHIP OF CHRIST

God has purposed to make a New Creation. Incidentally He takes the opportunity to call the Church to be associated with her Lord in the divine nature, far above principalities and powers and every name that is named. Thus eventually, when all wilful sinners shall have been blotted out, we find, as the Scriptures state, that “every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and such as are in the sea” will be heard saying, “Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever.” (Rev. 5:13) Thus the Lord will gather together all the faithful, both in heaven and in earth, under the headship of Christ, whose Head is Jehovah.-- Eph. 1:10.

Reprint 5057

VICTORIOUS CHRIST HEADS PROCESSION

“When He ascended up on high He led a multitude of captives.”--Eph. 4:8.

THIS GRAND EXPRESSION respecting the glorious outcome of the Savior's work is quoted by the Apostle Paul from the Psalms. (68:18.) The figure thus thrust before our mental eye is that of a great Conqueror whose victory is being heralded. With the Romans we know that it was a custom that generals returning from various wars were granted what were termed "Triumphs"-- that is to say, triumphal processions, that the people might have tangible evidence of their victories.

Thus, for instance, Titus, returning from the war upon the Jews in A.D. 70, brought with him certain notable persons and the Golden Candlestick from the Temple, and these were displayed to the eyes of the people following the conqueror. They were subsequently sculptured on the Arch of Titus, still standing in Rome. And evidently the custom was still older than the days of the Romans, since it was so prophetically set forth by the Prophet David.

Let us permit our mental eye to feast upon the scene presented in our text. Jesus, in fulfilment of the Divine Program, had left the heavenly condition and descended to earth, taking a bondman's form or nature in order "that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:9); in order that He might rescue Adam and his race from the dying and death condition in which they were--under Divine sentence and under the power of Satan.

Therefore the Redeemer counted not His life precious to Him, but freely delivered Himself up for our offenses and died, "the Just for the unjust," that He might bring mankind back into harmony with God. His humiliation ended in death, but His triumph began when, as is recorded, God raised Him from the dead by His own power, and set him at the right hand of His own Majesty—"far above angels, principalities and powers and every name that is named, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow."

HE THAT ASCENDED FIRST DESCENDED

The prophecy says nothing about our Lord's descending from the heavenly glory to the earthly nature, but St. Paul supplies this feature saying, "He that ascended, what is it but that He first descended, into the lower condition of the earth?" (Verse 9.) Thus the Apostle asserts that He that descended is He that ascended above all heights, that all things may be fulfilled through Him.

An important thought here noted is that our Lord not only left the heavenly glory, but that He returned to a still more excellent glory--He did not suffer the disastrous loss of the heavenly nature as a result of His obedience in taking the human nature. As He left the heavenly nature to take the human, so in returning He left the human nature to ascend again to that which He had before, with the additional glory of the divine nature.

LEADING FORTH THE CAPTIVES

With most of the conquerors in olden times the captives were made slaves. Not so, however, will be the result of Jesus' victory. He leads forth to liberty and eternal life those who have been slaves of sin and death. His train of captives is a long one indeed; the procession has already occupied *eighteen centuries*, and is yet to be the great work of the *thousand years* of the Messianic reign!

First of all in the procession are the saints—"the Church of the First-born, whose names are written in Heaven." In the forefront of them we see the twelve Apostles, St. Paul taking the place of Judas. The Apostles are to be Kings who are to reign with Christ in preeminent positions; but following them are some others of the saintly company of Kings--in all a "little flock."

Then will come a company, more numerous, but less heroic—"a great multitude," uncrowned, but with "palm branches," not antitypical Priests, but antitypical Levites, associates and servants of the Royal Priesthood, the Bride. Then will follow (Heb. 11:38-40) other faithful ones of the past, the Ancient Worthies. The Prophet speaks also of the "rebellious house." The classes previously specified were not rebellious, but gladly and willingly forsook all to do the will of the Father and to attain the liberty of sons of God, as the first-fruits of the triumph of the Lamb.

But during the thousand years of Christ's reign He will lead forth the "rebellious house"--the world of mankind-- not all of them, we may be sure, for some, the Scriptures positively declare, will die the Second Death, because, after realizing their deliverance, they will love sin and will therefore be destroyed as enemies of righteousness. But it is a blessed thought that many of those who are now aliens, strangers and foreigners from God through wicked works, are in this condition of opposition, not willingly, not intelligently, but by reason of the ignorance and weaknesses which came to them by heredity, under the reign of sin and death.

It is to be a distinct feature of the great Triumph of Immanuel that every eye shall be opened and every ear unstopped, that "the knowledge of the glory of God shall fill the whole earth," during His glorious reign of righteousness. Are we not distinctly told of the time that will follow, in which all the willing and obedient shall receive the Holy Spirit, which then will be poured out "upon all flesh" even as now, during this Gospel Age, it is poured out upon God's "servants and handmaidens" only?-- Joel 2:28.

Oh, that will be a glorious Triumph for the great Redeemer! In the language of the Bible, "He shall see the fruitage of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." (Isa. 53:11.) What a glorious fruitage!--not only His own exaltation--not only the exaltation of His faithful Bride class, and the additional exaltation of "the virgins, her companions, which follow her," and the exaltation of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and all the Prophets, but finally the deliverance to human perfection of all the groaning creation willing to accept the same upon the Divine terms of loyalty to God and to the principles of His Government, as these shall be made known to them.

"HE GAVE GIFTS UNTO MEN"

It was the custom in olden times that a king coming into authority and power should give gifts according to His wealth. Governors and princes would be needed and he would dispense the honors of these offices to those found faithful in his service, loyal in the defense of His cause. So, in this prophetic reference to our Lord's ascension, it is declared not only that He would lead forth a multitude of captives, granting them freedom, liberty, blessings, but also that He would confer certain gifts.

We might have spent valuable time guessing the nature of these gifts which the great Redeemer would dispense, but such a waste of time is unnecessary, since the Apostle proceeds to explain the matter and tells us what gifts are meant. He says, "And He gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers."

There is an astounding thought connected with this statement--that the Apostles were not self-appointed, and that they had no successors, and that the work of evangelizing, or making known the "good tidings," and the pastoral work and the teaching work amongst believers, are all under the supervision of the Head of the Church, the great Victor, who redeemed us with His blood, and who proposes, first, to lead forth a Bride class, and subsequently all the willing and obedient.

It behooves us to notice that the Apostle does not intimate that Jesus gave to some Methodism, to others Presbyterianism, and others Roman Catholicism, etc. No, when we held such thoughts it was because of more or less misunderstanding --because we failed to see first that there is but the "one Church of the Living God, whose names are written in heaven, "and second, that that one Church is not any of the various sects and parties, but includes the saintly in all of these; "the Lord knoweth them that are His."

NOT GIVEN TO CONVERT THE WORLD

Noting carefully the Apostle's argument in connection with our text, we perceive that the Master did not give these gifts for the conversion of the world. He does specify, however, what they were for, namely, "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ"--the Church, the Bride class. Is it supposable that the Apostle erred in this statement and that the fact is the reverse--that these gifts were provided for the conversion of the world, and that the Apostle thoroughly misunderstood the matter and supposed that they were given for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the Body of Christ? No! We are to be taught by the Apostle and may be sure that there is no mistake, no error in his statement.

Notice the force of the expression, "the perfecting of the saints." It is not sufficient that believers have a little knowledge, a little faith, and a measure of sanctification or devotion to the Lord, for after they have received and attained all of these things they still need the instruction of the Apostles and ministers, pastors and teachers, provided by the great Head of the Church for their perfecting. Ah! there is a force and depth of meaning in that word *perfecting*. We remember that of our Head it is written, "Being made perfect through suffering, He became the Author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him." So His followers are made perfect through suffering.

The Master's perfecting, indeed, was a little different from ours, and yet there is a similarity between the two. He was perfect before He humbled Himself; He was still perfect as the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself; but as a result of His consecration He received a begetting of the Holy Spirit to the divine nature, and His development as a New Creature required that He faithfully carry out His vow, or covenant of sacrifice, in the doing of the will of the Heavenly Father. By such faithfulness He perfected Himself on the divine plane--that is, He proved Himself worthy according to the covenant--"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive glory, honor, dominion and power."--Rev. 5:12.

Similarly the followers of Jesus are to be sharers with Him in the sufferings of this present time and in the glories which shall follow, for "If we suffer with Him we shall also reign with Him." (2 Tim. 2:12.) Although we are imperfect in the flesh, while He was perfect, yet the robe of His righteousness, the merit of His sacrifice, covers all of our blemishes and makes us, as His footstep followers, holy and acceptable before the Father, as joint-sacrificers with Jesus.

The begetting of the Holy Spirit starts us in the life divine. We are not to be perfected in the flesh, but in the spirit, and our perfection and acceptance with the Father will be demonstrated by our loyalty of heart and the fulness and thoroughness with which we submit our all to the Divine will and

seek to glorify God in our bodies and spirits which are His. (I Cor. 6:20.) Our justification comes to us as a reward of faith, regardless of works, but our glorification will follow as a reward for faithfulness.

THESE GIFTS ARE LASTING

Not merely for a few days or years were these gifts to the Church provided; on the contrary, they were to endure throughout this entire Age, until the Church perfected shall pass beyond the veil and be forever with her Redeemer, to share His glory, honor and immortality. The Lord from time to time has raised up evangelists, pastors and teachers for this glorious service of preparing the "chaste virgin," the Church, to be the Bride in glory. But the Apostolic office, as represented in The Twelve specially provided by the Father, has continued and needs no replenishment. We still have their instructions as fully as the early Church, "that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work."-- 2 Tim. 3:16, 17.

That the Apostle did not understand the matter to be merely for a day, but throughout this Age, until the completion of the Church, is clearly evidenced by his statement, namely, that all these gifts were for the edification of the Body of Christ and the perfecting of the saints to the last—"until we all come to the unity of the faith and to the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect Man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

This is a wonderful statement, however we view it. Shall we say that it applies to each individual member of the Church of Christ, and that each individual must come into that full unity of faith, and that full knowledge of the Son of God, and the perfection of manhood in Christ, and to a developed stature of maturity in Christ? Or shall we understand the meaning to be, until the entire Church of Christ shall have reached a full knowledge and shall, as a whole, have come to the condition of a perfect Man, of which Christ is the Head and we are the members --to the full development or stature of the Anointed, the Messiah, Head and members? We believe that the latter is the Apostle's thought.

Nevertheless, it cannot be disputed that the selection of these members all the way down the Age must have been along the lines here indicated. Individually, one partially developed would not be fitted for the Kingdom. One not in the unity of the faith would not be suitable. One not developed to the proper measure or stature as a Christian would not be suitable. Nothing is more plain than that the individual Christian needs a great deal of instruction, edification, building up in the holy faith, testing, proving, chiseling, polishing, fitting, preparing before he shall be ready for a place in the Kingdom.

GOD'S PEOPLE NO LONGER NEED BE MISLED

This thought is confirmed by the succeeding verses, in which the Apostle tells us that by the assistance of these, the Divinely provided gifts, teachers, etc., God's people need no longer, like children, to be tossed to and fro, and be misled by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness of those who would deceive. On the contrary, being sincere, and speaking the truth in love, they are to grow up into membership in the Anointed One in all things--coming fully and completely into fellowship and obedience, under the Head, even Christ.--Verses 14, 15.

Proceeding, the Apostle tells us that all who are recognized as members of the Body of Christ must be properly joined to the Head--by a proper compact, or covenant, intelligently made and fully intended. This union must be compacted, and it requires the entire Gospel Age to effect this

development and compacting as members, that the whole Body of the Anointed may be one--symmetrical, beautiful, co-operative--making increase in its members and edifying itself in love--growing in grace and in knowledge and in character-likeness to the Head.--V. 16.

In conclusion, then, the Captain of our Salvation has gone before, He has accepted us as His joint-heirs, and we are following on, blest by the gifts which He dispensed when He ascended up on high; and we, in turn, will be His gifts to the world of mankind. When as Priests and Kings we shall be associated with our Lord, we shall bless all the families of the earth with a glorious opportunity of knowledge and obedience, that they may, if they will, attain life everlasting, "the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." --Rom. 6:23.

Reprint 5066

RETRIBUTIVE DISCIPLINE OF THE MILLENNIUM

SO FAR AS Divine Justice is concerned, God's provision is that all claims against mankind on the part of Justice shall be settled and closed in the end of this Gospel Age. This is represented in the typical sin-atonement, the satisfaction for sins. The antitypical Atonement Day witnesses the sacrifices of The Christ and the preparation of those worthy to become members of His Body. When Justice shall have accepted that satisfaction, it will clear the books and deliver Adam and all his race from all responsibility accruing from the violation of God's Law by the eating of the forbidden fruit. The death of Jesus is the satisfaction for the sins resulting from the original Adamic sin.

But there have been other sins, flagrant wrongs, for which Justice would demand retribution, sins against the Holy Spirit, against light. All of these are sins against God, against righteousness. To illustrate, consider the Lord's experience: It may be that the rabble were not responsible for the crucifixion of our Lord; but there were *individuals* who had sufficiency of light to have done better. So from the days of Abel to the present time some have suffered gross injustice, and the cries of these violations of Justice appeal to God, just as the blood of Abel cried out. The Scriptures show us how satisfaction will be made also for these before the opening of the great Day of blessing, before the world is turned over fully into the hands of the Mediator of the Kingdom.

The satisfaction for these wilful sins is shown in the picture of the scapegoat. There we see in type how the "great company" will be caused to pass through tribulation, which will have a good effect upon themselves and which will, at the same time, be the means of squaring up accounts for gross violations of Justice outside of Adamic sin. The putting of the hands of the high priest upon the head of the scapegoat pictures the placing of these sins upon the "great company" class and the sending of them into tribulation. These will pass through an experience similar to that which our Lord foretold would come upon the Jewish nation, and which was literally fulfilled. Our Lord states that those horrible sufferings at the end of the Jewish Age were to be a squaring up for sins against Divine Justice--for various misdeeds of previous times. (Luke 11:49-51.) This will leave the world at the opening of the Millennium without anything against them on the books of Justice.

THE DISCIPLINES ACCORDING TO PREVIOUS CHARACTER-DEVELOPMENT

Then Justice will transfer the whole world of mankind into the hands of Messiah, who will take them *just as they are*. They will be in various conditions. Some will be more depraved, others less depraved; some will be more seared in their consciences and some less; and these deficiencies of character will depend upon the way in which each one accepted or rejected light and opportunity in the present time. Those who *knew not* His will and *did it not* will receive few stripes; those who *knew His will* and *did it not* will receive many stripes, because of previous hardening of character. Everybody will be required, eventually, to come up to the full standard of Divine requirements. Those more depraved will have greater difficulty and those less depraved will have less difficulty and receive fewer stripes, in the coming up to Divine requirements.

In other words, every wrong deed, every wrong principle acted upon, has an evil effect upon character, as all right doing brings blessing. So mankind, in proportion as they have in this life obeyed or disobeyed privilege or knowledge, enjoyed and understood, will be elevated or degraded in character when they enter the next Age.

The Apostle says that God is not slack (slow) as men count slackness, but is long-suffering and patient (2 Pet. 3:9); and "He knows how to reserve the ungodly until the Day of Judgment to be punished." (2 Pet. 2:9.) Again we read, "Some men's sins are open, going beforehand to judgment, and others they follow after. (I Tim. 5:24.) That is to say, there are people who do wrong and receive promptly the punishment for their wrong course. Thus they have opportunity of improving upon the past.

There are others who seem to do well, seem to prosper in earthly things; their eyes stand out with fatness; they seem to go unheeded in their wrong course, down to the very tomb. (Psa. 73:3-12.) Will these escape? We answer, "No." In the Day of Judgment they will get their lesson. In that Day of trial they will have much more difficulty than will those who have learned lessons from the tribulations of the present life. A man who has practised evil will require severe discipline before he will learn that the customs of the past will not be allowed. Since this New Order will be such that nothing will be allowed to hinder it, his course in this life, therefore, will then receive retribution, in the sense that it will be the result of his wrong condition.

We all have noticed that some children have been born with a mark that is very humiliating to them; and many of these, by reason of having the lip of scorn turned toward them, have thereby been made humble-minded and beautiful characters. On the other hand, spoiled children who have had their own way have constituted saws and files in the world and have made trouble for others. These, not having learned lessons of self-control in the present life, will be proportionately disadvantaged in the future, and must then learn these lessons.

The question has been asked, will the Decalogue be revived in the Messianic Kingdom? We see no reason why it should not be made the Law of the Kingdom. There was no fault to be found with the *Law*, but with the *weakness, the inability of those who were under the Law*. The Ten Commandments were not given to the *Church*, but the spirit of them is comprehended in the word *Love*, which is the Law of the New Creation. (Rom. 13:8-10.) It would be rather incongruous for the Lord to say to the Church, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not kill; for they would have passed from every such condition of mind before they could become His.

With the world, at the beginning of the New Age, it would be a Law quite over their heads to say, You shall love everybody. They would need to have some simple statements such as, Thou shalt have no other gods but Me; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not murder; thou shalt not bear false witness. The Decalogue is the very best Law for the world of mankind. We cannot improve on the wisdom of the Law-Giver who gave this Law to Moses in the beginning. It will not surprise us, therefore, if the Ten Commandments will be put upon the whole world, just as they were upon the Jews; and that mankind will be shown that the *spirit* of the Law is *Love*; but that they will come *gradually* to the understanding of this principle; for at the beginning they would not have the proper appreciation of the matter.

Reprint 4856

“THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH”

OUR FINITE MINDS have difficulty in understanding some of the deep things of Scripture because of our insufficiency of knowledge and of experience. All that we know of our Lord's pre-human existence is revealed in the Word of God. The Scriptures state that our Lord was rich and *became* poor; not that He *remained rich* and *seemed* to become poor, but that He actually became poor that we might become rich. The Apostle says that He divested Himself of those conditions that He had before He became human, and that He took a bondman's form. He was made flesh. The explanation is given, “A body hast Thou prepared Me,” a human body, and thus He was made “a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death.”--Heb. 10:5; 2:9.

Putting together the Scriptural statements on the subject we have this: In His pre-human existence our Lord was the *Logos*, “the beginning of the creation of God,” the Alpha of all God's creation, and the Omega in that Jehovah created only this One. Of the *Logos* it is written, “All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made.” (John 1:3.) He was on the spirit plane, next to the Father.

In the Divine Plan of the Ages, formulated long before, a proposition was made our Lord with a view to the redemption of mankind; provision was made that if obedient to the Father's will, the *Logos* would receive still further exaltation, even to the divine nature. For this joy set before Him, our Lord took the various steps necessary to complete the great work of redemption. The contract into which He entered with the Father was one which involved much humiliation. While there was a sacrifice of power, of honor, of glory, yet no sacrifice of life was involved in the first step taken; namely, His acceptance of the Father's arrangement that He should be made flesh; that He should become a human being, that He should give up His existence on the heavenly plane.

Originally, as the *Logos*, our Lord was a soul on the spirit plane, in the sense that any intelligent being is a soul; for the word “soul” signifies being; and the transfer of the life principle to a human body brought Him to the earthly plane. The life principle was the same that He had before, therefore the personality was the same. It was important to have identity of mind; and this He had by Divine arrangement.

A BODY GIVEN FOR THE PURPOSE OF DEATH

The Scriptures do not explain how the spark of life belonging to the spirit being known as the *Logos* became transferred to the human plane. When our Lord was thus changed, He merely took the step of getting ready to become the sacrifice for sinners. In His pre-existent state He could not have given the corresponding price for Adam; for He had not the human life to offer. But when He became a human being and had reached the age of maturity, He was in condition to be the Sin-offering.

We would say that our Lord as a human being was the *same soul* as in His pre-existent condition; for He had the same life principle as before; and that when He became human He did not die as a spirit being. The Scriptures declare that our Lord was “made flesh,” a human being; and that the difference between Him and mankind in general was that He was perfect—“holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners”--separate from the remainder of the human race. (Heb. 7:26.) The Scriptures also explain that this difference resulted from the fact that He was specially begotten. The life principle by which He was conceived came directly from the Heavenly Father.

This explanation is altogether different from the theory known as Incarnation. The thought of the theory of incarnation is that a spirit being took possession of an earthly being--became incarnate, dwelt in the flesh, in the same way that some are possessed of evil spirits which dwell within them. This, we believe, is a wrong thought respecting our Lord which has come down from the "Dark Ages." There is nothing in the Scriptures about *incarnation*. The Scriptures do not say that our Lord's *body* died, while the *spirit being* within it remained alive. But the Bible says that our Lord left the glory which He had with the Father and was found in fashion as a man; that He humbled Himself unto death, even unto the death of the cross; that He was "put to death in the flesh."--John 17:4, 5; I Pet. 3:18; Phil. 2:8.

"MADE FLESH AND DWELT AMONG US"

From what we know of childhood we recognize it as the period of development. And so we read of our Lord: "And the child grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him...And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." (Luke 2:40, 52.) His was not a mind that had all the experiences and intelligence of His pre-existent state. We read that He *grew* in wisdom. His *mind* grew. Of course, being perfect He would learn much more rapidly and accurately than would others; and this accounts for the fact that as a child He was able to confound the Doctors of the Law. With His natural qualities of mind He was able to grasp the situation, to take in things rapidly.

St. Luke tells us that at the age of twelve years our Lord accompanied His mother and Joseph to Jerusalem. The Jewish children were accustomed to attending religious services; and it was a custom that Jewish boys should make a consecration at the age at which Jesus did. Jesus knew that He was different from other boys. Very likely He told them the facts relating to His miraculous birth. It is assumed by some that He was even charged with having an illegitimate birth. But since we do not know definitely about this, we must confine ourselves to the Scriptures.

Our Lord came into the world in a miraculous manner for the purpose of fulfilling the prophecies, which were all to attain fulfilment in Him. Naturally He would avail Himself of the first opportunity of ascertaining the requirements. When at twelve years of age He learned from the Doctors of the Law that He could not assume the priestly function as a boy, He made no further attempt, but was subject to His parents, or to Mary and her husband, who properly enough were His guardians until He reached thirty years of age, when His first step was to make *full* consecration of Himself.

"I COME TO DO THY WILL"

Our Lord at thirty years of age certainly had much knowledge that Adam did not possess when he was on trial. Our Lord had some knowledge of what constitutes sin and its penalty. He had also knowledge of the fact that God had arranged for the redemption of mankind, through the great Mediator of the New Covenant--a Savior, a Redeemer, a Deliverer. He knew that the *inability of others* to keep the Divine Law written in the Decalogue and *His ability* to keep that Law, constituted the difference between Himself and others.

Doubtless our Lord's mother had told Him of His miraculous birth and of the message that had come through Gabriel and of the prophecy of Anna and of Simeon. And He had in mind the prophecy respecting Himself and the future of the great Messiah that was to come and deliver the world. All this knowledge was very valuable.

But the thing that our Lord evidently lacked was the knowledge of the deeper things of the Scriptures. He evidently found perplexities in the Bible; for He had not received the Holy Spirit. Although He might be better qualified to understand these things than were the fallen race, yet, as the Apostle says, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God,...neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (I Cor. 2:14.) Jesus had not been begotten of the Holy Spirit; therefore He did not have the understanding of the prophecies and symbols.

"THE HEAVENS WERE OPENED"

All this knowledge began to come upon Him when He was begotten of the Holy Spirit. He began to understand the higher things, the deep things of God. He had understood in a measure about the Lamb that was slain as the sin-offering and the things about the putting away of sin, but nothing to identify the One who was to be the great Deliverer or to explain the wonderful pictures in the Scriptures. Just as soon as He was begotten of the Holy Spirit He began to see that if He would reign, it would be by a manifestation of loyalty to God and to righteousness. As soon as He was illuminated He saw the things pertaining to the suffering.

During our Lord's earthly ministry He learned obedience through the things which He suffered. (Heb. 5:8.) And thus He received the great illumination which was so powerful an addition to Him--just as it is a great illumination to us to see the terms and conditions of our calling--that we must walk in the steps of our Lord if we would reign with Him.

Just in what manner the higher things were revealed to our Lord we may not know. St. Paul tells us of wonderful revelations which were made to him. Doubtless our Lord also had revelations, but just what was revealed to Him thus, in order that He might understand His pre-human conditions, etc., we may not know. Nor do we know how all the acts and experiences during the previous period of His existence before He became flesh could have been impressed suddenly upon His mind. The same God who is able to give us a spirit body which will assimilate all the experiences of the present life, could also impress upon Jesus all the previous experiences which He had had.

The impress of previous experiences did not come to Him during His boyhood; for He was then *growing* in knowledge and in stature, and in favor with God and man. We believe that the impress came at the time of His consecration at Jordan; and that not only had He there given to Him the impress of His previous experiences with the Father and of the remote past, but also that He had light given to Him upon the Scriptures so that He could grasp the full purport of what He had done when He gave Himself in consecration.

As the "heavens" continued to open to our Lord, He would see that the experiences of the Messiah, which could not have been commanded under the Law Covenant, were nevertheless to be His privileges as He would see these to be the Divine will, as He would see these to be the Divine Law in the Prophecies. As a sheep would be dumb before its shearers, so He would not rebel as His rights were taken from Him. He would know that He was to be put to death; and that He was to be an innocent victim. He was to be the crucified One, the antitype of the brazen serpent.

Having consecrated to fulfil all things written in the Book Jesus was fully prepared for His every experience. This we see also is the purport of that beautiful picture in Revelation of the scroll sealed with seven seals. The proclamation was made, "Who is worthy to open the Book, and to loose the seals thereof?" (Rev. 5:2.) Up to that time no one had been found who could open the Book. But at that time our Lord was found worthy to open the Book, and to Him was given all the knowledge in the Divine Plan, that He might carry out these things in the sacrificing of the flesh.

At His consecration at Jordan our Lord gave up the human life--He gave up all rights and privileges as a human being. The ultimate purpose of this full surrender of His life was that He might bring everlasting life to mankind. The Father's arrangement with Him, however, was such that He might retain His personality, His identity. But after He was begotten of the Holy Spirit, He was a New Creature; and as a New Creature He had the human body in which to develop character, in which to have His experiences. This New Creature was developed to perfection during the three and one-half years of His ministry, and was ready for the spirit body which had been promised to Him.

If our Lord had not been found perfect, faithful, loyal, in His pre-human condition, He never would have had this privilege of becoming a man and the Redeemer of men. Because of His obedience as a man He received the greater glory, immortality. He was perfect under all the favorable conditions before He became a man; He was faithful as a man, and being glorified, He is still faithful. Therefore He maintains the same relationship to God and to righteousness that He ever had. Consequently He would not specially need any of those things which assist in making character; for He has never shown any defects to be rectified. But we may suppose that the experiences which He had in His pre-existent state, and while He was a man, and since He was glorified, all cooperate to make His character intelligent and loyal in the very highest sense.

HE "MANIFESTED FORTH HIS GLORY"

Let us examine some Scriptures which might be understood to imply that our Lord had a clear recollection of His pre-human experiences with the Father.

(1) "Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do; for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." (John 5:19.) These words were used in connection with the healing of the sick. They do not, of course, mean that the Lord had seen the Father healing the sick, but that He had seen the Father's will, the Father's Plan.

Our Lord was simply carrying out the Father's will concerning Him: "The eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped; then shall the lame man leap as an hart"; etc. (Isa. 35:5, 6.) These miracles of healing were some of the things that He was to do, as written in the Scriptures. He knew that He was to do these miracles and that they were a foreshadowing of the things to be done by and by. As we read, "This beginning of miracles did Jesus... and manifested forth His glory."--John 2:11.

(2) "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth." (Prov. 8:23-25.) This passage may be viewed either as a prophecy of what our Lord understood of His previous condition, or as a figure of speech setting forth the Wisdom of God all through the ages. But since the Wisdom of God is specially revealed in our Lord Jesus, so this was a foreshadowing of what Jesus might know respecting His pre-human condition.

(3) When our Lord at twelve years of age asked, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" (Luke 2:49) He would have in mind the Heavenly Father, just as any consecrated child of God might think of Him. From the information which He had received from His mother, Mary, He would know of His miraculous birth and of His special mission in the world. His mother knew that He could not be true to Himself and His mission unless she told Him about these things. Having been told that He was specially holy and miraculously born for this very purpose, He now

turned to Mary and asked, Is it possible that you should not know that I should be about My Father's business? Did not you tell me of this thing? He was surprised that Mary and Joseph should not understand that this was the very thing for Him to do.

MEMORY THE MEANS OF IDENTIFICATION

(4) Our Lord's statement, "Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58), serves to identify the man Jesus with His previous condition as the *Logos* before He was made flesh and dwelt among us. He is the same today, although He has been received to the spirit plane. He says, "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold I am alive forevermore." (Rev. 1:18.) Originally He was on the spirit plane. Later as a man, He lived; He died. At His resurrection He was made alive on the spirit plane, far above angels, principalities and powers. But the identity, the personality, is the same.

And we can readily believe that the memory of things past is still with our Lord. We also think that He remembers the experiences which He had in the flesh and also those which He had before He became flesh. Otherwise, He could not identify Himself. Memory seems to be the means of identification of our personality. Nothing in this Scripture would seem to imply that our Lord was born into the world with the knowledge of all His previous experiences. After His consecration He received the knowledge by some means which we are not great enough to understand--by some power the Father used; for the Father has all power.

(5) "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever." (Heb. 13:8.) This statement would not identify our Lord with His previous condition; for in His pre-existent state, He was not *Jesus*. He was called Jesus at His birth. He became Jesus Christ at His baptism. "By His knowledge shall My Righteous Servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities." (Isa. 53:11.) Our Lord began to bear the iniquities of the world at His consecration, and finished so doing at His crucifixion. Since then He has been reckoning certain persons to be members of Himself. When the Holy Spirit came upon Him and the heavens were opened unto Him, He probably received the knowledge which would enable Him to overcome.

Before His consecration, when our Lord was a perfect man just as Adam was, we know not what force Satan's temptations would have had; but when His mind was opened, then Satan came to tempt Him along the very line of His work, along the line of the consecration which He had already made. Satan attempted to overthrow His consecration and to thwart its completion. How much knowledge our Lord had we do not know; but the Heavenly Father gave Him sufficient to enable Him to come off conqueror. And so with us. Our Lord gives us knowledge of Himself and of the Father. He shows us the relation between the sufferings of this present time and the glories that are to follow. Thus by knowledge all the members of the Body of this Great Righteous Servant will be permitted to come off "more than conquerors" by His grace.

THE NATURAL MAN CANNOT PERCEIVE

SPIRITUAL THINGS

(6) "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness." (John 3:11.) The intimation is that our Lord could tell heavenly things, but that He was not disposed to do so, because Nicodemus and others found it difficult to receive even the earthly things. How could Jesus tell of the heavenly things? By that time He may have had the impress of memory in respect to His pre-existent condition.

We are to tell the heavenly things, but not to the natural man. "Cast not your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you." (Matt. 7:6.) Our Lord said that He had many things to tell His disciples, but that they could not receive them until the Holy Spirit came. (John 16:12,13.) And, "The Holy Spirit was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified." (John 7:39.) "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned"; "but God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." (I Cor. 2:14, 10.) Now if the Holy Spirit reveals some of the deep things to *us*, how much *more* could the perfect mind of our Lord enter into the holy things?

"THE GLORY WHICH I HAD WITH THEE"

(7) Our Lord's words, "Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine Own self, with the glory which I had with Thee, before the world was" (John 17:5), would not signify that He had no knowledge of His prospective share in the divine nature. He had the assurance of the Scriptures, one of which was that He should be very high; another that the Lord would give unto Him the Kingdom; another says that Jehovah God would "divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong; because He hath poured out His soul unto death" (Isa. 53:12); still another says, "The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, Thou art a Priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek." (Psa. 110:4.) He was to be both a Priest and a King of very high state and honor.

Probably our Lord knew these things fully after He was begotten of the Holy Spirit, even as St. Paul was caught away to the third heaven and received knowledge of wonderful things "which it is not lawful for a man to utter." (2 Cor. 12:4.) And so it is most probable that our Lord Jesus had some special revelation; for we read that He said that "as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself" (John 5:26); thus indicating His knowledge of the fact that both He and the Church would share in the divine nature and inherency of life.

Our Lord's words show that He was not wishing to aspire to these glorious things. Very humbly He said, "Father, I have come to do Thy will. Father, I shall perform the work Thou hast given Me to do and I shall be glad to be returned to the glory I had with Thee-- to ask nothing as a favor. I am glad that I have had this privilege, and I think that I shall not suffer by reason of My obedience to Thy will. I shall be glad, therefore, to be with Thee in the glory that I shared with Thee before the world was."

He did not say to the Father, "Do not forget to pay Me; do not forget what Thou didst promise." No. He did the Father's will without any thought of compensation connected with it. So with us. Anyone who looks for the divine nature merely *as a reward* and feels that it is due him, is taking an improper view. We should feel that to be on the side of righteousness and to be identified with our Lord Jesus is a great privilege, if there be no reward of the divine nature at all; but the thought of the reward is a great incentive to run patiently for something super-abundant, exceedingly beyond what we could have asked or thought.

THE BABE OF BETHLEHEM

“For unto you is born this day in the City of David a Savior, which is Christ, the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.”--Luke 2:11, 12.

WHY WAS THIS BABE EXPECTED?

WHY WERE all men in expectation of Him at the time of His birth? What was to be peculiar about Him to lead Israel to expect His birth? The answer to this question is that God had made a certain promise centuries before and the promise had not been fulfilled. This promise contained the thought that a holy child would be born, and that in some way, not explained in the promise, this child would bring the blessing the world needed. Therefore every mother amongst the Israelites was very solicitous that she might be the mother of a son rather than a daughter, that perchance she might be the mother of this promised child. Thus the matter went on for years until, finally, the child was born.

The promise back of the expectation was that which God made to Abraham, saying, *"In thee and in thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."* From that time forward Abraham began to look for the promised Seed--the promised child. He looked first of all to his own children, and was finally informed that it would not be one of his children direct, but that through their children, at some remote date, this child should be born-- the Seed of Abraham. From that time onward, all the Israelites were waiting for the birth of the child that should bring the blessing.

But why was a Messiah necessary? Why wait at all for the birth of the child? The answer to this question is that sin had come into the world; that God had placed our first parents--holy, pure and free from sin--in the glorious conditions of the Garden of Eden with every favorable prospect and everlasting life at their command if they continued in harmony with God. But by reason of their disobedience they came under Divine displeasure and sentence of death. This sentence of death has brought in its wake aches, pains, sorrows, tears, sighing, crying and death--all of these experiences as the result of sin.

Our heavenly Father said to our first parents--and this was the first intimation that He gave them of a deliverance --that "The Seed of the woman shall bruise the Serpent's head." The *serpent* in this expression means *Satan*--all the powers of evil, everything adverse to humanity, everything adverse to the blessings which God had given them, and which they had lost by disobedience. But the promise was vague and they understood little about the "Seed of the woman" and "bruising the Serpent's head." It merely meant in an allegorical way a great victory over Sin and Satan, without explaining how it should come.

So mankind continued to die; they continued to have aches and pains and sorrows; they continued going down to the tomb. They realized that what they needed was some Savior to come and deliver them from the power of sin, to deliver them from the death penalty of sin--a Savior who would be, in other words, a Life-giver. They were dying and needed new life. This is the meaning of the word *Savior* in the language used by our Lord and the Apostles. They were hoping and expecting that God would send a *Life-giver*.

It was on this account that they were so greatly concerned regarding the promise made to Abraham—"In thee and in thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed"--they shall be granted a release from sin and death. In no other way could mankind be blessed. It would be

impossible to bless mankind except by releasing them from sin and death. Hence, the Scriptures tell us of God's sympathy; that God looked down from His holy habitation, and beheld our sorrow, and heard, figuratively, "the groaning of the prisoners"--humanity--all groaning and travailing under this penalty of death--some with few aches and pains, and some with more aches and pains; some with few sorrows, and some with greater sorrows, but all groaning and travailing in pain.

But God's sympathy was manifested; and we read that, "He looked down and beheld that there was no eye to pity and no arm to save" and with "His own Arm He brought salvation." This is what was promised to Abraham--that one should come from his posterity who would be the *Savior of the world*; and because this promise was made to Abraham and to his Seed, they were marked out as separate from all other nations and peoples. To the Jewish nation alone belonged this great honor--that through them should come this salvation. Hence, from that time onward the Jews spoke of themselves as God's people, the people whom God had promised to bless, and through whom He would bring a blessing to all others. Therefore, all other people were called *heathen* (or *nations*, which the word means). Israel was thus separated because God's Covenant was with them, and not with the others. But God's Covenant with Israel was for the blessing of all the others: "In thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Now, we have the "Why" of this wonderful babe's being born.

HOW WAS THIS BABE PECULIAR --HOLY, HARMLESS, UNDEFILED?

How could He be a Savior? In what way could He be different from any other babe? Why not use some other babe as the one through whom salvation should come? The answer of the Bible is that salvation could not come to mankind unless there should be a satisfaction of Justice on account of *Original Sin*. That must be the first consideration. The penalty, "Dying, thou shalt die," pronounced against the first man, must be met before the world could be blessed.

Why not let any man die? Because all were under the sentence of the original condemnation, and none could be a Ransom-price or a substitute. Hence the necessity for a specially born babe, different from any other babe. In what way was this One differently born? The Bible explains to us very distinctly that He was not begotten of an earthly father. Although Joseph was espoused to Mary, yet this child was not the child of Joseph. The Bible explains that this child was specially begotten by Divine power, in the mother, though she was still a "virgin" when she brought forth the child.

This is the Scriptural proposition; and while it may not seem clear to some, yet the Word of God standeth sure. If the Redeemer was not perfect then He could not be the Savior of the world. The promised redemption implied that Jesus would be perfect; it implied that He would be as the first man was before he sinned. "For since by man came death, by man shall come also the resurrection of the dead"; "As all in Adam die, even so shall all in Christ be made alive."

So this one must be, as the Apostle declares, "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners." (Heb. 7:26.) He must be entirely distinct and separate from humanity so far as sinful features were concerned. If we had time it would be interesting to go into the scientific features--of how a perfect child could be born from an imperfect mother. If we can have a perfect life germ we can have a perfect child from an imperfect mother. If a breeder of stock wishes to raise the standard of his stock, he selects a fine bull, a male goat, or a male ram, and thus he improves the entire herd. And so, if we had perfect fathers, we would soon have a perfect race. But there is no father who can produce a perfect child. Hence it was necessary in this case (and the Scriptures declare it was accomplished) that God should beget this Son by power from on high. Therefore, that which was

born of the “virgin” was separate and distinct from all humanity. His life came not from an earthly father, but from His Heavenly Father.

WHO WAS HE THUS BORN?

It is written that before He became flesh Jesus had an existence; as He declared, "Before Abraham was, I am." Again, in one of His prayers He said, "Father, glorify Thou Me with the glory that I had with Thee before the world was." The Revelator tells us that "He was the beginning of the creation of God," and Paul says that "by Him all things were made." And so our Lord Jesus was not only the beginning, but also the active agent of the Father in all the creative work in the angelic world and in the creation of humanity, and in all things that were created.

The whole matter is summed up by the Apostle John. We will give a more literal translation of "In the beginning was the Word." [This expression, *Word*, in the Greek is *Logos*. The thought behind the word *Logos* is that in olden times a king, instead of speaking his commands directly to his people, sat behind a lattice work, and his *Logos*, or messenger, or word, or representative, stood before the lattice work, and gave the message of the king to the people in a loud tone of voice. The king himself was not seen by the people--the *Logos* was the one seen. So this is the picture the Scriptures give us of how Jesus was the express representative of the Heavenly Father, the One through whom the Heavenly Father made Himself known--the Word, or the *Logos*. So we read in the first chapter of John, "In the beginning was the *Logos*, and the *Logos* was with *the* God, and the *Logos* was a god. The same was in the beginning with *the* God. By Him were all things made, and without Him was not anything made."

In other words, Jesus was the direct Creator of all things. He was the Divine Power, Agent, Word, Messenger, the *Logos* of Jehovah. He did all the great work of creation; but He Himself was the first of God's direct creation, the First-born of all creatures, that in all things He might have the pre-eminence--the first place.

When the time came that our Heavenly Father made known His great purpose that He would bless the world, He gave opportunity to this First-begotten One--this One begotten of the Father--to be the servant in this great work He intended to accomplish for mankind. Consequently, the Scriptures state that "for the joy set before Him He endured the cross, despising the shame." And now He has sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. He has this great reward because of His obedience even unto death, the death of the cross.

The Apostle speaks of Him as having been rich, but for our sakes becoming poor, that through His poverty we might be made rich. He tells us how He left the glory which He had with the Father and humbled Himself to the human nature. Why? Because, as already stated, it was necessary that some one should become man's Redeemer; an angel could not redeem man, neither could an animal redeem man. The Divine law is "an eye for an eye; a tooth for a tooth; a man's life for a man's life." This was to teach us a great lesson: that perfect *human life* having been condemned to death, it would require a *perfect human* life to redeem it. It was therefore necessary that Jesus should become the "Man Christ Jesus," in order "that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for every man."

WHAT RESULTS HAVE FOLLOWED?

The results that have followed have been that He Himself proved His own faithfulness. "Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross"--the most ignominious form of death. It pleased the Father thus to prove Him, not

only by Death, but by the most ignominious form of death--dying as a culprit, being crucified between two thieves. What a terrible ignominy to die thus!

It would be ignominy enough for *us* in our *imperfection*, but for *Him*, perfect, "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners," it must have been a cause for deep and poignant sorrow. Having completed the laying down of His life, at the end of the three and a half years, He cried, "It is finished!" What? Not His work, for much of that lay before Him! He merely finished *this part* of the work, finished laying down His life a ransom-price.

What next? After His death came His resurrection; and we read that "God raised Him from the dead on the third day." According to the Scriptures He was raised up from death a glorious being—"sown in corruption, raised in incorruption; sown in dishonor, raised in glory; sown in weakness, raised in power; sown a natural body, raised a spirit body"; "Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, those in heaven, and those on earth, and those under the earth; that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."--Phil. 2:10.

But we see not yet all knees bowed to Him. Why not? The Scriptures tell us that before He begins His great work for the world of mankind, He first does a work for the elect, the Church, those who desire to walk in His footsteps, to gather out of the world a Bride, to be co-workers with Him in all the great work of the Father. This is the only work yet in process of accomplishment, and this has been going on now for over eighteen centuries. We see how He gathered out the saintly ones from amongst the Jews, "Israelites, indeed, in whom there was no guile." Not finding enough to make the desired number, He proceeded to gather them from all nations, kindreds, tongues and peoples.

The Apostle tells us that when this Bride class is united with Him they shall be parts of the Seed of Abraham; as we read, "And if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's Seed, and heirs of the promise." (Gal. 3:29.) This statement relates to the promise made to Abraham, that through him and his Seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Thus we see the work that Christ is accomplishing now.

The invitation to become the Bride of Christ is a very special invitation and those who would be His must walk in the "narrow way." If they will sit in His Throne, they must suffer with Him. If they suffer with Him they shall also share His glory. So "the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that shall follow," were not only to be accomplished in our Lord Jesus, personally, but He was an example for *all the Church* who are justified through faith in His blood. They have a share with Him in His sufferings, and will share in His glory; they have also a share in the First Resurrection; as the Revelator declares, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the First Resurrection, on such the Second Death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."--Rev. 20:6.

Saint Paul says, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord," "that I might know Him and the power of His resurrection" (the special resurrection) to the divine nature. How? By being made conformable to His death; for, "If we suffer with Him we shall also reign with Him."

WHAT ABOUT THE FUTURE?

All the families of the earth are to be blessed, as originally promised in Eden: "The Seed of the woman shall bruise the Serpent's head." Also, as St. Paul states in the 16th chapter of Romans,

"The very God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." So, then, the next thing in order in the outworking of God's Plan will be to bruise Satan and destroy sin.

When and how will this be done? Just as soon as this Age shall end; because this Age is merely for the development of the Bride class; then will come the promised Free Grace to all the families of the earth. Messiah's Kingdom shall come. He has promised that when He shall reign, all His faithful shall reign with Him: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My Throne, even as I overcame and am set down with My Father in His Throne." All the Church will be associated with Him in His great Messianic Kingdom; and "He shall reign from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth"; and "Unto Him every knee shall bow and every tongue confess, to the glory of God the Father"; "The knowledge of the glory of God shall fill the whole earth." The whole earth will become as the Garden of Eden. Paradise Lost will be Paradise Restored. The Divine Image lost in Adam will be restored to man. Human nature will be brought to perfection. But the glorious reward to the Church will be the divine nature, to be like her Lord, to sit at His right hand, and to bless the world of mankind. Man will become not only perfect, having all that Adam had, but will have additional knowledge and character; and there is every evidence that this shall be an eternal blessing.

SHALL NONE BE LOST?

Yes, the Scriptures tell us that some will be *lost*, and that the loss they shall sustain will be loss of *life*, and therefore all the pleasures of life. "*They shall be as though they had not been*"; "They shall be destroyed from amongst the people." St. Peter says, "They shall be destroyed as brute beasts."--Acts 3:23; 2 Pet. 2:12.

When? When the eyes of their understanding shall have been opened to see the Lord and to understand His glorious character, and they shall have had opportunity to appreciate and enjoy His blessing. When such intentionally reject the grace of God, they shall die the Second Death, from which there is no resurrection, no hope of recovery. But, thank God, there shall be no knowledge of suffering for them; they shall be destroyed as brute beasts.

In proportion as we believe in this Babe of Bethlehem shall we rejoice today. In proportion as we believe He was manifested on our behalf; in proportion as we believe He died for our sins; in proportion as we recognize Him as the glorified Savior; in proportion as we have surrendered our hearts to Him and seek to do the things well pleasing to him shall we have the peace of God.

Our hope on behalf of mankind in general is that in God's due time His blessing shall reach all--not the same as that for the Church, but as St. Peter tells us in Acts 3:19-21, "Times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord, and He shall send Jesus Christ, who before was preached unto you, whom the heavens must retain until the Times of Restitution of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy Prophets."

Reprint 4963

WHY CHRIST AROSE FROM THE DEAD

“If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain and your faith also vain; yea, and we are found false witnesses of God . . . Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.”--1. Cor. 15:14, 15, 18.

THE FAITH ONCE delivered to the saints by Jesus and the Apostles in respect to the resurrection of the dead has been very generally lost. Christian people profess a belief in the resurrection, because they find it stated in the Bible, yet they are continually in difficulty in their endeavor to make the Scriptural teaching on the subject square with some of the unscriptural theories received into the Church, and incorporated into many of the creeds during the “Dark Ages.”

St. Paul warned the Church against these human philosophies, and called them “science, falsely so-called,” which makes void the Word of God. These errors have been instrumental in dividing the faith of God's people into six hundred denominations, with six hundred different professions. If God's people could all come back to the simplicity of the Bible's teaching in respect to the resurrection of the dead, all of these differences would speedily disappear. God's Word would be seen to be beautiful and harmonious, satisfactory to the consecrated intellect, as none of our sectarian creeds are.

Really the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead has been repudiated by all denominations, not willingly, not intentionally, but perforce, as it were. An opposite theory received and entrenched in the minds gives no place for the doctrine of the resurrection, as the Bible presents it. Consequently we have twisted the doctrine of the resurrection and recite, “I believe in the resurrection of the body.”

Yet even this perverted view of the resurrection is not satisfactory to those who hold it. They wish many a time that the doctrine of the resurrection were not in the Bible, so much difference does it cause. For instance, how inconsistent it seems that they should say, “I believe in the resurrection of the body,” and then say, as many do, Dying is but going home, getting rid of the mortal flesh, and being freed from its limitations. If it is a blessing to die and get free from the limitations of the body, how could it be a blessing to be reincarcerated in the body, and be obliged to keep it through all eternity? Such is the inconsistency of the resurrection, however, from the viewpoint of the creeds of men.

THE BIBLE RESURRECTION REASONABLE

There is nothing inconsistent in the Bible presentation of the resurrection. Not from the Bible, but from men, comes the suggestion of the resurrection of the *body*. The Bible invariably refers to the resurrection of the *soul*. It is the *soul* that dies; as we read, “The soul that sinneth, *it* shall die.” Adam was created a living soul, but his living soul came under the death sentence because he disobeyed God. It was his *soul* that was redeemed from death, not his body. “I will redeem thy *life* from destruction.”--Psalm 103:4.

To accomplish this redemption, we read that Christ Jesus “poured out His soul unto death”; “He made His soul an offering for sin.” Moreover, we are particularly told that it was the soul of Jesus that was raised from the dead: “Thou wilt not leave My soul in *sheol*. St. Peter quotes this statement as prophetic of the resurrection of Jesus, that His soul was not left in *hades*; God raised Jesus from the dead on the third day. With what body do the dead come? is a totally different question. Some dead souls, in the resurrection, will come forth with spirit bodies, and others with

human bodies, according to the Bible. But the important part is, that it is the *soul*, the *being*, that comes forth, that is resurrected-- not the body. If the *soul* dies, as the Bible declares, then manifestly the soul should be resurrected.

The difficulty with us has been that we "have made void the Word of God" by our "traditions." We received from the Grecian philosophers a tradition which Socrates and Plato both advocated, namely, that when a human being dies he does not really die. The soul, it is claimed, cannot die, but, whenever the soul gets out of the body, the body dies. How strange it seems that we all, as intelligent, thoughtful beings, have accepted this heathen philosophy, without a word of Scripture for its support, and with hundreds of Scriptures to condemn it!

We can see how the heathen philosophers might be led to conjure up such a theory, because of their desire to believe in a future life, and because they had no revelation from God respecting a future life. They therefore tried their best to convince themselves that man really does not die--that no man can die. The Bible theory is the very reverse of this, namely, that a man does die; that he is a soul, a thinking, sentient being. Neither is he a bodiless being, and indeed he cannot be a being at all without a body. His body may change, as science declares it does gradually, hour by hour, until a complete change is effected in seven years.

Thus a man, a soul, a sentient being, may in a life of fifty years have sloughed off gradually sufficient matter to have composed seven bodies. But the moment the sloughing off of this dying matter and the substitution of living matter ceases, we have death; and as soon as the body dies the soul dies--that is, the intelligent being ceases. There can be no thinking without a brain, no breathing without lungs, no maintenance of life in any sense of the word without a body.

This would have been a total destruction of the soul had not God specially provided, as the Prophet declares, that He would redeem man's life from destruction, through the redemptive work accomplished by Jesus in giving His soul an offering for man's sin, and thus making possible man's resurrection from the dead.

It is in consequence of this Divine provision through Christ for a resurrection of humanity that the Scriptures speak of death as merely a falling asleep for a time, to wait for the new body in the resurrection, rather than to speak of us as dying as the brute beasts. The word *sleep* implies that in the Divine purpose a future life is intended, and will eventually be given.

"BUT NOW IS CHRIST RISEN"

St. Paul does not leave the matter of Christ's resurrection undecided. He positively affirms that, "Christ is risen from the dead," and that, thus risen, "He is the First-fruits of those that slept," which implies that when He was raised the others still slept. Jesus slept during a part of three days, from the time He died until the Father raised Him from the dead, from *hades*, from *sheol*, from the tomb, on the third day. He, as the First-fruits of the sleeping ones, is an example and a guarantee of the fulfilment of the Divine promise, that "there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust."

It behooves us to take a decided stand, either with the Grecian philosophers and their theories, or with the Bible. The two are in conflict and whoever attempts to hold both is in confusion. If the dead are not dead, then no human being is dead. And if no one is dead, how could there be a resurrection of the dead?

The inconsistency of the theory held respecting the resurrection of the *body* has invited a very reasonable and just criticism. The skeptic asks, "How could the body be resurrected, after it has gone to dust and after the dust has been scattered to the four winds?" They tell us of a grave that was opened near an apple tree, and it was found that a root from the tree had entered the coffin and practically absorbed the corpse, from which it had produced thousands of apples, which in turn had been shipped to various parts of the world, some of the poorer grades being fed to hogs, whose hams were cured and sent abroad and thus passed into other human beings, to become parts of still other human bodies. The question is a proper one, but it is an unanswerable one from the standpoint of our former misbelief and our poor attempt to combine human philosophy and Divine Revelation.

But such a question brings no consternation to the Bible student who follows the Scriptures alone. The Scriptures never speak of the resurrection of our bodies. They do tell of the resurrection of the soul, and that in the resurrection God giveth it (the soul) a body as it pleaseth Him.

How reasonable it will be for the world to be awakened in practically the condition in which they went down into death! And these will experience, if willing and obedient, a gradual resurrection or raising up to the image and likeness of Father Adam in his perfection. But some in the resurrection will receive spirit bodies like unto the angels, and some like unto the body of Christ in His resurrection, which Saul of Tarsus beheld--"shining above the brightness of the sun at noonday."

The class that is promised a resurrection in spirit bodies is the Church--the saintly few who walk in the footsteps of Jesus. The begetting of the Holy Spirit which comes to these changes their nature from earthly to spiritual. If they are faithful to their covenant their resurrection will be to glory, honor and immortality, as explained by St. Paul in the context, saying, "It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown an animal body, it is raised a spirit body."

This is a description of the resurrection which God has promised to all the members of the Body of Christ, which is the Church. St. Paul declares that the members of this Body fall asleep to awaken in the glorious morning of the New Dispensation. But he adds, "We shall not all sleep"--some will be alive and remain till the second coming of Jesus. These, however, will not take precedence over the sleeping ones, for "The dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain" "shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," ...because "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God." As the death of Jesus was absolutely necessary as the atoning price for human sin, so the resurrection of Jesus was absolutely necessary, that He might not remain dead through all eternity, but be glorified, and in due time come again to effect the resurrection of His Church and, subsequently, the awakening and uplifting of all the families of the earth.

Hearken to the special promise made to the Church: "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the First Resurrection; on such the Second Death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God, and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." (Rev. 20:6.) Also note the promise of the world's resurrection: "There shall be a resurrection, both of the just and the unjust." (Acts 24:15.) Again, "They that have done evil" shall come forth, that they may enjoy a resurrection effected by "judgments," disciplines, chastisements, which will develop in them character; and the glory which will be attained will be perfection--a raising up to all at first possessed by Father Adam, lost through disobedience, and redeemed by the precious blood of Christ.--John 5:28, 29, R.V.

“A KIND OF FIRST-FRUIT”

Every Sunday is a memorial of the resurrection of our Lord from the dead, and if a proper conception of the Master's resurrection were kept in mind we would not think of quarreling with the expression "Easter Sunday." But alas, this name Easter is associated with heathen philosophies and idolatries, which did so much to make the Word of God of none effect; and the fact should be noted that it is the name of a Greek goddess. The compromising spirit induced some of the early Church to admit the heathen philosophies and to commingle with these the inspired teachings of the Bible; but now there is the loud call to true Christians to rid themselves of science and philosophy "falsely so-called," and to return to the Biblical simplicity of the Divine Revelation.

Of this Revelation alone St. Peter declares, "It is able to make you wise unto salvation," and to "give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." And again, "The Word of God is sufficient, that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto every good work." Let us today, then, rejoice in Him who died for our sins and who rose on the third day for our justification.

Let us rid our minds of the foolish thought that He did not really *die*, that He only *seemed* to die--that when the Roman soldiers crucified Him, He simply got out of His body, laughed at them, and said, "I have not died at all; I could not die; you could not kill Me." Let us remember rather the Divine Word on the subject: "Christ *died* for our sins"; "He poured out His soul unto death"; "He made His soul an offering for sin." Let us remember the assurance of the Bible that eventually "He shall see the fruits of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied." Let us rejoice also in the assurance of the Apostle that His soul was not left in *hades*, *sheol*, death, but that God raised Him from the dead on the third day.

NOTE AN ADDITIONAL PROOF

If Christ did not die, then the death penalty upon Adam and his race has not been met. Those who claim that He did not die, that merely His body died, are illogical. They profess to believe that Jesus accomplished for us a redemptive work, that He died, "The Just for the unjust." If Christ, the Redeemer, "poured out His soul unto death," and if His resurrection meant the recovery of His soul or being out of death, wherein is the logic in the declaration of some that it is not thus with the Church nor with the world? If Jesus did not go to Heaven when He died--if He went into *hades*, into the grave, into *sheol*, into death, who has the temerity to say that others go direct to Heaven or Hell or Purgatory? Let us be consistent. The wages of sin is not Purgatory, nor a Hell of torture, in some far-off place. On the contrary, "The wages of sin is death." The Redeemer died and rose; and this is the assurance, that He who raised up Jesus from the dead will raise us up also, by Jesus, through His spirit and power; and not only so, but also the world of mankind, all who were involved in the death sentence upon the first man.

Therefore, the entire world is included in the death payment made by the Great Redeemer, that "As by man came death, by a man also shall come the resurrection of the dead; for as all in Adam die, even so all in Christ shall be made alive." But, says the Apostle, while every man who will come into Christ shall be made alive, each will come forth "in his own order." The Christ company shall come forth first—"the Church of the First-born, whose names are written in heaven." Afterwards will come those who will become His at, or during, His presence --during the thousand years of His Kingdom glory. The opportunity of that thousand years will mean to every man the privilege of coming into fellowship with the Redeemer and King, Emmanuel. Whoever will accept the opportunity will receive the blessing of an admission to Messiah's family. As the Apostle says,

they will become His. Under His heavenly guidance and blessing and regenerating influence, all such may attain again to a full image and likeness of God, lost in Eden, redeemed at Calvary.

Reprint 2016

HOW THE GREAT APOSTASY WILL BE OVERRULED

“They received not the love of the Truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God sendeth them a working of error, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be judged who believed not the Truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” -- 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12 Rev. Ver.

THE Bible Helps of our day are so numerous and accessible, and the words in the original Scriptures translated Hell, so clearly shown in these Helps, that there is no reason why an honest student of the Word of God may not see clearly what the Bible teaches on this subject. We are not to lay upon our God the responsibility for the erroneous thought on the subject of future punishment; for He is not the Author of sin or darkness or error in any form. All His work is perfect; He is "righteous altogether," His name is LOVE. Such being the case He would never create any being to torture it forever. Nor does the responsibility for doctrinal error rest entirely upon humanity, who have no doubt been more ignorant than wilful in respect to this error of doctrine, though there seems to have been a measure of wilfulness on the part of mankind.

The Apostle Paul, in the first chapter of Romans, declares that when men knew God, they worshiped Him not as God, and did not wish to retain the knowledge of Him in their minds, but willingly departed from Him. (Romans 1:18-28.) This same Apostle elsewhere assures us that "the god of this world," "the prince of this world," Satan, who fell from his holy estate and became the Adversary of God through unholy ambition, has blinded the minds of mankind. (2 Corinthians 4:4; John 12:31; 14:30.) He is the great Deceiver, of whom the Lord said, "He was a murderer from the beginning [of man's creation] and abode not in the Truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar and the father of it."--John 8:44.

Again the Master declared in Revelation, when telling us about the consummation of the Gospel Age and the inauguration of the Age to follow, that at that time Satan should be bound for a thousand years, that he should deceive the nations no more until the thousand years were finished--thus intimating that prior to that time the people of the world had been deceived by him right along. Satan started his lies very early. His first great lie was told to our Mother Eve, away back in Eden. (Genesis 3:4,5; 2 Corinthians 11:3.) The lie that he told to Mother Eve he has ever since very assiduously propagated; namely, "Ye shall not surely die"--God has deceived you; nobody dies; what is called death is only the dropping off of the mortal body as of a worn-out dress; merely the passing into another form of life--a more desirable change. But the Bible has all the while been assuring us that death is a reality, that death means death.

SIN'S RAPID DEVELOPMENT UP TO THE FLOOD

There is an irreconcilable conflict between the words of Satan and the declaration of God. But God has permitted man to a large extent to go his own way, just as St. Paul intimates in Romans, already cited. Mankind did not desire to retain God in their knowledge, so for a time He has permitted them to work all manner of uncleanness. (Romans 1:28-32.) But while He has allowed the world liberty in regard to their own wills, nevertheless He has not abandoned them. From the beginning God has purposed that in due time, after mankind have learned the needed lesson, they shall be delivered from sin and death--"whosoever will." For the time being He has permitted them to take their choice as to whether they would give heed to the voice of conscience still to some extent remaining in man, whether they would listen to His word of instruction, so far as they were able to know it, or whether they preferred the words of Satan and the promptings of evil. The great majority have followed Satan, the opponent of God.

The Adversary has propagated his falsehoods and deceptions in order to oppose God and righteousness. He succeeded so well from the start that in 1656 years from the creation of our first parents in Eden, many of the holy angels had fallen and had joined him in the debauchery of mankind. (Genesis 6:1-5.) Eventually the world became so full of corruption that God destroyed all of humanity from the face of the earth, including the unlawful progeny of the fallen angels, and began anew the propagation of the human race from Noah and his family, who had remained untainted--"perfect in his generation." --Genesis 6:1-22.

SATAN'S EVIL WORK CONTINUED

But soon Satan again got in his evil work, so that in Abraham's day, only a few centuries later, the whole world was again corrupted by idolatry and sin. Evil spirits--the fallen angels--denied by the Lord after the Deluge the power of materialization in human bodies, continued their deceptions by using human beings as mediums of communication with men, either by developing in them powers of clairvoyance, clairaudience, guiding their hands to write, etc., or by taking actual possession of their bodies and using these as if their own. All this has been done by Satan and the other fallen spirits over whom he made himself prince (Ephesians 2:2; 6:12), in order to prove to mankind that God had deceived them and falsified in His pronouncement of a sentence of death upon the father of the human race, to effect as well all his offspring. They wished to make men believe that people who had gone into death were not dead--that they had not ceased to be --but were more alive than before.

This gigantic falsehood has greatly hindered mankind from seeing the Truth and the real facts of the case. God has all along been Master of the situation to the fullest extent, but has been permitting Satan and His legions to thus exercise power over the rebellious race that He may ultimately teach a lesson to both men and angels.

Four hundred and twenty-seven years after the great Deluge, God called Abraham, and after testing his loyalty and obedience, made a covenant with him, as a reward for faithfulness, to the effect that in his Seed all the families of the earth should ultimately be blessed. In due time, the descendants of Jacob, Abraham's grandson, were chosen to be the special people of God, under the terms of the Law Covenant. These people were used to picture forth in types God's great Plan for the salvation of all mankind. They were to be a separate people from the other nations of the earth.

Although God established a special Covenant with the nation of Israel, and they promised full obedience to His Law, yet they became, like the nations about them, idolatrous, and sought after wizards, witches, and necromancers, mediums of the fallen spirits. This became so pronounced that God commanded that any amongst them who became such a medium should be put to death. They had agreed to be the people of God, and He had warned them to be on guard against these evil spirits.

In the days of our Lord, these fallen spirits had intruded to such an extent in Israel that many of His miracles were for the healing and deliverance of those afflicted of the Devil, possessed by one or more of these wicked demons, and thus rendered insane. Israel had become to a considerable extent affected by the false doctrines of paganism, this being especially true of certain parties among the ruling class. The Sadducees were infidels, materialists, denying totally the resurrection of the dead and believing in neither angels nor spirits. The mental afflictions and confusion of mind amongst the people seemed more widespread even than were bodily diseases. In the time of our Lord, Grecian philosophy had attained great prominence, notably the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. Thus was Satan's great lie, "Thou shalt not surely die," prospered. Like all Gentile nations,

Greece had many gods, divinities; and thus were the Greeks worshipers of devils, fallen angels.-- Deuteronomy 32:16,17; Psalm 106:34-38; 1 Cor. 10:19, 20.

JEWISH NATION UNWORTHY, CALL GOES TO GENTILES

Because of the world-wide prominence of the Greek language, Greek philosophy, "science falsely so-called" (1 Timothy 6:20), had become entrenched in the minds of thinking people generally. This was true to quite a degree even in Palestine. Only to Israel had God sent His Law and given His prophecies. To them He had said, "You only have I known [recognized] of all the families of the earth." (Amos 3:2.) When Jesus came, He said, If you had received the witness of John, you would have been ready to be My disciples. Many of the Jews had merely a form of godliness. They thought God would save them by the Law whether or no. But Jesus told them that they should not boast that they had Abraham for their Father, for God was able even of the stones about them to raise up children to Abraham. He assured them that God would find a worthy Seed of Abraham.

The work of Jesus during His ministry was the starting of this new Seed. Jesus Himself was the Head of this Seed. The special work of the entire Gospel Age has been the calling and preparing of this Spiritual Seed of Abraham. The promise was first to the Jews, but since they did not prove worthy as a nation, God, after taking out the faithful "remnant" from that people, turned to the Gentiles, to take out from them a sufficient number to complete the foreordained 144,000 to comprise this Seed, the Church of Christ, the members of His Body. After the accomplishment of this work, Christ, who would then be present in the world the second time, would again visit the natural seed of Abraham, for their enlightenment and blessing. But this blessing would come to them through the Spiritual Seed of Abraham, the faithful Seed.

Our Lord, in the parable of the Wheat and Tares, shows that of those who would constitute, nominally, the Spiritual Seed, there would likewise be but a faithful "remnant" who would prove worthy to be exalted to reign with Christ; and that the remainder, like the majority of the natural seed, would lose this great favor. The words of the Apostle Paul have proven true, that "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

SATAN SOWED TARES IN THE WHEAT-FIELD

In this parable Jesus showed how after the Apostles had fallen asleep the great Adversary, Satan, would come and sow "tare" seed in God's wheat-field, the Church. This tare seed would spring up and bring forth "tares," imitation "wheat," who would associate with the true Church and count themselves as of the Elect. They would consider themselves as real "wheat," In the parable, the servants are shown as coming to the Master and asking Him whether they should root up the tares from among the wheat. But the Master replied that they should not then do this, lest, in pulling up the tares, they might also root up the wheat. He bade them let both grow together until the time of "Harvest," when He would again be present and would say to the reapers, "Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them into bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into My barn." The field was really a wheat-field always; the tares had no right there.

This indicated a separating work to come in the end of the Gospel Age, in the time called by our Lord the "Harvest." The "field" in the parable, as Jesus said, represented the world, the masses of mankind. This evil seed which Satan sowed in the wheat-field was largely the Greek philosophies. Prior to this time, when the persecutions of Nero and, later, Diocletian, Roman emperors, came upon the growing Church, there was a faithful company of disciples, which had held firmly to the Truth

and were loyal to Christ; and they endured much hardness, many of them even unto death by violence.

But later came prosperity and freedom from persecution, and this proved the downfall of many. The Church attracted the attention of the Greek philosophers. They said, "You Christians teach much that is good. Your teacher Jesus was a great man, a great philosopher. But we also have great philosophers and teachers. We would like to come in with you, but in order to do that we must all be broad-minded; none of us must be narrow. We must each be able to see the great truths of the others. Socrates and Plato and others of our great teachers taught the doctrine of a future life long before Jesus was born."

So the Christians thought it would be fine if all the Gentiles could be united in religion. Thus the majority gradually worked in with the Greek philosophers and fraternized with them. Numbers of the adherents of paganism made a profession of Christianity, being reinforced later by many others from the more northern tribes of Europe, these all joining some of their heathen philosophies and theories with Christianity.

GRADUAL RISE OF THE PAPACY

Thus it came about that the poisonous draught was mixed which was poured into the "golden cup" of Truth, and held out to the world by the apostate "Woman," the professed Church of God. And she "made all nations drunk with the wine of her fornication." (Jeremiah 51:6-13; Revelation 17:1-5, 15.) As error spread and the spirit of ambition gradually superseded the spirit of humility and loyalty to God, bringing the desire to avoid suffering and to be esteemed of men, the Church, as conditions favored her advancement, organized herself as the Papal hierarchy. The Bishop of Rome was declared Pope, and claimed to represent our Lord Jesus to the Church and to the world. The Pope sat upon a throne of glory and became an autocrat in power; commanding kings, and ruling as both a spiritual and a temporal prince. The pagan doctrine of the immortality of the soul, combined with the idea, also imbibed from paganism, of the torture of the wicked after death, was made the basis of the doctrine of the eternal torture of heretics and of the Purgatorial sufferings after death of practically all Catholics to fit them for Heaven.

These ideas and theories were presented by Dante in his great epic poem, *The Divine Comedy*. According to his presentation, it was written over the gates of the Inferno that all who entered abandoned hope. This place was for those who were to suffer eternal torment. This included all heretics; for no good Catholic entered that abode. Then there was another place--Purgatory--where different punishments were administered for various sins, the process of purgation to vary in time according to the degree of the sin and the masses said for them by their friends on earth and the money paid for their deliverance. Thus the work went on, and the "tares" in the Church were multiplied. People were threatened with eternal torment if they did not go to church, and support the hierarchy; and their infants who died were denied salvation.

It was the claim of the Papacy that the thousand years of Christ's Reign, the Millennium, promised in Scripture to follow Christ's Second Advent, began in the year 800 A.D., under Pope Leo III., who claimed to be the representative of Christ, His Vicegerent, to begin Christ's Reign in His stead. In that year the "Papal states" were ceded to the Church by Emperor Charlemagne. Their "Millennium" ended, it was claimed, in the year 1799, when Napoleon confiscated the territories granted to the Church and took the Pope, Pius VI., a captive to France, where he died. The succeeding freedom from Papal persecution, and the widespread circulation of the Bible in the languages of the people, was declared by the Papal leaders to be the "little season" foretold in

Revelation to follow the thousand-year Reign of Christ on earth; and they are hoping that soon they will regain their former power and prestige and once more reign supreme, and that their rule will be permanent.

This Papal Millennium is known in history as the "Dark Ages." During that time many were the erroneous doctrines and practises brought in and forced upon the peoples of Europe by the Papacy. Their theory was that they must conquer the world. They endeavored to do this by force, which led to great persecutions, notable among them being the Inquisition. During those dark centuries millions were tortured, exiled, and murdered in multitudinous ways, for refusing to bow to the mandates of the apostate Church, under the leadership of Popes, Bishops and priests. Agents and spies were employed to apprehend and bring to punishment any who were found to express sentiments contrary to the Papal hierarchy, or who failed to bow in abject submission to their authority.

Thus were the nations of Europe paganized and steeped in error and superstition and in reverence for men who falsely claimed to be the special and authorized representatives of God on earth. Yea, these pseudo-apostles of God, as declared in the prophecy of Daniel (7:25), thought to "change times and laws." They presumed to have authority to alter the laws of God when it seemed advisable to them to do so. They thought to change the time for the Reign of Christ, as we have shown. They also set up the abomination of the Mass, which was the taking away of "the continual [once for all] Sacrifice" of Christ, claiming that in the Mass Christ is offered again and again, in a bloodless manner. Thus they set at naught the Scriptural teaching that the one offering of Jesus on Calvary was all-sufficient for the cancellation of sin. See STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, Vol. II., Chapter 9.

We do not charge that these religious leaders of the Dark Ages were all doing these things knowingly. We believe that many of them were themselves deluded by the Adversary into thinking that they were doing the Lord's will. These errors were gradually fastened upon the Church. The leaders became to a large degree confused. God alone can judge of the culpability of each one. By degrees this paganized Christianity, more cruel and relentless in its propagation and enforcement than even Paganism itself, was adopted by the European nations, and they became what was, and still is, known as "Christendom"-- Christ's Kingdom. The glorious Scriptural doctrine of the resurrection also fell largely into the background; for what use had an immortal soul which could not die, for a resurrection from the dead? Plato's doctrine of the immortality of man was much more agreeable to the flesh than was the true idea of death. It was not pleasant to think of death as the enemy of man, as the curse which God had pronounced because of Adam's sin.

WORK OF REFORMATION—"A LITTLE HELP"

The work of reform, which in spite of violent opposition gradually developed, in the sixteenth century, into what was known as the Great Reformation, brought some measure of relief to the persecuted, hunted, crushed saints of God--His true Church. Even through the darkest years of the Dark Ages there were a few saintly ones who never bowed their knees to Baal. These sealed with their blood their declaration of faith in the vital doctrines of the Scriptures. However, in due time, their teachings gained sufficient headway to bring about the Reformation, by which the saints "were holpen with a little help." But their leaders were in time overcome with "flatteries," and also succumbed in a considerable degree to the desire to gain power and influence among the nations. See SCRIPTURE STUDIES, Vol. III., pp. 34-39 and pp. 108-113.

AN IMPORTANT QUESTION AND ITS ANSWER

Why has God permitted these appalling conditions, is it asked by some? Why did He allow His wheat-field to become so overrun with tares? Our Lord knew that these conditions would later develop, as is shown in this parable of the Wheat and Tares. It was God's purpose to permit this experience as a great lesson to the Church, to angels, and eventually to the whole world. These errors were to be permitted to be introduced, to grow and bring forth their bitter fruitage, and thus to manifest the terrible effects of error, unholy ambition and sin. It had the effect, too, of developing and separating in spirit the true saints of God from the great mass of tares. Both were to grow together in the Babylonian System, however, until the Harvest time. Then would come the entire separation of the two classes.

Now we are in this separating time. Now we whose eyes of understanding have been opened can see that these errors and evil practices are not of God, are not taught in His Word. Now we see that, as our Master forewarned, "The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." But the great majority of professed Christians are still largely blinded by the smoke of the Dark Ages which for so long has filled their eyes. Violence to the persons of the saints of God is not often indulged in today, because of present laws and public sentiment, though with some this persecuting spirit still exists as formerly, if only they could gain the power. But the same unscriptural doctrines are still preached, modified to some extent to suit the refined ideas of our day. The Bible doctrine of the resurrection of the dead is relegated to the scrap-heap.

Ministers of today, though they sometimes read passages of Scripture bearing upon the resurrection, straightway give them an interpretation utterly at variance with the Scriptural presentation. Some still preach that there is to be a final resurrection of the body, to be joined to its spirit--a doctrine nowhere taught in the Bible, and the veriest nonsense in view of their own theory of the immortality of the soul, which they say is translated at death to its eternal abode. The Bible teaches that the dead are dead, and that there is to be a resurrection of the soul, the being, the Ego. Our Redeemer died to buy back the human race who died in Adam; and He was raised from the dead on the third day by the Father. If the body is "shuffled off" at death, that the spirit may be free from its encumbrance, why would the spirit come to need it again sometime in the distant future? And what an eternal degradation this would be for a spirit which had been freed from its former animal body for years or for centuries!

The church systems of today are thoroughly permeated with all manner of pagan doctrines--Greek philosophies, Pantheism, Buddhism, Rationalism, Spiritism, etc. The doctrines of the immortality of the soul, a trinity of Gods in one, torment after death, re-incarnation of the soul after death, communion of the living with the dead--all these have been borrowed from paganism and are purely heathenish. Truly the nominal systems of today have become Babylon, confusion! And now in the Harvest time of the Age, God is calling His people out of them, and the work is nearly completed. He has spewed these nominal systems out of His mouth.--Revelation 3:14-20; 17:1-5; 18:1-24; 19:1-8.

At one time we wondered why it was God's will to permit this condition of things. But in the light now shining we believe we can clearly see the reason. We believe that God saw what we are now coming to see; namely, that who had never known of the nature and results of sin, who had never known the baneful effects of these monstrous doctrines, could never have appreciated the Truth as can those who have been influenced and bound by them.

What wonderful relief came to our minds and hearts when we emerged from this gross darkness out into the glorious light of God's Truth as it is in Jesus! What a marvelous impression it made upon us! We fancy that mankind, when awakened from the sleep of death, will be on the lookout, as they awake, for the conditions which they had been taught would be theirs beyond this life. Many will look around in terror to see the fiery flames and tortures, and will shout, "Where is the Devil?" Then when the love of God in His wonderful provision for mankind shall be shown to them, when they are told that they are now under the righteous Reign of Messiah, which designs only good for all men, when they come to realize God's matchless goodness, what a revelation of joy it will be to the poor, benighted, sin-cursed world!

Surely all who are sincere of heart, all desirous of doing right, when the conditions are made favorable for so doing will appreciate, as they never could have done otherwise, the glorious character of our great Creator! So we can see that God has had a purpose in permitting for six thousand years the evil conditions which have prevailed-- a purpose for the Church and for the world and for all His created intelligences, even those yet to be created. We hope and believe that when God makes the matter fully plain all will see that His ways are just and righteous altogether. We are waiting for Him fully to demonstrate His character in due time; and this time, we believe, is now very near at hand.

Reprint 5909

THE PAROUSIA OF OUR LORD JESUS AND HIS SUBSEQUENT APOKALUPSIS AND EPIPHANIA

--AT HIS SECOND ADVENT.--

“Watch, therefore; for ye know not the day* your Lord doth come.” “What I say unto you, I say unto all [believers], Watch.” --Matt. 24:42; Mark 13:37.

WHATEVER the character of the watching, and whatever the thing to be looked for, there can be no question that the exhortation to watch for an event whose precise time is not stated, implies that when the event does take place, the watching ones will know it. Watch, because ye know not, in order that at the proper time ye may know, is the thought; and the intimation clearly is, that those who do not watch will not know: that the events which are to be known in due time to the Watchers, will be recognized by them, and not recognized by others, at the time of accomplishment.

This, the only logical interpretation of our Lord's exhortation, is fully corroborated by several of the apostles. The Apostle Paul urges us, saying: “Yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night; for when they [the world, unbelievers] shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief ” (I Thes. 5:2-4); because, being children of the light ye, brethren, will be watching and be enlightened and taught of the Lord. The Apostle Peter suggests the means by which the Lord will teach us, and informs us respecting our location upon the path of “the just which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” He shows that it will not be by miraculous revelations, nor by dreams; but through the Word of testimony, the Bible. He says, “We have a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light which shineth in a dark place, until the Day dawn, and the Day-star arise in your hearts.”--2 Pet. 1:19.

1. The the first edition of Our Most Holy Faith and the Reprints varies from the original. This edition uses the text from the original TOWERS.

2. Thus read the oldest Greek MSS.

The united testimony of these Scriptures teaches us that, altho it was neither proper nor possible for the Lord's people to know in advance, anything definite, respecting the exact time of the second presence of the Lord Jesus, and the establishment of his Kingdom, yet when the due time would come the faithful ones, the watchers, would be informed,--would not be left in darkness with the world. It is vain to urge, as contradicting this, our Lord's statement, "Of that day and hour knoweth no man; no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." (Mark 13:32.) Those who use this Scripture to prove to themselves and to others that no man will ever know anything respecting the time of the second advent, find it to prove too much, and thus spoil their own argument; for if it means that no man will ever know, it must similarly mean that no angel will ever know, and that the Son himself will never know. This, evidently, would be an absurd

construction to place upon the passage. The Son did not know at the time he uttered this statement; the angels did not know then; and no man knew then; but the Son certainly must know of the time of his own second advent, at least a little while before it takes place; the angels also, must know a little while before it takes place; and the true children of God, the "watchers," as we have seen above, are to watch in order that they, too, may know at the proper season and not be in darkness, in ignorance, with the world; and that their watching shall be rewarded is guaranteed:--"None of the wicked shall understand; but the wise [in heavenly wisdom] shall understand."--Dan. 12:10.

FOR WHAT ARE WE WATCHING?

This is an important question. Many of God's people have been offended, "stumbled," as respects the doctrine of the second coming of our dear Redeemer, by reason of peculiar, extravagant, unreasonable, illogical and unscriptural views on the subject, presented by some, who professedly love the Lord's appearing, known as Second Adventists. But this is all wrong; we are not to reject one of the grandest and most prominent doctrines of the Scripture, simply because some fellow-Christians have erred egregiously respecting the matter, and brought a certain amount of worldly wise contempt upon everything connected with this subject. On the contrary, this doctrine, as a glorious gem, should be given the first place among the precious jewels of divine truth, where it can cast its halo and splendor and brilliancy over all connected and related promises and blessings. It should not be left in the imperfect setting which hides its glory and beauty, but should be recovered, remounted, set in its true place, to the glory of God and to the blessing of all who are sincerely and truly his people.

We need offer no apology for the interest which we feel in this grand subject, which is the center upon which all the testimony of divine grace, through all the holy prophets, is focused. Rather do they need to apologize who, knowing that next to the doctrine of the atonement for sin, the second coming of the Lord and the resurrection of the dead hold the most important places in the Scriptures, have nevertheless neglected this, while they have quarreled, skirmished, fought and bled over trifling things of no real importance, doctrinally or otherwise.

Our watching is to be for the second coming of him who redeemed us; who said, "If I go, I will come again and receive you unto myself." The watching is to be specially with the thought that our Lord Jesus comes at his second advent, in the majesty and glory of the Father, King of kings and Lord of lords. The watching includes not only the thought of the second presence of our Lord, as King, but it has attached to it the wonderful results which are promised to flow from the coming of the King; for the coming of the King means the coming of the Kingdom for which he taught us to pray, "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." And the coming of our Master, the King, and the establishment of this glorious Kingdom mean the fulfilment of the long-awaited-for promise made to the seed of Abraham; the promise which Israel after the flesh was not found worthy to inherit; the promise for which God has been selecting the members of the Bride of Christ during this Gospel age, to be with the Lord Jesus, and his joint-heir in carrying out his beneficent provisions; the promise which is sure, but which has never yet had, in any sense of the word, a fulfilment; the promise which reads, "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

Watching implies hoping, and it also implies waiting. We are waiting for what the Apostle terms "that blessed hope, the glorious appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," who shall transform his Church to his own spiritual image and likeness, in order that we ("changed") may be like him, see him as he is, and share his glory, and be associated with him in his great work of bringing in the Millennial blessings to the world of mankind. Nevertheless, this waiting time and

hoping time is a time of more or less tribulation, not only on the world, which still lies under the yoke of sin, and under the blinding influences of Satan, but also to the waiting, hoping and watching Church, of whom the Apostle says, "We ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the deliverance [from death] of our body"--the body of Christ, of which we are members in particular.--Rom. 8:23.

HOW ARE WE TO WATCH?

Our watching consists not in looking up into the sky,-- "stargazing;" for those who study the Lord's Word to any purpose soon learn that "the day of the Lord so cometh as [like] a thief in the night," and that its dawning cannot be discerned with the natural eye. If the Lord's people could discern anything by watching the sky with their natural eyes, could not the world discern the same thing? If the second advent of our Lord were to be an open, outward manifestation, would not the world know of it just as soon as the saints, the watchers? In such event it could not be true that the day of the Lord should come as a thief, as a snare, unawares, upon the world, while the Church would have foreknowledge thereof --not be left in darkness.--I Thes. 5:2-4.

We are to watch the signs of the times, in the light of the Lord's Word, our lamp; as the apostle declares, "We have a more sure Word of prophecy . . . as a light shining in a dark place,--until the Day dawn." The Gospel age has been a night-time; and the Lord's people have been waiting for the dawn of the Millennial morning, with the promise ringing in their ears, "God will help her [the Church], and that right early [in the morning]." (Psa. 46:5.) The Word of the Lord, through the prophets, has been the lamplight all through this Gospel age, upon the Church's pathway; as the Lord expressed it through the Prophet David, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, a lantern unto my footsteps." (Psa. 119:105.) The lamp of the truth of revelation has guided all the faithful, watchful pilgrims in their journey toward the Celestial City--the Heavenly Kingdom. Oh, what a comfort it has been, and how dreary would have been our pilgrimage without it!

"Looking back, we praise the way
God has led us, day by day!"

Those who have taken heed to the landmarks, pointed out by the Lord through Daniel and Isaiah and Jeremiah and all the holy prophets, realize that we have come already a much longer journey than was expected by the Church when first she started out; but we realize also from these landmarks, that we have approached very close to the end of the journey; very near to the time when the great blessing, for which God's people have so long waited and prayed, is at hand. For instance, the Watchers have noted the Lord's testimony through the Prophet Daniel that "the time of the end" would be a period of time (more than a century), and that in this "time of the end" there would be a great increase of travel, running to and fro throughout the earth, and a great increase of general intelligence, increased knowledge, as it is written, "in the time of the end many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased."--Dan. 12:4.

Watching carefully respecting our whereabouts, hopeful and solicitous respecting the gracious things which God has promised, none of the Watchers is indifferent to these fulfilments of prophecy, which are to be seen on every hand today. All men discern these things, but not all alike: the faithful, the Watchers, discern them not only as facts, but also as fulfilments of prophecy; as proofs that we are already in the period termed "the time of the end." Further investigations and applications of the prophetic measurements prove to the watchers that we have been in "the time of the end" since 1799, and that it is also termed "the day of his [Jehovah's] preparation." Looking about them, they see the preparation that Jehovah God is making for the Kingdom of his dear Son.

They see the lifting of the curtain of ignorance, and the letting in of the light, and that thus God is using mankind at the present time to make ready, in a natural way, the mechanical and other arrangements and conveniences which ultimately shall be so great blessings to the world;--when the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in his beams, and the Millennial Day shall be ushered in, with all its multiplied blessings and mercies and opportunities;--“the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.”--Acts 3:21.

Watching intently, earnestly, interestedly, because they know of the good things God hath in reservation (I Cor. 2:9-13; I Pet. 1:4), the Watchers note that Daniel's prophecy further points out that, as the increase of travel brings the increase of knowledge, so the increase of knowledge will bring an increase of discontent to the world of mankind in general; and the result will be, as prophetically stated, that "there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation." The Watchers, seeking to note whether these things have yet had a fulfilment or not, look about them and behold on every hand discontent, unhappiness; much more than when the world enjoyed far fewer of the mercies and blessings of heaven. These latter day gifts of Providence (preparations for the Millennial age), instead of provoking thankfulness, gratitude and love to God, and generosity to man, produce in unregenerate hearts ambition, greater avarice, selfishness, envy, hatred, strife, and other works of the flesh and of the devil. Yes; the Watchers can clearly discern the approach of the great climax of human trouble, in which the Scriptures distinctly declare that all the present human institutions shall go down in anarchy, in confusion, in chaos. But the Watchers do not lose sight of God and his providence. They see that the approaching social and ecclesiastical catastrophe will be the natural result of the operation of selfishness under highly favored conditions; nevertheless, they remember that God is at the helm, and that he is able to cause the wrath of man to praise him, and the remainder of man's wrath (which would not praise him) he will restrain.--Psa. 76:10.

The Watchers look not merely at the outward signs, as seen in the world. They scrutinize carefully and repeatedly their "chart," the Bible's prophetic outline of the world's history furnished by the King himself. It is because they see the time of trouble outlined in the prophetic chart that they know that it is sure to come, and are able in advance of others to "discern the signs of the times," and not to be in darkness respecting the "things to come." It was in respect to this that the Lord promised the Watchers that the holy spirit should guide them into all truth, as each feature became due, and would show them things to come--future things--in advance of the world's knowledge, and in advance of the facts themselves. (John 16:13.) But the same chart which shows the downfall of all earthly institutions, political, social and ecclesiastical, shows also that their fall is so timed in the great plan of Jehovah that it shall be the very hour in which he will establish his kingdom in the hands of the elect Church (who then shall be a royal priesthood glorified,--priests upon their thrones,--the religious as well as the civil rulers of the world), whose exaltation shall be to the glory of God and to the blessing of every creature.

The Watchers remember well that the King gave them an outline of the history of the Gospel age at the very time that he told them to watch; intimating to them that they were to watch for the things which he therein noted. The Watchers are those who are in harmony with the King, and who have respect to his promise, and they, therefore, do not neglect the words which he spoke. And as they note this very prophecy in connection with which he tells them to watch, they see in it clearly that the day of the Lord will be ushered in at the close of this Gospel age, secretly, quietly, unobtrusively, "as a thief in the night,"--unawares to the world, and known only to the Watchers.

PAROUSIA VS. EPIPHANIA, APOKALUPSIS.

Because not heedless, careless, indifferent servants of the King, but faithful and earnest ones, the Watchers have scrutinized every little particular which fell from the lips of him who spake as never man spake; and all the messages which he has sent them through his faithful apostles and prophets. And discriminating carefully, they discern that there are three words of distinctly different signification, used in respect to the Lord's second advent; namely, parousia and epiphania and apokalupsis. Parousia is used in respect to the earliest stage of the second advent, while apokalupsis relates to the same advent later;--not that apokalupsis and epiphania relate to another, or a third advent, but merely to a later feature of the second advent. These Greek words, it is true, are somewhat obscure or hidden in the Common Version of the Bible, and undoubtedly for a purpose. The Lord's purpose evidently was to keep the world and the wicked in ignorance of his gracious plan until his due time; nor did he wish the particulars to be understood by the Watchers until near the time of the fulfilment. But now we are "in the time of the end," in "the day of his preparation," in the time in which it was foretold that then "the wise [not the worldlywise, but the humble Watchers who are wise enough to take heed to the Word of the Lord] shall understand." (Dan. 12:10.) And hence, since many of the Watchers are not Greek scholars, God has made gracious provision through valuable helps (such as Young's Analytical Concordance and the Emphatic Diaglott), so that the very humblest of his people may have a clear and discriminate understanding of the meaning of certain features of his Word which, hitherto, have been kept hidden under imperfect translations; and these matters God himself has been bringing to the attention of his people, through MILLENNIAL DAWN, ZION'S WATCH TOWER, and the OLD THEOLOGY TRACTS. The Watchers all over the world are being reached by these "Helping Hands for Bible Students," which the Lord himself is extending to them.

By these helps, the Watchers are rapidly coming to see that the word "parousia," in our Common Version translated "coming," does not mean what our English word signifies; namely, to be on the way, approaching; but that on the contrary it signifies presence, as of one who has already arrived. The Watchers note also that the Scriptures predicate certain things respecting the Lord, and respecting his parousia (his presence) which clearly intimate that he will be present and doing his work, his great work (of setting up his Kingdom and smiting the nations with the sword of his mouth) wholly unknown to the world,--as a thief in the night. The Watchers also notice that the Scriptures clearly indicate that after the Lord has done certain things during his presence (parousia) and unknown to the world, he will later make a manifestation of his presence;--a manifestation which will be discerned by all mankind: and this outward manifestation is designated his "epiphania" which signifies "shining forth" or "bright shining."

The Watchers keep separate these two thoughts (presence and manifestation) respecting the Lord's second coming; that altho really present a spirit being (like the angels who, we are told, encamp round about them that fear God and deliver them, and who are "all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation," and whose ministry is an invisible one) our Lord, now a glorious spirit being, of the divine nature, will not be manifest to the natural eye during his presence--his parousia.--Psa. 34:7; Heb. 1:14. Hence the necessity that the Lord's faithful ones shall "watch," because they, no more than the world, can discern a spirit being with their natural eyes. The Watchers in due time are to discern the presence (parousia) of their Lord by the eye of faith. The sleepless eye of faith will in due time take note of the "sign of the Son of Man,"--the indications of the presence of the King.

During the period of the parousia (presence) preceding the epiphania (shining forth) a certain work will be accomplished, unknown to the world, unknown to the nominal Church, known only to

the Watchers. Ah, how important to us the words of our Master, exhorting us to be Watchers! And, by the way, this watching includes a watching of our own hearts as well as of the Lord's Word and the outward signs--to insure our worthiness to be continued in the light, and under the instructions of the great Teacher. "If any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his;" therefore if any man lose the spirit of Christ he ceases to be his; and hence we all need to "watch" that we may, as the Scriptures direct, "Keep our garments unspotted from the world;" and "keep ourselves in the love of God, while looking for the grace [aid] of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is able to keep us from falling and to present us faultless in the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." (Jude 21,24). For whoever has the spirit of Christ may be a Watcher, and as a Watcher may know of the gracious things connected with the great "salvation which shall be brought unto us at the revelation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;" but whoever ceases to have the spirit of Christ must, of necessity, cease also to be a Watcher, and shall be in ignorance of the things of the day of the Lord, like the world, of which he would then probably be a part.

As the light by which the eye of faith may discern the parousia, we have the "more sure word of prophecy to which we do well to take heed." It has shone upon the pathway of the Watchers all along through this night; but now its various prophetic rays have focussed and clearly indicate that we are already living "in the days of the Son of Man," while, as he expressly foretold, the world in general goes on as usual, in utter ignorance of his presence and of his harvest work and of the beginning of the Day of the Lord; it continues as usual--eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, planting and building. It is a mistake to suppose that our Lord, in giving this information respecting the events of the time of his presence, meant us to understand that it would be wicked for the world to eat, drink, plant, build and marry; these are not improper things, and any such interpretation is strained and faulty, and results from an utter misconception of the subject. Our Lord wished merely to show that the world would be in ignorance of his presence "in the days of the Son of Man," and in utter ignorance of the great time of trouble, or "Day of Vengeance" which the inauguration of his Kingdom will signify to the kingdoms of this world, which are to be dashed to pieces as potters' vessels. The ignorance of the impending trouble here will be similar to that of the people who lived in the days of Noah. "As it was in the days of Noah, so also shall it be in the days of the Son of Man."-- Luke 17:26.

As "the days of Noah" were not days before Noah's time, neither are "the days of the Son of Man" days before the Son of Man's presence. The days of the Son of Man are the days of his parousia, or presence,--invisible and unknown to the world; known only to the Watchers and seen by them only with the eye of faith. "As in the days that were before the flood they were eating, drinking, marrying . . . and knew not . . . so shall also the [parousia] (presence) of the Son of Man be:"-- the world will simply go on about its usual affairs, and know not of the Lord's presence.--Matt. 24:38.

But why should our Lord be thus present? What will be his work during the period of presence preceding his epiphania or manifestation to the world?

THE LORD'S WORK FORESHOWN IN HIS PARABLES.

His work is clearly outlined in various of his parables, which were given that the Watchers might know--might not be in darkness. The parable of the wheat and the tares shows this period of the parousia (presence) preceding the epiphania (manifestation), and represents it as the "harvest" time of this age. The Son of Man sowed the good seed, and his servants followed, doing work in the field down through the age; finally the end of the age comes when the full crop of wheat is ripe, and then the harvest is reaped. The parable shows the separation of the two classes of the nominal church during the "harvest." For be it noted that the wheat-field is not the entire world, but merely the

professedly Christian part of the world--Christendom: much of the field is not yet sown. And the parable relates only to the wheat-field, and particularly to the wheat. The tares (spurious Christians) are dealt with only incidentally. The tares choke the wheat, yet, nevertheless, the Master will obtain a sufficiently large crop, for—"All his purposes shall be accomplished."

The separation of the tares from the wheat, and the gathering of the wheat into the garner of heavenly conditions, precedes the work of cleansing the wheat-field of its symbolic tares by symbolic "fire;" and this entire harvest work is to take place during the parousia (presence) of our Lord, before his epiphania (manifestation). He is the Chief-Reaper, and all the under-reapers will work under his direction and eye; and every kernel of true symbolic "wheat" will be gathered into the glorious symbolic "garner" by resurrection and "change."

The sickle of truth will be the separating medium; and not until the separation is nearly complete and the "wheat" nearly all garnered into the glory of the heavenly nature, will the "fire," the great time of trouble mentioned by the Prophet and by our Lord, burn and consume, symbolically, all the "tares:" so that thereafter none will make false professions of being Christians while really of the world, and possessed of its spirit.

The parables of the Pounds and of the Talents cover this same period of time. In both of these the Lord represents himself as a great householder and heir to a throne, who has gone into a far country to be invested with kingly powers, and to return to use those powers. Departing, he left with his servants various riches of grace and privilege, "to every man according to his several ability," saying to them, "Occupy till I come." The return of the nobleman of the parables, unquestionably, represents the second coming of our Lord and Master. Now note the work due first to take place upon his return as King, as shown by these parables. He does not first deal with the rebellious world,--those who would not have him to rule over them; but, first calls "his own servants," and reckons with them--rejecting some from further service because of unfaithfulness, and accepting others to a participation in the joys of the Kingdom, which he at once establishes.

This reckoning with the servants signifies a reckoning with the Church first, after his return; and corresponds to the separating of the wheat and tares, in the other parable. It is comparatively easy for anyone to realize that this part of the Lord's work at his second advent is the work which precedes the epiphania or manifestation to the world. It is during this period that the Watchers are to be aware of the presence (parousia) of the Lord, and of his scrutiny, or judgment of them, which will then be in progress. Only the faithful will know, however;--only they will be "accounted worthy to stand before the Son of Man" in that judgment;--all found unworthy shall "stumble." "The wicked [and slothful servants] shall not stand in the assembly of the righteous." (See Psa. 1:5.) It is of this period of Christ's presence, and this feature of his work, that the world is to be in total ignorance, and "know not," until, having finished reckoning with his servants, and having glorified the faithful, the judgment of the world shall begin with "a time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation." That trouble is symbolically pictured as a fire, and we are told by the Apostle that our Lord shall be revealed (apokalupto--uncovered, disclosed, made manifest) in flaming fire (judgments), taking vengeance.

All who are Watchers, all who have taken heed to "the more sure word of prophecy," including the Master's description of the events of "the days of the Son of Man," can readily discern that the world would not go on in its usual routine-- eating, drinking, planting, building, marrying, etc.--if they knew of the Lord's presence, and the progress of the "harvest" of the Gospel age. If they knew of the Lord's presence, and that the reckoning with the servants had commenced, and that the next thing in order would be judgments upon themselves, they would change their usual order of

affairs considerably; they would be in great trepidation; because only those who are in sympathy with the Lord and the righteous government which he is about to establish, when he shall lay judgment to the line, and justice to the plummet--only these can in any degree be ready to welcome him: all others have the spirit of fear, and are under the blinding influences and misrepresentations of Satan. "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the glorious light of the gospel of Christ . . . should shine unto them." Because of ignorance, therefore, the world would be in great fear, if they knew the fact of the beginning of the day of the Lord, which is to be to them the "day of vengeance."* Very evidently, therefore, this reckoning with the Church and the reward of the faithful will precede our Lord's *apokalupsis*, or revealing. To use one of his own figures, we might say that his day or time of *presence* --"the day of the Lord"--will come "as a thief in the night;" and in this time he will gather his virgin Church, discriminatingly, and take her as his Bride to himself,--changing her from earthly nature and conditions to spiritual or heavenly conditions, to be like him, see him as he is, and share his glory. And since the saints have always been "the salt of the earth," we may readily discern that the taking away of the salt of the earth would leave mankind proportionately in a deplorable condition, in which corruption would spread rapidly: and this is exactly what the Scriptures indicate.

*See MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. IV., *"The Day of Vengeance."*

We are not, however, to understand that the Lord will take the Church away to heaven, and then come back again, and make his epiphania or apokalupsis; for that would be a third advent, which is nowhere even hinted in Scripture. The "change" of the Church from earthly conditions and nature to heavenly, spirit conditions and nature, will be first in order; and then they twain, the Bridegroom, Christ, and the Church, his bride, thus made one in nature and in heavenly, or spirit power, will commence the work of putting down all rule and authority contrary to the divine rule;--bringing all things into subjection to the heavenly Kingdom, the Millennial Kingdom. Our Lord and his Church will not be absent from the earth during the period of the world's tribulation; but, on the contrary, will continue present, but invisible, bringing upon the world the tribulation foretold in the Scriptures, which will result in the humbling of the hearts of mankind, that they may say, eventually, "Come, let us go up to the mountain [Kingdom] of the house of the Lord, that he may teach us of his ways, that we may walk in his paths."--Isa. 2:3.

This fact is abundantly proved by the Lord's statement of what shall be the reward to the overcomers, a part of which is, "He that overcometh, and keepeth my words to the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken in pieces: even as I have received of my Father." (Rev. 2:26, 27.) Again, the same matter is mentioned by the Prophet David, saying, "This honor have all his saints,--to execute the judgments written."

This, however, need not be understood to mean that none of the faithful members of the body of Christ will be in the flesh during the trouble. The majority will have gone beyond the vail--by First Resurrection change to spirit conditions; but others may remain in the flesh for a time, to serve further on this side the vail. True, our Lord has said, "Watch ye; that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass" (Luke 21:36); but we may not be too certain which way he meant we should escape; and we well know that there are two ways. We might escape by avoidance of the trouble, or by being kept from feeling its poignancy, by "grace sufficient" to enable

us to rejoice in tribulation. In which ever way it may be the Father's pleasure the Lord will keep his own--out of the furnace of affliction, or in the furnace heated seven times.--Dan. 3:27.

THE TIME OF THE PAROUSIA.

It will doubtless surprise many to learn that there is much Scripture proof that we are already in the time of the presence (parousia) of the Son of Man,--that we are already living "in the days of the Son of Man." At first some will be inclined to say, "Where is the promise of his (parousia) presence, while all things continue as they were from the beginning?" Peter foretold that some would thus question, being surprised at the information that we are living in the days of the Son of Man, while there is as yet no outward manifestation of his presence, but the affairs of the world continue in their ordinary channels. (2 Pet. 3:4.) The answer to the question is, as we have already pointed out, our Lord's own declaration that in the days of his presence the world would be eating, drinking, planting and building, and know not. That is "the promise of his presence" "while all things continue as they were." Could it be more explicit? A totally different question, however, is--

WHAT ARE THE PROOFS OF CHRIST'S PRESENCE?

This is a reasonable inquiry. We would not be justified in believing upon any slight evidence that the Lord is present; even though we know in advance that he is a spirit being, whose presence would be invisible without a miracle;--and even though we know in advance, from the parables, that he will be present, but invisible, in the harvest time of this age, in the time of reckoning with his servants preparatory to their glorification. We have a right to expect clear, reasonable ground for faith, before accepting any matter which implies so much. We are not, however, to ask or to expect evidences to natural sight: if we are of the Watchers, who have "the eyes of their understanding" opened to see wonderful things in the divine Word, then these eyes of our understanding must also be the eyes of our faith. Hence, the true Watchers are to expect reasonable, satisfactory evidence for faith, and not ocular demonstrations of an invisible parousia. As the Apostle explains, "We walk by faith, not by sight."--Eph. 1:18; 2 Cor. 5:7.

To our understanding there are strong proofs that our Lord's parousia began in the Autumn of 1874. We have seen nothing with our natural eyes; only with the eyes of the understanding, only in the light of "the more sure word of prophecy," do we know this, which we sincerely believe and affirm, and which is important news to all who claim to be Watchers. The fact that any Watcher should have remained in ignorance of this important event for now more than twenty-seven years, would seem of itself to be an indication that he had not been properly awake to the use of his privileges and opportunities--that he had not been sufficiently watchful of the sure word of prophecy to which he was instructed to take heed; and that therefore he had been left at least partially ignorant of the important things transpiring throughout the world during these years. To this extent, many of the Lord's people have been with the world and are similarly ignorant; and yet we may reasonably assume that the Lord did not expect all of his watching servants to discern the matter at the same instant of time. True, those who saw early have had special blessing for the longer time; but, as we saw above, the preparation for the knowledge of the time lies largely in the right attitude of heart--in its humility and possession of the various graces of the spirit of Christ.

Lest we should get a misapprehension respecting this matter of the discerning the Lord's parousia, we do well to take heed to the parable of the ten virgins, which evidently was given to throw special light upon this point. That parable shows a false announcement of the arrival of the Bridegroom in 1844, which brought to the subject considerable reproach, but which, nevertheless, was of great advantage, as stirring up the "virgin" class (the pure, the consecrated) to fresh trimming

of the lamp of truth--investigating the sure word of prophecy. The parable shows, also, that the "virgins" in general fell asleep; yet, nevertheless, in due time all would be reawakened by the prophetic knocking, and the knocking of the signs of the times, which would indicate the Bridegroom's presence. And the parable shows that the result will depend upon how much oil (holy spirit) the "virgins" may have in their vessels (in their own hearts), as well as in their lamps (the Scriptures). Applying this parable, then, we may reasonably suppose that some of the Lord's true people have temporarily fallen asleep on this subject of his second coming; and that the sleeping ones will include some who have his spirit in their hearts, and who will be fully ready to welcome the Master when they shall awake; and whose lamps will be duly trimmed and burning and ready to enable them to discern the signs of his parousia, when once their attention is brought to the subject. In harmony with this we find that many who now get awake on this subject, come into the clear light of present truth much more rapidly than did some in the past: doubtless partly because present truth can now be presented to them through the printed page more concretely than ever before. It is in the interest of this true "virgin" class that we now write: we have no desire to awaken the worldly; this knocking of the prophecies announcing the parousia is not for them;--besides, the worldly are so sound asleep that it will require the terrific crashing of present institutions, and the earthquake shakings of social revolution to awaken them thoroughly to a realization of the presence of the great Judge --Immanuel. The true Watchers, on the contrary, if they slumber at all, sleep lightly, being on the qui vive of expectancy and hope for the long-awaited-for Bridegroom. We would merely whisper in the ears of this class the one word, "Parousia!" assured that all true Watchers (and the Lord alone knoweth them that are his) will be aroused by that word, and trim their lamps on the subject.

Is the question asked,--What portions of the sure word of prophecy indicate that the presence of our Lord began in the Autumn of 1874? We answer that there are several lines of prophecy which interlace and corroborate each other in this testimony; but, as might be expected, since the entire matter was to be hidden from the world, and "none of the wicked," but only the "wise" were to understand (Dan. 12:10), and these wise only to understand when the due time would come,--it must be evident to all that these prophecies, while clear and forcible and positive, are nevertheless somewhat under cover. We cannot here attempt to give a complete and comprehensive statement of these prophecies; that has already been done in five volumes aggregating twenty-three hundred pages.* Here we can only give a very brief resume, leaving it for the true Watchers to seek that they may find; to knock if they would have the door of divine revelation opened to them; to use the keys which God has provided, if they are interested in penetrating into "the deep things" of the divine Word, now due to be understood; to eat of the meat of present truth, "things new and old," if they hunger and thirst after righteousness and true knowledge.

*MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOLS. I-V.

"IN THE DAYS OF THESE KINGS."

(1) We have a number of general prophecies, indicating that we are living in about the time of the Master's second presence. We have already referred to Daniel's testimony respecting "the time of the end," in which many will run to and fro, and knowledge will be increased, and the wise understand; and later, and as a result, will follow the great time of trouble foretold. Then we have the inspired dream of Nebuchadnezzar, and its inspired interpretation by Daniel, showing the earthly governments which would bear rule over the earth;--during the interim between the overthrow of the

typical Kingdom of God, whose last king to sit upon the throne of David was Zedekiah, and the installation of the true King, Immanuel, in his Millennial Kingdom glory. These different governments of earth are there pictured as a great image; Nebuchadnezzar's government, the first universal empire of earth, being represented by the head of gold; the Medo-Persian Empire, which, according to history, was the second universal empire, is there shown as the breast and arms of silver; the Grecian empire, which overthrew the Persian and became the third universal empire, is represented by the belly and thighs of brass; the Roman empire, which succeeded the Grecian and constituted itself the fourth universal empire of earth, was represented in the image by the legs of iron--strong exceedingly; and the later development of the same Roman empire, with the intermixture of papal influence, is represented in the image by the feet, which were partly iron (civil government), and partly of clay (ecclesiastical government--Papacy). These were to constitute the sum total of Gentile dominion; and "in the days of these kings" (represented by the ten toes of the image), Jehovah God himself would establish his Kingdom--the very Kingdom for which we pray, "Thy Kingdom come!"

We are all witnesses that the heavenly Kingdom has not yet come,--that we are still under the dominion of "the prince of this world"--the prince of darkness. All the efforts to prove to us that the greedy and bloody governments of Christendom, so-called, are the Kingdom for which we pray, and were taught to pray, could not prevail; we could never recognize these as Immanuel's Kingdom; they are only the kingdoms established by Antichrist, and recognized by Antichrist, and named by Antichrist "Christendom." The true Kingdom waits for establishment at the hands of him whose right it is; and he has promised that, when he sits upon his throne, all his faithful ones, the "little flock" of the Gospel age, shall sit in that throne with him, and be associates in the work and in the honor of blessing the world.

The Church is not neglected in the picture of earthly dominion given to Nebuchadnezzar, and interpreted by the Prophet Daniel. She is shown therein as a stone taken out of the mountain without hands (by divine power). This stone represents God's Kingdom (Christ and the Church); and the inspired dream and explanation show that the disaster which shall come to the kingdoms of this world, represented in the image and in the toes of its feet, would come through the impact, or smiting of the image by the stone. Daniel says: "A stone was cut out, which, without being in hands, smote the image upon his feet . . . Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver and the gold broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors, and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain [kingdom], and filled the whole earth." Dan. 2:34, 35.

The explanation is that--"The great God hath made known to the king [and indirectly more particularly to the Watchers] what shall come to pass hereafter." In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, and the kingdom shall not be left to other people [it shall have no successors, for the others will all be destroyed]; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." Here is a prophecy which gives a full delineation of the empires of earth, to which God granted dominion during the interim between the removal of the typical crown from his typical kingdom, and the institution of the crown of righteousness and glory upon the true King, in the inauguration of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Even the surface evidences are that human empire has nearly run its course, and that heavenly empire is needed to deliver the world from its own selfishness. But the sure word of prophecy, if carefully scrutinized by the Watcher, reveals still more. It shows that the next universal empire will be the Kingdom of God's dear Son; and further the interesting fact that the total lease of power to the Gentiles is in the Scriptures known as "the times of the Gentiles;" and that these "times" are seven

times, and that each of the seven times is a period of three hundred and sixty years, and that consequently the complete period of the seven times is 2520 years. Hence the Watchers may reckon that Gentile rule will terminate and Immanuel's rule be fully set up in 2520 years from the time the Lord removed the diadem from Zedekiah, saying: "Oh thou profane and wicked prince,...take off the diadem, remove the crown; I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, until he comes whose right it is, and I will give it unto him." --Ezek. 21:25-27. The period of overturning of the Lord's typical Kingdom and the removal of the crown must correspond to the period of the lease of empire to the Gentiles and be 2520 years. And measuring this period, we find that 2520 years will expire with the close of the year 1914, A.D. and consequently that by that time Gentile rule will be no more, while God's Kingdom will then hold sway.

But the scrutinizing Watcher will readily perceive that it is one thing to know the time when earthly dominion shall cease, and give place to the completed Kingdom of God, while it would be a totally different matter to know when the "stone" Kingdom would begin to smite the image upon its feet, preparatory to its destruction. This period of smiting of the image, which precedes its destruction, must also precede the full establishment of God's Kingdom to fill the whole earth. This smiting period is the period of the parousia; the period in which Christ is present, gathering his "jewels," his "elect," and in which he will smite the nations with the rod of iron and with the two-edged sword of his mouth, dashing them in pieces as a potter's vessel, and preparing mankind for the royal majesty of the heavens. Let the Watchers note critically the Prophet Daniel's explanation that it will be "in the days of these kings" (the kingdom represented in the feet and toes of the image--the divisions of Papal Rome) that the God of heaven will set up his Kingdom. God began the selection of his Kingdom class in the days of Civil Rome--represented by the legs of iron: he has continued the selection ever since, and the setting up or bringing of his Church (Kingdom) into power comes toward the close of Gentile power, but before it ends; for it is to be "in the days of these kings" and not after their days. Now note the similarity of the expressions "in the days of the Son of Man" and "in the days of these kings," and give both the same significance and remember that, as we have proven, they will be the same days--days before the lease of Gentile power expires, in which the Son of Man will be present to "set up" his Kingdom, which shall a little later destroy all these Gentile Kingdoms.

TYPICAL ISRAEL'S EXPERIENCES WERE PROPHETIC.

(2) Take another line of prophecy, concealed, and yet very simple and easy of appreciation when once the mind grasps it. The Scriptures show us that the fleshly house of Israel and all of its institutions and affairs were typical fore-shadowings of the spiritual house of Israel and its higher institutions, better sacrifices, etc. It need not, therefore, surprise us to find that the length of the Jewish age--the length of the divine favor to fleshly Israel,--was typical also, and that it gives us the exact measurement of the Gospel age,--God's dealings with, and favor toward spiritual Israel.

Jacob's name was changed to Israel, which signifies "A Prince with God," and his descendants were therefore termed Israelites--the people of the Prince with God. But the antitype of Jacob is Christ, the true Prince with God; not after the flesh, but after the spirit; and his house is spiritual Israel. Jacob's twelve sons first inherited his name and blessing, and through them it descended to all the fleshly house of Israel; Christ's twelve Apostles inherited his name and blessing, and through them it has descended to all the spiritual house of Israel. As the typical house had a high priest, Aaron, so the antitypical house has a greater high priest, Christ Jesus our Lord, the high priest of our profession. As the fleshly house had a priesthood under Aaron, so the spiritual house has "a royal priesthood" under Christ, to whom the promise is made that they shall be kings and priests unto God, who shall reign on the earth, after their present time of sacrificing is ended. So we might

proceed with everything that fleshly Israel had and find its duplicate on a higher plane, in spiritual Israel, but we will not go into details here: suffice it to notice further that the Jewish age or period of fleshly Israel's favor ended with a "harvest" period of forty years. This began with our Lord's baptism, lasted three and a half years, as a national test, and when that nation was rejected at the time of our Lord's crucifixion, the harvest work proper began--a separation of the wheat from the chaff--a time of gathering out of that rejected nation such as were "Israelites indeed," previous to the great time of trouble which came upon the nation, and which utterly destroyed their national polity A.D. 70. All of this is likened to a "harvest" season, and its first garnering of the wheat, and subsequent burning of the chaff. And our Lord gives instructions to us (Matt. 13) that this Gospel age of spiritual Israel's favor will likewise end with a time of harvest, gathering the wheat together, and ultimately destroying the tares. In the harvesting of the fleshly house our Lord, in the flesh, was the Chief-Reaper, and his Apostles were co-laborers; in the harvesting of the spiritual house our Lord, a spirit being, is to be present as the Chief-Reaper, and members of the spiritual house are also to be reapers,--some on each side of the vail.

ISRAEL'S PARALLELS.

Now note the time correspondencies. The Jewish age, from the death of Jacob to the death of Christ, was 1845 years long--to the beginning of our Lord's ministry 1841 ½ years long, and to the time of the utter destruction of their nation, in A.D. 70, 1881 ½ years long. Notice how the Gospel age corresponds to this. The Gospel age did not begin with our Lord's birth: it began after our Lord's death and resurrection, when he commissioned his disciples to "preach the Gospel to every creature." (Our Lord's previous work during the three and a half years of his ministry was the offering of the Kingdom to the fleshly house, to test them, and to prove that they were unready to receive the true Kingdom.) Applying the foregoing measurements of the Jewish age to the Gospel age, beginning at the time of our Lord's death and resurrection and the Pentecostal blessing, in the Spring of A.D. 33, we find that the period of 1841 ½ years from the death of Jacob to the beginning of our Lord's ministry, would measure from the Spring of A.D. 33 to the Autumn of 1874; and the 1845 years of the Jewish age, from the death of Jacob to the rejection of fleshly Israel, applied here, measuring from the Spring of A.D. 33, would reach to the Spring of 1878; and the 1881 ½ years from the death of Jacob to the full destruction of Israel's polity in A.D. 70, finds its correspondency in this Gospel age, by measuring 1881 ½ years from the Spring of A.D. 33, which would bring us exactly to (Autumn) 1914 A.D.-- the very year and time shown us by Daniel's prophecy to be the full end and limit of the "Gentile times." Can this be accidental? Nay; it is design. What stronger testimony could be asked by the eye and ear of faith? Surely, anything plainer or clearer would be sight, and leave no room for faith.

THE JUBILEE PROPHECY.

(3) Note another prophecy, similarly hidden in type in the Mosaic law,--Israel's Jubilee Year. No one is prepared to understand this line of prophecy who has not first learned that the second coming of our Lord is not for the purpose of destroying the world, but for the purpose of blessing it according to the promise made to Abraham, "in thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed,"--with the favors lost in Adam. These will be offered to all and will be made perpetual to those who will accept them on the terms of the New Covenant. None can see any beauty or typical significance in Israel's Jubilee, who have not learned that God has provided "times of restitution of all things" which are to begin in connection with the second advent of the Redeemer.--See Acts 3:19-23.

We find that Israel's Jubilee year, in which every person and family had every lost possession and all personal liberties restored to them, was intended to be a type of the coming time of restitution, when a full opportunity for attaining freedom from sin and from Satan, and from the hereditary weakness of the flesh, shall be presented to all, and when the earth shall again revert to the human family in general, for whom it was created, and for whom, after being lost through Adam's transgression, it was redeemed by Christ. We find that the Scriptures indicate, in connection with these jubilees, a system of counting by multiples; and that a Jubilee of Jubilees, or fifty times fifty years (2500 years) constitutes a Great Jubilee cycle and that such a cycle began to count after fleshly Israel had observed her last typical Jubilee. We find from the Scriptures that Israel's nineteenth Jubilee year,--in the year B.C. 626,-- was her last. Knowing that the Jubilee was a part of the Law, and that no feature of that Law, not one jot or tittle, can pass away without reaching a fulfilment, or antitype, we measure the cycle of the Great Jubilee 2500 years from the date when the last typical Jubilee was kept (626 B.C.), and find accordingly that the antitypical Jubilee or Great Jubilee of Jubilees should have begun in October, 1874. Thus,--625 years B.C. plus 1875 years A.D. are 2500 years, which would include the Jubilee year: consequently, with the end of the year 1874 (Jewish time, October), the antitypical Jubilee of 1,000 years, instead of another typical one year, was due to begin.

Watchers will note carefully the correspondency of this date, and the character of the event to be expected, with the finding of our previous examinations (1 and 2), which showed us this very same date, October, 1874, was the time when the "harvest" of this age was due to begin, and when the Lord himself, as the Chief Reaper, was due to be present. The only thing necessary to connect this Jubilee prophecy with the others, is the statement of the Apostle Peter in Acts 3:21, which shows that our Lord must be present (at his second advent) at the beginning of the times of restitution of all things, and as already seen, these restitution times are the Antitypical Jubilee times typified by Israel's Jubilees. Thus we have two very simple but clear and very important lines of Scripture testimony which indicate clearly that the parousia of our Lord was due to begin in October, 1874, and both show us the character of the work which we should expect would be in progress during the time of his presence, preceding his open manifestation to the world, his epiphania, his apokalupsis.

THE DAYS OF WAITING ARE FULFILLED.

(4) Take another line of prophecy: we find that the 1260 days, and the 1290 days, and the 1335 days, so particularly set forth in Daniel's prophecy, and corroborated in Revelation, have had fulfilments;--the 1260 days ending in 1799, the 1290 days ending in 1829 and the 1335 days ending in 1874. Our friends known as "Second Adventists" were wont to use these "days of Daniel," and once applied them as we do here: but they abandoned them after 1874 passed and they failed to see Jesus with their natural eyesight, in a body of flesh and with Calvary's scars. They have dropped these "days of Daniel" entirely, because they find no way of applying them which would prolong them beyond 1874. The fault is not with the days nor with their application as above; but with the wrong things expected. They, in common with others who look for the Second Advent, err in expecting that the Gospel age, which has been a spirit and faith epoch, will end with a flesh and sight deterioration;--in expecting that the spiritual kingdom of Satan will be followed by a fleshly kingdom of Christ. But the Watchers amongst the Adventists as well as in other denominations are getting the eyes of their understanding opened by the anointing of the promised eyesalve.--Rev. 3:18.

It was concerning this last period that the angel declared to the Prophet, "Oh, the blessedness of him that waiteth, and cometh to the 1335 days . . . Thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." What blessedness? We answer, a joy of heart and rejoicing to the Watchers is what is here intimated. It is since this date, October, 1874, where Daniel's 1335 days intimated that a great

blessing would begin; where the Jubilee types indicated that the restitution of all things would begin (which implies the second presence of the Great Redeemer), and where the parallelism of the two houses of Israel shows that the second presence of our Lord as the Great Reaper is due;--from this date a great blessing has come to the Watchers. Since then the Word of God has opened before us in a most marvelous manner. Since then the sure word of prophecy as a lamp to our feet has shown us many evidences that we are in the end of the age. Since then the day-star has been rising in the hearts of the Watchers, and has illuminated our minds, releasing us from the terrible nightmare of error respecting eternal torment, revealing to us the true character of our heavenly Father, making plain to us the necessity for the great atonement for sin, and showing us distinctly the object of the permission of evil, and revealing, one by one, various features of the divine plan,--the high calling of the Church to the divine nature, and to joint-heirship with Christ in his Millennial Kingdom, and the resulting blessing of restitution to human perfection for the world of mankind in general. Ah, yes! all who have been brought "out of darkness into this marvelous light" can appreciate the words of the angel, and heartily say, Blessed are our ears, for they hear, and our eyes, for they see, for many prophets and many righteous persons have desired to know these things, and have not known them.

(5) We might refer to other prophecies and types in the Scriptures, which show that we are living in the "harvest" times of this age, in the parousia of the Son of Man, but our space forbids. The fact that this world, as he predicted, continues in its usual course, eating, drinking, planting and building, etc., and knows not of his presence, so far from being an evidence against these prophetic testimonies, quite to the contrary, shows us that the fulfilment is coming, just as the Master predicted: that the day of the Lord, the day of his presence, has come upon the world as a thief in the night, secretly, quietly, stealthily, unknown;--the only ones favored with a knowledge of events transpiring on the other side of the veil being the Watchers who, if they have slumbered at all, have, nevertheless, maintained a waiting attitude of readiness for the announcement--

"BEHOLD THE BRIDEGROOM!"

This is the announcement which we are now giving-- Not, Behold, the Bridegroom *cometh*, but "Behold the Bridegroom!" already here, present, knocking gently with the prophecies to arouse the Virgins, but not to arouse the world. (Rev. 3:20.) This is the reading of the oldest Greek Manuscripts, which omit "*cometh*." Our Lord says, "If any man hear my voice [knock] and open the door, I will come in to *him*, and sup with *him*." This message to the present Laodicean phase of the Church, intimates very clearly (1) that the "knock" and "voice" will be inaudible to natural ears, and heard only by the ears of the understanding, the hearing of faith; (2) that it will not be a denominational knock or call (as to Adventists, Presbyterians, etc.), but (3) that it will be a knock that must be heard individually, and responded to individually,--"any man" who hears the "knock" or "voice," if he so wills, may *exercise faith*, open the door of his understanding, and realize his Lord's second presence.

The man who never hears the "knock" is evidently not counted worthy to hear it. But those who hear are just as evidently not compelled to respond and to accept the present, knocking King: hence he says, if the hearing one open the door, I will come in. However, only those who recognize the "knock," and who respond and by faith open to the Lord and receive him as their present King--only these are to have the great blessing of spiritual nourishment--the feast of "meat in due season," "things new and old," which the Master promised to provide at that time to strengthen the faithful for the judgments, trials, testings and siftings which must "begin with the house of God." "I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me."--Compare Rev. 3:20, and Luke 12:37.

As, therefore, we softly whisper—"Behold the Bridegroom!" it is not with any hope of arousing the world to faith in the Lord's presence, etc. They are not worthy to know and would only misuse the knowledge now. By and by, in the Lord's due time, they shall know--in the period of the epiphania and apokalupsis of the Son of Man. They will be awakened by the great crash of the day of trouble. We do, however, promulgate the message, "Behold the Bridegroom [present]!" with the confident expectation that all who are of the "Virgin" class (the pure, the justified and consecrated), will be permitted to hear the message, will be aroused by it, and will trim their lamps (examine the Scriptures, investigate the subject), and find the message true, before the "door is shut" and the great trouble begun. We well know, however, from the Lord's prophetic parable, that among those who will be aroused to investigation, there will be two classes, because there are both wise and foolish "Virgins." The wise are those who have not only consecrated their all to the Lord, but who are living accordingly,--not unto sin, nor unto self, nor unto sectarianism, but unto the Lord: these, as intimated in the parable, will find no difficulty in trimming their lamps and recognizing the presence of the Bridegroom. But the foolish Virgins, overcharged with the cares of this life, or the deceitfulness of riches (wealth, reputation, influence, etc.), will not have within themselves ("in their vessels") a sufficiency of the oil (holy spirit); and consequently they will be unable to get the light in time to go in with the wise virgins before the elect number shall be completed, and the door of opportunity to become part of the Bride of Christ shall forever close. True, they will later obtain the oil, as is shown in the parable, but too late to be of the "little flock" who shall be accounted worthy to share the Kingdom, and to escape the great time of trouble coming upon the world: the foolish virgins will be obliged to pass through the trouble with the world, and will share thus in its distress, represented in the parable by the words, "wailing and gnashing of teeth."

PAROUSIA IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

"The word parousia occurs in the following texts of the New Testament in each of which it should be properly translated "presence:"--

"What shall be the sign of thy presence?"-- Matt. 24:3.

"So shall also the presence of the Son of Man be."-- Matt. 24:27, 37, 39.

"They that are Christ's at his presence."--I Cor. 15:23.

"What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye, presented before our Lord Jesus Christ at his presence?"--I Thes. 2:19.

That "he may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ."--I Thes. 3:13.

"We which are alive and remain unto the presence of the Lord shall not precede them which are asleep."--I Thes. 4:15.

"Be preserved blameless unto the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ."--I Thes. 5:23.

"Now we beseech you, brethren, by [respecting] the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him."--2 Thes. 2:1.

"Then shall be revealed the lawless one, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of his mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation [epiphania] of his presence."-- 2 Thes. 2:8. See R.V.

“Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the presence of the Lord.”--James 5:7.

“Be ye also patient, stablish your hearts; for the presence of the Lord draweth nigh.”--James 5:8.

“There shall come in the last days scoffers [in the Church] walking after their own lusts [desires], and saying, Where is the promise of his presence?”--2 Pet. 3:3, 4.

The word parousia is properly translated (“presence”) in 2 Cor. 10:10, and Phil. 2:12.

EPIPHANIA IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

The Greek word epiphania signifies bright shining or manifestation. It is rendered “appearing” and “brightness,” and occurs as follows:--

“Keep this commandment without spot unrebukable until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which in his times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords.”--I Tim. 6:14, 15.

“I charge thee, therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his Kingdom.”--2 Tim. 4:1.

“There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.” --2 Tim. 4:8.

“Looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.”--Titus 2:13.

“Then shall the Wicked One be exposed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness [epiphania--bright shining] of his coming [parousia--presence].”--2 Thes. 2:8.

APOKALUPSIS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

The Greek words apokalupsis and apokalupto signify revealment, uncovering, unveiling (as of a thing previously present but hidden). The name of the last book of the Bible is from the same root--Apocalypse or Revelation. Apokalupsis is rendered revealed, revelation, appearing, coming and manifestation, in the following texts which relate to the Lord's second presence and power and glory, as these shall be made known,--uncovered or revealed to the world. Many of these texts also show that when he shall thus be revealed, his Church will be with the Lord and be revealed or manifested at the same time and in the same manner.

“The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”-- Rom. 8:18.

“Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.”--I Pet. 4:13.

“An inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”--I Pet. 1:4, 5.

“A partaker of the glory that shall be revealed.”-- I Pet. 5:1.

“Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it; because it shall be revealed by fire.” (I Cor. 3:13.) Here the reference evidently is to the testings of the Lord's people during the period of his presence in the end of the age. The Apostle's words thus agree with our Lord's prophecy of the same testings, saying that “there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed”--uncovered.-- Luke 12:2.

“Hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”--I Pet. 1:13.

“The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven... in flaming fire [judgments against all unrighteousness], taking vengeance.”--2 Thes. 1:7,8.

“So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming [apokalupsis--revelment] of our Lord Jesus Christ.”--I Cor. 1:7. [The Lord's people will need to keep active, watching and waiting for the great blessing until the manifestation or revealment of the Lord; but if Watchers, they shall be made aware of his presence (parousia) and the work of “harvest” beforehand, and shall share in the revealment.]

“That the trial of your faith . . . might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing [apokalupsis--revelment] of Jesus Christ.”--I Pet. 1:7.

“For the earnest expectation of the creature [mankind] waiteth for the manifestation [apokalupsis--revealing] of the sons of God [the Church].”--Rom. 8:19.

“The same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed [apokalupsis].” (Luke 17:29, 30.) That is to say, the judgments of the coming “time of trouble” as predicted, will begin as soon as the “salt of the earth,” the saints, have all been changed; and thus the Son of Man will be revealed a present Judge, who already had for some time been present sealing and gathering his “elect.”

PRESENCE GRADUALLY REVEALED.

Foregoing we drew the line of distinction between the parousia and the epiphania or apokalupsis of our Lord, quite sharply, to assist the reader in noting their difference of signification. As a matter of fact, however, the bright shining of the present One is due to begin shortly after the parousia begins; and again as at the first advent it will be true that “the Light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not.” The revealing of the Lord's presence begins with the faithful of the Church speedily, and gradually extends to the world in general. Up to the time when the strength of the trouble breaks forth, only the faithful Watchers discern the parousia, and only by them can the bright-shining of the Lord's presence be appreciated. To these the bright-shining of the Lord's presence, the increased brilliancy of the light of truth respecting the Word and character and plan of God, is an ever increasing joy and pleasure: thus it is that “ye, brethren, are not in darkness,” respecting the events of the day of the Lord, but know in advance that its tribulation will come upon the world as travail upon a woman.--I Thes. 5:3, 4.

While the revealment of our Lord's presence thus illuminates the hearts of his faithful ones as the Day-star (2 Pet. 1:19) and causes them to understand, and not be in darkness with the world in

respect to his plans, present and future, the bright-shining of the Lord's presence shall affect nominal Christians, and the civilized world in general, also, but in a totally different manner; for the character of Christ's "harvest" work, during this period of his presence, is such as to cause a general opening of eyes along the lines of justice and injustice, righteousness and sin, the rights of mankind and the wrongs of mankind. The light which has been shining out for the past twenty years is awakening the world to a realization of its rights and its wrongs; to a realization that the earth belongs to mankind in general and not exclusively to a few who have seized it and fenced it. This same light is exposing the corruption and falsity of many long-venerated theories and institutions, religious, political, social and financial. It was in reference to this light of his presence at the second advent that our Lord declared that this day of his presence would bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the secret counsels of the heart,--for there is nothing hidden that shall not be uncovered. (Luke 8:17.) And in this connection let it not be overlooked that the Apostle declares that Satan's power to deceive the world through Antichrist is to be consumed by "the bright-shining [epiphania] of his presence [parousia]."--2 Thes. 2:8.

Thus seen, the bright-shining of the present One is causing great joy to the hearts of the faithful, who wait patiently for him and for the deliverance which he has promised; but the bright-shining, as it affects the worldly, has the effect of quickening their selfish propensities, producing discontent, and is thus preparing the world for the great climax of catastrophe, predicted in the Word of the Lord, as the consummation of this age;--the overthrow of all the governments and institutions of this present order of things, in anarchy,--"a time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation."

We noticed that it was predicted 2500 years ago through the Prophet Daniel, that "in the days of these kings" the representatives of the fourth universal empire, Rome (ecclesiastically conglomerated, shown in the feet and toes of the image), the God of heaven would cause the Kingdom of God to smite the image upon its feet,--to utterly crush it; and that it would be after smiting the image that God's Kingdom, represented by the stone, would wax great and fill the whole earth. As we have just shown, we are now in this time in which the Kingdom of God is exerting its force against the kingdoms of this world: the King himself is present, must be present before he could destroy present kingdoms and take their power; he is already exerting the influences which will eventuate in their destruction; and he is prepared, backed by all the power of God, quickly to establish upon their ruins his own glorious Kingdom, consisting of himself the King, and his faithful ones of the Gospel Church as his Bride and joint-heir.

The influence exerted by our present Lord, the Light, the Truth, is already breaking the power of ignorance and superstition, which for long centuries has held the masses of mankind in subserviency to Papacy; and the same bright-shining is likewise dissolving the lighter shackles of ignorance and error forged for their faithful by the various sects of Protestantism. Ultimately, all superstition and false reverence will be dissolved, and false institutions will fall; then will be manifest the fact that error and falsehood and fear never truly sanctify the heart,--and the world of mankind being released from its servility to fear will speedily manifest its true character of selfishness and ungodliness, and will speedily precipitate the great trouble predicted.

But it would be a mistake to suppose that the parousia of our Lord is merely or chiefly in connection with the world and its preparation for the chaos of the present order of things. On the contrary, the chief work of the Lord during this period of his parousia is for and in connection with his Church. As we saw above, he foretold that on his return he will reckon with his servants, to whom he entrusted the pounds and talents, before manifesting his wrath against evil-doers in the trouble of this "day of vengeance,"--in the slaughter of all who would not have him to reign over

them. That slaughter time, in which all who will not accept the reign of righteousness will be destroyed from among the people (Acts 3:23), begins with the burning of the “tares” in the end of this age, when there shall be great trouble, “weeping and gnashing of teeth;” and to some extent it will continue throughout the Millennial age, for all the way to the very last (Isa. 65:20; Acts 3:23; Rev. 20:8, 9) all who wilfully oppose the Lord will perish.

The Kingdom which we are expecting, and which we believe is now in process of establishment, and is soon to smite the kingdoms of this world and to supplant them, is not an earthly kingdom, but a heavenly one; not a fleshly kingdom, but a spiritual one; not a kingdom which will be visible to the natural eye, but an invisible yet powerful kingdom. We find nothing in the Scriptures to corroborate the thought entertained by some that this Gospel age having begun in the spirit, is to culminate in a reign of Christ and his Church in the flesh with an earthly throne, etc. Quite to the contrary, the King and his joint-heirs, the Church, as spirit beings, will have a spiritual empire, tho their subjects, to whom they will offer the blessings of the restitution purchased at Calvary, will be men in the flesh, whose highest hope and ambition will be restitution to the grand perfection of the human nature lost in Eden, redeemed at Calvary,—an earthly image of the Heavenly Father. We hold that Christ and his saints during the Millennial age will be no more visible to mankind than is the Prince of this world, Satan, whose associates in the misrule of the present evil world, the fallen angels, are likewise invisible.

“THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN COMETH NOT WITH OBSERVATION.”

The Pharisees at the first advent made the mistake of supposing that the Kingdom which Christ proclaimed would be a visible kingdom, composed of himself and his followers in the flesh; and seeing no army or other evidences of temporal power for the establishment of an earthly kingdom, they thought to expose the hollowness of our Lord's claims before his followers, by asking him the question;—When will your Kingdom of God appear?—when will we see it? Mark well our Lord's reply, which, if the Pharisees had understood it, might have been a great revelation to them. He answered: “The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation.” How strange they must have thought this answer! The Kingdom of God, then, would be a Kingdom which could not be observed or seen;—an invisible kingdom. But our Lord continued the explanation and increased their perplexity by adding, “Neither shall ye say, Lo here! or, Lo there!” (Luke 17:21.) Then our Lord gave the key to the matter by adding, “Because the Kingdom of Heaven is [to be] in the midst of you” That is to say, when the Kingdom of Heaven shall come it will be amongst mankind, everywhere present, but wholly invisible; so that they cannot observe it with the natural eye, nor can they point it out or locate it, although it will be everywhere present amongst men; an omnipresent and omnipotent rule, or reign of righteousness. In our Common Version the true thought is obscured by the words “within you,” which would better be “among you.” Anyone, however, can see that it could not have been our Lord's intention to say that the Kingdom of God was then or ever would be within the hearts of the class addressed, which elsewhere he styled “hypocrites, whited walls and sepulchers, full of all manner of corruption.”

“THAT WHICH IS BORN OF THE SPIRIT IS SPIRIT.”

We call to mind also our Lord's explanation of spiritual things to Nicodemus, in which he declared plainly that only those who are born again can either enter into, or see the Kingdom of God. (John 3:3, 6.) Nor does this refer merely to the begetting of the spirit, as at consecration; it includes also the birth of the spirit in resurrection—“born from the dead.” The Apostle Paul gives the same assurance, saying, “Flesh and blood [human nature] cannot inherit the Kingdom of God.” Hence he informs us that all those who shall be sharers of that heavenly Kingdom must be “changed” from

human, or flesh conditions to spirit conditions, from weakness to power, from animal to spiritual conditions.--I Cor. 15:42-44.

One matter which more than any other seems to hinder the Lord's people from grasping this subject clearly is, the prevalent but mistaken view which is entertained respecting the resurrection of the dead. We shall not attempt to discuss this subject at length here, and we shall omit entirely reference to the world's resurrection, which will be to human conditions, nature, etc.; but it is necessary that we notice something respecting "the first [chief, best, highest] resurrection, which pertains only to Christ Jesus and the Church, which is his body--the Kingdom class. These all are sacrificers, who "present their bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God." In view of this sacrifice of the human nature, the gift of God in exchange is, to these, a spiritual nature,--and hence they are termed "new creatures." Their exaltation in nature is very high: lifted out of the human nature, which is a little lower than that of angels (the lowest order of spirit beings), they are to be exalted to the nature and likeness of their Lord, "far above angels, principalities and powers;" and to be made partakers of the highest form of the spirit nature; namely, the divine nature, with its wonderful peculiarity,--immortality, or inherent life.*--2 Pet. 1:4.

*Send for our tract, "The Hope of Immortality,"--samples free.

The one point which more than any other seems to confuse the student of this subject, is our Lord's resurrection. They note the fact that he appeared in a body of flesh and bones, after his resurrection, and they therefore conclude that he still has a body of flesh and bones bearing all the scars of Calvary; hence, in thinking of his second advent they invariably expect it to be another advent as a human being (in flesh and bones), "a little lower than the angels." These expectations are wrong, as we shall show from the Scriptures. Our Lord after his resurrection was a spirit being, and his manifestations of himself to his disciples in various fleshly bodies then, were similar exactly to manifestations made before he became the man Christ Jesus, while he still possessed the glory which he had with the Father before the world was,--the glory of a spirit being. For instance, are we not particularly told that the Lord and two angels appeared as men in bodies of flesh and blood and bones, and in ordinary human garb, to Abraham and Sarah? And the record is that "they did eat and talk with Abraham." On another occasion the Lord appeared to Moses, not in a body of flesh, but "as a flame of fire" in a bush which apparently burned, and from which he spoke to Moses. We contend that such a power to appear in any kind of a body is a power which in the past was considerably used in communicating the divine will to mankind, and that it is discontinued now, only because the canon of divine revelation is complete, so that in it the man of God is thoroughly furnished unto every good word and work, and needs no special message or revelations.--2 Tim. 3:17.

In reading the narrative of our Lord's appearance to his disciples after his resurrection, the fact seems generally to be overlooked that he appeared only a few times, in all, and that these visits were always brief, and that between these visits, after the day of his resurrection, there were long periods of days and weeks in which the disciples saw nothing of him. It is generally overlooked, also, that he appeared in various forms, one of which was identical with the body that was crucified, because Thomas had said he would not believe unless he could have such a demonstration. Even then our Lord rather upbraided Thomas, assuring him that there was a still greater blessing in store for those who ask not for such ocular demonstration. It is generally forgotten that none of the world ever saw our Lord after his resurrection, but merely his disciples, to whom, it is said, he "showed

himself." This was in harmony with his statement made before his death, "Yet a little while and the world seeth me no more."-- John 14:19.

The change of nature which our Lord experienced in his resurrection was no less a step upward from the earthly to the heavenly condition, than was the change of nature which he experienced at his birth a step downward from the heavenly to the earthly condition, called "humbling himself," laying aside his glory. As he laid aside the glory of his spirit being to become a man, so he, in turn, laid aside his humanity in death in order to assume the glory and dignity of the divine nature, "far above." Concerning the change which he experienced at his resurrection, the Apostle declares, "God hath highly exalted him." It should be manifest to all that, since our Lord left his rich condition as a spirit being, and humbled himself and became comparatively poor in the taking of the human nature, that this was for some particular reason and object, and that, when that object would be accomplished, the riches of the spiritual condition would be fully restored to him. But instead, the general thought is that our Lord Jesus is not only encumbered in heaven with a body of flesh, wholly unsuitable to heavenly conditions, but that, in addition to this, that body of flesh has all the marks of mental and physical suffering which it received through contact with sin and sinners as our ransom price.

Such a view is dishonoring to the Heavenly Father; for it should not be supposed that he would tolerate a loss to all eternity on the part of his well beloved One, because of his faithfulness and obedience to the divine will. The Scripture declaration is to the contrary; namely, that our Lord was "made flesh," took upon him our nature "for the suffering of death;" and not to be encumbered with fleshly conditions to all eternity. Besides, if our Lord must bear the scars of his wounds to all eternity, the implication would be that his people would also bear all their blemishes and scars to all eternity. Surely, if such were the divine arrangement, that which is perfect would never come,--we should be encumbered with the imperfect forever.--I Cor. 13:10.

When we get the correct view of this matter, every difficulty and objection ceases. As the Scriptures declare, so it was: "He was put to death in flesh, he was quickened in spirit." "Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more [so]." (2 Cor. 5:16; I Pet. 3:18.) It was at his resurrection that he became the second Adam--"the last Adam, a quickening spirit." (I Cor. 15:45.) "Now the Lord is that spirit." (2 Cor. 3:17.) After appearing to his disciples under various peculiar conditions after his resurrection, and in various bodies, the Lord invariably vanished,--as soon as he had communicated to them the appropriate lessons, causing, as they declared, their hearts to burn within them. He appeared in these various forms for two reasons:--

(1) They could best receive his instructions under such conditions, for, if he had appeared to them in the glory of his spirit being, and had performed a miracle upon their eyes by which they could have discerned his spiritual glory, they would have been too much affrighted to have benefited by what he would have said.

(2) They were still natural men, not fully begotten of the holy spirit, because Pentecost was not yet come (John 7:39; Acts 2:1-4), and hence they were unprepared to understand spiritual things; "for the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, neither can he know [appreciate] them, because they are spiritually discerned."--I Cor. 2:14.

The Apostle Paul was the only one of the disciples who saw the Lord "as he is." He tells us that the Lord's real spiritual presence, so far from being fleshly, or human-like, shone with a brightness "above the brightness of the sun at noonday." The effect upon Paul's eyes was serious; and, we may readily believe the effects remained with him to his dying day, notwithstanding the

miraculous removal of the callous scales, which permitted him to see, though indistinctly. Very evidently our Lord's design was to educate his apostles up to the thought of his resurrection; and, also, to the thought of his resurrection being not to former conditions, limited by the flesh, but to new conditions, in which he (as he had already explained to Nicodemus) could come and go like the wind, and none could know whence he came nor whither he went; he could appear in one body or in another body, or be present with them without their being aware of it, just as "the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him," yet is invisible to them, because he is a spirit being.

“WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM FOR WE SHALL SEE HIM AS HE IS.”

When the right conception of our Lord in his glorified condition is gained, and when the Apostle's statement is remembered, that his Church shall be like him, and "see him as he is," it is comparatively easy to understand that the entire glorified Church will be as invisible to the world as the Heavenly Father is, and as our Lord Jesus was after his resurrection; and when it is remembered that this Church constitutes the Kingdom of God, the "royal priesthood," which is to rule and bless the world during the Millennial age, our Lord's words to the Pharisees are quite intelligible,--"The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation--neither shall ye say, Lo here! or, Lo there! for behold, the Kingdom of God is in the midst of you"--a present but invisible authority, government, rule of righteousness.--Luke 17:21.

**THEY KNEW NOT THE TIME OF THEIR VISITATION.
--LUKE 19:44**

Our Lord reproved the teachers of Israel because they did not discern the signs of the times; because they "knew not the time of their visitation." His words imply that their ignorance was a mark of carelessness and unworthiness, and of divine disfavor. He said: "Ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?" There was a reason, and the realization of that reason might have meant, to some at least, a correction of it--a drawing near to God to be taught of him. So now in the time of our Lord's second presence we find the world largely increasing in wisdom along various lines, and many hearts in perplexity and wonderment looking for those things which are coming upon the world, their hearts failing them for fear of the impending dissolution of the social structure in anarchy, and yet none are so blind respecting the times in which we live and the great changes impending, as the leaders of religious thought.

They are blinded by their false theories. They have declared that the Lord's commission to his Church is that she should convert the world into a Kingdom of God, and thus bring about the reign of righteousness; and they are so determined that their theories must not fail that they cannot see what is rapidly becoming apparent even to the worldly; namely, that the numbers even nominally converted every year are increasing far less, proportionately, than the natural increase of the world's population: so that if they had millions of years before them, the conversion could never be hoped for; but at the end of millions of years, true Christianity could not expect to claim as large a percentage as at present. Their theory also blinds them to the fact that much of the increase of Church membership in civilized lands is merely for popularity's sake, and for the sake of worldly prosperity, social standing, etc., and not the result of love for God and righteousness, nor significant of a consecration to walk in the "narrow way" of self-denial, self-sacrifice, etc.

The worldly, therefore, are really in a better condition to discern the signs of the times than many prejudiced nominal Christians. But none can see these things from the *true* standpoint except as they take that standpoint, and it is only granted to those who are fully consecrated to the Lord and who hearken to his Word. These shall not be in darkness, the Lord will not hide from them either his

good purposes as respects the blessing of the Church and, subsequently, of the world, or his purposes respecting the chastisement of the world in a great time of trouble, preparatory to its blessing, which will come after it has been humbled.

“THE DEAD IN CHRIST SHALL RISE FIRST.”

The chief work of our Lord during this “harvest” time, and especially in the forepart of it (when he calls his faithful servants of the Gospel age and reckons with them and rewards them), respects his Church as a whole, and not merely its living members. And here we should note the Apostle's statement respecting this time and work. He informs us that the Lord's dealings during this harvest will be first with “the dead in Christ,” saying, “We which are alive and remain to the coming [presence] of the Lord, shall not prevent [precede] them which are asleep [those of the Church already dead] . . . for the dead in Christ shall rise first.” (I Thes. 4:15, 16). Taking this statement in connection with our Lord's parable, it means that the faithful sleeping in death will be resurrected, reckoned with, rewarded, before the reckoning with and rewarding of the living members of the Church begins. Accordingly, if it be true, as we have briefly presented it, foregoing,— that we are now living “in the days of the Son of Man,” and that his presence began in the Autumn of 1874, then we should also believe that the resurrection of the saints which “were asleep” was due, and took place at some period not long after our Lord's *parousia* began. And we are able to fix upon a date for this with comparative certainty, although the entire matter is invisible to natural eyes and can be discerned only with the eye of faith and by the light of our lamp, the Scriptures.

Our lamp, as we have already seen, shows us that the Jewish age was in every particular a pattern, or illustration of this Gospel age; and keeping this in mind, we can judge something respecting the order of the divine arrangement in the “harvest” of this age, from the order of the divine arrangement in the “harvest” of the Jewish age. Observing the Jewish age, we find that the first three and a half years of their “harvest” were devoted to the simple announcement of the Master's presence, and an offer to the nominal Church then living; and that they ended by the rejection of the nominal Church at the time of our Lord's death; and that afterward while their nominal system, or Church was ignored, the Israelites indeed were called out of it into fellowship with the Lord, through his spirit. We note also, that it was at the very time of the rejection of the Jewish house that our Lord assumed before them, typically, his office of King, and rode upon the ass as the King of the Jews: and looking for the time when our Lord, in the end of the age, should assume his full regal power and authority as the King of kings, we find it should be at the corresponding date in this “harvest;” namely, in the Spring of 1878. And as the first work of our Lord, after taking the kingly office, in the typical “harvest,” was to reject the nominal house of Israel, that he might begin the work of gathering out of it the Israelites indeed, so we understand that in the present harvest time the first work of our King is the rejection of the nominal Gospel house of Sons,—to the intent that he may gather out of it the “wheat,” his “elect,” from one end of the ecclesiastical heavens to the other. (Matt. 24:31.) This rejection of the nominal Church, and the call to his people to “Come out of her,” we understand to be symbolically styled the fall of Babylon, and the spewing out of Laodicea. See Rev. 3:16; 18:2-4.

Here, then, we have an indication of the time when the judgment of the Lord's servants was due to begin, represented in the parable by the king's calling to himself his own servants to hear their reports; and in the light of the Apostle's statement just noticed, namely, that the living will not precede those that are asleep, it is clear that at that time, and before the reckoning with the living began, “them that sleep,” “the dead in Christ,” were awakened, granted a part in the first resurrection—raised in glory, honor, power, spiritual bodies, invisible to mankind. Nor would the resurrection of the spirit bodies necessitate any disturbance of graveyards or tombstones, or anything earthly. “That

which is born of the spirit is spirit," and as our Lord after his resurrection was invisible to the world, and invisible also to his Church (except as he miraculously manifested himself), so with these: they are invisible; there is no necessity for miraculous manifestation; none has been made, neither is any expected. "We walk by faith, and not by sight."

To all who understand the necessity for the sleep of the saints (namely, that it was because the call of the Church took place before the time divinely arranged for the establishment of the Kingdom), it will seem eminently proper that the King should, immediately on taking office as King, liberate from the prison house of death his faithful followers, who during his absence manifested their faithfulness, and for whom crowns of righteousness have been set aside, to be given them at his return in power and great glory. Indeed, it would be unreasonable to suppose any prolonged delay of their resurrection, after our Lord takes to himself his great power and begins his reign. We hold, therefore, that the resurrection of the dead in Christ was due to take place in the Spring of 1878.

"BLESSED THE DEAD WHO DIE."

Furthermore, we note a beautiful analogy here; for, thus considered, our Lord's resurrection a few days after his taking of office as King in typical Israel, corresponds to, or parallels the resurrection of the Church, "the body of Christ" a few days after his taking to himself honor and glory and power as the King of nations, in the Spring of 1878. Not only so, but the Book of Revelation, in a scene which belongs to that particular time, and in a description of the opening of the "harvest" of this Gospel age, shows "one like unto the Son of Man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle," beginning the work of reaping the harvest of this age: and there we find the significant statement, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord *from henceforth*; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, for their works follow them."--Rev. 14:13, 14, 16.

This text has been so frequently misapplied by theologians that its true significance will be apt to elude all who have not their senses exercised by reason of use, and who do not closely discriminate. It signifies that from the time of the beginning of the reaping of the "harvest" of this age by the crowned reaper (the Spring of 1878), there will be a wonderful blessing not previously possible, upon the certain class described. From this particular date onward those of this particular class who die will be favored or blessed in a manner in which none of the preceding members of this same class were blessed; namely, in that their death will not interrupt their works, which will continue right along, the labor and weariness alone ceasing, the work itself continuing under more glorious and more favorable conditions.

This means that since 1878 the fully consecrated of the Lord's people, those who are completely "dead with him," will not sleep in death, as has been necessary with all the preceding members of the body of Christ throughout the Gospel age; it means that from 1878, onward, the dead, who die in the Lord, will in the moment of dying experience their "change," or share in the first resurrection--in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, pass from mortality to immortality; from weakness to power; from dishonor to glory; from natural to spiritual condition.

It is to this that the Apostle referred when he said, "Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump." To our understanding, the last trump, the seventh of the series of symbolical trumpets, began in 1874, just before our Lord took to himself his great power and began its exercise--began his reign: its sound is to continue until the close of the Millennial age, a thousand years. This "change" "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," that is to occur to the living members of the body of Christ, will

indeed be a momentary change as respects each individual after he shall have rendered his accounts before the great King, and been accepted of him as a joint-heir in the Kingdom; but it does not imply that all of these will be changed in the same moment. Quite to the contrary, the judging of the living members of the Church, the going in of the wise virgins in the end of this age, will be a gradual work; it has already been in progress for over twenty years, and is not yet finished. It will include the rejection of the "foolish virgins," and the utter casting out of any who may take off the "wedding garment" of Christ's righteousness, as shown in one of the parables.

Thus we see that immediately after this taking of the crown in the Spring of 1878, our Lord gathered to himself those of his saints, "his jewels," who had already been polished and fitted and prepared, and who slept, awaiting the time for the establishment of the Kingdom; and that since then, one by one, his faithful saints of the same class of "jewels" are being gathered to himself, as they finish their course. But as it was necessary that our Redeemer should not only consecrate his life to death, but that he should actually die, so it is necessary that every member of the body of Christ shall not only consecrate himself to be dead with him, but that each also shall actually die. They are already reckoned dead, but this is not sufficient; our Lord's words are, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life;" and again, "Blessed are the dead in the Lord [reckonedly dead, consecrated unto death], dying from henceforth." So also it had been foretold in other Scriptures, that all who would be of the body of Christ must, like the Head, pass through the portals of death; thus it is written, "I have said, Ye are gods [mighty ones], all of you sons of the Most High; ye shall ALL DIE like men, and fall like one of the princes." The two princes of our race were Adam and Christ Jesus. Adam went into death because of disobedience; Christ as a sacrifice for the sins of others, entered death in obedience; and the Church, the body of Christ, his "brethren," being justified out of the Adamic death by faith in his sacrifice, are reckoned as joint-sacrificers with him in his death of obedience, that they may be accounted also sharers in "his resurrection" --the first resurrection, to the divine nature and glory and joint-heirship.--Psa. 82:6,7; Rom. 5:12,17; 2 Pet. 1:4.

We have given here only the briefest possible summary of the Scriptural evidences that we are living in the parousia, the presence, "the days of the Son of Man," in the "harvest" time of this age, and that the work which he, directly and through his apostles, instructed us to expect, is now in progress; namely, the "sealing" of the saints of the Most High God in their foreheads (Eph. 1:13,14), and giving them a mental appreciation of the divine plan and its times and seasons, together with a judgment, or testing of all who have covenanted themselves to be the Lord's and to lay down their lives in his service. And all who refuse to live up to their covenant, even tho sealed and blessed, and enlightened with present truth, will, we understand, be rejected from it, and cast again "into outer darkness" with the world, to share in the great time of trouble coming upon it. We understand also, that the elect number will soon be completed, and the last one of the class who shall be blessed by the glorious "change" from mortality to immortality, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, shall soon obtain that blessing, and that then the great time of trouble will fully burst upon the world, and speedily bring down the high, the lofty, and the proud, and prepare the world for the reign of the Prince of Peace.

Here we have consistency, at least, and harmony of Scriptures which have never been harmonized in the past, and which cannot now be harmonized from any other standpoint or with any other interpretation. Here we have the spiritual Kingdom of Messiah, with all power, displacing the spiritual kingdom of Satan, and establishing order and righteousness through earthly agents of its own, and overthrowing the earthly agents of the prince of darkness, many of whom are his servants merely because "the god of this world [age] has blinded the minds of them that believe not."

“THEY WITHOUT US SHALL NOT BE MADE PERFECT.”

--HEB. 11:40--

We remark, incidentally, that following the gathering of the Church to glory, as above outlined, will come the resurrection of the holy ones of the past,--"Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the holy prophets," whose resurrection will be to perfect earthly conditions, and who shall be the "princes in all the earth," seen of men, and representatives of the invisible but all-powerful spiritual Kingdom--the glorified Christ. Thus, chosen representatives of fleshly Israel will indeed rule the world, and bless it, as the representatives and agencies of the Spiritual Israel, and the nation of Israel will be first to respond to the standard of the Lord thus set up.--Psa. 45:16; Rom. 11:25-31; Zech. 12:10.

Our Lord's *parousia* (presence in the world) begun in 1874, will continue till the end of the Millennial age. The word is not applicable merely to a little period of presence at the beginning of the Millennial age: Christ's *parousia* and that of his Church will continue throughout the age. Nor will the epiphania and apokalupsis be a sudden burst of glorious light; nor do these words signify a visible showing to mankind of the Lord's person, or of the persons of his Church. Let us remember his words, "Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more." Let us remember also that, as his Church is to be in his likeness, so his likeness is declared to be an "express image of the *Father's person*;" it is written that he is the King eternal, immortal, invisible. (I Tim. 1:17.) Nor will it be any more necessary that the world should see with their natural eyes the Lord and his glorified ones, than that they should see the Heavenly Father: the world will see the earthly representatives of God and of Christ and of the Church, when they "see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the holy prophets," for they will be samples of perfect manhood, which is the earthly image of the invisible God.

Our Lord's epiphania (bright shining) and his *apokalupsis* (unveiling) began shortly after his *parousia* began; the bright shining of his presence is now visible to those who are walking "in the light"--to those who "are not in darkness with the world." It is a mental illumination, an illumination to the eyes of our understanding, and not to our natural eyes. The eyes of our understanding have been opened to see him that is invisible to the natural sight. The epiphania of our Lord is already affecting the world also, tho not through the eyes of the understanding; for they have no eyes for such spiritual things: nevertheless, the bright shining of the Lord's presence is influencing and affecting the whole course of the world, through an increase of knowledge on every subject--specially noticeable since 1878. Eventually, all the blinded shall have opened eyes of understanding, and

“EVERY EYE SHALL SEE HIM.”

Many even who are not of the Watchers are noting the signs of our times and are startled, and led to exclaim, What do these things mean?--this remarkable latter-day advance in science, art and mechanical invention?--this latter-day discontent in the midst of plenty and luxury?--this latter-day growth of millionaires and paupers?--this growth of giant corporations of world-wide power and influence?--Why are national policies and public men and their utterances and doings criticized (judged) by the masses as never before?--And what means it that with an apparent growth in wealth and numbers in all denominations of Christians, there is a growing dissatisfaction, discontent in them all: a growing tendency to criticize the creeds and the preaching and everything?--How comes it that nine-tenths of the preachers in all denominations know that their hearers desire a change, and would gladly "move on," if they knew how to better themselves even at smaller salaries?

The Scriptural answer is, The hour of God's judgment is come; the time when "Christendom," political, financial, social and ecclesiastical is being judged--being tried in the divine balances. And the Scriptures declare that she will be found wanting, and will be adjudged unworthy to further administer the affairs of earth, which will be turned over to the elect "little flock," according to the divine promise.--Luke 12:32.

The secret of the matter now is the same as in the Jewish "harvest," which John explained, saying,

“THERE STANDETH ONE AMONG YOU WHOM YOU KNOW NOT.--JOHN 1:26.

"Mine eyes can see the glory of the presence of the Lord;
He is trampling out the winepress where the grapes of wrath
are stored;
I see the flaming tempest of his swift descending sword:
Our King is marching on.

"I can see his coming judgments, as they circle all the earth,
The signs and groanings promised, to precede a second birth;
I read his righteous sentence, in the crumbling thrones of
earth:
Our King is marching on.

"The 'Gentile Times' are closing, for their kings have had
their day;
And with them sin and sorrow will forever pass away;
For the tribe of Judah's Lion now comes to hold the sway:
Our King is marching on."

* * *

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice [knock], and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him, and he with me."--Rev. 3:20.

Reprint 2972

THE THREE GREAT COVENANTS

CHRISTENDOM in general recognizes only two Covenants, the Old or Law Covenant, with Moses as its mediator, and the New Covenant, with Christ as its Mediator. Christendom may be said to know nothing whatever about the Abrahamic Covenant. When rarely they recognize the Abrahamic Covenant at all, or enter it into their calculations, they identify it with the New Covenant. We all inherited this general line of thought through Sunday-School sermons, commentaries, etc. It is not strange, therefore, that we all had this confused conception of this subject. Gradually, as a part of the light due to the Church in the end of this age, we got to see that there are three Covenants, instead of two, as we first supposed. We got to see that the Abrahamic Covenant, the original one, is the grandest and best of the three, and that from it the other two proceeded. This light upon the Divine purpose we began to set forth in the WATCH TOWER in 1880, and later elaborated the same thought in the Tabernacle Shadows of Better Sacrifices. In the latter we set forth that these Covenants are represented in the garments of the High Priest, in the ephod of two parts, with its shoulder-clasps and jeweled breast plate. However, we did not discern so sharply as we now do the clear-cut distinctions between those three Covenants. And is not this in full accord with the Lord's general dealing with us and with all people throughout the age? Is it not his proposition that the "Path of the just shall shine more and more unto the perfect day"? We believe that it is.

GROWING IN GRACE AND KNOWLEDGE

What we now see still more distinctly it is our duty and privilege to lay before the Household of Faith. We remind you, however, that as it took some of us quite a while to get a proper focus upon the Abrahamic Covenant, it may now take some of us a considerable time to still further differentiate between the Abrahamic Covenant and the New Covenant. Remember also that a clear understanding of every detail of God's Plan, while desirable, is not necessarily essential to our blessing thereunder. For instance, we believed in the precious blood of Christ and were justified thereby freely from all things, when we did not at all understand the philosophy of the Atonement--even as the majority of Christian people do not understand it now. The increasing knowledge did not bring increasing justification, but it did bring increased appreciation and love and devotion and opportunity for greater harmony with the Divine purposes better understood.

I.--GRACE. II.--LAW. III.--WORKS

St. Paul pointed out to us most distinctly that the original Covenant made with an oath to Abraham was in every way the superior one and that it, being a one-sided Covenant, an unconditional promise, has no mediator. St. Paul tells us that the Law Covenant was "added" to the Abrahamic Covenant in God's dealing with the nation of Israel. It is called a Law Covenant because the benefits of that Covenant were offered only to those who would keep the Law in all its requirements--inviolable. He calls it the Hagar Covenant, because it was a bondage and because its offspring, the Jewish nation, could not inherit the promised blessings and privileges. He tells us that it made nothing perfect, brought nothing to perfection. Although faith had a place and the grace of God had some manifestation towards Israel, yet neither faith nor grace affected their Covenant, which was hard and fast and demanded obedience to the works of the Law--"He that doeth these things shall live by them." Since none could do perfectly, that Covenant of works brought only condemnation of their imperfect works. It had a mediator, Moses, but he was unable to accomplish anything for the people, because of their imperfection through heredity. We properly call this the Law Covenant.

The Apostle points that as Hagar's child was born before Isaac, who represented The Christ, Head and Body, "The New Creation," so the nation of Israel, Moses and all the people baptized into him in the sea and in the cloud, "The house of servants," would be developed before Spiritual Israel, the New Creation--Christ and all the members of the house of sons of spirit-begetting.

As the Covenant of Grace (Sarah) existed before the Law Covenant was added to it, so it continued to exist after the Law Covenant was set aside as a Covenant, its prize of life eternal having been won by "the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a Ransom for all." So, then, the Covenant of Grace (Sarah), which preceded the Law Covenant (Hagar) four hundred and thirty years, continued alive during the whole period of the Law Covenant, but without children, and then brought forth the Head of the Seed, Jesus. The Law Covenant was then cast aside--"Cast out the bond-woman and her son; for the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the free-woman"--The Christ, the Heir of the original promise, now being developed. From the Scriptural standpoint the Resurrection is the birth; as, for instance, our Lord is the "First-Born from the dead, the First-Born amongst many brethren," and "his brethren," "his members," "his Bride" (three different names for the "elect" Church), must all be brought forth from the dead, all be "changed" to spirit condition before the Seed of Abraham will be complete.

**“IF YE BE CHRIST'S, THEN ARE YE
ABRAHAM'S SEED AND HEIRS.”**

--GAL. 3:29

This is the Mystery--the selection of the Church as the Bride of Christ during this Gospel Age, to be sharers with their Redeemer in the sufferings of this present time, and also in the glory that shall follow. Hence the Apostle was very solicitous that he might have share in "His Resurrection," The Christ Resurrection, "The First Resurrection." Not until that "First Resurrection" is finished will the Seed of the Sarah Covenant be fully born. This is quite in accord with the prophetic statement, "Shall I bring to the birth (deliver the Head), and not cause to come forth (the Body)." (Isa. 66:9.) The intimation is that so surely as Jesus, the Head of the Body, was brought forth in the Resurrection, born from the dead, so surely will all the members of his Body share with him his glorious "change" from mortality to immortality, from earthly to heavenly nature.

What about the Jews under the Law (Hagar) Covenant? Were they on that account cut off from the very privileges and blessings which they so desired--of being Abraham's Seed and heirs according to the promise? We answer, Yes. The Apostle shows that the children of the bond-woman could not be heirs with the children of the free-woman. How, then, did the apostles and others, who were of Israel according to the flesh, come into relationship with Christ and the Sarah Covenant (of grace)? The Apostle tells us that as a human marriage is dissolved by the death of one of the parties, so those of the Jews who could recognize by faith that Christ's death had fulfilled the terms of the Law Covenant could realize that that Covenant was dead, and hence, that they were freed from it and could become married to another--united to Christ. On the contrary any Jew who does not recognize that Christ, by his death, has "made an end of the Law, nailing it to his cross," and who still continues to believe in that Covenant, is as firmly bound thereby as though the Covenant were still alive; just as a woman whose husband was really dead, but she thought him alive, could not conscientiously marry another.

“WHEN I SHALL TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS”

The Apostle explains that all of that nation who lacked proper faith in Christ were cast off, "blinded," not forever, but until the completion of the House of Sons, the New Creation, the spirit

members of the spiritual Body of spiritual Israel--The Christ. Ah! but, says one, if they be cast off, "blinded," until the elect Church is complete, then they can have no part in it; and, being under the conditions of the Hagar (Law) Covenant, will they not be in an unsatisfactory state, under a New Covenant? And according to this evidence, did not God rather deceive the nation of Israel, when he entered into the Law Covenant with them at Sinai, knowing that they could not keep it, and could not get life under it, and yet permitting them, so supposing, to put themselves under that bondage? Are not the Lord's ways just and equal?

Yes, we answer, and the full scope of the Divine purpose when seen is glorious in its harmony. The difficulty in the past has been that we have seen as through an obscured glass, and not face to face. Now we perceive that God intends to recognize two seeds of Abraham, the one heavenly, like unto the stars of heaven; the other earthly, like unto the sands of the seashore. The attempt of the Law Covenant to bring forth the natural seed first was abortive--a failure. First must come the spiritual Christ, Head and Body, partaker of the divine nature, heir of all things. Then God's favor will return to natural Israel. But since the Law Covenant completed its purpose and was demonstrated to be unavailable for them, because of the weaknesses of the flesh, God purposes to make with that nation, and with that nation alone, a New Covenant.

Not a single statement of Scripture identifies the New Covenant with the Gentiles. On the contrary, it is Israel's New Covenant given to displace the Old or Law Covenant. Let us note well that the great mass of the early Church were Hebrews and that the Apostle's references to the New Covenant are almost exclusively in his epistle to the Hebrews. One exception is in Rom. 11:27, where the Apostle, although addressing Christians of Gentile birth, tells them that natural Israel was cast off for their sakes, but is still beloved for the fathers' sake, and is again to have Divine favor, under a special Covenant. The other (2 Cor. 3:6) refers to the royal priesthood as able (qualified) servants of the New Covenant--dying with Christ for its sealing.--Mal. 3:1.

The more closely we investigate the New Covenant, the more we must be convinced of this fact--that it belongs to Israel alone, including the two nations into which they divided at the death of Solomon--Israel and Judah. Note the statement of the Prophet, "Behold the days will come, saith the Lord, when I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not according to the Covenant [the Law Covenant] which I made with them when I took them by the hand and led them out of the land of Egypt." The Apostle, endeavoring to prove to the Jews that they could gain nothing under the Law Covenant, points out this prophecy, and tells them that the fact that God speaks of this as a New Covenant implies that a preceding [Law] Covenant had become old, valueless, and was preparing to pass away--"In that he saith, a New Covenant, he hath made the first old; now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away."--Heb. 8:13.

THE OATH-BOUND COVENANT SURE

--HEB. 6:17-20

The New Covenant is to take the place of the old and unsatisfactory one. There were two old Covenants, the Grace, or Sarah Covenant, and the Law, or Hagar Covenant. Which did the Apostle mean had grown old, valueless, and would pass away and give place to the New Covenant? Surely there can be no doubt or misunderstanding on this point. He meant the Law Covenant, for he says so. He did not mean the original Grace or Sarah Covenant, for he points out that our claim to relationship to God is under that original Covenant, as members of the Body of Christ, members of the Bride of Christ, Joint-Heirs with him. Our Lord Jesus, by his obedience, became heir of all, heir of the original Covenant and heir also of the Law Covenant. Of the people there was none with him, neither Jews nor Gentiles. But by the grace of God there was provision made, as we have seen, that

any Jew, seeing that the Law Covenant was dead, nailed to the cross, might become betrothed to Christ. They did not need to wait for the New Covenant, the provisions of which apply only to those on the earthly plane. Instead, by a faith justification and a consecration unto death, they were counted worthy of begetting to the new nature--betrothal to Christ. And similarly Gentiles, favored of God by the hearing ear and seeing eye of faith, were subsequently privileged to go through the same process, except that they did not need to reckon themselves dead to the Law Covenant, because they never were under it. Otherwise, recognizing Christ's death as the blood of the original Covenant, typified by Abraham's offering up his son, these also were reckoned justified and, presenting their justified bodies to the Lord as sacrifices, they were begotten of the same holy Spirit as the Jews, to be fellow-members of the same Body--the Body of Christ.

We come now to the other part of the question: What provision has God made for those Jews who bound themselves under the Law Covenant, from Moses' day down to the first advent; and for those who since then have not discerned the death of the Law Covenant and who will not be made aware of it until after the spiritual Seed shall have been completed and glorified? If they have not lost all share and privileges in connection with God's special mercies, where do they come in? We answer that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and others before the Law Covenant were not bound by it, yet were not in the fullest sense justified to life until the Abrahamic Covenant had been established at Calvary. Their faith, then, entitled them to a share in the merits of that sacrifice. Likewise throughout the period of the Law Covenant, before it was annulled at the cross, there were Ancient Worthies who lived above the masses of their time, and who, although bound by the Law, had above it a living faith in the original Oath-Bound (Sarah) Covenant of Grace. These in the Divine records were entitled to their share of that grace, as soon as the merit of Calvary's sacrifice had been presented on behalf of believers, when Jesus "ascended up on high, there to appear in the presence of God on our behalf." Although they lived while the Law Covenant was alive, they foresaw its death and trusted not in it, but in the superior Covenant of Grace. Hence these in due time will come forth to a life resurrection, not because of their relationship to the Law Covenant, under which they lived, nor because of their relationship to the New Covenant, of which some of them knew nothing, but because of their relationship to and faith in the original (Sarah) Covenant of Grace.

Thus the Scriptures account for the faithful ones of the past under the Covenant of Grace. But what now shall we say respecting those earthly Israelites, who lived not on that higher plane of faith, but of whom the Apostle says, "Our twelve tribes instantly serving God day and night hope to come" unto this promise. (Acts 26:7.) Were they all deceived? Will they get those special blessings?

GOD'S GIFTS AND CALLINGS SURE.

--ROM. 11:29-32

Nay, we answer, the gifts and calling of God are things not to be repented of. He who knew the end from the beginning knew exactly what Israel would be and do, and was not disappointed, and all of the plans and promises to that nation were made from the standpoint of this knowledge. Although the chief feature of the Sarah Covenant was secured by our Lord Jesus as a trophy of his victory over sin and death, and although he laid down his human nature completely to this end, nevertheless the Divine arrangement is such that the blood of Christ, the merit of his sacrifice of earthly things, must accrue to the benefit of the natural seed of Abraham, because it all goes to seal the New Covenant, which belongs exclusively to fleshly Israel. The opportunity granted to both the Jews and Gentiles to become Joint-Heirs with the Redeemer was based upon their offering themselves to him in sacrifice, and his acceptance of their offerings as his own--his sacrificing them throughout this age as his own flesh--and God's acceptance of them as New Creatures, begotten of the Spirit, as brethren of Christ, or the betrothed of Christ, or members of his Body. Only by thus sharing with our Lord, drinking his cup, being baptized into his baptism of death, surrendering all

into his hand, can we have fellowship with him in his sufferings; and his death (including ours) seals the New Covenant in his blood, of which he said, "Drink ye all of it." In his cup we are partakers, joint-sacrificers.--1 Cor. 10:16.

Thus while natural Israel had been counted enemies for our sakes, for the Gospel's sake, our only opportunity for gaining the great prize is in connection with the sealing of a New Covenant between God and Israel. How beautifully the features of the Divine program balance! Their loss was our gain, and our gain through sacrifice becomes their gain; and, altogether, the Lord will be glorified!

As already shown, the New Covenant will not be sealed, ratified, until the sacrifices of The Christ shall have been finished. And the finishing of these sacrifices closes the work of this great Day of Sacrifice and Atonement. With the second presentation of the blood of Atonement in the Most Holy, at the end of this age, the New Covenant with Israel will be sealed, and the blessing of the Lord will begin to Israel, "For this is my Covenant with them, when I shall take away their sins."--Rom. 11:27.

ABRAHAM'S TWO SEEDS

Not only did the original promise indicate two seeds of Abraham--one as the stars of heaven, and the other as the sands of the sea--but St. Paul elaborates this thought, saying of the promise, "It is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end that the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the Law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all (including you who are Romans); as it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations." We have seen how Abraham, as a type of God, is the father of the spiritual Seed and how through Christ, by the provision of the New Covenant, the Jewish nation, dead under the Law Covenant, is to be regenerated by The Christ, the Mediator of the New Covenant; and that this regeneration will commence at the close of this Gospel Age and the opening of the Millennial Age. But these are only two--"the (Church) holy nation," and the (Jewish) chosen nation. How do all nations come in? It will not do to say the Body of Christ, the Bride class, fulfils this prophecy, because, although they were taken out of the nations, they are not all nations, and do not even represent all nations. Each first died to his earthly estate and nationality, before he was begotten of the holy Spirit to be a member of the holy nation, the New Creation.

The Scriptures distinctly show that Christ and his Church, spirit beings, must constitute the Kingdom class, but they also show that the Ancient Worthies, and through them the nation of Israel under the New Covenant, will become the representatives of the heavenly Kingdom amongst men. It will be with these that the blessing of the Lord in the Millennial morning will begin. Thus we read of Jacob's trouble, that he shall be saved out of it and that the Lord will restore their judges as at the first, and their law-givers as at the beginning--the Ancient Worthies resurrected on the earthly plane. (Jer. 30:7; Zech. 12:7.)

The New Covenant will be the Law Covenant over again, only that it will have the better Mediator--The Christ, Head and Body, who will be able to make allowances for the imperfections of Israel's heredity. The sins of the past will all be forgiven, their physical blemishes waiting for restitution. They will be dealt with according to what they are, allowances being made in each individual case, and each will be required to heed the voice of the antitypical Moses. "And it shall come to pass that every soul which will not heed that Prophet, shall be utterly destroyed from amongst the people."--Acts 3:23.

HOPE FOR THE MANY NATIONS

Since God's favors are thus marked out for the heavenly and the earthly Seeds of Abraham--the earthly through the heavenly--it follows that the blessing of the other nations will come about through their affiliation with these. In other words, we may understand that the Divine Government established in Israel in the hands of the Ancient Worthies will be the center of Divine favor, and the people of other nationalities must come to this center for their supplies of truth and grace. Thus the Prophet represents the matter, saying, "Many nations shall go and say, Come and let us go up to the mountain (Kingdom) of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for the Law shall go forth from Mount Zion (the spiritual Kingdom) and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem (the center of the earthly Kingdom)."--Micah 4:2.

As thus all nations, peoples, kindreds and tongues shall be brought gradually to an appreciation of the Divine Plan; they shall all be blessed with Restitution privileges and opportunities and with an enlightenment from the rays of the Sun of Righteousness, which then through the appointed channels will be flooding all the earth. Thus will the original Covenant have its amplified fulfilment; first, in The Christ, the spiritual Israel; secondly, under the New Covenant with Israel after the flesh; and through these bless all the families of the earth, so that all the willing and obedient may gradually attain to the standards of the children of God and be possessed of the "liberties of the sons of God"--freedom from sin, sorrow, pain and death. As the old Law Covenant was with Israel only, so the New (Law) Covenant will be with Israel only. Other nations will share it by becoming Israelites, "Proselytes of the gate," not under the old but under the New Covenant. (Ezek. 16:60, 61.) "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear."

"Know your calling." Let us who have accepted the Divine call in Christ bear in mind that, according to the Apostle's declaration, we are the children of the Sarah Covenant. We are the Bride of Isaac, and his Joint-Heirs, of whom it is written, "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's Seed and heirs according to the promise." Our only relationship to the New Covenant is that the Father drew us to Jesus and Jesus covered us with his robe of righteousness and thus made it possible for us to be called to joint-fellowship with himself in the "better sacrifices," participation in the "cup" of suffering and death--"the blood of the New Covenant"-- for the sealing of the New Covenant for Israel, under which all the families of the earth will get a blessing. Thus in the divine purpose our Lord's death or blood justified the Church and (with the Church's) will seal the New Covenant for Israel and through Israel will become effective to all of Adam's race. "As all in Adam die, even so all in Christ shall be made alive--every man in his own order."

The Church comes into Christ as his Members or Body or Bride. Israel will come into The Christ family as children. "Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children." And this same privilege shall extend to all--to become regenerated "in the regeneration" when we shall sit with him on his throne.

THE EVERLASTING COVENANT

Both the Abrahamic Covenant and the New Covenant are Scripturally styled "The Everlasting Covenant," in contrast with the Law Covenant, which passed away, a failure because of its "unprofitableness." (Heb. 7:18.) The one is perpetuated in the other, even as the spiritual Seed (spiritual Israel) will rule and bless through the earthly Seed (fleshly Israel). Note the Scripture testimony that the original Grace (or Sarah) Covenant is everlasting. (Gen. 17:7,13, 19; 2 Sam. 23:5; Psa. 105:8-10.) Note other Scriptures which apply the same term prophetically to the New Covenant.

(Jer. 32:40; 31:31, 32; Ezk. 16:60.) Note carefully the context in each instance, that the reference is to the Millennium.

THE BLOOD OF THE EVERLASTING COVENANT

The blood of the Everlasting Covenant is the "blood of Jesus," his sacrifice, through the merit of which believers are now "justified by faith" under the Grace or Sarah Covenant (not by the New Covenant which does not yet exist and which is to be made only with Israel). And the blood or sacrifice of Jesus is "the blood of the New Covenant," yet to be established with Fleshly Israel, just the same only that by the Father's good pleasure Jesus is now accepting the "little flock" as his members and counting their sacrifice or blood as a part of his own.

Note how this is set forth in Isaiah 55:1-3. Here believers of this Gospel Age are described as those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. Under the Father's drawing they come to Jesus now. They are not of those who, blind and deaf under Satan's power, love darkness rather than light and will need the Kingdom regulations and corrections to make them bow and confess, under the New Covenant arrangement with Israel and indirectly with all nations.

To these hungry, thirsty, seeing, hearing, believers the Lord offers the "fatness" or cream of the Everlasting Covenant, saying, Obey and your soul shall live and I will give unto you the sure or promised mercies of David. David means beloved and is another name for the Redeemer, the antitypical King of Israel by Divine appointment.

This prophecy evidently, therefore, is the prophecy of the call of this Gospel Age to share with Jesus the glory, honor and immortality of the Kingdom. Note the context, "A nation that thou knowest not shalt thou call, and a nation that knew thee not shall run unto thee." (V.5.) Unquestionably this is the Church--Spiritual Israel, "a holy nation," a peculiar people, chosen out of all nations to the heavenly Kingdom of the Millennium.

Note the description of Christ Jesus and his "Body" in Isaiah 42:1-7. Note that Messiah is "given" for [sacrificed in the interest of] a Covenant to the people (Israel) and for a light to the nations or heathen, to enable them all to come in that light under the blessings of Israel's New Covenant.

Come now to Hebrews 13:20, "Now the God of peace who brought again from the dead the Great Shepherd of the sheep (Jesus), through the blood of the Everlasting Covenant make you perfect." Does this refer to our justification from Adamic guilt and reconciliation to God? Not at all. The Father will have nothing to do with us (except to "draw" us to Jesus for justification and consecration) until after our justification. Then his mighty power which brought our Great Shepherd from the tomb to glory and immortality begins to mightily "work in us to will and to do his good pleasure." (Phil. 2:13.) If we abide in his love he will perfect us as New Creatures by the privileges granted us of sharing in the sufferings of Christ--participating in the shedding of the blood of the Everlasting Covenant, which as the New Covenant will bring blessings to Israel and then to the world. The Greek word here rendered "perfect you" signifies "knit you together," that is, make you completely one with the Shepherd as his "members" both in sufferings and in glory to follow.

Note also that in Hebrews 10:29 it is the blood of the Covenant that sanctified and not the blood that justified that, sinned against, merits the Second Death. We were justified by faith in the blood of Jesus. We were sanctified by our consecration to drink of his cup--the blood of the New Covenant. Only those who have gone on to this second degree and presented themselves as

sacrificers (Romans 12:1) and have been accepted or sanctified by the begetting of the holy Spirit, as members of the "Body" of Christ and sons of the Highest, can commit the sin unto death. "If any man [thus presented and sanctified] draw back my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of those who draw back unto perdition"--Second Death.--Heb. 10:39.

Let us now briefly refer to all the Scriptures which mention the New Covenant, that we may note their full harmony with the foregoing. We have already examined the one statement connected with our text and see that it applies to the closing of this age--a shaking of the nations and everything out of harmony with God, preparatory to the establishment of the Kingdom, as the foundation of the New Covenant blessings to the world during the Millennium. There are just eight other texts in the New Testament which refer to the New Covenant:

(1) "For this cause he is made Mediator of a better Covenant [not better than the Grace or Sarah Covenant, but better than the Law Covenant], which was established upon better promises." (Heb. 8:6.) Our Lord Jesus had already begun the work necessary to his fulfilling this office of Mediator of the New Covenant. He had laid the foundation, but he had not yet accepted to himself all the members the Father intended and foreknew and predestinated. We notice from the context that the contrast still is between the Law Covenant and its Mediator Moses, and the New Covenant, superior because of its better Mediator, the Messiah. Moses could offer only imperfect sacrifices, but Christ, by antitypical sacrifices of the bullock and goat (himself and his Body), makes satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, and prepares to mediate the New Covenant, which God has promised shall be his channel for blessing Israel and the world.

(2) In the succeeding verse (8) the Apostle supports his argument by a quotation from the Old Testament promise to Israel of a New Covenant, saying, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah." Clearly this does not refer to Spiritual Israel.

(3) Neither does the next reference to the New Covenant, which is a part of the same quotation from Jer. 31:31, refer to Spiritual Israel--"Not according to the Covenant that I made with their fathers...For this is the Covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people."--Heb. 8:8-10.

The days referred to in the above are "after" the days of this Gospel Age. The Apostle goes on to say, "And they shall not teach every man his neighbor and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know me from the least to the greatest, and I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." This is a description of what will take place during the Millennium, and not a description of what we see about us today. God has not yet put his laws into the hearts of the house of Israel, and they are not his people, as he states they will be at the proper time in the end of this age when the New Covenant becomes operative. Compare Acts 15:15.

(4) "In that he saith, a New Covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." Notice that the Apostle is not saying one word about the New Covenant being for the Church of Christ. His readers understood very well that they came in under the Sarah Covenant. But certain Judaizing teachers insisted that they must be under the Hagar Covenant, as well as under the Sarah Covenant. And this is what the Apostle is disputing. He is making clear that the (Hagar) Law Covenant would not continue, but perish, and that, in God's due time, he would provide a New Covenant to take its place with Israel.

(5) It was necessary that Jews be redeemed from the "dead works" of the old Law Covenant and that a New one be made for them by Christ--Head and members. The old one was sealed by the blood of bulls and goats, but the New one by "better sacrifices." Antitypically the blood of the bullock has been offered, and soon that of the goat will be presented.--Heb. 9:14-23.

(6) "This is the Covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now, where remission of sins is, there is no more offering for sin." (Heb. 10:16-18.) The Apostle is arguing along general lines. He would have his hearers understand that when an acceptable sacrifice has been offered to God for sins, the transaction is a closed one, and the sacrifice needs no repetition. He shows that this will be so in the future for the world. When the "better sacrifices," sealing the New Covenant, shall have been offered to God by our Redeemer, and accepted by him, it will mean the cancellation of all condemnation. On the strength of this work for the future the Apostle urges that we, the Body of Christ, whose sins have been atoned for by our Lord, the first sacrifice of the Day of Atonement (in the type the bullock), may count that our sins are completely cancelled, and will be remembered against us no more. "For by one offering he (Christ) hath perfected forever them that are sanctified": all justified by faith, who proceed to full consecration and sanctification. If numbered amongst the sanctified, we may know that our sins are completely obliterated from the Divine record, so far as justice is concerned, and that we have entered upon a new record as New Creatures and will be held accountable only for trespasses against our covenant to the Lord, our vow--by which we became members of the Christ, the Seed of Abraham, and heirs of the great (Sarah) Covenant of Grace.

(7) "For this is my Covenant to them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the Gospel they are enemies for your sakes; but as touching the elect, they are beloved for the fathers' sake." (Rom. 11:27, 28.) There is no room to doubt that the Apostle here is referring to Israel's Covenant, the New Covenant, which God will make with them after this Gospel Day. The Apostle says the Covenant will be made when, or at the time that the Lord will "take away their sins." That time has not yet come. Israel is still under Divine condemnation, though we are now privileged to speak comfortably unto them and to assure them that the time for their deliverance is nigh, the time when the Mediator of the New Covenant will have taken on the last members of the spirit Body, the Gospel Church, "changed" by the power of the First Resurrection; the time when he will mediate that New Covenant, satisfy the demands of Divine justice on behalf of the world, as he already has satisfied it on behalf of the Church. Then he will become, as previously intended and declared, the great Mediator of the New Covenant between God and mankind in general--the Church being the exception, under the Covenant of Grace. Then will he begin his Millennial Kingdom: "For he must reign until he shall have put all enemies under his feet, and the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." Then all who drank of his "cup," the blood [sacrifice] of the New Covenant, as members of the Spiritual Seed, will reign with him.--Gal. 3:29.

(8) "But ye are approached unto Mt. Zion . . . to the New Jerusalem . . . to the general assembly and Church of the Firstborns . . . and to Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant and to the blood of sprinkling." (Heb. 12:24.) Here spiritual Israel is pictured as an army marching and the things at the farther end are seen and to be reached. Jesus reached the end of the way long ago, but the Church of Firstborns is not there yet. Jesus is the Mediator, but he has accepted the Church as his Bride, his Body, and waits for her arrival. The picture shows that the New Law Covenant will be established as the old Law Covenant was, only on a higher plane and through a greater Mediator and by better sacrifices.--Acts 3:23.

Not one of these references to the New Covenant makes the slightest suggestion that it is applicable to the Church. A reference to the original prophecy from which the Apostle quotes shows that it could not apply to the Church, for we there read that the Lord "will take away their stony hearts out of their flesh, and give them an heart of flesh." This is exactly the Restitution Work which will begin with Israel and extend to all the families of the earth, but it is not at all the work of this Gospel Age, which is far higher. The Lord does not give the "little flock" hearts of flesh, but, justified by faith, allows them to sacrifice the flesh, and begets them to a new nature, the glorious Seed of Abraham, through which all the families of the earth shall be blessed, by the inauguration of the New Covenant, sealed, made operative by the merit of the blood of Christ.

Reprint 4318

THE SEED OF ABRAHAM AND ITS WORK

DIVINE foreknowledge is one of the great lessons which God will impress. God would have us know that every feature of his plan was premeditated, forearranged from before the foundation of the world. He would have us recognize the fact that he is working all things according to the counsel of his own will, according to fixed rules, and principles which are unchangeable. This lesson is one of the principal objects served by a Divine revelation; a secondary object is the blessing of a certain class in sympathetic accord with God by giving them in advance such information respecting Divine purposes as would enable them to rejoice therein and to cooperate therewith.

THE SCROLL IN THE DIVINE HAND

A beautiful word-picture of this Divine foreknowledge and prearrangement is given us in the fifth chapter of Revelation. There Jehovah, the Emperor of the Universe, is pictured upon the throne, and in his hand a written scroll, sealed with seven seals. That sealed scroll represents the Divine plan which God purposed in himself from before the foundation of the world, but which he had revealed to no one, no, not to the angels, neither to the Son. (Matt. 24:36.) In a word, all that has occurred since creation--the permission of sin, the fall, the Covenant with Abraham, the Law Covenant with Israel, the coming of Jesus, the Pentecostal blessing, the gathering of members of the Church--all these things were foreknown to the Father and provided for. Additionally, that scroll contains a record of all that is happening now, and all that will occur throughout the Millennial Age, down to its very close--down to the time when every creature in heaven and in earth and under the earth shall ascribe praise, honor, glory and dominion to him that sitteth upon the throne and to the Lamb forever.--Rev. 5:13.

In the picture John notes a proclamation made throughout heaven and earth, inquiring for anyone worthy of the great honor of having this scroll of the Divine purpose committed to his care--to be opened, to be executed in harmony with the Divine purpose. He looked to see who the worthy one might be, but none was found worthy. Then he wept. It seemed to John too bad that God should have some great, wonderful purposes which might come to naught because no one was worthy to be the Divine executor in respect to the plan. But his tears were checked by the angel, who said, "Weep not: Behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof." And John said, "And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne . . . stood a Lamb as it had been slain." And to the Lamb was given the scroll. Then all the angels of God worshiped the Lamb, saying, Thou art worthy to receive glory, and honor, and dominion, and might, and power, etc.

Applying the picture, we see the signification. Until our Lord was slain, until he had given his life as man's redemption price, there was no being in all the universe worthy to be the executor of the Divine purposes. By our Lord's loving obedience to the Father's will--even unto death, even the death of the cross--he proved himself loyal to the last degree. Him the Father raised from the dead, and when he had ascended up on high the proclamation went forth, Let all the angels of God worship him. He is the Lamb of God who was slain, and by his death redeemed a condemned world of mankind, and merited the Father's confidence that to him might be entrusted every feature of the Divine program. "He is worthy." From that time on, every feature of the program would be under his supervision and he would open the seals and see to the execution of every feature of God's gracious purposes. He had promised his Church that whatsoever things the Father would reveal to him, he, in turn, through the holy Spirit and by his providences, would reveal to his faithful ones, to those walking in his footsteps of full consecration.

THE GOSPEL BEFOREHAND

St. Paul speaks of the Gospel's having been preached beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Here was a vague statement of the Divine purpose, relating to the blessing itself as an acorn would be related to an oak tree. Similarly, seed-thoughts respecting coming blessings had previously been given, though with much less definiteness. Directly after the fall God had declared that the Seed of the woman should yet bruise the Serpent's head. In other words, he foretold that evil should not always triumph. Again, through the Prophet Enoch a seed-thought had been given in his prophecy, "Behold, the Lord cometh with his holy myriads, to execute judgment." But to Abraham the message was so much more explicit as to make it worthy to be termed a part of the Gospel, a part of the good tidings now more fully made known unto us who are in Christ Jesus.

Abraham no doubt expected that Isaac, the son of promise, would be "the Seed," or the offspring, through whom the blessings would come; but when Isaac was grown and nothing wonderful was accomplished through him, God confirmed to him, and subsequently to Jacob, his son, the same Abrahamic promise, assuring them that "the Seed" was still future, and implied that the promise meant a nation instead of an individual--a nation of Abraham's Seed, Abraham's children. And this feature of the Divine arrangement was made manifest at Jacob's death, when the blessing was passed on from him, not to only *one* of his children, but to *all of them* collectively. There he pronounced them a nation of twelve tribes, and indicated that to them as a whole descended this Abrahamic promise--that they, as the Seed of Abraham, inherited the promise, "In thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

This promise held that nation together for all the centuries down to Christ--yea, it still holds them together as a peculiar people, separate from all the other nations of the world. St. Paul and the other Apostles refer to this repeatedly. St. Paul says, Our twelve tribes instantly (incessantly) serving God, hope to come to the fulfilment of this Abrahamic promise--the blessing of all the families of the earth through them.--Acts 26:7.

THE LAW COVENANT WAS ADDED

As St. Paul points out, the Law Covenant was added to the Abrahamic Covenant so far as the nation of Israel was concerned--to continue until the promised Seed should come. He is particular to add that the Law Covenant itself did not disannul or make invalid the original Covenant, which was of Grace and not of Law. (Gal. 3:17.) He was particular also that we should see that the Law Covenant "made nothing perfect" --it accomplished no real reformation or restitution. It did, however, set forth in types and allegories some wonderful lessons illustrative of great Divine principles of truth and righteousness--lessons which were beneficial to the Jewish nation, natural Israel, and also to the Gospel Church, which constitutes spiritual Israel.

During the period from the death of Jacob to Christ, while the Law made nothing perfect, a few of that nation, exercising faith above and beyond the Law Covenant, were blessed by the *underlying* Abrahamic Covenant. These the Apostle enumerates in Hebrews 11. They had this testimony, that they died in faith, and that thus "they pleased God," although they did not by obedience to the Law Covenant secure the blessing which it proposed. Those faithful ones will get through Christ what the Law Covenant could not give them, for, because of inherited weaknesses, they were unable to fulfil the requirements of the Law Covenant.

THE PROMISED SEED

Let us keep in mind that the Law Covenant was *added* to the Abrahamic Covenant because of transgression-- to show to the Israelites and to all the impossibility of an imperfect man's keeping the Divine Law, and also to manifest in due time our Lord Jesus, who, born under the Law Covenant, kept its provisions faithfully. By so doing, says the Apostle, Christ "magnified the Law Covenant and made it honorable." Previously it might have been claimed that the Divine Law was too rigorous and that nobody could possibly keep it; that it would be impossible for a man to love God with *all* his heart, *all* his mind, *all* his being, *all* his strength, and his neighbor as himself. But when Jesus did this, and did more in sacrificing himself, the just for the unjust, it demonstrated the fact that God had not given an impossible Law; it demonstrated that the fault lay with mankind; that they had lost the original perfection with which the Creator had endowed them.

We read that our Lord was born under the Law Covenant "that he might redeem those who were under the Law" Covenant. So far as other peoples were concerned, he might have been of any other nation and redeemed Adam and the remainder of the world, but in order to preserve equitably to Israel the special blessing of God's Covenant with Abraham it was necessary that Christ should be of that nation, "born under the Law, that he might redeem those who were under the Law." That nation had been separated from the other nations of the world for the very purpose of giving the illustrations already referred to, and God would see to it that they should not be disadvantaged by reason of his having used them thus. The blessed opportunities offered them under the Law Covenant through the typical sacrifices, etc., lifted them above the other nations and gave them, as it were, a *second trial* for eternal life. In common with the remainder of mankind as children of Adam they had one trial and one condemnation through him; and then, under the Law Covenant arrangement and its mediator, Moses, another trial for eternal life was granted to that nation; but it was lost because none of them did keep or could fulfil the requirements of that Law Covenant. The day was saved for that nation as respects that Law Covenant, by which they were bound, by the fact that Christ became a Jew and by obedience to the Law Covenant gained all of the rights which it held out.

The rights gained were earthly rights--human perfection, an Eden home, fellowship with God and the dominion of earth; as recited by the Prophet, "Dominion over the beasts of the field, the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air." Had Christ kept these rights, which were properly his through obedience to the Law, he could indeed have brought a great blessing to the Jews, instructing them along the lines of health and morals; and through Israel these blessings and instructions might have been imparted to all other nations. But as the race was under Divine sentence of death, it would not have been possible for Jesus to give mankind perfection of mind or body. The blessings of the Seed of Abraham in that event would have been very limited indeed, and then only to such as would exercise faith and obedience similar to the faith and obedience which Abraham exercised.

MESSIAH THE REDEEMER

Instead of keeping the earthly rights which his special birth and obedience to the Law made possible to him, Jesus, in harmony with the Father's program, sacrificed these earthly rights at once-- as soon as he reached manhood's estate, 30 years. He gave up all earthly rights and interests and privileges. His consecration was complete; he symbolized it by a water immersion at Jordan. The Father accepted it, and forthwith gave him the begetting of the holy Spirit to a new nature. For the three and one half years of his earthly ministry our Lord persistently sacrificed his earthly life and every earthly interest, finishing the sacrifice at Calvary when he cried, "It is finished." On the third day thereafter the Father raised him from the dead to a newness of life--again on the spirit plane of

being. This was the reward for his obedience to the Father's will in the sacrificing of his earthly rights and privileges as the perfect man.

So, then, as the glorified one in his resurrection, Messiah was a spirit being, "partaker of the Divine nature," and had at his command all those earthly rights and privileges which he had sacrificed, which he laid down in death in obedience to the Father's will. He had these now as a possession, as an *asset* which he might dispense, which he might *give* to others.

Let us not lose the thread of the thought: The Law Covenant promised earthly life and earthly blessings and earthly dominion--*those which Adam had lost*. Whoever would keep the Law should have these. Christ Jesus, as the keeper of the Law, had the right to these and laid them down. And now, being exalted, it is these *earthly blessings* and earthly rights which he has to dispense--to the Jew, or to all mankind, or to such an elect or select number of mankind as he may please, and as will be in accord with the Father's program outlined in the scroll sealed with seven seals.

When the Israelites found that Moses could not give them eternal life, and that even under David and Solomon they did not reach the pinnacle of power and influence in the world to bless mankind, they might well have been discouraged. Hence God, through the prophets, sent them further enlightenment to the effect that they could never accomplish the Divine purpose of blessing the world except as he would send them a Messiah, an Anointed One, a King and Priest after the order of Melchizedek. When Messiah should come as the great Priest, and the great King, he would be able to do for them under a New [Law] Covenant what Moses and Aaron had not been able to do for them under the old Law Covenant.

It was in connection with this promise of Messiah that God told his covenanted people that he would replace the Law Covenant under Moses by a new and better Law Covenant under Messiah, the antitype of Moses. He said: "It shall come to pass, saith the Lord, after those days, that I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; not according to the [Law] Covenant which I made with them when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, but I will make a New Covenant with them, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more, and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and I will give them a heart of flesh, and I will write my Law in their inward parts."--Jer. 31:31.

Israel was looking for this glorious Messiah greater than Moses, who would introduce to them and put them under a better, a New (Law) Covenant, and under more favorable conditions by which they would more fully accomplish the Divine purposes in their own hearts, and be prepared, qualified, to introduce those blessings to all the families of the earth, as they had been expecting to do from the beginning.

THE HIDDEN MYSTERY

We can see a reason why the Lord kept secret from the Jews in general his identity; for, as the Apostle Peter says, "had they known they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." They did it in ignorance. (Acts 3:17.) We can see it was necessary that Christ should die; that he should lay down his earthly rights and earthly life and receive of the Father the higher life, and a spiritual realm, in order that he might have the *earthly blessings to give*, to dispense to Israel and to the world. We can see that otherwise no blessings of a permanent and eternal character would have been possible; hence, as our Lord explained to the disciples after his resurrection, "It was necessary that Christ should suffer and (then) enter into his glory."

Now the question arises, What disposition will the risen and glorified Jesus make of these *earthly rights* which in his death he had secured by his sacrifice of them? The most reasonable, the most natural thought to us would be: Surely having consecrated the *earthly rights* he will confer these upon Natural Israel: He will at once become King and Priest to that nation, and in harmony with their hopes cherished for more than sixteen centuries he will exalt Israel as a nation. He will open their eyes. As the prophets have declared, "They shall see out of obscurity"; and "They also that pierced him shall mourn," and he will "pour upon them the spirit of prayer and supplication."--Zech. 12:10.

But Jesus did nothing of the kind. Instead of so doing, he cast off the nation of Israel, saying, "Your house is left unto you desolate." He did not establish for them the New Covenant; he did not bless them at all. They have been the most outcast nation of the world for the nearly nineteen centuries since they crucified him. No wonder the Apostle asks, Has God cast away his people whom he foreknew?--the people to whom he made the promises and covenants?--the people whom he encouraged in every way to believe that they were his special people and would be specially used by him in carrying the blessings of the Divine Law and instruction to all nations? Has God set aside all his promises?

We shall see presently that God has not in any degree abandoned his original program as respects the nation of Israel--"the seed of Abraham" according to the flesh and according to the Law Covenant. Here comes in "a Mystery," as St. Paul explains. This Mystery he declares was hidden from previous ages and dispensations, and is now made manifest only to the saints, to the holy ones taught of God. It is still a *Mystery* to Israel after the flesh. It is still a *Mystery* to the world of mankind in general; for the world knoweth us not, even as it knew not the Master. The world does not perceive that God is selecting a "Little Flock" to be with Christ, members of his mystical Body--members of the spiritual Seed of Abraham.

THE MYSTERY SHALL BE FINISHED

In his last symbolic message to the Church, the Lion of Judah, who received the scroll of the Divine purpose, informs the saints, to whom it is "given to know the *Mystery* of the Kingdom of Heaven," that the *Mystery shall be finished*; but not until the days of the voice or sounding of the seventh trumpet--in the end or close of this Gospel Age and the dawn of the Millennial Age. Whoever is interested may profitably search the Word respecting this Mystery class, its calling, its selection, its testing, its completion, its glorification; but only those who are begotten of the holy Spirit will be able to *understand* in the sense of fully appreciating these "deep things of God" which "God has revealed unto us (the Mystery class) by his Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God."--1 Cor. 2:10.

This Mystery class is composed of such as have the faith of Abraham and the obedience of Abraham--beginning with our Lord and continuing from Pentecost down to the close of this Gospel Age. It is upon these that Christ's blessing of forgiveness, reconciliation, and earthly favors lost by Adam and redeemed by himself were conferred.

Call to mind that he has something to give away-- *earthly rights* and privileges which were his by virtue of his keeping the Law Covenant. Those were not spiritual rights and privileges which he secured through keeping the Law, but earthly ones only. He got his spiritual and higher privileges and honors as a reward for the sacrifice of himself. What he has to give to *us* therefore is not spiritual life and honors and dominion, but the earthly. These come to us in the nature of a bequest. The earthly life and the earthly rights which Jesus sacrificed are willed or bequeathed to all those of the

faith and obedience of Abraham. But here comes another feature of this Mystery. It is not enough that we have the faith of Abraham and his loyalty to righteousness; an additional matter is necessary. All who would become sharers of this gift of Christ must now, in addition to faith and obedience to righteousness, take up their cross and follow Christ as the Captain of their salvation; they must walk in his footsteps in the narrow way of self-sacrifice, even unto death. Any who do not thus will and thus covenant cannot be his disciples now, whatever blessing they may obtain by his grace later on. He is now, during this Gospel Age, making a special selection of a special class, "elect, precious." These he styles his Bride, members of his Body, the Royal Priesthood, his Jewels. These various names indicate his high appreciation of this specially called class.

THROUGH THE SPIRITUAL TO THE NATURAL

Let us keep in memory the Apostle's words that "God hath not cast off natural Israel whom he foreknew" and to whom pertained the promises, the giving of the law, etc.; he has merely turned them aside temporarily during this Gospel Age, that in the interim he may develop a spiritual Israel, a Royal Priesthood, a Holy Nation, a Peculiar People, to be the Bride of Messiah, or otherwise his "Members." This "*Mystery*" is working no disadvantage to the Jew, but really is a further step in the Divine program in fullest accord with the original Covenant made with Abraham. The seed of Abraham was to be of two parts: (1) As the stars of heaven and (2) as the sands of the seashore. The Mystery class developed during this Gospel Age are the Spiritual Seed, symbolically pictured as the stars of heaven, while the natural seed of Abraham is yet to become as the sand of the seashore. The Apostle refers to both of these seeds (Rom. 4:16) --"Not to that only which is of the Law, but to that also which is of the *faith* of Abraham; who is the father of us all." The old Law Covenant brought not forth the seed to Abraham, but the New (Law) Covenant will bring forth many children--as the sand of the seashore. The only children of Abraham thus far developed are those who are the Seed of Abraham according to faith.

As we have already seen, all of Christ's blessing goes to this faith class, the "Mystery" class, according to a program which the world does not understand, but with certain conditions attached which obligate all who receive this blessing to become *dead* to earthly aims and hopes and ambitions, and thus as members of the Body of Christ to have fellowship in his sacrifice of the *earthly things* that they may have fellowship and share with him in the heavenly part of the blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant. "If we suffer with him we shall also reign with him; if we be dead with him we shall also live with him." "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne."-- 2 Tim. 2:11; Rev. 3:21.

THE DEATH OF THE TESTATOR

The Apostle explains that no will or testament or bequest is of validity so long as the testator liveth. Whatever covenant or agreement may be had, it awaits a final sealing or completion by the death of the testator. The Apostle applies this to Christ. By his death Jesus passed on to us, the Church, the benefit of his merit; namely, the *earthly rights* or "justification" to all that was lost in Adam and redeemed by the precious merit of Christ's sacrifice finished at Calvary. In accepting these earthly blessings we, as his members, agreed to the terms: namely, that we also surrender our rights to these as servants or "ministers of the New (Law) Covenant" --that these earthly blessings secured by our Lord's obedience and death should thus pass through us and still be the Redeemer's asset to be given to Israel, under Israel's New (Law) Covenant.

The fact that Israel is still outcast from God's favor is merely an evidence that the Body of Christ is not yet completely sacrificed, for bear in mind that the Covenant is of no validity until the

death of the testator. The Lord Jesus, the primary testator, has accepted believers, as "members of his Body," and he is working in them by his holy Spirit to will and to do the Father's good pleasure--that they may lay down their lives in sacrifice, filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Messiah. As soon as the last member of the Church shall have died as a member of his Body, the New (Law) Covenant with Israel will be sealed--sealed with the blood of the testator, *the death of the testator*, the death of the Christ, Head and Members.

Meantime the resurrection change of the Church as the Body of Christ will have brought the Testator as a whole to the plane of glory, honor and immortality. On this plane the Christ, Jesus the Head, and the Church, his mystic Body, will be in antitype the great Prophet, the great Priest, the great King, the great Judge, the great Mediator between God and mankind in general. Then will come the time promised in the Scriptures when this Great One, this Glorified One, the Seed of Abraham on the spiritual plane, will begin the work of blessing all the families of the earth, under the conditions of the New (Law) Covenant, to be made with Israel first.

THE BLOOD OF THE NEW COVENANT

Our Lord when discussing his sacrificial sufferings, referred to them as his "Cup." In the Last Supper, the memorial of his death, referring to this Cup symbolically, he said, "This is the blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins: drink ye all of it." (Matt. 26:27, 28.) That *Cup*, which symbolized our Lord's death, our Lord's sacrifice of his earthly rights, was sufficient of itself to have sealed the New Covenant. He needed not to ask the Apostles, or us, or anybody, to become his disciples and to share his sufferings, to share his Cup, and to share the rewards of these--his glory, honor and immortality. But he passed the Cup along, passed the merit to us; or, rather, passed the merit of his sacrifice *through us*, his disciples, his followers. He did this because it was a part of the Divine program; for, as St. Peter declares, "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ hath begotten us." He who foreknew Jesus foreknew us also by Jesus. This was no change of the Divine program. It was surprising to us merely because it was a *Mystery* not previously made known--that we should be made fellow-heirs with Christ in the sufferings of this present time and in the glory that shall follow.

However some may oppose this and claim that we do not drink, do not partake of the sufferings of Christ, the Scriptures leave no doubt about the matter. They declare of the symbolic Cup that Jesus, after he had supped, gave it to his disciples, saying, "Drink ye all of it"--not only must all partake of my Cup who would be my disciples, but *drink all of it*, leave none of it. The drinking of the Lord's cup, the sharing of his sacrifice, must all be accomplished during this Gospel Age; none of it is to be left for the future. There will be no *sufferings of Christ* during the Millennium; there will be no drinking of this Cup. By that time "the glory to follow" will have been ushered in, and under the reign of righteousness thus instituted there will be no sufferings for righteousness' sake, but only for evil doing, because the reign of righteousness will have commenced.

Let us remember, moreover, the Lord's words to the other disciples who made special request that they might sit with him in his throne, the one on his right hand and the other on his left. He said, "Ye know not what ye ask; can ye drink of the Cup that I drink of?" Only those who drink of his Cup may sit with him in his throne; only those who share in the sufferings of Christ will share in his glory, honor and immortality; only those who are thus partakers with him are members of the Spiritual Seed of Abraham, through which the blessings will pass to the Natural Seed in due time, and through them to all the families of the earth. "If ye be Christ's (his disciples indeed), then are ye

Abraham's Seed and heirs according to the promise"--according to the highest feature of that promise, the spiritual feature.-- Gal. 3:29.

"MERCY THROUGH YOUR MERCY"

We have already shown from the Scriptures that it is part of the Divine program that the natural seed of Abraham shall receive its blessings through the Spiritual Seed--Messiah the Head, the Church his Body. We have already shown that this Great One is to be the Mediator of the New (Law) Covenant, which will bring to Israel actually the blessings hoped for under the old Law Covenant, of which Moses was the mediator. We have seen how and why this Spiritual Messiah, Head and Body, will be able to do for Israel and all who come under that New (Law) Covenant far better things than Moses, mediator of the old Law Covenant, could do. We have seen that the New Mediator has something to present to Justice on behalf of Israel--something to give to Israel; namely, *earthly* blessings, *earthly* rights, *earthly* restitution to all that was lost in Adam. We see that these were secured by Jesus through keeping the Law; that he surrendered them, or sacrificed them in his obedient death, and that he gave them to the household of faith during this Gospel Age *on condition that these earthly blessings should not be retained but sacrificed by all whom he would accept as his members*. Now we see that it is these same *earthly* blessings that are to be dispensed during the Millennial Age, first to Israel and, secondly, to all people under the New (Law) Covenant.

Notice how the Apostle Paul states this matter clearly and concisely in few words in Romans 11:25-36. There he tells us that we should think not of Israel as being cast off forever, but merely disfavored of God for a limited period--during the time of the calling and approving and acceptance of the elect number of spiritual Israel, whose first members were gathered from the Jewish nation and whose completeness is to be made up from amongst the Gentiles. He tells us that when this elect number of Spiritual Israel is complete, God's favor will return to Natural Israel, "Jacob," and then "All Israel shall be saved"--recovered from the blindness and stumbling which came upon them when God thrust them aside until first Spiritual Israel should be gathered. The Apostle explains that then God will fulfil his promise to Israel: "For this is my Covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins." Thus the Apostle shows that the New (Law) Covenant promised to Israel, in which their sins will be cancelled and remembered no more, comes at the close of the Gospel Age and not at its beginning.

THE DELIVERER MUST BE BORN

The Apostle explains (vs. 26) that before the New (Law) Covenant with Israel could become effective the Deliverer must come out of Zion; for it will be he that shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. Zion is another name for the New Jerusalem, of which the Apostle says, She is the mother of us all. Zion was typically represented in Sarah, Abraham's wife, who was the mother of Isaac. Isaac was a type of Christ--of Jesus the Head and the Church his Body; as the Apostle declared, "We, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise"--the Seed of Abraham. (Gal. 4:28.) Zion was again typified by Rachel, Jacob's wife, and the two classes of the Church were represented in her two sons, the first of whom, Joseph, was a child of promise, the second the child of tribulation--Benjamin. Joseph, who came to the throne of Egypt through much tribulation, typified the Christ, Head and Body. Benjamin, his brother, born of the same mother, the same Covenant, did not reach the throne, but typified the "great company" class, who will have a special relationship and nearness to the Deliverer. Benjamin's name, "Son of my pain," (Benoni), shows his identity with the "great company"; his mother died in the travail of his birth.

This is again expressed by the prophecy which says, Before she (Zion) travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child. Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children. Shall I bring to birth (the Head) and not cause to bring forth? (the Body)--Isa. 66:7-9.

Zion brought forth the Lord, the Head of the Church, the Head of the Great Deliverer, eighteen centuries ago. Very shortly all the members of his Body will come forth, similarly born from the dead in the "first resurrection." *Thus shall a nation be born at once to the spirit plane*, "a Royal Priesthood, a Holy Nation, a Peculiar People"--distinctly separate from all others of God's creatures, partakers of the divine nature, higher than angels and men. Then in a great time of trouble the "Great Company" will be born to the spirit plane, though not to the throne and not to the divine nature. Thus the spiritual children of Zion will be complete, and the blessing will turn to natural Israel.

The Deliverer born out of Zion, the Christ, with the "Great Company" as servants or ministers of the great God, shall begin the work of blessing "Jacob"--natural Israel. Discerning these things, it is for all who have named the name of Christ, for all who have been accepted as members of his Body and inducted into this "*Mystery*," to be earnest, to be zealous, in making their calling and election sure, that they may not only come into the Body of Christ, but by obedience to the instructions of the Head they may abide in him and grow in grace and in his character likeness, and be prepared for birth to the plane of glory, that they may have a share in the work of the Kingdom, making effective to Israel and to the world the New (Law) Covenant for the blessing of all the families *of the earth*.

THEY ARE NOT ALL ISRAELITES

The blessings of the New (Law) Covenant are distinctly shown to be Israelitish. But this will not hinder these blessings from extending to all nations and peoples and kindreds and tongues. By circumcision of the heart, all who will may come into the Holy Nation which Israel will then be. Thus it is written in the prophets, "The Law shall go forth of Zion (the heavenly Kingdom), and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (the earthly phase of the Kingdom). "And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths." (Micah 4:2.) Thus all through the Millennial Age Abraham's seed will be increasing, in harmony with the prophecy, "I have constituted thee a father of many nations."

But it would be a mistake for us to suppose that God's blessing under the New (Law) Covenant will come to the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, merely along fleshly lines. On the contrary, we are to suppose that the blessing of the New Covenant will apply first to Abraham and his natural seed who had his characteristics of faith and obedience, and who were developed or proved in the past. St. Paul refers to these, saying, "These all died in faith, without having received the things promised them, God having provided some better thing for us (the Church, Spiritual Israel), that they without us should not be made perfect."--Heb. 11:40.

"They shall obtain mercy through your mercy," as the Apostle explains. (Romans 11:31.) It will, of course, be God's mercy, but through Jesus Christ, and it will of course be the mercy of Christ Jesus, but through the Church--"*your mercy*." Thus will the blessings of God be passed on. The blessing coming to the Ancient Worthies will not be for themselves alone, but be passed on by them in turn to all who will come to the faith and obedience of Abraham. Undoubtedly at first this class

will consist chiefly of the natural Israelites, but later, as we have shown, it will consist of many people, of many tongues, and of many nationalities. All of these, enlightened by the great Sun of Righteousness, will be brought to know the great Messiah, and to understand the principles of righteousness involved in the laws of the great Jehovah. These the new Mediator will most clearly set forth, until every knee shall bow and every tongue confess, until "the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth as the waters cover the great deep, and until there shall be no need to say to the neighbor or to the brother, Know thou the Lord, because all shall know him from the least unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord."

THE NECESSITY FOR THE NEW COVENANT

If the Abrahamic Covenant was all-comprehensive, and included all the blessings which God intended, why was it necessary or expedient to add either the old Law Covenant or the New (Law) Covenant? We have already considered the value of the old Law Covenant as an addition to the Abrahamic Covenant, hence now we confine ourselves to the consideration of the advantage gained by the addition of the New (Law) Covenant.

When we read that "Without faith it is impossible to please God," and that Abraham pleased God by reason of his faith, we may know assuredly that none could be acceptable to God as Abraham's seed except such as had similar faith to his. Additionally, as God tested Abraham's faith, and obliged him to prove it by works of obedience, so we may be sure it would be with all who ever will be acceptable to God--that as Abraham's seed they also should have faith attested by works.

The comparatively few who exercised faith, and wrought righteousness in harmony therewith, up to the time of Christ, are reviewed by the Apostle in Hebrews 11. These were few indeed as compared with the millions of their time. These alone, therefore, could be counted as participants in God's favor because of Abrahamic faith and obedience. During the Gospel Age a similarly small class has been gathered out of every nation, people, kindred and tongue--called by the Gospel message, and tried and proved by the narrowness of the way of obedience. These consecrated ones, and no others, of this age could be acceptable to God for his blessing of eternal life, because these alone manifested the faith and the obedience exemplified in Abraham.

So, then, we see that if Christ, after redeeming the world, had merely sought out of it such as could exercise Abrahamic faith and obedience, and had blessed these with eternal life, the sum total of his work would have been comparatively small. He would have been on the spiritual plane and the others would have received from him the blessing of restitution, and nothing more.

LENGTH AND BREADTH

But note the breadth and length and height and depth of the Divine Wisdom and Grace, which provided a more stupendous plan. Under its provisions the "Little Flock" become joint-heirs with Christ in the heavenly Kingdom as the Royal Priesthood, and the "Great Company" become the spiritual assistants of that Priesthood--the antitypical Levites. And, additionally, by the New Covenant arrangement the great Prophet, Priest, King, Judge, becomes the Mediator between God and the world of mankind in general. He will not deal with them merely on the basis of faith, because in their fallen condition few indeed could be benefited thereby, because few could exercise the necessary faith and obedience. Indeed, as we have seen, the majority of those *capable* of exercising faith and obedience have *already been found*. The New Covenant takes over Israel through the Ancient Worthies and incidentally all of that nation and all of every nation willing, under the enlightening influences of the Millennial Kingdom, to come into accord with the Mediator and to be

taught of him. He will enforce obedience, to the intent that the fallen and degraded members of the race may learn what righteousness is and what justice and love are. He will exemplify to them the rewards of obedience and the penalties of disobedience, that they may learn the benefit of righteousness --and all come to a knowledge of God, not by faith merely, but by demonstrations. It will be after the Millennial Kingdom shall have lifted mankind out of degradation and sin, out of imperfection of mind and morals, that their final testing will come.

God's law will stand forever. Only the willing and obedient will be partakers of the grace of life eternal; all others will die the "Second Death." But we have every reason to believe that as a result of the Millennial Kingdom, the reign of righteousness, the restitution work, the enlightenment of mankind, the bringing of all to a knowledge of the Truth, many will learn righteousness and become servants thereof, and in full accord with the Divine Law: come to love God with all their heart, with all their mind, with all their being, with all their strength, and their neighbor as themselves.

Thus we see how much more can be accomplished by the Seed of Abraham, the Christ, Head and Body, through the method adopted by the sealing of the New (Law) Covenant, and the establishment of the Kingdom, than could have been accomplished without the New Covenant, under the Abrahamic Covenant *alone* with its terms of faith and obedience.

Is it any wonder that after having pictured this matter of the rejection of natural Israel, the gathering of Spiritual Israel, and the subsequent giving of God's blessings through Spiritual Israel to reclaim natural Israel, the Apostle should become enthusiastic? Is it any wonder that he concludes with the exclamation, "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" Who knew of this wonderful, deep, hidden plan of Jehovah? Who counseled him to make it thus? The Apostle's conclusion is that such depths of wisdom and knowledge and grace prove that the plan of God is superhuman; that no man ever thought out this plan. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are God's ways higher than man's ways! Of him, and through him, and by him, are all these things, and to him be glory forever!

Reprint 4451

SUPERIORITY OF THE ORIGINAL ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

THE Scriptures mention three great Covenants, typified by the three wives of Abraham. These Covenants are represented in the order of those wives. Sarah was the first wife of Abraham--the only acknowledged wife. Then came Hagar, Sarah's maid-servant; and later Keturah. Sarah and Hagar each had one son, but Keturah had six. The Scriptures show that Abraham made Isaac his heir (Gen. 25:5), and that through Isaac both Ishmael and the sons of Keturah received their portion. The fact that Ishmael was born before Isaac did not alter the fact that Isaac was the heir.

From the very beginning, the Covenant which God had in mind was the one which is in operation in the Church-- the Abrahamic Promise, or Covenant. St. Paul declares (Gal. 3:8) that God preached the Gospel to Abraham in advance, saying, "In thee and in thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 12:3; 28:14.) The same Apostle also shows that the original Abrahamic Covenant mentions two seeds, represented in the statement, "I will multiply thy seed (1) as the stars of heaven, and (2) as the sand which is upon the sea shore." (Gen. 22:17.) As Abraham here typified God, the Promise shows two classes developed as God's children--(1) Christ and the Church, on the spirit plane; and (2) the Restitution class of mankind, on the human plane.

St. Paul refers to these two seeds in Rom. 4:16,17, the one developed under Faith, and the other under Law and Works. The first, the Spiritual Seed, has been in process of development during this Gospel Age. The second, the seed according to the flesh, the Restitution class (with the exception of the Ancient Worthies, developed previous to the Gospel Age), will be developed under the New Covenant and by its Mediator, according to Law and Works, and not by Faith merely.

The Law Covenant, made at Sinai, was a type of the New Covenant, and had for its mediator Moses, the man of God. This Covenant brought nothing to perfection, however, for its mediator, as well as the people, was imperfect. St. Paul explains that Israel, typified by Ishmael, did not receive the blessing, but that The Christ received it. Later, however, Israel is to receive a blessing, as the Apostle points out; and that blessing will be brought by the New Covenant, after the glorification of the Church.

The question naturally arises, If the Abrahamic Covenant contained the Divine Promise to the full, both for the Church and for the world, why did God arrange for two other Covenants; namely, the Law Covenant, instituted at Mount Sinai with Israel, and having Moses for its mediator, and the New Covenant, which is to follow, and under which the whole world is to be blessed?

PURPOSE OF THE ADDED COVENANTS

We answer that these two Covenants were added to further elucidate the Divine Purpose, and to help us to appreciate the operation of Divine Love and Justice.

(1) The Law Covenant was added to the Abrahamic Promise, or Covenant, as St. Paul explains, to fill up the time until the promised Seed should come, to whom the Covenant applied, and this was necessary because of sin, that the high Divine standard for the Seed might be shown. The Law Covenant with Israel rendered this very service; for it set up the standard which approved Jesus and condemned all others. It also helped to develop the Jewish nation toward God and righteousness, and to fit and prepare some of them for the glorious High Calling of the Gospel Age, which ultimately came to them, inviting them to Divine favor and joint-heirship with Messiah in the Millennial Kingdom.

The Law Covenant also provided certain typical transactions and prophecies, which have been very beneficial to Spiritual Israel during this Gospel Age, illustrating to us in these types and shadows of the Law, and enunciating to us in the prophecies of the Old Testament, various matters appertaining to the blessing of the Church during this Age, and that of the world during the next Age.

(2) Through the New Covenant--the second addition to the original, Abrahamic Covenant--the world is to get all of its blessings and favors of Restitution. This New [Law] Covenant has not yet been inaugurated; for the Mediator who is to inaugurate it, and to cause its blessings to reach every member of Adam's race during the Millennial Age, has not yet been completed. This New Covenant will be inaugurated in the end of this Gospel Age, and its work will embrace the entire period of the Millennium.

Jesus, our Redeemer and Head, is the appointed Mediator of the New Covenant by virtue of the merit of His own sacrifice at Calvary. He could have sealed it and begun at once its operation, had not the Father "provided some better thing for US" (the Church, the Bride of Christ, whom God foreknew as Jesus' members), than for the Ancient Worthies. This is the Mystery--that the Gospel Age has been devoted to the development of the Body of the Mediator.--Ephesians 3:3-6; Colossians 1:27.

THE CHILDREN OF THE OATH

The Scriptures clearly show that our Lord was the Messiah, the long-promised Seed of Abraham. (Luke 1:32,33, 55, 72-74; 2:11; John 1:41; 4:25, 26.) "The Church, which is His Body," is also developed under the original Abrahamic Covenant, which God bound with an oath. St. Paul calls it "the hope set before us, which we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil." (Heb. 6:13-20.) Again, he says to the Church, "Ye, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of the Promise." (Gal. 4:28.) The Church are the children of the Oath.

Our begetting Promise, through Christ, to the new nature, is very different from that by which the Jews were constituted the House of Servants, and wholly different from those promises by which restored Israel and all the families of the earth will be brought to human perfection through Restitution processes, as children of the Keturah, or New Covenant. Since our Lord was developed under the Abrahamic Covenant, the Church also must be developed under that Covenant; for the Spiritual Seed cannot be the child of two mothers. It is written, "In Isaac shall thy Seed be called."--Gen. 21:12.

THE NEW COVENANT EVERLASTING

It is very evident that the world does not enter into New Covenant relationship with God individually at the beginning of the Millennial Age, and will do so only at the end of that Age. Throughout that period, the matter will be strictly and solely in the hands of the Mediator. During that time He will uplift mankind, and make them individually and collectively (as many as are willing) worthy of God's everlasting life and blessing. So then, we see clearly that the end of the Millennial Age will be the end of the Mediatorship of Christ, and will mean the personal and individual New Covenant relationship of each one of the world.

There is another view, however, which should have our consideration, and that is this: The same New Covenant that starts with the beginning of the Millennial Age will continue through all eternity. There is not to be an additional New Covenant at the end of the thousand years of Christ's reign. This New Covenant will be operated, not directly between God and man, but through the

Mediator. In this Covenant, God agrees that He will remember the sins and iniquities of the world no more, that He will have nothing against them, and that they may have His blessings the same as though they were personally received of Himself. They will be received through their Representative, The Mediator, The Christ.

The whole world during the Millennial Reign will be in Covenant relationship with God, in exactly the same way that Israel was in Covenant relationship with God-- through the Mediator. The Law Covenant persisted after Moses died. So this New Covenant will continue after Christ shall have finished His work. The whole world will be under that Covenant arrangement. But before God finally accepts them, He will give them a test to see how many of them will be found worthy of everlasting life. Hence the test at the close of the thousand years is a test by Jehovah, a test to prove the worthiness of each to enter into everlasting covenant relationship with Him. They will not be tested as a nation or as a race, but each individual must establish his own right to this covenant relationship--a new covenant relationship in that the original, similar relationship was vitiated by Father Adam's disobedience.

Throughout the thousand years of Messiah's Reign, He as Mediator has absolute control of the whole human family. His Law and His arrangements, in full harmony with those of Jehovah, will be the ones that will be operative. They will be more favorable than any arrangement Jehovah could directly make; for mankind being imperfect, would be incapable of perfect thoughts and words and deeds for awhile, and Jehovah's Law cannot recognize sin in any degree.

The Mediator will have mankind fully under His control and regulations for the purpose of uplifting all who will. This will include the right, also, to destroy in the Second Death any who will not obey. He can exercise the full powers of an autocrat in the matter. No one will have any authority but Himself. The Son having bought the world, He will be an Autocrat for those thousand years. The Kingdom will be a Reign of compulsion. This will be necessary for the correction of the world in righteousness, with a view to their perfecting.

A FULL TRIAL GUARANTEED TO ALL

The Scriptures are clear in their declaration that God has purposed from the beginning that mankind shall have another, an individual, trial for everlasting life, wholly free from the injury received by them as a result of the failure of Adam in the first trial. Provision has been made for this, so that Justice can sanction the arrangement. To this end, Christ tasted "death for every man." He "gave Himself a Ransom for all, to be testified in due time." The due time for some is in the present Age. The due time for others will be in the Messianic Age.

Those who die during the thousand years of Christ's Reign will be those only who will have had a full trial. They will be those who remain unconverted, those whose wills are not right. But God purposes that none shall perish because of ignorance, misunderstanding. Therefore God has made full provision for the enlightenment of all (I Tim. 2:3-6), and that all who will be obedient shall be saved; and this full opportunity will be brought to all through Christ's Kingdom.

If, under the Messianic Reign, some will die a hundred years old, who are still imperfect, not fully restored to perfection, how can such be said to have had a full trial? The answer is that God's arrangement for every member of the race is that Christ in His Mediatorial Kingdom will help them out of their fallen condition, if they will. The condition required is that they shall accept and seek to obey the Divine will. After coming to a clear knowledge of the Truth, all such will be helped out of their weaknesses, allowance being made for all their failures through imperfection. But those who

would sin wilfully under such knowledge and opportunity, would do the same if they had full knowledge and ability.

This last class are spoken of as angels, or messengers, of Satan and Sin; for whoever wilfully and intelligently sins against the Divine arrangement is of Satan's spirit. All who develop such disobedient wills shall go into the Second Death. There is nothing further for them. The whole Plan of Salvation is with a view to rescuing those who with knowledge and opportunity will be glad to come into harmony with God and to walk in the ways of truth and righteousness.

THE THREE GREAT COVENANTS IN BRIEF

As heretofore stated, the Abrahamic Covenant is first in order of time and importance. This Covenant has two parts. The first applies to the Spiritual Seed of Abraham, The Christ, Head and Body--the antitype of Isaac, or, in another figure, of Isaac and Rebecca. These are the Seed of Abraham--the Seed of Promise--not fleshly, but Spiritual.

The second part of the Covenant applies to the world of mankind--"all the families of the earth." These are to be blessed by the Spiritual Seed with an opportunity of becoming Abraham's natural seed, and heirs, with him, of the earth and the fulness thereof. The conditions upon which they may obtain God's favor, and a Restitution to all that was lost, are that they shall exercise faith, and render obedience to the Divine provision which will be represented in Messiah's Kingdom, when it shall be inaugurated.

The Seed of Abraham--Jesus and the Church--is the legitimate Heir of this Abrahamic Covenant, wholly regardless of the Law Covenant which was made with Israel at Sinai, or of the New Law Covenant that is to be made with Israel at the close of the Gospel Age.

This Abrahamic Covenant has no mediator; but the Law Covenant had Moses for its mediator, and the New Law Covenant will have Messiah, the Spiritual Heir of the Abrahamic Covenant, as its Mediator.

The Abrahamic Covenant needs no mediator; for there are no terms and conditions upon which to base a mediation. In it God merely declared His purpose to find a Seed of Abraham, by certain selective processes of His own, and to bless and honor this Seed in connection with the remainder of mankind. This especially selected Seed of Abraham, as the Apostle points out, is Christ and the Church--God's Elect.--Gal. 3:8, 16, 29; Rom. 8:29, 30.

GOD'S SELECTION OF THE SPIRITUAL SEED

God has taken certain steps whereby He is making a selection of those worthy and pleasing to Him, to constitute this Messianic company. His arrangement for finding these is shown by the Scripture which, referring to this call of the Gospel Age to membership in that Seed of Abraham, says, "Gather My saints together unto Me; those that have made a Covenant with Me by sacrifice." (Psa. 50:5.) This Covenant of sacrifice of the human will, and of all the rights and privileges and liberties of the flesh, proves a most drastic test, and demonstrates to the Lord the very peculiar people whom He desires to be the Spiritual Seed of Abraham. They become a Spiritual Seed by renouncing the flesh and all its rights and liberties--even unto death.

The Head of this Seed is the portion which contains the life for the entire Body. All the members added to Him needed, first of all, to be justified by His merit. These were not justified

under the Law Covenant, which made nothing perfect; nor were they justified under the New Covenant; for it is not yet completed. But the blood which by and by will be effective for the sealing of the New Law Covenant for Israel and the world, is effective now, in advance, for the justification of those accepted as the Body of the Mediator. This is possible because these Body members were selected from the same human family as the rest of mankind. Therefore the blood which by and by is to seal and make operative the New Covenant to the world, is the same blood, or merit of Christ, which justifies freely all those now called to be saints, and joint-heirs of Jesus.

SECOND AND THIRD COVENANTS--TYPE AND ANTITYPE

The Second Covenant, in order of time, was the Law Covenant. (Exod. 19:3-8.) This was an addition to the Abrahamic Covenant, which addition could not interfere with the original Covenant. It was typical. It had a typical mediator, typical sacrifices of bulls and goats, a typical Atonement Day, a typical Holy and Most Holy.

The third and last is the New Law Covenant, to be instituted in the future. (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:6-13.) This cannot set aside, or make null or void, the original Abrahamic Covenant of Grace, any more than could the Law Covenant of Sinai. The New Law Covenant cannot be introduced, sealed, made operative, until the Abrahamic Covenant shall have brought forth the Seed of Abraham and invested Him with glory, honor and Divine majesty. Then this antitypical Moses, The Christ complete, Head and Body, will mediate between God and the world of mankind for a thousand years.

The basis of this New Covenant's blessings will be the merit of Messiah; but this merit will not be presented on behalf of the world, or to seal the New Covenant for Natural Israel and mankind, in order to the Restitution blessings, until first the entire Seed of Abraham, Head and Body, shall have been completed; and it cannot be completed until all the sacrificing has been finished. The sacrifice of the Head was finished eighteen centuries ago, and was typified by the bullock, in the Atonement Day sacrifices of Israel. The sacrifice of the consecrated Church, His members, who have been accepted by Him, has been going on now for eighteen centuries, and was typified by the goat, in the sacrifices of the same Day of Atonement.

Not until the Messiah shall have finished all of His sacrificial work of the Gospel Age, not until the last member shall, under His hand, have passed from the earthly condition of membership to the Heavenly condition, will the sufferings of The Christ be finished, will the sufferings which He left behind be filled up; and not until then will He usher in the blessings of the Messianic Kingdom. And those blessings will be secured to mankind by the great Mediator's applying the merit of His sacrifice on their behalf.

Reprint 5300

“MEDIATOR OF THE NEW COVENANT”

“And to Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel.”--Heb. 12:24.

SOME dear brethren seem to have difficulty in harmonizing former and our more recent presentations on the subject of the New Covenant and its Mediator. They seem to get the thought that the latter presentations are contradictory to the previous ones, and that some radical change of sentiment is thus involved. On the contrary our views respecting the facts are in no sense or degree altered. We still believe and teach that Christ died for our sins, that without his redemption work there would be no remission of our sins, and in the future no remission of the sins of the world. We still claim that all the virtue, all the merit for sins, is in his personal sacrifice, finished at Calvary. What then is the change? Merely we now see that we have for years been using wrong terms when expressing right thoughts. For instance: We have spoken of Jesus as being the Church's Mediator, when we should have said that he is the Church's Redeemer and Advocate and the world's Mediator, because this latter is the Scriptural presentation. We have spoken of ourselves as being blessed by the terms of the New Covenant, whereas clearer light upon the subject shows us that it is Israel and the world that get God's blessing thus, and that the Church gets her blessing under most favorable portions of the original Abrahamic Covenant, symbolized by Sarah and not under the Law (or Hagar) Covenant nor under the New (Law) Covenant symbolized by Keturah.

THE ORIGINAL ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

The Apostle declares that God preached the Gospel in advance to Abraham, saying, "In thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 28:14.) The Apostle shows that the original Abrahamic Covenant contained two parts, or two seeds, represented in the two statements, Thy seed shall be, (1) as the stars in heaven, and, (2) as the sands of the seashore. The first seed mentioned relates to Christ--Jesus, the Head, and the Church, his Body. The Apostle enunciates and emphasizes this in Galatians 3:11, 29. Abraham's spiritual Seed, like the stars of heaven and the brightness of the firmament, is the channel through which the secondary seed will receive its blessing. The secondary seed of Abraham, likened to the sands of the seashore, represents all the families of the earth, which ultimately will come into harmony with God, during the Millennial Age. As Abraham typified God, the picture shows two classes of God's children, developed through Abraham--Christ and the Church on the spirit plane and the perfected Restitution Class of mankind on the earthly plane.

The Apostle refers to these two seeds, the one developed under Faith and the other under Law and works. The first, the spiritual Seed under the Abrahamic Covenant, is now in process of development during this Gospel Age. The second, the seed according to the flesh, the Restitution Class, is to be developed under the New Covenant and by its Mediator, according to Law and works and actual perfection and not reckoned by faith merely. Its type was the Law Covenant, which had Moses for its Mediator, but which brought nothing to perfection. The Apostle's words are, "Therefore it (the Abrahamic Covenant, covering the Church) is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the intent that the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the [R4366 : page 104] Law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all"--as Jehovah will be the Father of all the saved, not only of the Church Class, but also of the restituted world. As it is written, "I have made thee a father of many nations."--Rom. 4:16, 17.

All the families of the earth, all the nations that will be blessed (to whom the blessing will become effective) will thereby become the children of God, whom Abraham prefigured. It is to be hoped, then, that we can all see that the original Covenant made with Abraham includes everything

that God promised to give, both to the Church and, through the Church to such of the world as will receive the grace of God not in vain. Notice that no additional Covenants were necessary so far as the Divine determination is concerned --it was all in the original Abrahamic Covenant.

TWO COVENANTS ADDED

If the original Covenant contained the Divine Promise to the full, both for the Church and for all the families of the earth to be blessed through the Church during the Millennium, why did God arrange for two other Covenants, namely (1) the Law Covenant, instituted at Mt. Sinai with the nation of Israel, with Moses as its Mediator, and, (2) the New Covenant, which is to follow and is to bless Israel and the world? We answer that these two Covenants were added for the good and sufficient reason that they further elucidate the Divine Purpose, and, rightly understood, help us to appreciate the operation of Divine love and justice, past, present and to come.

(1) The Law Covenant. What was its object? The Scriptures answer that it was added to the Abrahamic Covenant to fill up the time until the promised Seed should come, to whom the original Covenant applied, and that this was necessary, because of sin, that the high Divine standard for the Seed might be shown. It is certainly a fact that the Law Covenant with the nation of Israel rendered this very service. It set up the standard which approved Jesus and condemned all others. It helped to develop the Jewish nation towards God and towards righteousness. It helped to fit and prepare them for the glorious "calling" of the Gospel, as it ultimately came to them, inviting them to the Divine favor and joint-heirship with Messiah in the glorious Millennial Kingdom, upon conditions of faithfulness and following in the footsteps of their Redeemer. It had a beneficial effect in that, under God's providences, the Jewish nation was the most advanced in righteousness of any nation of the world at the time of our Lord's first advent, so that amongst them several thousands were found fit for transfer from Moses to Christ. Furthermore the arrangements of the Law Covenant provided for certain typical transactions and for prophecies which have been very helpful to Spiritual Israel during this Gospel Age, illustrating to us in the types and shadows of the Law, and enunciating through the prophecies, various matters appertaining to the blessing of the Church during this Gospel Age and to the blessing of the world during the Millennium.

This conglomeration, this mixing, of the matters pertaining to two Ages in the types of the Law Covenant have confused things, to some minds. The Lord hides things from us so as to develop in us the necessity of searching for them. Thus the children of God grow stronger from the Truths, by reason of the difficulties they have in the mastication of them, even as it is with the natural food; those who thoroughly masticate obtain the better nourishment.

Thus we have clearly before our minds the thought that the Law Covenant "made nothing perfect" and added not a whit to the original Abrahamic Covenant, though it gave certain typical foreshadowings in connection with the general plan. That the Law Covenant was never intended to take the place of the original Covenant, is the Apostle's argument. He develops this at considerable length in Galatians 4:21-31. The Apostle addresses Christian believers who, while recognizing Christ as the original inheritor of the Abrahamic Covenant, felt that somehow or other they were still under the Law Covenant, very much as some of us for a time recognized Christ and the completeness of the Abrahamic Covenant, and yet somehow supposed, without Scriptural authority, that we additionally needed the New Covenant and were under it. We now see that the Church, the Body of Christ, is not under either the old Law Covenant, which came to an end, or under the New (Law) Covenant, which has not yet been even sealed.

What we Spiritual Israelites have is the superior portion of joint-heirship with Christ in the Original Covenant represented by Sarah, as the Apostle distinctly declares in Galatians 3:29, "If ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's Seed and heirs according to that promise."

The world is to get all of its blessings and favors of Restitution through the New (Law) Covenant, the second addition to the Original Covenant. This New (Law) Covenant has not yet been instituted, because the Mediator, who is to inaugurate it and to cause its blessings to reach to every member of the race during the Millennial Age, has not yet been completed. The New (Law) Covenant will be inaugurated in the end of this Gospel Age, and will embrace the entire period of the Millennial Age. This is the teaching of the Apostle in our text. Jesus our Redeemer and Head is its appointed Mediator, in the merit of his own sacrifice finished on Calvary. He could have sealed it and could have begun at once its operation, had not the Father "provided some better thing for us," his Church, his Bride whom God foreknew as his members. This is "the mystery," that the Gospel Age has been devoted to the development of the "body" of Messiah, the Mediator by sacrifice.

In Hebrews 12th Chapter St. Paul points us down to the end of this Age and to the inauguration of the New Age, under the New (Law) Covenant. He shows that its inauguration is typified in the inauguration of the old or typical Law Covenant. He draws the contrast between the two. When the Old Law Covenant was instituted, Moses came down from the mountain and set forth the tables of the Law and sprinkled them with the blood, sealing the Covenant in a sense, and then took of the blood and sprinkled all the people. This was typical of what is to occur shortly. The antitypical Moses, The Christ (Jesus the Head, and the Church, the Body) will come down from the mount veiled, hidden, because mankind could not endure the glory of the shining presence.

The inauguration of the Law Covenant was accomplished in a typical time of trouble, a shaking of the mountain, the fearing and quaking of the people. The antitype of what occurred at Mt. Sinai will take place at Mt. Zion (the Millennial Kingdom of Christ) as soon as the "election" closes and the new age opens. The Great Mediator (Head and Body) veiled, hiding the glory of the spirit condition, will set forth the Law, and sprinkle it with his blood of the New (Law) Covenant--as Moses took of blood and sprinkled the (Old) Law Covenant in the type. The difference is that Moses sprinkled the tables of the Law with the blood of bulls and goats, but the antitypical Moses, the Mediator of the New (Law) Covenant, will (symbolically) sprinkle the Law with the antitypical blood of the better sacrifices (antitypes of the bullock and the goat)--"his own blood"--not only the precious blood of Jesus, but the blood of the sacrifices of all those whom he shall have accepted as "members of his Body." Then, as Moses sprinkled all the people at Mt. Sinai in the type, so in the antitype, on a larger scale, the Christ, Jesus and his members, will, during the Millennium, sprinkle all the people, that is bring all mankind to a knowledge of the Truth and to an appreciation of their privileges of full return to harmony with God and his Divine laws and regulations.

"SOME BETTER THING FOR US"

We hope that the Lord has blessed us with great plainness of speech in treating this subject, and that every reader can clearly discern that God's Covenant with Abraham primarily related to the Seed of promise and faith only, and was symbolized by Sarah, who bore the Seed. The Law Covenant, Hagar bore not the Seed, failing to perfect anything. The New (Law) Covenant costs the death of the Seed in order to pass the earthly rights back to natural Israel and through them to the world of mankind. And this so, not because God could not have done otherwise but because it pleased God to do it thus.

Well did the Apostle declare that there is a "mystery" connected with the peculiar relationship of Christ and "the Church, which is his Body." So heavily clouded is this Mystery that the Jews could not see it at all, except the few who were Israelites indeed, and they not until after they had been imbued with the holy Spirit at Pentecost. Even then, as St. Paul pointed out, it was difficult for them to grasp the Mystery, that the Gentiles also were to be fellow-heirs with themselves in these special blessings that appertained to Messiah and the faithful few, the "very elect."

Whoever realizes that the Church is Joint-Heir with her Lord; that those who now suffer with him shall also reign with him by and by, should have no difficulty in seeing that the death of the Church, as the Apostle declares, "fills up that which is behind of the afflictions of The Christ," and that only those who thus have part in the afflictions of Christ will have a share in the glory that shall follow. We are at a loss for words to make this subject more plain than it is already stated in the Scriptures. What we each need is the enlightening of the eyes of our understanding, that will enable us to discern "the deep things of God." But the Scriptures assure us that these "deep things" of the "mystery" are only for the Spirit begotten.--I Cor. 2:10, 13.

This holy Spirit is one of humility and faith and obedience of heart--and, so far as possible, of word and of deed also. We trust that the Vow is helping many to get into this attitude, where they will be the nearer to the Lord and thus have the more abundant favor and blessing and enlightenment. One thing to be borne in mind is that our sacrifices would be without merit or value; that it is only because our Redeemer adopts us as his members and imputes his merit to us and counts our sacrifices as a part of his own--only thus does any merit attach to anything that we may say or do or sacrifice.

Whoever sees the above clearly must see that during this Gospel Age the branches of the Vine have been in process of development and are a part of it; and that only as they bear the fruit of the Vine will they be retained as members thereof. This picture of the vintage of the Church, the One Vine--Christ--the crushing of all the grapes, and the gathering of all the wine, is a picture of the experiences of the whole Church.

Another picture of the same thing loses sight of the Vine, and represents our participation with the Lord by the Cup itself. Our Lord, after participating of the Cup, gave it to his disciples, urging that they *drink all of it*. That Cup of suffering and self-denial has come down to us during eighteen centuries, and is still with us. It is a prophetic Cup, representing all the sacrifices and all the sufferings of all the members of the Body of Christ, from the Head down to the humblest feet members.

The faithful of the past have participated and the Cup has now come to us, and the Master's voice still says, "Drink ye all of it." Soon the last drop of it will be drained and then the sufferings of the Church which is his body--the Body of Christ--will have been completed. Immediately, through the resurrection, the glorious "change" promised shall follow.

Of that Cup of suffering of which the Lord tasted and which he passed on to his followers, and members, he said, "This is the Cup of the New (Testament) Covenant shed for many for the remission of sins. *Drink ye all of it*." Participate ye all in it. It is not for the world to drink of that cup of the sufferings of Christ. That honor is reserved for his saints. They alone may participate with their Lord in his sufferings. If the blood of the New Covenant be participated in by all the faithful members of the Body of Christ, how could the New Covenant itself be sealed until the members of the Body had all participated? It would be impossible. Whoever sees clearly that which is a "mystery" to the world must see that the work of The Christ in the inauguration of the New Covenant

could not begin until the perfecting of his own Body, which is the Church. And the first, the initial feature of the inauguration of the New Covenant, is its sealing with the blood, and all of his blood has not yet been shed.

This sealing of the New (Law) Covenant has nothing to do with the ransom nor with our justification. We are not justified by any Covenant, but by faith in the precious blood of Jesus. Who cannot see that nobody could be justified by faith under the New (Law) Covenant? The Law is not a "new" faith arrangement but a "new" work arrangement. The Old Law Covenant (of works) failed only because its mediator could not render the needed aid. The New Law Covenant (of works) will succeed because it has a "better Mediator," able to restore to perfection, and ability for *perfect works*, all who will.

ABRAHAM'S THREE WIVES

Abraham had three wives; Sarah, his original spouse; then later, Hagar, Sarah's maid, whom she urged upon him as a supposed assistance to God in the carrying out of the Covenant, after a long delay and waiting; and third, after Sarah's death, Abraham took Keturah to wife, and by her had many children, whereas by the primary wife and by the maid, but one each. The Apostle's language justifies us in considering this matter allegorical or typical. The holy Spirit, through St. Paul, tells us that Sarah represented the essence of the original Covenant and that Hagar represented the Law Covenant. He explains that the Jewish people were in bondage under their Law Covenant and therefore the antitypes of Ishmael, Hagar's son, and that these were cast out from Divine favor, even as Hagar and her son were cast off from Abraham's family by Divine instruction, and to make the type complete. The Apostle introduces this lesson to show us that the Covenant of Grace, under which the Gospel Church is developed, has nothing whatever to do with the Covenant of the Law; that the two were separate and distinct.

Hagar's child might indeed appear to be the child of Sarah for a time, but it was not; even as Sarah's child, Isaac, was in no sense Hagar's son. The Apostle's argument is, "So, then, brethren, we, as Isaac was, are the children of the promise"--the original Covenant, and not children of the Law Covenant. Similarly, we fancy, the Apostle, if writing today to those who claim to be under the New Covenant, represented in the type by Keturah, would tell them plainly, "You cannot be children of two covenants, children of two mothers." If you are children of the Keturah Covenant in any sense or degree, you cannot be the children of the Sarah Covenant; and if you are children of the Sarah Covenant, then in no sense or degree can you be the children of the Keturah Covenant, or New Covenant--which is not yet in existence.

"CHILDREN OF THE OATH"

The original Covenant with Abraham, typified by his wife Sarah, is the one which God bound with an oath, and which the Apostle describes in Hebrews 6:13-20 and which he calls "the hope set before us in the Gospel" and our "anchor sure and steadfast within the veil." We, then, are the children of the oath of God, the children of "the promise." Our begetting promise, through Christ, to the New Nature, is wholly different from the promise by which the Jews were begotten, as the house of servants; and wholly different also from the promises by which restored Israel and all the families of the earth will be begotten to human nature through Restitution processes, as the children of the Keturah Covenant.

What is the difference between the promises by which we came into the family of God and the promise by which others may come into the family of God hereafter? We answer, the differences

are very great indeed. God will not deal with the world directly during the Millennium. He has committed all things to his Son, and the Son, in harmony with the Divine program during this Gospel Age, has been accepting as his "members" such as the Father has "drawn" to him, granting them the spirit of adoption and thus bringing them into new spirit relationship. No such promises will prevail in the begetting of other children of God, the "other sheep which are not of this flock." These children of the oath, or children of the promise of God, are the special "little flock," to whom it is the Father's good pleasure to give the Kingdom, as the Master declares.

On what basis, different from that of the world, are these acceptable to God? We answer that the world will be accepted only when they reach actual perfection, under the processes of Restitution at the close of the Millennial Age. The Father will have no dealing with the world until, mankind being perfect at the end of the Millennium, Christ shall deliver up the Kingdom to the Father. Then men will fall into the hands of the living God; but be perfectly secure, because of their perfection, if they are at heart loyal to God and the principles of his Government.

Jesus Christ (and his Bride and Joint-Heir) will stand as "Mediator between God and men" during the Millennium. All of mankind's communications and relationship to God must come to them through Messiah, and all of God's dealing and relationship with mankind will be in and through the Messiah. How different from that is the dealing of God with the Church of this Age, "Abraham's Seed and heirs according to the promise." These are "drawn" by the Father, as Jesus declares, "No man can come unto me (now), except the Father which sent me draw him," and whoever cometh unto me, drawn by the Father, I will in no wise reject. (John 6:44.) Some of our Lord's followers were drawn to him of the Father before he had completed the sacrifice for sins at Calvary, and others have been drawn throughout the Gospel Age; as the Apostle declares, "Even so many as the Lord your God shall call." (Acts 2:39.) Here is a reversal of the Divine purpose. The Gospel Church, under the Abrahamic Covenant arrangement, are drawn to the Son by the Father, "Given unto him." The world in the next Age the Father will not draw, but the Lord Jesus will draw them to himself. "If I be exalted, I will draw all men unto me." And even after the Son draws them unto himself, he must as the Mediator keep them unto himself until he shall have instructed them, disciplined them, and made their knees to bow and their lips to confess, and taught them the necessary lessons and brought them back to all that was lost, before the Father will have anything to do with them--at the close of the Millennial Age.

Who will say that the children of the free woman, the Sarah Covenant, have not a great advantage every way over the children of Keturah, and not only have they this more favorable reception of the Father, but they receive directly his begetting to the spirit plane; as we read, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." (I Pet. 1:3.) These are his "elect." As the Apostle says, "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren."--Rom. 8:29.

WHEREIN IS THE DIFFERENCE?

Why should God make such a difference in his dealings? Surely there is a logical reason connected with the matter, if we can but ascertain it. And surely it is true that "The Lord God doeth nothing but he revealeth it unto his servants." If all mankind had been at heart "Israelites indeed" there would have been no need of a mediator and a New Covenant--the Abrahamic Covenant would have been quite sufficient. It is because the world of mankind is estranged from God, rebellious against the Divine Law, and lovers of Sin, that the mediatorial work is a necessary one. The Great

Mediator (Head and Members) after making "an atonement for the sins of all the people," at the close of this age, will take all the people in hand, and, by chastisements and corrections in righteousness, cause every knee to bow and every tongue to confess, in harmony with the Divine arrangement, or be cut off in the Second Death.

All men are sinners and all are children of wrath and under Divine sentence of death; but there are other respects in which all are not alike. Some hate the chains of Sin, wherein they are held, and long for freedom and for reconciliation to God, while others love the sin and are estranged from God. God is not in their thoughts. Here, then, we have the ground for the difference in God's dealings with the two classes. He takes note of those who are weary and heavy laden; these, feeling after God, if haply they might find him, he is pleased to "draw," during this Gospel Age, through the knowledge of the Truth, to Jesus, that at his hand they may be justified and become acceptable, if they will, as "members" of his Body, suffer with him now. Then they will reign with him by and by. The ungodly are not "drawn" or called in consecration with the High Calling of this Gospel Age, but left to be dealt with by their Redeemer, when he shall assume the Office of Mediator between God and men--the world.

But is it not Scripturally declared of believers that "We were enemies of God through wicked works"? And does not that place us on the same level with the world, in enmity against God? We answer, No, there is a difference. The worldly mass are enemies against God, not merely in respect to their works being imperfect, such as he cannot accept, but also and specially because their hearts are estranged from him. They love unrighteousness. Believers, on the contrary, although enemies through wicked works, are not enemies at heart, and God, who reads the heart, deals with them from that standpoint and leads them to Christ, that the merit of his sacrifice may offset the demerits of their sin and their imperfect or wicked works.

But does not the Apostle again say that we "were aliens and strangers and foreigners from the commonwealth of Israel"? Yes, we, who were Gentiles, were entirely separated and alienated from God, until Christ came, and we found access to Divine favor through him, whereas the Jew had a measure of Divine favor and opportunity for development, before Christ came. Three and one-half years after Christ's death, St. Paul says, the middle wall of partition or separation between Jews and Gentiles was taken down, so that, in God's providence, the honest-hearted Gentile was no more an alien and a foreigner to God than his Jewish neighbor.

ATONEMENT NOT MEDIATION

There is a difference between Atonement for Sin and mediation between God and the sinner. There are certain senses in which we might correctly say that the person who made atonement for the sins of another was his mediator, but this is not the Scriptural use of the word mediator. The Bible speaks of Christ as the Mediator of a Covenant, not as a Mediator for sins. However true it is that he mediated an atonement for the sins of the world, that is not a Scriptural form of statement. Believers, as well as all the remainder of the world, need to have an atonement made for our sins, as a basis for our reconciliation to the Father. But believers are under a Covenant which needs no mediator, as St. Paul distinctly points out. "A mediator is not of one." (Gal. 3:20.) That is to say, Where a Covenant has only one side to it, it does not have, nor require, a mediator. On the contrary, covenants which have conditions demand a mediator, as, for instance, Moses was the mediator of the Law Covenant, and Christ was the Mediator of the New Covenant. Under both of these covenants there is a conditional proposition --"If ye will do those things, I will do this thing. If ye will obey my laws and keep my statutes, I will bless you," etc.

Let us notice carefully why the original, or Sarah Covenant, "The mother of us all," needed no mediator. It was because in it God made no conditional promises. They were all unconditional to whoever would become The Seed. "In thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." There are no conditions in that promise, and hence, there would be nothing for a mediator to set straight. God himself undertook to choose who should constitute the Seed of Abraham. He chose our Lord Jesus to be the "Head over the Church, which is his Body," and he foreordained, and, in harmony with that foreordination, chose and called, throughout this Age, such as he desired might have the privilege of membership in that Seed of Abraham. There was no place for a mediator in connection with it, for God did his own selecting. As it is written, "Ye are God's workmanship." "The Father himself loveth you." "Whoever is drawn of the Father cometh unto me." "No man can come unto me except the Father which sent me draw him."

TAKE ANOTHER GLANCE

Honest-hearted ones now "drawn" of the Father are, indeed, children of wrath, and hence, before they can be received of the Father as sons, he delivers them over to Christ, and Christ's acceptance of them, or justification by faith in his blood (not faith in a covenant) makes them ready to be returned again to the Father, if they still so will. It is to these justified ones that the Apostle says, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." If these needed to be made actually perfect they would need to be left in the hands of the Son for such restitution work as is his alone, and would be held over for the Millennium. But instead they are justified by faith. Their faith in Christ, in the merit of his sacrifice, attested by their repudiation of sin, "Is counted unto them for righteousness," Jesus applying his merit on their account. When, afterwards, these made full consecration of themselves to do the Father's will, even unto death, and when they were begotten of the holy Spirit as New Creatures, they became "members" of the Seed of Abraham, members of the Mediator of the New Covenant. Then they by faith passed to a new plane, where no sin or imperfection is imputed to them, so long as they fulfil their consecration Vow and "Walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit."-- Rom. 8:1.

THE CHURCH'S SHARE IN THE SIN-OFFERING

THE MERIT of Christ consisted in His keeping of the Law and in His obedience to the Father in the laying down of His life. That life which He laid down was the price. It was placed in the hands of Justice when He died--"Father, into Thy hands I commit My Spirit." All passed into the hands of the Father and it remains in the hands of the Father--a Ransom-price. When God raised our Lord from the dead He did not raise Him a human being, but a spirit being of the highest order.

As the Scriptures declare of the Church, so it is true of the Head of the Church, for we follow in His footsteps. Of the Church it is written, "It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." (I Cor. 15:42-45.) Our Lord was raised a quickening, a life-giving spirit. (I Cor. 15:45; I Pet. 3:18.) It was a man who forfeited his life; it was a man also who gave Himself a price in offset. (I Cor. 15:21, 22.) The sacrifice of our Lord's human nature *remained a sacrifice on behalf of the world*. Has He given it to the world yet? No. What has He done with it? Merely committed it to the Father. To whose credit is it now? To our Lord's credit. Where? In the hands of Divine Justice. For what object? That it may be applied. How applied?

First of all, in an imputative sense, in this Gospel Age, it is applied to all those who come unto the Father through Him. He imputes it to these after they have turned to the Father in faith and have come to the point where they can say, "I present my body a living sacrifice"; "Here, Lord, I give myself away." There the great Advocate, the future Mediator for the world, imputes to them enough of His merit to make their sacrifice good. They, of themselves, have nothing to offer that God could accept; for, "There is none righteous; no, not one." --Rom. 3:10.

Here the great Advocate applies, or imputes, a sufficiency of His merit, already in the hands of Justice, to make these perfect in the sight of Justice. Divine Justice can then accept the sacrifice; and the acceptance of the sacrifice is manifested by the impartation of the Holy Spirit, the begetting of the Spirit; and that which is begotten of the Spirit will, in the resurrection, be born of the Spirit, unless in the meantime there be something to paralyze, or vitiate, the condition. If one thus begotten of the Spirit lose the spirit, become dead to spiritual things, then he is indeed "twice dead," as the Apostle says.--Jude 12.

DOES THE CHURCH SHARE IN THE SIN-OFFERING?

But now, in the case of those who are thus accepted of Christ, what have they to do with the Sin-Offering? We answer that we should not know what they have to do if God did not show us; but God first makes a picture of the matter in the Old Testament. He made, with the Jews, a typical Day of Atonement, which prefigured what will be done during this Gospel Age and during the period of Messiah's reign. What is this? It is the work of reconciliation between God and men. How did the type show this? The Day of Atonement had various features. It began with the offering of a bullock; and that bullock represented the offering of the Lord Jesus Christ on behalf of the Church. The blood of the bullock was sprinkled upon the Mercy Seat for the household of faith. The household of faith was represented in the two goats.

These goats represented you and me and all of God's people who have offered their bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable. (Rom. 12:1, 2; Heb. 13:11-13.) Only one of these goats became a follower of the bullock and had experiences exactly the same as the experiences of the bullock. This goat represents that class of believers who daily follow in the footsteps of Jesus and

who are partakers with Him of His sufferings at the present time and will have a share with Him in the glory to follow.

The other goat represents the class which does not go voluntarily to sacrifice, but which, without turning to sin, fails to make a willing sacrifice. Therefore this class is treated as the "scapegoat" and dealt with accordingly, being driven into the wilderness condition for tribulation. The Apostle seems to refer to this class when he says that some are thus dealt with "that their spirits may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." (I Cor. 5:5.) These are not the Bride class, but a servant class.

In the 45th Psalm we have the picture of the Heavenly Bridegroom and can see how He introduces His Bride to the Heavenly Father, the great King. Next follows the picture of the Bride, who is described as "all glorious within," and who is to be brought unto the Heavenly King in fine needlework and wrought gold. Then we have a third picture, "The virgins, her companions that follow her," and who also shall be brought unto the King. These represent the other class, the "scapegoat" class, who do not voluntarily go into death, into sacrifice, and who, consequently, cannot be counted in as members of the Bride.

Because the Scriptures show this Sin-Offering, therefore, we believe in the Sin-Offering; and because the Scriptures tell us that we are to be sharers in this matter, therefore we believe it. Where does the Apostle so state? We answer that he says to us, addressing us as the "Lord's goat" class, "Let us go forth unto Him without the camp, bearing the reproach with Him." He also says that the bodies of those beasts whose blood was brought into the Most Holy to make atonement for sin, were all burned outside the camp. (Heb. 13:11-13.) What beasts were those? *Only the two*. The bullock and the Lord's goat were the only ones. The Apostle urges that we were represented by this goat. "Let us, therefore, go forth unto Him without the camp." All that was done with the bullock was done with the goat. Let us, then, if we would walk in His steps, share with Him in His sacrifice--"Go to Him without the camp, bearing His reproach with Him"; for "If we suffer with Him we shall also reign with Him"; we shall be glorified together.-- 2 Tim. 2:11, 12.

DOES THE CHURCH ADD TO THE SIN-OFFERING?

The question may be asked, "What does the Church add to the Sin-Offering if the Lord gave the necessary per cent. of His merit to each to make his or her sacrifice possible?" We answer that it depends upon what thought is behind the expression "add to the Sin-Offering." THE SIN-OFFERING NEEDED NO ADDITION. The *sinner* was a *man*--Adam. Our Lord left His glory and became a man in order that He might redeem *man*. When a perfect man's life was given for the other perfect man who sinned, it constituted a sufficiency, or as the Scriptures express it, a *Ransom-Price*.

This word "*Ransom*" (I Tim. 2:6), in the Greek (*anti-lutron*) signifies a price, *as an equivalent; a satisfactory price*. Consequently there is no addition needed to the Ransom which our Lord gave and *nothing could be added* to it, for we *cannot add* to that which is *already complete*. If the price of an article is \$1 and you add \$25 to it, you are not really adding anything to the price, for the price is *only* \$1, and the other dollars added on neither *affect the price nor are necessary, in any sense of the word*.

There is another sense, however, in which the Church has a share with her Lord; namely, Not only was our Lord Himself the Ransom-Price for the world, but in order that He might be highly exalted and receive the reward of the divine nature, it was necessary that He should die. So, then, the death of Christ effected two things; first, it was the Ransom-Price for mankind; second, it was the

condition upon which He would obtain His glorious reward--the divine nature. If He had not been obedient even unto death, then He would not have been highly exalted.

As the Apostle says, "And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore [on which account] God also hath highly exalted Him and given Him a Name which is above every name." (Phil. 2:8, 9.) *He could not, therefore, have been exalted to that high position except by obedience unto death--obedience to His covenant. Had He failed to carry out His covenant of sacrifice, He would have failed to gain His glorious reward, and also failed to be a satisfactory price for mankind.* But He did not fail. He attained the prize of the "high calling" to the divine nature.

There is, however, an arrangement in God's Plan that takes in the Church as well as Jesus, the Head of the Body, the Head of the Church; and so the Apostle says that God *foreknew us* also by Jesus. (Rom. 8:28-30; Eph. 1:4, 9-12.) Not that he foreknew you and me as individuals, necessarily, but that He foreknew a Church, a class; He had fore-intended the gathering of such a class, or Church, from the beginning. It is just as much a part of the Divine Plan that the Church, the Body of Christ, should be called to walk in His steps, to be dead with Him, to present their bodies living sacrifices, as it was a part of the Divine Plan from the beginning that Jesus should do these things. The difference between Jesus and the Church is that *He was perfect*, holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners; and therefore, His death could be in the nature of a *ransom-price*--all that was necessary. We have no such perfection of our own; and therefore, in order to be permitted to sacrifice at all, we must first have His merit imputed to us, that we might be acceptable sacrifices on the Lord's altar.

WHY MUST THE CHURCH SACRIFICE?

Then the question comes up, What is the object of having any of these sacrifices on the altar? Why is the Church on the altar with her Lord, as expressed by the Apostle Paul (Romans 12:1), "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, your reasonable service." Why does God invite us to be living sacrifices with Christ, since Christ is sufficient as a ransom-price for the sins of the whole world? The answer is that the Father invites us to come in and be partakers of the *sufferings* of Christ in order that we may also be sharers of His *glory*; for it is only "if we suffer with Him that we may *reign* with Him--if we be dead with Him, we shall live with Him."

As our Lord was called to sacrifice, so the Church is also called. If He would be found worthy, if He would have the Father's highest approval, He must leave the glory which He had with the Father and must do all the Father might require of Him. And only by so doing would He gain the reward offered. During the Gospel Age the Church is invited to enter into that covenant with Him. We who are by nature sinners, "children of wrath, even as others," are justified through His merit in order to permit us to have a share in His suffering, in His sacrifice.

What is the *use* of all this? Why should this be done? That is the only way that we could be with Him on the spirit plane. If we retain the human nature we can never get to heaven. None can ever go to heaven except those of the sacrificial class. Those not begotten from above will never get a share in the heavenly blessing, but will get an earthly blessing, if they get any. They will keep their earthly nature and will in due time be made perfect. But those who are now invited to become the Bride of Christ are invited to join with Him in sacrifice. Our Lord sacrificed the earthly nature and its rights. All those who wish to belong to this Bride class must sacrifice the flesh, the earthly nature, its rights, etc., that they may be sharers with Him in the Heavenly, the divine nature.

**RANSOMER, REDEEMER,
SIN-OFFERING, ATONER, ADVOCATE,
MEDIATOR**

ADMITTING that we are not justified by the degree of our knowledge of the Divine Plan, but by the fulness of our faith, we are, nevertheless, deeply interested in every expression of the Scriptures bearing upon the philosophy of the great fact which the arms of our faith have grasped as a whole. The fact was as large when first we laid hold upon it as it is today, but we did not see its details as we now see them. And quite possibly there may be certain features which will yet more fully open to our eyes of understanding in the future. Our proper attitude is one of gratitude to God for knowledge of the blessed fact that his forgiveness of sins is somehow or other made possible to us through the death of Jesus. It was the appreciation of that fact which justified us and drew us to the Lord in consecration, saying, "The love of Christ constraineth us." (I Cor. 5:14.) Since that blessed moment it has been our privilege to go on and on, growing in grace and in knowledge and appreciation, in love and self-sacrificing obedience. Let us continue in this way and permit no amount of philosophizing to rob us of the blessings and privileges already secured. Some seem in danger of so doing--in danger of quarreling over philosophies which they cannot see; and, by the wrong spirit fostered through the quarreling, they seem in danger of losing all the blessings ever enjoyed. Let us not follow such a course, but, while maintaining our justifying faith and spirit of devotion, let us seek to appreciate every feature of Divine Truth presented to us in the Divine Word.

THE RANSOMER AND THE RANSOM

The Gospel message is the good tidings respecting a Ransom sacrifice, on account of which God may be just and yet be the justifier of the believer. Of the Ransomer God gave the first intimation to father Abraham, yet without explaining the particulars. He merely intimated that in some manner Divine Justice would be satisfied by Abraham's offspring, the Messiah, and that in consequence a blessing would go through his Seed to all the families of the earth. When our Lord was introduced as the Seed of Abraham he made the first statement of the philosophy of the Divine Plan by which, as Abraham's Seed, he was to bring the promised blessing. He declared, "The Son of man came to give his life a ransom for many." (Matt. 20:28.) This comprehensive statement of the Ransom was not elaborated--no details were given. However, in the Law to Israel, God prefigured and elaborated the Ransom, not in such a manner that all would understand it, but in types and shadows, which in his "due time" he proposed should be made clear and plain to such as would have the proper eye of understanding, enlightened by the holy Spirit.

SIN-OFFERING OF ATONEMENT

The word Ransom, as we have already pointed out, signifies a price to correspond. Adam, disobedient and a sinner, was condemned to death and needed to be Ransomed or Redeemed or Purchased back from death and from the condemnation of Justice. As he was but one man, so it needed but one man to Redeem him, to Ransom him. But it needed a perfect man, and there was none such. And so God sent Jesus, holy, harmless and undefiled, to be the Ransom of Adam and incidentally of his race, because all were involved through his disobedience. When, therefore, Jesus "died, the just for the unjust," on Calvary, a price sufficient had been laid down to redeem Adam and his race.

But this merit has not yet been placed in the hands of Justice. Merely the merit of the sacrifice of a perfect human life was laid down in death, and it belonged to our Lord Jesus when the Father raised him from the dead by his own power.

What did the risen Jesus do with the merit of his own sacrifice? We answer, that forty days later he ascended up on high, there to appear in the presence of God for us--believers, the "household of faith." This was pictured in the Law. As Jesus said, "Moses wrote of me." (John 5:46.) In the type Aaron, the high priest, typified the consecrated Jesus anointed with the holy Spirit, the High Priest of our profession. As Aaron took the blood of the bullock, which represented his own blood or life or sacrifice, and went with it into the Most Holy and sprinkled it upon the mercy-seat to make for himself (and the under-priests) and for his house (the tribe of Levi) atonement for sins, so did our Lord Jesus do in the antitype. He took not the blood of the bullock, but "his own blood," the merit of his own sacrifice. He sprinkled it not for the literal priests and Levites, the typical people, but for the antitypical Royal Priesthood, and Levites (or servants) of the "household of faith."

What has this to do with the Ransom? We answer, This is the philosophy of it, as set before us in the Scriptures. It is not God's intention nor our expectation that all or many will be able to understand this Divine philosophy. As our Lord says, It is "given" to some to understand and not "given" to others. (Matt. 13:11-17.) We write in hope of assisting only those to whom it is "given to know the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven." We write not to those outsiders to whom it is not intended these mysteries shall be understood or made known--either because they never came into the right attitude of heart to receive them, or because they subsequently left that proper condition of loving devotion, humility and teachableness.

So, then, our Ransom sacrifice was presented before the Father when Jesus ascended up on high after his resurrection; and, according to the God-given type, it was presented, not for all the people, but merely for the antitypical "household of faith." The Sin-Offering, the offering which Christ made to Divine Justice in offset to man's sin, was the Ransom. None but he could have given it, as we have shown, and he could have given it for one of the race only, or for all of the race of Adam, as he might choose to apply it. As a price it was sufficient for all, but for how many of the all he would choose to apply it rested entirely upon himself and the Divine Plan, which he was following, although, as the type shows, he did not apply it for all, but for merely the "household of faith"--"for us." Nevertheless it is ultimately to apply for all, "a ransom for all," not only in the sense that it was sufficient to meet the penalty for all, but additionally in the sense that it will yet be made available to all--indirectly-- by passing the merit through the "household of faith," through the "members of his Body."

The waters of a great spring are set apart for the supply of a great city. To serve the intended purposes it is passed through numerous pipes and spigots. It is the same water in each spigot because from that same spring. In partaking of its refreshment we might indeed refer to the spigot from which we drew it, or we might refer to the spring itself or sometimes to the one and sometimes to the other. So in thinking of the merit of our Lord Jesus' sacrifice we should remember that all sin-atonement merit sprang from our Lord's sacrificial death--whenever applied and however. He is the Ransomer. His blood is the blood of Atonement for the sin of Adam, which brought the death sentence upon him and his race. No one adds to that Ransom and no one takes away from it. In the divine plan it is appropriated to the Church, "the elect," in order to let us have the privilege of joining our Lord as his "members" and by dying with him; as sharers of his sacrifice we merely pass his merit on to natural Israel and the world through the New Covenant. He is the spring, we are the pipes.

THE BETTER SACRIFICES THAN THOSE

In *Tabernacle Shadows of the Better Sacrifices* (published in 1880) we have already elaborated this subject. We therein show that Christ, instead of applying the merit of his sacrifice directly to the whole world, eventually effects the same thing by applying his merit to the comparatively small class drawn off by the Father during this age. The Father draws (John 6:42) to the Son for "justification by faith in his blood" those who love righteousness and hate iniquity, and who are feeling after God, if haply they might find him. The Son receives these and acquaints them with the fact that he has already made atonement for sin and presented it on behalf of "*every one that believeth*." And then he guides them to the further privilege of this Gospel Age--that they may become joint-sacrificers with him and thus become his Bride and Joint-Heir in his Mediatorial Kingdom, which is soon to be established for the blessing of the unbelieving world-- yet undrawn, unjustified, unblessed. The Son will draw them during the Millennium.--John 12:32.

Why should the merit of Christ Jesus be thus placed upon the "household of faith" and not upon the world of mankind in general?

We answer that this feature of the Divine Plan of the Ages is, as yet, a "Mystery" to all except the "saints." To the latter God reveals this great privilege--that by it he will "bring many sons to glory," under the Captaincy of Jesus, and that these will be called "his brethren," "his members," "his bride," according to the various standpoints of observation. In order that they may share his nature and its glory they must share his sufferings, "his death"; thus, since he must suffer, the just for the unjust, so these, being justified through faith in his blood, must similarly suffer, the just for the unjust, as his "members," and as "filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ;" not afflictions left behind in the sense of the Redeemer's incompetency to make the full Atonement for the sins of the whole world, but sins left behind in the sense that our Lord did not apply his own merit directly to the world of unbelievers. Their sins are left behind that the merit of Christ, passing through the elect Church, might benefit them just as much in the end, and additionally might give the "elect" of this age the opportunity of suffering with their Lord and Head, in order that in due time they might be glorified with him.--Col. 1:24.

This is all clearly shown in the type of Leviticus 16. As the High Priest's own personal sacrifice is represented in the bullock, so the sacrifice of his adopted members, justified by his blood, is shown in the secondary or supplemental sacrifice of the goat. All who have studied the subject remember well that everything that was done to the bullock was done to the goat, and that thus our Lord in advance foretold and illustrated that all who will be members of the "elect," the Royal Priesthood, must be copies of God's dear Son, the great High Priest, by whose sacrifice they were justified. Again, these are they who are called to walk in the footsteps of Jesus, in the "narrow way"--the way of self-sacrifice, self-denial, the way of the cross.

We have repeatedly called attention to the fact that these highly honored ones were originally "children of wrath even as others," and many of them "strangers and aliens from God," but brought nigh unto him "by the blood of the cross" and still closer through the sufferings of this Gospel Age, this antitypical Atonement Day of sin-offerings.

Who cannot see that our Lord offered himself once for all, a sin-offering? and that Christ dieth no more than "once for all"? Who cannot see that there were two distinct sin-offerings in the type--the bullock and the goat? Who cannot see that there are two sin-offerings during this Gospel Age, our Lord, our Redeemer, the center of all the merit, and the sacrifice of his Church, his Body, to whom his merit is applied? Who cannot see that these two offerings, the bullock (Jesus) and the goat

(the members of his Body), are the "better sacrifices" mentioned by the Apostle Paul? (Heb. 9:23.) Who cannot see that these are the sin-offerings which alone were burned outside the camp? (Lev. 16:27.) Who cannot see that the Apostle urges us to present our bodies living sacrifices and to "Go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach"? (Heb. 13:13.) So surely as two and two make four, we who go without the camp with our Lord are therefore participants in the sin-offerings, exactly as the Apostle declares.

“WE HAVE AN ADVOCATE”

We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous. The world has no advocate with the Father, because they do not believe and have not accepted Jesus as their Redeemer and Advocate: he has not "appeared" for them, but "for us." When he appeared in the presence of God for us, just after his ascension on high, he presented his merit for believer's "sins that are past by the forbearance of God." He did not apply his merit for our future sins, transgressions, trespasses, weaknesses, ignorances, etc. As the basis of his work as our Advocate, our Lord retained a measure of his abundant merit for this purpose, with a view to having us come daily to the throne of the heavenly grace to obtain mercy--not for the original sin, which for believers is past, through the forbearance of God, but for our daily trespasses of ignorance or weakness. So he encourages us to remember that the imperfections of our earthen vessel need be no hindrance as New Creatures, spirit-begotten, because for all these human weaknesses "we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous." Thus we are exhorted to keep our garments unspotted from the world, because if we are in the right condition of heart we may appreciate the privileges of going to the throne of grace and having every trespass of weakness and ignorance blotted out, washed away.

Thus our Lord is the Atoner "for our sins and also for the sins of the whole world." But there is a difference. Our sins are represented in one part of the sin-offering, the bullock, and the sins of the whole world are represented in the other part, the goat. (Heb. 13.) He has already made satisfaction for our sins. Now he is offering his "members" in sacrifice that we may share his sufferings and glory. He is passing his merit through us that he may apply it "in due time" "for the sins of the whole world." Surely the merit of the Atoner is not decreased in any wise by reason of its passing through those whom he accepts and whom the Father accepts as his "members" on the larger scale!

This is the thought which our Lord suggested, saying, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." (John 12:24.) The immediate fruitage of our Lord's death was the bringing forth of the Church and the "household of faith." The dying in turn of those grains accepted as part and parcel with the original is to bring forth in the Lord's due time the appointed crop suggested by the Prophet, saying, "There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon." --Psa. 72:16.

“MEDIATOR OF THE NEW COVENANT”

The word "Mediator" is not synonymous with the words "Ransomer," "Redeemer," etc. On the contrary there could be no use for a Mediator until first a Redeemer had ransomed mankind. The word "mediator" is Scripturally used in connection with the establishment of the Covenants, *and never otherwise*. For instance, "Moses, the mediator of the Law Covenant," and Christ, "the Mediator of the New Covenant." Notice, however, that Aaron, the priest, did not mediate any Covenant; neither does Jesus, as the antitypical Priest, mediate a Covenant. It was the work of the priest to offer sacrifices for sins, and this our Lord has been doing for nearly nineteen centuries, as the antitypical

High Priest. All of the antitypical priesthood must offer up "sacrifices holy and acceptable to God," else they cannot be of the "Royal Priesthood."--Rom. 12:1.

But notice further that Moses typified the greater Christ--Jesus the Head and the Church his "members." As, for instance, in Acts 3:23 St. Peter says, "For Moses verily said unto the fathers, a Prophet (Teacher and Mediator) shall the Lord your God raise up unto you from amongst your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye obey in all things, whatsoever he shall say unto you; and it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not obey that Prophet, shall be destroyed from amongst the people." The antitypical Moses here pictured was undoubtedly the glorified Christ, Head and Body, in his instruction of the world during the Millennium. It is certainly not true that all are destroyed who disobey the Lord at the present time. It is this antitypical Moses taken from amongst the brethren that God has been raising up during this Gospel Age. Our Redeemer and Lord was raised up first to be "Head over the Church which is his Body." Since then the members are being raised up from the world, separated from the world to the Lord and the Millennial work.--Eph. 1:23; 4:4,12,16; 5:30; Col. 1:18; 3:15.

Moses was not the typical priest and made not the typical atonement for sin; that was the work of the priest--Aaron. *Moses as the mediator of the Law Covenant typified The Christ, Head and Body, Mediator of the New Covenant.*

However, that it might be seen that the work of the Mediator of the future in the sealing of the New Covenant will be vitally identified with the Atonement work, we have the declaration of the type that Moses used in sealing the Law Covenant, the typical blood of both bulls and goats. The lesson of this most distinctly is that the greater Mediator, Jesus the Head of the Church, his "Members," will seal or sprinkle the New Covenant with the blood of both of the sacrifices the meritorious blood of the antitypical bullock (our Lord, our Redeemer), and also the blood of his "members" (the Church), the antitype of the goat.

OUTLINED BRIEFLY IN REVIEW

Looking back at the original Covenant made with Abraham, it is like a closed-up telescope. For hundreds of years natural Israel seemed to be the Seed of Abraham, to whom the promises were made and through whom all the nations of the world would be blessed. Yet after more than sixteen centuries the telescope was slipped out a notch and matters so completely changed that the Jew does not know what happened unto this day. The thing which did happen was that Christ Jesus came and *personally* became the Seed of Abraham, by obeying the Law. Then, by *dying* for Adam's race, he was exalted to be the Spiritual Seed of Abraham. Then he was ready to give the earthly part of Israel's blessings to as many as would receive them--by *justification by faith*. Bewildered Israel held off and the favor went to the few of that nation and to thousands of others previously in darkness--Gentiles. These, after accepting the blessed privilege of human justification, were invited to surrender it, to sacrifice it, as their Redeemer had done.

This work of sacrificing has been going on for more than eighteen centuries, and soon will be finished. When the sacrificing finishes, to whom will the blessed privileges of fellowship with God and Covenant privileges then be given? We answer that the Apostle and the prophets declare that it will be given to Israel again, but not by their own Law Covenant, but by a Law Covenant which the Lord will make with them at that time. The Redeemer and his sacrificing associates, his "members" or "Bride," will act as Mediator of the New Covenant between God and Israel.--Ezek. 16:60, 61; Rom. 11:27-32.

Furthermore, the blessed privileges of that New Covenant will not be confined to those of Jewish birth, but all the nations of the earth will be privileged to become "Israelites indeed," without guile, and to come under the terms, conditions and blessings of that New Covenant.

Thus eventually the blood of Christ shall extend in its efficacy and blessing, not only to the "household of faith" of this present time, but to the Jews in the next age and through them to all nations. It will be none the less the blood of Christ that will bless and whose efficacy will restore all nations to fellowship with God because (1) Spiritual Israel and (2) Natural Israel shall have been associated in conveying the blessing to all nations.

Have in mind, then, that a priest never is a mediator of a Covenant and that a mediator of a Covenant is never a priest to offer sin-offering and make atonement. What God has thus distinctly separated in his Word, we do well to keep separate in our thoughts and words, else our poor heads will become confused over terms, even while holding fast to certain facts.

Reprint 4352

THE LIFE AND LIGHT OF MEN.

--JOHN 1:1-18--

"In him was life; and that life was the light of men."--Verse 4.

OUR lesson is an epitomized statement of the entire plan of God in most comprehensive form, reaching from long before the creation of the earth down into the future to the grand consummation of the divine plan at the close of the Millennial age. The subject is wide enough, deep enough, high enough to furnish food for thought for a score of lessons. In considering it as a whole, therefore, we can touch only briefly on its various points at this time.

"In the beginning": These same words introduce us to the Bible as the record of the world's creation in the book of Genesis, but here the reference is to a beginning long before the creation of this earth. At the beginning mentioned in Genesis, Job tells us that the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy. There were then at that time angelic beings, sons of God, previously in existence, who rejoiced at this further manifestation of divine power in the creation of this world. There must have been a beginning, so far as they were concerned, long before. It is to this original beginning that our text refers, a beginning before the angels were created.

To what beginning, then, could it refer--a beginning of what? We answer that it was not the beginning of the divine being, for respecting the heavenly Father, Jehovah, the Almighty, we have the distinct statement that from everlasting to everlasting he is God--he had no beginning. Hence the beginning mentioned in our text refers neither to man, nor to angels, nor to the Father: it does refer to the "beginning of the creation of God" (Rev. 3:14), a name or title given to the only begotten of the Father, who subsequently became our Redeemer and Lord, Jesus. With this thought in mind all is clear: the Apostle's explanation has settled the matter.

This original or beginning or first creation of God in our text is called the Word of God--the Logos. History tells us that in olden times it was customary to regard the person of the king as too sacred to be seen by the common people except on special occasions, and that when certain great laws or edicts were to be announced it was customary for the king to be screened by a lattice from the gaze of the multitude assembled, while before the lattice stood a person who enjoyed the king's favor and confidence and who became his representative and was called the king's word, because he spoke in a loud, audible tone the commands and directions of the king, who communicated with him in a low voice from beyond the lattice work. This illustration gives us a clue to the use of the Word as one of the titles of the only begotten Son of God. It suggests to us what the Scriptures variously declare, namely--that all of the Father's dealings with all others of his creatures are done indirectly through the Son, his mouthpiece, his Word, his representative.

A GOD, WITH THE GOD.

In the beginning the Word was alone with the Father, the Apostle declares. But the whole matter is still more clearly seen when we take the literal reading of the Greek, because in it the Greek article appears before the word rendered God, which would make the translation into English properly read, "And the Word was with *the* God." Here we see most clearly and beautifully the close relationship existing in the very remote past between the heavenly Father and the heavenly Son, between the Almighty God and his only begotten Son, in whom centered all the divine purposes and through whom he was pleased to manifest every feature of the divine power and glory.

The next statement, "And the Word was God," is not to be understood as contradicting the statements previously and elsewhere made, but the distinction is considerably lost in the translation. We explain, therefore, that here the Greek article does not appear before the word translated God, and hence the thought in the statement is *a* God, as in contrast with the previous statement, *the* God. Thus understood the passage would properly read, "The Word was with the God and the Word was a God." Ah, now we have it clearly! The word god signifies mighty one, and in the Scriptures is used not only respecting the Father but also respecting the Son, also in reference to the angels, and in one instance when referring to men, influential men--the seventy elders of Israel whom Moses appointed or designated elohim, that is gods, mighty ones. The thought in our text, then, is that the Word of God, the Only Begotten of the Father, the beginning of the creation of God, was created on a nobler and higher plane of being, endued with grand qualities, so that he was in very fact a god--not the Father, not the God, not Jehovah, but "The Son of the Highest." The Apostle Paul clearly sets forth this matter, saying, "To us [Christians] there is one God the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ."--I Cor. 8:6.

The second verse reiterates and thus emphasizes the statement that the Word, which was *a* God, was in the beginning (before the creation of others) with *the* God. If anyone were in danger of misunderstanding the statement of the first verse that the Word was *a* God, if in any danger of thinking of this as signifying that the Word was *the* God, the second verse would correct the error by showing that the Word as *a* God was with *the* God, and that therefore they were two and not one in person.

The third verse is a grand, comprehensive statement, which gives us a glimpse of the great honor and dignity of the Son of God, "the Only Begotten" of the Father, the "beginning of the creation of God." "All things were made by him," by the Word-- angels, worlds, mankind--all things: "Without him was not one thing made that was made." How grandly, how gloriously, the dignity and honor and position of our great Lord looms up before us as we think of how highly the Father honored him, even before he came into the world, even before he manifested his obedience to the Father's will even unto death.

**"HE IS EXCEPTED WHICH DID PUT
ALL THINGS UNDER HIM."
--2 COR. 15:27; EPH. 4:5, 6.--**

We are not from this statement to get the inference that the Son was superior to the Father, that the Father had created nothing previously because of lack of ability to create, but that the Father was pleased thus to recognize, honor and use this particular channel in his great work. The Apostle sets the whole matter straight, saying, "To us there is one God of whom are all things, and one Lord Jesus Christ by whom are all things." This explains the matter. The power all resided in the Father--everything is of him, from him, through the Son, by the Son as his honored instrument and representative, "that all men may honor the Son even as they honor the Father also." (John 5:23.) It will be noticed from this last quotation as well as in all the other statements here examined that there is no suggestion whatever that the Father is the Son and that the Son is his own Father, but quite to the contrary--that there are two persons, both Gods, both Creators, but the one the superior, the other his honored representative in glory and in power.

Verse four transports our thought from the glorious Only Begotten, the Word of Jehovah, creating angels, worlds and man, to his work as man's Redeemer --present among men. Elsewhere we get the particulars of how he who was rich became poor for our sakes; how the Only Begotten, the Word, left the glory of the Father to carry out the Father's great and wonderful and loving plan of

salvation toward man. Briefly the Apostle assures us that when Jesus was amongst men "in him was life." There is a great force and meaning in this expression when we understand it. When our Lord was amongst men he was the only man who had life in him. Father Adam once had life, but he lost it through disobedience in Eden, and instead the curse, the sentence of death, rested upon him and was inherited by all of his children, so that not a man in all the world of Adam's race had life--except this Son of man of whom John was writing. Of all others the Apostle Paul wrote, "By one man's disobedience sin entered into the world, and death as a result of sin; and thus death passed upon all men, for all are sinners." (Rom. 5:12.) Our Lord's words respecting those about him were, "Let the dead bury their dead." True, not all were dead in the sense of having lost every spark of life, but all were more than nine-tenths dead and the other tenth fast ebbing away. But in him, in this Only Begotten of the Father when amongst men, there was life, absolute life, perfect life, because his life had not come from Adam through an earthly father but was directly transferred from his prehuman state or condition to the womb of Mary. Thus born he was indeed partaker of a human organization but without any impairment of his life rights; hence, as the Scriptures declare, he was holy, harmless, separate from sinners--separate and distinct from all the race of Adam, peculiarly different because of his different begetting.

"AND THE LIFE WAS THE LIGHT OF MEN."

Needless to say light is here used in a figurative sense: it signifies hope, intelligence, instruction. Our Lord's life as the "man Christ Jesus," his holiness of heart, his full obedience to the Father's will, his loyalty to every principle of righteousness, his manifestation of divine character, no less than the words of instruction that he spoke as never man spake--all these attest that indeed he was a great light amongst men--a light which ever since has been shining, not only through his recorded discourses and instructions but also through the lives of his disciples, and that in proportion as they were and are truly his.

"And the light shined in darkness; and the darkness appreciated it not." How true! not only of the Jews of his own day, but how true still in respect to the world in general. How few grasp, comprehend, appreciate the light of divine truth and grace which shone out through the words and deeds of the man Christ Jesus. True, we are informed that about four hundred million, nearly one-fourth of the world's population, are named by his name--Christians, --yet how impossible it would be to close our eyes to the great fact that the vast majority of these are in nearly as great darkness as the remaining three-fourths of the world's population, the heathen. Into how few hearts and minds has this true light shined! The Apostle's explanation is the only one that covers the case. He declares, "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the glorious light of the goodness of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord should shine into their hearts."--2 Cor. 4:6.

How sad! Three-fourths of the world in total darkness, while nearly all of those who say, We see, are "blind also"! (John 9:40.) If by the grace of God our eyes have been opened to some degree to appreciate this great light, let us not be highminded but fear lest the light should pass from us, lest we should ever get into darkness again, lest pride of heart or the cares of this world or the deceitfulness of riches, or any other thing should again blind us to the goodness and grace of God in Christ. Even Christians, the Apostle intimates, see only in part, but may see increasingly in proportion as they come into line and accord with the divine plan respecting them. Let us keep in memory how he wrote respecting some true followers of the Lord in his day, saying, "I cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him:

the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints."--Eph. 1:16-18.

In verses six to eight the Apostle begins to particularize respecting the Lord's earthly ministry, and shows us that John the Baptist was divinely commissioned to bear testimony and witness to the Lord, to this great Light, the object being the giving of a ground for faith in Jesus as the Light, the life of the world. John was not the Light, but merely the messenger of it, one to point out the true Light. And we remember, indeed, that John was particular not to take any honor in respect to these matters to himself, but declared plainly that his mission was to introduce the Messiah; and as soon as he received from the Father the witness that Jesus was indeed the expected one he made haste to proclaim the Lord, declaring himself unworthy to even be his servant to unfasten his shoes. So faithful was John's testimony that many of his own disciples at once forsook him and became followers of Jesus, as the record shows.

“HE WAS THE TRUE LIGHT.”

As he was the Father's Word or Messenger he was also the Father's Light, whose mission it was to reveal, to make known, the Father's love, that thereby those who had eyes to see might be attracted, drawn, blessed. Alas, how many were blind! Eyes had they but they saw not, and understanding had they and appreciated not. Those who did see, who did appreciate, what a blessing they received!--not only those who saw the Lord personally but those who have since seen his glory, his light, through the words of his faithful messengers under the guidance of his holy Spirit. "Blessed are your eyes for they see and your ears for they hear." What a blessed thought lies half hidden in the Apostle's words--in the declaration that this true Light shall enlighten every man born into the world! What a ray of hope this lights up in the sympathetic and Christian heart! All who have the Spirit of God, who so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son to be its Redeemer, are sure to be sympathetic with the world in its lost and blinded condition. To such this promise is a reassurance of all the glorious privileges and messages sent by the Lord through the prophets telling of the age of glory, when the Messiah shall be the Sun of Righteousness to scatter the darkness and miasm of sin and death and to bring in everlasting righteousness and life to the world--to whomsoever will accept the same.

Nothing is plainer than that our dear Redeemer has not yet enlightened those born into the flesh four thousand years before he was made flesh and died for our redemption. It is equally clear that not more than one in ten of those born into the world during the past two thousand years since he redeemed us have ever heard of that great transaction or had the opportunity of thus being enlightened and blessed. This, then, is the glad message, the good tidings of great joy which shall yet be unto all people--our dear Redeemer is not only the Redeemer of the Church and the light of the Church, but the Redeemer of the world, the light of the world, that shall ultimately enlighten every man born into the world, every son and daughter of Adam. In this connection we are reminded of the words of the Apostle to Timothy, "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all --to be testified in due time."--I Tim. 2:5, 6.

“TO BE TESTIFIED IN DUE TIME.”

Ah, yes! there is a due time for every feature of the divine plan, and not until all of these various features have been developed will its glory and beauty fully appear. For two thousand years the world was left practically without hope of any kind; during the next two thousand years Abraham and his seed alone of all the families of the earth enjoyed divine favor and a partial knowledge of the glorious plan of salvation which would be outworked by Messiah, who according to the flesh would

be of the seed of Abraham; during the last two thousand years the knowledge of Messiah has been largely hidden from the Jews and from the majority of other nations, but has gone nevertheless hither and thither, selecting a peculiar people, a Royal Priesthood, a holy nation--spiritual Israel. Each of these features has its due time: in due time God revealed the outlines of his plan to Abraham; in due time Christ died for the ungodly; in due time his second coming will usher in his Kingdom and with it the blessing of all the families of the earth, when the true Light shall lighten every man.

"He was in the world, the world was made by him and the world knew him not. He came unto his own [nation] and his own [people] received him not." Thus briefly the rejection of Christ by the blind world and blinded Israel is recorded. But this blindness, which God foreknew and had left provision for in his plan, did not hinder our dear Redeemer from accomplishing the gracious purposes intended. He came not to reign, not to be ministered unto, but to serve Israel and the world as their Redeemer--to purchase them with his own blood, and to draw them out from under the condemnation that rested upon all because of disobedience to the divine law. Grandly he finished the work that was given him to do.

But not all rejected him: a small remnant as compared with the whole nation believed on him, trusted him and obeyed him, and were blessed by him in a special manner. These were the apostles, and other faithful brethren to the number of about five hundred. (I Cor. 15:6.) To these by divine arrangement a special favor or blessing was extended--the privilege of passing from the house of servants to the house of sons. Moses was the head of the house of servants-- natural Israel; Christ is the Head of the house of sons--spiritual Israel. This the Apostle points out, saying, "Moses, verily, was faithful as a servant over all his house; but Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we if we hold fast the confidence of our rejoicing firm unto the end."--Heb. 3:5,6.

JEWS NOT SONS OF GOD.

The Jews never claimed to be sons of God, neither are they referred to in the Scriptures as such. No greater dignity than that of being servants of the Most High God could possibly have been dreamed of up to the time when our Lord himself announced the privilege of adoption to the new nature. In evidence of this we remember that the Jews sought to stone our Lord simply because he claimed to be a son of God. (John 5:17, 18.) The place and time of adoption for these believers was in the upper room at Pentecost, when the spirit of adoption was granted unto them-- the holy Spirit, the anointing; and similarly the spirit of adoption is granted to all the followers of the Lord during all the centuries since, although not accompanied by the same miracles and manifestations granted and necessary in the beginning. It is this begetting of the spirit to a newness of life on the spiritual plane to which the Apostle refers, saying, "Which were begotten not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." The word *born*, as used both in the Common and Revised Versions, is erroneous and misleading; *begotten* is the proper translation of *genao* in this case. We note also that Westcott bears out this thought, saying, "Literally *begotten*, as in I John 2:29; 3:9."

The Apostle is very particular to show that this begetting to the new nature is as necessary to the new creation as begetting of the flesh is necessary to human generation. Furthermore, he hedges the subject all around to prove that the begetting power is not of heredity, not of blood, not of the will of the flesh directly or indirectly, not of the will of man in any sense of the word: God alone does this begetting, God alone accepts to membership in this new creation, God alone imparts the seal of his adoption; and hence those so begotten, when born in the resurrection, will be in the highest sense of the word children of the Highest, "heirs of God, joint heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord."

Coming back to our original topic to view our Lord's advent amongst men from the standpoint of the faithful disciple, he says, "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Note first the statement that he was made flesh, a totally different thought from that expressed in some of the creeds when they speak of the Lord as "incarnate." To be incarnate would signify to get into flesh as though the flesh were merely a covering or garment. This is not the statement nor the significance of the Scriptural testimony, which is very explicit, "made flesh." The Revised Version, following the original still more exactly if possible, gives it, "The Word *became* flesh." This is in accord also with the statement of Romans 1:3, that our Lord was made "of the seed of David according to the flesh;" and again, the statement of Galatians 4:4, that "God sent forth his Son made by a woman."

WE BEHELD HIS DIGNITY.

The apostles and all believers who had intercourse with our Lord in the days of his flesh experienced, "beheld, his glory." They beheld the grandeur, the nobility, the perfection of the "man Christ Jesus"--a perfection and glory seen in no other because all others were sinners, while he by virtue of special birth was holy, harmless, separate from sinners. The Word glory here represents the same thought as in Psalms 8:5, where, speaking of Adam and his perfection and God likeness as the perfect man in the image of God, it is declared that God "crowned him with glory and honor." Similarly our Lord Jesus was crowned with glory and honor of human perfection in the days of his flesh, and his disciples beheld this dignity of human perfection, which marked him as separate and distinct from all others; and they recognized it as differentiating him from the world of sinners, marking him as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth--abounding in every proper and desirable quality and characteristic.

Another thought is somewhat covered by our translation in the word dwelt. In the Greek this signifies tabernacled or tented, as if it read, "The Word was made flesh and tabernacled amongst us." A tabernacle was intended to be a temporary residence or dwelling, and thus the Scriptures point out that our Lord took the human nature, "was made flesh," not that he might forever be a fleshly being, a human being, but merely temporarily. Other Scriptures fully corroborate this thought, and it seems strange indeed that Christian people should have so generally received the erroneous thought that our Lord is now a human being, a flesh-and-blood being in heaven. Quite to the contrary--flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of heaven. Our Lord was changed in his resurrection and is now, as the Apostle declares, "a quickening Spirit," and again "Now the Lord is that Spirit." Again he declares that all of the Lord's people who shall be joint-heirs with him in his Kingdom must be "changed," because "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom."

It would be too bad indeed to think that our Lord had made the great stoop from heavenly conditions to earthly conditions, laying aside the glory which he had with the Father before the world was, being made flesh and suffering on our behalf, and that then, after thus being obedient to the Father and serving us so graciously, he should be obliged to remain forever upon the lower fleshly plane of being. It would indeed be a distressing thought. But not only do the Scriptures cited above prove the contrary of this, but in harmony with the statement of the text we are considering, namely, that he merely tabernacled with us for a little while, the Apostle distinctly explains the object of our Lord's coming into the world and shows that it was all accomplished at his death: he says he was made flesh that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. (Heb. 2:9.) That was the object, the only object, the only necessity for our Lord's becoming a man, and when he had finished that work which the Father gave him to do he was glorified, and, as we are distinctly told, he was highly exalted and given a name above every name--"far above principalities and powers and every name that is named." Phil. 2:9; Eph. 1:21.

The Apostle John proceeds to show that John the Baptist fully proclaimed the Lord as the Messiah, and doubtless he notes this fact because many of the Jews evidently had great confidence in John the Baptist though rejecting Jesus. The Apostle proceeds to say that the fulness of Christ, the grace and merit which were in him, have been conferred upon all of his followers, his true disciples, "grace for grace," or, more literally, favor upon favor. This last expression seems to be a statement of what all the Lord's people recognize in their own experiences, namely--that the blessing coming to them first in their relationship to the Lord is by no means all of his favor; that they may grow in grace, grow in knowledge, grow in the fruits of the Spirit, and possess favor upon favor additionally, continuously to the end of the course; and then--in the resurrection morning--that which is perfect shall come as the climax of God's favor, and we shall be like our Redeemer and see him as he is and share his glory.

Proceeding, the Apostle contrasts Moses, the typical mediator, the head of the typical house of Israel, with Christ, his antitype, the Head of Spiritual Israel. The Law Covenant communicated and mediated by Moses was a great blessing to that nation in many respects; but the grace and truth, God's favor and the knowledge of his wonderful plan, came not through Moses but came through Christ, and not to the followers of Moses but to the followers of Christ.

Our lesson concludes by pointing out that our Lord Jesus was the only begotten Son of his Father's bosom, and that his mission in the world was to declare the Father, to make him known, to reveal the Father first to the Church, and ultimately, in due time, to the world. The Father, standing as the embodiment of perfection and righteousness, could not properly and justly recognize sin and sinners, for they are wholly contrary to the best interests of the universe and contrary to the divine purposes: they can not be recognized by God. Hence, if he would exercise mercy it must be through another--a mediator. His love and mercy, therefore, are revealed to us in Christ, and are none the less his because exercised toward us in this circuitous manner, and with the reservation that no man cometh unto the Father but by him, and that there is no other name given under heaven and amongst men whereby we must be saved. Thus the entire work of the Son in man's redemption, in the instruction of his followers, and ultimately in the judgment and blessing of all the families of the earth--all of these will be but the revelation of the Father, the showing of his real character both for love and justice, wisdom and power.

JEHOVAH'S CHARACTER MANIFESTED IN HIS GREAT PLAN OF THE AGES

WHY was Jesus Christ called upon to suffer and die? Could not the great God have accomplished the salvation of humanity in some other way, without the agony and death of His Son? These are questions which often present themselves to the thoughtful student of God's Word, and which can be answered very satisfactorily. God could have arranged the matter very differently; He is not an unresourceful God. He is an All-Wise God, an All-Powerful God. We can see, for instance, that God could have decreed that Adam should be excluded from the Garden of Eden for a time, and that after he had suffered somewhat for his disobedience, and had thereby learned a lesson, he should then be restored to favor. By that experience Adam would, no doubt, have been taught a very good lesson. So all of Adam's children might have undergone some penalty, some purging experiences, whereby they might have profited, and then have come back again into harmony with God.

But the Wisdom of God is a Mighty Deep, and He has a great and wise Plan! He had purposed that all of His intelligent creatures--angels, cherubim, seraphim, and humans--who would gain eternal life, must be absolutely loyal to Him, and hence that they should all be tested in respect to their loyalty. They must all be tried and tested characters. It was His purpose, therefore, that all His intelligent creatures in Heaven and on earth should be brought to perceive His goodness and worthiness of all praise, that they might be able to exclaim from the heart: "Blessing and honor and might be unto Him that sitteth upon the Throne . . . forever!"

Those who prove their loyalty to the Creator shall live everlastingly. Those who will not prove their loyalty shall die--go into absolute extinction. Up to the time man was created, God had not made known this feature of His Plan. He then declared that death should be the penalty for sin, in order that all might know the Law of His Government--that only the righteous shall live, and that all sinners shall eventually be destroyed. Hence God arranged beforehand that man's sin, which He foreknew, should bring upon Adam and his posterity the extreme penalty of His Law.

Many would not have chosen sin if they had known its sure results, and had been born with perfect ability to choose the right. But God purposed that Adam's posterity should come into the world under fallen conditions, as the result of his disobedience. He purposed to make manifest here on the planet Earth what is the natural tendency and certain outcome of sin. Sin's tendency is always downward; and not only so, but it aggregates itself, and leads to ruin and death.

God designed that this great lesson of the evil results of sin should be witnessed by the angels also, who before the creation and fall of man were surrounded by such conditions as presented no special temptation to sin.

TEMPTATION COMES TO THE ANGELS

God desires the worship of only such as worship Him in spirit and in truth. Any who will not worship from this motive shall eventually be destroyed. We see that God allowed sin not only to enter the world through the machinations of Satan, but to be a source of temptation to the angels. We see how all the angels became exposed to a peculiar temptation in connection with fallen mankind.

(Genesis 6:1-5; Jude 6.) We believe that Satan instigated this temptation, as he did the temptation of Mother Eve. He himself was the first transgressor.

Some of the angelic host succumbed to this temptation, and some remained loyal to God. So we know that all the angels of Heaven were subjected to a great test as to their obedience to their Creator. All those angels who are in harmony with God, according to the Bible, have stood their test. These, we understand the Scriptures to teach, have been granted the reward of everlasting life, because they proved faithful and obedient and demonstrated their loyalty. Those who fell were bound in chains of darkness unto the Judgment of the Great Day--now present, we believe.

GOD'S ECONOMICAL PLAN

Man has for six thousand years borne the penalty, "Dying, thou shalt die"--the penalty which the Bible declares to be the wages of sin--death and all the weaknesses and depravities of mind and of body which are its accompaniments. But God purposes that all shall have a full opportunity of recovery from this condition of sin and death; and the provision for man's recovery has been made in Christ. This provision is the most economical one that could have been arranged. If a thousand perfect men had sinned, it would have required a thousand perfect men to redeem them--one redeemer for each sinner. "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," a man's life for a man's life, is the requirement of God's Law.-- Exodus 21:23-25; Deut. 19:21.

Before the creation of our first parents God had arranged that only one man should have the opportunity to fall and to be sentenced to death, that thus only one man would be required as a Redeemer. This Divine arrangement was most economical because it will bring all the masses of humanity back to life at the cost of but one human life as the redemption-price. No fallen man could be a ransom, a corresponding price, for the perfect man Adam. Therefore God purposed from the very beginning that His Only Begotten Son, the First-born of all creation, should become man's Redeemer and that in order to become the Redeemer He should become a man.

The death of an angel could not have redeemed man. Divine Justice required that a perfect human life must be given for a perfect human life. And God, knowing all this, sent His Son to carry out His great Plan of human Redemption and Restitution. Neither was there anything unkind or unjust to His Son in this, although for the Almighty to have forced the matter upon His Son would have been an injustice; and God could not be guilty of injustice.

Thus the Scriptures inform us that the coming of the Logos into the world was a voluntary matter. He did this "for the joy that was set before Him," by the Almighty. The Father set before the Son that if He would suffer the ignominy of the transference of His being from the higher plane to a lower, a human plane, in order that He might redeem the lost race of Adam, He should be highly exalted, next to Jehovah; He should be made a partaker of Jehovah's nature--the Divine nature. All this was the inspiration of our Lord's course--the joy of doing the Father's will and of having His approval; the joy of restoring mankind and of being exalted to His Father's glorious nature. He who thus humbled Himself to become a man and die the ignominious death of the cross, has indeed been highly exalted as promised, and has sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High.--Hebrews 1:3.

INFINITE WISDOM OF GOD'S GREAT PURPOSE

Thus we see that the Plan which God has adopted furnishes opportunity for the manifestation of the principles underlying His own glorious character, which neither angels nor men could so

clearly have understood by any other means. When the great work of restoration is fully accomplished, angels and men will see the Justice of God--a Justice which permitted the penalty of death to be executed upon our race for six thousand years--a Justice which provided a Redeemer to pay this penalty for Adam, that he and all his posterity might go free--a Justice, too, which provided a great reward for the faithful Son who carried out, at such a cost to Himself, the Father's Purpose! This is the highest conception of Justice of which men or angels could conceive!

By this means God will also manifest His sympathetic Love, which otherwise neither angels nor men might ever have known. Had there been no sin, no death, no sorrow, no pain, they might never have known the depths of Divine Mercy. After sin had entered the world, the angels beheld the Love of God, in that He "gave His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever [of mankind] believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his *life*" for another! The Father's Love was thus shown in His Plan to send His Son to die for the world. This Love will be manifested to all men in the incoming Age, now very near at hand.

Through His Plan God will manifest His Power also; for while His Power has been shown in the creation of the worlds, of men and of the various orders of angels, still this manifestation of energy is small in comparison to the Power which He will yet exercise. This Power will restore every individual of the race to his former condition; every soul of man will be awakened from the tomb. This will be a manifestation of Power that is beyond the comprehension of humanity.

Then, too, God's Wisdom will be wondrously manifested. When the grand outcome of the Divine Plan of the Ages shall have been seen in its glory and majesty by all the created intelligences of God, all will hail Him as the infinitely Wise One--who fittingly ordained that every creature formed in His image should be tested as respects absolute loyalty, that only the loyal and obedient should have life, and that all others should be destroyed!

Thus we see that in His wonderful Program for dealing with sinners, angelic and human, God chose the very best way, the one most profitable to angels and to men, the one which most redounds to His own ultimate glory and honor. "Who shall not reverence Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? . . . All the nations shall come and worship before Thee, when Thy judgments are made manifest!"--Revelation 15:4.

Reprint 5429

TRUTH MOST PRECIOUS

Great truths are dearly bought. The common truth,
Such as men give and take from day to day
Comes in the common walk of easy life
Blown by the careless wind across our way.

Great truths are dearly won; not found by chance,
Nor wafted on the breath of summer dream;
But grasped in the great struggle of the soul,
Hard buffeting with adverse wind and stream

Sometimes' mid conflict, turmoil, fear and grief,

When the strong hand of God, put forth in might
Ploughs up the subsoil of the stagnant heart,
It brings some buried truth-seeds to the light.

Not in the general mart, 'mid corn and wine;
Not in merchandise of gold and gems
Not in the World's gay hall of midnight mirth,
Nor 'mid the blaze of regal diadems;

Not in the general clash of human creeds,
Nor in the merchandise 'twixt church and world,
Is truth's fair treasure found, 'mongst tares and weeds;
Nor her fair banner in their midst unfurled.

Truth springs like harvest from the well-ploughed fields,
Rewarding patient toil, and faith and zeal.
To those thus seeking her, she ever yields
Her richest treasures for their lasting weal.

“GOD MANIFEST IN THE FLESH”

“Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels.”--1 Timothy 3:16.

GOD, the great Origin, or Fountain, of Life, is pleased to manifest Himself in various creations. And all of His intelligent creations which He recognized as sons were in His likeness. The Logos, the beginning of God's creation, was in the Divine likeness. Not only was He a spirit being (and God is a Spirit), but more than this, He was a spirit being in the character likeness of His Father, His Creator.

Moreover, when the Logos became the active agent of the Father in creating the various orders--angels, cherubim, seraphim--they were all created in the image of the Father. The angel sons of God sang together and shouted for joy as they saw the different creations. When it came time to make a still different order of creatures, an order that had never before existed, namely, human beings, God carried out through the Logos His purpose of creating man in His own image, His own likeness. And God declared Himself well pleased with man.

A description of the first man is given us in the Eighth Psalm: "Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet; all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea." Adam was the master or king of all these. He represented something that the angels did not represent; for none of them were ever set over anything. God Himself is the Ruler of all, and Adam and the Logos were the only ones who were in any sense of the word set over anything.

When God made man, He made him like Himself in this particular--that he had a dominion. When the angels were created, they were God manifest in different orders of beings--cherubim, seraphim and the lower orders of angels. When it came to the creation of man, he was made in God's image. God was manifest in flesh. But we cannot say that God is manifest in fallen flesh now. The original likeness to God has been obliterated by sin. The reign of Sin and Death has to a considerable extent erased these traces of God's image. And the Scriptures plainly show us that we have lost this image and likeness of the Creator.

Adam was called a son of God because he was in covenant relationship with God; but when he became a sinner, he lost this relationship. None of the Jews were sons of God. Abraham was styled a friend of God. Although God had approved of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the Prophets and others in Israel, and indicated that a great blessing would be theirs, they could not be treated as sons. God said, in substance, when speaking to Abraham, My friend, I will make with you My Covenant. "In thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

GOD MANIFEST IN PERFECT HUMANITY

But everything must wait until that great antitypical Seed of Abraham should come. We have the record of how this One would come who was to be the Deliverer, the Antitypical Seed of Abraham. After reasoning about the Logos--how He was made flesh and dwelt amongst them--St. John declares that Jesus had the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace, full of truth. This was the way above all others in which God was manifest in the flesh.

When the lower animals saw Adam, they saw the very best representation of God possible to them. Nothing could be made in the flesh that would be more like God. And when the time came for God to send His Son into the world, He set before Him the great privilege of being man's Redeemer. And when He was made flesh, all those who beheld Him saw the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father. When any looked upon Him, they saw the Father in the most absolute sense in which it would be possible for them to see Him.

God said to Moses, "No man shall see My face and live." Saul of Tarsus merely had a glimpse of Jesus glorified, and yet the glory was so great that if he had had a full look he would not have lived. Jesus was the express image of the Father. Jesus is the express image of the Father. And if no man can see God and live, then he cannot see the glorified Jesus and live.

GOD MANIFEST IN THE PRINCES

But God has made a provision that when Christ's Kingdom shall be established amongst men, there will be earthly representatives through whom Messiah will govern and uplift mankind during the thousand years. God has just such a class prepared and ready for this work-- Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the other Ancient Worthies. These are to be counted worthy of an instantaneous awakening to human perfection. These experience no change of nature in their resurrection, because they were not begotten of the Spirit. There was no one begotten of the Spirit until Pentecost, except our Lord at Jordan. "The Holy Spirit was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." Therefore those Ancient Worthies had merely the testimony that they pleased God. Because of their loyalty to God and the principles of righteousness, some of these Ancient Worthies "were stoned; some were sawn asunder; some were tempted; some were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the world was not worthy."--Hebrews 11:37, 38.

These, although they had received God's Promise, received not the things promised them. For instance, God had promised Abraham, "All the land which thou seest will I give unto thee." Abraham must have a resurrection in order for God's Word to come true. He must get that land. But there was no suggestion to Abraham of glory, honor, and immortality--no suggestion to him of becoming a partaker of the Divine nature and a joint-heir with Jesus. See Acts 7:5; Hebrews 11:8-10, 17, 39, 40.

This began with Jesus. Christ has not only brought to men the knowledge of life and immortality, but also that there is a privilege of gaining this life with Him: "Which salvation began to be spoken by our Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him." (Hebrews 2:3.) But the Ancient Worthies had the faith to *believe God, to trust His Promise and to wait for the fulfilment* of that Promise. They merely had the intimation that God would roll away the curse. And Abraham's Seed was to be the glorious channel of God's blessing--"In thee and in thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." So St. Paul tells us that they received not the things promised them, "God having provided some better thing for us [the Gospel Church], that they without us should not be made perfect."--Hebrews 11:40.

The Ancient Worthies cannot get their blessing before we get ours. The Bride must be glorified, and then the faithful of the past can come in and get their blessing. Then forthwith the Kingdom will be established. And Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the other Worthies will be the first children of Christ. Instead of being the fathers, they will be the children, and He will make them princes, rulers in all the earth. (Psalm 45:16.) Being resurrected perfect men, they will be the perfect images of God. In each one of these Ancient Worthies God will be manifest in the flesh. They will be princes at that time and will rule the earth, under Christ's Kingdom.

Jesus corroborated this thought when He said, "Ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the Prophets, in the Kingdom of God." (Luke 13:28.) Of Himself He said, "Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me *no more*." (John 14:19.) If we should not be changed to spirit conditions by the power of our resurrection, we would not see him any more than will others who will continue on the human plane. Those who have died in Christ, and those "who are alive and remain," will, at His manifestation, be made like Him, be "changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." At the moment of our change we shall see not only our Lord, but all the holy angels--all on the spirit plane, who are now invisible to us. They can see humanity, but humanity cannot see them.

God was manifest in the flesh; first, in the case of Adam; secondly, in the case of Jesus; and thirdly, He will be manifest in the flesh of those Ancient Worthies, who will be reckoned deserving of a better resurrection than the rest of the world.

OUR LORD'S BEAUTY OF HOLINESS

When in derision the soldiers placed upon the head of our Lord a crown of thorns, and arrayed him in a purple robe, and led Him into the judgment hall, Pilate looked upon Him in admiration, and exclaimed, "Behold the Man!" or (see Strong's Concordance) "Behold the countenance!" I am a Gentile and not of your race, but here you have sent to me for sentence the most glorious Jew on earth! None can have a really beautiful character without the inner beauty being reflected in the face. If a man be a vicious character, he cannot hide it from his features. If he be of a loving disposition, it will show in his face. What, then, shall we think of our Lord! His face must have been one of marvelous beauty! No wonder the people flocked to see Him because of His graciousness of speech and His wonderful beauty--the image of God!

The Psalmist has asked, "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest [carest for] him? For Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, Thou hast crowned him with glory and honor." (Psalm 8:4, 5.) But man has fallen into sin, alienation, darkness! The Satanic influence works sin and has brought about man's fall from the image of his Creator. It is God's great purpose to bring humanity back from sin and imperfection. He will uplift all those who desire to be righteous.

"We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor [the perfection of human nature]; that He by the grace [favor] of God should taste death for every man." (Hebrews 2:9.) We see the broad basis of God's Plan laid in the redemptive work at Calvary. We see that it must be the Redeemer's life that would be the price of human redemption. "For since by man came death, by man comes also the resurrection of the dead. For as all in Adam die, even so all in Christ shall be made alive. But every man in his own order; Christ [the Anointed, the Messiah class], the first fruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at His Coming [Greek, during His presence]." (I Corinthians 15:21-23.) Jesus says, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the First Resurrection." Such shall be kings and priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.--Rev. 20:6.

So, then, "God manifest in the flesh" was clearly exhibited in the Man Christ Jesus, in His perfection. But God was specially and more particularly manifest in the flesh of Jesus when He presented Himself to John at Jordan, as He reached the period of thirty years of age, and there gave Himself sacrificially. "Lo, I come (in the volume of the Book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, O God." There He offered Himself without spot, in harmony with God's will. And the Divine acceptance was indicated in the form of a dove coming upon Him--not that the Holy Spirit is like a dove, but that God gave the outward manifestation so that John would have some means of

identification of the Messiah, so that he could say, "I saw the Spirit descending from Heaven, like a dove, and it abode upon Him."

From the time of Jesus' baptism God dwelt in Him in a peculiar manner; as the Apostle John says of the Church, God dwelleth in us and we in God. (I John 4:16.) The Father took up His abode in Jesus, and qualified Him to make known the Divine Plan. Our Lord said, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."--Luke 4:16-21; Isaiah 61:1-3.

OUR LORD'S TEMPTATION IN THE WILDERNESS

From the time when Jesus received the Holy Spirit, we read that the Heavenly things were made known unto Him. For as the Apostle says, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God . . . neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." When Jesus, therefore, received the begetting of the Holy Spirit, He received spiritual discernment. He came to see how the types of the Old Testament fitted to Himself. He saw that the serpent in the wilderness represented Himself.

When He saw these things, we remember that He was in the wilderness. He had the entire Scriptures in His mind. From childhood He had been in the habit of attending the synagogue; and with His perfect mind, the Scriptures would be thoroughly engraved there. He could quote any Scripture ad libitum. And when Satan quoted the Scriptures, Jesus understood them.

At the end of the forty days, when Jesus was weak from fasting, was the most favorable time for the Adversary to tempt Him. When He had before Him the thought of all the shame and ignominy connected with His sacrificial death, it would be enough to make any one's heart quail! The moment when He realized that He was to be counted as a blasphemer, and contrary to God, was the most opportune moment for Satan. And the Father permitted Him to be tempted--permitted the Adversary to tempt Him at this particular time.

Then Satan addressed himself to the mind of our Lord: I know you very well. We had a long acquaintance in the past, and I know the mission on which you have come. You do not realize, I know, the power that came upon You when You were baptized. I beheld how the power of God came upon You. You have need only to command these stones to be turned into bread. I realize that You can do a great work, and I would like to join with You in the matter. But first of all, You should have something to eat.

Jesus knew Satan--He knew that Satan was Lucifer, who had rebelled against the Divine Government, and who was imprisoned on this planet. When Satan appeared to Jesus, we may be sure that he tried to appear as an angel of light, and to pretend that he wished to be on God's side, and that he now wished to co-operate with God. But Jesus knew that His power was not given Him for the purpose of sustaining His life, and He would not yield to the temptation.

Therefore Satan next took Him to a high mountain-- this was in the spirit of their minds--and showed Him how he--Satan--was "the prince of this world" and all the kingdoms thereof. And he said, You see, then, that I have the power to help You. Can You afford to be without such assistance? I am in sympathy with You. You will save mankind and deliver them all from death. Instead of your having to suffer, as God's Plan is, we will work together, and You shall not have to suffer. But first,

You must acknowledge me. That was the way I started out. I wanted to show what kind of a kingdom I could set up. I said, "I will ascend into Heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High," I will have an empire of my own. I advise You to come in and share with me. I will give You all the glory You could ask. I intend to be the prince of this world. Do You not see that everything is in my hands?

But in these temptations Jesus conquered. And the victory was so complete that Satan thought it not worth while to tempt Him again! He thought that if He could not move Jesus when He was on the verge of starvation, it was of no use to try any further. So he never made another attempt, so far as the record goes.

THE INCARNATION THEORY NOT SCRIPTURAL

After this, as Jesus went about doing good, healing the sick, and preaching to the people, everything was in perfect conformity to the Father's will. If the Father had been there incarnated in a fleshly body, He could not have done His own will more perfectly. But Jesus was not incarnated. The incarnation of our Lord is only a theory invented during the Dark Ages. For He humbled Himself to become a man, and "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow (both in Heaven and in the earth) . . . and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."--Philippians 2:8-11.

Reprint 5290

“THY JUDGMENTS ARE A MIGHTY DEEP!”

“The foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.”--1 Corinthians 1:25.

THE Plan which God has adopted for dealing with sin and with sinners seems to the worldly mind, to worldly wisdom, to be a very foolish, a very unwise plan. The declarations of the Bible along this line do not appeal to such minds as reasonable. First of all, God created man perfect. Then He placed him under conditions where he was tempted and fell into sin. God then pronounced upon him a sentence of death, as He had forewarned him would be the result of disobedience. After thus sentencing man, Jehovah Himself provided for a release from that death penalty by furnishing a Redeemer for the sinner at great cost. When He wished to proclaim to the world His provision for their salvation from the curse, He sent forth preachers chosen from the race of sinners to tell the good tidings.

For nearly two thousand years these preachers have used their best efforts. As some of them would die, others would take their places. But with all the preaching that has been done only a very few have believed the Message or given an attentive ear. Often have these imperfect messengers grown weary and faint. They have gone to the Lord with burdened hearts, telling Him of the meager results that attended their labors. But the Lord has answered, "Continue to give forth the words which I have delivered to you; this is My will; it is just what I wish you to do." So they have toiled on, leaving the results with God.

But the world has shaken the unbelieving head. To them the proclaiming of such a Message has seemed foolish, a waste of valuable time, an evidence of unsoundness of mind. Few have believed that it is of God--even if a God of Love existed at all. Yet, as the Apostle tells us, "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." (1 Corinthians 1:21.) He chose this method, which men denominate *foolishness*, to select a special class for a very special purpose, in connection with His great Plan. Although from the human standpoint this appears a very small and weak beginning, as if God's work is almost a failure--if He purposes to save and uplift the world--yet when the Plan of God shall have been brought to its glorious consummation, it will be seen by all to have been most wise, powerful and effective. No more shall it be

“The unbeliever's jest, the heathen's scorn.”

God is not now choosing the great ones of earth, but chiefly the mean things, the humble and obscure, "that no flesh shall glory in His presence." He is choosing these as instruments to bless the remainder of the world.

LIFE A GREAT BOON EVEN NOW

The question has been asked: How is the Love of God to be seen from the standpoint of a deliberate arrangement beforehand which, in its outworking, has involved so vast an amount of sin, suffering and death? In thinking of this question, one should first of all rid himself wholly of the erroneous thought that sin, suffering and dying are only preludes to an eternity of woe. Then we are to remember that God is not in any way our debtor. We are His debtors, even for our existence; He owes the race nothing.

Suppose that we could disabuse all minds of the idea of eternal torture or of a purgatory of suffering after death, and should then say to them, Consider, now: Would you prefer to live on for a

few years more, or would you rather die at once? Or, suppose we put it this way: Are you glad that you have an existence, or would you rather that you had never been born? We believe that the great majority would reply that they desire to *live*, that they prefer to live as long as possible. They do not wish to die, either today or tomorrow or next year; indeed they would never die if they could help it!

Those who feel that they would be glad to die, or who wish that they had never been born, are those who have had more than ordinarily evil and unhappy experiences; or else they are unbalanced in mind. Many have not so much money as they would like, not so pleasant surroundings and conditions as some have and as they would wish to have. Still life is sweet; and they hold on to it with as firm a grip as possible. Love of life is inherent in man, and has survived even the sorrowful experiences consequent on the fall.

WHY GOD PERMITS THE PRESENT REIGN OF SIN

But why does God permit things to be as they are? This has ever been one of the perplexing problems to the minds of those who have still sufficient faith to believe in the existence of a Supreme Creator. We do not know that we can make the matter any clearer or state it any more plainly than we have stated it in *STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES*, Volume I., in the chapter on "Why Evil Was Permitted." Putting ourselves in God's place we are able to see that He must create man either without moral faculties, like the lower animals, or else with mental and moral faculties capable of appreciating the standards of right and wrong, of appreciating his Creator, with power to reason and to choose between good and evil--between obedience and disobedience to that Creator.

Having previously brought into existence the brute creation, God wished to create a nobler order of beings, creatures in His own image and likeness, on the earthly plane of life. He purposed to have a race of beings who were perfect like the angels, able to appreciate the same moral standards, the same principles of righteousness. The question might be asked: How could God so create these beings that they would not be in danger of sometime falling into sin? Evidently it was not God's purpose so to create them. He desired that they should possess the quality of free moral agency, the power to exercise their own wills for either righteousness or unrighteousness.

At the time of the creation of man, Lucifer, Son of the Morning, began to cherish ambitious designs, disloyal to his Maker. He realized that a race on a lower plane of existence than himself might be induced to choose a course at variance with the expressed will of God--their Creator. Before man's creation God had foreseen that Lucifer would deflect from the path of obedience, would become a rebel against His righteous Government, a great Adversary, and that as the result evil would break forth later in His Empire. He foresaw that through the influence of the rebellious Lucifer (thenceforth Satan-- adversary, accuser, hater) man would become disobedient and fall from the condition of perfection in which he would be created.

Knowing this, and doing man no injustice, but creating him with full ability to resist temptation, God so arranged and timed the creation of man that he would be an object of attack by Satan, who would take advantage of the inexperience of Father Adam and Mother Eve and seek to capture the entire race of man. In other words, God purposed to permit this test to come to man, and knowing that Adam would fail in the testing and thus incur the penalty of death, He designed to make the experience of the race an object lesson to all His created intelligences, and at the same time to so overrule the matter that the human family would themselves eventually be delivered from the evil results of the fall and be greatly blessed, if they would profit by the lessons learned in their bitter experiences with sin, and would come back into harmony with righteousness.

TIME AN IMPORTANT FEATURE

God's infinite Wisdom could not approve any as worthy of everlasting life who would not prove themselves to be in full accord with His Divine Law. The nature of sin is to propagate itself and to produce misery and degradation. With this knowledge God arranged in advance to let man have his own way. He foreknew that intelligent beings with liberty of choice and of will would eventually, if untaught and unrestricted, fall into sin, even though a penalty was attached to disobedience. He chose not to restrain Lucifer.

The Plan of God is so comprehensive that it cannot be viewed and judged from the standpoint of a few years --not even of a thousand years or six thousand years. It must be viewed from the standpoint of eternity. It was arranged, not for the well-being of creatures who would live for a few years or a few centuries, but for those who would live throughout eternal ages. His Plan must, therefore, be laid so broadly as to include all time and all beings created in His likeness, for His glory and their own eternal good.

We are not to suppose that Jehovah weeps in anguish because mankind are suffering and dying. He is a God of infinite love and sympathy; but from the beginning He knew that man would fall, and that He Himself could overrule the entire matter for the ultimate blessing and instruction of men and angels--all His created intelligences; and He purposed so to do. We ourselves know that sin and death with all their direful effects have prevailed in the world for six thousand years. We also know that our God is at the helm, and that all things will be made to work out good in the end. We think of the flood as a terrible overthrow, because so many lives were lost. Yet the calamity would have been far greater if one half had been left to mourn for the others. It is claimed that men do not suffer very much when drowning --that death by this means is comparatively easy.

Six thousand years of sin, sorrow and death seem a long while for humanity to suffer. Yet the majority of the race have not lived beyond the age of twenty years. Perhaps one-half have not lived to the age of five. Very few have reached the age of one hundred years. We all have seasons of comparative comfort, blessing and enjoyment; even under present conditions, God has been very merciful. And from the viewpoint of the glorious future, with its marvelous opportunities of blessing, its hope of eternal life for man, and its great lessons learned for all eternity by all of God's intelligent creatures, the reign of Sin and Death presents an altogether different aspect from what could otherwise be had.

In permitting the long reign of Sin and its train of evils, God has been showing forth the principles of His Government, that all may clearly discern in time what are the inevitable results of disobedience to their great Creator. We are sure that Adam and Eve were glad that God did not instantly carry out the sentence of death pronounced against them. We are sure that they were glad to be permitted to continue their existence for many years, even after they had been driven out of the Garden of Eden; and we believe that they had many experiences of more or less happiness, in spite of the tears, the pain and the sorrows that fell to their lot.

So when we view the entire history of the race of Adam, and perceive that all the experiences with sin, suffering and death are to be caused to outwork God's glorious purposes for the world, and are designed to prove a lasting lesson to all His intelligent creatures who now exist or ever will exist, we can see why He has permitted the reign of evil which to man has seemed so long. When we see, too, that God is now choosing a very select class, of very humble and obedient ones, to be used as agencies under His Only Begotten Son to recover and uplift to perfection and life everlasting all the human race who will accept the gracious provisions, we can understand why He has been pleased to

call this class through the "foolishness of preaching," by very imperfect instruments. Thus He has manifested the humble ones, who will receive His Message by any means which He is pleased to use, and who are glad to forsake sin and serve Him.

A SAVIOR AND A GREAT ONE

God might have said, I will lift My curse from mankind and let them have another trial for life--an individual trial. But even if this had been in harmony with God's Justice, it would not have sufficed alone. Mankind have long been floundering in the mire of sin. They were powerless to profit from any new trial granted them that would not include a Redeemer, a Savior, who was strong, not only to bring about the abrogation of the death sentence by a payment of their penalty, but also to deliver them from all the bonds of Sin and Death in their members. He must be a Savior having power to bind the great Adversary who has so long held the race of man in slavery and blindness. He must heal their wounds, open their blinded eyes and their deafened ears, and lift them up, up, into the light and liberty of the sons of God. Truly, man needs a mighty Savior; and such, praise God, has been provided in His beloved Son!

As we trace the various steps of the marvelous Plan of the Ages, we perceive that to all who shall gain eternal life, on whatever plane of being, the path of humility is the path to glory. "He that exalteth himself shall be abased; but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." None will be granted the inestimable blessing of life everlasting who are not thoroughly proven and found worthy under testing, who do not cheerfully humble themselves under the mighty hand of God. This principle applies to both human and spirit beings. Only those who gladly obey God, out of love for Him and for His righteous laws, will be permitted to live beyond the Harvest time of the Millennial Age. All others shall utterly perish.

GOD'S GLORIOUS CHARACTER REVEALED

Then the holy in every sphere of life, in every part of the mighty Universe of God, shall ascribe glory, honor and praise to the Almighty Creator and to His glorious [R5536 : page 277] Son throughout the ages of eternity. All will then see and acknowledge how marvelous was Jehovah's Plan of Redemption, how far beyond the power of fallen man to fathom. The majesty and glory of the Divine Character will stand revealed--His unswerving Justice combined with infinite compassion, His glorious Wisdom, His marvelous Love, His mighty Power. Then all will bow before Him and adore!

“When all Thy mercies, O my God,
My rising soul surveys,
Transported with the view, I'm lost
In wonder, love and praise!”

“LOOKING FOR THAT BLESSED HOPE.”

“I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”-- John 14:3.

WHAT joyful hopes, what exuberant anticipations, cluster around this promise, in the hearts of the Lord's faithful! In a few words it sums up all the good things that God hath in reservation for them that love him. But not all mankind have such feelings in respect to this subject;--not all are aware of the gracious blessings held in store for the world, awaiting that auspicious time for their dissemination; and not all mankind are in such a condition of mind and heart as to be able, with joy, to anticipate meeting the Lord. We can readily surmise that not only a large proportion of nominal Christendom, but a comparatively large proportion of true Christians, are not living in that attitude of heart and daily life which would permit them to anticipate this meeting with sentiments of pleasure.

Not only do false doctrines hinder a joyful anticipation of this great event, but sin, likewise, hinders such joyful anticipation, induces shame and fear,-- knowing that even those conditions of heart which may be hidden from fellow-servants cannot be hidden from the Master. We pray with the prophet, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults, keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins," and to the extent that this is the desire of our hearts, and the effort of our lives,--to the extent that the testimony of God's Word dwells in us rightly, and enables us to recognize the lengths and breadths of divine love and compassion covering unintentional shortcomings,--to this extent the Lord's faithful ones are able to rejoice in this promise, and to look forward with joy not only to the meeting with the Lord, but also to their abiding everlastingly in his presence and companionship. But to all others --to all who are not living up to their privileges as children of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ their Lord,--to all who are not seeking to walk circumspectly in the footsteps of Jesus, the words of the text come bringing only a measure of joy, a measure of hope, and not an exuberant overflow.

THEY KNEW NOT AND RECEIVED HIM NOT.

Looking back to the harvest of the Jewish age, we readily perceive that the difficulty in the way of God's ancient people--the direct cause of their stumbling --lay in their failure to appreciate the fact that the coming of Messiah, for which they had so long waited and prayed, was a compound event, having its beginning in their day in the advent of Jesus in the flesh, and having its consummation now, in our day, in the advent of Jesus, a spirit being in glory. The prophecies do not clearly distinguish between the sufferings of Christ and the glory to follow; and it is not for us to blame unduly the poor Jews for seeing with hope and joy the ultimate blessings which Messiah would bring, and overlooking the trials, sufferings and death which must necessarily precede the glory. The Apostle assures us of their expectant attitude; saying, "Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God, hope to come."-- Acts 26:7.

We inquire, Why were they permitted to stumble through the misconception of the prophecies? Why was it not explained to them clearly and definitely that the Messiah should first come as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, to be a sin-offering for the sins of the whole world; and that subsequently he would come as the King of Glory to deliver and bless the possession purchased with his own precious blood? We answer, Because the Lord did not wish to draw all Israel into the Gospel Church. He wished to draw only a certain special class; hence, as the Prophet foretold, he spoke unto the people in parables and dark sayings, that hearing they might hear and not understand, and seeing they might see and yet not believe--lest they should receive Jesus, lest they should accept him as their King. God's dealings in this matter would be inscrutable, unjust, unloving,

unfair, were the ordinary conception of his plan the correct one;--if, for instance, all those who rejected Jesus were to be sent to eternal torment.

But we have already seen that this was not a part of the divine plan, and that while only the elect class of Israel received the Lord, or were able to appreciate him and to accept his invitation, the remainder of that people were merely blinded, and that, as the Apostle tells us, for a time only,--until the elect class should be completed by selections from the Gentiles also, and then divine favor shall return to them, and all Israel shall be saved from that blindness which there came upon them. The eyes of their understanding shall be opened, and the Lord in glory, speaking to them at his second advent, will no longer hide his meaning under parables and dark sayings, but, on the contrary, shall cause the knowledge of the Lord to fill the whole earth, so that no man will need say unto his neighbor, Know the Lord--because all shall know him, from the least of them unto the greatest of them. --Jer. 31:34.

If such were God's dealings with the natural Israelites --if the matter of the sufferings and glory of Messiah, and the relationship of these two features of his coming were hidden from natural Israel, how has it been with nominal spiritual Israel?--with those who from amongst the Gentiles have to some extent accepted God and Christ? Has this subject of the manifestation of Messiah been clearly discerned by nominal Christendom throughout this Gospel age? We answer, No; although the blindness to the subject is from a somewhat different standpoint. The Jews through their traditions were blinded to the sufferings of Christ, and looked only for the glorious empire which he would establish for the blessing of the world; while Christians, generally, see matters only from the reverse standpoint--see merely the first advent of Christ, its sufferings, the redemptive work, and fail to discern the Kingdom and the blessing of all the families of the earth, which are to result from its establishment at the second coming of our Lord.

What is the source of this error, this blindness to the facts so clearly enunciated in prophecy, that the Apostle could declare that the times of restitution which shall come at the second coming of our Lord, had been "spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began"? Why do not Christians see this? We answer, Because they are blinded in the same sense that the Jews are blinded, although with a different form of blindness. But as the "Israelite indeed" amongst the Jews was not suffered to be blinded on the subject, but was clearly instructed by the Lord, guided into the truth, so that all the wheat of that nation were brought to a knowledge of Messiah, and only the chaffy element failed to discern him; so now, amongst the wheat and tares of this Gospel age we find the Scriptures clearly teaching that all who are of the wheat class will have the light of life; and all who are of the tare class will, just as surely, be left to grope and stumble in darkness, as did their prototype in the end of the Jewish age. Why? For the very same reason. Because the Lord is still seeking not for masses; not for numbers; but for peculiar characters--for those who are in heart-harmony with him;--for the pure in heart, in motive, in intention--the honest, the sincere. These will as surely be guided by the Lord into a knowledge and appreciation of the second advent of Messiah and of the Kingdom glories, as were those of the similar class in the end of the Jewish age--even though, as in the case of Saul of Tarsus, it should be necessary to strike them down in the way with some exhibition, or demonstration, of the truth.

THE HIDDEN MYSTERY.

There is a secret connected with this subject which the Apostle repeatedly calls the "Mystery" of God (Rom. 16:25, 26; Eph. 3:9; 5:32; Col. 1:26; Rev. 10:7). This mystery, as he explains, relates to the Gospel Church;--the peculiar relationship between the Gospel Church and its Head and Lord is

not intended to be understood by the world or by the nominal Christian nor by even the true Christian who is not in a proper attitude of heart and fully consecrated to the Lord.

When we catch a glimpse of this "mystery" it explains the whole situation. It shows us that from the divine standpoint, the promised Messiah, the Deliverer of the world from the bondage of sin and death --the Restorer, the great Prophet, Priest and King, whose Millennial reign as "the seed of Abraham" is to bring blessing to all the families of the earth--*is not our Lord Jesus alone*, but also with him, and under him as its Head, the entire Church of God--the faithful in Christ Jesus--the "little flock," whom God is selecting from amongst men during this Gospel age, --these, unitedly, are the Christ, the Messiah which God promised and is providing for the deliverance of the world.

Grasping this "mystery," it shows us that the first advent of Christ--in the flesh--for the suffering of death--has been in progress for nearly nineteen centuries. First came "the Lord Jesus, the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth," who was the forerunner; none could precede him, all who would be associated must be followers and under his control and direction, for he is the "Head over all, God blessed forever." (Rom. 9:5.) He learned certain lessons which would qualify him to be the great High Priest for the world, as the Apostle declares, "Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." --Heb. 2:17.

Additionally, through the sacrifice of himself, this Chief of a Royal Priesthood bought the world, thus making possible the restitution of as many as will in due time receive the blessing of God at his hands, and at the same time making possible the invitation of some of them, some of the redeemed, to become joint-heirs with himself in his Kingdom. But if it was necessary that the Head of the priesthood should be tested in all points, and should learn obedience by the things he suffered, it was certainly not less necessary that all who would be members of the Kingdom class with him, after being redeemed by his precious blood, should be exercised, tried, tested, proven--"made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." So how plain it is, that the Head having been manifested in the flesh, seen of men, testified of angels, etc., all the members of his body should likewise be manifested in the flesh; because, as the Apostle declares,--"As he was, so are we in this world." --1 John 4:17.

Looked at from this standpoint, we see that the first advent of Christ--in the flesh--has been a gradual one, covering a period of nearly nineteen centuries. We see that the Master has acknowledged these members of his body, made them his ambassadors, and through them has borne witness to the world, and in their sufferings he has suffered; for, as the Apostle declares, "We fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ." (Col. 1:24.) The Apostle Peter declares, that the prophets "spake of the sufferings of Christ [which, as we have seen, have extended over a period of nearly nineteen centuries] and of the glory that should follow"--as soon as the sufferings are completed. (1 Pet. 4:13.) The sufferings evidently did not end at Calvary, else the glory would have begun long ago. The words of our text are in full harmony with this; for the Master addressed not the world, but this very class, his brethren, his Church, the members of his body, "you." His declaration implies that when all of this "you" class shall have been found, tested, tried and approved--when the elect company shall be complete, the Head, who meantime passed into glory, will reappear to be then and ever afterward associated with the members of his body in glory--"in power and great glory"--a spiritual company. And for what purpose?

We answer that God is "the same yesterday, today and forever"; and his plan is an unchangeable one; hence, all this preparation of the Messiah, Head and body members, is part and parcel of the original plan. This implies that when this great Messiah, Head and body, changed and

glorified, no longer in the flesh, but in the spirit, no longer of human nature, but of divine nature, shall be complete,--then shall come the time in which all the gracious promises of ancient times shall have fulfilment,--"times of restitution." Then Israel's blindness shall be turned away, and the blindness of the Gentiles also; for is it not written that "all the blind eyes shall see out of obscurity" and "all the deaf ears be unstopped," and that Satan, the god of this world, shall be bound, and deceive the nations no more? The Apostle declares that he has blinded the world; and doubtless Satan supposes that he is interfering with the divine plan; but behold, as the mists clear away, we perceive that the Almighty has made use of his unwitting servant, to keep secret the mystery which he did not intend should be understood except by the faithful, until the great day of revealing. Then the whole world, released from its bondage of ignorance, superstition and blindness, shall be again made to see, and assuredly many will shout for joy, "Glory to God in the highest,"--giving thanks for the gracious plan of God in which they will be participators, and which will be carried out through the agency of the glorified royal priesthood of which our Lord is the Head and Chief and Redeemer.

ERRORS BECLOUD TRUTHS.

False doctrines have beclouded this subject of the second coming of the Lord in the minds of many. (1) First came the wrong thought that the Church in its present condition, in the flesh, was to accomplish the promise of God made to Abraham,--to bless Israel and all the families of the earth. How false this conception! It is true that some blessing has followed the promulgation of the Gospel, even when sadly mixed with the traditions of men; it is true also that a measure of civilization and enlightenment has followed in the wake of the testimony of Jesus, even when uttered through imperfect lips and in distorted form; but this is not the blessing which God has promised; this is not the "restitution of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets." In no sense of the word is it the blessing of all the families of the earth. At no time has even this measure of blessing reached more than a tithe of the living generations and nations --to say nothing of the generations of all nations which have passed into the great prison house of death. What a shortsighted interpretation it is that could apply to the Church in its condition of humiliation, of the past nineteen centuries, all those glorious promises of power and glory and majesty, and earth-filling knowledge, and victory over evil, sin and ignorance, and Satan; and the blessing and uplifting of all mankind; --so clearly stated by all the holy prophets since the world began!

(2) Another false doctrine which has helped to becloud the minds of many is the theory that those who die do not die, but are, on the contrary, when dead, more alive than ever before--that they merely seem to die--that in reality they are in the moment of dying clothed upon with immortality, and as spirit beings, pass into an eternity of either bliss or torment. This unscriptural teaching makes void the Scriptural promise of a resurrection of the *dead* by claiming that *none are dead*; and it makes void also the lesson of our text and hundreds of others like it; for why should those who believe such things have any interest in such a promise as this text presents--"I will come again and receive you unto myself"?

In proportion as the doctrine of the second coming of Christ, and the resurrection of the dead then to take place, have been lost sight of from either of the above causes, in that same proportion blindness and darkness and lack of spiritual life have surely resulted. By the lack of spiritual life we do not mean lack of excitement, "revivals," "vanity fairs," "church work," etc.; but we do mean lack of piety, lack of deep Christian experience, lack of the fruits of the spirit and the joys thereof. And be it noted now, that those Christians who hold this hope of the second coming even though bound with various false doctrines, receive a blessing from it that is not fully counteracted by the false traditions of men which they have wrongly associated with it. Indeed, this must be true in respect to every feature of divine truth;-- every item of it has its power as a sanctifying medium, as explained in our

dear Redeemer's prayer--"Sanctify them through thy truth, thy Word is truth." Whoever has even one item of truth to nine items of error, has to the extent of that one item, a sanctifying power; whoever has five parts of truth and five parts of error has a considerable measure of sanctifying power; and whoever, by the grace of God, can get rid of all the error, will have the tenfold power of the truth working in him to will and to do God's good pleasure--sanctifying him.

These ten various points of truth are not alike powerful either, and amongst them all we know of none which has greater purifying influence than this one referred to in our text--"that blessed hope"--the appearing of our glorious Lord.

THIS HOPE PURIFIETH.

"He who hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." (1 John 3:3.) He who has not this hope in him may purify himself in some measure from other motives, but is not at all likely to be purified to the same degree as he would be purified by this hope. Indeed we may be sure, on the other hand, that none but the pure in heart can honestly and truly entertain this hope; to the impure of heart it must rather be a dreadful thought that, shortly, he who can read the very thoughts and intents of the heart will be present; and that all shall appear before him--that all shall be open and naked before his sight. The illiterate and uncultured and morally impure would feel sadly out of place if found in the midst of the pure, the noble, the refined, even for an evening; much more would the matter be distressful to them if the prospects were that they must be thus associated forever. And so it is with the immoral and impure of heart in respect to the second coming of our Lord, and the prospect that all the pure in heart shall be there with him,--the impure cannot covet a place in such a gathering, nor could they rejoice in the hope of such a companionship. Indeed the thought of such associations everlastingly would to such be unendurable.

When we speak of the pure in heart who alone can rejoice in this promise, we are not to be understood as meaning perfect men and women according to the flesh, in every word and act acceptable to the Lord. We have God's own assurance that there are none such--"There is none righteous, no not one"--all come short of the glory of God, the majority very far short. But the Lord knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust, that we were born in sin and shapen in iniquity, that all the children's teeth were set on edge by the sour grapes of sin of which our first parents partook. Those who rejoice in the promise of our text were "children of wrath even as others," and the difference now is that they have been reckonedly justified--their sins are covered by the merit of the great redemptive sacrifice, they have a new standing with the Lord as "new creatures"--not sinners, but friends--accepted in the Beloved; accepted not according to the flesh and its imperfections, but according to the new mind, the new heart, and its new divine aspirations and endeavors.

FEW KNOW OF OUR LORD'S PAROUSIA.

Let us, dear brethren, keep well before our minds the Master's promised return, and now in the time of his "*parousia*" (invisible presence), let it have its full weight and influence upon our every word and act; yea, upon our very thoughts. Let the hope that we shall soon experience our resurrection change, and be made like our dear Redeemer, and see him as he is, and share his glory in the great "*epiphania*," or shining forth of the Sons of God in the glory of the Kingdom, enthuse us;--let this energize our hearts, loose our lips, and strengthen us for every duty, privilege and opportunity--to serve our Master and the household of faith. If this hope has been an anchor to the Lord's people for so many centuries, how much more does it mean to us who are living now in the very time of his presence, waiting for his "*apokalupsis*"--his revealing in the glory of the Kingdom!

It is only in accordance with what we have seen respecting the heavenly Father's dealings in the past, that we now perceive that there are various matters connected with our Lord's second advent which are inscrutable to the natural man, and can only be perceived by the faithful, and that under the guidance of the spirit in the understanding of the Word. As we saw previously that the Jews failed to grasp the facts connected with our Lord's presence at the first advent --except those who were Israelites indeed, and they but a handful in comparison with the nation,--so here, may we not expect that even amongst those who today are hoping for the Master's return, only a comparative remnant, a handful, will be in such a condition of heart as to permit them to discern clearly and distinctly the manner of the second advent? The presence of our Lord, invisible to men, is for the gathering of the wheat into his barn and the tares for burning; and, subsequently, the manifestation of the complete Christ, Head and members, in the glory of the Kingdom, as the Sun of Righteousness will be for the healing and blessing and restoring of all mankind then willing to accept the blessings of the Lord on the terms of righteousness.

Reprint 3191

“SOME BETTER THING”—“OUR HEAVENLY CALLING”

LIKE MANY of our Christian friends, for a long time we did not understand how to "rightly divide the Word of Truth." (2 Tim. 2:15.) We did not comprehend that God's Plan provides, first, a heavenly salvation for the Church, and then an earthly salvation for mankind in general. The study of the Bible along Dispensational lines clears away all of our difficulties. It shows us that the promise that the redeemed "shall sit every man under his own vine and fig tree," and "long enjoy the work of his hands" (Mic. 4:4; Isa. 65:22), is God's provision for Israel restored to Divine favor, and for all the families of the earth, but not for the Church. Of the true Church, the Bride of Christ, it is declared that her members shall, in the resurrection, be like unto the angels--heavenly or spirit beings.

St. Paul distinctly says of these, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God." (I Cor. 15:50.) Jesus tells these that He has gone to prepare them a place in the Father's house on high. (John 14:2, 3.) But the place for man, the earth, already provided from the foundation of the world (Matt. 25:34), is a very different one from ours, of which we read, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." --I Cor. 2:9; Isa. 64:4.

THE CALL TO THE SPIRIT NATURE

Now we understand why it is that from Genesis to Malachi there is not one suggestion of a heavenly or spiritual hope for any natural man. Every promise is earthly. In Abraham's case, for instance, we read, "The Lord said unto Abram, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward, for all this land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth, so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee."-- Gen. 13:14-17.

St. Paul refers to this difference between the hopes of the spirit-begotten Church, founded at Pentecost, and those of all others. Pointing to the faithful of the past, he declares that although they had God's testimony to their faithfulness, nevertheless, they "received not the promise, God having provided some better thing for us, that they, without us, should not be made perfect."-- Heb. 11:38-40.

As soon as we get our "better thing," our higher reward of "glory, honor, and immortality," in joint-heirship with our Lord as figuratively His Bride--then the worthy ones of ancient times will get their reward of resurrection to human perfection. Under Messiah's Kingdom, those perfect men will be "princes in all the earth." (Psa. 45:16.) Then from the spiritual to the perfected earthly ones the blessings and instruction will descend for the poor, ignorant, selfish and superstitious world to help them, to uplift the obedient to the perfections illustrated in the perfected Worthies.

We have heard of the Sunday School teacher who told her class about heaven, about its pianos, harps, organs, horses and carriages, fruits and flowers, etc. We see that she was merely thinking of the blessings God has provided for the faithful and obedient of the world--"in due time." She had no conception of the "heaven of heavens" promised to the faithful followers of Jesus in the "narrow way." The Great Teacher explains that it is impossible to describe heaven with its beauties and charms. He said to Nicodemus, "If I have told you of earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?"--John 3:12.

In line with this, the Bible makes no attempt to describe heaven itself, nor its inhabitants. We are merely told that "God is a Spirit," "dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor can see"--personally. (John 4:24; I Tim. 6:16.) Men must discern God in His works--the noblest of which is the perfect man--made in His moral likeness, on the earthly plane, "a little lower than the angels" on the spirit plane. The most that His Word declares of our heavenly inheritance is that "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." --I Cor. 2:9.

But while refusing to inform us of the heavenly condition, God gives us a soul-satisfying portion. Through the Apostle He declares (I John 3:2), "It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He [the glorified Jesus] shall appear [at His second advent, in power and great glory] we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." Others, not thus changed from human to spirit nature by the First Resurrection power, will not "see Him as He is," but only as He shall be revealed in His providences and judgments, which every eye shall recognize.

How satisfactory! Beyond all that we could have asked or thought! "Like Him!"--what more could we ask? "*Like Him*" whom God hath highly exalted "Far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named!" (Eph. 1:21.) We stand amazed at such grace! Moreover, we can realize that He who called us to become "partakers of the divine nature" and joint-heirs with the Redeemer in His Mediatorial Kingdom has provided for our every comfort and joy in that heavenly state, the details of which we may not now grasp. Prophetically of these it is written, "I shall be satisfied, when I awake with Thy likeness."--Psa. 17:15.

It is the hope, the desire, the aim of every one of us to make our calling and election sure--to so run that we may obtain that great "prize" of participation in the First Resurrection. Of that resurrection we read, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the First [chief] Resurrection; on such the Second Death hath no power, but they shall be Priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." (Rev. 20:6.) Let us have this in mind, dear friends, that our participation with our Lord in the glories of the Kingdom is dependent upon our faithfulness here in following Him through evil report and through good report; through honor and through dishonor; in the bearing of the cross along the way of self-denial.

THE FIRST-BORNS PASSED OVER

When God would bring typical Israel out of Egypt, the first-borns had a peculiar salvation, or preservation, first. The night before the deliverance all the first-borns were in danger of death, and were saved only when under the blood of the passover lamb. We see the significance of this beautiful type. St. Paul tells us that Christ is our Passover Lamb, slain for us. We each have appropriated His flesh, His human nature, which He sacrificed on our behalf. We recognize His sacrifice, the blood of Atonement. We see that this entire Gospel Age is the antitype of that night. We are hoping to belong to the First-borns (begotten of the Holy Spirit) who, during this night-time of sin and death, will be passed over and, on account of the blood *without* and the lamb within, be accounted worthy of being passed over--accounted worthy of eternal life on the spirit plane as members of the Church of the First-born--participants in the First Resurrection, to glory, honor and immortality, with our Lord and like Him.

All of the first-borns of Israel passed over typified all of the Lord's people, in all denominations and outside of all denominations, who are now passing from death unto life. In the type, however, the first-borns of every tribe were exchanged for the one tribe of Levi--the priestly tribe--which thereafter typified the Church of the First-borns --the "Household of Faith." Further, the

Lord divided that tribe into two classes. A little handful were made priests and occupied a special position of favor and relationship and nearness to God. The remainder of that tribe were honored in being used as the assistants or servants of the priests. This is an allegory, or type.

The Church of the First-borns will consist of two classes, a "little flock" of priests, and a "great company" of the "household of faith," antitypical Levites, who will serve. The "little flock" of priests do their sacrificing now and, if faithful, will shortly be made a Royal Priesthood, a reigning Priesthood, joint-heirs with the great King of Glory and High Priest of our profession-- Jesus. The "great company," however, typed in the ordinary Levites, will not be in the Throne, but serve *before* the Throne. They will not be "living stones" of the Temple, but will serve God in the Temple. They will not wear crowns of glory, though they will be granted palms of victory.

Which place will you or I occupy in the resurrection, in the General Assembly of the Church of the First-borns? Shall we be of the Royal Priesthood, or of the less honorable, but still blessed servants? Shall we be of the Bride class, or of the less honored "virgins, her companions, that follow her"?

It is for us to make our calling and election sure by our zeal, our earnestness, our devotion to the great King and His cause. He has called us to the highest plane of existence. It rests with us, under His wonderful and gracious arrangements, to determine whether we shall be passed over or not passed over; and if passed over, to determine whether we shall accept the place to which we are called, or the inferior place, which will be granted to those who do not keep their garments unspotted from the world and who, therefore, must come through "great tribulation" in order to enter into the Kingdom at all.

We exhort, therefore, that we strive, not only to be present at the Great Convention, the "General Assembly of the Church of the First-borns," but to make our "calling and election sure," that we may be of the Bride class, the Royal Priesthood class, the members of the Body of the Great Prophet, Priest and King of Glory! Let us encourage each other and be encouraged to maintain the good fight of faith, and to gain the victory, so far as our hearts are concerned, over the world, the flesh and the Adversary. Let us be so filled with the spirit of the Truth, the spirit of meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, brotherly-kindness and love, that we shall be a blessing to those in our homes, that they may take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus and have learned of Him; and that this blessing may thus overflow and abound to many hearts.

BURNING AND SHINING LIGHTS

One of old was declared to be "a burning and a shining light." There is force in this expression. Some lights are cold, austere, unsympathetic; but the kind approved of the Master was the burning kind--warm, glowing, sympathetic, helpful, intensive! The Master Himself furnishes the best of all illustrations of the principle enunciated. He was the Light which came down from heaven--undimmed, resplendent, shining forth to the utmost the light of Divine Truth! Not a cold, forbidding recluse was He, holding Himself aloof from the people with a haughty and disdainful spirit, telling coldly "Wonderful words of life." On the contrary, His entire life was sympathetic, whole-souled. One of the charges brought against Him by the cold Pharisees was, "He receiveth sinners and eateth with them." Even His disciples were shocked that He should converse with a woman of Samaria. But the common people heard Him gladly. While recognizing that He was far above their plane-- while beholding in Him the glories of the "Only-begotten of the Father," they nevertheless were drawn to Him because He was the burning as well as the shining light. And they declared, "Never man spake like this man."-- John 7:46.

Bible students are all Christians; though, alas! all "Christians" are not Bible students. True, God's Book may even be read through by some who are unbelievers; and it may be scanned critically by opponents who seek to find fault with it and to entrap it, as they sought to find fault with the Master. These, however, are not Bible students in the proper sense of the word. Only those who have made a consecration of their lives to the Lord and are anxious to know the Divine will that they may conform their lives to it, and who, to attain this end, have entered the School of Christ to be taught of Him--only these are Bible students from our standpoint, searchers after the secrets of the Lord, because they love Him, and are appreciative of His glorious Plans and desirous of understanding them fully.

Such Bible students should be burning and shining lights in the world and amongst our fellow-Christians of all denominations, many of whom, alas! have much of the spirit of the world and are lacking in the spirit of the Truth itself--because they are not sufficiently Bible students.

"Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." We are not enjoined to make a show of carrying our Bibles everywhere in an ostentatious manner. We are exhorted to show forth in our daily lives the lessons we learn from its precious pages. As the Bible is the Lamp provided by the Lord to all those who walk in His footsteps, so each of these in turn is a lamp which should shine forth upon others the light, the knowledge, the Spirit of the Truth, for their satisfaction. In other words, the Holy Spirit is not poured out upon the world of mankind, but merely upon the Lord's servants and handmaidens. It is an anointing for these, and upon these, evidencing to them that they have been begotten again, to the new nature, and making of them light-bearers for the benefit of others--burning and shining lights, sympathetic and helpful lights, "that they might show forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvelous light."

"THE LIGHT SHINETH IN DARKNESS"

While keeping the lamp trimmed and burning--while seeking to glorify God as burning and shining lights in the world, we must not forget that the Bible assures us that we shall be no more successful in converting the world than was our Master. His great light shone in darkness, "and the darkness comprehended it not." And the religionists of His day instigated His crucifixion.

The Master's prophecy concerning His followers will prove true to the end of the Age. The darkness hateth the light. "Marvel not, My brethren, if the world hate you"; "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you." (I John 3:13; John 15:18.) It is altogether a mistake, therefore, to suppose that the Lord's consecrated people, letting their light shine faithfully before men, could convert the world. Such was not God's intention. It is the Church, not the world, that is being tested at the present time. The opposition of the world and all the powers of darkness serve to test us as New Creatures--to test our loyalty to God and to His Truth.

Whosoever receives the light of Truth intelligently must rejoice in it; and, rejoicing in it, he must let it shine out upon others, or, by covering his light with a bushel, he will demonstrate his lack of courage, lack of appreciation, lack of earnestness--qualities which the Lord is now specially seeking amongst those whom He has invited to be sharers with Jesus in the glories of the Mediatorial Kingdom about to be established amongst men. It is important, therefore, that we let our light shine before men; that we be willing, nay, glad, if need be, to suffer for our loyalty to the Lord and to His message. And we have His Word for it that whoever is ashamed of Him or of His Word now, of such He will be ashamed by and by. He will not own them as members of His Bride class, will not accept them as assistants with Him in His glorious Throne.

"The Light of the world is Jesus"; "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." (John 1:9.) Thus far Jesus has not been dealing with the world, but merely with the blessed ones who have the eye of faith and the ear of faith. "Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear." (Matt. 13:16.) The time for the enlightenment of the world will be after the special call of the elect. Then the Church, as the Bride, will be with the heavenly Bridegroom in His Throne. Then all now found faithful in the matter of letting their light shine will be associated with the great Light, Jesus, as members of His Body. Altogether they will constitute the great Sun of Righteousness, which will then arise with healing in its beams for the blessing of all the families of the earth; "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father; who hath ears to hear, let him hear." (Matt. 13:43.) He that hath a desire of heart, let him be obedient and thus make his "calling and election sure" to this glorious, chief salvation.

Reprint 4966

QUALITIES AND ATTRIBUTES OF JEHOVAH

THE SCRIPTURES declare a "beginning of the creation of God." His qualities and attributes were the same then that they are now; for the Scriptures also declare His unchangeableness--"the same yesterday, today and forever."--Hebrews 13:8; Psalm 90:1, 2.

The completeness of the Divine perfection is such that companionship is not necessary to the happiness of Jehovah. The One who "inhabiteth eternity" is self-centered. The creation of angels and of man was indeed His pleasure, because, benevolently, He desires to do good, to give capacity for pleasure and to afford it opportunity for gratification. Furthermore, the highest good of His creatures calls for an exhibition to the full of all the elements of Divine character--Divine Justice, Love, Power and Wisdom.

BELIEF IN SATAN LOGICAL

The declaration of the Bible respecting the Father's Power is that "the eyes of the Lord [the intelligence of Jehovah] are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." (Proverbs 15:3.) This statement implies that there are things evil as well as good; things which God approves and things which He disapproves. This citation comes the nearest to a suggestion of God's omnipresence contained in the Scriptures.

The fact that the Lord has *knowledge* of all conditions of things is not out of harmony with the other fact that He permits conditions which He *disapproves*, and which He declares that He will ultimately *destroy*. "All the wicked will He destroy."--Psalm 145:20.

If we accept the great Divine premise that the Bible is the Word of God, then we are bound to accept the declaration that there is a being called Satan, that he is the "god of this world" (2 Corinthians 4:4), and that he now works in the "hearts of the children of disobedience." (Ephesians 2:2.) These words imply not only that there are evil principles at work in this world, but that behind them there are evil spirit beings, of whom Satan is the inspirer and *through whom he is working*.

Certain statements are made respecting Satan which could not properly be applied to a principle of evil, or to a working of error; as, for instance, Jesus declared that Satan was a "murderer" from the beginning--and a "liar." (John 8:44.) Errors and principles are not murderers and liars. It would be a misuse of language to make such application. Only an intelligent being can be a murderer or a liar. Hence the whole tenor of the Scriptures upholds the assertion that there is such a being as Satan and that he is in opposition to God.

If we were to suppose the everlasting continuance of Satan as a being, as an adversary of God, the matter would seem strange to us, because irreconcilable with our conception of Divine Power. We have the statement of the Scriptures respecting his reign and ultimate destruction. (Hebrews 2:14.) With this information we have a reasonable, logical thought on the subject. When we consider the Scriptural presentation further, that originally Satan was not an evil being, but that he made himself evil by the exercise of personal liberty and became the enemy of God, the subject seems to be clear and reasonable. In fact, this is the only rational solution to the problem of his existence.

To suppose that there is no Satan is to suppose that God has permitted His Word to deceive mankind in this respect, or that the Devil is a manifestation of God Himself --a position which is

unthinkable. Nor is it logical to say that there is a Devil, an opponent of God, and at the same time to maintain that God is all in all, and omnipresent --everywhere present. But we do not find this latter statement to be Biblical. The Scriptural proposition is that at the close of the Millennial Age, when Christ shall have conquered sin and Satan, when Satan shall have been destroyed, and when the Kingdom of the Universe shall be in absolute harmony, then God will be all in all. (I Corinthians 15:28.) To all eternity there will be *no opposition* to His will. There *is* opposition now, however, in many places and at many times. But ultimately, God will have full control.

THE OMNIPOTENCE OF JEHOVAH

To say that God is *all* Power is sophistry of language which often misleads the one questioning as well as the one attempting to answer him. The statement is not correct. If God is all Power, then He is not Love or Justice or Wisdom. He would thus be limited to the one great attribute of Power, or force. Such cannot be the thought entertained by any logical mind. It is, nevertheless, a form of statement that is often used, perhaps unintentionally, but very injuriously to the reasoning faculties.

The Bible nowhere says God is all Power. There is a marked difference between being power and exercising power. God is all-powerful. He has the ability to exercise power in any direction to the extent that *He wills*. If He had chosen, He could have so created Satan that he could not think or do other than in harmony with the Divine will; or He could have exercised His power to crush the Adversary and thus have destroyed him long ago. But He has permitted Satan to exist for six thousand years, in the sense that He does not restrain the Devil from doing evil. The Scriptures, however, tell us that God will eventually destroy him.

The scope of the exercise of Divine Power is the Universe, but it is difficult for our finite minds to comprehend the meaning of this word--*Universe*. Astronomers tell us that by the aid of photo-astronomy they can see nearly 125,000,000 suns--the centers of solar systems like our own, with supposedly more than a billion of planets more or less like our earth. These, we may assume, are in process of development, are in preparation for inhabitants, whom the great Creator will in due time provide. From the Scriptural standpoint, however, the great work of human creation began with our earth. What a boundless thought we have in the mere suggestion that the billion worlds are to be peopled, and that the lessons of righteousness and sin, of life and death eternal, now being taught to humanity, will never need to be repeated!

We stand appalled at the immensity of space and at the law and order which everywhere reign! We heartily assent to the words of the Prophet David, "Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard." (Psalm 19:2, 3.) The person who can look upon this wonderful display of superhuman power and believe that these worlds created themselves, shows to the majority of us that, if he has brains, they are sadly disordered, unbalanced. Whoever, after mature thought, concludes that there is no God, that everything came to be what it is by chance or by the operation of some blind force--that person is described in the Scriptures in the following words, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God."--Psalm 14:1.

As scientific instruments demonstrate to us the immensity of the Universe, we perceive that the Prophet used very moderate language indeed in his description of the majestic power and greatness of the Creator, when he represents Jehovah as weighing the mountains in His balance and holding the seas in the hollow of His Hand. (Isaiah 40:12.) From His standpoint, a thousand years are but as a watch in the night. (Psalm 90:4.) How insignificantly small we all feel in the presence of our

God! No wonder some great men are inclined to say that humanity is too insignificant from the Divine standpoint to be worthy of the least consideration--much less to be objects of Divine care and providence!

THE OMNISCIENCE OF JEHOVAH

To say that God is all Knowledge is also an inaccurate statement. If God were all Knowledge, how could He be all Power? God has all Knowledge, possesses all Knowledge. But this is a different matter. If we say, "The boy has a hoop," we do not mean that he is a hoop. To be a hoop and to have a hoop are not the same. God is omniscient; that is, He knows all things. This very fact proves that He is a personal God. There can be no knowledge without personality. Knowledge implies cognizance of external things. Amongst the things outside the Divine Person are things both good and evil.

When we read that God created man in His own image and likeness (Genesis 1:26,27), we may know that man is not God. He was merely made in the image of God. Because God is perfect, therefore the human being made in His image would be satisfactory to God. That human being had knowledge. But he neglected the Word of God, and thus he learned something by his neglect. What he learned is mentioned in the Scriptures. "He is become as one of Us [*the Elohim*], to know good and evil." (Genesis 3:22.) This statement proves that God knows good and evil.

If God did not know evil from good, then He could not be our Instructor. By His laws, His principles, God sets before our minds that which is right and that which is wrong. Adam knew how to discriminate between right and wrong, but his disobedience increased his knowledge of both good and evil. In his fallen condition man cannot always determine between them. Therefore God gave Israel a Law, and man's knowledge of that Law assists him to discriminate between good and evil.

One of old time said, "Thou art a God which hidest Thyself." (Isaiah 45:15.) How true! As a result the world by wisdom knows not God. He is near in His Wisdom and Love, yet He can be seen only by those whose eyes of understanding have been opened. But we are glad that the time is coming when all the blind eyes shall see clearly. "As truly as I live," says Jehovah, "all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Num. 14:21; Hab. 2:14.) Then all shall see what God hath wrought, and our temporary blindness will but accentuate the glorious brightness of His Wisdom, Justice, Love and Power.

"GOD IS LOVE"

God is Love in the sense that the term Love represents the central principle of the Divine character. There is nothing contrary to love in God. The Scriptures do not teach that there is nothing except love anywhere--that God is everywhere and love is everywhere. But they teach that God is a loving character. This does not militate against the other statements that God is just, wise and powerful. But this quality of Love best of all represents the Divine Being. All of His Justice is in harmony with His Love. There is no exercise of Justice or Power in an evil sense, for all His attributes work together for good to all His creatures.

The Scriptures encourage us to reason from the known to the unknown. They tell us that although God is so great, so wise, so powerful, He is also just and loving. And the more we consider the matter, the more reasonable the Bible description of the Almighty appears. His Power we see demonstrated. The Wisdom of One so great cannot be doubted. When we come to consider, Could

One so wise and so powerful be unjust or ungenerous? Our hearts answer, No! No one is really great who is devoid of justice and love. So surely as our God is Jehovah, He must possess these qualities.

When we came in contact with the Bible, and particularly after we learned something of its teachings and got rid of the misrepresentations which gathered about it during the Dark Ages--then we began to recognize it as the Message of Jehovah to His creatures. It informs us that the great Creator of the Universe is not only Almighty and All-wise, but loving and kind, with Justice as the foundation of His Empire. (Psalm 89:13, 14.) From the Bible we learn, too, that our Creator has been pleased to make us in His own image, in His own moral likeness, to the intent that we may enjoy Him and the fruits of His righteousness to all eternity.

All the Power, all the Justice, all the Wisdom, of God must be used in accordance with His own character, which is Love. It will therefore be loving Wisdom, loving Justice, which He will use toward all creation in the exercise of His loving Power for their good. He created man. He permitted Adam to disobey His Law, telling us that He knew in advance what man would do and that He permitted man to do wrong.--Isaiah 46:9, 10.

In permitting sin to enter the world, God had two ends in view. He purposed to give an illustration to the angels respecting the results of obedience and of disobedience. He also intended that the human family should gain a lesson from this experience. Thus we know that God's arrangement from the beginning has been for a resurrection of the dead. "As all in Adam die, even so shall all in Christ be made alive."--I Corinthians 15:21, 22.

If we were to take any fragment of Scripture as a basis for a system of doctrine, we would find ourselves either teaching universalism on the one hand, or claiming that God has no Wisdom, or that He purposed the evil, or what not. We would get into all sorts of confusion. But when we see the perfect adjustment of God's Justice, Wisdom, Love and Power, and realize that He has good purposes respecting the evil, that He has fully marked out what it shall do and what it shall not do, either in its present influence, or in its ultimate influence, this gives us confidence in the character of God.

THE PERMISSION OF EVIL

From only one standpoint can Divine Wisdom and Love be discerned in connection with the history of mankind. It must include the Age about to be ushered in-- the period of Messiah's reign of righteousness. This will be the time when every member of Adam's race, sharing the penalty of sin and death because inheriting his weaknesses, will be set free from these; the time when the full knowledge of the glory of God shall be granted to every human being, and when a full opportunity will come to each, by obedience, to gain life everlasting.

The lesson thus far taught is the goodness and the severity of God--His goodness in bringing us into being, and His severity in the punishment of Adam's wilful transgression; also to both men and angels, Justice, unswerving Justice. The next lesson to be taught to God's intelligent creatures is that God is Love. The foundation for these lessons is already laid in the Ransom-sacrifice of Jesus, through and on account of which He becomes the world's Redeemer and Restorer. A few can believe this Message by faith; but not many have the ear of faith or the eye of faith. Only the saints are able to appreciate this great fact at the present time.

That which is now secret and understood only by the few is shortly to be made manifest to every creature in heaven and in earth. All will then see and be able to appreciate the great fact that

the redemption accomplished by the sacrifice of Jesus is world-wide and means a full deliverance from the sin-and-death condemnation which passed upon Adam and all of his race, to all who will accept the same as a gift from God. The remainder will be destroyed in the Second Death.

THE SECOND DEATH THE ESSENCE OF WISDOM

As for the Second Death, we easily see that if God created man in His own image, man must of necessity be a free moral agent; otherwise he would not be in God's image. If he was created a free moral agent, he must have the power or privilege to will wrong as well as right. If he exercise his power in the direction of evil, God has the power to destroy him. On the other hand, if he live in harmony with righteousness God has the power to grant him life to all eternity.

The destruction of the wicked in the Second Death is the essence of Wisdom. As to the declaration that God is too pure to behold evil (Habakkuk 1:13), the thought of the original seems to be that God's character is so pure and so righteous that He will not continue to behold evil. He will not permit evil to exist to all eternity, for this condition would not be pleasing to Him.

This very thought implies that there is evil to behold. If not so, how could He behold it? But this is all consistent with the Divine Plan. Ultimately all evil shall be destroyed. Ultimately all creatures which are "in heaven and on earth and such as are in the sea" shall be heard saying, "Blessing and honor and glory and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever."--Revelation 5:13.

Reprint 5209

PART 11

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

PRESENT DUTY AND PRIVILEGE OF THE SAINTS

“Cry aloud and spare not; lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgression, and the House of Jacob their sins. Yet they seek Me daily and delight to know My ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinances of their God. They ask of Me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God.”--Isaiah 58:1, 2.

WE understand that the Lord, through the Prophet Isaiah, is here describing the condition of the nominal people of God. These words probably had an application in the Prophet's day, but we think they have a special application in our day. If we should view the words as a general statement, applicable at any time, it would seem to have reference to some who are truly the Lord's people and also to the House of Jacob in general. The Prophet speaks of certain transgressions of God's people, errors, and of sins of the House of Jacob (Natural Israel)--especially *grievous* transgressions.

Applying this to the present day, we would understand that the Lord's people are those who are in covenant relationship with God, His real people, and no others. Those in covenant relationship with God are comparatively a small number. The great mass of professed people of God have gotten into many transgressions of the Divine will and Law, many of them quite ignorantly following blind leaders of the blind, following creeds of the darker past. The term "the House of Jacob," however, is a distinguishing term, referring exclusively to the Jews, God's ancient Covenant people.

The Lord's people of the present time, those who have the Light of Truth as it now shines out from His Word, should, as they have suitable opportunity, point out to Christendom of today, and especially to those who are the professed people of God, their error, show them where they have deviated from God's Word, where their course is not in harmony with the Golden Rule, etc. Moreover, if they have favorable opportunity, they might point out to the Jews the reasons why they are in their present cast-off condition. But it would not be well to go about berating them, or berating anybody.

Very little good is done by such a course. The Truth itself is to be the Sword. It is a sharp two-edged Sword, even the Word of God. The work that any of us could do aside from the Word of God would be but bungling work; whereas "The Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow." We are to "cry aloud, and spare not," to point out what the Scriptures have to say--on proper occasions. This does not mean to insult people. God's ambassadors have no commission to insult any one. But with gracious words we may, nevertheless, point to the conditions of today, the dangers that are now before the world, and the proper position to be taken by those who would wholly follow the Lord.

A FORM OF GODLINESS WITHOUT ITS POWER

The words of the text under consideration are along the same line as the words of the Prophet Isaiah in Chapter 29:13, quoted by our Lord. There the Prophet declares: "This people draw near Me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor Me, but have removed their heart far from Me"; "but,"

as the Master rendered the following words (Matthew 15:9), "in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men."

The translation of V. 2 of our text is not quite so clear as perhaps might be. The thought seems to be: They apparently seek Me daily, apparently delight to know My ways. They build churches with high steeples and gorgeous appointments, at great cost. Many churches have imposing images of the saints or great paintings which make a fine outward appearance. They have rich, melodious bells chiming out sweet hymns; such as "Nearer, my God, to Thee," "Rock of Ages," etc. They have well-trained choirs to sing anthems. They have highly educated ministers who are gifted orators and deliver eloquent dissertations. Outwardly, they have a wonderful zeal for righteousness; it would seem on the surface that they are doing well. They appoint an annual Thanks giving Day and take up large collections for the poor; they pay large salaries to their preachers; they raise money for missions. It is very much as it was in our Lord's day, at His First Advent, when He said, "Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is made, ye make him two-fold more the child of Gehenna than yourselves"; he is far worse than before they touched him.--Matthew 23:15.

There is great zeal shown for the traditions of men, for the propagation of men's theories, for the advancement of denominational interests, for attracting the world by varied and numerous devices, in order to gain their influence and their financial assistance. For instance, Thanksgiving Day was set apart in the early history of New England. Long ago it became a custom in the United States to have the last Thursday in November appointed as a day of thanksgiving to God for the harvest of the year. The Governor of the State of Massachusetts first took it up; then the Governor of another State followed; then another; then it was taken up by the President of the United States. Finally it became the custom for the President first to make the appointment every year, to be followed by a proclamation by each of the State Governors, making the day thus a legal holiday, when banks and places of business generally would be closed that the people might be free to meet for praise and thanksgiving to God for the blessings of the year. And the custom still persists. Now this might sound to people of other nations to whom it would be told as if the people of the United States were a set of saints. These nations might say, It was not sufficient that the general Government of the United States should make such appointment, but each State makes such appointment; and they do it every year.

As a matter of fact, if the President of the United States were an infidel he would be expected to follow the custom and make the same proclamation. Or whether the Governor of a State were a Catholic or a Protestant or an atheist, he would be expected to do likewise. It has become a custom, just as the hands of a clock go around. But very few of the people think of the day in any other light than as a pleasant holiday, when they can enjoy a fine dinner and have a good time generally. Very little attention--in fact, none--is paid by the great majority to the real feature, of thanksgiving to God.

It is the same with other customs in other nations of the world. If we were in a Mohammedan country, we would see, at twelve o'clock, every Mohammedan, no matter what he was doing, stop immediately for a moment of prayer to Allah. One who did not know might think from this that the Mohammedans were a most saintly people, who would be very honest and upright in all their dealings; better keep your eye open, for all that. So a great deal that we have everywhere today is a mere mechanical form, an outward display--a form of godliness without its power.

PATENT FACTS IN CHRISTENDOM TODAY

In our text the Prophet was declaring that God's true children should lift up their voice and cry aloud, and tell God's professed people their transgressions. The implication seems to be that there

is a very special need of public expression on the matter of calling attention to the fact that there is a great deal of hypocrisy practised in the name of religion. If we consider the British people, or the Russians or the Germans, they all have very strict religious laws. They used to be even more strict--so strict that we who proclaim Present Truth would not have been permitted to live there; so strict that we would have been in danger of our lives. Yet how many of the people of these countries really serve God and follow the instructions of His Word as given to the children of the Lord? Which of these governments in its dealings with other nations has followed or is now following the Golden Rule taught by the Savior? What does history, past and present, show along this line?

It is not now considered necessary or proper to cry aloud in the streets--the public are no longer ignorant. All these things of which we speak are criticized in the newspapers and elsewhere. As to religious intolerance, nearly all denominations have done their share in persecuting others. But it does not seem that there is any more heart-loyalty today than formerly, even though violent persecution is now seldom practised. If we have the right conception of the matter, only about one-tenth of all the ministers have any faith in the Bible as the Word of God. If that is the case, they are simply living on a high moral plane, though we do not know that this is true of ministers any more than of the world in general. But there is a great deal of religious formality. Those one hundred and eighty thousand ministers still take their texts from the Bible, as they formerly did, but they merely sanction those features of the Divine Revelation which they think comport well with Higher Criticism and general intelligence. It would seem that the Lord through the Prophet is referring to these conditions.

We do not understand that we should cry out in any unseemly manner--not go to the churches and cry aloud. Those in the churches have a legal right to meet there, and to be as honest as they please or as hypocritical as they please. Neither would it be seemly to go along the streets crying aloud. There is a more fitting and effective way of sounding the alarm.

As a notable instance of the present attitude of the nominal church ministry, we cite the case of the Rev. Dr. Aked. Our mention of this is not a divulging of any private matter; for Dr. Aked took it out of the personal list himself, by publishing the matter in the newspapers. Not long ago this minister disproved to his own satisfaction the virgin-birth of our Lord Jesus and made light of the whole matter. Rev. Mr. Aked is a very able man--stands high with the people and with the colleges and with the ministers. There is a branch of the Federation of the Christian Churches in San Francisco, and the Rev. Mr. Aked was chosen as President. Some one attacked Rev. Mr. Aked through the newspapers and said that he should be "churched," "unfrocked," etc., for his statements. Dr. Aked said that he thought everybody understood his position. He offered his resignation as President of the Federation of Churches. The man who thought that he should be called to account for his statements was treated as the offender, and Rev. Aked was requested to resume the presidency. Yet this minister publicly declared that he did not believe one word of the story of the Redemption of mankind--did not believe that Jesus *was ever* a superhuman being; and the fact that he was supported in his position by his fellow-ministers, with but very few exceptions, proves that the body of the ministry today have sadly fallen, and are "blind leaders of the blind."

KINGDOM WORK THIS SIDE THE VEIL

We are not surprised at these conditions; for long ago they were foretold in the Word of God. We were assured that our day would witness the fulfilment of the prophecies along these lines. Wherever we look, we witness the disintegration of the Present Order, whether we view the conditions from a social or a religious or a financial standpoint. The lease of power to the kingdoms of this world has expired. It was foretold by the Prophet Daniel that "in the days of these kings,"

before their utter overthrow, the God of Heaven would set up a Kingdom which should smite and break in pieces all the kingdoms of men, the beastly kingdoms of Daniel's dream. When these kingdoms would be given to "the people of the saints of the Most High," they were to "smite them in pieces as a potter's vessel." This intimates that in some sense of the word the Lord will take possession of these before they have been completely overthrown; that some of the kingdoms represented in the Gentile Image will be remaining at that time.

What time, then, is signified by the expression "in the days of these kings," when the Kingdom of God was to be set up in power? To our understanding the first step in the setting up of this Kingdom was the raising of the sleeping saints of the Gospel Age, which we believe was in the spring of 1878. Then began the glorification of the Church. The work of setting up the Kingdom has, we understand, been progressing from that date, and is now merely lacking the last members of the Church class. When these shall have taken their places as members of the Church in glory, the Kingdom will be fully set up.

This does not signify that there may not be a part of the Kingdom work begun while some of the members of Christ are still in the flesh. Indeed some Scriptures seem to imply that there will be a Kingdom work done this side the Veil, while a work of still greater magnitude and authority is progressing on the other side of the Veil. We read, "Let the saints be joyful in glory; let them sing aloud upon their beds." This seems to imply, as we have mentioned before, that there is a special work to be done while these saints still have beds, while they are in a condition of repose--not "tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine," but fully at rest in God's great Plan. The Scripture goes on to say that they have a two-edged sword in their hands--this is the Word of God. They use it as the Sword of the Spirit. This would not be true of them on the other side of the Veil. They would have no use for a sword there. The Scriptures also declare that the high-sounding praises of God are upon their lips. This, too, seems to be applicable to those this side the Veil.

The final phrase, "to execute the judgments written," would seem to imply that there would be something for the saints on this side of the Veil to do in connection with the execution of the judgments upon the nations. As to just what this means, we have not yet fully learned. But we see nothing here to conflict with the thought that the Lord's Kingdom may be properly understood to have begun operations and that the present smiting of the nations is under Kingdom control. The fact that some of the members of the Kingdom class are still in the flesh does not militate at all against this thought. We see the kingdoms of this world now being dashed to pieces, and we are expecting to see the process continued until they are completely ground to powder. They shall become as the chaff of the summer threshing-floor, and the wind shall carry them away. Then shall they be found no more at all.--Daniel 2:35.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD SET UP

Because certain important things are to be accomplished, we see that God is permitting what to others might seem to be purely human devilishness. For a wise purpose He permits this reign of lawlessness, this condition which evokes universal odium. Our thought is that we should look for still further evidences day by day that the Gentile Times have ended, and that God's Kingdom has begun its work. We are expecting to see multiplied proofs of the Kingdom power, though the world will not recognize it as such until it is manifested in the flaming fire of Anarchy, which is still further along. The present step is the war of the nations. The next step will be Socialism--an attempted Socialism--among the people. Then the third step, Anarchy, will gradually come on. When this symbolic fire shall prevail, then the world will realize what we are trying to tell them now; namely, that God's Kingdom is taking control, and that these various demonstrations are evidences that our

Lord is taking His great power. But the many will not begin to see until the flaming fire is revealed. When we endeavor to tell them now they will not receive it, but they will be thoroughly convinced when they see the destructive fire of Anarchy.

It was merely during the interval between the destruction of the kingdom of Israel and the setting up of the Kingdom of the Heavens that the opportunity was given to these Gentile kingdoms to see what they could do toward establishing a righteous government on earth. Now the time has come for God's Kingdom to displace them; but they will not *willingly* resign their crowns and scepters; they are in defiance. Therefore force is required to destroy them. Their 2520 years of rule are in the past, and they must now submit to a complete overthrow. We are expecting that the work of their crushing will steadily continue until its full accomplishment. "A short work will the Lord make upon the earth," is the Scriptural declaration.--Romans 9:28.

At the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet Messiah was to take unto Himself His great power and reign. That Trumpet is now sounding! "And the nations were angry and Thy wrath is come." (Revelation 11:18.) Surely the nations are angry now! They act as if they were bereft of common sense. We see readily enough that the spirit of selfishness has prevailed there right along; but that some hindrance or fear heretofore held them back. But finally, when the Lord's "due time" had come to permit it, they broke through their restraint. The Lord has at this particular time especially to do with the affairs of the nations. And this war was allowed to occur at about the end of the Times of the Gentiles, at the appropriate time when they are to be dashed to pieces with the iron rod of the Iron Rule. (Psalm 2:6-12.) It is our judgment that we shall see more of this iron rule and its breaking influence, not only upon the nations, but upon society at large. Now in this great Day of the Lord everything that can be shaken is to be shaken to pieces and shaken out, to the intent that nothing unrighteous or unworthy shall remain. God Himself is doing the shaking.

FINANCIAL SHAKINGS

For our own part we are looking for great shaking in financial matters. There has never before been a war that has shaken the world as this war has done. This effect is largely because of money conditions. The only thing that is current is gold. Silver was demonetized forty years ago. The results of this we are just feeling now. At the present time stocks, bonds and all other kinds of securities are largely built on *confidence*. As soon as confidence begins to shake, all these securities decline in value. With such a lack of confidence among the people, we can readily see that there is good ground for the bankers to have a great deal of trepidation--"men's hearts failing them for fear."--Luke 21:25, 26.

Since the beginning of the war there have been bonds and stocks sold as low as thirty per cent. less than those of last July. But the Exchanges did not recognize these sales. Why? They wish to keep the prices up. The banks have their vaults filled with stocks and bonds. If the Government Inspectors should come in to take stock, they would count the stock up at the price of the last sale; and the Government officer's duty would be to say, "You must make this right before you enter into business tomorrow morning." They would reply that they have any amount of securities. But the answer would be, "We do not want securities; we want gold." There is not enough gold in the world to pay the debts. These debts are put into gold bonds. The interest on all the debts is represented by gold bonds. But everybody is going to say, "I do not want bonds or stocks; I want gold."

The business people of today who are feeling the strain most are the wealthy. They have the stocks and bonds, but they have not the gold, the money. If you demanded gold at the banks in exchange for something else, they might give it to you, but unwillingly. Gold notes are the same as

the gold, because the Treasury must, according to law, have that gold on hand to exchange for them when presented.

This matter is causing trouble, not only in the United States, but down in South America and Central America. They would like to buy goods. And the question comes, "Have you the money? Have you the gold?" "No, we have no gold. Sell to us in the same way you have sold heretofore." "No, no, we cannot do that; something has stopped. We do not know what is the matter." The wheels have stopped, and the people who have their fingers in the way are getting them pinched. There is not enough money; and the very people who destroyed silver money forty years ago are the ones who are now getting pinched.

THE TIME FOR JUDGMENT IS RIPE

We believe that the Times of the Gentiles ended just on time, as shown in Volume II. of STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES. The hand of Justice is now doing the breaking-- the nations shall be broken as "a potter's vessel." The whole cataclysm of trouble may be upon the world during the next ten months or it may be longer deferred. We believe that the time for the setting up of the Kingdom was on September 21, 1914. At that time, when it was due for our Lord to take up His great power and reign, the nations were already angry. They were at war over a month in advance of the time, because so angry.

The due time for the "wrath" was September 21. We are expecting to see this wrath still more manifest. The nations have been in just this same unloving spirit one toward another for a number of years, but apparently they have been under some forcible restraint. We believe that God's time had not yet come. We wondered, and many people wondered, how their anger could be restrained much longer; much has been written about it in the newspapers. When the Balkan war came, it was because the nations were angry; and it very nearly led to this conflagration. Austria tried to precipitate the trouble at that time, but the German Kaiser held back. Now the restraining hand has been removed. The time is ripe.

"WHAT MANNER OF PERSONS OUGHT WE TO BE?"

Seeing that we see all these things with such clearness, and realize what it all means to the Church, how soberly and carefully and faithfully we should live! Never were the words of the Apostle Paul--"Let us watch and be sober"--more applicable than now. Accompanying the momentous events that usher in the New Dispensation are special trials and difficulties, not only to the world, but also to the Church. The Apostle says, "Ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief." But "as a snare will it come on all them that dwell on the earth." All except the brethren will be surprised, disappointed, chagrined, found unprepared and more or less overtaken. But the brethren, because they have been feeding at the Lord's table, and are strong in His might, will not be overtaken unawares. The Apostle urges that because the brethren are "children of the light," "children of the Day," they shall not act as children of the darkness, "children of the night."

In the New Day that is just dawning we shall have the "Reign of Righteousness." We belong to that New Dispensation. While living in the flesh, we are not of the flesh; while living in the world, we are not of the world. Our minds are clarified by the light of the New Day. We are not interested in the things of this world, but in the things of the Lord; and because of our special relationship to the Lord, as His Elect, we are not left in the darkness of the world.

Above all others, then, we should be sober. When the Apostle enjoins, "Be sober," he is not referring to the use of intoxicating liquors; for those who have the Lord's Spirit, the Lord's mind--the Truth--do not so indulge. Neither would we understand him to mean that we should always go about wearing long faces; for the children of the Light should of all others be happy, cheerful people. But we should be sober in the sense of being of serious mind, thoughtful, not given to frivolity or levity, but earnestly watching our thoughts, our words, our doings, that we may in all things bring honor to our King whose name we bear. We who have our eyes open see what sin is and how the reign of sin is about to culminate. We see God's arrangements; and having entered into a Covenant with God, we surely must be sober, vigilant, realizing the great battle now on between Light and Darkness, between Truth and Error; realizing that faithfulness in this "evil day" will require all the soberness of mind, all the fortitude, that we possess. We shall continually need the wisdom from on High. "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." (James 1:5.) It is only those who are using to the best of their ability the power and the talents already given them who have any right to ask for further wisdom and who are prepared to use more.

THE "CUP" OF THE APOSTATE "WOMAN"

The Scriptures speak of various kinds of intoxication. We can be intoxicated with the spirit of the world. But it would be impossible for true children of the Heavenly King to become thus intoxicated. We have a new wine which the Lord gives, and we should be fully satisfied and not seek the intoxication of the world. Then there is a spiritual intoxication, the spirit of error. All the world are intoxicated with this spirit. All Christendom has been made drunk with the wine which comes from the Golden Cup mentioned in Revelation, which the Apostate Woman has held out for all to drink. This Cup is filled with false doctrines. These false doctrines were her mixture. Thank God! the intoxication of these is passing away, and we are able to see more clearly than ever before. But we see many who are still intoxicated.

The most stupefying potion is the doctrine of eternal torment. It gives people the impression that after they have heard of Christ, have turned from outward sin, and have professed His name, that is all there is to it, and now they should go out and try to induce others to turn from a life of sin. They verily think that there is nothing more to do, not recognizing that there is an important work of grace to be attained in their own hearts, and that they are to be upbuilt in the knowledge of God and in obedience to His will; and that is His will, "even their sanctification." As a consequence of this, many of them are mere babes in Christ; and many more are not even justified to life, having never made a full consecration of themselves.

Many professed Christians of broad mind and of good influence are thoroughly confused with this wine of false doctrine. They are content to give some money to the Church system and to engage in some works of benevolence. It does not occur to them to seek for further knowledge of God or of service for Him. How much these need to be delivered from the enslaving influences which are binding them hand and foot! How glad, how thankful we are that the chains of bondage will soon be broken and the captives all set free! The children of the Light, however, are properly on the watch all the time. They are not influenced by the deluding, false doctrines. We rejoice that the Morning is about to dawn, the time when all will be awakened and see the light as it will then be streaming from the Sun of Righteousness, risen with healing in His beams.

We who are now awake should be very active and energetic in the service of God; for we have a hundred-fold more opportunities than those of other days--by telegraph, by telephone, by mail and by newspapers, by rapid and convenient train service, through the printed page, etc. This is pre-

eminently the time for the Lord's children, "children of the Day," to be sober, vigilant, active. In the presence of so great opportunities, who should not be sober and vigilant.

And we are to *watch*. What should we watch? Pre-eminently we should watch ourselves, to keep ourselves from the snares of the present time, which are more insidious and entrapping than ever before, so that we do not endanger our peace with God nor lose our enlightenment. The Adversary is on the watch, and it is necessary that the Lord's people be especially alert and watchful. In the past there was little opportunity for the Lord's people to watch the fulfilments of Scripture; for these fulfilments were far apart. But now is the time for us to watch particularly along this line. The Times of the Gentiles have ended, and the nations are now disintegrating.

There are certain indications that the Lord has a great work for all His people, His watching saints, at the present time. Unless we are on the alert, we might go to sleep. In our Lord's time the disciples were disposed to go to sleep, and to go back to the fishing business, instead of doing the work the Lord had outlined. We should all be fully awake and watching to see what is the duty of the hour and then to be diligent in doing it.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE NEVER BEFORE SO GREAT

There are some of the Lord's children who seem possessed with the idea that "the door is shut," and that there is no further opportunity for service. So they become indolent in regard to the Lord's work. We should lose no time dreaming that the door is shut! There are people who are seeking the Truth--people who are sitting in darkness. There never was a time like the present. Never have so many people been ready to hear the good Message. In all the forty years of Harvest there have not been such opportunities to proclaim the Truth as now present themselves. The great war and the ominous signs of the times are waking people up, and many are now inquiring. So the Lord's people should be very diligent, doing with their might what their hands find to do.

Business men are greatly troubled. At the present time there are thousands of business men who scarcely get a night's rest. "Men's hearts are failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." (Luke 21:26.) They do not know what to do. They thought they were secure; for they had large bank accounts and stocks and bonds. Now they say they do not know what these things are worth. "We had some insurance too," they say, "but we do not now know whether the Insurance Companies can pay." Their stocks and bonds are not salable. Their holders are therefore in perplexity. They have not had the security of God's promises, and they have nothing on which to rest. But the Lord's people have the full assurance of His Word that "*all things* shall work together for good to those who love God"--love Him supremely.

Then let all of us whose eyes have been anointed with the "eye-salve" of Present Truth, who are loyal to the Lord, lift up our voices and point the way to those who are bewildered and troubled, who know not which way to go, nor where to seek for comfort, who long for something substantial upon which to rest, when everything seems to be slipping from beneath their feet. Their religious teachers have failed to be true to their commission, and they have been left to grope in darkness. Some of these may be helped by our efforts and led to the "green pastures" and "still waters" of the true Shepherd's Fold, before the dark night is fully upon the world.

Reprint 5630

“STUDY TO SHOW THYSELF

APPROVED”

“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth.” --2 Tim. 2:15.

THIS TEXT does not say, "Study the Scriptures," but "Study to show thyself approved" --study to know what God would approve. And yet it means, first of all, to study the Revelation He has made. Then, after having come to some knowledge of the Scriptures, we must meditate upon them and consider how the Word is applicable to all of life's affairs. Thus we would study the nature of everything that we come in contact with, as to whether it is good or evil. The word "study" here is used with very much the same thought as when the Apostle says, "*Study to be quiet.*"

Evidently the central thought of this expression is the approving of ourselves to God, not to men. It is proper enough that we should have the approval of all good men and good women. But our study, primarily, should not be along this line. First, we should *study to please God*--to be approved of God. We notice that there is a contemplative study, such as David speaks of when he says, "I meditate upon thy Law day and night"--to see how that Law would work out its height and depth, its length and breadth of influence upon himself. And so the Apostle's thought here is that it should be our chief aim to please God.

"*Rightly dividing the Word of Truth*" would signify the *proper application* of the Word of Truth; the understanding of how and when and where it should be applied and what was the purpose and thought and Plan of the Divine Mind in the giving of this Word of Truth, the Word of God's Message. Up to the advent of our Lord, God's Message had been given chiefly through the Old Testament Scriptures. Then God's Message was attested by Him who came from heaven. Additionally, our Lord left twelve chosen Apostles to be His special mouthpieces, to increase the Word of Truth, to increase the Word of knowledge, to increase the Word of explanation of the Divine Plan. Everything, therefore, that Timothy could recognize as being the Lord's Message he was to give heed to. For instance, one part of God's Message applies to the past, a part applies only to the Jews, still another part applies to Christians in the present life, and yet another part to their future hopes.

WE SHOULD HAVE CLEARER LIGHT THAN HAD OUR FOREFATHERS

And so, as we get the matter rightly divided before our minds, we get the true understanding, the special enlightenment needed in our day, and we are enabled to rightly divide the Word better than did our fathers, so that today we can see, as our fathers did not see, the teaching of God's Word respecting the "high calling" and "restitution"--the spiritual portion of blessing for the Church and the human portion of blessing for the world. We also see something about the times and seasons -- *which* apply to the Church and which to the blessing of the world.

Thus, in our Day, to rightly divide the Word of Truth necessitates the taking cognizance of everything that seems to be of the Lord and that throws any light upon the Word, and thus we may be able to "rightly divide" it. We must always bear in mind that in the Scriptures of the *Old Testament* "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit," and that the Lord also said of the *Apostles*: "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

We are not to forget that the Lord promised that He would guide His people in the way of the Truth and show them things to come. We are to "*study*" to show ourselves approved--*study* the doctrine and endeavor to have our course of conduct harmonize with it--study to perform faithfully the duties of a loyal soldier of the cross of Christ.

The Christian soldier must study to perform even the smallest duty in a manner creditable to his calling; he must not permit himself to become entangled with other things which do not relate to his duties as a soldier and thus be side-tracked. The Christian soldier who turns aside to seek some personal, temporal advantage to the detriment of his duties as a soldier is to that extent an unfaithful soldier and likely to be drawn out of the ranks entirely.

"*Study* to show thyself approved." Study the *Word*; study *yourself*, that you may become well acquainted with yourself; that you may know your talents for service-- in what direction they lie, and what are your weak points and how they may be guarded against--that you may know both your abilities and your shortcomings. Then study to avoid error and to shun all foolish questions and profane and vain babblings. Remember that only "the foundation of God standeth *sure*"; that all other foundations are worthless and that all other theories must come to naught. But "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, "The Lord knoweth them that are His." And let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."--2 Tim. 2:19.

WE SHOULD STUDY TO MAKE OUR IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS MORE AND MORE ACTUAL

There is much significance in the word "study" and it is important to note that this Divine injunction is given to the Church, to those who are believers in Christ and who have consecrated their lives to His service. Having been reckonedly cleansed from sin, we are to give all diligence to the work of studying to make this reckoned cleansing, this imputed righteousness, an actual thing, to the extent of our ability. It is purely of Divine grace that we are reckoned righteous before we are *actually* so. Looking at our hearts and seeing in them, not only our good and honest intentions, but also our desire for righteousness and our efforts to become righteous in the way He would approve, God accepts the will for the deed. Accordingly, He *counts* us as righteous *now* and treats us as His children, since we have been redeemed from the curse and have accepted His gracious provision for reconciliation.

LET US STUDY TO SEE THAT OUR LIVES ARE AN HONOR TO THE CAUSE WE ESPOUSE

Let us, then, *study* our hearts to see that we are striving daily to *cast out* all the old leaven of sin; to be sure that we are not content to allow it to remain in us and *work* in us; otherwise we prove by our course that our love for righteousness is growing weaker. Happy are those who find that they are not merely working down the leavened mass occasionally and allowing it again and again to ferment, but are casting it out, by constantly resisting sin, by cleansing their thoughts, words and deeds with the Truth and cultivating the blessed "fruits of the Spirit"--love, joy, peace, etc.

Only the studious find the way to Divine approval and acceptance. Let us *study* to see that our lives are an honor to the cause we have espoused; that we abstain from even the appearance of evil; that we are circumspect in all our conversation, in our conduct--watching our thoughts, our lips, our lives. Let us *study* to be diligent in every duty, performing it with a ready mind and with joy and gladness of heart. Let us never lose sight of the fact that we are *soldiers*, and that as true soldiers we are to learn to "endure hardness."

A soldier has many trivial duties to perform and he is as really doing his duty as a soldier when he is polishing his armor, foraging, cooking his meals, cleaning camp or building bridges for the army to pass over, as when he is fighting the enemy. Such things are incidental work, but are necessary and entirely consistent with his commission as a soldier and should not be regarded as entanglements and hindrances. These duties cannot be disregarded nor carelessly done without a measure of unfaithfulness.

WHATEVER OUR CAPTAIN HAS RECOGNIZED AND APPROVED IS PROPER FOR US

So with the Christian soldier. The routine of life-- housework, shop work, daily toil, anything, everything, incidental to a proper and honest provision of "*things needful*" for ourselves and those dependent upon us for support, as well as for provision for the prosecution and care of the Lord's work--all this is a proper part of our engagement as soldiers of the Lord.

The Apostle Peter was as truly serving the Lord when catching the fish from whose mouth he got the coin with which to pay his Master's taxes and his own, as when proclaiming, on the day of Pentecost, the "raising up" and ascension of the Lord. The Apostle Paul was as truly a soldier of the cross and doing his proper work as such when making tents (rather than be chargeable to any) as when at Mars Hill he preached Jesus and the resurrection. Whatever is done with a view to the glory and honor of our Lord, the Captain of our salvation, or for the benefit of any of our fellow-soldiers, or for our own *preparation* for this warfare, or in the discharge of obligations which our Captain has recognized and approved, is proper work for us as soldiers and is not entanglement in the affairs of this life.

Reprint 4838

OUR REASONABLE SERVICE

“I beseech you therefore, brethren by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”--Romans 12:1.

THIS exhortation of St. Paul's is based upon the preceding statements of the eleventh chapter of this same Epistle, as is shown by the connecting word therefore--because of those things recited in that chapter. The eleventh chapter tells of the mercies of God toward both Natural Israel and Spiritual Israel--not so much to the world. But the tenth chapter takes up in elaborate form the mercies of God toward all His creatures. In this Epistle the Apostle is addressing those who had been Gentiles. In view of these mercies of God (His Plan of Salvation and the call of some of the Gentiles to take the places in the Body of Christ, lost by Natural Israel) St. Paul exhorts his hearers to present their bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable.

The question naturally arises, Whom did the Apostle address? He evidently is using these words as an exhortation, not to the world, but to believers. The introduction to the Epistle indicates that it was written to those already consecrated. But evidently some connected with the Church at Rome had not yet made a consecration. Some who were believers, who had come to a knowledge of the Lord and had counted the cost of self-sacrifice, but who had not given themselves fully to the Lord, might yet become brethren in the Truth in the full sense. The Apostle's words would apply equally to both classes-- those who had presented their bodies living sacrifices, and those contemplating doing so. It would have been fully as proper to say, Brethren, you who have already given yourselves to the Lord, I beseech you that you fulfil your Vow of Consecration; for your bodies are holy and acceptable to God.

The Heavenly Father never forces anybody; but He tells them that He is willing to accept sacrifices, and that now is the acceptable time to present them. He sets forth the fact that self-denial and sacrifice are the only terms upon which one can come into fellowship with Him. But nowhere does He urge or command any one to make a consecration. To do so would be to change the matter from sacrifice to obligation; and the very thought of sacrifice is in opposition to requirement.

THE TERMS OF DISCIPLESHIP

Our best example of what we should do is shown by our Lord and the Apostles, the chief members of God's royal family. Our Lord did not seek to entrap any into His service--as we see done today. On the contrary, He proceeded along high and noble lines. He said, "Come unto Me, all ye that are oppressed and heavy-laden." This is an appeal to reason. If you have found that you are sin-sick, come unto Me--I have the will and the way to help you to come to the Father.

When talking to the young ruler of the synagogue, our Lord set forth the terms of discipleship. He did not say, Never mind; do not make it too serious a matter. On the contrary, He stated just what are the terms of consecration. No man could be His disciple unless he would surrender all. To this rich young man our Lord showed that with all his morality there was

inconsistency. He possessed wealth, and should use that wealth to the glory of the Lord. He must not be selfish, or he could not be Christ's disciple.

The young man might have said, I have some children for whom I must make provision. But the Lord said, Give all that you have to God. A parent can consecrate his children, so far as he is concerned. The Lord would not ask any one to do that which he was unable to do. But he said, "Take up your cross and follow Me," if you would be My disciple.--Mark 10:21.

Again our Lord said, "He that putteth his hand to the plow, and looketh back, is not fit for the Kingdom." (Luke 9:62.) We should make up our mind to use all of our powers, or else stand aside. The Lord's method should be our guide. We should not try to entrap any one or resort to hocus-pocus to convince any one. We should not plead what there is to be gained in a material way by becoming a Christian. We should tell people that there is no other way to come into Christ but by the way of the cross. We cannot reach Him in any other way. It is the *Lord's* way or no way. We must bear the cross, as He bore it. We believe that we do the people more good by setting forth the Message with no uncertain sound than trying to entrap them. Nevertheless, in putting before them the trials and cross, we should also put before them the glory to follow.

TEXT APPLIED TO THE CONSECRATED

To those who have already made a consecration the thought would be, You have entered into a Covenant with God to follow Jesus. You have given up your own human will. Remember that this includes your mortal body. Continue the work of presenting your body--of dying daily. Keep before your mind this Covenant of Sacrifice; for it is not yet fulfilled. The mere *promise* to fulfil a covenant is not *fulfilling* it.

The Father begets us of the Holy Spirit, and gives us the great privileges that belong to those who have become New Creatures in Christ. Then it is for us to go forward, and day by day lay down our lives in His service. It would be appropriate, therefore, for the Apostle to say to such, Lay down your lives daily. Remember that it is your mortal bodies which you are to sacrifice in the Lord's service. It is yourselves as old creatures, human beings, and not as New Creatures, that are being sacrificed. Yours is a living sacrifice in the sense that this body, reckonedly passed out of sin, is being continually sacrificed. It is not given to *preserve*, or to be your everlasting possession; but it is your covenant and privilege to accomplish the sacrifice of your flesh. Therefore I beseech you to do this.

TEXT APPLIED TO THE TENTATIVELY JUSTIFIED

To those whose justification has not been vitalized, the text might mean, You are desirous of serving God. This is indicated in your attending the meetings of the Church. The fact that you assemble with the saints of this congregation signifies that you love holy things-- that you desire to know the will of God. Now then, brethren, I beseech you to make a full consecration of yourselves to God. Consider your body as a living sacrifice --not that you are to commit suicide and destroy your body, but that you are to esteem your body a living sacrifice, day by day using your strength and your life in the Lord's service.

The exhortation, "Present your bodies," then, would seem to be applicable both to the consecrated and to those who are following on to know the Lord. The next statement should be understood to be in harmony--"holy and acceptable to God." If this statement be taken in relation to those who are already consecrated, then the Apostle is saying, This vitalization of your justification

which the Lord has granted you has constituted you holy. And because the Lord counts you holy, and yourselves wholly acceptable to Him, you should continue to do good works --complete the good work which you have begun. The sacrifice being esteemed of God holy and acceptable, the results will be grand and glorious.

This exhortation, viewed from the standpoint of one who has not completed his consecration, might be understood to mean, if you take this step of consecration, remember that then the merit of Christ will be imputed to you, and that through the arrangement which He has made in Christ God is willing to accept you.

CONSECRATION TO DEATH MOST REASONABLE

Every one who recognizes God's mercies and blessings finds it a "reasonable service" to sacrifice the earthly things for the precious privilege of serving Him. If it was a reasonable service for Jesus to leave the Heavenly glory, to become a man, and to sacrifice Himself unto death, then surely ours is most reasonable. We, being imperfect, have very little to give; and when there is an opportunity for showing our appreciation of the Heavenly Father, then we should make haste to use it.

The Father made a proposition to the Lord Jesus, and it is not to be supposed that He would suggest anything but a reasonable service. To have asked Jesus to sacrifice His life for humanity without any reward of a future life would have been a most unreasonable thing. The Father set before the Redeemer a great joy, to be the recompense of His obedience. And so with us. The Lord does not invite us to sacrifice ourselves at the present time without any reward from Him. He tells us that if we do this He will make us joint-heirs with His Son, participators with Him in all the joys of the Kingdom.

CONSECRATION NOT THE END OF OUR WORK

The term *Brethren* may be viewed from two different standpoints. On the one hand, we may apply it to those who are in the state of prospective justification, in a justified attitude of mind, and whose justification is growing by every step they take toward God. On the other hand, it would refer to those who have become brethren in the fullest sense--who have taken the step of consecration, and whose consecration has been accepted by the Father through the Lord Jesus. With these there is a continual, a daily presentation. This morning we presented ourselves before the Lord and asked His blessing on the day. It is a presentation day by day and hour by hour. It is a constant surrender of self-will, in this way and in that way--a daily waving of our offering before the Lord. So it was with our Lord Jesus. He not only made the full consecration at the beginning, but day by day He laid down His life, until the sacrifice was completed on Calvary.

For one to make a consecration of his time and his talents, and then to withhold his offering, would insure his not gaining the great prize for which the Father invited him to run. The Great Company will be made up of those who have presented their bodies, but who neglected their opportunities for laying down their lives--their time, influence, money, all--in the Lord's service. This neglect will lose them their place in the Throne, their privilege of being a part of the Bride class. The Bride will be made up of those who not only have presented their bodies in the beginning, but have faithfully continued that presentation unto death.

CONSTRAINED BY GOD'S MERCIES

The Apostle states the reason why we should make this presentation of ourselves as being the "mercies of God"--"I beseech you by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies." God's mercies are to a certain extent over all. He sends His sunshine and His rain upon the evil as well as upon the good. For many centuries God's special mercies were granted only to the Jews. But the arrangement of God's Plan is such that Gentiles, as well as Jews, may now come into God's favor. God broke down the middle wall of partition through Christ, and thus gave all people an opportunity to come back into harmony with Him and to have Him as their Father, their Life-Giver, and through Christ to share His blessings.

As many as see and hear and have the eyes of their understanding opened, should consider this a reason for a full consecration, a full surrender, to the Lord. It is truly a most reasonable service, as the Apostle points out; and the prize which He attaches to the matter makes it unspeakably desirable and precious. It would be very unreasonable to accept God's marvelous favors and then neglect to live up to the conditions attached to them. If we really *believe* God, if we have a proper faith in His exceeding great and precious promises, we will joyfully and faithfully meet the requirements.

A lady said to us recently: You put more stress on godly living than we in our Church have done. You say, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved." You put a special stress on *believing*. Yes, we replied, this word *believe* has a most important bearing on the entire matter. If we should say to you that if on your way home today you would stop at a certain house, of a certain number, you would find, in a particular corner under the steps, a little bag, and that it contained valuable treasure which should be yours--if you believed our words you would go and get that bag. If you said that you believed us, and then went another way altogether, we would be sure that you had not believed us. Your course would prove it.

Now the Lord has offered us the opportunity of being joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord in "an inheritance incorruptible and individual and that fadeth not away." If we believe this fact, we will seek to know just what the conditions are. Whoever really believes will find that the conditions are very easy in comparison with the great reward. But if he fails to put forth his greatest effort to win this great prize, he will show that he has not believed the Message; for if he recognizes the offer and *believes* it, he will surely be eager to lay aside every weight and encumbrance and run patiently to the end to obtain the crown.--Hebrews 12:1,2.

THE COMPLETENESS OF OUR OFFERING

It is, therefore, a reasonable service. The Apostle tells us the conditions. All who would have this great blessing must offer themselves living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God. It is ours to present our bodies. It is not the New Creature who does the presenting; there is no New Creature at the time the body is presented. Our natural mind discerned from the Message of the Lord that there is a more excellent way--of harmony with the Lord--and we desired to come thus into harmony with Him. And that new, or changed, will presents our earthly interests and *all that we have in sacrifice*. We are altogether *human* when we offer ourselves to the Lord. We are then begotten to a new mind, a new hope, and thus are New Creatures.

While we present ourselves to God, we do not come to Him directly with our presentation. We come through the great High Priest--as in the type, the offering of the Lord's goat was presented by the high priest. We come to the Father through the Redeemer. We do not offer a justified sacrifice, but come with all our sins, for cleansing in that fountain opened for us. The sentiment of our hearts is:

"Just as I am without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee--
O Lamb of God, I come!"

But God could not accept a sacrifice in that imperfect condition; it is only as we come through the Priest that He recognizes us. If we were *perfect*, we might come in our own name; but we are not perfect, and so we come only through this High Priest, Jesus. The great High Priest then imputes His merit, and includes our sacrifice as a part of His own. The Divine blessing then comes upon us--we are begotten of the Holy Spirit. Thenceforth we are New Creatures in Christ. We have been presented in God's way and have been accepted.

REFUSAL TO ACCEPT SHOWS LACK OF APPRECIATION

Now we are dead; and our life is hid with Christ in God. We presented our bodies, and they were made living sacrifices: they were then received by God and were slain with Christ and we arose to walk in newness of life. By the *body* is meant also all the earthly interests, both present, past and future--every interest that we ever had or might ever have. Such a one gives up all the hope or right he might otherwise have had in a future Restitution. The covenant is a complete one. The sacrifice of such became holy and acceptable to God as soon as the merit of Jesus was imputed; and our offering continues to be acceptable to the end. And as day by day we lay down our lives in the Lord's service, it brings us more and more of the Lord's blessings, and we are more and more filled with His Spirit.

To render all that we have in the service of the Lord is not only a most reasonable thing, but an offering far too small. It is far less than we would gladly render to Him who has manifested toward us such wondrous compassion and grace. When God has offered us so great a reward and blessing in return for our poor lives, we should feel that a refusal to accept this offer would be an indication not only of a pitiful lack of appreciation of Infinite Goodness, but also a weakness of mind. It would show a puerility of judgment which is unable to weigh and compare the trifling and transitory pleasures of self-will for this brief life with an eternity of joy and blessing and glory on the Divine plane, far above angels and principalities and powers and every name that is named, next to our glorious Lord and Head--a station so glorious, so exalted, that no human mind can grasp its infinitude. Let us be faithful--even unto death!

Reprint 5422

“THIS ONE THING I DO”

“I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”--1 Cor. 2:2.

THE TALENTED APOSTLE PAUL gives in another place his testimony as to the wisdom of shaking off some of our plans and arrangements and of relaxing our efforts in various directions in order to concentrate our energies upon those things which we can best bring to perfection, saying, "This *one thing* I do." (Phil. 3:13.) The Apostle's one business in life was to be, so far as he was able, acceptable to the Lord, personally, and to do with his might what he could to assist others into the same condition.

In harmony with this, the thought of our text seems to be that whatever the Apostle knew respecting other matters prominent in his day--customs of the Age, scientific questions, etc.--he would ignore. He would be a *specialist*. He would confine his thoughts, words and teachings along this *one line*; for he thought it was worthy. He had been at Corinth as an ambassador of Christ. He was not there to air his knowledge, but to tell the *message of the Kingdom*. He would make preaching the Gospel his one business, to accomplish which he felt that all of his knowledge and energy were too little.

The Apostle did not determine to ignore all of his knowledge without having a good reason, or purpose therefor. It was because he wished to concentrate all of his attention and influence upon one great subject. That subject was Jesus Christ, Jesus the Anointed; Jesus the Messiah was the main thought of all his preaching. He realized that the great Messiah was a part of the Divine Program which had been promised--the "Seed" which was to bless all the families of the earth; that Jesus was that great Messiah, and that all men should recognize Him, should flock to His standard.

But St. Paul would preach, not only that Jesus was the Messiah, but that He was the *crucified Messiah*, for he would not be ashamed of the Divine teaching. He would preach that God sent forth His Son; and that the Son had left the glory He had with the Father, had lived on the earth, and had "died, the Just for the unjust," for this very purpose--that He might manifest His obedience to the Divine arrangement. In thus preaching Christ and His crucifixion, the Apostle was not ignoring the fact that there was to be a Church; Jesus was the Anointed Head over His Body, the Church. Hence, in preaching Jesus the Anointed One, St. Paul was showing how the Divine Plan was being outworked under Divine supervision, and what the glorious results would be. To these things he had determined that all his time and attention should go.

How evident it is that today many ministers have lost something possessed by the Apostle, who thus recognized the importance of the Gospel of Christ! This loss very largely accounts for the various peculiar topics advertised for religious meetings; sometimes the topic is politics; sometimes temperance; sometimes woman-suffrage. The reason for this change from the old-time style of preaching is that during the Dark Ages the Gospel became perverted, misrepresented; and that now people are ashamed of what was formerly preached--"Be *good* and go to *heaven*; be *bad* and go to *hell*!" It is not a great message. We cannot wonder that an astute mind grasps the whole thing in a

few minutes. We are rather glad, indeed, that ministers are ashamed to preach what their creeds profess, and that, therefore, their creeds must be kept in the background.

“NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST”

For us, however, who see the importance of the Gospel, the case is different. We know that this Gospel of the Kingdom, of which the Apostle was not ashamed, teaches that the elect Church is to be the Bride of Christ; that Messiah is to bless the whole world; that Jesus is the Messiah; that He was crucified, dead, buried, raised from the dead by His Father; that His crucifixion was a part of the great Divine Plan, and that without this very arrangement no salvation could be effected, either for the Church, or for the world in the future. Therefore, as the Apostle did, we are preaching Jesus, the Crucified One, who died for our sins, who rose again for our justification, and who, coming in glory with His Church, is the great Messiah, to bless the world through natural Israel.

Because we have found the Truth we, like St. Paul, feel constrained to preach nothing but this Message. The same truth that influenced Him should influence us. If, therefore, any of the brethren feel disposed to go out after the manner of Babylon and preach something else, here is the *reproof*--"Not . . . anything save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." This is the only subject. St. Paul would be as though he *knew nothing else*. This subject would be the one thing to which he would give his time and attention. Let it be so with us!

Beloved, as you value the glorious hope set before you, we beseech you that you give no heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, as the Apostle terms them (I Tim. 4:1); but that with fixedness of purpose you apply yourselves to the one thing to which you are called, and which as prospective heirs of Messiah's Kingdom you are privileged to do. Let us not forget that we are a "peculiar people," separate from the great body of nominal Christians, as well as from the world, having higher hopes, aims and ambitions, and favored with a clearer insight into the deep things of God, having been called out of our former darkness into His marvelous light. Thus separate from the world and from Christians who partake largely of the spirit of the world, what wonder if we find them all out of harmony with us, and either ignoring or opposing us!

We expect such opposition; and we know that it will continue until our course has been finished in death. If we endure hardness as good soldiers for the Truth's sake, no matter how that hardness may come, in our efforts to do the Lord's will and to advance the interests of His Kingdom, then we are presenting our bodies as living sacrifices in the Divine service. To be really in His service includes both the careful and continual study of God's Plan, and the imbibing of its spirit, leading to an enthusiastic zeal for its accomplishment, and to activity to the extent of ability in its service, whatever the cost or sacrifice it may require.

If faithful in this service we have neither time nor disposition to give heed to other themes having no bearing on the one thing to which we have solemnly dedicated our lives. If we have consecrated all to *God* our time is not *our own*; and consequently we have none to spare for the investigation of theories built upon any other foundation than that laid down in the Bible. Nor have we time to devote to the ideas and pursuits which engross the world's attention, many of which are harmless or even elevating in themselves, but which would be harmful and degrading to us if we

allow them to occupy consecrated time and to divert our attention from the one thing we ought to be doing.

The Apostle warns us to "Shun profane and vain babblings; for they will increase unto more ungodliness"; but counsels, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth"; "Teach no other doctrine, neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions rather than godly edifying which is in faith."--2 Tim. 2:16, 15; I Tim. 1:3, 4.

HOW NARROW THIS WAY!

Is not this a very narrow way? Yes, so narrow that our Lord foretold respecting it, "Strait [difficult] is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto [the] life, and few there be that find it!" (Matt. 7:14.) It is so narrow that it is wide enough to admit only the Lord's Plan and those who are willing to discard all other plans, projects and questionings, and to devote themselves fully to its service; and who are quite willing to bear any reproach it may bring.

Are you endeavoring from day to day to vindicate the Divine character and to make known God's righteous ways? Are you diligently studying to make yourself thoroughly familiar with the Truth, so that you may indeed be a living epistle known and read of all men within the circle of your influence? Are you indeed a workman that need not be ashamed (2 Tim. 2:15)? Are you of those who have really given themselves to the Lord, saying truthfully to Him:

"Take myself--I will to be
Ever, only, all for Thee"?

If so, you are just narrow minded enough to say, "This one thing I do; and I make everything else bend to this one thing of showing forth God's praises and of helping others into His marvelous light; and to this end I cultivate and use what talents I possess as a wise steward of my Heavenly Father."

Dearly beloved, we impose neither vows nor bondage upon each other, but the call has its own limitations; the Master has directed us to teach all nations (for the Gospel is no longer confined to the Jewish nation), not astronomy nor geology nor any of the vain philosophies about which the world speculate, but--"*Observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.*"--Matt. 28:20.

This is what the Apostle Paul did. Hear him in his zeal for this one thing to which he had devoted his life: "And I, brethren, when I came unto you, came not with the excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the mystery of God; for I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. [I riveted your attention on this one thing! I kept this one thing continually before you.]... And my speech and my preaching were not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and power [of the Truth], that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."--I Cor. 2:1-5.

St. Paul was an outspoken, uncompromising teacher. When he knew that he had the Truth, he spoke it with confidence, and boldly declared that everything contrary to it is *false doctrine*. He also taught believers that it was not only their privilege, but their duty to be established in the faith, to know on the evidence of God's Word, why they believed, and to be able to give to every man that inquired a reason for the hope that was in them.

Let it be so with us also. Each consecrated believer should ask himself, "How carefully have I studied that which I recognize as Divine Truth? How fully capable am I of handling the Sword of the Spirit?" Few indeed are those who can say they have fully digested and assimilated all they have received; and that they have let none of these things slip from memory; that they have so treasured it up in their hearts that it is their meditation by day and by night; that they have a ready answer--a "Thus saith the Lord"--for every man that asks them a reason for the hope that is in them, concerning any point of doctrine; that they can clearly and intelligently portray the Divine Plan, quote the Divine authority for each successive step of it, and, if need be, point out its place in the Divine system of types. To gain such proficiency in the Word is the work of a lifetime; but every day should see a closer approximation to that proficiency, and will if we are faithful students and faithful servants of the Truth.

If all the consecrated were thus busily engaged in putting on the armor of God, and in proving it by actual use in zealous endeavor to herald the Truth and to help others to stand, there would be no time left for even good temperance reform work, nor for work among the slums of the great cities, nor for the doctrine of healing, nor any such things. We have no consecrated time for these matters, which are only side issues and not harmful in themselves, except as they divert attention and consume time which has been consecrated to another and higher use. All these works will be effectually accomplished in the "Times of Restitution" (Acts 3:19-22), now in the near future. Besides, there are others engaged in these works; we recognize and seek to accomplish the work set before *us* in the Divine Plan.

In all the history of the Church there has never been a time in which the great Adversary has been so active in diverting attention from the Truth by introducing unprofitable and irrelevant questions as at present. Just now, when the exaltation and glory of the Church are soon to be accomplished, and when the faithful are about to be received into the joy of their Lord, Satan is resorting to every device in order to beguile them of their reward and to frustrate this feature of the Divine Plan.

But really to frustrate any part of the Divine Plan is impossible. God has purposed to take out from among men a "little flock," "a people for His name"; and such a company is assuredly being gathered. Yet whether all those now in the race for the prize will surely be of that company, is still an open question. Take heed, beloved, that no man take *thy crown*. (Rev. 3:11.) If any come short of their privileges and prove unworthy of the rich inheritance, there are others who will quickly fill their places.

Our observation of those consecrated ones who have permitted other themes than this "Gospel of the Kingdom" to engross time and attention, leads us to advise such to be very jealous in husbanding time and talent for the ministry of the Gospel, leaving all subjects outside of this, however interesting they may be, to those who prefer to devote time to them now; and to the future life for ourselves, when all knowledge shall be ours. We have invariably observed that those who, for any avoidable cause, have turned aside from the true and only Gospel, are quickly turned out of the way or greatly hindered in their course toward the "prize" of our "high calling."

May we, dear brethren, be able truthfully to express our position in the words of the Apostle: "This *one thing* I do; forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus"; "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."--Phil. 3:13, 14; I Cor. 2:2.

“TAKE HEED TO YOURSELVES AND THE FLOCK”

--ACTS 20:2-38--

Golden Text:--“I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me.”--Phil. 4:13.

WHEN St. Paul fled from Ephesus, after the rioting, he made a tour of the European Churches which he had founded. Passing through Macedonia to the city of Corinth he came by vessel again to Miletus, about fifty miles south of Ephesus. He was accompanied by representatives of several of the churches of Asia Minor. He was en route for Jerusalem, for whose poor at his suggestion collections had been made in the four provinces in which he had been preaching. Seven delegates accompanied him, representatives of the Church at Thessalonica, Berea, Derbe and Ephesus. These visits are supposed to have consumed several months of time, and now, at Miletus, he would have his final opportunity of bidding goodby to the Elders of the Ephesus Church. The vessel on which the party were to go to the Jerusalem port was detained indefinitely at Miletus, so word was sent to the Elders at Ephesus and they came to Miletus.

Our lesson specially calls to our attention the Apostle's address to these Elders. We are not to understand this as a boastful statement, but rather as a plain rehearsal of matters which his hearers would fully concede and of which he boasted nothing. The rehearsal was given, not for his own sake, not as indicating personal vanity and self-praise, but with a view to quickening the recollection of his hearers and making the lesson of the hour more impressive upon them. He reminded them that for the space of three years they had known him intimately, the manner of his life, his devotion to the Lord, to the service of the Truth and to the service of the brethren. He reminded them of his humility of mind; that he had not been with them as a boaster; that his conduct had not been haughty and overbearing; that he had not sought to "lord it" over the Church, but on the contrary, he had endured amongst them many trials and difficulties with the Jews, with "false brethren."

They knew of his work, his endurance and of his holding back nothing from them that would be helpful to them; that he had taught them both publicly and privately as circumstances opened to him opportunities. He had testified both to Jews and to Greeks that there is only the one Gospel of Christ, to be accepted through faith and turning away from sin. By calling attention to these elements of his own character he was laying the foundation for his subsequent exhortation to them that they should copy his zeal, his fidelity. He had been a faithful overseer or bishop, watching over their interests. He had been a faithful pastor, guiding their welfare and seeing to their nourishment in spiritual things. Knowing the truthfulness of these presentations and having the whole situation in mind, they would be the better prepared to receive from such an one his parting exhortation--the great lesson which he had to give them.

“BOUND IN THE SPIRIT”

He informed the brethren that although possessed of his physical liberty he felt a bondage or restraint upon his mind that he could not shake off; that he must go to Jerusalem; that this was the Lord's providence for him; and that at the same time he received assurances from others through the "gifts" that bonds and imprisonment awaited him at Jerusalem. Then he adds these courageous words: "But none of these things move me; neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus to testify the Gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the Kingdom of God, shall see my face no more." The Apostle had become apparently more intimately acquainted with the Ephesus Church than with any of the others. Apparently it was one of the most flourishing of them all. He had, by the Lord's providence, spent more time with them, and evidently the results procured justified the prolonged stay. Partings between friends are always grievous. And parting with no hope of seeing each other again this side the veil is a doubly severe ordeal.

“PREACHING THE KINGDOM OF GOD”

Incidentally we note the message which the Apostle delivered and which he here particularly emphasizes as the Gospel of Christ--"preaching the Kingdom of God." It is right that we should recognize that this is the same Gospel which we are preaching today, or, if not, that we are not preaching aright. The grace of God was manifested in the gift of his Son, that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man. The grace of God was further manifested in an outline of how the death of Christ was designed to bring blessings to our race:

(1) By ultimately establishing a Kingdom under the whole heavens for the rule of mankind; for the suppression of sin and death; for the uplifting of those bound by these enemies.

(2) As a precedent to that general blessing to the world, for which we pray, "Thy Kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven," the Divine proclamation first calls out the "little flock" to be joint-heirs with their dear Redeemer in that Kingdom. Thank God that these precious truths, respecting the grace of God and the Kingdom of God, so long covered and hidden from our sight by the traditions of the dark ages, are now coming forward, are now being revealed by the enlightenment of our eyes by the Spirit--that we might know the things that are freely given us of God, and that thus we might be assisted in making our calling and our election sure!

No wonder the Apostle could add the forceful words, "I testify unto you this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men; for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." What he preached to the Church at Ephesus during his three years' stay amongst them is surely the same message which, by Divine arrangement, has come down to us in his epistles addressed to the various churches. We note that St. Paul's message contained not one word respecting eternal torment, which is no part of the Divine Plan. Surely from these epistles we now assent that St. Paul was very patient in reproofing, instructing, encouraging the Lord's dear people. He was much used of the Lord because he had given himself so thoroughly to the Lord.

Herein we note the difference between the operation of the holy Spirit of God and the operation of the unholy spirits, the fallen angels. In both cases the control increases in proportion as the individual relinquishes his own will. Fortunately for humanity we all possess an inherent dread of self-surrender. Had it not been for this natural tendency, this natural self-will, doubtless the whole world today would be obsessed by the evil angels, or, at least, more largely under their control. Even amongst spirit mediums there is generally only a partial yielding of the will and an urging by the spirits toward a full self-surrender. Spirit mediums, however, are freely warned through their journals

and books that there is great danger in a complete surrender of the will, lest an evil spirit gain full possession--obsess the medium. Alas! poor mediums! They know not that all of the spirits which communicate through them are evil spirits, demons, fallen angels, who, at times, personate human beings and represent themselves as our dead friends.

Not even husbands and wives dare fully to surrender to each other their wills without danger of injury. Nor should parents seek to coerce their children to a condition of entire will-lessness. To whatever extent they do this they injure the child, detract from its personality and make it a more easy dupe for the fallen angels.

The One, the only One, to whom we dare submit our wills fully, completely, is the Lord. He invites this full submission of the will to him; and we, in his name and as his ambassadors, may freely invite our children, our friends, our neighbors, to this same full submission of their hearts to the Lord. The more fully consecrated the will the greater the submission, the more blessed should be the experience--the greater the usefulness in the Lord's service. This is the substance of St. Paul's exhortation, "Be ye filled with the Spirit," sanctified, set apart wholly unto the Lord. In proportion as this condition of consecration or will submission is attained-- in such proportion we may be used of the Lord as his mouthpieces, his instruments, ready for his service, the service of the Truth, the service of the flock. St. Paul was a noble example of such a full self-consecration to the Lord; of such a filling with the Spirit; of such an emptying of self-will; of such a deadness to the world, its will, its plans, its service.

No wonder the Apostle was able to assure the brethren that they might follow him, as he was following Christ. Christ was filled with the Father's Spirit. St. Paul, a [R4458 : page 253] loyal follower in his footsteps, had a similar filling experience though of smaller capacity. And all who will live godly in Christ Jesus must similarly be filled with his Spirit, the will of Christ, the will of the Father--and be dead to earthly ambitions. The Apostle's thought in calling the elders was to impress upon them that, like himself, they not only were consecrated to the Lord, but, as teachers in the Church, they had a double responsibility --in respect to themselves and in respect to the Church of which the Lord had made them overseers.

Notice his words, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock in the which the holy Spirit hath made you overseers (bishops) to feed the Church of God, which he purchased with the blood of his own (Son)."--V. 28.

Several points in this are worthy of careful attention. The revised version, quoted above, says, "In the which the holy Spirit hath made you bishops," thus agreeing that the general Scripture statement that the elders of the Church are not over the Church in the sense of a superior, or "clergy," class, but in the Church--members of it--overseeing members, assisting members, by appointment of the Lord through the channel of the Church. Note the two points:

(1) They needed to take heed to themselves and to take heed to the flock. Whoever attempts to do shepherding in the Church will need, first of all, to watch himself lest he fall into temptation, for, as the Apostle declares, Those who accept the position of Elders in the Church, pastors, overseers, are exposed to special trials, special difficulties. They need primarily to take heed to themselves, lest, having preached to others, they themselves become castaways.

(2) Those who accept the ministry or service of the Church as Elder-Brothers under the Divine regulation should realize that they have assumed a weighty responsibility respecting which they must "give an account to God." (Rom. 14:12.) This does not mean fault-finding with the

brethren. It does not mean merely preaching to them; nor merely visiting the sick and counseling the troubled. It means an oversight, a care of all the interests of the congregation and the individuals of it in their every detail. Those who are over-charged with the cares of this life are not in a condition, in any sense of the word, to accept the responsibilities of this service in the Church of the living God and should not be invited to do so; should not be voted for as Elders. Only those who seek first the interests of the Lord's Kingdom and the righteousness which it represents are in any sense or degree properly suited to such service in the Church. They should consider it a part of their responsibility to notice how the dear brethren and sisters are progressing, especially in their spiritual interests. They should feel it a part of their duty to warn, to encourage, to assist all of these, as opportunity may offer.

It is not the prerogative of all the brethren and sisters in the Church to endeavor to set each other right, unless it be in some *personal* matter specially related to themselves; then Matt. 18:15 should be strictly followed. An Elder, however, by his very election, has been asked to take such an oversight of the affairs of the congregation, to give such advice, to give such reproofs, as the nature of the case may seem to demand--in meekness, remembering himself also, lest he should be tempted, if not along the same lines, then possibly along some other line of temptation. He, too, of course, should follow Matt. 18:15.

GRIEVOUS WOLVES AND PERVERSE TALKERS

The Apostle, by way of impressing this duty of oversight upon the elders, reminds them that the Lord purchased this flock with the precious blood of the Lamb of God and that this value in the Lord's sight should be so deeply impressed upon their minds that they would be willing to lay down their lives for the brethren in any service which they could render.

Emphasizing the caution already given, the Apostle prophetically declared that there would be great need of their taking heed to themselves, because *of their own selves*, of the flock itself, and especially amongst the Elders, men would arise speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them; desirous of being leaders, they would not hesitate to produce a schism or division in the Church to help along their ambition. The word perverse (here) in the original signified *distorted, twisted*. The thought is that those who begin to lose the Spirit of the Lord, begin to lose their clearness of appreciation of the Truth. As personal and selfish ambitions cloud their vision they see the Scriptures more vaguely and feel free to twist or distort them to make them support their ambitious sentiments. How true the Apostle's words; how great a danger there is along these lines, especially to the Elders, the overseers of the flock! Evidently selfish ambition is one of the greatest of foes with which they must contend.

Nor do these ambitions suddenly germinate, bloom and bear fruit; the process is a gradual one and hence the more dangerous, the more deceptive, the less likely to have our notice. How important then that all of the Lord's flock, and especially the elders, take heed to themselves and scrutinize their conduct, and, above all, the motives lying behind their deeds! Let us remember that absolute purity of the will is essential. Every admixture of selfishness, however little, is a poisonous virus which, if unchecked, would lead to the Second Death. "Take heed to yourselves," is the admonition, for, the Apostle goes on to say, that of their own selves should men arise telling truths in a distorted fashion, for the purpose of drawing away disciples after them; for the purpose of being leaders in the flock; for the purpose of having praise and honor of men. Ah, how dear the price--the loss of Divine favor and of eternal life!

"Grievous wolves" are ferocious wolves. For a time they may deceive the sheep by an outward manner and outward profession, covering their wolfish nature. They and the outward conduct by which they deceive are Scripturally designated, "Wolves in sheep's clothing." The Shepherd certainly knows their character before it becomes manifest to the sheep; but the docile, innocent sheep are deceived until these wolves begin biting and devouring and scattering the flock. The howls of anger, malice, hatred, envy and strife are noted in the Scriptures as "works of the flesh and of the devil"--not works of righteousness and peace and love, the Spirit of the Lord. The wolf does injury with his mouth and so do these-- slandering, backbiting and doing every evil work.

St. Paul warned the Elders of the Ephesus Ecclesia what to expect, and his words are true. Hymenaeus and Alexander, Phygellus and Hermogenes, and Philetus are mentioned by name. (1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 1:15; 2:17.) The same principles are still at work. The same warning still needs to be heeded. Indeed, the Scriptures in general imply that the severest experiences along these same lines are due to come upon the Church in "the evil day" with which this Gospel dispensation will close.

"NIGHT AND DAY WITH TEARS"

"Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." Here are two points set before us; first, the duty of the Elders of the Church to watch against these evils so graphically portrayed; to watch for the interests of the flock as against the wolves; to watch to give the wolves as little opportunity as possible to tear the flock and backbite them, and to warn the sheep lest any of them, becoming inoculated with the rabies of the wolves, should display signs of hydrophobia and begin backbiting one another, with the usual symptoms of hydrophobia--with an apparent thirst for water (Truth) yet a refusal to drink it.

Second, the elders are to watch also against those sure to arise "of your own selves." Proper watching will begin with our own hearts, saying, Lord, is it I? And proper watching will in time discern such characters as Hymenaeus and Philetus and, following the Apostle's example, will expose them--not from any feeling of bitterness towards them, but in the interests of and for the protection of the flock. St. Paul reminds the brethren that such was his own course--one of great watchfulness, interest, care, over them and over all the Churches of Asia Minor. The expression, "Night and day with tears," shows us clearly that the great Apostle felt properly the weight of responsibility resting upon him as a servant of God and an ambassador of the King of kings and an over-shepherd and overseer of the Lord's flock--as a "minister of the New Covenant," delegated by the Great Head to assist in calling out those who will be the members of his Body, for their instruction and building up in the "most holy faith," that eventually they might all come to the full measure of the stature of manhood in the Body of Christ, as the great Mediator, Prophet, Priest and King of the world.

DIVINE ASSISTANCE PROVIDED

The exhortation closed thus, "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." The Apostle's thought seems to have been that his words, his earnest exhortation, might not only awaken them, but have them to inquire as to what defences could be depended upon for the crisis thus pointed out. He draws attention to the fact that God, the great Center of all our blessings, from whom comes every good and perfect gift, is on our part, is on the part of all those who are seeking to cooperate with his arrangements. By way of further explanation he mentions the Scriptures, the Word of God's grace, the Gospel message. He tells them that they, and we also, may

be assured that the Word of God is able to build us up, to give us the necessary development of character, of heart and head, and to give us ultimately a share in the great inheritance which God has in reservation for all those who are sanctified by this message.

Let us lay this well to heart: neglect of God's Word of grace, neglect of his promises means a deficiency of strength to bear the trial which is our portion. It means also the opening of the door for Satan to put light for darkness and darkness for light for our confusion. It means that those who will not give strict heed in following might be unable to distinguish between the bleating of the sheep and "the midnight howl" of the wolf; might be unable to distinguish between those who are holding fast and blowing on the trumpets of the Lord's Word and those who are seeking to cause divisions amongst the sheep and speaking perverse things--misrepresenting facts, that they might divide the flock and draw some after themselves.

Let us make no mistake. It is a question of *inheritance or no inheritance*, amongst them which are sanctified. He who is faithful in that which is least, acknowledges the Lord and his provisions in connection with all of his blessings, temporal and spiritual, will be prepared to look forward with continued zeal and will receive the Shepherd's care accordingly. On the other hand, those who do not appreciate the "meat in due season" and the special provisions of this Harvest time--these will not be prepared; these will quite likely be deceived by those who endeavor to deceive them and draw them aside to themselves.

AS AN EXAMPLE TO THE FLOCK

St. Paul had already pointed out that the lesson of the law was that the ox that threshed the corn should be allowed to have a share of it for his nourishment; and that similarly those who minister to the Church in spiritual things legally, justly, should have a share in the temporal blessings of those whom they serve. He had also pointed out that if he had served the Church spiritual things of immeasurably more value to them than earthly things, it would be a small thing indeed for the Church to minister to his temporal needs. But, while noting these as points of equity, which should be observed by the Church, he did not require these things of them. It would be to their advantage to see these matters in their proper light and to act accordingly. But if they did not see their privileges in serving him and other ministers of the Truth in temporal matters, he perceived that this offered him a still larger opportunity for self-sacrifice, self-denial in the service of the Truth. Their neglect he did not resent, saying, You have refused me temporal necessities, I will refuse you spiritual comforts. On the contrary, his reasoning was this: These dear sheep need the spiritual blessings and I am so glad that I am privileged by the Lord to be his servant in dispensing them. The more it may cost me in the way of self-sacrifice, self-denial, the more it will evidence to the Lord my love for him, for his Truth, for his flock, and the more I will have of the Great Shepherd's favor, because I will be more like the great Redeemer, who bought the sheep by the sacrifice of himself.

On these lines the Apostle proceeds to call attention to his course--not boastingly, but for their advantage, that they might be the better able to discern what would be the proper character of an under-shepherd of the Lord. He says, "I have coveted no man's silver or gold or apparel." He was not serving them for the accumulation of wealth, nor to secure the comforts of the present life. He coveted their hearts. He coveted the pleasure of bringing them into relationship with the great Head of the Church as members of his Body. He appreciated his privileges as a minister of the New Covenant along these lines--preparing the members of the Body of Christ, the Mediator, and helping them to make their calling and election sure to the glorious things promised in the Word.

He continues, "Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me." Apparently some of those who were of St. Paul's company had no trade or could find no profitable employment, while the Apostle's trade of sail-making, tent-making, was apparently a lucrative one, furnishing employment in the various seacoast cities visited. Apparently the others were largely dependent upon this leader for things temporal, as well as things spiritual. He had never complained. He did not now complain. He merely drew their attention to the proper course which he believed he had followed, which he believed was pleasing in the sight of the Lord. He commended to them a similar spirit of love for the Lord and love for the flock and love for the Truth--to the self-sacrificing degree. Thus they might be faithful stewards of God's mercy, faithful overseers of his flock. His own form of stating the message is summed up thus, "I have showed you an example, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Reprint 4458

THE NEW CREATURE'S RESPONSIBILITY TO DIVINE LAW

PART I

THE LAW COVENANT was a Covenant that God made with Israel, based upon the keeping of the Law, which was briefly expressed in the Ten Commandments. The Apostle Paul says that our Lord was born under the Law (Gal. 4:4); not under the Ten Commandments merely, but under the Law Covenant. This Law Covenant, the Apostle elsewhere shows, was that addition to the Abrahamic Covenant which was typified by Hagar and not by Sarah. Our Lord was under this Hagar Covenant, then--under the Law Covenant, the Covenant of the flesh--up to the time when He was thirty years of age.

We have no record whatever respecting our Lord's obedience to the Law before He became of age, although we have every reason to believe that He kept the Law Covenant. But the time of His special trial began at His baptism. The fact that God was willing to enter into a Covenant of sacrifice with our Lord shows that He was perfect at that time. Our Lord persisted in keeping the Law during the time of His ministry, and at the same time sacrificed those rights which were His because of keeping the Law.

With our Lord it was the same as with Adam. Jesus was perfect at the time of His baptism; therefore, no one could question His right to life. Consequently, God dealt with Him as with One who had life rights. But as Adam was placed on trial to see whether he would prove faithful, so our Lord Jesus was on trial during the three and a half years of His ministry, to prove His worthiness to retain His life rights. If He had failed to keep the Law any time during His ministry, He would have failed to have Divine approval. Likewise if He had failed to keep His Covenant of sacrifice He would have failed to make His calling and election sure.

CONDITION OF HEART TESTED CONTINUOUSLY

What our Lord did in this matter is on a parity with what each one of us does. We come to the Lord in the beginning and present ourselves living sacrifices; His acceptance of us and the imputation of His merit to us makes us perfect beings from the Divine standpoint. Everyone who is perfect in the flesh has a right to life, according to the Divine Law. But the fact that we have a right to life for the moment, does not prove that it will be everlasting.

At the end of the thousand years of Christ's reign the world will be actually perfect. They will then be subjected to a testing to prove whether or not this perfection is deep and abiding, whether or not it is the permanent condition of their hearts. So it was with our Lord. Before His consecration He certainly had no such trials and contradictions of sinners against Himself as He had afterwards. "Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself?" (Heb. 12:3.) Practically all His trials began at the time of His consecration. We have no reason to suppose that our Lord was undergoing a trial for life or death before His consecration.

When our Lord was thirty years old, He was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners. His trial, which was to prove His worthiness, began at His consecration and continued until His death. For three years and a half the spirit of His mind was being tested. If during that time He had committed any sin whatever, would He have been accepted of God then? Surely not! He was on trial, not as an old creature, but as a New Creature, and His trial did not end until on the cross He cried, "It is finished!" This did not alter the fact, however, that He was still under the Law. The Law had dominion over Him as long as He lived. As a New Creature He did not have a body of the spirit kind. He had a human body, and was, therefore, responsible for everything that His human body would do.

It is just so with us. The body is reckoned dead in one sense of the word. As the Apostle says, "If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above." Does this refer to us merely as New Creatures? Yes. Is not our flesh reckoned dead? Yes, but we are *figuratively* raised from the dead. (Rom. 6:4,5; Col. 3:1.) To whatever extent our bodies fall short of perfect obedience, Christ, as the great Advocate, makes good. So if any of us sin, we have an Advocate with the Father. No matter how trivial the sin may be, it is a sin. God keeps no accounts with the flesh, but holds the New Creature responsible. It is for these weaknesses of the flesh that the New Creature goes daily to the Lord and says, "Forgive us our trespasses." We have an Advocate with God, and if we sin we may come to God and obtain grace in every time of need.--I John 2:1; Heb. 4:16.

THE TWO-FOLD TRIAL OF THE NEW CREATURE

As we have seen, when our Lord made His consecration at His baptism, He was a perfect human being. When the Father accepted His sacrifice, He was begotten again; and He was to this degree a new soul, a New Creature--spirit. But He had this treasure of the new mind in an earthen vessel, and the New Creature was responsible for all that the old creature did. If the old creature had gotten Him into trouble, the New Creature would have been responsible.

As previously stated, our Lord was under the domination of the Law as long as He lived. The question then arises, How long did He live as a man? Our answer is that in a very important sense of the word He died at the time of His baptism; that is to say, He died so far as His *human will* was concerned, but His human body did not die. His human body, therefore, was still as liable to every Law as it had been before. He became a New Creature in the spirit of His mind, but a New Creature without a new body; and in the Divine arrangement the New Creature accepted and used the old earthly body, with all the responsibilities of that earthly body, whatever they might be.

In other words, the flesh has its law and its responsibilities. But as a New Creature our Lord was under an additional law. We are not to understand that as a New Creature He was released from the Ten Commandments. In his flesh He was a perfect human being, under the Law. As a New Creature He undertook to do more than merely keep the Law; and so the New Creature was on trial--not merely to prove whether the flesh would live up to the requirements of the Law, but whether the flesh should be brought into subjection to the higher law of the New Creation. Thus our Lord *more* than kept the Law--not *less* than kept the Law.

Jesus died to the *Law Covenant*, but not to the *Law*, at the time that He made His consecration. He was not relieved from His responsibility to the Law according to the flesh, but as a New Creature He gave up all hope, all anticipation, as respects that Law Covenant. When He gave up the human nature He would have no use for that which applied to the human nature, which He was giving up in order to get something better. Therefore, He died to the Law Covenant, not because He could not keep it, but because by becoming dead to that Covenant He might become alive to the Covenant of sacrifice. The blessings of that Law Covenant would have been merely earthly life. So when our Lord consecrated Himself, He sacrificed everything that went with the Law Covenant.

NO ADVOCATE FOR OUR LORD

If our Lord's human nature had failed to keep the Law, the New Creature would have been held responsible. It is the same with us, as we have illustrated before in the case of a man and his dog. The New Creature is like the man and the old creature like the dog. But the man is responsible for the dog. If the dog does damage or bites anyone, the owner is responsible. God has made a special arrangement for us, however, by which we may go to the throne of heavenly grace for the imperfections of the flesh, because we have an *Advocate*. But Jesus had no Advocate; and therefore any misdeed on the part of His flesh would be charged to Him directly, as He would be responsible for all the flesh might do.

As we have seen, our Lord at thirty years of age was a perfect man, accountable under the Law Covenant. When He had made a consecration and when that consecration had been accepted by the Father, He was counted alive as a New Creature and reckoned dead as an old creature. These facts should not cause us to lose sight of the other fact that He was not really a New Creature, but merely begotten to a new nature, and that He would not be entirely free from the earthly nature until He was actually dead.

So, then, as a New Creature our Lord was responsible for all of God's laws that applied to Him as a man. The fact that He had given up all the earthly hopes and ambitions and privileges did not give Him liberty to violate the Law of God; and therefore His passing from under the Law Covenant did not give Him liberty to break the Law.

Even so with us. We cannot trespass against our neighbor in any degree. The fact that we have become New Creatures in Christ makes us still more responsible for good behavior. We have need of the Lord's covering merit for every fleshly imperfection that we have. The very fact that we have need of that covering for our fleshly imperfections shows that our every thought, word and action are taken cognizance of by God; and since we are still imperfect, an arrangement is provided for us by which we may go to the Throne of Grace and have our weaknesses covered by our Lord's merit.

GRAVE RESPONSIBILITY RESTING ON OUR LORD

But our Lord had *nothing to shield Him*. Although He had given up all hope of human life, that He might have the spiritual blessings, yet He was responsible for every feature of the Divine Law.

The Divine Law has always existed. God always had certain laws of right and wrong; He Himself is under a law of righteousness. Our Lord Jesus and all the holy angels are subject to a law of righteousness. What ceased at our Lord's consecration was the Covenant promise of life which was based upon that Law and which had been won by our Lord. Since no imperfect being can keep

that Law, another arrangement is made for us --a sacrificial arrangement, based upon our Lord's merit, imputed to us. "Gather My saints together unto Me; those who have made a Covenant with Me by sacrifice." --Psa. 50:5.

From the Divine standpoint our Lord kept the Law as a New Creature; from the human standpoint He kept it as an earthly creature. To God we are one thing; to men we are another. Before God Jesus had the standing of the New Creature. But He did not keep the Law *merely* in the *spirit*; He kept it in the *letter* as well. As for ourselves, we cannot keep the letter of the Law, but we must keep the spirit of it. Our Lord, being *perfect*, kept the Law both in spirit and in letter. Every act of obedience to the Law was credited to the New Creature, and any failure would have brought death. Even though the account was entered in the name of the New Creature, these acts of obedience were only *credited* to it. Just as a parent might put into the bank money for a child, the child does not have the money and cannot receive it until he becomes of age; so with our Lord. Everything that He did was put to His credit. And if He had done anything wrong, it would have been charged to the New Creature. "The wages of *sin* is *death*."--Rom. 6:23.

CHANGE OF NATURE A GRADUAL PROCESS

But had our Lord remained under the Law Covenant, He would not have become the heir; for the child of the bondwoman could not become heir with the son of the freewoman. (Gal. 4:30.) The son of the freewoman was the *New Creature*.

When our Lord made the Covenant of sacrifice at Jordan He passed from His position under the Law Covenant and from His *fleshly* relationship to Abraham, into the *spiritual* relationship and became the spiritual "Seed" of Abraham; for there He sacrificed all the blessings and favors which were His under the *Law Covenant*.

But we are to remember that in our Lord's case, this change of nature required three and a half years. He did not pass instantaneously from one relationship to the other, but by a process in which He was dying daily and also becoming alive daily. He had accepted the terms of the Covenant of sacrifice. During those three and one-half years, He was in the process of transfer from the Law Covenant to the Sacrificial Covenant. After He had fulfilled the terms of that Covenant, He was put to death in the flesh, and quickened in the spirit. (I Peter 3:18. R.V.) But He did not enter into the glorious station typified by *Isaac* until after His resurrection from the dead.

So it is with us. We renounce the earthly that we may share in the heavenly. But the change requires a period of time, during which we are dying daily and becoming more alive daily. We shall be made fully alive only in our resurrection, for flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. (I Cor. 15:50.) While this change is not instantaneous, but by degrees, yet the Father dealt with our Lord from the moment of His consecration, and so He deals with us. We have the foretaste of the blessing now, but it will not be ours completely until the sacrifice shall have been finished. Our Lord's baptism did not constitute Him The Christ in the full sense of the word, but He was declared to be The Christ with power when He was raised upon the spirit plane.--Rom. 1:4.

PURPOSE OF OUR LORD'S SUFFERING

The Scriptures give us to understand that our Lord's sufferings produced a variety of results. First of all, those sufferings were in fulfilment of the Law, and by them He testified His obedience to the Law of God. He suffered for well-doing and not for evil-doing. Second, it was appropriate that

He should prove to God His loyalty and faithfulness, so as to establish His worthiness to be made the great Messiah and to be granted the great power and glory which Messiah will exercise.

The Apostle Paul gives us this particular thought, when he says that it pleased God to make the Captain of our salvation perfect through suffering. (Heb. 2:10.) At the same time this suffering would demonstrate our Lord to be the great Messiah who would eventually lead the people out of sin and death. The Apostle also intimates that His sufferings were expedient and wise for the assistance of those who would be His followers, when he says that this High Priest was touched with a feeling of our infirmities, that He might be able to sympathize with those who are in trouble. He was faithful Himself, having gone through various trials and testings.-- Heb. 4:15.

When mankind come to know how it was that Messiah assumed control of the world, all humanity will have full confidence in Him--not only in the power with which He will rule His Kingdom, but also in His justice, His love and His mercy. He has been tempted in all points as the Church is, and therefore, not only can we have the benefit resulting from His experience, but the whole world in the future may also have an opportunity to appreciate it.

The sufferings of Jesus became a witness both to angels and to men. He gave the demonstration of the full extent of loyalty even unto death. As a reward the Father did not give Him merely the high position that He had at first, but exalted Him to His own right hand in the heavenly places, "Far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named" (Eph. 1:21); even to the *divine nature*. All this was a part of the Father's great Plan; and by our Lord's experiences we see that the Heavenly Father has demonstrated His Justice, His Power and His Love in a *most marvelous way*.

THE CHURCH'S EXPERIENCES SIMILAR TO OUR LORD'S

Our Lord's perfecting, indeed, was a little different from ours, and yet there is a similarity between the two. He was perfect before He humbled Himself; He was still perfect as the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself; but as a result of His consecration He received a begetting of the Holy Spirit to the divine nature, and His development as a New Creature required that He faithfully carry out His vow, or Covenant, of sacrifice, in the doing of the will of the Heavenly Father. By such faithfulness He perfected Himself on the divine plane--that is, He proved Himself worthy according to the Covenant-- "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing."--Rev. 5:12.

Similarly the followers of Jesus are to be sharers with Him of the sufferings of this present time and in the glories which shall follow, for "If we suffer [with Him] we shall also reign with Him." (2 Tim. 2:12.) Although we are imperfect in the flesh, while He was perfect, yet the Robe of His Righteousness, the merit of His sacrifice, covers all of our blemishes and makes us, as His footstep followers, holy and acceptable before the Father, as joint-sacrificers with Jesus.

The begetting of the Holy Spirit starts us in the life divine. We are not to be perfected in the flesh, but in the spirit; and our perfection and acceptance with the Father will be demonstrated by our loyalty of heart and the fulness and thoroughness with which we submit our all to the Divine will and seek to glorify God in our bodies and spirits, which are His. Our *justification* comes to us as a reward of *faith*, regardless of works, but our *glorification* will follow only as a reward for *faithfulness*--"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."--Rev. 2:10.

THE NEW CREATURE'S RESPONSIBILITY TO DIVINE LAW

PART II

EXPERIENCE OF THE NEW CREATURE EDUCATIONAL

THE NEW CREATURE is represented by the will, the mind; but there can be no New Creature without a body. God does not give the New Creature its own body in the present life, but permits it to practise on the old body. And according to the New Creature's faithfulness in the old body will be its reward--either as a member of the Little Flock or of the Great Company or--for unfaithfulness, its punishment, Second Death.

The New Creature owns the mortal body, possesses that body. The body is not the New Creature's body except in a possessive sense. If one were living in a cabin temporarily while his house is being built, and someone else were to ask, "Is that your house?" he would say, "No; I am staying here merely until my house is built." So the New Creature occupies the old body. That body is dead because it has been devoted to God in connection with the Sin-offering.--Col. 3:3; Gal. 2:20.

The Lord knoweth our frame. He knows that we are all fallen, imperfect--mentally, morally, physically. His message to the New Creature is, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matt. 5:48.) This means perfection of will, of intent, of endeavor. But God knows that we have this treasure of the new will in a mortal body, which is imperfect. Through Christ He has made provision that every imperfection of our flesh may be forgiven on condition that we come to Him for that forgiveness in the name of our Advocate, Jesus. This arrangement is to our advantage, for it leads us to watch the more carefully in respect to our trespasses and to note the more carefully that they cannot be forgiven except through the merit of our Redeemer.

THREE BLESSINGS RESULTING FROM FAITHFUL OBEDIENCE

The experience of the New Creature in coming to the Throne of Grace for help is, therefore, educational. It will strive the more diligently, the more earnestly, the more perseveringly, to live according to the will of God, not only in mind, but also in body. The result of faithfully following this course of daily scrutinizing our thoughts and words and doings must be the strengthening, the fortifying of the New Creature against the wiles of the world, the flesh and the Adversary.

Additionally, this course must mean not only a higher and nobler earthly life, even though still imperfect, but a great sympathy for others of the human family and for the Church, who similarly strive against the weaknesses of heredity in the flesh, and also a general enlightenment of the heart sympathetically toward the members of the human family--born in sin, "shapen in iniquity." It must mean thus much of preparation for the future Kingdom --for helping poor humanity up out of the degradation of sin and death.

CAUSES OF SPIRITUAL DECLINE

Although the New Creature cannot consent to sin, cannot sin wilfully, cannot sin with deliberation, and still be a holy mind, it can become slack, careless, inattentive, overcharged with the cares of this life--not sufficiently loyal and alert to fight against the Great Enemy. In this condition it may become more or less stupefied, while the will of the flesh may gain the ascendancy in some particular. The flesh has its cravings, its demands; and it has a plausible way of urging what it thinks to be its rights and privileges. Sometimes the flesh is very persistent along these lines.

If the New Creature become overcharged, become weak through a *failure to eat* the strengthening food which the Father has provided, it may be almost helpless for a time, until at last it becomes non-resistant to sin. To whatever extent the New Creature is to blame for this condition, it will receive stripes, not merely as a matter of justice, but also as a matter of correction, for if it were not corrected it might go on to greater carelessness as to its responsibilities.

We all need to be disciplined in order that we may stand firm for the principles of righteousness. To whatever extent the New Creature fails to resist the flesh, there will be stripes, punishment of some kind, retribution. But even when those punishments come, there will be also manifestations of the Lord's favor.

The experiences of the Prophet David were not altogether like those of the saints, for he was on a different plane from us. But we may apply the general principles deduced from his experiences. David sinned and the Lord allowed certain chastisements to come upon him. David was contrite and asked forgiveness for those sins. Although he had the light of the Lord's favor, yet the Lord declared that he must be punished for doing those things which he knew were wrong, even though all the while his heart was set on the Lord. The after experiences of the man proved his contrition. He committed sin; he repented; he was forgiven; he was restored to the Lord's favor. Yet in due time he received chastisements for those very sins; and when he received those chastisements, he recognized that they were a just recompense of punishment upon him.

STAGES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF WILFUL SIN

Inattention or carelessness on the part of the New Creature does not necessarily mean the Second Death, unless that carelessness went to the extent of intelligent choice of sin--*wilful* sin. The wilful sinner cuts himself off entirely from Divine favor and lapses into the condition of condemnation to death, out of which he had been lifted. Of this the Apostle speaks, saying, "We are not of those who draw back unto perdition," destruction-- Second Death. Furthermore, it should be noted that none ever steps suddenly from loyalty to disloyalty to God and to righteousness.

Wilful sin coming upon the New Creature destroys him so gradually that he seems not to be conscious of its development at the time. First, the wish, the desire, the pride or the ambition develops; he is not submissive to the Divine will. Later on, an attempt is made to acquire the gratification of the pride of life, the lust of the eye and of the flesh and a corresponding neglect of the

heavenly things--of the hope set before us in the Scriptures and of the Covenant of sacrifice which we have made.

A later development of this wrong spirit by and by finds opportunity, under one pretext or another, to put the person into opposition to the Lord, to the truth and to the brethren. He thus gradually passes from being a soldier under the banner of Christ to becoming a co-laborer with the Adversary in opposing the things of God.

As the Apostle says, "Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!" (James 3:5.) Behold what a great destruction of all the work of grace may be accomplished speedily by a little pride or fond desire or self-gratification! --not that the little beginnings mean the Second Death, but that they will surely lead on toward it unless the individual be recovered. St. James emphasized this thought, saying, "When lust [desire] has conceived, it bringeth forth Sin; and Sin when it is finished [completed] bringeth forth Death."--James 1:15.

THREE METHODS OF ADMONITION USED BY THE LORD

Meantime, while one of the Lord's sheep would be thus straying, would the Great Shepherd be inattentive and allow him to wander without warning? *Surely not!* Through some Divine providence, such as sickness or the coming to the attention of some message from God's Word, directly or indirectly, or through faithful testimony and witness of the brethren, the Lord will speak to all such straying sheep, pointing out to them the danger of the path they are taking. If they heed well, they shall be recovered fully, and ultimately attain to the highest state as overcomers. But the Lord will not coerce.

In the beginning the Lord appealed to our wills, and He continues to do so. The Lord will not use force in the selection of the present time; for He seeketh only such to serve Him as worship Him in spirit and in truth. The same *will* which He accepted and which brought us such great blessing can reject God's favors--can receive the grace of God in vain and gradually draw back out of fellowship with the Lord and with the spirit of the Covenant and toward the Second Death.

If the admonitions of the Lord's providences, including the counsel of the brethren, etc., fail, and if there be a measure of ignorance connected with the perverse course, the Lord may give severe chastisements to awaken thoroughly such a person, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus, through those chastisements. (I Cor. 5:5.) Many such, the Scriptures assure us, will come up out of great tribulation, washing their robes and making them white in the blood of the Lamb. (Rev. 7:14.) But while they may attain to a good position on the spirit plane, they have lost the great, pre-eminent prize of joint-heirship with the Lord in the Messianic Kingdom, unto which they were called.

ALLOWANCE MADE FOR IMMATURITY OF CHARACTER

It seems to be a correct principle, however, that a person begotten of the Holy Spirit, who had not yet developed strength of character sufficient to qualify him to be a child of God on the heavenly plane, would not have judgment passed upon him until he had enjoyed the opportunity of coming to a knowledge of Present Truth and of demonstrating his loyalty.

This thought seems to be borne out by the Apostle in Hebrews 6:4-6. There, where he says in substance, If those who have tasted of the good Word of God and been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, shall fall away, it will be impossible to renew them, he implies that those who have not had this opportunity for development are not responsible to such an extent and would not be liable to the Second Death. If a babe had done something worthy of stripes, he would be treated according to his infancy. The Apostle Peter says, "As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby."--I Peter 2:2.

These texts seem to suggest a process of development. If one made his consecration today, he would not be counted worthy of the Kingdom today; for only through trials and tribulations shall he become worthy. A certain period of probation would be granted to him, an opportunity to make good his covenant of sacrifice. Then if he failed to make good that covenant of sacrifice, he would be responsible in one of the two ways, as we have seen; either he would receive chastisements of the Lord which would bring him to a realization of his privileges, or if wholly unworthy of God, he would go into the Second Death. Anyone becoming a Christian will have a long enough time in which to make his calling and election sure, if he so run in the race as to obtain.

SELF-IMPOSED DISCIPLINE RECOMMENDED

Sometimes God's people, appreciating their own weaknesses, the blemishes of their flesh, properly feel themselves unworthy of the glorious things which God has in reservation for the Elect. It is their duty to do the best in their power, but not to attempt to judge, to decide their own cases. There is One that judgeth them, even God. Whatever the sin, whatever the circumstances, it should be taken promptly to the Throne of Heavenly Grace in the name of Jesus, to obtain the mercy of God provided thus, and to find increasing help for future times of need.

We must not become discouraged and lose faith and hope, even though obliged to come to that Throne, repentantly, seventy times seven times. To whatever extent, however, the sin be repeated as the result of earthly weakness of heredity, to that extent there is forgiveness, in the Divine arrangement. But to whatever extent the sin contained a measure of wilfulness, or to whatever extent we failed to use our knowledge and ability to resist it, to that extent the New Creature will be held responsible, and will have certain chastisements imposed. Happy are those people who seek to punish themselves by some discipline, such as fasting. The Apostle says, "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged" [chastened of the Lord].--I Cor. 11:31, 32.

We should all keep in memory, however, the fact that God expects of us a demonstration of loyalty to Him and to the principles of Truth and Righteousness--in an overcoming degree. It will not do simply to stand still from week to week and from year to year and to say, "These are my weaknesses and I take them to Jesus." Overcoming is the gaining of some victory by the New Creature over besetting weaknesses as well as over trespasses. Only such as strive will be crowned and acknowledged of the Lord as overcomers. And their overcoming will be, not of themselves, but of God's grace and the assistance of the Great Advocate.--I John 5:4.

THE NEW CREATURE'S RIGHT TO LIFE

From the time that we become New Creatures in Christ, a right to life on the spirit plane is given us, just as a right to life on the human plane was granted to Adam when he was created. But as he lost that right to life by disobedience to God, so we, as New Creatures, if we sin wilfully, would

forfeit that right to live, and we could not be redeemed again, for "Christ dieth no more." (Rom. 6:9.) Those who really accept God's proposition as laid down, heartily consecrate themselves, have passed from death to life, and the Apostle says that these are *alive*.

That right to life, according to the Divine record, is a very different matter from anything we had before. Formerly, we had a right to *die*. Since we became New Creatures we have a right to live, unless we take some adverse step. Therefore, it is a very different thing with the Church from what it is with mankind. The world will gain the right to life under the opportunities offered to them during the thousand years of Christ's reign. We have that right to live now. Our "life is hid with Christ in God." (Col. 3:3.) Men can kill the body, but no man can take from us the right to live. Our eternal life has already begun in a sense. We are on trial now, and if we pass the trial successfully, we shall forever possess that right to life.

Not so with the world. There is no provision by which the world has a right to life. "The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." (Rev. 20:5.) Therefore the Church gets eternal life at least a thousand years before the world will be given the right to everlasting life; it is ours now and forever if we continue faithful unto death. Mankind will all be awakened from the tomb, but we do not know what proportion of them will get everlasting life. We hope that many will obtain it. But there is a difference between *having* and *hoping*. We have a right to life because we are in Christ; because the Father so decreed for us.

DEATH OF HUMAN WILL AT CONSECRATION

At the time of our consecration the old creature dies in the sense that the old will dies. The old will, in the Scriptures termed the "old man" (Col. 3:9,10), is reckoned dead at the time of our consecration. But this is not real death; and hence there is a continual mortifying until the time of actual death. The Apostle says, "I die daily." (I Cor. 15:31.) His old will was given up. The body of flesh which had belonged to the old creature and which had been reckoned dead since consecration, was not really dead. He was not only reckoned alive as a New Creature, but the flesh body was reckoned to be his body until such time as in God's providence, by the power of the First Resurrection, he should be clothed upon with his new body. Hence his flesh is the flesh of the New Creature, and his body that belonging to the New Creature.

The New Creature is responsible for the flesh body, and the weaknesses of the old creature are charged up against the New Creature. There is an arrangement, however, by which the New Creature can have the appropriation of the merit of Christ for the weaknesses of heredity. So St. Paul exhorts the Church to come boldly to the Throne of Grace, there to obtain mercy for the shortcomings of daily life.--Heb. 4:16.

DEATH OF THE HUMAN BODY

The New Creature never dies, unless it forfeits its right to life and goes into the Second Death. What dies is the *human body*, which was consecrated to death, but which has been loaned to the New Creature to practise on, as it were. God gives the New Creatures their new bodies in the First Resurrection.

Speaking of the First Resurrection, St. John says, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." (I John 3:2.) This statement is satisfactory to the Lord's people, for though they might without impropriety be curious to know full particulars respecting their spirit bodies--shape, size, elements, etc.-- they can

well imagine that the new conditions will be so different from present conditions as to be beyond the power of the human brain to comprehend, no matter how particular the description given. But the whole question is settled with the assurance that the Church shall be like her Lord, and see Him--not as He was in the days of His humiliation, the Man Christ Jesus, nor as He appeared to His disciples after His resurrection, robed in flesh in various forms, with various garments--but see Him "as He is," behold His glory, and be like Him, sharing His glory.

Reprint 5101

THE NEW CREATURE'S RESPONSIBILITY TO DIVINE LAW

PART 3

RESURRECTION OF CHURCH DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF WORLD

WE SHALL NOW consider some texts which are not generally understood, but which will enable us to set forth clearly the sharp distinction between the resurrection of the Church and that of the world in general.

In I Thess. 4:14, 16 the Apostle Paul mentions two classes--"those who *sleep in Jesus*" and "the *dead in Christ*." Our Lord's Ransom-sacrifice accomplished on Calvary has changed the future of the Adamic race, so that they may now be said to "sleep in Jesus." The world, therefore, is not to be considered as *extinct*, eternally dead, but as *asleep*, waiting for the time foreordained of the Father, when "all that are in the graves shall hear His voice [the voice of the Son of God] and shall come forth."--John 5:28, 29.

"The dead in *Christ*," however, is an expression applicable only to the Elect Church. The call to be baptized into Christ (the Anointed) is an offer which is restricted to the "called and chosen and faithful" Church of the Gospel Age. The Apostle is here referring to those who have been begotten of the Holy Spirit, and later have fallen asleep in death.

But they are not to be considered dead in the same sense in which the world is dead in *Adam*. "The dead in Christ" are the dead, who are to have *the* Resurrection of the dead--the First Resurrection--the chief resurrection. The others will be of the subsequent resurrection. We are not to understand, however, that these "dead in Christ" were dead as *New Creatures*, but that as far as the flesh was concerned their death was fully accomplished.

The term "asleep" has been applied to both *classes*. Those of the world who go down into death are still in the unsatisfactory condition in which they died and will come forth in the same state, in order that they may rise from it. But those who now belong to Christ will experience an instantaneous resurrection, and will receive new bodies like unto the Lord's glorious body.

The Church really begin to rise from the time when they become New Creatures; and unless we begin this rising now we shall not have the change--"in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," at the end of our course. (I Cor. 15:51, 52.) These shall not come forth under a future judgment, or trial, but in their change will pass fully from death unto life--into the glorious reward, the Divine nature.

"THE SPIRIT RETURNS 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 has no special reference to the Church. It has a general application to all mankind as they die. There can be no question as to what is meant by the first part of the text, for human bodies have crumbled to dust for centuries. The latter part of the text is wholly misunderstood by many Christians. It has no reference to the breath or anything returning through the air to God.

The thought is this: When God created Adam, He gave him a life that would continue forever if he would be obedient. When Adam sinned God did not take away the spirit of life immediately. He allowed him to hold on to that spirit of life just as many years as he could, battling with the thorns and thistles until the "breaking of the silver cord."

Adam transmitted a portion of that spirit of life to his children, in some of whom that portion of life continued for centuries. But mankind have no right to that spirit of life; it is merely something transmitted to them by their parents. God recognizes none as having a right to live except those who are in harmony with Him-- those who are *perfect*. Since the fall all mankind have lived without a right to live. Therefore, from the Divine standpoint the whole world is spoken of as legally *dead*. Every right to life from the Divine standpoint is forfeited. No one can say to God, "I have a right to live." God could say, "You have no right to live; for your first parents sinned and thus lost that right."

Adam could not give to his descendants what he had lost. When Adam died he gave up the spirit of life; that is, he no longer held that portion of life which he had held for nine hundred and thirty years. Where did that spirit of life go? It went back to God from whom it had come originally. Everything goes back to God. Adam could not say to his children, "I bequeath my life-rights to you"; for he had none. No one but God can give a right to life.

"The spirit returns to God who gave it." When one who has possessed the right to life has forfeited it, he cannot say that he has a right to life or to anything. There is *no way* to get life other than *through Christ*.

"NOT OF THE DEAD, BUT OF THE LIVING"

"The God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob...is not a God of the dead, but of the living."--Luke 20:37,38.

When we note the context we see that our Lord was combatting the theory of the Sadducees, and proving that Abraham and Isaac and Jacob would have a resurrection. Jesus said, "Now that the

dead are *raised*, even Moses showed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." (Luke 20:37.) If they were dead in the sense that the beast is dead, God would never have spoken of them in this manner. They had come into accord with God, and He spoke of them in harmony with the general Plan. St. Paul says, "There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust." (Acts 24:15.) The Ancient Worthies had this testimony, that they pleased God; and we know that they had the promise of a better resurrection than would have been theirs if they had not pleased God.--Heb. 11:35.

These Ancient Worthies lived in exactly the same sense that the begotten New Creatures live. Unless God raises us up from the dead there will be no resurrection. The same thing that applies to the New Creature in Christ applies to the world in general. They may think that those in the tomb are absolutely *dead*; but God intends that they shall have an awakening. So the Apostle speaks not only of those who are asleep in Christ, but also of those who are asleep in Jesus. Those who are asleep in Christ are those who had become New Creatures in Christ, heirs of God, partakers of the Divine nature and have passed into death. These are spoken of as "the dead in Christ" who shall rise first.

Jesus is not the Savior merely of the Church, but also the Savior of the world. (John 4:42; I John 4:14.) He is the propitiation not only for our sins, "but also for the sins of the whole world." (I John 2:2.) Therefore, those who believe this statement--that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust--speak of the whole world in exactly the same way that they speak of those who have slept in Christ.

But in the awakening, those of the world who are asleep in Jesus will have the earthly nature, and those who have slept in Christ will have the higher nature. Christ gave His life as a corresponding price for man's life. But we who have come into the Church have come under different conditions altogether from those of the world. As Jesus said, "Ye are not of the world." (John 15:19.) We are separate and distinct from the rest of the world. The Apostle tells us that our life comes from the *Father*--"the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."--I Peter 1:3.

Does Jesus do nothing for the Church? Yes, indeed! As Advocate He imputes of His merit to the Church that we may be counted in as joint-sharers of His sacrifice, for "if we suffer [with Him], we shall also reign with Him." (2 Tim. 2:12.) This willingness to *suffer* is the Covenant of sacrifice that we make with our Lord. Without Him we can do nothing. We can never come up to the Divine standards as He did; but as our Advocate He makes good our deficiencies. We have the same begetting of the Holy Spirit by the same Father and we shall also share in the same Resurrection, being made conformable to His death. The Resurrection of Christ is to the Divine nature, in which we shall be "changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye."--I Cor. 15:51, 52.

The world will receive earthly resurrection. The Life-Giver, Jesus, will give to them all that was lost--human nature and the Edenic condition. So then, the dead world is said to be asleep, but they are to be awakened. Theirs is exactly the same kind of sleep as with us; but the Church were asleep as *New Creatures* and the world are not.

"GOD GIVETH IT A BODY"

"Thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat or of some other grain; but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him."

Here is the thought: Mankind belong to the Adamic nature. The kind of nature that God has been pleased to give to the Adamic race is earthly nature. But if we belong to the spirit nature we

shall come up accordingly. If you plant corn, you will reap corn; if you plant wheat, you will reap wheat; if you plant barley, you will reap barley. So in death. If an animal body is sown, the animal body will be raised. The Church is an exception to the rule. We New Creatures are sown as animal bodies, but we have these animal bodies merely loaned to us, in which to operate. We are New Creatures, not human beings. We are sown natural bodies, we are raised spirit bodies, in the First Resurrection.

THE TWO RESURRECTIONS

"The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment." --John 5:28, 29. R.V.

The Divine provision is that through the obedience of One, the sins of the whole world will be atoned for, and a blessing come to every member of the Adamic race. By a man came death, and by a man comes the resurrection of the dead. (I Cor. 15:21-23.) We have two classes here; they that have *done good* are those who, during the present time, have heard the Gospel, and who have and use an opportunity to do good, and those who have done evil are those who have not heard and who have not, therefore, had an opportunity of doing good.

Who can be said to have done good? "There is none righteous, no, not one." (Rom. 3:10.) After having received this good Word of God we should make good use of it, enter into the School of Christ to be taught of Him, and pass through our trials and testings. These things will determine whether or not we are worthy of this high position, to attain which we have consecrated our lives.

But we shall not in this life be perfect as Jesus was-- in body as well as in mind. We cannot be perfect in the *flesh*, as Jesus was; but Jesus had a perfect will, and we can also have a perfect will, although we may have drawbacks and hindrances in carrying out that will. But to cover our defects, we have our Advocate, in whom God has arranged that we may be accepted. The Church have had their trial in advance of the world; and if they have overcome, God has said that the verdict will be, "Well done...I will make thee ruler over many things." (Matt. 25:21.) These constitute the "good."

Who are they that have done evil? None have been perfect; not even in their minds have they come up to a standard that God can approve. They are *unsatisfactory*, which means unfit. When God shall have established the glorious Messianic Kingdom, then He will put all mankind under trial to see whether, during the thousand years of His Reign, the rewards and punishments will bring them to a proper condition of heart. At the end of the thousand years, Jesus, as Mediator, will present them to the Father for a final testing. If they pass that test, God will give them everlasting life. But those who take a thousand years to make good, will not get as high a reward as those who, by self-sacrifice, now prove their love for the Truth and die for righteousness' sake.

“HIDE ME IN THE GRAVE”

"O that Thou wouldst hide me in the grave, that Thou wouldst keep me secret until Thy wrath be past, that Thou wouldst appoint me a set time, and remember me!" --Job 14:13.

This passage of Scripture refers, not to the New Creature, but to a human being. It refers to a man and not to a spirit-begotten son of God and member of Christ. Job was here speaking as one of mankind. He was willing to die, for life had become burdensome to him. He said, "Oh, that Thou wouldst hide me in Sheol until Thy wrath be past!" In the midst of his very severe afflictions he

cried, Oh, that I might die! but do not leave me as the brute creation; only hide me in the grave until all this time of wrath and sin and curse is done away with and the New Era shall be ushered in. We can hardly believe that Job realized the meaning of what he was saying, but we should rather suppose that he was uttering words, the full import of which he did not realize.

There is no reason to suppose that when David said, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Sheol" (hell), he knew that he was speaking prophetically of the Messiah. St. Peter pointed out that these words referred, not to David, but to Christ, that His soul was not left in hell, neither did His flesh see corruption. (Acts 2:27-31.) But Job was speaking for himself, and yet prophetically for mankind. He was a type of the world. He had lost his flocks and herds, his friends, his home, his children, his wife and even his health.

But in due time, God gave Job back just as many sons and daughters and twice as many flocks and herds, etc. In this way he was a type of the human family. Adam and his family have been lost. He was the king of the earth, but he lost his authority, and with it everything that he had. Ultimately Adam and all of his children will come back to their own--child for child. And so far as the earthly riches were concerned, he will get very much more than he ever lost. Job is a type of this Restitution.

The world is asleep from the Divine standpoint. As Job could say, "Hide me in the grave," so once a Christian could have said, "I shall be hid in the grave until the resurrection." God has made provision for the resurrection of all. But did all die alike? We answer that the Adamic family are dead in the sense that their life-rights were forfeited at the time of the fall. But God looked forward and could speak prophetically either through Job or through any one else. Job could speak as if he were not dead, taking cognizance of the fact that there will be a resurrection. The point here seems to be, Was Job's life carried over in the same sense that St. Paul's life was carried over? By no means. Job was asleep in the *Adamic death*; St. Paul was asleep in *Christ*. The one was the life of the New Creature, and the other was the life of the old creature, not begotten of the Holy Spirit to the new nature.

Reprint 5107

A PRACTICAL SELF-EXAMINATION ON LOVE

“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves.”--2 Cor. 13:5.

IT SEEMS impossible to describe *Love*, this wonderful quality without which nothing is acceptable in the sight of God! The Apostle does not attempt to define Love, but contents himself with giving us some of its manifestations. Those who possess a love with such characteristics are able to appreciate it, but not able otherwise to explain it. The fact is that Love, like life and light, is difficult to define; and our best endeavors to comprehend it are along the lines of *its effects*. It is of *God*; it is *god-likeness in the heart*, in the tongue, in the hands, in the *thoughts*--supervising all the human attributes and *seeking to control them*. Where Love is lacking, the results are more or less evil; where Love is present, the results differ according to the *degree* of Love, and are proportionately *good*.

In the Christian an outward manifestation of amiability, meekness, gentleness, patience, etc., is not sufficient, either in God's sight or in his own. These graces must be produced by the spirit of Love, filling and expanding within his own heart. Many of the graces of the Spirit are recognized by the unregenerate and are *imitated as marks of good breeding*, and in many cases are successfully worn as a cloak or mask, covering hearts and sentiments wholly antagonistic to the holy spirit of Love.

The measure of our appreciation of Divine Love will be the measure of our zeal in conforming our characters to the Divine pattern. A naturally rough, uncouth, depraved disposition may require a long time, after the grace of Divine Love enters the heart, before that grace is manifest in all the thoughts and words and acts of the outward man. Others, on the contrary, of more gentle birth and cultured training, may, without the grace of God within, have many of the outward refinements. None but Him who reads the heart is competent, therefore, to judge as to who have and who have not received this grace, and of the degree of its development in their hearts; but each one may judge for himself, and each one begotten of this Holy Spirit, Love, should seek to let its light so

shine out, through all the avenues of communication with his fellow-creatures, as to glorify his Father in Heaven and "show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light."--I Pet. 2:9.

Amongst the "gifts" of early Apostolic times, prophecy, or oratory, was one highly commended. Knowledge of the mysteries of God was also highly commended, and large faith was reckoned as being amongst the chief of Christian requirements; yet the Apostle declares that if he possessed all of these in their fullest measure, and Love were absent, he would be nothing--a mere cipher-- not a member of the New Creation at all, since Love is the very spirit of the begetting to the new nature.

What a wonderful test this is! The Apostle Paul counsels, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves." Let us each apply the test to himself: Whether I am something or nothing in God's estimation is to be measured by my love for Him, for His brethren, for His cause, for the world in general, and even for my enemies, rather than by my knowledge, or fame, or oratory!

Yet we are not to understand that one could have a knowledge of the deep mysteries of God without having been begotten by the Holy Spirit of Love; for the deep things of God knoweth no man, but by the Spirit of God; but one might lose the spirit before losing the knowledge it brought him. In the measure of character, therefore, we are to put Love first, and to consider it the chief test of our nearness to and acceptance with the Lord.

LOVE IS THE SECRET OF TRUE POLITENESS

Having given us such a conception of the importance of Love, the Apostle proceeds to describe what it is and what it is not--how it operates and how it does not operate, or conduct itself. Let us each make a practical application of this matter to himself and inquire within:

Have I such a love, especially for the household of faith, as leads me to *suffer considerable and for a long time*, and yet to be *kind*? Am I patient with the weaknesses and imperfections of those who give any evidence of good intentions? Am I patient even with those who are out of the way, realizing that the great Adversary blinds the minds of the masses and remembering that this manifestation of Love was very prominent in our Lord Jesus, who was patient with His opponents?

Am I kind in my methods, seeking to guard my manner and my tones, knowing that they have much to do with every affair of life? Have I *this* mark of Love pervading my *actions* and *words* and thoughts? Do I *think* of and am I *considerate of others*? Do I feel and manifest kindness toward them in word, in look, in act? A Christian, above all others, should be kind, courteous, gentle *in the home, in his place of business, in the Church--everywhere*. In proportion as perfect Love is attained the constant effort of the heart will be to have every word and act, like the thought which prompts them, full of patience and kindness. With the child of God these *qualities are not to be mere outward adornments*, they cannot be; on the contrary, they are fruits of the Spirit--growths from or results of having come into fellowship with God, having learned of Him, *received of His Spirit of holiness*, of Love.

Have I the Love that "envieth not," the Love that is generous, so that I can see others prosper and *rejoice in their prosperity*, even if, for a time, my own affairs be not so prosperous? This is true generosity, the very reverse of jealousy and envy, which spring from a perverted nature. The root of envy is selfishness; *envy will not grow upon the root of Love*. Love rejoices with them that rejoice, in

the prosperity of every good word and work, and in the advancement in Christian grace and in the Divine service of all who are actuated by the Divine Spirit.

Have I the Love that is humble, that "*vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up*"? the love that tends to modesty, that is not boastful, not lifted up? Have I the Love that would prompt to good deeds, not to be seen of men, but that would do the same if no one saw or knew but God only? that boasts neither of its knowledge nor of its graces, but in humility acknowledges that every good and perfect gift comes from the Father? And do I make return to Him in Love and service for every mercy? Boasting over self-esteem has led many a man not only into folly, but sometimes into gross sins in his endeavor to make good his boasts. The Spirit of the Lord is the spirit of a sound mind, which not only seeks generously to esteem others, but also soberly to estimate one's self, and not to think too highly of his character and attainments.

Have I the Love which is courteous, "*doth not behave itself unseemly*"? *Pride* is the root out of which grows much of the unseemly conduct, impoliteness, so common to those who think themselves somebody, either intellectually or financially. Politeness has been defined as Love in trifles; courtesy as Love in little things. The secret of politeness is either surface polishing or love in the heart. As Christians we are to have the heart-love which will prompt us to acts of kindness and courtesy, not only in the household of faith, but in our homes and in our dealings with the world.

Have I the Love which is unselfish, which "*seeketh not her own*" interests exclusively, which might even be willing to let some of her own rights be sacrificed in the interests of others? or have I, on the contrary, the selfishness which not only demands my own rights on every occasion, but which demands those rights regardless of the conveniences, comfort and rights of others? To have Love in this particular means that we will be on guard against taking any unjust advantage of others, and will prefer rather to suffer a wrong than to do a wrong; to suffer an injustice than to do an injustice.

LOVE BEGINS AT HOME

Nothing in this signifies that one should neglect the caring for and providing in every way for those dependent upon him by the ties of nature, in order that he may do good to others. In every sense, "*Love begins at home.*" The proper thought, as we gather it, is that men and women, possessed of the spirit of perfect Love, would not think exclusively of their own interests in any of the affairs of life. Put into exercise, *this* element of Love would have a great influence upon all the affairs of life, *inside as well as outside the home and family.*

Have I the Love which is good tempered, "*not easily provoked*" to anger--Love that enables me to see both sides of a question, that gives me the spirit of a sound mind, which enables me to perceive that exasperation and violent anger are not only unbecoming but, worse than that, injurious to those toward whom they may be directed, and also injurious in their effect upon my own heart and body?

There may be times when Love will need to be firm, almost to sternness and inflexibility, where principles are involved, where valuable lessons are to be inculcated; and this might come under the head of anger, using that word in a *proper sense, in regard to a righteous indignation, exercised for a loving purpose*, for doing good; but it should be exercised then only for a time. If justly angry we should see to it that we sin not either with our lips, or in our hearts, in which, at no time, may we entertain any but loving and generous sentiments toward those who are our enemies, or toward those of our friends whom we would assist or instruct or correct.

To be easily provoked is to have a bad temper, fretfulness, bad humor, touchiness, quickness to take offense. This is wholly contrary to the spirit of Love; and whoever is on the Lord's side and seeking to be pleasing to Him and to attain to an overcomer's position should jealously guard himself against this general besetment of our day. To whatever extent this disposition is fostered, or willingly harbored, or not fought against, it becomes an evidence of a deficiency and imperfection of our development in the Holy Spirit of our Father, and of the *deficiency of our likeness to our Lord Jesus*, our Pattern.

Very few of the evidences of a wrong spirit receive from one's self as much kindness and as many excuses for their continuance as this one. But however much natural depravity and heredity and nervous disorders may tend toward this spirit of fretfulness, taciturnity and touchiness, every heart filled with the Lord's Spirit must oppose this disposition to evil in his flesh, and must wage a good warfare against it.

It will not do to say, "It is my way," for all the "ways" of the fallen nature are bad; and it is the business of the New Creature to overcome the old nature in this as well as other works of the flesh and the Devil. In few ways can we show to our friends and households more than in this the power of the grace of Love. This grace, as it grows, should make every child of God sweet-tempered. In no way can we better show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light than by the exhibition of the spirit of Love in the daily affairs of life.

LOVE THINKS NO EVIL

Have I the spirit of Love which "thinketh no evil," which is guileless, not suspicious of evil or looking for faults in others, not attributing to them evil motives? Have I the Love which seeks always to interpret the conduct of others charitably, to make all possible allowance for errors in judgment rather than to impugn the motives of the heart? Perfect Love is good intentioned itself; it prefers and, so far as possible, endeavors to view the words and conduct of others from the same standpoint. It does not *treasure up animosities* and suspicions, nor *manufacture a chain of circumstantial proofs* of evil intentions out of trivial affairs. "*Faults are thick where Love is thin*" is a very wise proverb.

But where Love passes over offenses and takes no account of them, holding no grudges, this does not mean that Love would treat evil-doers in precisely the same manner that it would treat its friends. It might be proper or even necessary to take some notice of the offenses to the extent of not manifesting the same cordiality as before, but no hatred, malice or strife should be manifested--nothing but kindness and gentleness, leaving the door of opportunity open for a full reconciliation as soon as possible, doing all that could be done to promote a reconciliation and evincing a willingness to forgive and forget the wrong.

"LOVE REJOICETH NOT IN INIQUITY"

Have I the Love that is sincere, that "*rejoiceth not in iniquity* [in-equity], *but rejoiceth in the Truth*"? Are the principles of right and wrong so firmly fixed in my mind, and am I so thoroughly in accord with right, and so out of harmony with the wrong, that I am grieved with evils wherever encountered and sympathize with all who fall into evil or who are beset with temptations? Am I so opposed to the wrong that I would not encourage it even if it brought advantage to me? Am I so in accord with right, with Truth, that I could not avoid rejoicing in the Truth and in its prosperity, even

to the upsetting of some of my preconceived opinions, or to the disadvantage of some of my earthly interests?

Every one who is seeking to develop in his heart the Holy Spirit, perfect Love, should guard carefully this point of sincerity of motive as well as uprightness of conduct. The least suggestion of rejoicing at the fall of any person or thing that in any degree represents righteousness or goodness is to be deplored and overcome. Perfect "Love rejoiceth not in iniquity" under any circumstances or conditions and would have no sympathy but only sorrow in the fall of another, even if it should mean his own advancement.

The Love of God, which the Apostle here describes as the spirit of the Lord's people, is a love which is far above all selfishness and is based upon fixed principles which should, *day by day, be more distinctly discerned* and always *firmly adhered to* at any cost. However profitable error might be, Love could take no part in it and could not desire the reward of evil. But it does take pleasure in the Truth--truth upon every subject, and especially in the Truth of Divine revelation, however unpopular the Truth may be; however much persecution its advocacy may involve; however much it may cost the loss of the friendship of this world and of those who are blinded by the god of this world. The spirit of Love has such an affinity for the Truth that it rejoices to share loss, persecution, distress or whatever may come against the Truth or its servants. In the Lord's estimate it is all the same whether we are ashamed of Him or ashamed of His Word; and of all such He declares that He will be ashamed when He comes to be glorified in His saints.

Have I the Love that "beareth all things"? that is impregnable against the assaults of evil? that resists evil, impurity, sin and everything that is contrary to Love? that is both able and willing to endure, for the cause of God, reproaches, reproofs, insults, losses, misrepresentations and even death? "This is the victory that overcometh the world, *even your faith*"--the very life and center of which faith is the Holy Spirit of Love for the Lord and for those that are His and, sympathetically, for the world. Perfect Love can bear up under all circumstances and, by God's grace, bring us off conquerors and "more than conquerors through Him that loved us."--I John 5:4; Rom. 8:37.

LOVE IS NOT SUSPICIOUS

Have I the Love that "believeth all things"? that is unwilling to impute evil to another unless forced so to do by indisputable evidences? that would rather believe good than evil about everybody? that would take no pleasure in hearing evil, but would be disposed to resent it? Perfect Love is not suspicious, but is, on the contrary, disposed to be trustful. It acts on the principle that it is better, if necessary, to be deceived a hundred times than to go through life soured by a suspicious mind--far better than to accuse or suspicion even one person unjustly. This is the merciful disposition, as applied to *thoughts*; and of it the Master said, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." (Matt. 5:7.) The unmerciful, evil-thinking mind is father to unmerciful conduct toward others.

Have I the Love that "*hopeth all things*," that perseveres under unfavorable conditions, and continues to hope for and to labor for those who need my assistance? Have I the Love that "*endureth all things*," that continues to hope for the best in regard to all and to strive for the best, and that with perseverance? *Perfect Love is not easily discouraged*. This is the secret of Love's perseverance: having learned of God, and having become a partaker of His holiness, it trusts in Him and *hopes undismayed for the fulfilment of His gracious Covenant*, however dark the immediate surroundings.

This hopeful element of Love is one of the striking features in the perseverance of the saints, enabling them to endure hardness as good soldiers. Its hopeful quality hinders it from being easily

offended, or easily stopped in the work of the Lord. Where others would be discouraged or put to flight, the spirit of Love gives endurance, that we may war a good warfare, and please the Captain of our salvation. *Love's hopefulness knows no despair, for its anchorage enters into that which is beyond the veil, and is firmly fastened to the Rock of Ages.*

Let us, Beloved, with all our getting, get Love--not merely in word but in deed and in truth--the Love whose roots are in the new heart, begotten in us by our Heavenly Father's Love, and exemplified in the words and deeds of our dear Redeemer. All else sought and gained will be but loss and dross unless, with all, we secure LOVE!

Reprint 4917

PRIVILEGES OF THE SONS OF GOD

“Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of.”--Matthew 6:8.

THESE words were not addressed to the world in general; for the whole world is lying in sin, altogether out of relationship with God. These words were not addressed even to the ordinary Jew; for the Jews are also members of the Adamic race, which is out of harmony with God, and their Covenant was not one of sonship, but of servants. Moses was faithful as a servant over all his house. (Hebrews 3:5.) We never find Israelites referred to as sons of God. In the prophecies there are references made as to what God would do for them in the future. But there is no direct statement that He was their Father, or that they were His children.

We all see that this was so. It would have been improper that this should be otherwise, for the Sin-Atonement has not yet been made for the world. Neither a Jew nor one of the world today has a right to call God his Father, nor to think of Him as his Father. The only ones who have a right to call God "our Father," are those who have come into covenant relationship with Him through Christ. Through this relationship, the Apostle John says, "Now are we the sons of God."

We are not yet in the Kingdom, to be sons of God without imperfection; but in the future, in the moment of our "change," we shall be "sons of God without rebuke," and be like our Master and share His glory. But in the present time we are sons of God, and have this blessed privilege, this honor, of calling God our Father, because we have received His Holy Spirit. We have this treasure of the Holy Spirit in earthen vessels, and walk by faith, not by sight. All those who have come into the Body of Christ by full consecration are sons of God by faith, and are permitted to call themselves such, to realize Him as their Father, and to think of the testimony of the Scriptures as fully and completely referring to themselves.

SONS OF GOD BY FAITH

But the question is, Why did the Lord use these words to the early disciples before He appeared in the presence of God on their behalf and made an imputation of His merit for them? Were they not really under the Law Covenant still? We answer, Yes. They were still under the Law Covenant. Only by faith were they permitted to call God their Father. They had accepted Christ as the Way, the Truth and the Life, had accepted Jesus as the Sent of God, the One who would ultimately accomplish all that He had come to do. They were to manifest their faith by calling God their Father, calling themselves the sons of God--although we find that they did not really speak of themselves as the sons of God.

It was some time after our Lord's death that their faith began to grasp this privilege. The Jews would have been afraid to call themselves sons of God, or to call Him their Father. If they had spoken of themselves as sons of God, they would have thought that they were doing something reprehensible. When Jesus spoke of Himself as the Son of God, they said that He was a blasphemer.- John 5:18; Luke 22:70, 71.

We find from the context that the Lord is advising us that we should not think of our petitions to the Heavenly Father as being for His information. Our Lord said, practically, "You have not an ignorant Father. The heathen go through great supplications, as though their God was asleep, or indifferent, when they petition him. But you, as My disciples, know of God as your Heavenly Father; and as a good earthly father loves his child and makes provision for it, so your Heavenly Father knoweth the things you have need of before you ask Him. It is not necessary for you to give Him advice; for He knows your needs better than you do, and is aware that some of the things for which you ask would be injurious."

THE DIVINE OBJECT IN ANSWERING PRAYER

Why then do we ask at all, since He is our Father, and, as a loving Father, makes all the provisions necessary and needful? We answer that our instruction to pray is intended to awake a further realization of the fact that all of our blessings come from the Heavenly Father; otherwise we should fail to get a great spiritual blessing from contemplating His love and care. He would not have us get the blessing in the same way that trees take in moisture. He would have us to be intelligent, to consider that He is our Father. He knows our needs and has made provision for them. He wishes us to exercise faith in respect to His care and to all the things promised.

The Divine object, then, in answering prayer is that we may have a stimulation of faith in connection with our receiving daily blessings--both temporal and spiritual. The Lord knows the things that the world has need of, and He is making a general provision for the world. He has already arranged a way by which the world ultimately will return as sons on the human plane, and He is making all things to work together for good to them in a general and broad way. God has a great Plan of redemption through Jesus, and a great Plan of exalting the Church to be with her Lord in the Heavenly Kingdom. Then that Kingdom shall pour blessings upon the earth for the rolling away of the curse, and for the Restitution of mankind to the original perfection of Adam in Eden.

To whatever extent any one has an ear to hear, it is proper to tell him about these good things. But only those who have the ear to hear are to be specially instructed at this present time. The knowledge of God's grace at this time has been especially for the called-out ones. The remainder of mankind has been allowed to remain in ignorance. It is quite proper that, as they begin to be awakened, they should hear a little and understand a little; but we are certain that the world cannot see the deep things of God. As the Apostle tells us, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually

discerned." Again he tells us that "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."--I Corinthians 2:14, 10.

WHO MAY PRAY

The Lord is not dealing with the world; for they are not in covenant relationship with Him and, therefore, they cannot please Him now. His last dealing with the world was when they were condemned in Adam. They had no right to life. They were sinners and must die. He has not yet completed the arrangement for the healing of the breach. He has been getting ready for that New Covenant arrangement for the restoration of the world.

The only ones who are now in relationship with Him are the members of the Body of Christ. "If ye abide in Me and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." If we go out of relationship to Christ, then we have no right to pray. But if we maintain this relationship, if His Word abides in us, if we are conforming our lives to His will, and if we are in harmony with His will and the Spirit of His Word, we may ask what we will, and it shall be done.

Those who are abiding fully in Christ would not want anything except God's will to be done. And if they have His Word abiding in them richly, they will know what things they may properly ask for. But if they are ignorant of God's will in the matter, then they would surely say, "Not my will, but Thine be done!" So whatever would be the petition, they would get it, because they desire God's will to be done.

Reprint 5219

TRAINING FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE KINGDOM

“Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow.”--Matthew 6:28.

IN THE Sermon on the Mount, the Master is teaching His disciples certain important lessons. He is not teaching the world, but those who had come to Him, especially desiring to be taught, desiring to be His disciples. He points out to them that if they would be His disciples, thenceforth their main object in life would be to seek to become members of the Kingdom of God. He Himself is to be the great King; and an elect, choice number from the world are to be associated with Him in that Kingdom. When this election is completed, that Kingdom will be established. Then the blessing of all the world will follow under that Kingdom, in harmony with the promise made to Abraham, "In thee and in thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

These, then, who aspire to be members of the Kingdom class should make this the chief aim and object of life: "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness"; that is to say, the righteousness necessary to attain a place in that Kingdom. And all things necessary are promised to be supplied to such aspirants and seekers. Our Lord did not promise rich clothing, fine houses, ease or luxury; nor could we suppose that these would be specially helpful.

Certain training is necessary for membership in the Kingdom. God, the great Husbandman in one picture, the great Overseer in another, would supervise the affairs of each member; and all things would be made to work together for their good. If they needed experience in trials, difficulties and privations, He would see to it that they got those experiences. If they were proud, they would get experiences that would humble them. If they were rude, they would have experiences that would make them polite. It is necessary for them to have these experiences; for if they did not learn at all, they would never get the inheritance to which they have become heirs.

LESSONS IN EVERY EXPERIENCE OF LIFE

The Master took note of the fact that the majority of people are full of the cares of this present life--what they shall eat, what they shall drink, and wherewithal they shall be clothed. He saw that many of the poor were distressed, not knowing, perhaps, whence the next meal would come. If such were the Lord's people, they should exercise faith. If the Father permitted His children to be in these difficulties, He saw that there was some good lesson for them to learn. They were to seek to learn that lesson, and not to fret about their condition.

This did not mean that His followers were to be negligent, to care nothing about their appearance or about what they should eat. This is not the way to do; but while appreciating the beauties of nature, of dress, etc., they were to have faith in their Heavenly Father and to realize that the luxuries of life might not be the best for them. But they were to be content--knowing that all things would work out good to those who were rightly exercised.

This matter of taking anxious thought for food and clothing is not confined to the poor. Some of the middle class, as they rise to wealth, find themselves engrossed with the cares of this life, eating, drinking and dressing--saying to themselves, What shall I wear this time, or that time, etc.? Eating and drinking and dressing seem to be the engrossing thoughts of both rich and poor.

The Lord's people are to be content with such things as they have. They are to seek to provide things honest and decent. But honest and decent things are not extravagant things. The Lord's people are not to be inclined to use money in self-gratification. As they look about and see others of the Lord's children, they see that they must not take too many of these blessings for themselves, but that they should use their money with economy. They should use their money as a part of their stewardship, and know that they are to give an account of it.

We are to seek first of all the interests of the Kingdom. If the interests of the Kingdom need money, we would feel guilty if we should use the Lord's consecrated money in self-gratification. Presumably this is the reason that the Lord has left the interests of the Kingdom in a condition of semi-poverty--in order that His people may forward the interests of that Kingdom. Our God is very rich. All the gold and silver are His, and the cattle on a thousand hills; and if it was for the interests of the Kingdom class, He would forward them money in abundance. Things are left as they are, then, that we may practise economy, may have an opportunity of denying ourselves present blessings for the interests of the Kingdom.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE LILIES

In this connection, our text comes in, illustrating the thought by the lily of the field. Indigenous to the soil, it has those things provided which are necessary for its development. The Lord did not choose a hot-house plant, dependent upon the horticulturist, but He chose a flower from the field. That flower grows under those conditions because the great Protector has arranged for its interest.

This does not mean for the plant to be idle; for if it were idle, it would die. The bulb is continually sending up nourishment to its stalks. It is not idle by any means. But does the plant do this by worrying? No. It merely uses the opportunities that come to it. It merely exercises its functions by the laws of its nature.

God makes provision for the lily in its native soil; and as it grows in its beauty, "even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." So is it to be with God's children. When the Father begets us as His children and we are placed under present conditions, we may be sure that

He who so placed us made the necessary arrangements for us; that He is not unwise; that He has not put us in conditions that are unfavorable for us. They are all of Divine arrangement.

If we move ourselves out of these conditions, we may be responsible in some degree, but as long as we exercise no will of our own to take ourselves out of His providential care, we may be sure that all things will be overruled to work for good to us. If we then seek to adorn ourselves with all the graces of the Holy Spirit, and if we use the opportunities that are in our immediate grasp, we shall be using the means for our own development.

The lily has a right to use everything within its power for its own nourishment. So it is our right and our duty to use the means within our power for beautifying our characters and for our spiritual nourishment, knowing that He who began the good work in us is able to complete it unto the Day of Jesus Christ.

DEVOUT CONTEMPLATION OF THE DIVINE CHARACTER HELPFUL

Our Lord calls attention to how such simple things in nature should be studied, be considered. The lessons to be learned in connection with all the affairs of life will be helpful to such as approach the study from the right standpoint of faith in the Creator, and a realization that He is necessarily the embodiment and representative of the very highest and very noblest qualities of which the human mind could conceive--perfect in Justice, perfect in Wisdom, perfect in Power, perfect in Love.

The heart that thus considers, makes progress, grows in grace, in knowledge, in love. The heart that fails to consider the little things, is hindered from a proper consideration of God and from a proper appreciation of His Plan, and thus from a proper appreciation of His Character.

Reprint 5219

DO NOTHING WHEREBY THY BROTHER STUMBLETH

“It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.”--Rom. 14:21.

VERY EVIDENTLY the Apostle was not in these words endeavoring to put any bounds upon the liberties of God's people. Elsewhere he declares that the liberty of Christ makes us free. But he points out that while we have liberty to do things not sinful and not injurious to ourselves, yet it is part of our privilege and of our contract with the Lord to abstain from anything which would be injurious to others; and that we should seek to regulate our lives so as to be a help to others and not use our liberty merely for the flesh, for self-gratification. We are representatives of righteousness and should so deal with others, "Doing good unto all men, especially unto those who are of the household of faith."--Gal. 6:10.

In this text the Apostle is not referring to a matter where there might be merely a difference of opinion as between meat and vegetable diet. Such a question each should decide for himself. If one finds a flesh diet injurious to him, he should abstain. If, on the contrary, he finds that flesh diet is beneficial to him, he should use it. The Apostle's thought in connection with the eating of meat was in reference to religious convictions. In his time it was the custom for people to eat meat which had been offered to idols. No Jew would care to eat such meat. With a Christian it would be different. He would understand that it did not affect the meat to wave it before wooden idols, etc. Yet the Apostle goes on to show that to some it would seem a crime to eat meat that had been offered to an idol.

The Apostle's thought is that our conscience is the most important thing we have to deal with and should always be obeyed. The brother who would violate some one's conscience by eating the meat would be stumbling and harming that person. Thus a stronger brother would injure a weaker brother. And this was what the Apostle meant. In the case of a brother who could not see as clearly as we, not only should we not seek to break down his conscience, but we should not permit even our influence to break it down.

It would be very proper for us in the case of a weak brother to explain the matter from our standpoint. This would not be seeking to break down his conscience, but to educate it. Then, if he should eat such meat with impunity --without the disapprobation of his conscience--we have thus made him a strong brother rather than a weak one; and this should be to his advantage. The Apostle urges that we should be on the lookout for the interests of the brethren.

SELF-DENIAL IN THE INTEREST OF OTHERS

St. Paul here is evidently laying down a broad principle of self-denial in the interest of others--a principle which applies primarily to the Church, but also to the world. He applies this principle, not merely to religion and to eating meat offered to idols, but he extends the matter, saying, "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor *anything* whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak."

There might be some weak brother to whom wine might be a great temptation, a snare. The Apostle urges that, while there is nothing in the Scriptures to forbid the use of wine, and while he really recommended it to Timothy, whose stomach was weak, nevertheless, *our liberties should be limited by the surroundings*. We know that wine was used much more then than now, and is much more used in Europe than in this country; nevertheless, we know that the effect of alcohol is much more hurtful to the nerves of people now, because the race is so much weaker than in our Lord's day.

When there was no particular danger along this line our Lord and the Apostles seem to have used these things with moderation. They also counseled moderation-- "Whether, therefore, ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (I Cor. 10:31); and we should not use our liberty in any way that would stumble a brother in any sense of the word. God's people are to have *love*, to be willing to *sacrifice self-gratification in the interest of others*.

So far as we are able to discern, intoxication is one of the most terrible evils scourging our race at the present time. Many are so weak through the fall, by heredity, that they are totally unable to resist the influence of intoxicants. Is it too much to ask of those who have consecrated their lives to the Lord, to righteousness and to the blessing of others, that they should deny themselves in this matter, and thus lay down some liberties and privileges in the interest of the brethren, and of the world in general?

Similar arguments might be used respecting the use of tobacco, cards and the various implements which the Adversary uses in luring mankind into sin. The whole, be it noted, is the argument of *Love*. In proportion as we grow in the graces of our Lord, in His Spirit of Love, we shall be glad, not only to put away all filthiness of the flesh for our own sakes, thus to be more like the Lord, but also, at the instance of Love, we shall desire to put away from us everything that might have an evil influence upon others, whatever we might consider *our personal liberties* to be in respect to them.

Another illustration of this principle would be in the observance of Sunday. The Jews thought it wrong even to build a fire on the Sabbath; and any one who was found picking up sticks on that day was stoned to death. We do not consider it wrong to do on Sunday whatever might be done on other days. But would it be wise to use this liberty? Our conduct might have an injurious effect upon others and so discount all that we could say to them along religious lines. They would say: "These people are not good. They do not keep God's holy day." They would not understand.

It would be well for us to keep Sunday more particularly than any other people in the world. In fact, we very likely keep it better than others; and this is right. This error of Christendom has worked good for us. We can have a day full of spiritual enjoyment. If the world understood it as we do there would be no Sunday to keep. On our part we would be very glad if there could be three or four Sundays in a week. In fact, with us, every day should be Sunday. We are seeking to serve God, the main object of life being to preach the Gospel, and to enjoy the "good tidings"--the Message of God's Word.

Our relationship to God is that of the New Creation, a heart relationship; and the blessing which the Lord gives us is as newly begotten children--not along lines of the flesh, but along the lines of the spiritual and of heart development, which shall ultimately be perfected in the resurrection.

True, whom the Son makes free "shall be free indeed" (John 8:36), and we should all seek to "Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free" (Gal. 5:1); but it is also true that we should be on guard lest we use our liberty in such a manner as to stumble others weaker than ourselves, not able to use the liberty of Christ discriminatingly, sometimes through lack of knowledge.

The liberty wherewith Christ makes free may be viewed from two standpoints: if it gives us liberty to eat without restraint, in a manner that the Jews were not at liberty to eat, it gives us liberty also to abstain; and whoever has the Spirit of Christ and is seeking to follow in His steps has already covenanted with the Lord to use his liberty, not in the promotion of his fleshly desires, ambitions and appetites, but in *self-sacrifice*, following in the footsteps of the Master, seeking to lay down his life, even, on behalf of the brethren--for their assistance. How different are these two uses of liberty! Its selfish use--as well as the selfish use of knowledge-- would mean self-gratification, regardless of the interests of others; the loving use would prompt to *self-sacrifice* in the interests of others.

OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO OUR BROTHER

Knowledge does not necessarily mean a great growth in spirituality. A mite of soap will make a very large air bubble; and so a comparatively little knowledge might puff one up greatly, without any solidity of character. There is, therefore, great advantage in measuring one's self by growth in love rather than by growth merely in *knowledge*--though, of course, to be great in *both* knowledge and love would be the *ideal condition*. The Apostle inculcates this same lesson, asserting, "Though I have all knowledge and have not love I am nothing."

Knowledge without love would be an *injury*; and to consider it otherwise would imply that real knowledge has not yet been secured; but to the contrary of this the same Apostle says, "If any man love God, the same is known of Him." (I Cor. 13:2; 8:3.) We might have a great deal of knowledge and yet not know God and not be known or recognized by Him; but no one can have a large development of true love in his character without personally knowing the Lord and having obtained the spirit of love through fellowship with Him. Hence the getting of love is sure to build us up substantially (thus avoiding the inflation of pride) in all the various graces of the Spirit, including meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, brotherly-kindness, knowledge, wisdom from above and the spirit of a sound mind.

Love, after securing knowledge and liberty, will look about to see what effect the use of liberty might have upon others; and will perceive that by reason of differing mental conditions--perceptions, reasoning faculties, etc.--all could not have exactly the same standpoint of knowledge

and appreciation of principles. Love, therefore, would forbid the use of knowledge and liberty if it perceived that their exercise might work injury to another.

EVERY VIOLATION OF CONSCIENCE WRONG

But why? What principle is involved that would make it incumbent upon one whose conscience is clear to consider the conscience of another? Why not let the person of a weak conscience take care of his own conscience, and eat or abstain from eating as he felt disposed? The Apostle explains that this would be right if it were possible; but that the person of weaker mind, feebler reasoning powers, is likely to be weaker in every respect and, hence, more susceptible to the leadings of others, into paths which his conscience could not approve, because of his weaker reasoning powers or inferior knowledge.

One might, without violation of conscience, eat meat that had been offered to idols, or even sit at a feast in an idol temple, without injury to his conscience; but the other, feeling that such a course was wrong, might endeavor to follow the example of his stronger brother, and thus might violate his conscience, which would make the act a sin to him.

Every violation of conscience, whether the thing itself be right or wrong, is a step in the direction of wilful sin. It is a downward course, leading further and further away from the communion and fellowship of the Lord, and into grosser transgressions of conscience and, hence, possibly leading to the Second Death. Thus the Apostle presents the matter: "And through thy knowledge shall the weak one perish--the brother for whom Christ died?" The question is not, Would it be a sin to eat the meat offered to idols? but, Would it be a sin against the spirit of love, the law of the New Creation, to do *anything* which could *reasonably* prove a cause of stumbling to our brother, not only to the brethren in Christ, the Church, but even to a fellow-creature according to the flesh?--for Christ died for the sins of the whole world.

Let us take our stand with the Lord and determine that, in regard to using our liberties in any manner that might do injury to others, we will *refuse so to use them*; and will rather *sacrifice* them for the benefit of others, even as our Master, our Redeemer, gave all that He had. Let us adopt the words of the Apostle and determine once for all that anything that would injure a brother we will not do--any liberty of ours, however reasonable in itself, that would work our brother's injury, that liberty we will not exercise; we will surrender it in his interest; we will sacrifice it; we will to that extent lay down our life for him.

"Thus sinning against the brethren, and wounding their conscience when it is weak, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore, if meat maketh my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh forevermore, that I make not my brother to stumble." --I Cor. 8:13, R.V.

Reprint 4919

THE NEW CREATURE'S STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE

“I keep my body under and bring it into subjection . . . lest I myself should be a castaway.” --1 Corinthians 9:27.

THERE is a duality in Christians that is not to be recognized in others. The natural man has no distinct entity aside from his body. The New Creature is recognized as having a life and entity distinct from the body; and this New Creature is temporarily being developed and nourished in the old body. The old body has its will, its desires. The New Creature has its interests, its desires. Consequently there is a conflict between them.

In the first part of the text--"I keep my body under"-- we may see the thought of *mastery*. The New Creature should say, "I am the master--I will not allow my body to master me," as though there were fear lest the old creature should get the New Creature down and strangle it. It is a battle to determine which will win, which will live and not be destroyed.

The first thing, then, is for the New Creature to get the body under, and thus have the mastery. The New Creature having gained the mastery should, as a secondary step, bring the old nature into subjection and not do its bidding. The old creature is continually trying to assert itself. Very frequently it argues as to how it should be treated and how it should not be treated. Sometimes through false sympathy it might be treated too well.

We must remember that the *life* of the *old creature* means the death of the *New Creature*. We must vanquish the flesh; and we shall not be the victor until the flesh is entirely destroyed. Our victories as New Creatures will not be gained until we as old creatures die. So the battle is *unto the death*, and there should be no particular sympathy between the two natures.

That which would enliven, encourage, the flesh in any way is a foe, and must be banished from our hearts. This might lead in some cases to extremes of conduct, and we might be judged as extremists by the world. But the world is not our judge. The world has no "exceeding great and precious promises" before them. They are a different class from us altogether. We are not to take our instructions from them, nor to allow them to shape our view of the matter, but we are to use the spirit of a sound mind in all things.

DEATH OF THE FLESH ESSENTIAL

The Apostle says that we are to be dead with Christ, to suffer with Him. The Master invites us to take up our cross and follow Him. This means the complete subjection of the flesh--the death of the flesh. If we fail to gain the victory over the flesh, we shall fail to gain the great prize. The ones who are to gain the prize of the High Calling are those who will crucify the flesh, who will put it to death. We are to be "more than conquerors."

This is what the Apostle means: But I keep my body under and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway. All the preaching to others will not get me into the Kingdom. I must keep my body under and bring it into subjection, using *all diligence*. Whatever I would get out of it, my pampering it in any way would be to my disadvantage. I am to be on the lookout to accomplish the victory, lest I should be a castaway.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE NEW WILL CONDITIONAL

Elsewhere the Apostle has told us that the Church is a New Creation of God; and that to those begotten again of the Holy Spirit old things pass away and all things become new. (2 Corinthians 5:17.) Addressing the same class, he says, "Ye have put off the old man with his deeds." We have put off the old man, the natural, fallen man, with his privileges as the successor of Adam, in the same sense that we put off the old will and have received a new mind, in Christ. Instead, therefore, of belonging to the human family, we have stepped into membership in the Body of Christ--out of the old into the new.

The Body of Christ is not *human*, but *spiritual*. We have made this transfer from one family, with its hopes and interests, into the other. The old man is in a fallen and dilapidated condition in every way; and we realize that its deeds were far from satisfactory to ourselves, and especially unsatisfactory in God's sight. We, therefore, by our wills, stepped out of this condition, under guidance from on High. We have made a full consecration of all the old rights and interests, which we had in the old nature, in order that we may be in the New Man, Christ.

As we have come into membership in the New Man, Christ, of which Jesus is the Head, we have under this Head an increase of knowledge. "We are renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created us." The New Creature comes to a more and more clear knowledge of the new will in proportion as he seeks to put down the human will and to be directed by the Holy Spirit.

It would seem, therefore, that we put off the old man, Adam, and the human nature in general, in order that we may put on Christ and be found in Him, as members of His Body, and may receive with Him a share in the exceeding glory, and ultimately be accounted worthy of a place in the Kingdom of God. In proportion as we grow in grace, in knowledge, our appreciation of the Heavenly things increases. Thus our renewing progresses.

The new will recognized by God in the begetting of the Holy Spirit is the New Creature which thus puts off the *old* and puts on the new. Its existence depends on this transformation. Failure means Second Death. Barely to overcome would mean a lower place on the spirit plane--in the "Great Company." Only the "more than conquerors" will get joint-heirship with their Lord-- with exceeding glory and the divine nature.

Reprint 5220

STANDING AT THE MARK

WE HAVE heretofore suggested what we now wish to further, if possible, emphasize; namely, the fact that there is a Divine standard of holiness, of righteousness, which, if it be not attained, will mean our non-acceptance by the Lord as members of his Elect Church; and, more than this, our unfitness for eternal life upon any plane. This standard of character, or mark of perfection, as we have pointed out, is not a standard or mark of fleshly perfection, because the Lord accepts amongst his consecrated disciples those of various degrees of mental, moral and physical degeneracy. The justification which he provides makes up for the blemishes of each, for the more blemished as well as for the less blemished. The robe of his righteousness imputed is as necessary to the noblest as to the most degraded, and renders the latter as acceptable as the former.

From this standpoint it is recognized that the heart, the renewed mind, the renewed will, is the spirit-begotten New Creature which is on trial before God. It has professed a thorough consecration to righteousness and opposition to sin, a complete deadness to it, and a determination to mortify, to deaden, the will of the flesh to the extent of its ability. From the very start this condition is pleasing and acceptable to the Lord. Nevertheless, it is Scripturally represented at first as being merely a "babe" condition, according to one illustration, and according to another merely a "begotten" condition. Progress must be made, character must be developed, and then, further, it must be tested. "Not every one who saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter the Kingdom." Not every one who professes consecration, and newness of life, and self-sacrifice in the interests of truth and righteousness, can be accepted as a joint-heir with Christ. Time must be given for development and for proving.

Love for God they have, from the very outset. But it is not love of the highest type. As already shown, it is largely, if not entirely, duty love. The "babe" in Christ must feed upon the sincere milk of the Word, that he may grow strong. As the spiritual food is appropriated, and spiritual exercise is taken, strength of character comes in, the eyes of our understanding open more widely,

and lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the Divine character are discerned which were not visible at the first. This brings us to a higher type of love for God--a love for his glorious character.

Meantime, also, a sympathetic love for the world is gradually developing in the spiritual "babe." As the principles of the Divine character are seen and appreciated, the New Creature begins to apply these to everything in life, and hence increases in sympathetic love toward man and beast, friend and foe. Another element of love is gradually attained also: At first the "babe" in Christ loves some of the brethren--the nobler, the gentler, the better educated ones, etc.; but gradually, as the Divine character is discerned, and the Divine love becomes shed abroad in the heart, this love broadens out so that it includes every member of the family of God and every member of the fallen race--yea, even enemies. With this development comes spiritual activity, called in the Scriptures quickening--"You hath he quickened." This quickening implies activity in the service of God, and the *service* of the brethren, and if outside opportunity beyond this permit, it would mean an activity in the service of all needing assistance such as we could give.

The Christian life here illustrated, which began as a "babe in Christ," has by this time reached the standard of manhood in Christ, and is at the Mark of Perfect Love--for God, for the brethren, for the neighbor and for the enemies. Not until this point shall have been reached could such a person be considered fit for heaven, or for eternal life on any plane.

We are to bear in mind that there is no development in heaven, and hence perfection of character must be attained by the saints before they die. And, similarly, the world during the Millennium must attain this perfect development before the close of the age in order to be fit for eternal life according to the Divine promise and standards.

Is it asked to what extent will this standard of perfect love in the heart manifest itself in the flesh? We answer, that during the Millennial Age it will manifest itself perfectly in the flesh, for the world then will be judged according to the actual attainments in their flesh, and perfection by restitution will be not only possible, but required. But as for us of the Gospel Age, we who are being judged not according to the flesh but according to the spirit, to what extent will the new mind, the new nature, when at the Mark of Perfect Love, be able to govern and control the flesh? Our answer is, that the degrees of control will vary much, according to the degrees of imperfection with which the mortal body is afflicted.

The only standard which we can set forth is that the new nature, new mind, new will, would be very regretful, very sorrowful, in respect to any laches, or errors, of its mortal body. The Lord would know (and perhaps the brethren also to some extent) of the New Creature's endeavor to control the mortal body by the degree of its grief in connection with every error, and its continually renewed effort to bring every power of the body, and even every thought, into complete subjection to the will of God in Christ. Any sympathy with sin is an evidence that the New Creature is not at the Mark. And no sympathy with sin, but constant endeavor for righteousness, is evidence that it is at the Mark.

Some may be at this Mark for a longer and some for a shorter period. Our Lord was surely at it from the beginning of his ministry. He was tested there, while at the Mark of perfect love. All the besetments of the Adversary and of the world failed to move him from that position of perfect love. He laid down his life at this Mark. St. Paul was surely at this Mark for many years before his actual death. He was continually laying down his life for the brethren, continually serving his enemies and

praying for them; and surely he was continually loving and serving the Lord with his every power and talent.

No Christian should be satisfied with a long delay in reaching the Mark. The milk of the Word should be received, its strength should be appropriated, spiritual sight and spiritual energy should quickly follow, and strong meat of Divine Truth should speedily bring to full maturity the Christian character. And once attained, it should be held at any cost through all the trials and difficulties which the Adversary, and the world, and the flesh, might be permitted to bring against us. The severest temptations come after we have reached the Mark--temptations to slackness in service of God; temptations to withhold parts of our sacrifice; temptations to deal unkindly, uncharitably, unlovingly with the brethren, or unjustly with our neighbor, or ungenerously with our enemies. All of these must be resisted as we prize our eternal life, as we prize the promise of joint-heirship and fellowship with our Redeemer in His Kingdom.

Whoever sees this subject clearly must realize that as a Christian he has to do with a great proposition which will thoroughly test his loyalty, his courage, his zeal, his love. He will need to remember the Lord's comforting assurances of grace to help in every time of need if he would come off a victor and not be dismayed, nor have his courage beaten down by the Adversary's attacks.

MY SACRIFICE.

LAIID on Thine altar, O my Lord Divine,
Accept this gift to-day, for Jesus' sake.
I have no jewels to adorn Thy shrine,
Nor any world-famed sacrifice to make;
But here I bring, within my trembling hand,
This will of mine--a thing that seemeth small;
And Thou alone, O Lord, canst understand
How, when I yield Thee this, I yield mine all.

Hidden therein Thy searching gaze canst see
Struggles of passions, visions of delight,
All that I have, or am, or fain would be--
Deep loves, fond hopes, and longings infinite.
It hath been wet with tears, and dimmed with sighs,
Clenched in my grasp till beauty hath it none.
Now, from Thy footstool, where it vanquished lies,
The prayer ascendeth--"May Thy will be done!"

Take it, O Father, ere my courage fail;
And merge it so in Thine own will that I
May never have a wish to take it back;
When heart and courage fail, to Thee I'd fly.
So change, so purify, so like Thine own
Make Thou my will, so graced with love Divine,
I may not know or feel it as mine own,
But recognize my will as one with Thine.

THE SOURCE OF TRUE PROMOTION

“Promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south; but God is the Judge. He putteth down one, and setteth up another.”--Psalm 75:6, 7.

ONE watching the stars night after night, would observe that while each one has its own motion, yet all seem to revolve around a fixed point which we call the North Star. This fixed star is apparently motionless, and therefore is a point by which a man may gage his course. As we all know, the magnetic needle of the mariner's compass always points due north.

From the clearer astronomical knowledge of our day, it has been ascertained that while the planets of our solar system revolve around our sun, yet there are vast numbers of other suns each having its own retinue of planets, which with their satellites are revolving around it as a center. Furthermore, Science declares that there is a far mightier Center, around which these countless millions of suns revolve, accompanied by their planets and satellites. This great Center seems to be associated with the Pleiades, particularly with Alcyone, the central star of this renowned group. For this reason the suggestion has been made that the Pleiades may represent the Residence of Jehovah, the place from which He governs the Universe. This thought gives new force to the question which the Almighty asked the patriarch Job: "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth the constellations of the Zodiac in their season?"-- Job 38:31, 32.

There seem to be fewer stars in the North than in any other part of the heavens. Thus the North seems to have been given a very prominent position, the other points of the compass giving it homage, as it were. This fact was observed by the ancients, as the Prophet Job declares--"He stretcheth out the North over the empty space, and hangeth the earth upon nothing." (Job 26:7.)

Throughout the Scriptures the North seems to be closely associated with Jehovah's government of the earth.

LESSONS IN THE RESULTS OF SIN

For six thousand years this planet Earth has been a rebellious province in the Universe of God; and God has permitted mankind to work out their own designs, to manifest what they could do. He not only gave His chosen people Israel certain promises and blessings, but He afterwards gave opportunity also to various nations of the world to exercise great power, to become indeed world-empires, as representatives of Gentile wisdom, to show what the unregenerate heart could give to men in the way of order, law, prosperity, blessings, peace. The period during which He gave this opportunity to the nations is Scripturally called the "Times of the Gentiles," a period of 2,520 years, which began with Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon at the time the Lord permitted His own typical kingdom of Israel to be overthrown, to so remain until Messiah's Day.--Luke 21:24; Ezekiel 21:25-27.

During this interim the world has had four great universal empires. These world-governments have attempted to bring various blessings to mankind, yet they have all proven weak so far as righteousness is concerned, and strong so far as evil and viciousness are concerned. Evidently this is the great lesson which God designed that mankind should learn--that in this fallen condition human government cannot be a success; that perfection of being and perfect conformity to the Divine Law alone can give true happiness; that mankind in their present sinful, dying condition, can meet with only ultimate failure and disaster. Thus through actual experiences mankind will come to realize their own helplessness and their need of God.

But while God has been permitting man to prove his own weakness, He has also been preparing for the blessing of the whole world, as He has foretold in His Word. The time when He will take charge of man's affairs, through the Kingdom of Messiah, will be the time when true and lasting promotion will be realized. All who will then come into harmony with God will receive this true promotion--the attainment of all the good things which were originally provided for mankind in God's Plan, but which were lost by the disobedience of our first father and our first mother, Adam and Eve.

"God is the Judge; He putteth down one and setteth up another." The Lord will put down the attempt of the great usurper Satan to rule the world. Satan, originally Lucifer, conceived an ambition to exalt himself to "sit upon the sides of the North," to "be like the Most High." (Isa. 14:12-17.) But very soon now he will be bound for a thousand years, and will finally be destroyed.

So far as earthly kingdoms are concerned, we may say that God has a general supervision over them in so far as they might otherwise thwart His purposes; and He sometimes puts down one and favors the exaltation to power of another. We are not able to say, however, that this putting down or setting up is in the nature of Divine judgment for sin; for some of those put down have not been the unworthy, and some of those raised to power have not been the best, but often very evil. God has been merely so overruling as to cause all things not only to work together for the ultimate outworking of the great Plan which He has arranged, but also to teach men the necessary lessons of the exceeding sinfulness of sin.

"MOUNT ZION ON THE SIDES OF THE NORTH"

God's particular dealings with the world will be in the future, and for the first thousand years will be through the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. All things are of the Father, and by the Son. In this glorious work of judging the world, Christ Himself will be the Judge, and the Church, His Body, will be the associate judges. They will render righteous judgment in all cases, will set up only those who come into full accord with God, and will overthrow and eventually destroy all others.

In the meantime God has a special dealing with His people--those who have already left the world, who have consecrated their lives to Him, who have been accepted through the Lord Jesus Christ and counted members of Christ's Body. These are in the way to a promotion, a prominence, greater than that of all others. Satan's ambition was for self-exaltation; Christ's ambition, on the contrary, was to please the Father and to do good. So likewise the class called to be Christ's associates in the Kingdom have a similar purpose and spirit to that of their Lord and Head. They also seek to do only the will of the Heavenly Father. They also are moved, not to promote their own selfish interests and to gratify their fleshly propensities, but to lay down their lives in carrying out God's great Purpose and Plan.

This is the class which will receive the preeminence over all other classes, all other stations, in earth or in Heaven. With their Lord they are to receive glory, honor, immortality. They will be exalted far above angels and be granted the Divine nature, as has been their Master and Forerunner. (Romans 2:7; 1 Corinthians 15:53, 54; 1 John 3:2, 3; 1 Corinthians 1:26, 27; 2 Thessalonians 2:14; 2 Peter 1:4.) These will share the First Resurrection, Christ's Resurrection. (Revelation 20:5,6; Philippians 3:10.) Their mortal bodies, now merely the instruments of the New Creature, will be laid down forever in death--"Sown in weakness," they will be "raised in power"; "sown in dishonor," they will be "raised in glory"; "sown an animal body," they will be "raised a spiritual body."

A careful study of the above citations of Scripture will be very helpful to those who are comparatively new in the study of the High Calling of the Church of Christ. It is a subject but little understood by Christians in general. But such is the great promotion which God purposes to give His true saints of this Gospel Age, and this promotion can be received from no other quarter than God Himself, on His own terms. This is the glorious inheritance of Zion. When she has been thus exalted and glorified with her Lord, it will be said of her, "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, on the sides of the North, the City of the Great King." (Psalm 48:2.) Thus the great eminence which Lucifer in his pride and presumption sought to grasp, that he might "sit upon the sides of the North," will be granted as a reward to The Christ, Head and Body.

PUTTING DOWN AND SETTING UP IN THE CHURCH

This is the great prominence which the people of God, called to this high station, should be seeking, by faithfulness, humility, love and zeal in the service of the Lord. During the present life, experiences of developing and testing are necessary preparations for this exaltation. All those begotten of the Holy Spirit as New Creatures are now called the Church of Christ, although the elect Church proper will not be organized and completed until the First Resurrection. Not until then will the personnel of the Church of glory be manifested. But God deals now with all those who have made a Covenant of Sacrifice. (Psalm 50:5.) When they meet, even two or three of them, the Lord's presence is in their midst; and each has the Lord's blessing in proportion as he has His Spirit. God is now judging in the Church through His Son. He is not judging the world at present.

The principle expressed in our text is operating now in the Church--the setting up of one and the putting down of another. That the Lord does take an active part in the affairs of the Church we truly believe. St. Paul says that "God hath set the members, every one of them, in the Body as it hath

pleased Him." (1 Corinthians 12:18.) This surely indicates a Divine supervision in the Church. We believe that a great deal of trouble is caused by the failure of many of the Lord's people to view matters from this standpoint. They are too apt to forget about the supervision and oversight which the Lord is taking of His Cause. Some therefore have felt great distress if they were not elected to be a Deacon or an Elder in the Church. Instead of looking at the matter from this viewpoint--that the Lord Himself has the supervision of the affairs of His Church--they are too liable to think, It was that brother who opposed me, or this brother, etc.

We believe that these take a wrong view. Perhaps the Lord permitted the matter to result thus in order to test their humility. The Apostle James intimates something of this kind: "Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted, and the brother of high degree in that he is made low." We should look beyond the mere circumstances of the moment; we should consider and remember well that all prominence, all promotion, and all control of the Church, is in the hands of the Lord. Not only might the Lord wish to give a lesson to a brother who might have been a faithful Elder or a faithful Deacon, but it might also be a good lesson to the Class. They might have failed to appreciate what zeal, energy and ability this brother had. If so, their neglect to reelect him to the position would in time prove a lesson to them. The same is true in the case of a brother who has energy, zeal and ability with spirituality, who has never been elected to eldership by the class.

In any event it is for each of the Lord's children to exercise faith, and to remember that real prominence, true exaltation, is of the Lord. As the Apostle Paul shows, he that "desires the office of an overseer [from a real wish to serve], desires a good thing." So it is not wrong to appreciate such office in the Ecclesia; and we are to appreciate it when we are chosen Elders, because we shall thus have special opportunities for service and for laying down our lives for the brethren. But we are not to be self-seeking in the matter.

When brethren who have served as Elders or Deacons are not reelected, yet are rightly exercised and manifest no resentment, but say, "I am just as glad to serve in one place as another," and enter cheerfully into whatever service is open to them, it will no doubt prove a blessing to their own hearts, and also a blessing to the Class, who note their Christlike spirit. So such brethren should say to themselves, "I will do everything I can to forward the Lord's Cause. The vote of the Class has not given me the responsibility of initiative and direction, but I will do my best to help on in other ways the work of the Lord." Thus they would show the proper spirit of humility and submission to the Lord's providence in the decision of the Class.

“HE CALLETH HIS OWN SHEEP BY NAME”

We believe the principle of our text should be considered in the daily lives of all the Lord's people. Some may fail to see the particular interest which the Lord takes in each one who is His. Every true child of God is the Lord's in the particular sense of having entered into a Covenant of Sacrifice. We should always remember this. Thus as we grow in grace we shall undoubtedly come to see that all "the steps of a righteous man are ordered of the Lord, and He delighteth in his way." "He keepeth all his bones; not one of them is broken." (Psalm 37:23; 34:20.) The Lord will surely direct the path of such. The Master emphasized His peculiar and personal interest in each of His followers. He calls Himself their Shepherd, and says, "He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out." (John 10:3.) This means a very special supervision of the affairs and interests of each one of His true disciples. Whatever may come to these is not a matter of chance or luck.

The steps of the world are not ordered of the Lord. But God's people in proportion as they walk by faith and realize that "all things are working together for good to them that love God, to the

called according to His purpose," in that proportion will they be able to have joy, blessing and peace in every experience that comes to them. Failing to do this, some of God's people, we continue to see, are fretting and chafing, feeling that things are working wrong with them, fearing that the Lord has forgotten them, or that the brethren have forgotten them, and that everything is amiss in their case. They are failing to recognize that God has to do with all backsetting. If He sees best not to promote them, not to use their talents for a time as they would like, let them learn a lesson of humility and submission, of patience and trust. Let them be willing to cheerfully await God's own good time for their promotion.

To us, then, the great lesson of our text is that promotion, exaltation, cometh neither from the East nor the West nor the South, but from Jehovah, who alone is the Judge, who setteth up one and putteth down another --and all in love. If the putting down seems at times to be the result of mistakes or lack of appreciation on the part of the brethren, let us remember that it has come in the providence of the Lord, and is designed of Him for our good, and perhaps for the good of others in one way or another. The experience will prove a blessing if received in the right spirit. "No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." Nothing can by any means hurt us if we keep close to the Lord. Then in due time, we shall be promoted to sit with Christ in His Throne.

Reprint 5710

"LET US GO ON "IN FULL ASSURANCE OF FAITH!"

"Having an High Priest over the House of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith."--Hebrews 10:21, 22.

THE Apostle Paul is here drawing to the attention of the Church, and especially to those familiar with the Jewish arrangements of that day, the fact that the Aaronic priesthood was only a typical one, designed for a time to illustrate greater things; that God's real Plan was not to be carried out by the Aaronic priesthood from the House of Levi, and that their sacrifices of bulls and goats could not take away sins; but that from year to year this arrangement merely shielded God's typical people--typically covered them--through their Covenant. The Apostle points out that there is to be a greater Priesthood, after the Order of Melchizedek; that our Lord is the Head of this Priesthood, and that the Gospel Church are His members, the under-priesthood. He then asks, why should a better priesthood be needed than the one that God provided in Aaron and his sons? The answer is that they were sinners, and could never really cancel sin; and the blood of those animals possessed no real merit. Those priests themselves never really got back into favor with God. They merely had access into a typical Holy and Most Holy.

But now we have Christ as the Head of this new Order of Priesthood; let us realize our position as under-priests of this order. Our High Priest has entered into the true Most Holy. The evidence of this came in the Pentecostal blessing showing that the Father was well pleased with the sacrifice made by our Lord, and that all things were then ready to permit us also to come near to [R5424 : page 89] God, sharing our Redeemer's experiences, that we might later go to Him beyond

the veil and share His glory. Seeing that God has thus made all these gracious provisions, and has accepted us as the House of God to take the place of the House of Aaron--and so much greater than his House--let us enter into the real Holy and Most Holy, "with a true heart, in full assurance of faith."

The under-priests were permitted to enter into the Holy, and after the Day of Atonement into the Most Holy. All, in this Gospel Age, who have made consecration to God, and have been begotten of the Spirit, are in the first Holy. Aaron and his sons were a type of the true Priesthood; but we are not of the order of Aaron; we are not members of the Aaronic priesthood, but of the Melchizedek Priesthood, under its great High Priest. "Ye are a Royal Priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."--1 Peter 2:9.

LET US COME WITH TRUE HEARTS

Seeing, then, that we have confidence that God has made this arrangement, confidence to take the proper steps, and have presented our bodies living sacrifices, have gone through the antitypical consecration, and received the begetting of the Holy Spirit, let us begin at once the work of the new Order of Priesthood. There are great things to be accomplished: let us fully enter in with Him--let us become full participators in this work-- in everything that God has for us to do. Let us come with true hearts, however, realizing how wonderful are our blessings, how precious is the provision of the covering of our Savior's merit. Let us be true and loyal to this Covenant into which we have entered with God.

The Lord's call under this Covenant is, "Gather My saints together unto Me, those who have made a Covenant with Me by sacrifice." (Psalm 50:5.) This call, or invitation, has been going forth during the entire Gospel Age. And all the holy ones, all who have entered into this Covenant, are privileged to have a share in the sacrifice of Christ and to co-labor with Him.

Let us come with full assurance of faith in the sense that we shall have no doubt whatever that God's promises are true and *for us*. The world sees no cause for sacrificing in the present life, and they count us fools all the day long, as the Apostle says. But nevertheless in full assurance of faith, let us go on! Let us loyally press forward unto the end of the way, until we shall be joined to our great High Priest, and enter into His rest!

ANOINTED IN HIM

The anointing of the high priest in the type represented the Divine appointment to office. Aaron was thus anointed of God. The Apostle Paul says that "no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that was called of God, as was Aaron." Even Christ took not this honor upon Himself. God appointed Him, saying, "Thou art a Priest forever, after the Order of Melchizedek." (Hebrews 5:4-6.) God's direct dealings were with the Lord Jesus Christ. He was the One acceptable to the Father. God gave His Holy Spirit to our Lord in fullest degree. Jesus Himself tells us that God gave not His Spirit by measure unto Him, because He was able to receive the Holy Spirit in full measure. Those who are counted as His members are not able to receive the Spirit in full measure, because of their imperfection. The less fallen man can receive more of the Spirit, and the more fallen man can receive less.

When Christ appeared in the presence of God for us, and applied His merit for those who would offer themselves to become members of His Body, to be associated with Him in the glorious

Kingdom work, He received Divine approval and sanction, which was manifested by the begetting by the Holy Spirit of those who had presented themselves in consecration, the Holy Spirit being first given at Pentecost. The Apostle Peter says that God fulfilled His promise to Jesus by granting Him the Holy Spirit to shed forth upon His disciples. (Acts 2:33.) It is *of* the Father, and *by* the Son.

It was not necessary that the Heavenly Father should pour out His Holy Spirit upon each individual member of the body. We understand that the picture given in the type is quite complete. The Holy Spirit being poured out upon the Head of the great High Priest, and flowing down over the skirts of His garments, all His Body is thus anointed. We each receive our share of the anointing when we come into the Body, and under the Robe.

FULL ASSURANCE BASED ON KNOWLEDGE

Speaking to those who are privileged to come to God in prayer, the Apostle says, "Let *us* draw near in full assurance of faith." He is speaking to the *House of God* class. Natural Israel were of the House of God, too, but they were servants. The servants belong to the House, of course, but not in the very special sense, as do the children. We have the suggestion given us that Moses was faithful as a servant over his House, but that the Church of Christ are a House of Sons, and that Christ is Head over this House. It is this House of Sons that may draw near to God. The assurance with which these may rightly approach is dependent upon certain conditions here indicated. They must have a *true heart*, and are not to be double-minded. Entire heart loyalty must be theirs; they must fully demonstrate that they meant what they said when they gave their lives to God. Then they may come to the Lord with holy boldness, in full assurance of faith. All the steps of God's true people are steps of faith, of realization of His care. But there is a full assurance of faith in contrast with a lesser faith. A faith that is only partial will bring us somewhat near to God. A faith that is strong will bring us nearer. But a full assurance of faith is that faith which, if retained, will bring us off "more than conquerors," and make us at last members in full of the Royal Priesthood--in glory.

This *full* assurance of faith cannot be attained in a day. It requires quite a degree of information. And God has provided this information by instructing us in His Word as to what Christ did for us, and what He is willing to do; why He died for us, etc. All this is furnished us as a basis for faith. Then to further strengthen our faith, we have all the exceeding great and precious promises, and His daily providences over us. Therefore this fully consecrated class may draw near, and have the *full assurance* that they may attain all the glorious things to which God has invited them--to be heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord "to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

FULL ASSURANCE NECESSARY TO GOD'S APPROVAL

The Apostle intimates that without this full assurance of faith the child of God cannot come close to Him. Only those who trust the Father as a little child would trust its earthly parent, can expect to make good progress in the narrow way and have the courage and confidence which it is the privilege of all who are His to have, and without which we cannot have the perfect peace and rest of heart promised. "According to your *faith* be it unto you," is the promise. The desire to draw nearer and nearer to God must be in our heart; else we shall fail to go on and attain our privilege in Christ. Such a desire is a manifestation of our hunger and thirst after righteousness, which the Lord expects to see before He makes good to such His engagement that they shall be *filled*.

There are definite conditions specified in the Word as necessary to continued progress along this line. As we cannot draw close to the Lord except through this full assurance, neither can we have

the assurance unless our hearts are kept "sprinkled from an evil conscience," or a consciousness of evil; for, as the Apostle also declares, "If our own heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things." (1 John 3:20.) We may be sure that if our course as New Creatures in Christ is condemned by our own conscience it would also be condemned by God.

Therefore, if the child of God would draw very near, and would have the blessed realization of the Father's smile of approval continually, he must seek to have a conscience void of offense toward God and toward men--a conscience which can truthfully say, I am striving to do that which would be pleasing to the Lord, that which is in full harmony with my Covenant of Sacrifice; and I am striving also to do that which would justly have the approval of righteous men. Nothing short of this is at all permissible in those who have consecrated themselves to be members of the Royal Priesthood, to sacrifice their lives in the Lord's service that they may reign with Him.

CAUSE AND REMEDY FOR LACK OF FAITH

He who has begun a good work in us is both able and willing to complete it. (Philippians 1:6.) But how few children of God, comparatively, have this "full assurance of faith" which is our glorious privilege! How few can say, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and *I shall dwell in the House of the Lord forever!*" Surely, by God's grace I shall ultimately gain the Heavenly Kingdom and the glorious things which He has promised to those who love Him. The few who can thus enter fully into sympathy with the Apostle Paul and the Prophet David in their expressions of confidence have therein a great joy, a great blessing, a great rest of heart which none others possess.

Let us therefore inquire why it is that the number who thus enter into the rest of faith is so small. What are the hindrances to others, and how can these hindrances be removed? How can each one of the children of God enjoy fully this, his blessed patrimony? Many say, or think if they do not say, Oh, that I could feel sure that God's goodness and mercy would continue with me to the end! Oh, that I could remove my doubts of gaining the Kingdom, of being ultimately "more than conqueror"!

What is the difficulty with these? Why do they not have the "full assurance of faith" of their acceptance? We answer that their difficulty is a lack of trust in God; and such a lack is not pleasing to Him, for "without faith it is impossible to please Him; for he that cometh to God must believe that He *is*, and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." (Hebrews 11:6.) Moreover, this lack of faith is a constant hindrance to their overcoming; as it is written: "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our FAITH." (1 John 5:4.) The Christian who has not the shield of faith, and a large one, is continually at a disadvantage before the Adversary, and all the hosts of evil.

Then let each one who realizes a lack in this direction pray earnestly, as the Apostles of old, "Lord, increase our faith!" And then, acting in harmony with this prayer, let such a one cultivate such faith in his or her own heart. (1) Let him refresh his memory continually with the precious promises of the Word, becoming very familiar with these. (2) Let him seek more and more to remember that, having made a covenant with the Lord, these promises are his; and in his heart and with his lips let him claim them as his before the Throne of Grace, with thanksgiving. Let him claim them in his thoughts, and in his conferences on holy things with the brethren.

When trials or difficulties arise, he should call to mind these precious promises, remembering that they belong to him, because God has given these promises to such as love Him and have made a covenant with Him by sacrifice. (Psalm 50:5; Malachi 3:17.) He should resolve that henceforth he

will trust the Word of his Heavenly Father implicitly. If some seeming accident befall him, let him call to mind the promise, "All things work together for good to them that love God, who are called according to His purpose." (Romans 8:28.) Let him thus assure himself that the *seeming* accident could not have occurred had God not seen a way to make it the channel of a needed lesson or blessing to him.

Let us never forget that He who has begun this good work in us *changes never*, and that if we keep our hearts in harmony with Him, if our faith is still firm and clear in the great Atonement made for our sins, and we continually renew our consecration to Him, keeping our all on the altar of sacrifice, letting the Lord consume it in His own way, seeking not our own will, our own way, but *His will alone*, we have every reason to have full confidence that this good work in us will be finished, that we shall enter with joy into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord, and shall hear His blessed words of approval, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

Reprint 5424

SPIRIT-BEGOTTEN SONS OF GOD AND THEIR DEVELOPMENT

"If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the flesh, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."--Romans 8:13, 14.

ONLY those who have the right spirit, disposition, will or intention, can keep the Divine Law, and only those who are in perfect harmony with God will He recognize as sons. The holy angels are sons of God on the angelic plane; cherubim are sons of God on their plane of being; and Christ and the Church in glory are sons of God on the Divine plane. All these are sons of God, yet they exist on different planes. They are all governed by the Spirit of God; and unless they had that Spirit, they could not be recognized as sons; for no one can keep the Divine Law except those who have the Divine disposition.

Before Adam fell he was a son of God. (Luke 3:38.) He had the Spirit of God, in the sense of having the right spirit, disposition, will, intention. But after he had become a transgressor of the Divine Law, he was considered a sinner. All of Adam's race are still sinners except those who have come into Christ. In the Millennial Age, however, Adam's race will have the privilege of coming into Christ. He will be The Everlasting Father, the Father who will give everlasting life to all those who will obey the instructions given under the Messianic Kingdom.

In order to reach that condition of Divine approval, mankind must have the spirit of the Truth, and must be developed along that line. Before they will be counted, or recognized, as sons, they must have the spirit, or disposition, of righteousness. Until they attain that spirit, they will not be able to render acceptable service; for the Lord seeketh such to worship Him as worship Him in spirit and in

truth. In their fallen condition mankind are not able to keep the Divine Law. Even during the Millennial Age they will keep it only in part, until they shall have been brought back to the image of God in the flesh.--Genesis 1:26.

WHO ARE THE SONS OF GOD?

Thus far there has been a very limited number of sons of God on earth, according to the Scriptures. Throughout the Jewish Age God was the Instructor and Guide of His people through Moses and the Prophets; but the Israelites were not sons of God, and they did not have the Spirit's begetting to sonship. On the contrary, they were only a House of Servants. (Hebrews 3:5.) The Holy Spirit of God was not yet given to any of the fallen race; for Jesus was not yet glorified.--John 7:39.

The Scriptures speak of the Spirit of God as a special influence coming from God upon a special class, in a special manner, since a particular event--and not *before* that event. This coming of the Spirit was made manifest at Pentecost, so that it might stand out separate and distinct from anything that had ever before occurred. This power, or influence, is variously called the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of Truth, the Spirit of a sound mind, the Spirit of sonship. The various qualities described by these appellations are all applicable to the same class; namely, those who are begotten of the Spirit.

These spirit-begotten ones are a particular class who have taken up their cross and become followers of Christ, and who are on this account recognized of the Father by the begetting of the Holy Spirit. This Spirit of Truth so illuminates the Bible that the Revelation of God may be better understood by those who have the Holy Spirit. They are able to comprehend the deep things of God, which cannot be comprehended without it. While others not having this Spirit of God might get some truth from the Scriptures, this special class have the very essence of the Truth.

SOME NATURALLY DRAWN TO GOD

We call to mind certain Scriptures which speak of a leading of God's people prior to their begetting of the Holy Spirit. Speaking of a kind of drawing that came to those who afterward became His disciples, our Lord said, "No man can come to Me, except the Father who hath sent Me draw him." (John 6:44.) This drawing is not the work of the Holy Spirit of begetting, which comes to those accepted of God through Christ and received as sons. On the contrary, that which the Scriptures speak of as a drawing of God, and which we have all experienced, seems to be a natural drawing along the lines of the flesh, not toward things sinful, but toward holiness, yet along lines which belong to the natural man.

For instance, when God created Adam, naturally he would love God, naturally he would desire to serve God, naturally he would desire to be obedient to God and to worship Him. These desires were all natural to him because he was in a natural condition--the condition in which he was created--*pure*. Sin has made mankind *unnatural*. But even after sin had entered in and had perverted the original character which God gave, certain longings for God remained in the human heart--even amongst depraved people. They would rather be in harmony with Him, be related to Him, have Him as their Protector and Friend.

God does not draw mankind by any other means than that original power which He implanted and which has not been altogether lost through the fall of the race of Adam. All mankind have degenerated from the image of God; but the desire for worship, for righteousness, for harmony with God, is much stronger in some people than in others. In proportion as one desires righteousness, in

that proportion that one is drawn toward God, feels after God, if haply he might find his Creator. He is feeling after God because he wishes to *find* Him.

HOW THEY ARE DRAWN

This is the drawing, we believe, that comes to every one of us. Before we gave ourselves to God in consecration, we had a desire to come to Him, and that desire was something awakened in us. But it was there before it was awakened. Then something occurred that turned the thoughts toward God. Perhaps it was some great sorrow, some calamity, which drew the heart to God; and with it came the feeling that our grief should be taken to Him. Along with that desire, probably came the thought, "God will not hear me." This is a very proper conclusion, for there is no way of approach to God except through the Redeemer, who said, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life."

Just as the Roman centurion Cornelius needed instruction as to how to approach God, so the soul feeling after Divine assistance also needs instruction. We verily believe that thousands upon thousands have been turned away from God because of the creedal misrepresentations of His righteous character. When people begin to realize that our God is loving, just, merciful, they will turn to Him. We find that some are now being attracted toward God through the PHOTO-DRAMA OF CREATION. Recently we heard of a lawyer who felt that he had lost his hold upon God altogether; but, as a result of seeing the DRAMA, he drew nigh to God and made a consecration of himself.

This, we believe, is the way in which we are drawn to the Father, whose influence is related to everything beautiful and harmonious in nature. Not until we have the desire to go back to God are we ready to be directed by the great Advocate; for when we come to the Advocate, He very pointedly says, "I cannot receive you except upon one condition." That condition, He tells us, is that we take up our cross and follow Him. (Matthew 16:24.) Consequently it would not be wise to tell any one about the narrow way unless he had some drawing toward God.

We see, then, quite a clear distinction between the drawing of the Father--that drawing which persists everywhere --and what in the Scripture is called the Spirit of God. That Spirit is given only to the sons of God. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (Romans 8:14.) That Spirit takes hold of them, guiding them in various ways--sometimes by putting property into their hands, sometimes by taking it away from them, sometimes by permitting sickness to come. The experiences of these sons of God enable them to grow in grace, in knowledge and in love, that thus they may be fitted and prepared for positions on the spirit plane.

THE SPIRIT POURED UPON ALL MANKIND

During the Millennial Age things will be somewhat different from what they are now. Christ will have representatives in the earthly phase of the Kingdom, and through them the Word of God will go forth to the people. As many as will then be drawn toward God will be privileged to come into relationship with Him through consecration. They will then receive the Spirit of God in the sense of *blessing*, but not in the sense of *begetting*, as the Church receives it now.

The Ancient Worthies will be the earthly representatives of the Messianic Kingdom. The Christ, however, will be the great Teacher in glory, from whom all instruction will come through these earthly representatives. As people begin to get the true, the real knowledge about the glorious character of God, they will begin to see how inferior they are. Then they will be in condition to receive instruction.

No one will be compelled to have instruction, however; but whoever is out of accord with the Kingdom will have restrictions put upon him. The Prophet Zechariah, speaking of earthly affairs under the Kingdom, says, "And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain." (Zechariah 14:17.) If we interpret the word *rain symbolically*, we perceive that the thought is that upon such nations there will be no Divine blessing--if there were no rain, there would be no fruitage. But the rain, the blessing, would be upon those who would be in harmony with the Lord.

When people come into harmony with God, they will consecrate their lives and their bodies to His service. Then they will begin to get the blessings in their minds and bodies; and in this sense of the word they will get more of the Spirit of the Lord--the Spirit of His mind. So through His Truth and through the Divine judgments of that time, the Lord will "pour out His Spirit upon all flesh." (Joel 2:28.) In proportion as they receive His Spirit, they will come into the attitude of sonship.

But even then they would not be sons in the full sense of the term. We might say that the Church are not sons in the full sense of the word, but that we shall be sons indeed when we shall have experienced our resurrection change. So in the Millennial Age, as people come into harmony with the Divinely arranged Messianic Kingdom, they will be coming nearer and nearer to the standard of sonship. By the end of the Millennial Age they will have attained that condition of mentality which Adam had when he was perfect. All this blessing they will get through Christ and His associated Church.

THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT IN THE CHURCH

Because our Lord will give everlasting life to the world of mankind, He is called "The Everlasting Father," the Father who gives everlasting life. (Isaiah 9:6.) All the willing and obedient will become His children during the Millennium. Then at the close of the Messianic Kingdom the children of The Christ will be introduced to their Grand-Father. Since they are to be sons of Christ, who is the Son of God, the Heavenly Father will be their Grand-Father. Then the whole world will be back into harmony with God as the sons of Christ.

During this Gospel Age, however, God is not operating upon the world. Whatever there is in the world of natural beauty is the result of the operation of the Power of God in a general way. Our text does not refer to this operation of God's Power, or Spirit, but to His influence upon the hearts of men. In the New Testament writings it refers to those who have become His people by making a full consecration of themselves and then being begotten of the Holy Spirit as New Creatures in Christ. (2 Cor. 5:17.) All such are recipients of special Divine care.

The Scriptures speak of the Spirit of Truth, the Spirit of the Father, the Spirit of Christ. All these are synonymous terms, which represent the Divine influence exercised upon the people of God. Having been begotten of the Spirit, we should remember that, as the Apostle suggests, we are to be perfected. We must make a certain development. We progress until finally we are born in the First Resurrection. Perfection will be attained then, not before. Meantime, in order to be ready for that resurrection, a certain development must take place.

MAKING READY FOR SPIRIT CONDITIONS

In our context the Apostle is telling how we may attain to this life condition, how to make ready for the birth of the Spirit in due time. He says that such a development will be attained through the Spirit, or Power, of God. This Spirit operates in various ways. For instance, God's Message

applies to the Church. Therefore the more we understand the Plan of God, the greater will be that Power in our hearts; and the deeper our consecration to the Divine will, the more sympathy will we have and the greater will be our desire to do the Divine good pleasure.

The change going on within our hearts is neither by men nor of men. God began this work in us. Therefore we must look to Him to complete the work which He has begun in our hearts by the Message He has given us. So we go to Him in prayer, and we study His Word, to know the meaning of that Word and thus to be enabled to put it into expression in our lives. Just as we require food to strengthen our mortal bodies, so we must also have spiritual food to strengthen the New Creature. This spiritual food God has given us abundantly, in order that we may get spiritual strength to understand His will better than before.

This operation of God through the Holy Spirit is a gradual work. So beclouded are we by the errors of our former beliefs that we are not prepared to see the deep things of God at the first glance. Therefore we need to study, to meet together with those of like precious faith. Thus we are helped to see the deep things.

GOD'S WILL CONCERNING US

As we come to understand the matter more clearly, our thought on the subject changes gradually. When we first came to God, we had the thought that God's will toward us was that we should enjoy ourselves, live good, moral lives, and take care of our bodies; and that if we are God's people, we should have abundance; and that those who could not live in harmony with God would be destroyed. This would be the thought of the natural man. The Apostle says that the natural man cannot see the things of the Spirit of God, because they are spiritually discerned. But this is not at all God's way of dealing with us.

By and by we begin to discern that our Heavenly Father prepares us for the spiritual things by showing us how to destroy the earthly condition and how this will be brought to an end. This is a new thought to us; and we ask ourselves, Does God wish me to mortify, deaden, destroy, the earthly condition? Am I not to seek to cultivate my talents and to live a natural life?

The natural man says, Follow natural things; do as you please so long as you are not interfering with the rights of others. But the New Creature is not to heed the natural inclinations of the flesh. We have asked the Lord to transform us, to renew our mind, and ultimately to give us what He has promised. Therefore we do not belong to the world at all, and our course is to be that which is marked out in the Scriptures.

THE WORK OF THE NEW CREATURE

Our text does not mean that we are to mortify our bodies in the way that some have thought. According to history, there have been earnest souls in the past who have used whips on their bodies until they produced severe pain, and then have worn hair jackets, etc. Sometimes these bodily tortures have been carried so far that the skin would be covered with sores. Others have undertaken to mortify their bodies by lying down to be literally walked on, etc. We cannot question that whoever would do these things must have a motive for so doing, and we cannot think it a bad motive; nevertheless, we believe that those who do such things have a wrong conception of the meaning of our text.

By the expression, "Mortify the deeds of the flesh," the Scriptures mean that the people of God are to put to death in themselves all natural practises that are not in harmony with the Spirit of God. We are all born sinners, the Bible declares, and therefore we are not to follow the bent of our fallen nature. We are to have the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, which will guide us in the way in which we should go. We are to mortify every inclination of the body that is not indorsed by the new mind.

There are certain qualities of the mortal body that are to be destroyed, and therefore are to be warred against at all times. Then there are other qualities which are to be utilized in the service of righteousness. Once we were under sin; but now we have a new mind. Henceforth we are to treat the old creature as an earthen vessel merely. Under the direction of the Holy Spirit, we are to know how to do this. The first step in the process is to reckon our body dead. Having reckoned it dead toward sin and toward everything of an earthly nature, we are then to reckon it alive in the sense of awakening, quickening, all the tendencies, attributes, that can be brought into the service of God. This is the second step.

THE DAILY BATTLE OF THE SPIRIT-BEGOTTEN

After we have been begotten of the Spirit, we are New Creatures. In every sense of the word we are free from our body. Whatever parts of our human nature we find to be in opposition to God and His will we are to mortify, deaden, as soon as we discover them. This process is a continual warring against, fighting against, the old nature. The Apostle distinctly calls it a warring between the flesh and the Spirit. But while warring against certain elements which are legally dead, we find that the *flesh* is not *dead* actually. But if we live according to the Spirit, and not according to the flesh, God will not recognize the flesh, nor shall we. We shall recognize only the New Creature.

The battle is a daily one. All our members must be brought into harmony with God and His will. We are to endeavor to see everything from the Divine standpoint. The thought is not that we shall ever perfect these mortal bodies, but that while we are living on the earth and have to do with these bodies, it is our duty and our privilege to make the body do the will of the New Creature.

Our bodies were slaves to Sin. Now we say, "I have the right to control this body. I am a New Creature, but this is my body. I shall increase my power over this body, and use it more and more in the service of the Lord. It is not my intention to do foolish things--to leap from a pinnacle to see whether my body will remain alive; but under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, I am to get out of it the most that I can, in the service of the new Master."

All this is necessary to our development in character. God has called the Church to glory, honor, immortality and joint-heirship with Christ. If we do not prove overcomers, we shall never be ready for so great an exaltation. This exalted position will not be given to any mortal merely because he says that he desires to be something different from what he is. On the contrary, we must work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. Those who profess entire consecration to God must demonstrate this by putting away everything that is contrary to the Divine will. As these seek to build character, they will be growing "strong in the power of His might." Those who will pursue this course to the end are the class that He is calling for, and those alone will prove worthy of the place to be given to the "more than overcomers."

REJOICING IN TRIBULATION

The world will have a thousand years during which to bring their bodies into harmony with the will of God. Gradually mankind will come to the place where they will be thoroughly loyal to the Lord. The stony heart will be taken away. To all those who through obedience reach this condition God will be pleased to give life everlasting.

But with the Church it is different. During this Gospel Age the Lord is selecting and directing those who of their own will desire to lay down their lives in His service. They love Him, and He is pleased to call them His holy ones. No good thing will He withhold from this class. Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, what God hath in reservation for those that love Him--those who have through consecration been begotten of the Holy Spirit, and who are going forward from grace to grace, living not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For this class God has provided His very best things.

To this class the Scriptures declare that "through much tribulation we must enter into the Kingdom of God." Some might say that these have a hard time. But all Christians can agree that it is possible to reach that degree of development where one can rejoice in all these experiences in which the flesh is being mortified, deadened. This is not because we are so different from other people that we like what they dislike, but because we see a reason why this tribulation is permitted. We know that this is God's plan for us; and by these evidences of mortification of the will of the flesh, of the things of the flesh, we see that we are growing in the favor of our Heavenly Father.

These have the peace of God ruling in their hearts. They know that all of their affairs are under Divine supervision. The world have their troubles and fears and forebodings. But those who have put their trust in the Lord have a peace which the world can neither give nor take away. But we cannot explain this to the world; for they cannot understand it.

Reprint 5582

HEROES OF FAITH

--HEB. 11:1-40--

Golden Text:--“Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”--V. 1.

IN preceding lessons we have been discussing faith and works as the subtle power for good or evil wielded by the tongue. In this lesson we more particularly examine faith to learn of its importance as a motive power to good thoughts, good words and good deeds.

The chapter under consideration is one of the masterpieces of holy writ. Indeed, the entire book of Hebrews occupies a very commanding position in the Bible. Some, indeed, have questioned its authorship, but to us there seems no room for doubt that it was written by St. Paul. It is marked throughout by his masterful logic, reverence and personal humility. It gives insight into the Divine Plan of the Ages, which fully comports with St. Paul's other epistles and which far transcends in this respect all the other writings of the Bible. It has been noted by some that its style is more lofty than that of some others of St. Paul's epistles; but this may be easily accounted for. Those other epistles, although full of sound reasoning and logic, are written in a simple and fatherly style for the general reader. This one was written particularly for the benefit of the other eleven apostles and other learned

Hebrews who were slow to discern the change of dispensation. Naturally, therefore, it was St. Paul's masterpiece, because upon it he evidently expended the greater labor--demonstrating the typical character of the Jewish Dispensation and indicating the antitypes of the Gospel Dispensation, as well as some reaching well into the Millennium. The references in the thirteenth chapter to Timothy and the statement, "They of Italy salute you," imply that St. Paul wrote this epistle from Rome, where he was in prison.

It should not be thought strange, however, that the Lord used this great but humble man, St. Paul, as his mouthpiece in presenting many of the "deep things" of the Divine Plan. His early education and his association with the Gentiles combined with his deep spirituality --and fulness of consecration to the Lord well qualified him to be, as was foretold, the Lord's "chosen vessel." Let us remember, too, the order stated:--

(1) To bear my name to the Gentiles;

(2) And before Kings;

(3) And to Israel

St. Paul's missionary efforts were first directed of the Lord to the Gentiles. It was later on that he stood before King Agrippa and other notables of Palestine-- still later that he was sent a prisoner to Rome, and to some extent doubtless bore witness there before the Court. Later through this epistle to the Hebrews God's message through this Prince of the Apostles did much for "Israelites indeed" who were trammelled by the things of the Law Covenant and unable to disentangle themselves so as to rightly discern between the shadows in the types and the eternal verities antityped in the Christ, Head and Body, and his great work as the "antitypical Priest," "antitypical Prophet," "antitypical Judge" and "antitypical Mediator" of the New (Law) Covenant.

“THE FOUNDATION OF THINGS HOPED FOR”

Strictly speaking hope is unsubstantial--not a reality. It furnishes no genuine foundation--it is merely a hope. It will not sustain weight. But faith is more than hope. Faith implies a promise. And when a promise is made by the Almighty God, who changes not and who is as omnipotent as he is unchangeable, then faith can firmly trust him, come what may. Hope finds a foundation--finds in faith a substance, because the faith rests upon a Divine promise. Whoever, therefore, has hope that is without such a Divine promise has a foundationless hope. Thus we see the heathen with hopes and fears full of uncertainty; yea, many Christians, hoping for certain things, have uncertainty, fear and doubt, because they have not faith. And they have not faith because they are hoping for something which God has not promised and to many of them the things which he has promised are not known, not understood, and, therefore, not a basis for faith, nor a foundation for hope. Realizing these things, how careful we should be that our hopes should not soar away to uncertain fantasy, but build solidly upon the faith foundation of Divine promise. Such as have this proper faith must of necessity be students of the Divine Word and the greater their studies the more their faith; and the greater their faith the more their studies of the promises.

The Apostle brings before our minds from the past a galaxy of faith heroes. He holds them up for our admiration, so that they shine and sparkle and excite our admiration and, we trust, stimulate us to similar faith-heroism. None of these enumerated by the Apostle was a heathen vagarist feeling

after God and hoping against hope and soaring off in imagination. They were all positive, forceful characters, who knew in whom they believed and testified their faith by their obedience to God.

JOHN CALVIN DEFINES FAITH

"Eternal life is promised to us, but after death. We are told of a blessed resurrection, but we meantime become the prey of decay; we are promised righteousness, and yet sin dwells in us; we hear ourselves called blessed, and meantime are overwhelmed in infinite miseries; we are promised affluence of all good things, but are all our days in hunger and thirst; God proclaims that he will be ever present to help us, but seems deaf to our cries. What would become of us if we leaned not to hope, and unless our mind, guided by the Word and the Spirit of God, emerged through the midst of the shades, above this present world?"

The Apostle briefly sums up the matter of the Christian's present lessons in faith, saying, "We walk by faith and not by sight." The more carefully we walk with God the more peaceful and the more joyful may be our Pilgrim journey towards the New Jerusalem. Outwardly the world, the flesh and the Adversary may harass us, but no grief, no tribulation can shake our inmost joy, if it be well founded upon the faith foundation of Divine assurances that we are children of God, in touch with the Infinite, beloved by our Redeemer, who assures us that "The Father himself loveth you," and the Apostle, that "all things shall work together for good to them that love God, to the called ones according to his purpose."

ST. PAUL'S ILLUSTRATIONS OF FAITH

"By it (faith) the Elders obtained a good report." Not all the Elders or ancients received a testimony that they pleased God--the "report" here referred to. No, the number who received this witness of God is comparatively small, and, in every instance, they were commended, not for perfect works, but for their faith. Their "faith was counted unto them for righteousness." The Divine intention was that those whose reverence for their Creator and obedience to his Word of promise shaped and moulded a human life under present conditions of imperfection and world-enmity to God thus implied that they had hearts so full of trust and the proper spirit that God could count it righteousness, count it perfection; because when in the resurrection such should receive perfect bodies under perfect conditions they would surely do the Divine will thoroughly. Hence their faith in God and his promises, attested by imperfect works, justified them to that Divine fellowship which they will fully enjoy when the things hoped for shall be realized.

Thus in few words the Apostle summarizes what he afterwards proceeds to amplify respecting the Ancient Worthies. Then he begins a specification of faith. By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God--in obedience to Divine direction. We believe this equally true, whether we understand the seven days of creation mentioned in Genesis to be twenty-four hour days or to be longer epochs--seven-thousand-year days. The fact that Divine energy is exercised through various channels and agencies and that worlds are not spoken into existence in a moment of time matters not. While God could speak worlds into existence, as our Lord by his word turned water into wine, as a matter of fact this is not his usual proceeding, even as the fruit of the vine is usually produced by sunshine and rain falling upon the earth in which the vine has been planted. It is, nevertheless, a matter of faith with us that what we see was miraculously formed, even though gradually.

The Genesis account of creation does not go back to the forming of our world out of the elements, but begins with the statement, "Now the earth *was*, but was without form and void

(empty)." As the seven days or epochs were consumed in a gradual lifting of mountains and sinking of oceans and bringing forth of fish and reptiles, fowl and beast and herbage, so we may well suppose that the formation of the earth itself was a gradual accomplishment of a still more remote period in which the various strata of the earth's surface were formed--limestone, shale, coal, etc. A godly man wrote, "Ever all things are Divinely directed, and in the uniformity of nature we see the work of God; or (else) we see about us that which is impossible, unthinkable,--power, wisdom, a plan without mind; infinite intelligence in a godless, scopeless world."

Well did the Psalmist write, "For the heavens declare the glory of the Lord. Day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no place where their voice is not heard"--by those who have a hearing ear.

"HE BEING DEAD YET SPEAKETH"

Particularizing the heroes of faith the Apostle begins with the first martyr, Abel, who is mentioned four times in the New Testament and three of the times particularly styled "the righteous." It was in his death that he spoke --in the fact that he died because of his devotion to the Lord. And has it not been so with many of God's saints-- that their lives spoke more earnestly to their neighbors, friends and children after their death than while they lived? We know of many instances which have exemplified this. So Abel, the first martyr for righteousness in the world's history, yet speaks of his devotion to God and to principle.

Figuratively his blood is said to cry out to God for vengeance. Divine Justice is supposed eventually to see to it that every crime, every injustice committed shall somehow and somewhere receive a just recompense of punishment, whether in the present or in the future life. The Apostle calls our attention to the fact that the blood of Christ, on the contrary, speaks the very reverse, and, instead of calling for justice, vengeance, upon those who crucified Jesus and have persecuted the members of his Body, will eventually call for mercy. Our Lord was the great sin-offering for mankind, and all whom he accepts as members are specifically styled sacrificers--on behalf of sinners--to seal for Israel the New Covenant, through which all the families of the earth may receive the blessing of Divine forgiveness.

ENOCH WALKED WITH GOD BY FAITH

The testimony respecting Enoch was that his was a life of faith; that he walked with God and not with the world; that he sought to walk righteously, in harmony with the Divine will. The testimony is that all that approach God must believe that he is (else they would not seek to approach him), and must believe that he is a rewarder of those that diligently seek him, else they would not deny themselves the things highly esteemed amongst men and seek at the cost of sacrifice to do the things pleasing to the heavenly Father. The record respecting Enoch is very meager, but we do know that he was a prophet and that through him the message came that Messiah would come eventually with ten thousand of his holy ones to execute righteousness, judgment, in the earth--to overthrow sin and set up Divine standards amongst men. "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all."-- Jude 14, 15.

Enoch not only prophesied this but he believed it and it stamped his entire character and made him separate from the world and drew him nearer to the Lord. Similarly faith in the coming of our Redeemer and the establishment of his Kingdom and the reward of his faithfulness and the judgment or trial of the world during the Millennium, in which every man will receive a just recompense of reward, whether good or bad--this faith still has a sanctifying power. Let us cultivate

daily, hourly, the setting of our affections on things above, the things which God hath in store for them that love him, for which we pray, "Thy Kingdom come."

"HEIR OF RIGHTEOUSNESS"

Noah is the third of these faith heroes held up for our inspection. None of these was righteous in the absolute sense, for the Scriptures declare, "There is none righteous, no, not one." Of Noah it is written, "Now Noah was perfect in his generation"--he and his family were separate, free from the contamination of their time, from improper intercourse with the angels, which kept not their first estate.--Gen. 6:4.

Noah's faith in God was manifested in his building of the Ark in obedience to the Divine instruction that a great rain and flood of waters would come, which would destroy every living thing and wipe out the corrupted race. This was no slight test of faith either, for we are to remember that the Scriptures declare that up to that time there had been no rain on the earth. It was moistened by irrigation and by mists and fogs. "For the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth . . . But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground."--Gen. 2:5, 6.

For a long period Noah's faith was tested even unto the entering of the Ark and the closing of the door before the rains descended and the floods came. Of him it is well declared, therefore, "He became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." God is pleased to call Noah and all others who thoroughly, genuinely trust him, friends. He recognizes them as separate and distinct from the world in general. Their faith is their distinguishing quality. Nevertheless a manifestation of the faith and the testing of it by works of obedience is required. Blessed is the man who has much and strong faith in the Lord, which will stand trial, testing; for subsequently will be granted to him a corresponding blessing. Nay, more than this, the Lord has guaranteed us that he "will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able" and he informs us that he knoweth our frame and remembereth that we are but dust.

HE LOOKED FOR THE CITY OF GOD

Next in the list of Ancient Worthies is Abraham, styled "The Father of the Faithful"--not because Noah and Enoch and Abel had not been faithful, but because with Abraham God started a faith family to whom were given many and great promises. That family became known as the nation of Israel, and latterly as Spiritual Israel. Again, Abraham was the father of the faithful, because while the heroes that preceded him exercised faith in God, it was more along abstract lines, whereas the Divine revelation to Abraham was the Gospel, the good tidings in definite form--that in and through his Seed all the families of the earth should receive a blessing. Thus the Apostle declares that God preached in advance the Gospel to Abraham, and thus all who believe that Gospel, of which redemption by Messiah is the essential, all such are called "the children of Abraham," and he is spoken of as their father, the one through whom this Gospel hope was caused to descend.

But in still another sense Abraham was the Father of the Faithful: in the sense that he typified the heavenly Father, as Isaac typified our Lord Jesus, and as Isaac's bride, Rebecca, typified the elect Gospel Church.

Abraham's call of God was the result of his having faith in God and because he lived at an appropriate time for the Divine purposes to begin to be expressed. First his faith was tested by the Divine command that he leave his native country to wander up and down through Palestine as a

shepherd, dwelling in tents without any fixed habitation, without any attempt to take possession of the land and to establish himself in it by building fortresses, etc. The promise was that in after times God would bring his posterity to this land and give it to them for a possession.

The promise went further and declared that if obedient the Lord's blessing would continue and that the seed of Abraham would become great and influential and that through it all nations would receive a blessing--and by implication all would come under its control. It required great faith to believe all this under the circumstances. And the test continued, as, year by year, Abraham's wife grew older, until the time of motherhood was long past. Still we read that Abraham's faith "wavered not."

Still later, after Isaac the son of promise had been born and had grown to manhood, the Lord tested the faith of this wonderful man by telling him to offer his son as a sacrifice. We are not to assume that this instruction was given by any mere impression of the mind, nor would it have been proper for Abraham to have accepted and acted upon anything short of an absolute demonstration of the Divine will in such a matter. The father love, the hopes of years, and apparently the Divine Word and Oath were all about to be wrecked. Yet his faith "faltered not," for he accounted that God was able to raise his son from the dead and that surely God would fulfil his every promise to which he had bound himself, not only by his Word, but also by his Oath.

While we exclaim, Wonderful faith! let us remember that this was the very quality of Abraham which specially commended him to the Almighty as his particular friend. And let us remember that if we would have the particular friendship and blessing and fellowship of the Lord this is the channel through which it is to be sought--the channel of faith, of trust, of obedience. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." The more faith we have the more pleasing we shall be in the Lord's sight and the more we may be used of him as channels of blessing to others--however imperfect we may be in other respects.

And here it is worthy of note that Abraham was not perfect in every respect. On two occasions he was reproved by heathen kings and shown in some respects to have less lofty ideals, in one particular at least, than they would have given him credit for. Nevertheless, God did not reject Abraham because of those imperfections. Indeed, possibly those imperfections were partially the result of Abraham's endeavor to hold on to the Divine promises and to do everything in his power to bring them to fruition. He knew that the Divine promise was that his child, who should be the channel of God's blessings to the world, would be the son of Sarah; hence he felt that he must not jeopardize either her life or his own. This very desire to do nothing to interfere with the Divine promise may have had something to do with apparent weaknesses.--Gen. 20.

“THE CITY WITH FOUNDATIONS”

When the Apostle declares that Abraham "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God," we must not think this to mean that in his journeying throughout Palestine, he expected some day to come upon a newly-built city of divine construction. Nor should we think with some others that Abraham was looking for the New Jerusalem to come down from heaven --a city built of literal precious stones with gates of literal pearls. No, Abraham knew nothing about that city, for nothing respecting it had yet been revealed.

A city, in olden times, stood for and represented a fortification, a government, a rule of authority. Abraham realized that the earth was full of sin and violence and out of harmony with God. He knew that Enoch, his ancestor, a man of God, had already prophetically declared that Messiah

would come, the representative of Jehovah, and establish a Government, a Kingdom, a City of Righteousness. He longed for that righteous government and realized that its foundation of righteousness would be deeply laid, and that it would be an everlasting Kingdom. He knew that occasionally a monarch came to an earthly throne possessed of good intentions and partially able to exercise these, but that soon his throne, his kingdom, crumbled and passed to others.

Abraham, therefore, was not in sympathy with any in his day, nor since, in looking for an earthly kingdom, but he was looking beyond all these for the Kingdom of God's dear Son--the Millennial Kingdom. His eye of faith looked down and beheld Messiah and the exaltation of Israel and the blessing of all the families of the earth during the Millennial day. Our Lord Jesus attested this, saying, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day (the Millennial day of Christ's reign) and he saw it and was glad." The Jews misunderstood our Lord to mean that he had been with Abraham. Others misunderstand him to mean that Abraham saw by faith his work of sacrifice. It is true that our Lord did appear to Abraham. It is true that in a certain sense Abraham foresaw the sacrifice of Christ in the typical sacrifice of Isaac, but it is also true that "the Day of Christ" is the Millennial day for the world's blessing and that it was that which Abraham saw and which gladdened his eye of faith.

We also see the same; and, sharing the same faith, we share the same joy and gladness of hope and expectancy. We indeed discern still more clearly than Abraham of what that city or Kingdom consists--that our Lord will be the great King, the Head over the Church his Body (his Members, his Bride) and that this Bride, the Lamb's Wife, is pictured symbolically in the New Jerusalem, whose foundation stones in glory will be "the twelve apostles of the Lamb." (Rev. 21:2, 11-14.) We see more clearly than did Abraham (because guided by the holy Spirit through the Word) that the Ancient Worthies will be the earthly channels or agents through which this Heavenly City will send forth its blessings to Israel and to all the families of the earth. As it is written, "Ye shall *see* Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the Kingdom." Christ and his elect spiritual Bride will not be *seen* by men except as we now see our Lord, with the eye of faith.

"SHE JUDGED THE PROMISER FAITHFUL"

We are glad that Abraham's wife is specifically mentioned in this list of faith heroes. It helps us to thoroughly grasp the Apostle's thought that the distinction of sex does not operate to the disadvantage of either male or female in connection with the Divine promises. Perhaps it cannot be said that Sarah's faith did not falter, but if it wavered for a time it certainly was recovered. Although she was past the age of motherhood she believed God. "She judged him faithful who had promised." Thus she was counted in with the noble list of whom the Apostle says, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises (the things promised), but having seen them afar off (with the eye of faith) and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were pilgrims and strangers in the earth."

Ah, yes, here is an important feature. It is not sufficient that we see glorious things of the Divine purpose, not sufficient that we believe them, not sufficient that we rejoice in them. We must be willing also to stand the test of being strangers and pilgrims in the present time. Those who cannot stand this test will not be accounted *worthy* of a share in those glorious things. Those Ancient Worthies, unsatisfied with any of the earthly prospects, sought the heavenly--not in the sense that *we* are seeking the heavenly, the spiritual things--in the sense of hoping for the completion of a change of nature from earthly to spiritual. They sought or desired the heavenly in the sense expressed in our Lord's prayer. They wished God's Kingdom to come, to be established in the earth--a heavenly rule

of righteousness, a heavenly city or government. "Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city"--he has planned such a heavenly Kingdom or dominion as they hoped for. That Kingdom, the Scriptures assure us, will eventually be the "desire of all nations."--Hag. 2:7.

ISAAC, JACOB, JOSEPH, MOSES

We pass along the aisles of the hall of faith-fame and note the pictures to which the Apostle calls our attention --of Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses. Each one has distinctions, characteristics and peculiar traits; but the quality of faith foundation in them all is that which makes them the people of God--those he is well pleased to acknowledge and to whom he has already promised blessings in the future because of their faith. If anything would inspire God's people to a cultivation of the grace of faith it surely would be a walk through this portrait gallery of the Faith Heroes of the past.

Isaac showed his faith in the Abrahamic promise in that he conveyed with full confidence the Abrahamic blessing to his son Jacob; and none the less did he manifest faith in that promise when he gave a blessing also to Esau, realizing that under that original promise all the families of the earth to be blessed must include the family of Esau also. Jacob, exercised by faith in the promise made to his grandfather Abraham, manifested it in the ordering of all of the affairs of his life. Especially was it manifested on his death-bed when, after giving special blessings to the sons of Joseph, he worshipped God, leaning upon the headpost of his bed (translated staff in the common version). He recognized that the blessings that were to come to his family were all under Divine supervision and all included in the original promise made to Abraham. He further signified his faith by giving directions respecting his burial, that it should not be in Egypt, but in Canaan, the Land of Promise, which was Israel's by faith only.

Joseph gave many manifestations of his faith in God. Not only as a boy, but also while in Egypt he clearly demonstrated his faith in the promise of God that Israel was to be the blessed people through whom the blessing of the Lord would eventually, in co-operation with Messiah, reach all the nations of the world. By faith he gave direction that when Israel would leave the land of Egypt for Canaan they should not forget to take with them his bones. This does not necessarily imply that he thought the bones and the dust that had once constituted his entity would be necessary to God in his resurrection, but it does signify that he would thus testify his faith in a resurrection of the dead--his faith that he would participate in the blessings that would come to Israel through the Messiah.

“THE REPROACH OF CHRIST GREATER RICHES”

In various ways did Moses testify his faith in God, but in none of them, perhaps, in a more remarkable fashion than in renouncing the privileges of the throne of Egypt, to which he was by adoption the heir. He chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of the Abrahamic promise than to dwell in luxury with the others. The people of Israel were the people of the Messiah, the people of Christ; hence in associating himself with them he was showing his esteem for the reproaches of the Anointed. Indeed, faith marks every step of the progress of Moses in Divine favor and service.

"He endured as seeing him who is invisible." How graphically this describes the matter and how true it is to-day as well as then that the endurance of trials and testings is only possible to those who have the eye of faith--to those who can see invisible things, things invisible to others: especially those who can see the invisible King of glory and his, as yet, invisible Kingdom! It was through faith also that he instituted with Israel the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood, though we have no reason to suppose that to any considerable extent it was possible for him to comprehend the real

meaning of the passover and the antitypical significance of the blood and its sprinkling. His faith again was demonstrated in the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea. His obedience matched his faith in all these matters.

While we stand in awe at the presence of so great faith, nevertheless we are encouraged thereby, because we realize that perfect faith is possible to us, although perfect works are not. Let us, then, hold fast by faith to the Divine promises and continue to walk by faith and not by sight, until, by and by, our change shall come and we shall enter into the realities of which now we have only the promises.

“BY FAITH THE HARLOT RAHAB”

It is incomprehensible to the world, and an astonishment to the saints, that in so many ways the Scriptures show that God is no respecter of persons--that he has not been choosing out exclusively the great or the wise or the good, but, on the contrary, has been choosing the sincere, the honest, the faithful, notwithstanding lowliness of birth, natural blemishes and imperfections. Truly does the Lord say, "My ways are not as your ways, nor my plans as your plans." And truly did our Redeemer say that publicans and harlots should go into the Kingdom in preference to faithless, self-righteous Pharisees. How glad we are that in God's providence the Apostle mentions Rahab and her faith, and how the Lord appreciated it and rewarded it! Surely there is a lesson here that should be well marked and inwardly digested by every one of us, not only for our own encouragement, but also for our guidance in respect to others. It is in full conformity with the Apostle's statement that God is choosing some of the "mean things of the world" in the present time to ultimately confound some of the greater and mightier and less faithful and obedient.

After giving us this wonderful galaxy the Apostle seems to realize that he has only well begun the list. He declares that time would fail him to mention other faithful characters which have had God's approval, such as Gideon, Barak, Sampson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets, who through faith won victories, wrought righteousness, secured promises, etc. In every case the faith was tried, sometimes by cruel mockings and scourgings and sometimes by bonds and imprisonments. Some were stoned. Some were sawn asunder. Some were homeless wanderers, desolate of earthly comforts, afflicted, tormented--of whom the world was not worthy.

“NOT PERFECTED WITHOUT US”

After pointing us to these glorious heroes the Apostle intimates that they are a different class from ourselves, the disciples of Christ of this Gospel Age. They all died in faith, not receiving the things promised them, because God had provided something still better for us and had arranged that they could not get their blessing until we should first have received ours.

What is this wonderful thing that belongs to us, separate and distinct from what belongs to them? We answer that our blessing, like theirs, is a faith blessing and reward and not a reward of works. Our blessing is *superior* to theirs because Jesus the Messiah has come, has given his life, has been highly exalted--and because we are now being called to membership in his Body, the Body of Christ, the Body of the great High Priest, the Body of the King of kings and Lord of lords, the Body of the Mediator between God and mankind. This matter of our call to another plane of being as the associates of the great Messiah is the "*hidden mystery*" not previously revealed. It is indeed "*some better thing for us*"--as much better as the heavenly inheritance is better than the earthly one. The Ancient Worthies, whose glorious career we have been considering and praising, must wait until the spirit-begotten class shall be born from the dead in the First Resurrection; then they shall receive

their blessing of resurrection to the earthly plane, to be the earthly representatives of the Heavenly City, Heavenly Kingdom, and to share in a very particular way in the bestowment of God's blessing to Israel and to all the families of the earth.

They all through the fall were imperfect and hence "children of wrath, even as others," and so are we. But they and we are willingly and intentionally and at heart in accord with the Lord and his righteousness as the majority of mankind are not: hence they and we have been enabled to hear God's voice, speaking peace and blessings to the willingly obedient. The Ancient Worthies responded to the extent of the privileges and blessings that were then tendered, proffered, available. And we of this Gospel Age have heard and responded to the still higher blessings and privileges of the high calling of this Gospel Age.

JUSTIFIED BY FAITH

The Ancient Worthies were not justified by a Covenant nor by a Mediator. Neither were we. Both they and we are justified by *faith*. They with ourselves come under the Abrahamic Covenant, which had no mediator and needed none, because made only with those of similar faith and heart desires to those of father Abraham. Although some of these heroes lived during the Jewish Age they were not justified by their Law Covenant but by their faith, for the Law Covenant made nothing perfect because of the inefficiency of its mediator; neither were any of them justified by Israel's New (Law) Covenant, for it has not yet been inaugurated.

The selection of the *members* of the Mediator of Israel's New Covenant is now in progress. The Anointed (Christ, head and members) is the Mediator of the New Covenant. The Law Covenant was between God and the one nation of Israel, which it was proposed should first be blessed and made holy and granted eternal life and then become the channel of blessing to all other nations who would come into harmony with God by an acceptance of Israelitish obligations. That Covenant failed because its mediator Moses was unable to give life to anyone except in a typical sense temporarily.

The New Covenant is to be between God and Israel and the world--between God and men. The Mediator is spiritual, but he does not mediate between God and a spirit-begotten class. He is a mediator for *men* with God. Hence the Church has no mediator, needs none, for the Church is not composed of those who are of human nature, but only of those who are begotten of the holy Spirit and members of the New Creation. These are Members of the Mediator that need no mediator. Because of their imperfections of the flesh, because they cannot do the things that they would, they need an Advocate, and they have one, "Jesus Christ the Righteous."

As soon as all the Body members of the great Mediator Christ shall have been called and chosen and found faithful; then will come the time for the blessing of the Ancient Worthies, to whom will come the privileges and blessings of Abraham's seed according to the flesh. Through them God's blessing of the New Covenant will proceed, during the Millennial Age, to every creature: granting to all the fullest opportunities of reconciliation and eternal life.

Throughout the Millennial Age those Ancient Worthies, as the earthly representatives of the heavenly Mediator, will in a sense be deprived of the bliss which would properly belong to those tried and found worthy. For a thousand years they will serve the imperfect race as rulers, instructors, uplifting priests, in contact with imperfect humanity, assisting them back to harmony with God and to all that was lost.

Is it asked what reward will be granted to these Ancient Worthies for the labor accomplished during the Millennium in the uplifting of the world? We reply that the privileges of such a labor for mankind would of itself be quite a sufficient reward; but certain things in the Scriptures seem to *imply* that these Ancient Worthies will at the close of the Millennium receive a still further blessing, namely, that they will be *changed* from human to spirit nature.

This is not distinctly stated in the Bible, but merely may be inferred. We have already seen that these faith heroes who preceded this Gospel Age were typically represented by "the red heifer" which was burned without the camp and whose ashes served to sprinkle the unclean. We have also seen that as a class these were represented as members of the tribe of Levi. In other words, the household of faith, as typified in the tribe of Levi, was represented in times past as well as now. And it was from that "household of faith" that during this Gospel Age the antitypical priests are being called, chosen and found faithful. We have seen that all who will constitute the "Royal Priesthood" and all who will constitute the "great company" were originally represented in this "household of faith," typified by the Levites.

We have seen that the "little flock" and the "great company" both make consecration with a view to becoming sacrificing priests, but that only the few who have lived up to the terms and conditions of self-sacrifice will win the prize of membership in the High Priest's Body--membership in The Christ--membership in the Mediator of the New (Law) Covenant. Of the remainder, some will draw back completely and die the Second Death, while others, neither drawing back into perdition nor going forward into voluntary sacrifice, will be developed, proven, tested by the judgments of the Lord and be found worthy of life on the spirit plane as conquerors with palm branches, but not as "more than conquerors" with crowns. The justified who fail to go on to consecration pass back and become part of the world, while the consecrated who fail to go on to voluntary sacrifice nevertheless maintain their justification as New Creatures because in their testing they prove true.

Thus the "*great company*" of this Gospel Age and the *faith heroes* of preceding times still remain members of the "household of faith," the antitypical Levites; while the "little flock" of crown-wearers, belonging to the same household of antitypical Levites, passes on to the position of "royal priesthood" in glory. During the Millennium some of those antitypical Levites (the "great company") will serve on the spirit plane, while others, the Ancient Worthies, the faith heroes of ancient times, will be serving on the earthly plane. What is more reasonable than to suppose that when their service upon the earthly plane shall have ended the latter class also will be received to the heavenly plane? This thought is confirmed by the fact that the typical Levites were *granted no inheritance in the land*--the earth. Thus in advance God intimated that they were to have no earthly inheritance--but a spiritual one.

In Revelation 20:7-9 we are informed that at the close of the Millennial Age Satan will be released from restraint and permitted to bring temptation upon the restored world; and that some of mankind under his false teaching will become rebellious against the Divine authority and "go up and encompass the camp of the saints and the beloved city." This camp of the saints seems to symbolically tell us that even at the close of the Millennial Age, when all mankind shall have reached *perfection of human nature* (or, failing to do so, shall have been destroyed in the Second Death), there will still be a distinction between this camp of the Holy Ones and mankind in general? Why the distinction when all are perfected? Because, we believe, the Divine intention was to show that even when mankind shall have reached perfection the Ancient Worthies will still in some sense be separate and apart from the remainder of the perfect race. It is at that time that we understand the Ancient Worthies will be changed from earthly to heavenly organism.

“SO GREAT A CLOUD OF WITNESSES”

The moral of our lesson is summed up in the first verse of Hebrews 12th chapter, in which the Apostle says, "Wherefore, seeing that we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses (martyrs), let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith."

What a grand exhortation! Let us heed it! Let us give faith its proper place. Let us feed our faith upon the Word of God and upon all the Divine providences of our experiences in life as they daily come to us! Let us thus follow in the footsteps of our great High Priest, the Captain of our salvation, our Leader, our Forerunner, whose sacrifice is the foundation for our faith and whose power in glory is to be its consummation, when he shall receive us unto himself in the First Resurrection, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye."

Reprint 4385

“IF GOD BE FOR US WHO CAN BE AGAINST US?”

--ROMANS 8:31.--

WHAT wonderful thoughts these words arouse! God for us! God on our side! It means almighty wisdom enlisted in our interest, almighty power to be exerted on our behalf, almighty love and infinite goodness watching over us and caring for and helping us. What immeasurable lengths and breadths, heights and depths of infinite grace are here so forcibly and so concisely set before the mind!

But we notice a limitation: The Apostle's suggestion is not that God is for every one, but for "*us*." To whom does he refer by this word "*us*?" Is it possible that divine love and energy, wisdom and power are not being exerted on behalf of the world, but only on behalf of the Church in this present time?

Christian people are divided in their opinion respecting this matter. Our Methodist friends and generally Universalists and Unitarians hold that God is not for *us*, the Church, specially; but that he is for everybody, everywhere. They hold that he is today trying to save everybody, and that he has been so trying for the past six thousand years. They must of course admit, when making such a claim, that thus far the divine plan has failed of success for six thousand years; because men are not

saved and only a small proportion have yet had the necessary opportunity for salvation; namely, a knowledge of the only "name given under heaven or amongst men whereby we must be saved." They must realize that the logic of facts is against their contention and against all hope that by present methods and arrangements the world would ever be converted; for they are aware that while it is claimed in a general way that nearly a million heathen have been converted during the last century (and it is safe to say that a very large proportion of these are not so thoroughly converted as might be desired; that comparatively few of them could be termed "saints"), yet, during the same time it is estimated that the numbers of the heathen have increased, in a natural way, to the enormous sum of two hundred millions. How long would it require at this rate, at this ration of conversion, one million converts to two hundred million births, to convert the world? All can see that such hopes are quite illogical. Nevertheless, we can sympathize with and greatly appreciate the warmth of heart on the part of many of these whose theology we now criticise. Many of them--at least the founders of the systems--were forced to such conclusions, namely, that God is doing the best he can do for the world, in opposition to the doctrine of election and foreordination, as it has heretofore been misunderstood.

On the other hand, the great majority of Christian people, namely, the various branches of the Presbyterian, the Episcopal, the Lutheran, the Baptist and the Congregationalist churches deny the theory that God has been trying to save the world for the past six thousand years and has failed of his purpose. They hold, to the contrary, that his purpose has been to select or elect out of the world a Church and that this work of election has been progressing and will finally be consummated; and that thus God's Word through the prophets shall be fulfilled, "My Word that goeth forth out of my mouth shall not return unto me void; but it shall *accomplish that which I please*, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." (Isa. 55:11.) They hold that, since all of God's purposes shall be accomplished, it cannot have been his purpose either to convert the world or to bring every creature to a knowledge of Christ during the past six thousand years; because neither thing has been accomplished, therefore neither thing could have been purposed.

We were about to say that we agree with the last mentioned numerous families of Christians in reference to the doctrine of election; but we cannot make so broad a statement. While we find in the Scriptures the declaration that an election is in progress during this age especially, and to some extent during all the past, yet it is not the *kind of election* to which such large numbers of our Christian friends hold. Their view of divine foreordination implies not only the election of a Church, but the damnation of all who are not elected; and here we must differ; for we find nothing of this kind in the Word of the Lord. We find nothing in it to imply that all the non-elect are hopelessly lost; but, on the contrary, the teaching that the election of the Church (Christ the Head, the Church his Body), during this Gospel Age, is for the very purpose that they, as the "Seed of Abraham," may fulfil the divine plan as expressed in God's promise to Abraham, namely, that in this Seed (Christ and the Church--Gal. 3:16,29), as the heirs of the divine promise and benevolent intention, "all the families of the earth shall be blessed." Not only is the character of the Scriptural election a very different one from that which has generally been held by Calvinism, but the object of the election is as widely as possible different from their conception. We would use the same language as our Calvinistic friends in speaking of the "us" of our text, in that we would say that it refers to the elect Church, but we deny that the damnation of all others is either stated or implied.

In the preceding verses (29, 30) the Apostle explains the character and methods of the divine selection of the elect Church, and we cannot do better than notice its details, because so much depends upon this point. If we can find in the Apostle's description good and sufficient evidence to assure us that we are of this elect Church then we shall have great cause for thankfulness, confidence and joy, in realizing that God with all his almighty power and wisdom and love is enlisted on our

behalf. A great difficulty with many seems to be, not that they doubt that there is such an election in progress, nor that they doubt that God is *for* some, but that they doubt that they belong to that elect class--doubt, therefore, that they are of the "us," and that God is for them; and that he is causing all things to work together for good to them.

By reason of their natural constitution, some of the humble-minded of the Lord's people lack the confidence which they should have, while in some instances others who have such confidence have no real basis for it. Knowledge, therefore, clear knowledge of the Apostle's argument, is essential to proper faith respecting this subject, and proper confidence in God's care over those who have been adopted into his family and are seeking to make their calling and election sure. Our faith is made necessarily dependent to a large extent upon our understanding of the divine revelation on these subjects. Let us, therefore, critically examine the Apostle's statement with reference to the various steps in this election, and note our own connection with the same, step by step, that we may know to a certainty whether or not we are of the "*us*" class which he mentions, on behalf of whom the Lord's power and wisdom are and will be exerted.

The Apostle begins by asserting divine foreknowledge; a divine attribute which will not be questioned by any Christian. God not only foreknew the sin that would enter into the world through the liberty given to father Adam and mother Eve, but he also foresaw the fall that would take place as the result of his own sentence, and the mental, moral and physical degradation which have resulted. Moreover, he foreknew that in due time he would send his "Only Begotten Son," our Lord, to ransom all from sin and its penalty, so that ultimately he might be the Deliverer of all who desire to return to harmony with their Creator. He not only foreknew the humiliation of our Lord, his First Begotten Son, from his condition of glory and spiritual nature to the lower conditions of human nature, but he foreknew his trials, and his faithfulness through them, even unto death, even the death of the cross. In all this he foresaw our redemption sacrifice. He foresaw also the glory which he designed to bestow upon our Lord Jesus following his obedience, as expressed by the Apostle Paul, saying, "Him hath God highly exalted, and given him a name [title, honor, etc.] above every name."

But our heavenly Father foreknew and foreordained still more than all this--the selection of the Church to be the "Body" of Christ, the "Bride" of Christ, his associate, not only in the sufferings and trials of the present life, but also in the subsequent glory and great work of "blessing all the families of the earth." This is distinctly stated by the same Apostle in his letter to the Ephesians (1:4), where he declares that "God hath chosen us in him [Christ] before the foundation of the world." The same foreordination is distinctly stated by the Apostle Peter, who writes to consecrated believers, addressing them, "elect according to the foreknowledge of God, the Father, through sanctification of the spirit," etc.--I Pet. 1:2.

But the *predestination* of this verse (Rom. 8:29) is not at all what has generally been understood: it is not said that God predestinates that some should go to heaven and others to eternal torment. That is where false human reasoning has corrupted the testimony of God's Word and made it of none effect, or worse--of bad effect. The Apostle's statement is very clear, that God predestinated that all who shall be of this elect, foreknown and foreordained Church in glory must first be "*conformed to the image of his Son*"; or as the literal reading would give it, "copies of his Son." How reasonable this predestination! How unreasonable the false view! God is calling a number of sons to "glory, honor and immortality," and has made Christ Jesus the Only Begotten, faithful in every trial, the Head or Captain of this foreordained company, whom he has since been calling, testing and preparing for the foreordained glory. And as it was but a reasonable thing that God should determine that if our Lord Jesus would be faithful he should receive the highest exaltation, so it was equally right and proper that the divine will should be forcibly asserted and that he should

predestinate that none could be of that glorified "Body of Christ," except as they would become imitators of Jesus, who is the firstborn among these his "brethren."

Having thus stated the matter concisely, the Apostle proceeds to apply it to the Church individually, and to show the steps which God is taking during this Gospel Age for the purpose of finding amongst men this class which he has foreordained shall be found. The Apostle gives the particulars in the following verse (30); and although it is simply stated, it has very generally been stumbled over, not only by believers in general, but also by the theologians, because of two things. (1) The last word of this verse translated "glorified" should be translated "honored"; and should be understood to refer to the honor conferred upon all who, during this age, are brought to any knowledge of Christ--the true light. This honor went first to the Jews, and selected a "remnant"; but when that nation proved unworthy of this "honor" it was turned to the Gentiles, to gather out of them a peculiar people, a holy nation, to bear the name of Christ. (Acts 15:14.) (2) The reader naturally expects the Apostle to begin with present conditions and trace them up to the grand result--the glorified Church--while on the contrary the Apostle very properly begins at the other end, and traces the results downward. He does not begin, as is generally supposed, by saying, God honored you with the knowledge of the Gospel of Christ, and when you believed he justified you, and after you were justified he called you, and if you are faithful to your calling he will by and by exalt you to the condition which he foreknew. Indeed, it would not be possible to state the matter truthfully from that side; because many are honored with a knowledge of the Gospel of Christ who are never justified (because they do not accept the knowledge, do not accept Christ), and of those who do accept Christ and who are thus justified, it would not be true to say that they will all be sanctified; nor would it be correct to say that all who once are sanctified will reach the condition of glory; for "many are called but few chosen": few "make their calling and election sure."

But the Apostle argues the matter from the only proper and logical standpoint: having stated that God has foreknown or fore-intended the election of the Church, he steps forward to the time when God's purpose and intention will have been completed, accomplished --the time when the election will be finished and the Church accepted to glory. From that future standpoint he indicates the various steps which led up to it, saying, All those of the foreknown ones, glorified, will previously have been called; because it is a matter of grace, and no man taketh this honor unto himself, but "he that is called of God"--as the "Head of the Body," so each member of the Body. And, says the Apostle, every one thus "called" will previously have been "justified"; because God calls no enemies, no unreconciled sinners, to this high position. It was for this reason that Christ died, that through faith in his blood repentant believers might be "*justified*" and might be thus *prepared* to be "called." It is thus evident that the high calling to this glorious position of joint-heirship with Christ is a very different thing, indeed, from the calling of sinners to repentance. Sinners are called to repentance anywhere and everywhere and at any time. And when they repent, the Lord engages that in due time he will point them to

"The fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
Where sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains."

When they have lost their guilty stains, through repentance and faith in the Redeemer, they reach the condition of justification, and are ready to be "called" to sonship and joint-heirship. But the Apostle is still going backward in the argument and, having told that the foreordained class would all be "called," and that they would all previously have been "justified," he declares that the justified

ones would all previously have been favored or "honored" (not glorified): honored or favored with a *knowledge of the truth*, a knowledge of the gospel.

Perhaps only a comparatively small number of Christians have realized what a great honor was conferred upon them in the first knowledge brought to them of the "Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." This "*honor*" has been so widely dispensed that many forget that it is a special honor, a special favor, just as they forget to recognize as special blessings the sunshine and the rain. But this "honor" is not yet as common as some other of God's blessings. "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust," throughout the whole world: but not so the gospel sunlight and the spiritual showers. These blessings have been general only in certain quarters.

"THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD IS JESUS"

When Christ as the "Great Light" arose in Palestine, and when on the day of Pentecost the Church was illuminated by him, as a light for the world, that light was not sent southward into the darkness of Africa: the Africans were not "honored" with having the gospel of Christ. Neither was it sent eastward through India to its hundreds of millions: India was not "honored" with the gospel of Christ. Neither was it sent still farther East to the hundreds of millions of China: China was not "honored" with the gospel of Christ. But it was sent northward and westward through Europe and America. These lands were "honored," these peoples "have seen a great light," and with that light have received a great blessing. But how comparatively few have really seen this light, even when it shone around them on every hand. Alas! like the partly cured blind man of old they see a brightness and can discern something, but see nothing clearly. The Apostle explains their case, saying, "The god of this world hath blinded the eyes of them that believe not."--2 Cor. 4:4.

Having followed the Apostle's reasoning, we are enabled to see clearly each step of divine providence taken in connection with the divine purpose and foreordination.

(1) We see that first of all, to a certain extent, God was "*for*" us, for the people of Europe and North America: he was for them or *favorable* to them to the extent of "honoring" or favoring them with the light of grace "as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ, our Lord."

(2) In a still fuller sense God was "*for*" or favorable towards those who accept the light of truth, those who through repentance and faith in the precious blood are "justified" from sin through his grace.

(3) He was yet more "*for*" these justified ones, to the extent that he "called" them to suffer with Christ during this Gospel Age, and by and by to share his glory.

(4) In a still fuller sense he is "*for*" all those who accept the call and who are seeking to "make their calling and election sure." God is in an especial sense "*for*" all these who are so running as to obtain the prize which he offers. "They shall be mine, in that day when I make up *my jewels*."

It is to this called and faithfully running class that the Apostle speaks as "us." He and those whom he addressed ("called to be saints"--Rom. 1:6,7) had first been "honored" with the light; second, they, by repentance and faith, had accepted it and been justified; third, they had been "called"; fourth, they had accepted the calling and given themselves wholly to the Lord. And with the Apostle and the early Church all who to-day can recognize themselves in this same position, as having taken these same steps, may properly apply to themselves the Apostle's words and say, God is for us; who can be against us!

All the "saints" throughout the whole world, who have taken the afore-mentioned steps, are probably altogether not a great multitude; but rather, comparatively, a "little flock": yet each one of these may say to himself, and realize to the very bottom of his heart as applicable to himself, these wonderful words--God is for us. He may endeavor to grasp the significance of these words, but he will surely fail to get all of their wonderful meaning. It is not possible for the human mind to grasp the riches of divine grace and love and power. We cannot comprehend them, we can merely apprehend them. If God be for us, with all of his infinite wisdom and power, it implies also that Christ is for us, for he is one with the Father; it implies also that all the angels, Cherubim and Seraphim, and all the heavenly powers of our knowledge and beyond our knowledge are for us--all enlisted upon our side, to do us good, to help us, to succor us in time of need, to uphold us in time of temptation, to strengthen us to do the Father's will. "All things are yours, for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

The view granted to Elisha's servant, of countless horses, chariots and horsemen of fire or like fire, was of course merely a vision, nevertheless it represented a truth--that divine power is round about God's people on every hand for their protection and their deliverance. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that are his and delivereth them." "Are they [the angels] not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. 1:14.) Our Lord expressed the same thing, saying of his "faithful followers": "Their angels [messengers] do always behold the face of my Father." It matters not whether we shall understand this to signify that spirit beings continually surround those called to be the "elect" of the Lord, to guide and shape their interests for their highest good, or whether we shall understand it to be merely a figure of speech, signifying that divine power surrounds God's people; for the results would be the same; it matters not by which means the Lord would deliver them from the evil and help them in trial and adversity. The fact that God is "*for us*," and that he is making all things work together for good to those who love him, is the central thought, the essence, the strength of this message to "us."

How wonderful is all this! Let us cast our minds for a moment over the world with its fifteen hundred millions of inhabitants. Let us remember that they are all under the "curse," under the sentence of divine displeasure, except the few who have heard of the redemption --of the Way, the Truth and the Life--and who have by faith and obedience "escaped the condemnation that is on the world" and come back into harmony with the Father and into fellowship with his Son. Let us imagine, if we can, this "little flock" of the "honored," "justified" and "called," heaven-led and heaven-blessed, scattered here and there amongst the fifteen hundred million fellow-creatures. Oh, what joy, what comfort, what peace, what strength the thought must bring to each one who can realize that he has taken all of these steps thus far, and that he is still pressing "toward the mark for the prize of the high calling!" This joy is not dimmed, but is greatly enhanced, by the thought that soon, in conformity with God's gracious foreordination all the "elect" may have a share in the great work of blessing with the knowledge of the True Light the masses who are yet in darkness, "without God and having no hope" in him. For although a redemption has been provided for all, the knowledge of God's grace has not yet reached any but the favored or "honored" minority.

As the Apostle declares in this very same chapter (Rom. 8:22), it is indeed a groaning creation; it has been groaning ever since the sentence of divine wrath was expressed in Eden, and it must continue to groan until the great Deliverer shall have established his Kingdom, and shall have rolled back the "curse" of death and depravity. Oh, what riches of grace have come to "*us*" through Jesus Christ, our Lord! And yet, as the Apostle says, although we have all this blessing and favor, we have also with it certain trials, difficulties and painful experiences, which the Father sees necessary for our development in order that we may come up to the terms of his predestination, "copies of his Son." And in consequence of this, as the Apostle declares, "We ourselves also [as well as the whole

creation] groan within ourselves [while suffering *with* the world, we suppress the groan, "We lay our burdens at his feet and bear a song away"] waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our Body"-- "the Body of Christ," the elect Church.

The word if in this text does not signify a doubt or question on the subject; but quite the reverse. The Apostle has given the evidence that God is for "*us*," in the preceding verses, and now uses if as though he said, If I have proved that God is for us, then who can be against us!

"WHO CAN BE AGAINST US?"

Who can be against us, if God is for us? The Apostle does not mean that, having God on our side, none would dare to oppose our way. Quite to the contrary, we have bitter enemies and relentless foes. Who are against us? Their name is legion. The devil is against us; as the Apostle declares, "Your Adversary, the devil, goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." The Apostle Paul assures us that we must contend against "the wiles of the devil." St. James declares that we must "resist the devil." The Apostle informs us that Satan is cunning and deceitful, as well as desperately wicked; and says that therefore we must have a battle, and as good soldiers we must have on the armor of God and use it faithfully. Thus we are to resist the devil, and he will flee from us. We are to "quench all the fiery darts of the Adversary" in open attacks, and yet to remember that we battle not with flesh and blood, but with a demon host; with "principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in high places."--Eph. 6:12.

Nor is this all: we have a great enemy in ourselves, the "carnal mind," "the old man," *reckoned dead*, which must be kept in subjection. Perhaps the greatest battles and the greatest trials which we are called upon as "new creatures" to endure, are these battles of the new self, the mind of Christ, against the old fallen self, the mind of the flesh.

Furthermore: we have the "world" as "children of darkness" arrayed in opposition to us. They love the darkness and consequently hate not only the light, but also the "children of the light." This our Master declared, saying, "Ye are not of the world, for I have chosen you out of the world." "Marvel not if the world hate you; you know it hated me before it hated you." "If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but now ye are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you." And the world's hatred is not conducted along honorable lines of warfare. It would be ashamed to declare that it loved darkness, and ashamed to declare that it hated us because of the light. Its policy, rather, guided by the great Adversary, is to "put light for darkness and darkness for light"; to misrepresent our best efforts as evil and selfish, and to misrepresent its own selfish efforts as honorable and good. "Marvel not, if the world hate you." "The darkness hateth the light."

Nor are these great adversaries the only ones to oppose us: we must expect to endure from still another quarter. As our Lord declared, "A man's foes shall be they of his own household." Those whom you have dearly loved of your own family circle, and with whom you have had Christian fellowship, may turn against you and hate you for the truth's sake. Nor will this always be because of wickedness of intention: sometimes at least the persecutions will come conscientiously; as for instance, Saul of Tarsus, who afterward became the great Apostle Paul, was once a persecutor of "this way," and ignorantly did many things against Jesus and those who loved him. He himself tells us that he obtained mercy because he did it ignorantly, thinking that he did God service. And so doubtless it has been with much of the persecution that has come to the Lord's faithful ones in every age. Much of it has been inflicted conscientiously. It is quite remarkable, too, how the Adversary succeeds sometimes in deceiving those who once knew better into thinking that anger, malice,

hatred, strife, bitter words and slander, "works of the flesh and the devil," are "*duty*." Alas, how blinding is the spirit of the Adversary!

All these adversaries must be resisted unto blood, unto death, if need be; must not be permitted to hinder our walking in the footsteps of him who set us an example; must not be permitted to prevent us from becoming copies of our Lord and thus making our calling and election sure. But while resisting them with all our might, we must avoid carnal weapons and not render railing for railing; rather, so far as possible, we should use the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, and, Michael-like, say, "The Lord rebuke thee." God is "*for us*," and declares that in his due time he will right present wrongs and falsehoods, saying, "Vengeance is mine, I will render recompenses." Indeed, toward the class who war against us ignorantly and conscientiously we should feel no bitterness, but rather sympathy, love and an earnest desire and effort for an opening of the eyes of their understanding.

The Apostle was not ignoring all of these great adversaries which, like "roaring lions," would terrify us, and if possible arrest our progress in the path of consecration and sacrifice, which leads on to glory. This is not his thought when he says, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Quite to the contrary, his thought is, that *notwithstanding* all these things which are against us, we may realize that God is for us, that he has predestinated a Church in glory and has justified and called us to be members of it, and brought us on the journey thus far, through all of these various steps. And if we can realize that God has thus been leading us up to the present time, to bring us to share his glory, and that all things thus far have been working for our good, this is our assurance that all wisdom, power and love shall be exerted on our behalf down to the very end of the race course, if we continue to abide in Christ faithfully.

What shall we fear? What could oppose our way so as to hinder it, if God be on our side? This reminds us of the adage, "God with one is a majority." So, God with us, and for us, and leading us, makes us mighty indeed, stronger than all these adversaries with all their arts and wiles and perversity, and able through his grace to come off conquerors, yea, more than conquerors through him who loved us and bought us with his own precious blood.

We urge that each reader mark the various steps of progress through which divine grace has already led him, and that, whatever he finds to be his present standpoint, he go on as the Lord leads, not content with anything short of "the whole counsel of God." The reader has been "honored" with a knowledge of the grace of God in Christ: if he has not yet accepted, let him quickly accept this grace by repentance for sin and with faith in the ransom. If he has done this and has received the grace of justification, and, as the Apostle expresses it, has "joy and peace through believing," then let him remember that still there's more to follow, and that the justified are "called." Not called to glory merely, but called to *obedience*, called to present their bodies living sacrifices to God in his service, holy and acceptable through Christ.

Alas! how many who have received the grace of justification stop there: they hear the call to suffer with Christ for the truth's sake, they hear the invitation to stand up for Jesus, in their thoughts and words and deeds, but heed not. They perceive that such a full consecration would necessarily mean not only the giving up of sinful pleasures, but also the giving up of some not sinful, that they might devote their words and thoughts and deeds as far as possible as he did, doing good to others. But of those who hear the call to present themselves, how few obey it, how few surrender themselves to him who bought them with his own precious blood! Yes, many are called; though few are chosen. All the justified are called to self-surrender, full obedience, full trust in the Lord and full submission to his will. And of those who do accept the call and who have made the covenant, and who are

therefore of the "us" class mentioned by the Apostle, how many become "overcharged with the cares of this life, or the deceitfulness of riches," or the perplexities of poverty and so fail to obtain the fulness of heart-obedience, and consequently will fail to make their calling and election sure!

We are not now discussing what will be the *fate* of those who fail to be victors and to gain a crown and to sit with Christ in his throne; we are considering, rather, the privileges of those who have been "honored" of the Lord and led step by step up to present attainments of knowledge and privilege. We are seeking to bring before our minds at least a faint conception of the wonderful provisions of divine grace, and the full ability of every one so called to make his calling and election sure by laying hold of this grace of God, provided in Christ, by which to them, all things shall work together for good, because they love God and are the called ones according to his purpose.

Reprint 4212

THE HOLY SPIRIT PROMISED

--JOHN 16:4-15--

Golden Text:--"I will pray the Father, and he will send you another comforter, that he may abide with you forever." --John 14:16.

OUR Lord, on the way to Gethsemane on the night of his betrayal, gave the discourse of this lesson to his disciples. He had been telling them what they must expect as his followers; that they would be misunderstood, persecuted, reviled, because of their faithfulness to him and to the brethren whom he represented--"But these things have I told you that when the time shall come ye may remember that I told you of them." (v. 4.) He had not told them of all that they might expect, intimating this when he said, "I have many things to tell you, but ye cannot bear them now."

The same may be said to be true of all that ever become the Lord's disciples. They see a sufficiency of light for one step at a time, but the trials and difficulties future are graciously held from them that they may not be overwhelmed by them. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." This was not deception, not the alluring of his disciples into doing something contrary to their wills. At the very outstart the Master assures us that unless we take up our cross and follow him we cannot be his disciples.

If we take this step honestly and sincerely we see plenty of difficulty in connection therewith, without knowing particulars of the troubles to come. Indeed, if we knew of our future trials we should be unjustly overwhelmed thereby, since at first we could but imperfectly appreciate the meaning of our Lord's words, "My grace is sufficient for thee; my strength is made perfect in your weakness," and the assurance that he will not suffer us to be tempted above that which we are able, but will with every temptation provide a way of escape. (2 Cor. 12:9; I Cor. 10:13.) Hence, as the Lord's people take one step after another they find these promises quite true; they find themselves sustained, they find they have no more than they can bear, and that although their trials are indeed severer than at the beginning of the way, yet these can be overcome, because of growth in grace and knowledge.

The power by which the Lord would grant his aid to his persecuted followers during his personal absence was something difficult for them to understand. In our lesson the Master makes the matter as plain as possible, calling the power, the influence which he would exert on their behalf the holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of the truth. As the influence thus to be exerted upon them would be sustaining and comforting, the Lord denominated this Spirit or power a comforter, a sustainer, a helper. He did not say that he would send another person to deal with them; no other person could deal with them better than himself. It was a spirit, an influence, a power which he would send, and this would fully represent the Father and fully represent himself, so that in having the holy Spirit they would be having the fellowship of the Father and the fellowship of the Son. This holy Spirit is properly enough spoken of in the masculine, even as the Father and the Son are represented in the masculine. As it stands the propriety is obvious.

THE HOLY TRINITY

During the "dark ages" a great deal of confusion of thought prevailed and the clear teachings of the Scriptures were lost sight of. Indeed, the Bible for a time was little in use. The Bishops were credited with being the equals of the apostles in inspiration, under the doctrine of the Apostolic Succession. Hence, when these met in councils their vote or decision on a doctrine was accepted as apostolic, authoritative. Seemingly it was overlooked that the Lord chose but twelve apostles and said nothing about any successors to them, and that in Revelation he intimated there would be no successors when he pointed out the New Jerusalem with twelve foundations only, and in those twelve foundations the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.--Rev. 21:14.

Quite early in the second century the influence of the Grecian philosophy upon the Church is quite noticeable, and various errors became prominent. One of these especially related to our Lord, practically putting him on a par with the Grecian philosophers, Socrates and Plato, and denying his special birth and his pre-human existence. In combating those errors some, loyal to the Lord, went to the other extreme and declared him, contrary to his own words, equal to the Father. (John 10:29; 14:28.) Next came disputation respecting the holy Spirit, and these same extremists took the ground that there are three gods, the Father, the Son and the holy Spirit, "equal in power and glory."

Peculiarly enough, after claiming that they were equal, which implies that they are not the same in person, but different persons, the claim was made that they are really one in person. Of course, such unscriptural, illogical reasoning cannot support itself, and hence those taking this position were driven to various expedients and subterfuges of argument. At times some of them claimed that there are really three Gods in one person, while others claimed that there are really three persons in one God, and not being able to explain either of the nonsensical statements, they have resorted to that word so useful to error and superstition, namely, "Mystery," "Mystery." They tell us that the matter of the Trinity is so mysterious that neither they nor anyone need to understand it. If

they do not understand it they, indeed, should not discuss it; but this should not hinder others who can understand it, and who see most clearly that the entire mystery is of their own making; that the Bible teaching on the subject is most clear, simple, harmonious and satisfactory.

When the Apostle discusses the question of God he says to us, There is one living and true God, not three! He proceeds to say that this one living and true God is the Father; then he adds that there is one Lord Jesus Christ. (I Cor. 8:6.) As we have already seen this same Apostle declares that the Father highly exalted the Lord Jesus and gave him a name which is above every name; that all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father. (Phil. 2:9, 10; John 5:23.) This means that there are two persons, for in no other way could one exalt and honor another; and if the Son is to be honored as is the Father it follows, as other Scriptures show, that he is now partaker of the divine nature and that he was exalted to this high honor and dignity--"far above angels, principalities and powers"--as a reward for his obedience to the Father's will, in having come into the world and redeemed mankind at the cost of his own life in pursuance of the divine purposes. This we have already seen from John 1:1--that our Lord, before he came into the world, before the world was made by him as the Father's agent, was the Logos, the Word, the Messenger of the God, Jehovah, and that he was a God, a mighty one, superior to angels, the one "by whom all things were made that were made; and without him was not anything made that was made."

It will be noticed that the Apostle, in speaking of the Father and the Son, refers to them as separate persons, and that he does not refer to the holy Spirit as another God, nor as the third part of God. Not that the Apostle ignores the holy Spirit however, for throughout all of his epistles it is recognized as the Spirit of the Father and the Spirit of the Son, representing both Father and Son in the Church. Nor are we to understand that the holy Spirit is a spirit being--as when we read, "God is a spirit"--but that the word used signifies the spirit of a being, the power, influence, will, purpose, strength or whatever proceeds from the person. The holy Spirit is said to proceed from the Father and from the Son as an influence or power, and this influence or power in the Church of consecrated believers operates in turn upon those with whom they mingle. It is always a good and holy spirit or influence, and is thus clearly distinct from the spirit of the world, the disposition of the world, the influence of the world, the spirit of sin, the spirit of anti-Christ, etc.

"THE HOLY SPIRIT WAS NOT YET GIVEN"

Our Lord gently broke to his sorrowing, bewildered disciples the news of his prospective departure to the Father who sent him. They did not ask where, for they believed his word, that he had come forth from the Father and that he would return to the Father who sent him. But sorrow had filled their hearts. What would they do without the Lord! How could the promise of the Kingdom ever be fulfilled if he went away! Had they been following a delusion for three years? They would not doubt the Lord, but they were perplexed. Our Lord, therefore, explained that if they understood matters properly, it would relieve them of much of their distress, as it really was to their advantage, in their interest, that he should go away.

Had he not gone away it would have been impossible for the Father to beget them of the Spirit and recognize them as sons of God; hence it would not have been possible for them ever to be more than human beings, ever to become spirit beings or partakers of the divine nature, together with its glories and honors. Indeed, without the departure of our Lord it would have been impossible for them to attain even to human restitution, for the entire work of salvation, both as respects the Church and the world, was dependent upon our Lord's fulfilling the demands of justice.

On the following day, as the Lamb of God, he died for the sin of Adam, which rested upon the entire race, and on the third day the Father raised him up by his own power. In this great transaction on our behalf a most important work was accomplished; but the benefits of that work, under the divine arrangement, could not come either to the Church or to the world, until first our Lord would ascend on high and appear in the presence of the Father and present the merit of his sacrifice as an oblation on behalf of his people. Had Jesus remained with his followers all through this age, even as a spirit being (as he was with them during the forty days), no one could have been begotten of the holy Spirit. It was necessary for Christ to ascend and present the merit of his sacrifice before we could be accepted and adopted, before we could receive the holy Spirit.

When the apostles received the holy Spirit at Pentecost, they said, "This is that which was spoken of by the Prophet Joel"--not, This is he who was spoken of by the Prophet Joel. They called it a baptism with the holy Spirit! A baptism with a person is not a conceivable or proper thought; nor could it be a proper thought that the holy Spirit as a person is personally present in each believer's heart! Whenever we attach the thought of personality it implies place. Thus we see that God is a spirit, not that God is spirit; but we do not speak of the holy Spirit as being separate, as though it were a person separate and distinct from the Father and from the Son; it is referred to in the Scriptures as the Spirit of God, belonging to God, emanating from God; a Spirit of Christ, emanating from Christ; a Spirit or influence or power which is all pervasive, which can exercise itself in any place or in any number of places at any time and perform any kind of work or mission.

How much more satisfactory is the true thought respecting the holy Spirit than the absurd and unscriptural ones! We might remark in this connection that the word "him" of verse 7 in the Greek could, with equal propriety, be translated "it"--"I will send it unto you" --nevertheless, we have no objection whatever to urge against the use of the word Him, since this holy Spirit or influence is of or from him, the Father. Similarly the word "he" in verse 8 could, with equal propriety, according to the Greek, be translated "it."

NOT THE SPIRIT OF THE WORLD

Among the various false ideas of the operations of the holy Spirit is one which claims that the holy Spirit as a person has been busy going hither and thither all through this Gospel Age convincing people of sin and converting them to righteousness. Some go so far in the erroneous thought as to tell us that no one could be converted from sin unless God's holy Spirit miraculously operated upon him. If these thoughts approximated the truth in any degree they would imply that God alone is responsible for the fact that the world is not converted today, because the holy Spirit has failed to do its part in converting and reproofing and convicting. But all this is a serious mistake.

The holy Spirit does not operate at all in the hearts of the world; but, as our Lord declares, It shall be in you, his disciples, the Spirit of the Father, the Spirit or disposition of the Son, the spirit of the truth, the spirit of a sane mind, the spirit of holiness to the Lord. None of these qualities of the holy Spirit is found in the sinful world; they belong to and are intended only for the "sanctified in Christ Jesus." The power of God operates upon the hearts that are fully consecrated to him, energizing them, cleansing them, separating them from the spirit of the world and using them in the divine service. The spirit of the world is the spirit of sin and selfishness; the Spirit of the Lord is the spirit of holiness and consecration to the divine will.

“HE WILL REPROVE THE WORLD”

How, then, will the holy Spirit in you reprove them? We answer that all of the Church, begotten of the holy Spirit and thus enlightened, are to let their light so shine before men that it will reprove the world. That which reproves the world is the holiness of the Church. The Spirit of the Lord, the disposition of the Lord in his people, brings reproof to those who are living in sin. It was so in our Lord's case, as he declared. The Father's Spirit was imparted to him in this special sense at the time of his baptism; as John testified, "I beheld the holy Spirit descending and resting upon him and abiding." He received the Father's Spirit without measure, without limitation, for, as the perfect one, in the image and likeness of God, he could receive the Spirit of God in full measure. We, on the contrary, imperfect, defective through the fall, can receive the Spirit only in limited measure because of our defects--some more and some less; but, thank God, it is the privilege of each to be more and more filled with the holy Spirit and sanctified by it as the days go by. Our Lord's light, which he let shine before men, was a great one. Our lights are feeble in comparison; but we are to emulate our Lord's example, and be more and more filled with the spirit of the truth, the light of the truth, and let it shine forth with wisdom upon all those who are in range of our influence.

The effect of this will be three-fold, as stated in verses 8-11.

(1) "It will reprove the world of sin"--that is to say, it will make the world conscious of its sinful condition; it will show to the world more and more the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Many of the world have so lost the image of God and are so devoid of conscience that they cannot with great distinctness discriminate between honesty and dishonesty, between truth and falsity, between righteousness and sin. The world has been in the habit of measuring itself with itself; but now in Christ and his Church the Lord has established a new standard for the world; and the Church, not only by its words, but also by its actions, is to uphold the glorious standards of the Lord's words along the lines of justice and love.

(2) It is not enough that the world be convicted of sin; it needs to understand something about righteousness, the opposite of sin; that a considerable measure of righteousness is possible and that the difficulty in attaining it is due to the fallen nature. The world is to be convinced that righteousness is the proper standard, the only one which God could recognize, and that in his wonderful plan he has arranged for eternal life to be granted only to the righteous. In this connection it is unavoidable that those who give the instruction, the spirit-enlightened ones, will find it necessary to make clear that no one can come into accord with the Father through any works of righteousness of his own, but that the forgiveness, the covering for sins provided through the merit of Christ's sacrifice is necessary.

(3) The Spirit of the Lord in his people will convince their neighbors, all who come within the range of their light and their message, that the present life is not all that there is, that there is a trial purposed in God's arrangement for the whole world of mankind, a judgment, a test. Whoever hears this message must concede its reasonableness, and it becomes a basis for joy and hope to all those who desire eternal life. Such as are rightly and deeply exercised by these convictions will seek the Lord and his various means of grace in the present life that they may also have their judgment and trial as part of the Church. But such as are not thus exercised or influenced are to be instructed through the Church; in proportion, however, as they have light or knowledge they have responsibility. In God's plan he has provided a day of judgment in the future for the world, in which all shall have full opportunity of being judged, of being tested along the lines of their loyalty to the Lord. Nevertheless their conduct in the present life has to do with that future judgment or trial. In proportion as they may disobey their conscience and fail to follow the leadings of the truth in the present time, they will have stripes, difficulties to overcome in the future, and to whatever extent

they now seek to live in accord with righteousness they will lay up for themselves a blessing which shall assist them in that day of judgment.

“BECAUSE THEY BELIEVED NOT”

The holy Spirit of truth in the Church will make known to the world that their continuance in the attitude of sinners, "children of wrath," is because they do not believe in and accept of Christ and his meritorious sacrifice for sin. The holy Spirit in the Church will make known to the world that there is such a thing as righteousness, an imputed righteousness which has been secured by our Lord Jesus through his sacrifice, which he presented before the Father. The holy Spirit in the Church will instruct the world that the present order of things cannot continue, that a new order of things will be ushered in at the second advent of our Lord, as he has already redeemed the world, thus securing the legal right to dispossess Satan, the prince of the present order of evil.

“HE WILL SHOW YOU THINGS TO COME”

Our Lord prepared his followers for a still larger amount of instruction after his ascension than they had received from him during his presence. He explains that the necessity for this was their unpreparedness until they should be endued with power from on high. Until this they would be natural men, and, as the Apostle points out, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." This is the explanation, then, of why our Lord Jesus did not present as deep teachings along spiritual lines as did some of the apostles. It was not inability on his part to present them, but those truths would have been meat out of season to his disciples, which might have choked them, injured them. Hence the deeper things of our Lord's teachings were stated considerably in parabolic form, which would not hurt them at the time and which later they would come to appreciate and understand. Thus he said again, "I have told you earthly things and ye believed not [are unable to receive them], how would you believe if I told you of heavenly things?"--John 3:12.

But the spirit of truth, when it shall come, will guide you into all truth, yet it will be only a channel and not an authority, for it will make known to you various features of the divine plan and these will include things not yet made manifest to you, but which in due time will be brought to your attention through the Word and through the influence of the holy Spirit. I shall be glorified by this holy Spirit, for it will be my things that will be shown unto you, for all things that the Father hath are mine; therefore, said I, that he [it] shall take of mine and shall show them unto you. Note in this statement the prominence of the Father. All things are of the Father, but the Father hath made the Son joint-heir with him, his associate, and nothing is said to belong to the holy Spirit, because it is merely the divine channel or agency through which communications, blessings, instructions, etc., will be communicated. The holy Spirit is not a person, but the spirit or influence or power of the Almighty God and his everlasting Son, our Lord. For a full discussion of this subject see SCRIPTURE STUDIES, Vol. V., Chap. VIII.

“GIVE YOU ANOTHER COMFORTER”

Our Golden Text is beautiful, helpful. Indeed, our Lord explains that the holy Spirit as a comforting influence, as a guide, as an instructor and helper to the Lord's people in the narrow way would be a gift from the Father. This agrees with the Apostle's statement in the record of the Pentecostal blessing. Explaining the matter, the Apostle Peter said that our Lord, having been exalted to the right hand of divine power, received this holy Spirit, power, from the Father and shed it forth or sprayed it forth upon his followers at Pentecost.

These descriptions fit well to the right view of the holy Spirit, but are very much out of line with the wrong view, that the holy Spirit is a person. How could a person be sprayed or shed forth! How could one equal in authority pray to another that a third one equal to either of them should be shed forth as a gift! The inconsistency of the error is very manifest as soon as our eyes open to its falsity. But how beautiful is the true thought; that as soon as our Lord Jesus had appeared before the Father as our Advocate and had presented at the Mercy Seat the merit of his sacrifice on our behalf, the Father was well pleased to grant his holy Spirit, his holy influence and power upon us, and adopt us into his family and treat us as sons!

How precious is the thought that the Pentecostal blessing was not merely for those who received it, but for the entire Church, as shown in the type! The kings, as well as the priests, in the olden times were anointed, set apart to special service, and Christ and his Church are the true kings and the true priests of the Melchizedec order, through whose ministries as kings and priests all the families of the earth will be blessed. Our Lord is the Head, we are his members in particular.

The coming of the holy Spirit upon him to fit and prepare him to be the King, to fit and prepare him to be the Priest of the Melchizedec order, was symbolized in the type by the anointing of oil. Thus the Prophet speaks of this anointing as being poured upon Aaron's head and running down his beard even unto the skirts of his garments. This, as we see, represents the adoption of the holy Spirit, which came upon our Lord Jesus the Head at his baptism, and which was shed forth at Pentecost upon all those who were ready and waiting to be accepted as his members, and we who since have believed on him through their word have come into membership in the same Body and have received of the same anointing; and "this anointing which ye received of him abideth in you," and shall be in you. This anointing did not represent a person, but an influence and blessing.

What a satisfaction, what a comfort has come to the Lord's people through their privilege of being used by him and adopted into his family by the begetting of the holy Spirit, the adoption of the holy Spirit, the anointing of the holy Spirit, the holy influence, the blessing of the Father and of the Son, guiding our judgments, guiding our hearts, opening to us the Scriptures, causing our hearts to burn within us as we are brought to a still greater appreciation of the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of our Father's glorious plan of salvation for ourselves and all the families of the earth!

This abiding was not to be a temporary matter, for a day, a month, a year, but to the end of the age, age-lasting, for the entire period. How glad we are that this is so, and how blessed are the instructions and guidance which we have enjoyed! Truly, as our Lord said, the holy Spirit shows us things to come, and explains to us things that are past. How many of our blessings are along the line of appreciation of coming things--the Millennial Kingdom, the times of restitution, the uplifting and strengthening of all the families of the earth!

Reprint 4164

“I COME TO DO THY WILL”

“Then said He, Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God. He taketh away the first that He may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all.” “A body hast Thou prepared Me.”--Heb. 10:9, 10, 5.

IN THE CONTEXT from which our text is taken the Apostle speaks of the "*better sacrifices*"--plural--and the "*one offering*" --singular. From his statement we feel justified in saying that St. Paul is contrasting the antitypical Day of Atonement with the typical Atonement day, on which was made one *sin-offering* on behalf of all the people, but consisting of two sacrifices-- first, the bullock for the priestly tribe of Levi, and then the goat for the other tribes of Israel.

In those offerings which were made year by year continually, God had no pleasure, for they did not satisfy or please Him in making *satisfaction for sin*. They were not the Divine expression of what was pleasing to God in the *fullest sense*. "A body hast Thou prepared Me" "for the suffering of death." This "body" was the human body of Jesus, which, through immaculate conception, was holy, innocent, undefiled, separate from sinners and, therefore, capable of being the ransom-price for the sins of the whole world. But it is also true that God has provided a *larger Body*.

“JESUS, WHOM THOU PERSECUTEST”

This larger Body that God has provided is composed of human beings, whom He drew and called to be members of this Body of Christ, which is the Church. This drawing and calling was to the *natural man* and not to the New Creature. When Jesus accepted these members of His Body He accepted them as *New Creatures*. The *invitation* to them was before they became New Creatures. When, therefore, He accepted those whom the Father drew and called, He accepted them as members, or representatives, so that they might be His representatives throughout this Age. From this standpoint He spoke when upbraiding Saul of Tarsus, saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou *Me*?" (Acts 9:4.) So Jesus in the flesh (represented by His followers) was still in the world long after Jesus, as the Head of the Church, had ascended up on high. Thus we see that the sufferings of the Church all down the Age have, in this sense, been the sufferings of Jesus.

The Apostle speaks of himself as "always bearing about in the body the *dying of the Lord Jesus*." (2 Cor. 4:10.) *All* of the followers of the Lord Jesus bear about in their body the dying of the Lord Jesus. As Jesus had experiences in sufferings, so have all of His disciples experience with Him in the suffering of this time, and communion with Him in spirit. "Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." --2 Cor. 4:16.

OBEDIENCE TO THE EXTENT OF SACRIFICE

We refer to our text again, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God"--everything written in the Book. Because born under the Law, Jesus was obligated to keep the Law. There was no sacrifice in keeping the Law. To do whatever is commanded is not sacrifice, but *obedience*. The Law did not say that one should love his neighbor better than himself. But Jesus went beyond this Law of Justice and laid down His *life* in behalf of the Church and of the world. Because He was thus obedient to the Father to the extent of keeping, not only everything in the *Law*, but everything written in the Book, in the Bible--on this account He was a sacrifice, and was afterward raised up to the Divine Majesty on High.

The things written in the Book were written in types and shadows, in allegories. To illustrate: Moses lifted up the brazen serpent. This is a picture illustrating how our Lord Jesus would be lifted up. The lamb slain at the Passover season is also a type of Jesus, the slain Lamb. The Day of Atonement sacrifices are also pictures. And as the Lamb was led to the slaughter, so He did not resist.

"THE HEAVENS WERE OPENED"

We are not informed how much our Lord knew, at the time of His consecration, respecting the Divine purpose. In His boyhood days our Lord knew that He had come into the world to do the will of the Father. But just what that will was He did not fully know. It was all written in the Book, but the Book was *sealed*; and until that will was revealed it could not be comprehended. He could not know until after He had received the Holy Spirit; and His *consecration* must be made before He could receive that Holy Spirit. Hence at the time He offered Himself at baptism He could not understand the "deep things." As St. Paul says, no natural man can perceive the things of God: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (I Cor. 2:14.) Jesus could not know the depths and importance of all the symbols which God had written in that very form for the special purpose of keeping them secret, until He had been begotten of the Spirit.

We understand that our Lord was the *slain Lamb* in the Divine purpose just as soon as He consecrated His life at *Jordan* and had bestowed upon Him the begetting of the Holy Spirit. We read

that immediately after He had gone up out of the water the heavenly things were opened unto Him. Under the influence of that enlightenment He went into the wilderness and remained there fasting for forty days, that He might understand the will of God. But His consecration was to fulfill everything written in the Book. He was to be the great Messiah, the great Mediator between God and men. He made the full consecration of His life to this end. That consecration was accepted. It meant the fulfillment of all the details of the whole plan.

CONSECRATION MUST PRECEDE UNDERSTANDING OF TYPES

As before suggested, all these things written in the Book concerning our Lord were not understood by Him until the *due time*, which began when the Holy Spirit came to Him. Then, while He was in the wilderness, He began to see and to apply the various lessons to Himself. He had *contracted* to do everything written in the Book before He understood the meaning of these types. Evidently this was the Divine intention and there was a *reason* behind it.

Here was God's will, not written in commands, but in types and shadows, that the One who was to fulfill these things might see in them, not a Divine *command*, but the Divine will. "Lo, I come to do *Thy will*!" I am ready to do Thy will at any cost! Now the Apostle says that when our Lord thus came and presented Himself to God, "He taketh away the first (that is, He setteth aside the *type*), that He might establish the second," the antitype. The type was the serpent lifted up; the antitype was *Himself* "lifted up." The type was the lamb slain; the antitype was *Himself* slain. The type was the *sacrifice* of the Day of Atonement; *Himself* and the adopted Body, the Church, constitute the "*better sacrifices*."

After His return from the wilderness, our Lord began the work of taking away the first (the types). *Part* of the work was completed in the three years and a half of His earthly ministry. But the work is not yet finished. Coming down to our time, the Apostle says, "By the which will we are sanctified." (Heb. 10:10.) What will is this? The same will that our Lord had. He said, "I come to do Thy will"--not merely Thy Law. Now we who are the Church say that we are glad to follow Him. We are *glad* to be living sacrifices. God does not *command* us to be sacrifices.

THE CHURCH SET APART FOR SERVICE

The Apostle says, "I beseech you, brethren"--I put before you the fact that it is well worthy of your attention to present yourselves living sacrifices. Thus, by having the same will, the same mind, this same disposition that is in Christ, we are sanctified, we are set apart. We do not set ourselves apart. The Lord Jesus sets us apart. He it is who imputes to us His merit in order that the Father may accept the sacrifice and beget us to the new nature as members of His Body. The Apostle says, "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (*for* all being supplied). (Heb. 10:10.) What does this signify? We answer that the statement is true. The *literal* body of Jesus was the *basis* of our acceptance with God. The Church is the mystical Body of Jesus: "Why persecutest Thou *Me*?" "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest."

The offering of this Body of Jesus has progressed throughout the eighteen hundred years; and it is only as we are offered and only by being offered that we can become members and attain to joint-heirship with our Lord in the Kingdom--"So many of us as were baptized into Christ." (Rom. 6:3.) We are not merely baptized into the glorious Body of the future, the Messiah, but we are baptized into Jesus that we might share in the *death* of Jesus, the sacrifice, and share in the glory of Jesus, the Messiah.

THE BLOOD OF BULLS AND GOATS CAN NEVER TAKE AWAY SINS

"And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifice, which can never take away sins." (Heb. 10:11.) This refers to the fact that the Jewish priest offered the sacrifice continually and yet never accomplished anything with it. "But this Man, when He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God." (Heb. 10:12.) "This Man" is the glorious High Priest, Jesus, the Head, who, after He had offered one sacrifice for sin forever, sat down at the right hand of God.

But His offering was in *two parts*; the first of which was at Jordan, when He offered up Himself; and the second was at Pentecost, when He "appeared in the presence of God for us"--for us living today, as well as for those living then. At that time He accepted the Church as joint-sacrificers and offered them; and in offering them He offered the one antitypical goat. So His offerings were really completed at the time of Pentecost. What is He waiting for? The Scriptures say He has sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on High, waiting for the time to come when His enemies shall be made His footstool.--Heb. 10:13.

Meantime His Bride shall have been perfected and joined with Him in glory. When that time shall have come, His enemies shall be made His footstool. At the time of His death, we remember, He said, "I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine, and all Mine are Thine." (John 17:9,10.) And the promise of the Father to Him is, "Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession." --Psa. 2:8.

The Apostle says that He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High waiting until God would make His enemies His footstool. God is not prepared to give Him these things until the Church is *completed*. In other words, the Church is *not* a *supplemental* and *additional* part of the Divine Plan. This has been the "Mystery hid from ages and generations."--Col. 2:26.

THE MYSTERY UNFOLDING NOW

Now, under the revelation of God, we see the unfolding of the *Mystery*, that the Church are to be fellow-heirs with our Lord in the glories of the Kingdom. Hence, it is the Divine Purpose for Jesus to wait until the time shall come when the Church will have been perfected. This matter of sacrifice is all to be completed during the Gospel Age; and this one great Day of Atonement will also be completed. There will be no repetition of the sacrifice.

We remember that in Revelation 5 it is stated that no one was found worthy to open the scroll written within and on the back, and sealed with seven seals; not a soul was worthy. No; "No man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the Book, neither to *look* thereon." Jehovah had already said to Abraham that He would *bless* the world, but had not revealed how it was to be done. Then we read that John wept, because God had a great Plan, and because no one was to be the recipient of that Plan, to reveal it. The angel said, "Weep not; behold, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the Book, and to loose the seven seals thereof." (Rev. 5:1-6.) By this we understand that He was not *born* with this right, but that He acquired it--He "hath prevailed to open the Book." Therefore, on account of His obedience, God also highly exalted Him, giving Him dignity, power and honor.

The Lion of the Tribe of Judah was our Lord Jesus, to whom the Book was delivered. It is not due for any believers to understand any of the deep things written in that Book until they have come to the place of consecration. But God does not reveal them to us by His Spirit in the same manner as He revealed them to the Lord Jesus. John said that this is the "Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John." "All things are *of* the Father, and all things are by the Son, and we by Him."--Rev. 1:1; I Cor. 8:6.

“LIGHT SHINING MORE AND MORE UNTO THE PERFECT DAY”

It would not be becoming on our part to speak with positiveness of how much our Lord knew during His earthly ministry. For how could we know except as it was declared? He said that the times and the seasons were not at that time known by any but "the Father only." We cannot doubt that He knows all on that subject now. And if our surmises are correct, we know more on that subject now than our Lord did *then*.

Doubtless it would be impossible to understand many of the deep things pertaining to the Messianic Age long in advance of that period. Daniel tells us that the prophecies relating to the Time of the End were closed up, sealed until the end. (Dan. 12:4, 9.) As these things became due to be understood they constituted meat in due *season* for the Household of faith. (Matt. 24:45.) For instance, it would be meat in due season in Noah's day to know about the flood; but that information would not be meat in due season today.

So then we are to walk in the light and be guided by the Lord's Word. "For prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit," St. Peter tells us. Again St. Paul says, "These things...were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world [ages] are come." (2 Peter 1:21; I Cor. 10:11; John 16:7, 13.) And our Lord said of the Holy Spirit which He would send, that it would "show us things to come." (John 16:7, 13.) Thus the pathway of the Church all the way down has been one of increasing light.

Our faith does not consist merely in believing in God's personality, God's righteousness. We fully believe in the personality of God, in the power of God. Nevertheless we need to exercise faith in the Divine providence in our own case; faith in the fact that God veils things from our mental and spiritual sight at the present time. He allowed things to come to Jesus which might have astonished our Lord if He had not exercised faith. He allowed our Lord to be maligned, slandered--to be *crucified*. It requires knowledge, faith, for everything that we are called upon to do and to undergo. We believe God; but, are we determined to be *loyal to God and to His Plan*? And are we *willing* to endure hardship and to sacrifice earthly interests in favor of these *heavenly* promises?

Reprint 5053

THE MARK OF CRYSTALLIZATION OF CHARACTER

“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things that are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”--Phil. 3:13, 14.

IN THE EPISTLE to the Philippians, St. Paul expresses his full appreciation of his opportunity to gain a prize, something worthy of laying hold upon, of grasping fully, of getting possession of. What was that for which the great Apostle was striving and which he had not yet attained? He spoke of this thing as a prize, which he was pressing along to win.

We may view "the mark for the prize of the high calling" from two standpoints, both of which are correct. From one standpoint, this mark is that of *heart-likeness* to God's dear Son, of perfection of intention, of love for righteousness, for God, for the brethren of Christ, and for the world, even our enemies. This degree of character-development should be attained as early as possible in our Christian experience, and should be such that, were we to die at any time after its attainment, God would count us worthy of a share in the First Resurrection.

From the other standpoint, this "mark for the prize of the high calling" is that of crystallization of character in the likeness of our Lord. After having attained a heart-likeness to Christ, we must hold it fast, and see that in all the testings which the Lord permits to come upon us,

we are counted by Him as overcomers, not in our own strength, but in that of our Redeemer. This mark of *crystallized* character is not attained so early in our Christian experience as is the mark of character-development. But by fighting the good fight until the end of our course, we *crystallize* our characters in love for the principles of righteousness, for God, for the brethren and even for our enemies. If thus faithful, we shall win the prize of glory, honor and immortality.

PERFECTION, NOT CONSECRATION, THE MARK

There is no reason to think that our consecration is the mark; for our testing, our proving comes *after* our consecration, and not before it. No one would be at the mark merely because he is consecrated, but because he had endured the testing, thus proving that his consecration was from the heart and that he was sincere in the devotion of his every power to the service of God. We cannot suppose that the mark is reached the next moment after consecration. Some degree of character-development must be possessed; there must be some mark of character, in order that God may count that person worthy of everlasting life.

God's standard of character is perfection, which must be manifested by loyalty and obedience under whatever tests He permits to come to individuals upon *any plane* of life. No one will get the prize of everlasting life unless he successfully passes those tests. We realize that the Church has been under trial throughout the Gospel Age, as to her worthiness to obtain "glory, honor and immortality"--joint-heirship with her Lord.--Rom. 8:17.

From the Scriptures we learn that throughout the Messianic Age the world will be tried by The Christ, and that even after passing that test they will not receive the reward of everlasting life until God shall have proved them at the end of Christ's reign by loosing Satan for a "little season." (I Cor. 15:24; Rev. 20:7-10.) The fact that the world is thus to be tried by both The Christ and God confirms the thought that God has a standard, or mark, of character to be attained by all those who are loyal and obedient to Him--on any plane of existence.

While this mark of character to be attained by the world during Messiah's reign is not the one to which St. Paul refers in our text, nevertheless there is such a character-mark to be reached by mankind. Those who then attain the mark will have everlasting life on the human plane. But those who attain the mark to which the Apostle refers will be given eternal life on the divine plane.

THE MARK OF CHARACTER-CRYSTALLIZATION

The Apostle was a noble example of one who had reached the mark. So far as we know, he was ready to die at any time; hence it was *not* this mark of character-development to which he had not attained. He had not yet attained to the *prize itself*, and could not do so until his change should come. He was constantly pressing along, trusting that God would give him all the things that are in reservation for "them that love him." (I Cor. 2:9.) We could not think the Apostle to mean that he would reach this mark of character-development just at the moment *before death*. This would be an absurdity of thought.

Our Lord Jesus was at the mark of perfect character at the time of His consecration; and He maintained Himself at the mark. As a sacrifice He would have been acceptable at any time. It was His part to consecrate His life and not to hold it back. It was the Father's part so to arrange matters that the Jews might not take our Lord until the Father's hour for Him had come. In everything that He did He submitted Himself to the Father's will. Our Lord spoke of His "cup" as the one which the Father had prepared for Him.--John 18:11.

If our Lord had determined for Himself the time and the manner of His death, then He was pouring the cup. If the Jews had determined these points, then *they* were pouring the cup. But neither our Lord nor the Jews did so, for both time and manner were foretold by the Prophets. Our Lord took the cup and accepted it *as the Father's providence for Him*. If the Father's providence had led to His death a year sooner or two years sooner, if the Father's will had been expressed in our Lord's crucifixion at an earlier time, even then it would have been well with Him. But He "learned obedience by the things which He suffered."--Heb. 5:8; 2:10.

At Jordan our Lord was shown to be perfect and to have made a perfect consecration, both by the descent of the Holy Spirit and by the voice of Jehovah. (Matt. 3:16, 17.) He had also a perfect body--though it was earthly --in which the New Creature operated. But His *obedience* must be *tested--His loyalty even unto death*. Whatever the degree of testing to which our Lord might have been subjected, it was just the *right amount*, according to the Father's wisdom. Our Lord would have been just as much an overcomer had He died at any time after His consecration. But if He had died sooner than He did, it would merely have proved that the Father did not require as much evidence of our Lord's faithfulness and loyalty as He did require.

OUR LORD AN OVERCOMER AT CONSECRATION

Here some one may ask, "Is it proper to say that our Lord was an overcomer as a New Creature at the time when He made His consecration?"

Our answer is, Yes. An overcomer is a *victor*. The word does not imply that a man has completed the victory, however; for we sometimes say, He will lead them from victory to victory. So with our Lord. He continued faithful as an overcomer down unto death; but He was not counted as an overcomer unto death. Between the Father and our Lord as a human being there was no Mediator, and as a New Creature there was neither Robe to cover nor Advocate to represent in case of any deviation from the will of God; and the slightest deflection therefrom would have meant the Second Death.

The Scriptures give us two pictures of our Lord as an overcomer at His consecration, where He gained the first great victory over His flesh. The first of these pictures (Lev. 16:11), the killing of the bullock on the Day of Atonement, represents the death of our Lord's humanity at the moment when He consecrated Himself at Jordan. There He gained a victory and continued victorious until the end of His course.

The second picture is found in Rev. 5:2-7. Here our Lord is represented by a newly slain lamb. He was not this newly slain lamb at His death when He had finished His course, but at His consecration, when He began His course. The proclamation which the Revelator heard was, "Who is worthy to open the Book, and to loose the seals thereof?" We read that John wept much. "And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the Book and to loose the seven seals thereof . . . And He came and took the Book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the Throne." Our Lord alone was worthy of the honor of receiving the Divine Plan into His care. We also read that John looked and saw the newly slain Lamb open the Book.-- Rev. 6.

After our Lord had entered upon His consecration He was the newly slain Lamb. Then the Father gave into His hand the scroll of the great Divine Plan of the Ages--the scroll written on both inside and outside. The outside He was already able to read. But the inside, which contained information on spiritual things, remained sealed.

As soon as our Lord came up out of the water after His baptism, He was begotten of the Holy Spirit and began to understand spiritual things. "The heavens [higher things] were opened unto Him." The time when He began to be considered the slain Lamb, the time when the scroll was delivered to Him, was the time of His consecration.

SUBMISSION THE FIRST REQUISITE—

PATIENT ENDURANCE THE SECOND

A good illustration of the process of character-development and crystallization is afforded by the work of a potter. First, he must select the right kind of clay, for some clays would produce very coarse ware, others would crack or warp in the drying, and still others would not stand the intense heat. Having selected the proper clay the potter subjects it to very many processes of grinding, mixing and wetting until it comes from the mill a soft, plastic mass of the consistency of tough dough, ready for the potter's use. Then comes the moulding into the article desired. The dish is formed, or shaped, with care and dried. Next it is placed in the kiln and fired with an intense heat for two or three days and nights. Then it requires a long time to cool before it can be removed from the kiln. But even then it is only a porous, leaky vessel, altogether unfit for use until it has been dipped into a liquid glaze, or slip, which it readily absorbs.

Again it is subjected to the heat of the glaze kiln, which not only melts the glaze, but converts it into a perfectly transparent glaze all over the surface, making the article beautifully smooth and comely. But if the vessel is of very choice porcelain, to be made still more attractive to the eye by decorations, the ornamentation and gilding must be done at this stage, and the vessel must again be placed in the kiln for a third firing. Some vessels which have stood all the other tests, fail at this point and are cast into the waste heap. But if the vessel passes successfully the last test, it is ready for the service for which it was designed.

So in our Lord's case. Not only was He perfect as a man, but His own *will* was in complete subjection to the Father's *will*. When trials came, there was no swerving, no twisting, no bending. He was of the proper material. His heart (applying this word to the mind) was of the proper character. So must it be with us. Those who will be accepted and found worthy of the great reward will be of His character-likeness in this respect; they will be loyal to God's will. Not only *will* they endeavor both to ascertain and to do the Father's will, but they will be in heart submission to that *will* in *every degree*. The "cup" they will be required to drink is the same that our Lord drank--and "*all of it!*"

To follow in His steps, we must first reach this mark of character-development; and having done all, we must stand there. It is well to repeat the thought that it will not do for us to think that one reaches the mark of proper character-development just at the *moment of death*. Character should be attained as soon as possible. But having reached this character-development called the "mark," it is for us to *stand faithful*, and not be thrust away from it by the opposition of the world, the flesh and the Devil. All such opposition must be endured before we can win the prize. Some of the noblest characters, who have been in an acceptable condition, and used of the Lord, did not get to the *mark* until they had passed through certain severe experiences.

“WE HAVE THE MIND OF CHRIST”

The thought of the Apostle seems to be, Here is a certain line of conduct and character-development which God has marked out; and it is the same for all who are in the race. The life of Christ is the rule. If we would attain the mark, obtain the prize, we must follow this line, or rule, or mark.

The Apostle Paul had but one mind or will. "This one thing I do," he said. He was not a double-minded man, at one time thinking he would like to serve the Lord, at another time himself, and then again the Adversary, etc. He had accepted the Divine proposition to give *all* his talents to the service of the Lord. He had before his mind the great promise that God had made. For him there was but one thing in life.

The Scriptures tell us that during the Gospel Age God has sent out a special call, or invitation, and that those who have accepted that call have "exceeding great and precious promises" of wonderful things to look forward to. All who accept the call should practically forget all the trifling things of life in order to attain these promises. There is but one way to win the prize--by manifesting to God faithfulness, obedience and loyalty. *Character*, not *talent*, makes us acceptable. God could give any one intellectual powers as good as ours or better. He will not grant any one a place in the Kingdom on account of physical strength or endurance. He will not admit any one to the Kingdom because of worldly prosperity or honor of men, or because of riches.

CONDITIONS REQUIRED IN THE RACE

What then is God seeking? To what has He called us? The Apostle Peter says that God has "called us to glory and virtue." (2 Peter 1:3.) Certain conditions God requires of those who will run in the race. He requires that none be proud, but that they possess humility. And He will have no one in the Kingdom of His Elect who is weak, vacillating, so far as his *mind* is concerned. He may not have a strong *intellect*; but he must manifest to God that he has a strong *will* and *firm determination*, and that he has cut off everything in life in order to win the prize. He must also demonstrate his loyalty to God. He must not merely seek glory, but he must recognize and appreciate his responsibilities to God.

Loyalty is one of the great tests of character-- loyalty to God, to His *Word*, loyalty to *principle*. Whatever follows, the Christian must be submissive to God, trustful and faithful. To such alone could we expect God to give the great blessings promised to overcomers. Hence we see that the Apostle was quite right in giving up all that he might serve God, that he might please the Father, and thus attain to this glorious reward of joint-heirship with His Son.

"EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVETH"

Not necessarily all who make a consecration, but all whose consecration God accepts, all whom He begets of His Holy Spirit to become New Creatures, will have the opportunity of reaching this mark of crystallization of character before they die. These will have full testing-- "Every son whom He receiveth." (Heb. 12:6.) This promise guarantees that they shall have trials and difficulties to develop them in the proper character-likeness of our Lord; and that none of their experiences will be cut short of this attainment. God will see to it that they have the full opportunity to develop character-likeness to Christ. Those who turn to sin wilfully, deliberately, will fall into the Second Death. Others may fall from the priestly class into the Great Company. But even these must have sufficient time to manifest their loyalty to God.

At the time of His consecration, our Lord was at the mark by virtue of His perfection. We are not at the mark at the time of our consecration; for we are imperfect. But we wish to do the Lord's will; and we have given ourselves to ascertain what that will is in order that we may render intelligent obedience thereto. In our Lord's case He had no such imperfection to overcome as we have. At the time of His consecration He loved His neighbor as Himself, and He loved God with all His heart.

When we consecrate ourselves, we agree to do this; but we do not know what it means; just as St. Peter "wist not" what he said at the time of the transfiguration in the Mount: "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If Thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." (Matt. 17:4.) Neither did the two Apostles know what they were asking when they requested Jesus that they might sit the one on His right and the other on His left hand in the Kingdom. Our Lord said to them, "Ye know not what ye ask."--Matt. 20:22.

Since at the time of our consecration we do not fully understand what we do, therefore we do a great deal of running to reach the mark. This our Lord had no need to do; for He was perfect. At consecration He was at the mark of perfect character, so that had He died at any subsequent time He would have received the reward of the Father, who said, "This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. 3:17.) At His baptism our Lord was at that mark of character which merited the promised reward of the Father, and to which we must attain before we can secure everlasting life, either on the plane of glory or otherwise.

Stephen, who was martyred very soon after Pentecost, must have lived habitually near to the Lord; for he, like Nathaniel, was an "Israelite indeed" in whom was no guile. The fact that the Truth of God came to such as these men means that so far as their heart attitude was concerned they had been very near to the Lord under the Law as their schoolmaster (Greek, pedagogue,) so that when brought to Christ they could quickly learn of Him. So it appears to be with us now. The differences in our natural education in right and wrong, in truth and error, are such that we cannot tell just how long it will take for each to attain to the character-likeness of our Lord and thus to prove worthy of eternal life.

"PUT YE ON THE LORD CHRIST"

We have suggested that the Lord's people, at the time of their consecration and begetting of the Holy Spirit, are not ready for the Kingdom, but require development, which time alone can accomplish. Notwithstanding this suggestion, is there not a sense in which God's people are regarded *perfect* at the time of their consecration--at the moment of their acceptance? Our answer is, Yes; they are *counted* so, but are not so actually. The flesh is reckoned perfect so that God can accept their offering.

But at this time the New Creature is merely a babe in Christ and has not yet attained to the stature of manhood. Therefore, the necessity exists for entering the School of Christ and for "putting on Christ," as the Apostle expresses it. We begin to put on Christ after consecration, and after our begetting of the Holy Spirit. The babe grows into a child, and the child into a man. (Eph. 4:14,13.) The work of growing up into Christ is necessary before the child of God would be fit for the Kingdom. The difference between a babe in Christ and one fit for the Kingdom is that the latter has been tried and tested and has proved himself to be an overcomer.

When our Lord Jesus was at Jordan He was an overcomer. (Heb. 10:9.) He was perfect and had correspondingly a larger appreciation of what He did than we have respecting our course when we consecrate. But He tells us, "Fear not, little flock," "be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."--Luke 12:32; John 16:33.

Yet even in our Lord's case, while He was an overcomer at the moment of His consecration, He really did not win the prize of the divine nature until the end of His race-course, until there had

been demonstrated a sufficiency of worthiness for that high exaltation; and we know that the Father continued tests of obedience even unto the death on the cross. It was not until after this that our Lord was fully accepted as an overcomer, to whom it was granted to sit with the Father in His Throne.

THE GREAT TEST IS TO REMAIN AT THE MARK

The possession of perfection necessarily means that one is at the mark, as in the case of Adam. The test is, not whether one can reach the mark, but whether one will *remain* at the mark--"having done all, to *stand*." (Eph. 6:13.) When we reach the mark of character which God approves in every sense of the word, let us *continue* there. When our Lord came into the world He was perfect, loyal, at the mark--God's standard, perfection. Whether or not He would be moved away from the mark by the contradiction of sinners against Himself, was to be proved. But none of these tests led Him to abandon His determination to continue at the mark. So it should be with us--to the best of our ability.

The Spirit of God is the same whether manifested in Himself or in angels or in men or in New Creatures. We do not find the Spirit of God manifest in the majority of men, because of sin. We would find the Spirit of God manifest in angels. We should find the Spirit of God very manifest in the saints, who should carry with them into the new relationship all that they have naturally of the character-likeness to the Lord. The graces of spirit exhibited in the Lord's people are properly to be considered fruits of the Holy Spirit; for their possessors have become New Creatures, have entered into the race for the prize of the high calling. Some saints might be able by reason of natural qualities to make more rapid progress than would others in developing and perfecting these fruits and graces of the Spirit.

“RESPECT UNTO THE RECOMPENSE OF THE REWARD”

Sometimes the question arises, Should not the Lord's people preferably strive for character-likeness to Christ, with no particular desire as to what the Lord's reward will be? We answer, No. We should have "respect unto the recompense of the reward." In order to have the proper respect for the reward which God promises, it is necessary that we hold it up before us continually, and that we never lose sight of the prize.

Our Lord Jesus does not deprecate this looking at the prize. Listen to His words: "Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine Own Self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." (John 17:5.) Thus He prayed to the Father for the reward which the manifestation of His obedience would bring. So it should be with us; not that we have a right to insist that our efforts be rewarded, but that we should think of the blessing which God has promised those who love Him, as "exceeding great and precious." Many in the nominal church do not see these things.

Let us keep the goal distinctly before our eyes. Doubtless the Lord meant the knowledge of the prize to serve as a stimulus for our upbuilding and strengthening. We look for "glory, honor and immortality"; and it is right for us to seek for them. Any other attitude would be false modesty. If the thought that it is presumption for us to aspire to the high calling comes before our minds, let us remember that our Lord wants us to be so inspired by the "great and precious promises" that we will work for these things which He has set before us, and that it would be presumption for us to *refuse* what He *offers* to us.

FREE MORAL AGENCY A FACTOR IN CHARACTER-DEVELOPMENT

Character may be viewed from two different standpoints. When Adam was created, he was a man of great and good character--"crowned with glory and honor." He was perfect, the image of God. There is a difference, however, between a character thus *given*, and one that is *developed* and tested by the exercise of *free will*. Our Heavenly Father desires that His intelligent creatures exercise their wills. Therefore instead of giving Adam a part of His own character-likeness and eliminating that which we call moral choice, He chose to give Adam His character-likeness, including free moral agency. "So God created man in His own image." God foreknew the fall of man and all the circumstances connected with it. He knew that the permission of evil for a time would ultimately result in great blessings for all. He knew that the time would come when every creature in heaven and in earth would be obedient to Him, not only because there was no opportunity of doing otherwise, but from *choice*.

Those who are appreciative of God's character should desire to have this character-likeness. Only such will merit everlasting life amongst either angels or men. God is testing along these lines the worthiness of those who are on trial for life eternal. Hence, "The Father seeketh such to worship Him" as "worship Him in spirit and in truth"--intelligently.--John 4:23, 24.

WE MUST "LOVE RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HATE INIQUITY"

In the formation of character, we see that the lessons which we learn in the School of Christ are very helpful to us. Originally, man was made in the image of God. Yet in us the image is blurred, indistinct. Those who learn the lessons now and appreciate them to the full will be given no further trial. Those who have not had a sufficiency of opportunity will have a full trial in the Age to come. Under the discipline, the chastenings and the rewards of that time, they will learn how much better is righteousness than sin, Truth than error. They will develop in the character-likeness of God, which Adam lost, and will see the exceeding sinfulness of sin. They will learn both to *will* and to *do* righteousness. All who fail to learn this lesson will be judged unworthy of eternal life.

We see that the angels willed of themselves whether they would be obedient, or be disobedient and enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. All the holy angels, who are now in favor with God, are such as have had their testing and have come off victors. Their example will prove more and more a lesson to us as we come to understand it. As a result of this knowledge, we see in God the noblest sentiment that could actuate our Creator and Father in dealing with His creatures; and we are glad that we have chosen to do His will concerning us.

Finally it is important that we should keep in mind the fact that since true love on our part will manifest itself in *obedience*, then disobedience is an evidence of a *loss of love*, as viewed from the Lord's standpoint, a deflection from loyalty, a failure to endure the tests. We must agree that the Lord's standpoint of judgment is a reasonable one. Should one ask, How would it be if we should disobey through ignorance? The answer is, that the Lord has made provision against our ignorance: first, He has given us the Word of Truth, "that the man of God may be perfect [perfectly informed], thoroughly furnished unto all good works"; and second, He has promised to supply such helps to the spirit of holiness and the understanding of His Word, as will enable us to do what is pleasing in His sight.--2 Tim. 3:17; John 16:13, 14.

Love is the crown of all graces, "the fulfilling of the Law." Without a fervent, glowing love, it will be impossible to render obedience or to stand the tests for development and crystallization of character arranged for by Divine Love. Our Lord tells us that He was beloved of the Father; and the Father Himself declared, "This is My beloved Son." We can readily see why our *Lord Jesus* was greatly beloved, for He expressed and fully manifested the Father's love. But it *astounds* us to know that this same love is exercised by the Father toward us! "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the *sons* of God!" "The Father Himself loveth you!"--I John 3:1; John 16:27.

LOVING OBEDIENCE BRINGS JOY AND PEACE

Let us, dearly beloved, be more than ever careful respecting the Word of the Lord; let us not by negligence give evidence of a decay of love. Our Lord points out that His continuance in the Father's love, as the well-beloved Son, with all which this implies, was because of His obedience to the Father's will; and that following the same line, He must require that we should be obedient to Him if we would abide in His love and share His Throne and glory.--John 15:10.

Our Lord's instructions and commandments are not intended to terrify us, nor to deprive us of happiness. On the contrary, "These things have I spoken unto you that *My joy* may be *in you*, and that your joy might be *filled full*." (John 15:11.) Those who give surest evidence of living nearest the Lord well know that obedience to the Lord's words, together with the privilege thus obtained of abiding in Him and His love, is the greatest joy, a joy which wholly outweighs all the trifling pleasures which the world has to offer. It is the joy and peace which "passeth all understanding," which rules in the heart, and which brings with it the promise, the assurance, "not only of the life which now is, but also of that which is to come."--I Tim. 4:8.

Reprint 5080

THE LAW MAGNIFIED AND MADE HONORABLE

"The Lord will magnify the Law and make it honorable."--Isa. 42:21.

“**W**HERE THERE IS NO LAW there is no transgression" (Rom. 4:15), would seem to be an axiom--a self-evident truth. *No one could transgress a law that was not given to him, that was not applicable to him.* In his discussion of the Jewish view of the Mosaic Law, St. Paul used this statement to show that the Jews misunderstood the matter. They had the thought that because God had given them the Law at Mt. Sinai, they were justified in God's sight by that Law. But receiving a Law is not *keeping* that Law. Therefore, the Apostle shows them that by the deeds of the Law no flesh could be justified in God's sight.-- Rom. 3:20.

Continuing the argument a little further, St. Paul shows that the entire human race was once in God's favor, as represented in Adam before sin entered. While the race was in that condition of perfection mankind was *just* before God. But when sin entered, it brought the penalty of alienation from God and of death. Thenceforth the human race was dead in trespasses and in sin, having no right to everlasting life. In that condition God did not give mankind a law, but permitted the world to go without law up to the time of Moses. And even in the time of Moses God did not give the Law to the whole world, but only to the Jewish nation. If Israel had been able to keep the Law that was given to them at Mt. Sinai, they would have been a living nation--not a dying nation, as the other nations are.

The Apostle proceeds to say that the commandment, which was ordained to life, Israel found to be unto death. (Rom. 7:10.) A man cannot be justified by receiving the Law, but by keeping the Law. The rest of the world were less condemned than the Jews, for, says the Apostle, God did not give them that Law and they never came under the penalty of that Law. So, then, Israel found the Law to work death; and they were under more condemnation than were any other people in the world; for they were condemned, not only in Adam, but also by failure to keep the Law. By the Law Covenant given on Mt. Sinai, they were lifted out of the Adamic condemnation and put on trial afresh; and when they failed to keep that Law, they had a second condemnation put upon them.

St. Paul is here demonstrating the mistake of thinking that the Law Covenant gave Israel a special immunity from condemnation. Then he shows that there are some Gentiles who have never come under the Law Covenant, as did the Jew, but who, nevertheless, show a work of progress, which the Jew had not done; for these Gentiles show a law of love ruling in their hearts. In some respects they judge themselves, and in other respects their consciences excuse or accuse them.

GOD'S LAW ORIGINALLY WRITTEN IN MAN'S HEART

The Apostle says that since the Jews are condemned by the Law given at Mt. Sinai, and since the rest of the world recognize by their consciences that they are condemned, then the whole world stands guilty in God's sight. What then is that which condemns the Gentiles? The answer is, the original Law of God remaining in their hearts, though marred by the fall.

God created our first parents in such a condition of perfection that the Law of God was clear, or manifest, to them instinctively. Now, because of the fall, if a man were to use his moral perceptions alone, one man might say that a thing is wrong, and another might say that it is right; each would be guided by his own mind, his own conscience. St. Paul's argument is that no matter how fallen a man may be, he still has so much of the original Law in his heart that his conscience will either accuse him of wrong-doing or excuse his conduct; and unless extremely degraded he will know that it is wrong to steal or to take human life.

To whatever extent a man retains this original Law of God to that extent he is responsible. No one can sufficiently excuse himself so as to say that he is worthy of eternal life. The Jew could not claim that he had kept the Law, for his atonement for sin was an acknowledgment that he had failed to do so; and the Gentile's conscience testified to his unworthiness. Therefore, neither was deserving of eternal life. Continuing his argument the Apostle explains that none of the fallen race can obtain eternal life except by the way that God has provided; and that way is in Christ alone. By the Divine arrangement Christ, who was perfect, was made flesh and gave Himself on behalf of Adam and his race, so that God can be just and still be the Justifier of him who believes in Jesus. --Rom. 3:26.

Neither Jew nor Gentile can have eternal life except as the result of faith in Jesus Christ. The Apostle tells us that we cannot merit eternal life, but that we must do all in our power to manifest that if we were perfect we would keep God's Law, and that in proportion as we know the Divine will, the Divine Law, we should prove our desire to be in harmony with God by doing His will to the best of our ability. The merit of Christ will off-set, compensate for, the weaknesses of the flesh through heredity, and ultimately we shall attain to full perfection. But none except those who show their willingness to keep the Law will reach this perfection; they must be willing to spare no efforts to keep that Law, so far as in them lies.

TWO CLASSES RELEASED FROM ADAMIC CONDEMNATION

"Where no Law is there is no transgression," for "sin is not imputed when there is no Law." (Rom. 4:15; 5:13.) The world has not yet come under individual condemnation; for the world has not yet been placed under Divine Law. Why not? Up to the present time the world is under the Adamic sentence, and only those who are lifted out of that condemnation can come under another sentence. The whole world was condemned to death under Father Adam, and mankind cannot be sentenced again until they get out from under the first condemnation. The only ones who have, in any sense of the word, been released from this Adamic condemnation are two classes; the Natural Israelites and the Spiritual Israelites. The Jews could not be tried for life or death without a release in one form or another from the Adamic condemnation. This release they obtained by the Law Covenant; but it was only typical, for the blood of bulls and goats can never take away sin.--Heb. 10:4.

The only ones who have been actually released are those Jews who came under the Covenant of sacrifice, the Covenant which began with the Gospel Age with Christ, and those Gentiles who have entered into this Covenant relationship with Christ. As many of these as have entered into this relationship are on trial before Divine Law, and subject to eternal life or eternal death under that Law. If obedient to that Law they will get eternal life. If disobedient to that Law of the spirit of life, and if they wilfully sin after having been begotten of the Spirit, they will get death.

In the case of the Jew it would be the Second Death if their Law Covenant had been the full and complete Covenant which God intended for them. But it was not; it was merely a tentative Covenant to give them a tentative offer of eternal life; it was simply a typical Covenant. The real one is that which God intended should come in the New Covenant. "The days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; not according to the Covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt" (Jer. 31:31, 32); God will make a New Covenant with them. He will take away the stony heart out of their flesh and will give them a heart of flesh, that they may keep His statutes and ordinances and do them (Ezek. 11:19), under this New Covenant--the real Law Covenant.

Under that real Law Covenant every Jew will have the fullest opportunity of coming into harmony with God. And the basis of that harmony will be the "better sacrifices" than the typical ones, which Moses offered. The great Mediator will be the Messiah--Christ the Head and the Church His Body. And that great Mediator has the basis of His power in the fact that He has provided the "better sacrifices." He provided first His own sacrifice; and during the Gospel Age He has been providing other sacrifices--those who come unto the Father by Him.

THE LAW AN INDICATION OF GOD'S WILL

The Church of this Gospel Age is not under the Jewish Law Covenant; for that Law Covenant was given to the Jew and not to the Gentile nor to the Christian Church. We are not to speak of ourselves as "Gentiles" or as "Jews," but as the Church of God. God has made a different Covenant with us; it is spoken of as a Covenant of sacrifice: "Gather My saints together unto Me; those who have made a Covenant with Me by sacrifice." (Psa. 50:5.) This Covenant has been made individually with the entire Church of Christ.

Shall we say, then, that the Gospel Church is without a Law? By no means! We are not under that Law Covenant--the Covenant which demands of us to keep that Law and which binds us to keep it. But we are under a Covenant of *Grace*--a Covenant which makes special provision for us--for our inability to do perfectly. Nevertheless we are still under Divine Law. Every intelligent creature is under Divine Law. To the extent of her knowledge the Church will be responsible to the Law of God.

How may we know the Law of God? We may know of it in part by the Jewish Law and the Ten Commandments. Do we ignore the Ten Commandments? By no means. We appreciate them as showing us the Law of God. It is one thing to strive to keep them in mind, in spirit, and a totally different thing to keep them inviolate, as those under the Law covenanted to do; for whoever breaks one of the commandments breaks them all. (James 2:10.) We are therefore not under the Law, but under grace. (Rom. 6:14.) That same Law which God gave to Israel, so beautifully represented on tables of stone, is not over us; but the spirit of that Law is applicable to us. St. Paul says that the righteousness of the Law, the true keeping of the Law, is fulfilled in us, the Gospel Church, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.--Rom. 8:4.

With the Gospel Church God is dealing differently from the manner in which he dealt with the Jewish people. God's arrangement with the Jews was that they should keep that Law both in letter and in spirit, or else they would be condemned. His arrangement with the Gospel Church is that they should fulfil that Law to the best of their ability, and that the merit of Christ will make up for their deficiency. While we of the Gospel Church would like to keep the Law we are as unable to keep it, as were the Jews, on account of the weakness of the flesh. Every Christian should feel that he is strictly under obligations to the Divine Law more than are those who are not Christians, because of his greater enlightenment in Divine things, in the instructions of Christ and the Apostles and of the Holy Spirit. Not only is he to seek to live up to the requirements of the Law, but he covenants to do *much more*. He covenants to sacrifice even those rights which he would have under the Law, and to present his body a sacrifice, not even calling for his own rights under the Law.

OBEDIENCE TO THE EXTENT OF ABILITY

We keep the spirit of the Ten Commandments because it is the spirit of righteousness, the Spirit of God. We have become God's children; and having His Spirit, we are to do those things which are pleasing to Him. If, therefore, we can from the Ten Commandments learn what things are pleasing to Him, then they are lessons that we should learn. If any other thing shows us what is pleasing to God, we are to do it. But we are not *under* the Law Covenant. We do not hope for eternal life by keeping it. God's arrangement for us is that being obedient to the extent of our ability and having the spirit of the Law in our hearts, we are counted as perfect in His sight and will receive His blessing.

Some of the Jews thought that they kept the Ten Commandments, yet to their surprise they did not get eternal life. The teachings of Jesus and the Apostles show us that every one of the commandments of the Law had a deeper meaning than the Jews could discern, and that their failure to perceive the spirit of the Law was one of the reasons why they could not get eternal life. Take the commandment which says, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." Some people really have another god *in their hearts*; some idolize their husbands; with others their wives have the first place; with some it is their stocks and bonds. This is idolatry.

The Scriptures tell us that the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," has a still deeper signification than to take life. He who is angry with his brother, he who would like the opportunity to kill and who abstains from so doing merely because of fear, is in his heart a murderer. Similarly, the Master says, He that looks upon a woman to lust after her commits adultery in his heart; he is restrained only because of lack of opportunity.

When we begin to get this deeper view of the teachings of the Ten Commandments we see how the Lord magnified the Law and made it honorable. (Isa. 42:21.) But the fact that Jesus was able

to keep the Law shows that God did not give an unjust Law; that it could be kept; that the weakness was in the fallen condition of humanity, and not in the Law.

THE SABBATH OF FAITH IN JESUS' FINISHED WORK

Now as these other commandments have a higher and deeper meaning than that which appears upon the surface, so also has the Fourth Commandment, which relates to the Sabbath Day. The Apostle Paul gives us the key to this higher meaning when he says that this Seventh Day typifies the *rest of faith* for the people of God. (Heb. 4:9, 10.) Whoever *abides in Christ* is a Sabbath-keeper, and those who do not abide in Him lose this rest and thus fail to be Sabbath-keepers. There is a still further expansion of the Sabbath in its typical significance to the Thousand-Year Day. Then humanity will be at rest from Satan, from sin, from the trials, besetments and difficulties of the present time; and all mankind will have an opportunity of entering into this rest. The Church will enter into it first, in her resurrection. Next the Jew will enter into that rest, when he shall understand God's plan and become the recipient of God's blessing and eternal favors in the Millennial Day; and finally, before its close, all the world will come under its blessed influences. This was the promise of God to Abraham when He said, "In thee and in thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 12:3.) They will be blessed in the wonderful provisions of that great Sabbath Day.

The Fourth Commandment was never given to us, and we are not enjoined to keep the seventh day either in the letter or in the spirit. The Sabbath Day was never given to the Church. A higher thought than that of physical rest is given to us. God has provided for us a *rest of faith* in Christ's finished work. We may enjoy our rest seven days of the week, and every day in the year. If we begin to appreciate that thought we have a rest about which the Jew knows nothing. This is an earnest of the future when we shall be through with all our difficulties and shall remain ever in the rest of God.

SUNDAY AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE NEW ORDER OF EVENTS

We are not under commandments ourselves in God's sight; we are not under obligation to keep any day of the week. Why do we observe a Sabbath? Because of our own volition. The Law of this land provides for the keeping of Sunday. We are glad that the Law makes this provision for a quiet day once a week. We are pleased to have it so, and would not have any objection if there were two Sundays each week. We do think that the day chosen is a beautiful reminder of our Lord's resurrection. It is also a very fine illustration of the new order of things so soon to be established; and it is a very appropriate day for us. As for the world, quite probably, under the New Covenant there will be a day set specially for them in which they will rest from labors, etc. Perhaps it will be the seventh day.

SONS NOT UNDER LAW OF SERVANTS

It is nowhere said that Christians are to keep both the spirit and letter of the Ten Commandments. If it were so stated, we would be under that Law as were the Jews, who although bound by their Covenant to keep every jot and tittle of the Law, could do no more than to observe the *spirit* of the Law and to endeavor to keep, so far as possible, the letter also.

Christians are under grace; for they are sons of God by adoption. A son has many privileges which a servant does not have. To illustrate: Suppose we had been adopted into a millionaire's family. Upon going to the new home, as we look around we notice certain inscriptions over doorways; as, for instance, "Servants' Entrance," "Tradesmen's Entrance," "Servants' Washroom," "Servants' Quarters," etc. Upon further observation we discover various rules put up, regulating the duties and affairs of the servants in general. These we read, and thereby gain information as to the will of our kind friend. We ask ourself, "Do I come under this classification? No, for I have been adopted into the family. These are not for me. Yet, from these instructions I perceive something of the law of the house, but I have duties and privileges far beyond those of a servant; I am a son and have privileges corresponding thereto."

So, the Apostle says, God deals with us as with sons. He has not given us the Ten Commandments. Why not? It would be an insult to give us of His Spirit, His mind, etc., and yet put us under a command which would imply that we had not received His Spirit. It would be quite inconsistent to say to a New Creature, "Do not steal, do not commit murder." The New Creature would not want to steal or to murder. The more we know about the Law given to Israel the more we appreciate it, the better we comprehend the Divine standpoint for everything. So while we may get some good out of that Law given to servants, we realize that it is not a command given to us, although it gives us some idea of what a son should do. Those commands should make us know better what is the Father's will; and thus we are the better able to do that will.

In proportion as we learn to appreciate the Father's will and to copy the principles underlying the Divine Character, we as New Creatures are "changed" from glory to glory of *heart* quality. And thus changed in our hearts, our minds, our wills, our conduct, we become fit or "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."--Col. 1:12.

Reprint 5070

WAS JUDAS A HYPOCRITE?

IT IS DIFFICULT for any noble minded person to read the account of Judas' course without feeling a sense of righteous indignation --a disgust for the baseness of character which could thus betray, for thirty pieces of silver, the one whom he recognized as the noblest of men, whether or not he was sure that Jesus was the Messiah. It may not be amiss here to reflect that Judas did not reach this depth of iniquity suddenly, but rather that the disposition toward unrighteousness had grown upon him during the three years of his intimacy with the Master, when the reverse disposition should have had control.

At the time he was chosen to be an Apostle he was evidently a good man, so far as outward appearance, at least, was concerned; and his name, which signifies "Praise," would seem to indicate that his parents had been of a religious cast of mind and had wished and, so to speak, had prophesied of him that he would be a messenger of God to sound forth His praise. And what a privilege and opportunity he enjoyed in this direction!

From the meager mentionings of the Gospel records we may reasonably infer that the beginning of his downfall was the harboring of a love of money. Instead of rebuking this wrong spirit and seeking, on the contrary, to cultivate generosity, love and benevolence, he permitted selfishness to have control, more or less, in his heart and life. We may surmise that he chose the office of

treasurer for the little company, whereas, had he been sufficiently alive to his own weakness, his proper course would have been to refuse it, realizing that already he had too much love of money, and that the handling of the funds might prove a temptation to him. But on the contrary, he sought and obtained the office, and carried the bag with the money put therein; and the Apostle John tells us that he was a thief. (John 12:6.) This passion for money, like all other abnormal propensities of our fallen nature, grew stronger as it was encouraged and cultivated, until finally it knew no bounds and he was ready to *sell his loving Master, Messiah*, for thirty pieces of silver!

Probably Judas had made the same profession of consecration as did the other disciples: "Lo, we have left all to follow Thee; what, therefore, shall we have?" And, with the others, he had left all, and perhaps, in a certain way, was very sincere and recognized that this was the Messiah. But Judas had a business turn of mind. He wished to be associated with such a great Kingdom as the Messiah would set up. So there was a measure of selfishness connected with his consecration. Perhaps this is true *with all of us*. We are all sure that the Lord has a Kingdom and we hope to have a share in it. But this thought should be secondary. Our merit should be of a higher order than merely a desire for reward for service.

As treasurer of the disciples Judas looked out to get a good share for himself, to "feather his own nest." In the case of the ointment used for our Lord by Mary, he said, That ointment is worth a great deal of money, and it should have been put into the treasury instead of being poured on Jesus' head. "This he said because he was a thief and carried the bag."

So it seems that this spirit of avarice grew upon him. As matters progressed he began to see that things were not reaching the culmination for which he had hoped and looked. Probably he was one of those who said, at least in his heart, "If Thou do these things, do them publicly, so that others may see." This would seem to have been the spirit of Judas and of many others. They wanted Jesus to do the things that would establish Him with the people. We can imagine their saying, "Ask some thousands to come and see the raising of some one from the dead, and have a good demonstration," etc. But nothing of this kind was done. Each miracle was performed by our Lord in a quiet way.

Probably Judas began to think that Jesus could not manage affairs nearly so well as if He would allow Judas to "coach" Him a little. As time passed, he began to keep some of the money. Perhaps he thought, "Now things are not coming out very well. I will keep some of this money for the disciples and Jesus for a rainy day." But he was really thinking about Judas.

THE NECESSITY OF JUDGING OURSELVES

By following a similar course of reasoning many people persuade themselves that they are trying to help others, when really they are looking out for their own interests. Hence there is a necessity for judging ourselves. The new creature should get the old creature into a corner and cross-question him: "Why do you act thus and so? Are you sure that you did not have some selfish motive in this matter?" If Judas had thus examined himself it would have been better for him. But not having done so, he drifted farther and farther away from a right spirit. Finally he went to the chief priests and said, "What would you give me if I were to give Jesus over?" They said, So much. Then he turned the matter over in his mind for several hours. So when he was in the "upper chamber" his mind was abstracted, and he sat quietly watching what the others were doing.

When our Lord washed the feet of His Apostles, before partaking of the Passover Supper, He intimated that as they had bathed (in accordance with the Jewish requirement of the putting away of all filth at the beginning of the Passover season) they merely needed now the rinsing of their feet, the

cleansing of the members that had come in contact with the earth. "He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet to be clean every whit." (R.V.) Our Lord added, referring to Judas, "Ye are clean, but not all." This expression shows us very clearly that He had in mind a higher cleansing, of which this washing of their feet and their previous bath were but the figures.

The Lord knew that the hearts of His disciples were loyal. He had accepted them as His disciples and had reckonedly imputed to them the merit of His sacrifice as a covering of their blemishes, the full testimony of which would be given them by and by at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit testifying that the Father had accepted the Lord's atoning sacrifice on their behalf. There was one, however, of the number whose heart was not clean. Our Lord did not pass him by, but washed the feet of Judas with the rest, knowing the while of his perfidy, and that he had already bargained with the chief priests and was merely awaiting the opportune moment for the carrying out of his malevolent scheme.

Our Lord's words, although not understood by the rest, must have been appreciated by Judas, as were His subsequent words. Our Lord went so far as to quote the very prophecy which marked Judas and his disloyalty, his violation of even the common hospitality. (Psa. 41:9.) None of these things moved Judas; none of these things appealed to his heart in such a manner as to change his course. We have thus strong evidence of the wilful intention which marked his crime and makes clear the meaning of our Lord's words when He called him the "son of perdition," and declared that it would have been better for him if he had never been born.

"MINE OWN FAMILIAR FRIEND HATH LIFTED UP HIS HEEL AGAINST ME"

While they were at supper Jesus, appearing very sorrowful, gave as an explanation that it would be one of His own chosen twelve that would betray Him and thus become accessory to His death--one of those who dipped with Him in the dish, partaking of the same supper, the same bread, the same roasted lamb. Then He pointed out that although this was all written (Psa. 41:9), and thus no alteration would be made in respect to the Divine Plan, nevertheless it signified a very gross breach of friendship--one sad to contemplate. It really made no difference to the Lord, so far as His intention and His consecration were concerned, whether He were apprehended by the rulers without any betrayal, or whether betrayed by a comparative stranger or by a disciple. The fact would make no change in the Divine arrangement; but it was a cause of great sorrow to the Lord that the traitor should be one who had been a bosom friend and disciple.

Amongst the Jews and Arabs deceit and betrayal were not uncommon; but there was a code of honor recognized according to which no one would eat the food of the person whom he sought in any wise to injure. As food was seasoned with salt, it was probably this custom, of being faithful to those with whom one ate, that was known as the "covenant of salt"--the covenant of faithfulness. To succeed in having an enemy eat at one's table or partake of one's food seasoned with salt was amongst that people equivalent to a pledge of lasting friendship--that he would never do his host injury. Apparently Judas was so lacking of a proper spirit that he did not even acknowledge and obey the custom of his time--to be loyal and faithful to the one whose bread he ate, of whose salt he partook; hence our Lord's words, "He that dippeth his hand with Me in the dish, the same shall betray Me."

When Jesus passed the sop to Judas, he perhaps understood in some measure our Lord's meaning; but the other disciples did not understand. They thought that Jesus was telling Judas to get in his proper provisions before the stores would be closed. But Judas may have thought thus: "Jesus

has intimated that I will betray Him. I had not intended to do this, but now I will show Him. I know, of course, that He can get away from those officers; but I am treasurer of this company, and I will show Him something. While I do not believe they could ever take Him, yet the experience will be a good lesson. He will see henceforth that it will be better for Him to go ahead. This thing has been dallying too long. It needs a business push behind it. So here goes!" Thus Judas reasoned, and he carried out his part. No doubt Judas expected that Jesus would escape. Not for a moment did he expect that Jesus would suffer; for when he found that his plan had carried out and that Jesus would be crucified, he went and hanged himself, and then fell headlong, at the breaking of the rope.

“BETTER FOR THAT MAN IF HE HAD NOT BEEN BORN”

Jesus testified that His death would not be a victory on the part of His betrayer and His enemies, but in harmony with what had been written of Him by the Prophets. Nor are we to consider that Judas was simply fulfilling a prophecy irrespective of His own responsibility, his own wilfulness in the matter. Such a thought is negated by our Lord's statement, "Woe unto the man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed. It would have been better for that man if he had not been born."

This statement implies to us that, from the Lord's standpoint, Judas had already experienced so large a measure of knowledge and opportunity for better things that his responsibility for his act was complete, and that there would be no hope for him at any time in the future. These words leave no question, we think, that Judas had already enjoyed his full share of the great atonement work through the intimate association with our Lord and the abundant opportunities he had of coming into a clear knowledge of the truth, and the corresponding responsibilities. From our standpoint Judas sinned against great light. Evidently his was the "sin unto death"--the "Second Death." Hence, aside from any future existence, we are to consider that his life was a useless, wasted one, and that its joys did not overbalance its sorrows and anguish when to the latter were added his despair and suicide. Judas' end was a sad one. Every suicide, by his act, confesses his wish that he had never been born.

While Judas lived prior to Pentecost, we are to remember that he was one of the twelve upon whom Jesus had specially conferred a measure of His spirit--such a measure as enabled him, with the others, to perform miracles of healing, casting out devils, etc., *in the name of the Lord, as His representative, using His power. The position of Judas, therefore, was one of special closeness to the Lord and to His representative, using His power.* The position of Judas, therefore, was one of special closeness to the Lord and to His personal instruction, both by precept and example. We remember our Lord's words to His disciples, "*To you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom; but to them that are without these things are spoken in parables.*"

All this privilege, opportunity, knowledge, contact, made Judas specially responsible. But his crime would have been inexcusable had it been against any ordinary person, and it was seriously intensified by being a crime against Him who spake and acted as never man spake or acted before. From this standpoint our Lord's declaration that Judas was the "son of perdition" seems to have special import or weight, as implying that Judas had enjoyed a sufficiency of light and knowledge of righteousness to constitute a trial, and that his deliberate sin against such light and knowledge meant the Second Death.

But while hating such a character, loathing it, despising it, and seeking to go as far as possible in an opposite direction in our own characters, we are not to overlook the fact that there are amongst the Lord's professed disciples some who, in a less degree, commit a crime very similar to that of Judas; they sell their Lord, they betray Him, while professing to love Him! True, this cannot today be done in the same literal and personal manner, but the spirit of it may be seen occasionally, we regret

to say; we find some who really believe in Jesus, some who have consecrated their lives to be His followers; some who have been engaged in the ministry of His Truth, as Judas was there, but who are willing to sell the Lord for a mess of pottage--for good things of this present life--for a salary, for social position, for honor amongst men, for popularity and titles; who are willing to sell even their lips, as Judas did; so that while professing to honor and serve the Lord they are willing to join with those who misrepresent His character, His Plan, His Word--willing to join with those who seek to assassinate the Lord.

Ah, how well it is that each one ask himself the question raised upon the night of the Supper, "Lord, is it I?" And let none be too ready to excuse himself; but let each search earnestly his own heart and life and conduct to see that He is not in any way sacrificing the Truth and the Life for any consideration whatever.

More than thirty years ago we were inclined to think that all must come to a full knowledge of all truth ere they could be liable to the Second Death; but we have come to the conclusion from the general tenor of the Scriptures that this is not the Lord's view and plan. On the contrary, deliberate and intelligent rejection of the first principles of the Gospel seems to imply an unfitness for further favors, on the ground that he that is unfaithful in that which is least would be unfaithful also in more.

Adam's knowledge of the Divine Plan was very slight; yet his disobedience brought the death penalty. The real grounds for sympathy and hope for the masses is the Apostle's statement that Satan has blinded their minds, misinterpreted the facts. (2 Cor. 4:4.) All such will by and by "see out of obscurity" when Satan shall be bound--during the Millennium.

We confess little hope for the Scribes and Pharisees who, when they could find no other fault, ascribed our Lord's good works to the Devil. As for Judas' tears-- they were no better than those of Esau. (Heb. 12:17.) His remorse led him, not to a renewed or reformed life, but to self-destruction.-- Heb. 6:6.

PETER, THE IMPULSIVE--JUDAS, THE DISLOYAL

While Judas betrayed our Lord, another disciple, an intimate friend and companion, denied Him. Peter's case we remember well. A good man, of strong character, he realized not his danger, and hence was not prepared for the arts of Satan, by which he was placed in so trying a position that his boasted courage fled, his wonted strength of character vanished, and he denied his Lord even with profanity! What a lesson to us of human frailty! How we ourselves might be overtaken and ensnared by the wiles of the Devil! How much each one needs to watch and pray lest he enter into temptation--lest he succumb to temptation! How much we need to remember the prayer the Lord gave us for an example: "Abandon us not in temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One!"

That was a fateful time for *Judas*! If the Adversary could so juggle, deceive and mislead the true-hearted Peter, because he was off his guard in watching and praying, what might we not expect he would be able to accomplish with Judas, whose heart was not right, who was selfish, self-seeking, ambitious, covetous! We do not wonder that Satan's victory over Judas was soon accomplished --that he fell quickly into the snare of the Adversary, and lent his heart and energy to the betrayal of the Master, for thirty pieces of silver! His case was very different from that of Peter, the loyal, the true, for the moment bewildered, off guard and fearful. Although the danger was the same in either case, their hearts were in different conditions.

Is it not so with all the Lord's followers? Is not this the secret of the results of temptation as they surely come to each one of us? The Judas class of today and always are those who, when temptation comes, receive it, entertain it, enter into the spirit of the ambition or otherwise strong allurements, and are swallowed up by it. The Peter class has also been with us ever since; and today even the true-hearted, not sufficiently watching and praying and on guard against the Adversary's allurements, are at times taken unawares, and for a moment dishonor, not only the Lord, but their own hearts and consciences also.

The difference between these two classes is in the heart condition; the Peter class do those things which they do not wish to do, and their difficulty lies evidently in the weaknesses of their flesh, in the power of the Adversary, and in their failure to lay hold upon the help which the Lord has promised, the succor in their time of need.

The Judas class, on the contrary, are those whose hearts are not loyal, but selfish, and who, therefore, enter into the Adversary's schemes heartily, and are not, in their wrong course, going contrary to their own wills, but in harmony therewith. The difference in God's sight is seen in that, *although both Peter and Judas were penitent*, the one was accepted back to Divine favor, but the other was not. The one who was merely entrapped, but who at heart was not disloyal, was restored and blessed; the other, though not without conscience, as shown by his later remorse, was without the genuine loyalty of heart which in the Lord's sight is indispensable, and the absence of which, considering Judas' intimate acquaintance with the Lord, was inexcusable.

The Lord's words to Peter, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he might sift you as wheat; but I HAVE PRAYED FOR THEE, THAT THY FAITH FAIL NOT" (Luke 22:31, 32), give us the assurance that, because of this difference in the hearts of the two men, our Lord could properly be the Advocate of the one before the Father, but not the Advocate of the other. He could stand for and represent the one who at heart was loyal to Him, however weak his flesh, however careless he might have been of the Divine provision for his protection. He was still one of the Lord's sheep, and therefore subject to the Shepherd's care. He was still of the Lord's members, subject to the oversight and interest of the Head. He was still a member of the Lord's espoused virgin Church, whom our Lord loved and for whom He gave His life and for whom, therefore, He might properly make supplication as the betrothed Bridegroom.

But in the case of Judas, his heart being alienated through selfishness, any appreciation and love which he possessed for the Lord at the beginning of His ministry had evidently died, swallowed up of selfishness and ambition; and into that heart, thus fully withdrawn from the Lord, we are told that Satan entered. By thus willingly withdrawing his heart and strength and consecration from the Lord, and lending the same by deliberate intention to self-seeking, he became a tool of the Adversary. As our Master said, "It must needs be that offenses come (that He should be crucified), but woe unto that man by whom the offense cometh!"

THE HARVEST A TIME OF SEPARATION

Although we know in advance that none of the Lord's disciples, true at heart, will be plucked out of His hands by the Adversary, nevertheless we fancy that we can sympathize to some extent with our Lord's feelings when He exhorted the disciples, "Watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation."

True, Jesus knew who it was that should betray Him, and was, therefore, neither surprised nor disconcerted because of Judas' course; and yet, undoubtedly, the thought that one who had eaten

bread with Him should "lift up his heel against Him" (John 13:18) must have had a saddening effect upon our dear Master, who could assuredly have pity for even His bitterest enemies as well as those who, Peter like, fail at first to withstand the Adversary's assault, but who subsequently are recovered by Divine mercy and aid.

Since the Body of Christ is *one*, and since our Lord declares that whatsoever is done to one of the least of His members is done unto Him, it follows that the Judas class and the Peter class, all down through the Gospel Age to the present moment, have been betraying or denying the Lord in proportion as they have betrayed or denied His members. We, therefore, should note the significance of His statement to Peter, "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not!"

For all of the Peter class the Lord is the Head, the Representative, the Advocate before the Father. Without His aid, without His appearance for us and the application to us of the merit of His own sacrifice, none of us could stand; all would be judged unworthy, unfit to have part or lot in the great blessings which the Lord has invited us to share with Jesus. And as the Master prayed for such, and now intercedes for such, and makes good their unwilling imperfections, so should all who have His spirit feel kindly, generously, sympathetically, and speak helpfully to the Peter class. But as the Master had no such words of sympathy for Judas, the open and premeditated enemy and traitor, so likewise, whatever our sorrowful feelings for such may be, there is no room for any expression of sympathy or co-operation in their evil work, as for any of the Apostles to have co-operated with Judas would have meant a share in his evil deeds.

However much sympathy we may feel with Peter and others of similar character and experience, however much we may rejoice with him that the Lord prayed for him so that his carelessness in watching and praying for himself did not result in his undoing and his loss of relationship to the Lord--nevertheless, we should strive not to be of the Peter class, but of the class represented by the Lord Himself. Let us be of the watching, praying, faithful kind, who will not be overtaken by the Adversary's temptations of the present time.

We are in the Harvest of the Gospel Age; the separation of the wheat from the tares is due; and, more than this, the separation of the chaff from the wheat is also due--a sifting process. While this figure may to some extent have fit the experiences of the Church in the past, we are sure that it specially applies to the Church in the "ends of the Ages"--to those who were living in the end, or harvest, of the Jewish Age, and to those who are now living in the end, or harvest, of the Gospel Age. And our Lord is pleased to permit these siftings; they are necessary, apparently, that the Judas class may be entirely sifted out, and that the Peter class may be so thoroughly stirred up by the trials and difficulties and realization of their own weaknesses, and the knowledge that they would utterly fail without the Lord's sustaining grace, that these lessons may prove profitable to them, developing in them more of meekness, watchfulness, prayerfulness and trust in their All-Powerful Head.

WHY JUDAS' CASE IS HOPELESS

Heretofore we have pointed out that during this present Age (the Gospel Age, or Spirit Dispensation), the world of mankind is not liable to the Second Death: (1) Because this Age is for the Church's *trial* and not for the *world's judgment*, or trial; (2) Because now the world has not that degree of enlightenment which would involve the full, extreme penalty of God's Law, the Second Death; (3) Because the inspired Apostle declares that now Satan is exercising a blinding, deceiving influence upon all except true believers (2 Cor. 4:4; Rev. 20:3), and that "*the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*"--I Cor. 2:14.

These conclusions from the Scriptures in general are so abundantly confirmed by the statements of Heb. 6:4-8 and 10:26-31, in which the Apostle warns the Church that wilful sin, or apostasy, on the part of those who have enjoyed the privilege of consecrated believers--those who have tasted of the good Word of God, and the powers of the Age to come, and who have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit--as to leave hopeless the case of such. It will be found impossible to renew such, for there remaineth no longer any part for them in the sacrifice for sin. They have had and have misused their share in the great "ransom for all."

We have called attention to the fact that the world in general, even in civilized lands, *has had no opportunity to sin after the example of wilful apostasy*, described by the Apostle. And it is well to note that this *sin unto death* on the part of believers is not at all the same as the missteps and stumblings which may occur in the path of any through weakness of the flesh (Gal. 2:11-14), and which are among the sins which may be repented of, reformed from, and forgiven.--I John 2:1; 5:16.

In view of the above, and of our further claim that the Spirit Dispensation began at Pentecost, after our Lord was glorified (John 7:39), some have wondered that we teach that Judas' case is a hopeless one, since his sin and death were before Pentecost. We are asked to explain this seeming inconsistency.

We answer, the period of the *Lord's presence* at the first advent--from His baptism to His ascension--differed from the period after Pentecost, throughout this Age, in which believers walk *wholly by faith* and not by *sight*, even as the Millennial Age will differ from the Gospel Age.

In the Millennium knowledge and responsibility will no longer be confined to the spirit-begotten, for it is written, "The earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea [knowledge ocean-deep]"; "All shall know Me [Jehovah] from the least unto the greatest."--Isa. 11:9; Jer. 31:34.

It will no longer be the rule that the consecrated must "walk by faith and not by sight," for the consecrated of that time, while no doubt still having room for the exercise of faith, will, to a very considerable degree, walk by sight. It will no longer be true that Satan, the god of this world, will blind and deceive all except believers, for Satan will be bound and can deceive the world no longer; and "this world" [Age] shall then have given place to "the world [Age] to come," "wherein dwelleth righteousness"; and "all the blind eyes shall be opened."--Heb. 2:5; 2 Pet. 3:13; Isa. 35:5.

When knowledge is thus general, the possibility of sinning wilfully against great light will be general. Whosoever will may then accept the Divine favor and use the Divine aids, and attain to perfection and life everlasting; and whosoever will may intelligently reject God's favor in Christ, and die the Second Death--the everlasting death, the hopeless death.

Now let us return to the case of Judas, and consider the conditions which obtained at the time of his trial and failure, in the period of the Lord's presence in the Jewish harvest. The circumstances of that time differed from those of the present Age and also those of the Millennial Age in the conditions, and hence the responsibilities differed also. *Our Lord was present and performed marvelous works, illustrative of "the powers of the world [Age] to come."* The truth was presented to the people in such a manner that the Lord declared that its rejection would bring "stripes" and "woes" upon those who, after hearing, loved darkness rather than light. He declared that some of those, because of their rejection of the Truth, would be counted worthy of "many stripes"; and that it would be, therefore, more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgment than for those. Our

Lord's declaration was, "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did they had not had sin."--John 15:22, 24.

And if the people had such responsibility because of what they heard and saw, how much greater was the responsibility of the twelve chosen Apostles! They had professed much, saying, "We have left all to follow Thee." They were always with Him; and not only beheld many of His mighty works, of which the multitudes in various places saw but few, but more; He communicated to them, severally, a measure of His spirit and power, and sent them out to proclaim Him and His Kingdom and to work miracles--to heal the sick and cast out devils in His name.

The Apostles received also a special insight into the Divine Plan, an enlightenment not granted to the people, the equivalent to much that is now granted to the spirit-begotten ones of this Age. The Lord addressed the multitudes in parables and dark sayings, but these He interpreted to the Apostles, saying, "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God; but to them that are without [outside of the twelve and other special disciples], all these things are done in parables." Again He said to them, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear; for verily I say unto you that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which you see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them."--Matt. 13:11-17; Mark 4:11.

If, then, the people, who saw a few of our Lord's mighty works and heard a few of His words of life, under *parabolic cover*, were declared "worthy of stripes" for not receiving the light, what shall we say of the responsibility of the twelve who not only saw much more, but by His power in them performed His miracles; who not only heard the parabolic words of life, but who had them expounded to them by the great Teacher? (Matt. 13:36-43; Mark 4:10-20.) And what punishment less than death--hopeless extinction--shall we suppose was merited by one of these who, after all this, according to his own confession, "betrayed innocent blood"?

We judge that if Pilate and Herod and the Roman soldiers had some responsibility for Christ's death, the multitude who clamored, "Crucify Him! His blood be upon us and on our children!" had much more responsibility; that the better educated, envious Pharisees and Priests who incited the illiterate, common people, had yet a greater responsibility (Matt. 23:15-33), and that Judas, His betrayer, was the chief, the real crucifier, because of his knowledge and wilfulness.

Upon him alone, of all who had to do with His death, our Lord placed the full responsibility, the *full guilt*, when He said: "The Son of Man goeth [to death] as it is written of Him [prophetically], but woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed. It had been good for that man if he had not been born!" (Matt. 26:24.) Should Judas be granted eternal life, under any circumstances or after any experience, his birth could not be considered a disadvantage to himself. See also Psa. 109:6-8; John 6:70, 71; 17:12.

So, likewise, those who (with good knowledge of God's grace in Christ) sin wilfully and count the precious blood of the Covenant wherewith they were sanctified [set apart], a common thing, "crucify Christ afresh and put Him to an open shame." And, like Judas, they often accompany this denial of His ransom-sacrifice with the words, "Hail, Master!" and a deceitful kiss. All such should be an abhorrence to every one who possesses to any degree the true, noble, Christ-like spirit.

“BE NOT WISE IN YOUR OWN CONCEITS!”

Some of the dear friends feel very loath to "give poor Judas up," and some seem to feel that their sympathy for him is an evidence that they have "more love than others." Those who come to Christ are not selected because they are the least blemished amongst men; they are oftener the more blemished; the less blemished often feel a self-complacency and satisfaction which hinders them from coming to God as repentant sinners and from realizing that they can be justified only through the imputed merit of Christ. But those who come to Christ and hear Him, soon learn how imperfect are their depraved conceptions, and they seek and obtain *His mind, that it may be theirs thenceforth, as instead of their own judgments*. "We have the mind of Christ," says the Apostle. It is our "new mind"; we are "transformed by the renewing of our minds," so as to be able to "prove [know] what is the good, acceptable and perfect will of God."--Rom. 12:2.

Those whose hearts go out so strongly to Judas seem to indicate by their questions that, however much they have submitted their judgment to God's will on some questions, they have not submitted them on this point. The reason seems to be that they deceive themselves into thinking that their sympathy with Judas is the true love which the Scriptures everywhere enjoin as the essence of Christian character. But they are deceiving themselves. To love an evil thing is on a par with hating a good thing. Both are wrong; both are sinful; both are evidence that the depraved mind is not renewed, remodeled, transformed into the mind of Christ.

The mind of the Lord, inculcated by His Word, teaches that we are to love the beautiful, pure, true, noble; we are to love (in the sense of sympathizing with) the weak, the penitent and oppressed, who are seeking for the paths of righteousness and truth; but we are to "hate iniquity" and "every false way," and all the meanness and sin which is wilful, against light and *of the Devil*.

Cease to pride yourself upon love for one of the most detestable characters known to the pages of history, of whom our Lord, who so loved (sympathized with) the world that He laid down His life for it, said, "It had been better for that man if he had never been born." Adopt God's standpoint. As the Apostles say, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked;" "He that doeth righteousness is righteous [and approved of God], but he that practices sin [knowingly, wilfully] is of the Devil."--Gal. 6:7; I John 3:6, 7.

For our part, we have no thought of ever becoming more loving than the Lord; we accept His definitions and seek to be conformed mentally to His standard--the image of God's dear Son. We want to love just as He loves and just what He loves, and we want to hate what He hates. Of Him it is written, "Thou hast *loved righteousness and hated iniquity*; therefore, God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows." (Heb. 1:9; Psa. 45:7.) "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that *hate Thee*? . . . I hate them with a perfect hatred."--Psa. 139:21, 22.

We are glad that neither Satan nor Judas nor any other creature will ever be tormented to all eternity. We are glad that a full, fair opportunity for coming to a knowledge of the Lord and of the way of righteousness will be granted to every member of Adam's race; and we are glad that, on the contrary, all who rejoice not in the Truth, but rejoice in iniquity, will be utterly and everlastingly destroyed in the Second Death. We abominate Satan, who, for over six thousand years, has wrought unrighteousness and gloated over the evil and pain and sorrow which he has wrought, and who with clear knowledge of the redemptive work has for eighteen centuries opposed the Kingdom and the great salvation. The person who could believe in Satan's conversion after all this battling against the Light and the Truth has a perverse mind, very sadly blinded by the "god of this world"--a mind thoroughly out of harmony with the Word.

“YE HAVE NEED OF PATIENCE”

“Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.” -- Jas. 1:4.

THERE ARE two quite distinct words in the Greek which, in our English Scriptures, are translated "patience." One of these is a word that in a general way corresponds to the common thought of patience as we speak of it in connection with the everyday affairs of life, meaning merely forbearance, or long-suffering. Indeed the Greek word is generally translated long-suffering. It is the other word with which we are more particularly interested in the treatment of our text, and which is the one most frequently translated patience by the New Testament writers.

This word has a much deeper and fuller significance than attaches to our English word patience. It signifies, rather, constancy, the thought being an endurance of evil in a cheerful, hopeful, willing, patient manner. It represents, therefore, an element of character, and not merely a temporary condition or restraint of feeling or action. It signifies that development of heart and character which manifests itself in an endurance of wrong or affliction with contentment, without rebellion of will, with full acquiescence in the Divine Wisdom and Love, which, while permitting present evils, has promised to overthrow them in God's due time.

This grace of patience smooths the way for every other Christian grace, because all must be acquired under the process of patient and continuous self-discipline. Not a step of progress can be

gained without this grace of patience; and not one of the graces more beautifully adorns the Christian character, or wins the approval of the world's conscience, or glorifies the God of all grace whose Truth inspires it. It is *enduring meekness*, striving to stem the tide of human weakness, and endeavoring with painstaking care to attain to the Divine likeness. It is slow to wrath and plenteous in mercy; it is quick to perceive the paths of righteousness, and prompt to walk in them; it is mindful of its own imperfections and sympathetic with the imperfections and shortcomings of others.

The importance of endurance in the Christian's character is fully borne out by the Apostle Paul's use of the word; for on more than one occasion he places patience above and beyond love, which we have seen is the "mark" of character for which we are to run--the "mark for the prize." For instance, in writing to Titus (2:2), enumerating the characteristics of the advanced Christian, the Apostle uses the following order: "Vigilant, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity [love], in *patience*." Though we have all the other qualities, this final test of patient, cheerful endurance must be passed before we can be accepted of the Lord as members of the very elect.

Again, in writing to Timothy (2 Tim. 3:10) respecting himself, the Apostle puts this quality of patient endurance in the place beyond love, saying, "Thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, love, patient endurance."

"THE LORD YOUR GOD DOTH PROVE YOU"

One might ask, if "Love is the fulfilling of the Law" and "the mark for the prize of our high calling," how can patience rank higher than Love? The answer is that patient endurance does not come in merely at the close of our race, but it is a requisite all the way along the race-course. We need this *cheerful endurance* of the *earliest trials* in the Christian way; and as we speed along in our race for the "mark," the spirit of *cheerful endurance should be growing stronger and stronger at every step of the journey*. Some might be faithful for a few days or a few months or a few years, yet be unworthy of the great Kingdom blessing of Christ.

In the Parable of the Sower, our Lord gave an illustration of this fact, saying that some seed fell on stony ground and sprang up; it grew; but finally, when the burning heat of persecution came, the tender plants withered away. In choosing the members of the Kingdom class the Lord is looking for a *depth of soil, a depth of character, a depth of heart that will be patient to endure*. Those who lack this one quality will not be fit for the Kingdom. Patience is necessary as an element of character on any plane of being; but with the Christian it is specially important to have it developed from the beginning of the race. We need it with us at the *first quarter mark, and at the second quarter mark, and at the third quarter mark*, and still with us at the *fourth quarter mark, the mark for the prize--perfect Love*.

And when we have reached this mark of the race where we love, not only our *friends*, but our enemies, it is required of us that we *stand up to the mark faithfully, cheerfully, patiently enduring the tests* which the Lord will even then see fit to have come upon us. God subjects His people to testing, *long testing*, sometimes for months and years. As it is said, "The Lord your God proveth you."--Deut. 13:3.

Hence it is that the Apostle Paul exhorts us, "Having done all, *stand*"--*endure*. Having reached the "mark," "Let *patient endurance* have *her perfect work*," or "perfect her work." Let patient endurance demonstrate, not only that you have the character, the qualifications of Love, demanded in the race for the prize, but also that you have love as an *element of character, deep-rooted, immutable*, so that you can *endure opposition cheerfully*.

St. Paul tells us that we have need of this patient endurance that, after having done the will of God [after having brought our own will into complete subjection to the Divine will], we might receive the promise. (Heb. 10:36.) The thought in the Apostle's mind seems to be that there is a certain work for us all to *do in ourselves* --"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." (Phil. 2:12,13.) It is God who is working in us to *will* and to *do*--to co-operate in this work. Let us make sure that rebellion of any kind in our heart be thoroughly killed, mortified; and that we bring the will into perfect submission to the Divine will, so that we may have no other will than His. Even then, after we have overcome to this extent, we have need of patience. The Lord will not accept us merely because we are consecrated. He requires that the consecration shall be *proven*. *To begin with*, He accepts the consecration; then He tests us to demonstrate to what extent we really love Him.

PATIENCE NECESSARY TO FRUIT-BEARING

Patient endurance is also mentioned in the Scriptures as being the Lord's Word, or teaching. Our Lord says, "Because thou hast kept the *Word of My patience* I will also keep thee." (Rev. 3:10.) Twice in the Gospels also we note that our Lord brought to the notice of the disciples the importance of the quality of patient endurance. Once was in the Parable of the Sower above referred to. (Luke 8:11-15.) He said, "That [sown] on the good ground are they which in an honest and good heart, having heard the Word, *keep it*, and bring forth fruit with patience [with cheerful endurance, constancy]." The thought here is that in order to be of the fruit-bearing class, which the Lord will approve and accept in His Kingdom, it is necessary to do more than receive the Word of His Testimony, even though we receive it with joy; for that class in the parable is represented by the stony ground, which at first gave evidence of great fruitfulness and vigor, but withered under the sun of persecution, because of lack of depth of soil. That stony, shallow ground represents, the Lord explained, a class of hearers who rejoice greatly in the Truth, but do not endure; they are such as cannot withstand persecution or opposition, but wither under it, become discouraged. Such cannot be of the Kingdom class, all of whom must be overcomers.

In this parable our Lord shows us that patient endurance, constancy, is the final test, following after the readiness of preparation to receive the seed; following after the seed has been received and has sprouted; following after love and hope and joy and faith have caused it to spring forth and to give promise of fruitage. Patient endurance, then, is necessary in order that the grain may be developed and thoroughly ripened and made fit for the garner. How important patient endurance, cheerful endurance, seems to be, in the light of the Lord's Word! for we cannot suppose that He who judges the thoughts and intents of the heart would be pleased with His children, even if He saw them enduring much for His sake, if they *endured in an impatient or unhappy frame of mind*. They would not in that event be copies of God's dear Son, whose sentiment is expressed in the words, "I delight to do Thy will, O God!"

Our Lord at another time was telling His disciples that as the result of being His followers they must expect opposition, trials, *tribulations*. Perhaps it may assist some to realize the strength of the meaning of the word tribulation when they know its origin. It is derived from the Latin word "*tribulum*," the name of a roller, or threshing-machine used in olden times for cleaning wheat, removing from it the outer husk, or chaff. How appropriate the term when applied to the Lord's consecrated people, who in the Scriptures are symbolized by wheat! Our new natures are the kernel, the real grain; yet this treasure, or valuable part, is covered with the husk of earthly conditions. In order that the wheat may be made properly ready for the "garner" and for usefulness, it is necessary that each grain shall pass through the tribulation necessary to remove those qualities which, until separated, render us unfit for the future service to which we are called of the Lord.

In proportion as we are able to realize our own imperfections, and the perfect will of God concerning us, we shall be enabled to bear patiently, and even with a certain kind of rejoicing, all the tribulations which the Master may see best to let come upon us. Our Lord explained to His disciples that so long as they lived in this present Age, when sin abounds, and when Satan is the prince of this world, they must expect tribulation from various quarters; but He assured them that they would, nevertheless, be fully and completely under Divine care and protection, even though the persecutions would be permitted to reach and to affect them. Then follow the words, "In your patience [patient endurance, cheerful, hopeful constancy] possess ye your souls."--Luke 21:19.

“HE THAT OVERCOMETH SHALL INHERIT ALL THINGS”

One object of the test of patient endurance is that we may be "strong in the Lord," that we may have the character-likeness of the Lord Jesus--not merely the firmness, but also the gentleness. All this must be developed before we can receive the things promised, the things which God has in reservation for those that love Him. (I Cor. 2:9, 10.) These things are spiritual and might be apprehended by our minds, but could not be comprehended. The promise that we are to be like our Lord includes not only the spiritual and heavenly conditions, to which we shall attain in the First Resurrection, but also the blessing of sharing in the uplifting of the world. "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's Seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Gal. 3:29.) But to "be Christ's" means, not only that we shall accept Him, join Him and His standards, but also that we shall be good soldiers. Those who would not be good soldiers would not be worthy of being members of the Body of Christ, for such could not be conquerors and "more than conquerors" through Jesus Christ our Lord.--Rom. 8:37.

We already have the "promise," but it has not yet been received in the sense of being fulfilled. The promise is a conditional one. "He that doeth these things shall live by them." (Lev. 18:5; Rom. 10:5.) So in our Lord's arrangement, the condition of the promise is that we shall abide in His love, His favor. Whoever accepts of Christ's death and trusts in Him and seeks to follow the Divine commandments, walking not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, will receive the promise, for the promise is made to "*overcomers*." All the promises of the Gospel Age are made to the "*overcomers*." Such shall sit upon the Throne. Such shall become the Bride of Christ. Such shall be joint-heirs with the Redeemer and participate in all His great work as the great Messiah, to bless Israel and through Israel the world of mankind.

By faith the Church now begins to enjoy this conditional promise, which depends upon their faithfulness to the end--their *patient endurance*. Such loyal ones have the earnest of the promise and shall be joint-heirs in the Kingdom. All others will be cut off from that membership. "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth [cleanseth, pruneth] it, that it may bring forth more fruit." (John 15:2.) We are on trial; and the trial is to prove our loyalty. If this trial time, or probation, is satisfactory, the membership is made permanent. Those who fail to live up to the conditions, are not counted worthy to be members of the Body of Christ and joint-heirs in the Kingdom.

LET US ABIDE IN HIS LOVE

Who can consider the importance of becoming copies of our blessed Lord and Head without feeling that to attain to this character-likeness will be a life-work! It cannot be accomplished in a day or in a year; but the whole life must be devoted to it; and day by day, if we are faithful, we should realize a measure of growth in grace and of development in Christian character. It is not enough that we know the Truth, or that we be content to hold it in unrighteousness. We must see to it that the

Truth is having its legitimate and designed effect upon the character. And if the Truth is thus received into good and honest hearts, we shall have the assurance of the Apostle Peter that "We shall never fall," but that in due time we shall be received into the Kingdom.

Hence we see the necessity of ever keeping the instructions and precepts of the Lord fresh in our minds, and of drinking deep into their inspiring spirit, although we are already established in the faith. To be established in the faith is one thing; to be established in Christian character and in all the graces of the Spirit is quite another.

Beloved, "Let us run with patience [cheerful constancy, patient endurance] the race set before us" in the Gospel. (Heb. 12:1.) As already observed, the race must be run with this constancy if we would reach the "mark;" and after reaching the mark we can maintain our position only by the grace of constancy, patient endurance, that having done all, *we may* STAND!

Reprint 4909

“THE ROYAL DIADEM”

“Thou shalt be called by a new name . . . thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.”--Isa. 62:2, 3.

IN ONE PLACE the Prophet Jeremiah declares, "This is the name whereby *He* shall be called, Jehovah our Righteousness." In another place he says, "She shall be called, Jehovah our Righteousness [or, the Righteousness of Jehovah]." And so the Apostle declares, "That we might be made the Righteousness of God through Him." --Jer. 23:6; 33:16; 2 Cor. 5:21.

These statements refer to Zion. The *typical* Zion is the Jewish nation; and the *antitypical* Zion is the glorified Christ. Very properly, then, we may understand that the blessings which belong to the Church on the spirit plane will, naturally, on the earthly plane, belong to the Ancient Worthies, who will be in Divine favor forever.

The two expressions, "a crown of glory" and "a royal diadem," express practically the same thought, the repetition making the sentiment doubly impressive. A diadem is a crown. Crowns are generally used to add dignity and honor to the individuals wearing them; but the Scriptural expression, "A crown of glory, . . . a royal diadem in the hand of thy God," does not include the thought of a diadem that is to be *worn*, as giving glory to God; but rather as representing a *beautiful ornament in the Divine hand*, as you take something in your hand to look at the beauty and workmanship.

The jewels that will make this diadem beautiful, *when properly tested by the great Master-Workman*, are the Church. The Lord will come to make up His jewels, to secure His jewels. "God hath set the members in the Body." The text refers to the final setting in the future, in the Kingdom condition. As star differeth from star in glory, so shall these jewels differ in setting and position. This also applies to the present time. The present arrangement is subject to change in proportion as the *individual* will or *will not* be fully *submissive* to the Lord's will. There has been a selection of a jewel class; and the experiences of this class during the Gospel Age have been the polishing processes; and there will be a setting in the end of this Age, when the Church is completed. This began when the First Resurrection began.

The first setting in this royal diadem was, undoubtedly, our Lord Jesus Himself. He is the first in this great diadem which Jehovah has in His hand. Next will come the members of the Body, as they shall be perfected in the First Resurrection--the Apostles and sleeping saints, each as he is granted his change, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." Each jewel will be placed in that particular setting for which Jehovah has seen that it is prepared.

When the mother of James and John went with them to Jesus and requested that her sons might sit, the one on His right hand and the other on His left hand, He said that these places would be given to those for whom they are intended by the Father. Those positions will not be given through favor, but through justice. Any place will be glorious in this company. Only the Lord is competent to say who shall sit on the right hand and on the left. We shall be pleased to have His will done; and beyond the veil we shall have such a large sense of justice that we shall be glad to have the matter as the Father has arranged.

The Lord is first; we think probably St. Paul is next. And we think St. Peter and St. John have prominent places. We shall all be perfectly content and pleased with whatever the Father will decide. We shall be glad of any place. And any one who would not be of that spirit, of that disposition, will thereby indicate that he is not of that class which the Lord would have there. Any who will be of that class will be glad to accept the Father's decree and to prefer it to anything they could have devised.

So the Church in the hand of God is the Church in the hand of Divine power. That power will use the Church and she will be a crown of glory and a thing of beauty, *gloriously reflecting to all eternity the workmanship of our God*. How glorious it will be! How beautiful! The Lord Jehovah will have the setting of these precious jewels, one reflecting upon another in that crown of glory and diadem of beauty, with the Lord Jesus in the chief place, for the Father will not give to the Church any glory that He would not give to the Lord Himself. The Church is to be displayed before men as "a thing of beauty and a joy forever"--God's handiwork.

He is selecting the jewels now, and is providentially dealing with them. When the process of polishing shall have been completed, He will use them in a very special sense for a thousand years. As a star blazes in glory, so the Lord will make use of each one of the Church. But the use of the Church which the Lord will make at that time will be only a part of the work which He intends to accomplish. The Apostle says, "That in the ages to come *He might show the exceeding riches of His grace* in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."--Eph. 2:7.

All who are in Christ, all who are in the "elect" Body of Christ--to these God will show His exceeding grace. His grace and favor will be showered upon the Church. And the world will eventually see in the Church the culmination of all of God's creative work. The glory of the Church will be manifested in the sight of angels and of men. And so the Lord indicates the blessings that are to be ours if we are faithful in making our "calling and election sure."

Let us never forget that we are a "*peculiar people*," separate from the great body of nominal Christians, as well as from the world, having higher hopes, aims and ambitions and favored with a clearer insight into the deep things of God, having been called out of our former darkness into His marvelous light. And if thus separate from the world and from Christians who partake largely of the worldly spirit, what wonder if we find them all out of harmony with us, and either ignoring or opposing us in the performance of the Master's will.

Reprint 4913

“THE FEET OF HIM”

IT IS NECESSARY for the discipline, trial and final proving of the Church of God that they should be subjected to adverse influence; for "to him that overcometh" is the promise of the great reward. If we would reign with Christ, we must prove our worthiness to reign, by the same *tests of loyalty to God, of faith in His Word, of zeal for the Truth, of patient endurance, of reproach and persecution, even unto death, and in the unwavering trust in the power and purpose of God to deliver and exalt His Church in due time.* To such faithful ones are the blessed consolations of Psalm 91, which we believe is a picture of the Church in the end of this Gospel Age--a picture of The Christ. Hearken:

"He who dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High [typified by the Holy of the Tabernacle] shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." We thus place ourselves under the Divine protection when, having come to a knowledge of God's willingness to accept us as His children, we gratefully accept the invitation and approach in His appointed way, through Christ our Redeemer, and consecrate ourselves fully to His service. Such may sweetly rest in the precious promises of God, all of which are yea and amen in Christ Jesus. (2 Cor. 1:20.) The world does not see the overshadowing wings of Divine protection, but the faithful have a blessed secret realization of it. Praise the Lord!

"I [Christ Jesus, whom David here, as elsewhere, personifies, and who thus addresses His Body, His Church] *will say of Jehovah, He is My refuge and My fortress, My God; in Him will I trust, that He will surely deliver thee from the snare of the Fowler and from the noisome pestilence*"--from the deceptions of Satan, into which all those not protected shall stumble; for our Lord said that

so subtle and deceptive will they be that, if it were possible, they would deceive "the very elect." But this is not possible; for those who are making their calling and election sure abide under the protection of the Almighty. Such shall be delivered, not from the destructive pestilence of physical disease, but from the moral and spiritual pestilences of destruction--from the sinful propensities of the old nature, which in unguarded moments are liable to assert their mastery and overwhelm the souls of those who are not abiding under the secret protection of the Most High; and from the spiritual pestilences of false doctrine which, with subtle sophistry, destroy the faith of the unwatchful.

Such pestilences are already abroad in the world in the shape of so-called Christian Science, Spiritism and the various no-ransom theories which take the name of "The Larger Hope," and which bid fair, both from present prospects and from the prophetic outlook, ere long to become epidemic. From all these pestilences the Lord's elect shall be protected, resting safely and sweetly under the shadow of the Almighty.

"He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust; His Truth shall be thy shield and buckler." So close to His heart does Jehovah gather His loyal and faithful children that they feel the warmth of His love; and the responsive language of their hearts is, "I will abide in Thy tabernacle forever; I will trust in the covert of Thy wings; for Thou hast been a shelter for me and a strong Tower from the enemy; for Thou hast heard my vows; Thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear Thy name." (Psa. 61:4, 3, 5.) Yes, His Truth--that grand system of Truth comprised in the Divine Plan of the Ages--is an ample shield and buckler to all who in simplicity of heart receive it and prove faithful to it. It is *the armor of God*, which the Apostle urges all the faithful to put on--to appropriate, to meditate upon and to store up Truth in mind and heart--that they may be able by its use to withstand error and evil in every form presented to them in this evil day.

JEHOVAH SHALL KEEP THE FEET OF HIS SAINTS

"Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday." This is the "night," the dark night of which the Prophet Isaiah spoke and to which our Lord also referred, "The morning cometh, and also the night"; "The night cometh when no man can work." (Isa. 21:12; John 9:4.) The Millennial morning comes, and just as surely the great time of trouble will immediately precede it--the night wherein no man can labor for the dissemination of Divine Truth; so great will be the "terror," the tumult and trouble and persecution of that night; the arrows--"even bitter words" of the opponents of the Truth--will fly by day--at the present time, which in comparison with the dark night that is coming, is called day. The various besetments and difficulties from infidelity, Higher Criticism and other false doctrines are pictorially represented as the shooting out of arrows, as pestilences, as stumbling stones. None of these are to injure the "elect," of which Christ is the Head and the Church His Members, as specially indicated in this Psalm. The Church shall be immune, and nothing shall in any way hurt them. As the Lord said, the difficulties of this day would, if possible, deceive the very elect; but this will not be possible, for "the feet" class shall be kept. No; the Church need have no fear of the moral and spiritual pestilences that walk in darkness, spreading and making their victims amongst those who are ignorant of the Truth, or who are unfaithful to it and are, hence, unworthy of it, and who, therefore, lack the Divine protection and are subject to the "strong delusions" of error that subvert the faith and hope of many, just when the light of Divine Truth is shining clearest upon the faithful, as it is shining upon us today.

"A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee." Great will be the falling away from the Truth, even amongst those who, like ourselves, received it once with joy and who did for a time run well; but the Church, because of their loyalty and uncompromising faithfulness and because of the ample armor of Truth and righteousness, shall stand and not fall.

We are not to think of those who will be injured and who will fall ("A thousand at thy side and ten thousand at thy right hand") as of *the world, but rather as being friends of the Church; closely associated with the Church*. The world could not fall from Divine favor, for it has not been in Divine favor. The whole "world lieth in the Wicked One," and, therefore, could not be overthrown. This verse seems to apply to those who were actually begotten of the Holy Spirit or who have assumed a position such as those begotten of the Holy Spirit; as, for instance, the tares which affect to be wheat. They never were wheat, and will not be garnered with the wheat class. Time will show that they are not of this class. So in this picture we see the fall of these in general and of the consecrated in particular. There is a distinction between *the thousand falling at the side and the ten thousand at the right hand*. We might infer that the one thousand may fall into total unbelief, and the ten thousand, the "great company," into the great time of trouble to wash their robes white and to purify themselves. They will be partakers with Babylon in her sins and have part in her great fall.--Rev. 14:18; 18:10.

None too extravagant is the prophetic declaration, "A thousand shall fall at thy side." Only the sanctified in Christ Jesus, copies of God's dear Son, will be able to stand complete in Him. These will be the very elect, and it will not be possible for them to be deceived and ensnared; for God will give His messengers a charge [message] for them ["present Truth"] and thus these "feet" of the Body of Christ shall be upheld that they stumble not.

"Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked," who reject the Truth or prove unfaithful to it. We know that we are already passing through the beginning of these troubles (the troubles upon the nominal church incident to its testing), and that we are escaping, while many on every hand are falling into error and infidelity. We escape, not by being taken away from the scene of trouble, but by being supported, strengthened and kept in the very midst of it all by the Word of the Lord, our shield and buckler.

"NO EVIL SHALL BEFALL THEE"

"Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation; there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling" --no evil of the kind referred to; and any other seeming evils shall, under Divine providence, work together for your good.--Rom. 8:28.

God has so arranged that only the truly consecrated will be kept from stumbling into error in this evil day. Every day we learn to appreciate more and more the Divine favor which has anointed the eyes of our understanding, and permitted us to see the internal strength and beauty of the Divine Word and Plan. If, then, we are thus, by Divine favor, made strong in the Lord, and enabled to "stand fast" while thousands are falling from their faith and steadfastness, let us "rejoice with fear" (reverence). Let him who feels strong and well supported "be not high-minded," but "take heed lest he fall." Humility and zeal for the Lord are the terms upon which we received the great blessing, and are also the terms upon which we may retain it to the end--until our "change" comes and establishes in glory what grace began in our weakness.

"For He shall give His angels charge concerning thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." That is, God will raise up some faithful pastors and teachers who will "watch for your souls as they that must give account." True, there shall arise false teachers, perverting the Word of the Lord, and seeking by cunning sophistries to subvert your souls; but if in simplicity of heart the Lord's children require a "Thus saith the Lord" for every element of their faith, and carefully prove all things by the Word, they will be able readily to distinguish the true from the false. And having done so, the Apostle Paul (Heb. 10:35) counsels us to have confidence. The Lord, our Shepherd, will care for the true sheep.

The Apostle Paul assures us that the angels of God are ministering spirits sent forth to minister unto and serve those who shall be heirs of salvation, the saved ones of this Gospel Age--not only the overcomers of the "little flock," but also the overcomers of the "great multitude." Our Lord Jesus sets forth practically the same thought in His declaration, "Their angels do always behold [have access to] the face of My Father." (Matt. 18:10.) The Master's words seem to imply, at least, that one or more angels have charge over the consecrated ones, the "very elect." Nothing can by any means, therefore, harm these, except as the Heavenly Father sees that the earthly injury or disadvantage would prove profitable either to the individual New Creature or to the Lord's general cause. This is in full accord with His general assurance that all things shall work together for good to those that love Him. --Rom. 8:28.

Such a use of the heavenly messengers by no means invalidates the thought that the Lord's earthly children are frequently used of Him as ministers, servants, the one to the other. Indeed, we may be assured that the invisible messengers or servants, generally, if not always, are required to act through human instrumentalities--preferably through "the very elect." Of this kind of service done by the brethren, one for the other, we have illustrations in the Harvest work, for instance--supervised by our present Lord and His heavenly hosts, yet in the main [R4927 : page 438] carried on by the members of His Body still in the flesh.

THE HARVEST MESSAGE GOD'S KEEPING POWER

*"They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone"--"thee"--*all the members of the Body of Christ, individually and collectively, using all their strength to protect against any stumbling-stone of false doctrine, and especially that great fundamental Rock-Doctrine of the redemption through the precious blood of Christ; that "Rock of offense and stone of stumbling" to both the houses of nominal Israel. (Isa. 8:14.) "The feet" of the Body are its last members; the saints now living are members of "the feet of Him" (Christ), the ones who are now in danger of being stumbled, as the feet of the Jewish house of servants were in danger in the end, or harvest, of the Jewish Age.

How do such messengers *bear up the feet of Christ*? By helping them to a clear understanding of the Truth, and teaching and encouraging them by word and example how to be faithful to the Truth, and how to run so as to obtain the prize of our high-calling.

While doubtless the heavenly messengers are connected with this work, yet it is surely done through the Church in the flesh, as already intimated. The Lord in this present Harvest time has given His messengers, the leaders of His consecrated people, a "charge," a message, a word of warning, counsel, advice--an opening of the Word of Truth, an enlightening of their understanding-- that they should bear up all the members of "the feet" class, all of "the very elect" in this time of serious trial, testing and stumbling, lest at any time any of this class should stumble through the peculiar trials of

the present time. How manifestly this is fulfilled! The Harvest message in its various features, bearing on every phase of Truth now due, and every phase of error now brought forward, is God's keeping power by which, according to His guarantee, we know that nothing shall by any means hurt "the feet" members of the Body of Christ.

It is for us to rejoice in these blessings and favors of the Lord and to increase our faith; and we remember that even before the "House of Sons" was organized the Lord had power and exercised it in the "House of Servants" in a way that illustrates to us the abundance of that power.

Satan would like to have us walk by sight, not by faith; he would like to have us continually tempting God, and demanding some ocular demonstration of His favor and protection, instead of accepting the testimony of His Word, and relying thereupon implicitly, in faith. In the light of the unfolding of the Scriptures we see that Satan, probably unwittingly, quoted this passage of Scripture wholly out of its proper meaning and interpretation, a passage which referred, not to the literal feet of Jesus and to literal stones and to literal angels, but to the symbolic feet-members of the Body of Christ today, and to the stones of stumbling, doctrinal and otherwise, which are now permitted in the path of the faithful, and to the angels, or ministers, of Divine Truth, who in the present Harvest time would be commissioned to bear up "the feet" members with such counsels, admonitions and expositions of Scripture as would be necessary for them.

"Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder; the young lion and the dragon thou shalt trample under feet." Thus borne up in the hands of the Lord's faithful messengers and guarded by their vigilant watchfulness, and under the constant protection of the Most High, God's trusting, faithful children shall triumph over every device of Satan either to overpower or to beguile them--whether he goes about like a roaring lion, or whether, serpent-like, he stealthily lurks about to insert his venomous poison.

"Because he hath set his love upon Me, therefore will I deliver him; I will set him on high, because he hath known [appreciated] My name." On account of the love and loyalty of each individual composing "the feet" class, the heavenly Father will deliver him from the pestilences, etc., and will exalt him to joint-heirship with Christ, make him a member of the "Royal Priesthood" and a partaker of the divine nature.

"He shall call upon Me and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him, and show him My salvation" --He will make him understand His Plan. As individuals they are known unto the Lord, who judges not merely by the sight of the eye and the hearing of the ear, but who discerns and judges the thoughts and intents of the heart. And, however widely they may be scattered, whether standing alone as "wheat" in the midst of tares, or in company with others, God's eye is always upon them. Dwelling in the secret place of the Most High (sanctified, wholly set apart unto God), they shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty, while the judgments of the Lord are experienced by the great religious systems that bear His name in unfaithfulness. They have no share in the judgment of Great Babylon, but are previously enlightened and called out of her.

Praise the Lord for such assurances of His loving care! *"Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, praise His holy name!"*

FEEDING ON THE WORDS OF GOD

“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” --Matt. 4:4.

WE READ that these words were a part of our Lord's answer to Satan when the Adversary exhorted Him to command the stones to be turned into bread, in order to satisfy His hunger, after fasting forty days in the wilderness. The Lord knew, however, that it would be unlawful for Him thus to use the superhuman power which came to Him as a result of His consecration to the Father's service. That power was not to be used for His flesh. Hence our Lord refused to use His superhuman powers for the gratification of the flesh, even though He hungered. Then Satan suggested, How do you expect to live if you do not exercise your power to live? Our Lord's answer, as we see, was that man shall not live by bread, merely, but by every word, every promise that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Our hope of eternal life, therefore, rests upon that obedience to God which would entitle us to eternal life, according to His arrangement. If our Lord had gratified the flesh He might have satisfied His hunger, but He would have violated His covenant of obedience to God. Whoever would have eternal life must seek to be obedient to God, to all that God has commanded, all to which He has directed the individual. Of course, He might have one command for the angels, another for man, and a third for the Church. But since we find that we are not able to obey perfectly every command of God, we cannot hope for eternal life by perfect obedience to the letter of the Word of God. Even

though God has accepted us as His children, we can hope for life only by having the *spirit* of obedience to His Word.

One of the lessons to be learned in the School of Christ is that a "man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth"--food and raiment, etc.-- but that his life, in the fullest, highest, grandest sense, is dependent upon his complete submission to the Divine will. Careful attention to every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God, to every admonition, every encouragement, every promise, is necessary to the development of those whom God is now calling to eternal life as joint-heirs with His Son in the Kingdom. Let us, then, more and more, as the disciples of the Lord Jesus, keep in memory the words of the text, and act upon them.

LIVE BY EVERY WORD FROM THE MOUTH OF GOD

But how is it possible for us to live by the words that proceed out of the mouth of God? What did Jesus mean? How can God's words give life?

He meant that all hope of attaining eternal life depends upon God--upon the Divine Plan and its promises. Looking into these promises we can see distinctly that the Divine Plan, dating from before the foundation of the world, is that all of God's creatures, created in His likeness and abiding in faith, love and obedience in harmony with Him, shall have life everlasting. This is God's Word upon the subject, namely, that obedience is the condition of life everlasting. This is, undoubtedly, what our Lord had in mind in the words of our text. He may also have had the thought that He had come into the world upon a special mission, to do the Father's will, and that His understanding from the beginning was that His perfect obedience to the Divine will would insure Him glory, honor and immortality with the Father, eventually; but that any disobedience would mean the forfeiture of Divine favor and would involve the sentence of disobedience --*death*.

Our Lord's prompt decision, therefore, was that to disobey the Father's will and thus to secure bread for the sustenance of His body, would be a great mistake; that food thus secured could sustain life for but a little while; that His better plan would be to trust in the Word of God, the *Divine promise*, that those who love and serve and obey Him shall ultimately come off conquerors and more, and have eternal life with God. And this, our Master's conclusion, is full of instruction for us who are His disciples, seeking to walk in His footsteps.

DISCIPLINE AN EVIDENCE OF SONSHIP

One "word of God" which is very comforting to His children is His assurance of Parental care and discipline. "If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not?" (Heb. 12:7.) In this statement the word "chastening" should not be understood as meaning disapproval on the part of our Father, and sin on the part of the individual, but rather instruction. We are guided in the matter by remembering that although our Lord was a Son in whom there was no sin, yet He received, in the Father's providence, as a part of the "cup" poured for Him, various trials, disciplines. All of these experiences were very profitable, showing that the Father loved Him; that the Father had something which He was desirous that our Lord should do that He would not have been qualified to perform without some of these educational instructions and experiences.

Some disciplines, some chastisements, come as a result of our own mistakes and the natural consequences flowing from those mistakes and the apologies and heartaches which may necessarily follow them. God could save us from these experiences and so seclude and shelter our lives that we

would not have anything to tempt us. But such is not His proposition. He wishes us to have these experiences that we may be guided in the right way and learn of our own weaknesses.

If we did not come into contact with various testing experiences we should not know where we are weak. Thus we learn where we can strengthen our characters and how we can be thoroughly developed as New Creatures. The Scriptures speak of our Lord Jesus as "enduring such contradiction of sinners against Himself." (Heb. 12:3.) Our trials, or disciplines, in meeting every opposition that can come to us, should bring more or less of correction in righteousness. Even if this would not mean outward stripes, we, in any event, would have our mental regrets as New Creatures, and thus we would get a form of correction, or discipline. Additionally, the Lord causes His children to come into peculiar trials as an example either to the brethren or to the world. In many of these, whatever the cause, we may understand them to be also corrections or instructions in righteousness.

TRIAL--DISCIPLINE--NECESSARY TO THE PERFECTING OF OUR CHARACTERS

Character cannot be developed wholly without trial. It is like a plant. At first it is very tender; it needs an abundance of the sunshine of God's love, frequent watering with the showers of His grace, much cultivating with the applied knowledge of His character as a good foundation for faith and inspiration to obedience. Then, when thus far developed under these favorable conditions, it is ready for the pruning hand of discipline, and is also able to endure some hardness. Little by little, as strength of character is developed, the tests applied to it serve only to develop more strength, beauty and grace, until it is finally developed, perfected, fixed, established, through suffering.

This great work of developing and training character is necessarily a slow and tedious one, and not infrequently it is a painful process. But the Apostle plainly tells us that such things are necessary for the development of steadfast and enduring character. Consider how your own experience has verified this, you who have been for some time under the Lord's special care and leading. How much richer you are for all the lessons of experience, and for the patience and other spirit-fruits that experiences have developed in you!

Although, like the Apostle, you can say that "No chastening for the present seemeth joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward, it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." (Heb. 12:11.) The lessons of experience and discipline have made you stronger. They have increased your faith and drawn you into closer communion and fellowship with the Lord. They have made you feel better acquainted with Him and enabled you to realize more and more His personal interest in you and His love and care for you. And this in turn has awakened a deeper sense of gratitude and an increasing zeal to manifest that gratitude to Him. This also deepens the sense of fellowship with God, and gives confidence to the hope of final and full acceptance with Him as a son and heir, made worthy through Christ.

OBEDIENCE THE TEST

Another helpful "word of God" is found in I John 2:5: "Whoso keepeth His Word, in him verily is the love of God perfected." Here we have a test by which to determine our development as a New Creature. Only those who have received the Word of God can keep it, can retain it and comply with its requirements. The text suggests that it is a difficult matter to keep the Word of God. On all sides we hear various reasons why we should retain, hold fast the word, the flesh, rather than that which the Lord's Word holds out to us. There are many allurements to entice us from the "narrow way." Hence these who hold fast to the Word of God are "overcomers."

The Scriptures intimate that to live righteously and godly in this present time will cost us our very lives. "Whosoever will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (2 Tim. 3:12.) Under present conditions faithfulness means *faithfulness* even unto death. The intimation is that unless we have the love of God we will not undertake to be obedient to His Word; that otherwise we can neither retain the Word of God nor be in accord with it, serving it even unto death.

Our Lord Jesus illustrated the perfection of obedience to the Word of God when He said, "I come to do Thy will, O God!" Everything written in the Book; everything that was God's will, He was glad to do at any cost. Our Lord Jesus could not have reached this degree of submission to the Divine will unless He had had love for the Father. And so with us. Unless we have love for God and the principles of righteousness we cannot continue in this way.

Consequently, only those who so love God that they would surrender life to do His will, are properly keeping His Word. We may say that this condition is reached when we first make consecration, for the heart has given up its will and surrendered itself fully to the Lord--"Not my will, but Thine, be done." All those who are complying with the conditions of self-sacrifice have reached the mark of perfect love. Of course, there is another sense of perfecting which we shall attain in the resurrection. But only those who will keep God's Word by faithfulness even unto death will secure the prize and become partakers of the divine nature.

The *test* is OBEDIENCE. In proportion as we keep the Lord's Word, in like proportion the love of God is perfected in us; for if we have received the mind of Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, the effect will be to cause us both to will and to do His good pleasure to the extent of our ability. And this ability should be continually on the increase year by year. Although we may not hope to be perfected until we shall be "*changed*" and be granted our new resurrection bodies, nevertheless, we may keep so closely in touch with the Lord in the spirit of our minds that we may have continual fellowship with Him; and by confessing our faults daily and seeking his forgiveness we may continue to the end of our journey clean from sin, even though we must still acknowledge the infirmities of the flesh, that in our flesh dwelleth no perfection.

THE WORK OF RESURRECTION

A further word from the mouth of God assures us that He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust--weak, imperfect, dying; and that it is not His purpose that we shall continue always to be in conflict with ourselves--perfect will against imperfect body; but that He has provided that, in the resurrection, we shall have new, perfect bodies, in full accord with our new minds.

He assures us that He is able and willing to do all this and that He purposes to give to His elect, bodies of a much higher order than the human--that He will give us spirit bodies--and that of the *highest rank*. We shall have part in the First Resurrection, and will thenceforth be able to do the Father's will perfectly in every respect, as we now show ourselves desirous of doing His will so far as we are able. O gracious provisions! O wonderful words of compassion, inspiring us to wondrous hopes of eternal life and glory! It will be to such as thus overcome in spirit, in faith (I John 5:4), that the Lord will give the final Word of His mouth--"Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joys of thy Lord!"

"A little while; now He has come;
The hour draws on apace--
The blessed hour, the glorious morn,

When we shall see His face.
How light our trials then will seem!
How short our pilgrim way!
The life of earth a fitful dream,
Dispelled by dawning day!"

Reprint 4896

THE CHURCH'S ORDINATION

--MATTHEW 28:16-20; LUKE 24:36-49.--

“Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”--Matthew 28:20.

TODAY'S Study relates to the commission, or authorization of service, which Jesus appointed to His Church in His discourses during the forty days following His resurrection. First we have the Master's words on the evening after His journey with two of His disciples to the village of Emmaus, near Jerusalem. Then we have a part of the general commission which Jesus gave just before He parted from His disciples and was received up into Heaven.

The lessons of that journey to Emmaus and of subsequent appearances must have been very valuable to all the followers of Christ at that time. He said, "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you [while I was yet the Man Christ Jesus, before My resurrection change], how all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and in the Prophets and in the Psalms concerning Me. Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

The Evangelist sums up in few words conversation and Scriptural exposition which probably occupied at least an hour. We are not told what these expositions were which opened their eyes of

understanding, but we can surmise. He probably explained to them the significance of the Passover lamb that was killed at that time of the year, and showed that He was the Antitype of that lamb. He probably explained to them the true significance of the Passover--that in the type the first-born of Israel were passed over, and subsequently represented by the tribe of Levi, including the priests; and that the antitype of these first-borns is the Church of the First-borns, whose names are written in Heaven--all the saintly followers of Jesus who will be of the Royal Priesthood, and the antitypical Levites, their servants, in the work of the world's uplift during Messiah's Kingdom.

The Master doubtless also gave them some suggestions respecting the antitypical Atonement Day and "the better sacrifices"--that He Himself began "the better sacrifices," which would be continued in His disciples; and that, the sacrifices being finished, the Atonement blessings would go forth from the High Priest to all the earth, during Messiah's Kingdom of a thousand years.

POWER FROM ON HIGH PROMISED

Whatever features of the great Plan the Master unfolded, we have the assurance that His auditors were deeply interested. Their sadness disappeared. Their first thoughts were merely that they had lost their blessed Master, His counsels, His instructions; but now, through this enlightenment, their hearts burned with a fresh inspiration of knowledge. They saw heights, depths, lengths and breadths that they had never dreamed of in God's Plan. They saw that the death of Jesus was necessary for the carrying out of all the hopes and prospects inspired by the promises of God. They saw that they themselves were privileged also, not only to suffer with Him, but also to be glorified.

The concluding part of the Master's Message on that occasion was, "Behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you." The Father had promised in various types that the Church, the Bride of Christ, would receive the Holy Spirit from Jesus, their Head. It was typified, for instance, in the holy oil which, poured upon the head of Aaron, typifying Jesus, flowed down upon the body of Aaron, typifying the anointing of the Church.

This promise of the Divine acceptance of the Church was all-important. Without it the disciples would have no commission, and could not be ambassadors for God. Jesus indeed had sent out The Twelve, and afterwards the Seventy; but they were His personal representatives, and He had given them of His own spirit, His own power, by which they worked miracles, cast out devils, etc. But they had never been recognized of the Father. As we read, "The Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." (John 7:39.) They must wait for this begetting and anointing of the Holy Spirit. It alone could imbue or qualify them for the Divine service --to be God's ambassadors and representatives.

"LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS"

St. Matthew's account of our Lord's benediction upon His disciples and His commissioning of them to declare His Message, is full of interest to us. By His appointment the Eleven met Him in a mountain in Galilee. For a few moments only He appeared to them. They worshiped, some fully convinced, others wavering. It was for the convincing of such waverers that Jesus remained during the forty days. And we are sure that He fully accomplished His work of convincing the Eleven; for they were all of one heart and one mind when they waited in the upper room for the Pentecostal blessing.

Jesus came near to them, and declared that full authority had been given unto Him in respect to both Heavenly things and earthly things. Unless they could realize this, it would be impossible for them properly to represent Him before the world. He had not this power and authority previously, during His earthly ministry. He was then in process of trial as respects His faithful loyalty even unto death, even unto the death of the cross. But after He had demonstrated His loyalty, the Father had raised Him from the dead to a glorious fulness of power. He was thus declared to be the Son of God with power by His resurrection from the dead. He wished His disciples to know that He was no longer under the human limitations or under the limitations of the Death Covenant. That work He had finished. He had entered into the blessing, the reward. He had experienced His change and now had all power, not only in respect to earthly things, but also in respect to Heavenly things.

Prophecy had declared that unto Him all would bow, both those in Heaven and those on earth. He had entered into the condition where this prophecy would soon begin to be fulfilled. He had ascended up on High, where all the angels worshiped, gave heed to Him as the Father's exalted One. Not yet is the latter part of the promise fulfilled--that all on earth should bow to Him. The time for such a recognition will be during His Messianic Kingdom of a thousand years. As now, all who come to a true knowledge of Jesus as the Son of God gladly bow their knee to Him as the Father's Representative, so gladly the world will come to recognize the Only Begotten and render obedience to Him.

Eventually every knee shall bow and every tongue confess; for, according to the Divine arrangement all who fail to appreciate the glorified Son of God at that time will be destroyed--counted unworthy of any further blessings and favor of God, who has bestowed upon Christ all the blessings which He designs for the fallen race.

“GO YE THEREFORE, AND TEACH”

Here is the commission. Primarily it belonged to the eleven Apostles, but subsequently it included St. Paul, who took the place of Judas and who was "not one whit behind the very chiefest of the Apostles." (2 Corinthians 11:5.) The Apostles, and they alone, are authorized as mouthpieces of the Lord Jesus Christ and His Church to the world. All that has been told us of Apostolic Bishops being successors of The Twelve is false, unscriptural. They had no successors; they are with us yet. The Master's Message through them is given us in the New Testament, of which one of them wrote, "The Word of God is sufficient, that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished." (2 Timothy 3:16, 17.) To the Apostles was given the great work of inaugurating the Church. They were endued with the power at Pentecost.

But while Jesus appointed especially the Twelve Apostles to be His mouthpieces to the Church, and declared that whatsoever they would bind on earth we might know was bound in Heaven, and that whatsoever they would declare was not bound on earth was not bound in the sight of Heaven, nevertheless the Lord arranged that each member of the Church should be His representative, and that each in proportion to his opportunity and ability might have a share in proclaiming the Gospel Message. Whoever receives the Spirit of begetting, the anointing, is included in the statement of Isa. 61:1-3 as a member of the Body of Christ, under the anointed Head, Jesus.

Thus we read, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me; because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath appointed Me to bind up the broken-hearted," etc. Everyone who receives the Holy Spirit is thus ordained, or authorized, to preach, according to his or her opportunity or limitation of circumstances or conditions. One limitation of the Apostle is that the sisters are not to teach in public. (1 Tim. 2:12.) Nevertheless there are plenty of opportunities for all.

Evidently, therefore, a great mistake has been made in the arrangement of a clergy class, who declare themselves to be the only ones who are ordained, or authorized, to preach or to teach God's Message. Jesus and the Apostles knew nothing of a clergy class or of a laity class. On the contrary, our Lord declared, "All ye are brethren; and One is your Master, even Christ." And the Master and His twelve Apostles especially forbade anything approaching a lordship amongst His followers, anything like a clerical class.

THE CHURCH'S COMMISSION

The Message given is, "Go ye, therefore, and make disciples from all nations." The commission is not to make the nations disciples, but, as elsewhere expressed, to gather out of all nations those willing to be disciples of Christ, whether rich or poor, learned or ignorant, noble or base. A disciple of Christ is a follower, one who learns, one who copies. Jesus defined this discipleship, saying, "If any man will come after Me [be My disciple], let him deny himself [set himself aside, ignore himself, his talent, his will, his wealth, his everything--discipleship first], and let him take up his cross and follow Me."

The intimation is that all true followers of Christ, all true disciples, will find the path in which the Lord will lead a difficult one, in which their own wills must be continually crossed, opposed--a way in which they will continually have difficulty according to the flesh. However, the promise is that eventually, "Where I am [in Heaven or in Kingdom glory], there shall My disciple be."

While the Church of Christ has properly viewed water immersion as a symbol of death to the world, death to self, and of rising to newness of life as members of Christ, the Body of Christ, nevertheless the water baptism is only a picture of the true. So here it is stated that our commission is not water baptism, but baptism into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. "Into the name of" signifies into accord with, into fellowship with. All of Christ's disciples are to recognize the Father's name as standing for righteousness; and they are to become dead to every other principle than that which His name represents, and to be thoroughly immersed into that name of righteousness, justice, truth.

Ignoring all other names, such as Lutherans or Wesleyans or Calvinists, or State Church names, such as Roman Catholics or Anglican Catholics or Greek Catholics, these are to be thoroughly immersed into the name of Christ and to recognize His name and to be His members, His Body, His Church. Furthermore, they are to be immersed into the name of, the recognition of, the Holy Spirit--their own spirit, their own wills being dead. Their own aims, hopes and prospects are to be ignored. God's holy will, God's mind, God's holy purpose, are to be their will and purpose.

Thus we see our commission as respects all people of all nations who have an ear to hear our Message. We are to make them disciples and to immerse them into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. We are to teach them to observe all things whatsoever Jesus commands. This is the extent of our authority. We are not to organize human systems and to call them kingdoms, churches, or other names. We are merely to prepare the followers of Jesus, co-operating with God, who will work in them to will and to do His good pleasure.

“UNTO THE END OF THE WORLD”

“And lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” His words have been understood to signify that the world is to come to an end; whereas what the Master really said, according to the Greek, is that He would be with His people, even to the end of the Age-- down to the time when this Gospel Age will have accomplished its Divinely purposed mission of gathering out a sufficient number of disciples of Christ to complete the Divine purpose--until the Gospel Message shall have accomplished the sanctification through obedience to the Truth of a proper number to complete the Bride of Christ in glory, the Royal Priesthood. Then the end of the Age will come. Then will come the Master Himself, to gather His Elect, to glorify them with Himself, to establish His Kingdom, to bless the world of mankind--the non-elect.

Reprint 5587

EVIDENCES OF THE ANOINTING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

“Christ in you, the hope of glory.”--Colossians 1:27.

THE SCRIPTURES frequently speak of the Church as being "in Christ," giving the thought of membership in His Body. (Romans 12:4,5; I Corinthians 12:12-27; 2 Corinthians 5:17.) Our Lord Himself used the figure of a vine and its branches to convey the same thought. He spoke of Himself as the Vine, and of the Church as the branches in the Vine, partaking of nourishment therefrom. (John 15:1, 2.) It is not this thought, however, that is expressed by the Apostle's words, "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

The word *Christ* signifies *anointed*. All who will be members of the Royal Priesthood will be anointed--not separately, but collectively. This was pictured during the Jewish Age by the installation into office of both the kings and the high priests of Israel. According to the Law, every king and every high priest must be anointed, else he could not serve. The oil which was used in this ceremony was of a peculiar kind, which might not be used for any other purpose.--Exodus 30:22,23.

The anointing which our Lord and the members of His mystical Body have received is different from anything else in the whole world. It is the anointing of the Holy Spirit, which is

variously spoken of as the spirit of holiness, the spirit of a sound mind, the spirit of the Truth, and the Spirit of God. It is not the Truth, but the spirit of the Truth, it is not the Word of God, although it is in harmony with the Word; it is not holiness, yet it is in full accord with holiness. It is the spirit, the disposition, which is associated with a sound mind, with holiness, with Truth and with the Word of God.

As the anointing of kings and priests in Israel was the Divine evidence that they were accepted to office, so was it with our Lord Jesus. St. Peter tells us that "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power." (Acts 10:38.) Our Lord was set apart for a very high office. In harmony with the Divine arrangement, He is to be the great antitypical King and Priest--"after the order of Melchizedek."

During the Gospel Age, God has been setting apart those who are to be members of the Body of Christ. These are invited to be kings and priests unto our God--a Royal Priesthood. Consequently, when one is received into this Body, under the Headship of Christ, he comes under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. This unction is from the Father in that He alone can give the recognition. It is from the Son in that we can come to the Father only through Him.

This is well illustrated by the consecration of the Jewish high priest. The holy oil was poured upon Aaron's head, typifying the anointing of our Lord at the time of His consecration. The oil then ran down to the very skirts of Aaron's garments, thus typifying the anointing of the Body of Christ, which is the Church. This descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Church was manifested at Pentecost.

DISTINCTION BETWEEN ANOINTING AND BEGETTING

The anointing of the Holy Spirit is slightly different from the begetting of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit which came upon Jesus at Jordan was both the begetting and the anointing power of God. Our Lord was The Anointed from the moment at which He was begotten.

So with the Church at Pentecost. They were waiting for acceptance of God. Our Lord had appeared in the presence of God as their Advocate, in order that their sacrifices might be acceptable. When the Father recognized their acceptance by shedding forth the Holy Spirit --when there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and "sat upon each one of them" (Acts 2:3, R.V.) - -that recognition was both their begetting and their anointing. The former--the begetting--represents the matter from the individual standpoint, and the latter-- the anointing--from the collective. We are begotten individually, but we were anointed collectively.

If we should consider the anointing and the begetting as two different steps of progress, we should be obliged to say that the begetting takes place first, and that the begotten one is anointed, or recognized as an heir of God. But this giving the one a priority over the other is not necessary to the thought. These seem to be two pictures, which represent the matter from two different standpoints. We are not individually anointed, nor are we collectively begotten.

This Spirit which we receive from God abides in us. Whoever loses the Spirit loses the light, and passes into the death condition. So the Apostle urges, "Grieve not the Spirit." If we cease to be in the Body of Christ, we cease to be anointed. If we lose the spirit of our begetting, we shall die. The begetting represents the beginning of our experience, and the resurrection the completion. Each is individually begotten and born of the Spirit.

In the picture of anointing the whole Body is anointed. There will be no need for a repetition of the ceremony. At the beginning of the Gospel Age, the one Body was anointed, and all who will be members of that Body come under that one anointing, and all these will share in His resurrection--the First Resurrection--the Chief Resurrection.

THE ANOINTING NOT THE MIND OF CHRIST

Not only was our Lord begotten to the new nature, anointed of the Holy Spirit, but each member of the Body must be similarly begotten, for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God." If we have received this anointing, we are eligible to all that God has promised to The Christ--primarily to the Head, and also to the members of His Body. As God foreknew the great Shepherd of the sheep, the Redeemer, He also foreknew this class.

Long before our Lord came into the world, the Father had planned that there should be an Anointed Company, the Head of which should be our Lord, and the Body of which should be the Church. (Ephesians 1:3, 4, 22, 23.) Jesus was to have the first place in the Christ Company, and associated with Him would be those who would have His Spirit, His will, who had made a full consecration of their lives to do God's will faithfully, even unto death.

For those who have this spirit of consecration, and have presented themselves in sacrifice, our Lord stands as the Advocate before the Father, to make good for them, to cover their blemishes and imperfections. Our Lord's work is not that of anointing, but of making it possible for us to be received by the Father. The anointing is of the Father, but *by* the Son. St. Peter says that Jesus, having received the Spirit of the Father, shed it forth.--Acts 2:33.

As long as we have this Spirit of God, it is an evidence to us that we are children of God. So long as we possess it, we maintain this relationship of sons. (Romans 8:9, 14.) Then the consequent thought is that if we are children of God we are "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ," "to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time."--Romans 8:17; I Peter 1:5.

The words of our text suggest the thought that whoever has the Spirit of God has the evidence that he is an heir of glory and will receive the reward, if found faithful. On one occasion the Apostle John said, "But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you." (I John 2:27.) Those who have this anointing have no need that any one teach them that fact, for they have the evidence of it, the proof of it in their own hearts and experiences. These evidences are more apparent to themselves than to anyone else.

The evidences that one has been anointed may not be understood except as we have the instructions of the Word of God. The Scriptures give us an outline of the witness to the possession of the Holy Spirit, so as to leave no room for doubt. They tell us that the Holy Spirit, the begetting power in us, leads us more and more to have the mind of Christ. We were not anointed with the *mind of Christ*, but with the *Holy Spirit*, and whoever has the Holy Spirit will find that he will *develop* the mind of Christ.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MIND OF CHRIST

The mind of Christ is the will to do the Father's will. Our Lord, when a child, said on one occasion to His mother, "How is it that ye sought Me? wist ye not that I must be about My Father's

business?" (Luke 2:49.) We recognize that we have a Heavenly Father, whose service is the highest possible service. Those who are His must have this spirit. The work of the New Creature must be the Heavenly work, otherwise he will have no proof that he has passed from the condemnation upon the human race and become a New Creature.

If we have the spirit of loyalty to God, to the Truth and to the brethren, we have the mind, the disposition of Christ. We also have indeed the weaknesses of the flesh, but it is our privilege to fight against these and to become more and more transformed in the spirit of our minds, to have our minds more centered in the Truth and in the service of the brethren.

If there is a decrease of zeal in this direction, then we may know that there is danger of going backward instead of forward. We hear of instances where the Lord's people have lost their first love and have become more or less cold. From our standpoint we may know when any have lost their first love. It is when they have allowed their minds to be led away to earthly things-- love of family, of home, of worldly possessions, etc., all of which war against the Heavenly things. We should seek our pleasures, not from earthly sources, but from the Heavenly source. Very frequently we find Christians who tell us that they had a blessed experience when first they knew the Lord, but that they do not now feel as near to Him as formerly. If we probe the matter, we nearly always find that they went into business, or married, or did something which has warred against the Holy Spirit. We are not speaking against those things, but "If ye know *these things*, happy are ye if ye do them"--the things that make for our peace.

OTHER EVIDENCES OF THE ANOINTING

In addition to having the mind of Christ, we have other evidences that we have been anointed. We find ourselves needing the spiritual food, and to satisfy our hunger, our Heavenly Father has provided us the knowledge of the Divine Plan, the knowledge of our Lord. Each new view gives us fresh inspiration. Then if we find some of the brethren spiritually hungry, how can we withhold from giving them the spiritual refreshment which we have? If one has earthly mercies and dispenses them, God may give him the privilege of opening blind eyes. If it is a blessing to open physically blinded eyes, how much greater a blessing is it to open the spiritually blinded eyes! We have the blessed privilege of helping some to get their eyes open to see spiritual things, and also of helping others who already see to understand more clearly.

If we love the Truth, we will serve the Truth. This service is sure to bring upon us the disapproval of the world, it will not bring us an earthly passport. The world will say that we are doing it for money or some selfish object, for they are sure to err, sure to fail to see the real purpose of the truly consecrated people of God. If we endure these things, we thereby prove ourselves to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

If devotion to the will of the Father brought upon our Lord shame, ignominy, we must not wonder that we are treated likewise. If the world called the Master of the House of Sons Beelzebub, they will assuredly call His followers some evil name. The willingness to receive all this as a part of our reasonable service is a further evidence that we have been anointed.

Probably the Lord's people find that they can very easily love some of the brethren, but that there are some others whom it is not so easy to love, for they do not seem to be lovable. However, we should reflect that if the Lord can receive and love these brethren, we should do the same, and that our love should help them out of their naturally mean traits of disposition. Thus we shall develop

love for all of the brethren--the rich and the poor, the educated and the uneducated--and desire to render them assistance as opportunity may offer.

The evidences that one has been anointed with the Holy Spirit are, increasing desire for spiritual things, desire to assist others to see and to grow in knowledge and Heavenly grace, persecution from the worldly-minded, and the development of the mind of Christ--the disposition which is loving, generous, forgiving toward others and which is reverential toward God and obedient to His will. Whoever finds, on self-examination, that he has these evidences in his own heart has the witness of the Spirit that he is a child of God.

THE HOPE OF GLORY

The word "glory" carries with it the thought of honor and dignity--sometimes also that of brightness, shining. The Scriptures speak of the Heavenly Father as having the excellent glory, that glory unto which none others can approach. Our Lord Jesus is said to have been received up into glory--honor and distinction. Of Adam it is said that he was "crowned with glory and honor," was put over the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air and the fish of the sea. (Psalm 8:5-8; Genesis 1:28.) In this connection the word "glory" seems to indicate that Adam was made in the image of his Creator.

Applying these same thoughts to ourselves, we find that as yet we have no glory. What blessing we have received is the possession of the Holy Spirit, the evidence of our adoption into the family of God. This, however, is merely the beginning of the glory which God has promised to those who are faithful--merely the earnest. To have the Holy Spirit in us is to have the anointing in us. If we allow the Holy Spirit to operate in us, and ourselves faithfully co-operate therewith, the end will be glorious.

Thus the anointing which we have received--the Spirit of Christ in us--is the hope or basis of the glory which we are expecting--a glory which is to be like that of our Redeemer--a glory which is above that of angels, principalities and powers--a glory which is next to that of the Lord. This anointing, this Spirit of Christ within us, is the earnest, or hope, or basis, of all that is coming. Hence we should heed the admonition of the Apostle that we quench not the anointing, this Holy Spirit of Christ. On the contrary, we are to cultivate it, develop it, give attention to it. If we should allow it to die, because of neglect of the help which God has supplied, if we should quench it by indulgence in sin, we should thereby demonstrate that we are unworthy of the blessing and fit only for the Second Death.

Reprint 5227

THE MINISTRY OF ANGELS

**“The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them.”--
Psalm 34:7.**

THERE is more or less difficulty associated with all attempts to think about the great Jehovah, His character and His power. The Scriptures seem to indicate that God has used various ways of manifesting His power to His people--to the Jews during the Jewish Age and to the Christian Church during the Gospel Age. We think it would not be an improper thought that the word angel may stand for any agency or power, whether animate or inanimate, that God would be pleased to use in connection with service. God could make the wind or the flaming fire His messenger. He could make the great Archangel or an inferior *angel* His messenger. He could use as His messenger whatever or whomsoever He might choose to invest with the requisite power; just as a representative of these United States, going to another country, would be recognized, regardless of his own personal ability or standing.

The details of how the Almighty has knowledge of our prayers, our thoughts, our words, our needs, are not furnished us in the Scriptures; and evidently it is not necessary, therefore, that we should understand these in every particular. We do not think that any finite mind could comprehend God. He is too great for our comprehension, far too mighty for us to understand fully all His powers,

His ability. Nevertheless we can apprehend some things respecting God, and are therefore invited in the Scriptures to study Him along the lines of His Revelation. To assume that God is in every place, in every niche of space throughout the Universe, seems to us an absurdity, not taught in the Bible; and to assume that God knows about every little tadpole, pollywog, microbe, or that He even takes knowledge of every act of each one of the human family, when there are millions upon millions of these, is beyond our understanding.

If we should limit God's attention to the Church, still there are thousands of these; and the capacity to understand and deal with ten or twenty thousand people in an instant seems to us to be an impossibility. Nor would such an arrangement be what we would expect God to have. Any human being who would attempt to deal with even a hundred people and to know everything going on would be thought to be very unwise. Rather he would have various agencies through which his will would be done by those hundred people by which he would know what was being done, and by which they would know his purpose respecting the work. His general knowledge of matters would not imply that he would be in every room in the house at one instant nor take notice of every person at the same instant.

In our present text, however, we are inclined to think that the word "angel" used by the Psalmist refers to spirit beings. Our reason for thinking so is that the revelations of the Lord in olden times previous to Pentecost were nearly all by spirit beings. These materialized and then dematerialized, vanishing from sight. In general the Scriptures seem to indicate that God's dealing with His people in those earlier times was through angels. As respects this Gospel Age, just closing, we have confidence that God has shown as great care in His dealings with Spiritual Israel as He did with Natural Israel; for Spiritual Israel comes nearer to Him as His House of Sons than did Natural Israel as a House of Servants. But God expects the House of Sons to walk by faith and not by sight, a much higher walk. Hence His manifestations to these are not such as appeal to the natural senses. They are, nevertheless, just as real.

THE EYES OF THE LORD

We read that "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him"; also, "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." But this does not give us the thought that God personally beholds every individual act of every person on earth, but that He takes cognizance of matters throughout the world by means of His power, His agencies. These "eyes" referred to are the Lord's influence, His power of *knowing*, whatever the means. Whether His power is exercised and His will executed through angels or through other forces and agencies, it makes no difference--no more than it would with us in carrying out our wishes. If we wished to know about certain matters in Philadelphia, there would be various methods by which we could learn. One effective method would be to telephone and get into direct communication with the individual, provided he is supplied with a telephone. Or through the telegraph we could send a message; or we could send a messenger directly to the party, by foot or by train or some other conveyance.

Now if mankind have these various ways of accomplishing their designs, we can appreciate our Heavenly Father more by thinking of Him as having full ability to come into communication with His children, and as having various agents of communication. God has means, no doubt, far superior to any of ours. He has not revealed the matter clearly to us except to tell us that He is informed respecting all that concerns us, as well as respecting all the affairs of the world. He does

tell us that angels are His ministers, and that these have a charge over His people. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" They do not minister in the sense of directly providing bread for us, nor in the sense of cooking our food, nor of building our houses--in none of these ways do they minister. How, then, do they serve us? We have no way of knowing positively how they serve except from the words of our Lord Jesus, that the angels of God's "little ones" always behold the face of the Father, always have access to Him.

The fact that these angels represent the Lord's "little ones" would imply that they would have immediate access to God and have immediate attention. What would be the use of the Father's receiving the angels into His presence unless there was something to be communicated? Our understanding is that God's knowledge of our affairs and interests is gained by methods with which we are not acquainted. We may assume, however, that the mediums used are largely the angelic messengers. The head of every business house and banking institution has certain laws, certain regulations, governing all the operations of the business. Just so God has certain laws governing nature. It is not necessary that we pray to God that the earth may turn around upon its axis and that tomorrow may come. We may be sure that the Almighty, the One who represents exact Justice and infinite Wisdom, has laws that govern His entire Universe; that the angels have insight into these laws; and that they are Jehovah's deputies, just as an earthly court might deputize some one to sit in chancery and to take information.

OUR LORD JESUS THE CHIEF MESSENGER

If in connection with our text we also have in mind our Lord's words before His ascension, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the Age," we shall understand that the Lord Jesus is the Chief Messenger, or Angel, of Jehovah. He has surely been the Chief Messenger to the Gospel Church. Our thought, then, is that through the angels and other agencies God is governing the world, and especially caring for His people, through our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Head of all the Divine spiritual powers and has charge of all Jehovah's affairs. We have been brought into the School of Christ. He is our Teacher. When we go to the Father in prayer, we do not ignore this Teacher, but we go in His name; and we are not to suppose that the Father would ignore Him. He would be the Father's Representative in dealing with us. But we are not to suppose that the Lord Jesus has every detail of the affairs of the world under His personal supervision; but rather that those angels report to Him whatever is necessary, and that thus there are certain principles operating. This seems to us to be the reasonable and logical arrangement of Divine operations. We are not insisting upon this for other minds, but merely saying that this appeals to our own mind.

In view of the fact that the Church has been put under the special guidance of the Lord Jesus, it would not be a far-fetched thought that Jehovah encampeth round about His people through Jesus, and that the angels are under His direction. If Satan is the chief of his band of angels, so our Lord would have angels under His control, and He would be their Prince. We read of what Alexander the Great accomplished, and of what Napoleon Bonaparte did, regardless of the fact that they had many thousands under them to carry out their will. So we think of all the spirit beings as under the direction and guidance of Jesus Christ. Into His hands God has committed all power in Heaven and on earth. All the angels of God were made subject to Him; and through these, under the control of our Lord, all the interests of God's people are supervised. This is our thought, and we like to think so.

DELIVERANCE IN VARIOUS WAYS

Our text proceeds to say that the angel that encamps around the people of the Lord "delivereth them." In olden times the Lord's children were sometimes delivered miraculously. Some

were delivered from prison; others were not. Some were delivered from the sword; others were not. We should accept the will of God, whatever it may be. But in order to be able to do this, for our spiritual good, our ultimate good, we must realize that the terms and conditions under which we accepted of Him were that we would give ourselves unreservedly into His hands. A proper fear, or reverence, for the Lord, would surely lead us to place ourselves fully in His keeping and under His guidance and control. Our experiences in life have shown us how unable we are to direct ourselves aright. The Lord will deliver each of us in the way that will bring us the largest measure of blessing.

In the days of the Apostles, St. Peter was delivered from prison by an angel of the Lord, who appeared to him as a man. This was in the interest, not only of the Apostle, but of the entire Church, showing them that the Lord was able to fully care for His people, giving them valuable lessons. And although these outward manifestations are not given to us of the present time, we have other blessings that more than compensate for these outward tokens that are not at present for the good of the Church. We are able to say with the Apostle that all things are working together for good to those who love God, to the called ones according to His purpose. We should be full of confidence in Him--that we are subjects of His choicest care at all times.

EACH SAINT HAS HIS MINISTERING ANGEL

While we may not be too positive in our interpretation on this subject, we understand that each one of the Lord's people, in proportion as he is one of God's true children, has a ministering spirit, a person, an angel, who has charge of his affairs. This angel makes his report to the Lord, whether monthly, weekly or hourly we do not know. If God sees this to be the wise, proper course, we have every confidence in His Wisdom. Whatever God has arranged is fully satisfactory to us in this matter, and we are sure that it is quite right and fully in harmony with the Divine character.

We think that this principle is illustrated in the Book of the Prophet Daniel. Daniel had been praying and after some little time his prayer was answered. The angel Gabriel, who was the Lord's messenger to Daniel, explained to him certain things. At the beginning of his supplications the Lord had purposed to send him an answer. Gabriel had been sent especially to inform him, but had been detained by certain other duties. The fact of his detention should not give us the thought that Daniel or any of the Lord's people would ever be neglected; but that while minor affairs of Daniel were under the guidance of some lower angel, there were important matters that were entrusted to Gabriel as the plenipotentiary, as it were, in regard to Daniel's interest and other matters. There was a delay, and Gabriel mentioned what the delay was; the prince of Persia had withstood him for twenty-one days.

We have heretofore pointed out that this Gospel Age has been different from the Jewish Age and preceding ages; that after the Gospel Dispensation was ushered in, outward demonstrations, such as the gifts of the Holy Spirit--the gift of healing, the gift of tongues, the interpretation of tongues, and discerning of spirits--and angelic visitations passed away; and that during the Gospel Age it has been God's will that the Spiritual House of Israel should walk by faith and not by sight, and that therefore it would be inappropriate after the Church was fully established to expect angels to appear, to manifest themselves outwardly.

But the angels of the Lord, nevertheless, have a charge more particularly over us of the Gospel Church than over any other of the Lord's people at any previous time in the world's history. The Lord is especially interested in Spiritual Israel. These angels, then, care for us, supervise our affairs, and are God's agencies or channels of communication to us as to His will; that is, communication in the sense of providences for us, causing *this* providence or the *other* providence.

HOLY ANGELS NOT MANIFEST TO OUR SENSES

We would not give the thought of the angels whispering into our ears. We think that the angels which now whisper in the ear are the same ones that give table-tippings, planchette communications, communications through the hand by writing, and various other communications to the ear and the eye of spirit-mediums; namely, evil spirits, fallen angels. Our understanding is that the holy angels do nothing of the kind. The Lord's people of the present Age are to find their instruction in His Word. There is no need of a book on Mormonism or Spiritism or New Thought or of clairvoyant or clairaudient power for the Lord's children. These are all snares of the Adversary and his demons.

The followers of Christ have the Bible and the invisible ministries of the holy angels to provide for their interests and to providentially guard and guide their affairs. This, to us, is very real and of great comfort. If we had the thought that God was doing all this personally, we would think that He had certainly forgotten us. But having the assurance of His Word that not a hair of our heads can fall to the ground without our Father's attention, our mind can rest in the fact that He accomplishes His purposes in Christ for His children through the ministrations of the holy angels.

Reprint 5633

SPIRITUAL VISION PROPORTIONATE TO HEART PURITY

“Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord.”--Isa. 52:11.

THE VESSELS of the Lord in the Tabernacle, and also in the Temple, were those vessels which were connected with the holy services --in the Court, in the Holy and the Most Holy. They consisted of hooks, censer, pans snuffers, cups, bowls--a variety of precious vessels. Those used in the Holy and the Most Holy were of gold, and those used in the Court were of copper.

The only ones who were allowed to handle these vessels at all were the consecrated class. The priests handled these in the Holy and the Most Holy in certain parts of the service, and in less important services they were covered up and borne in the hands of the Levites. So the vessels were handled only by the priests and the Levites. They required a cleansing before being used, and so were washed. Every bearer of these was required to be cleansed, typically washed free from sin.

In the antitype, our Lord is the great High Priest. The most faithful of His followers are those who are counted as the Priesthood in God's sight, on trial now to see whether they will constitute the Priests in glory. But all who have made consecration have the Robe of Christ's Righteousness. Whoever is not thus clothed upon by the righteousness of Christ, whoever is not thus justified in God's sight, can have neither part nor lot in handling the holy things--the precious truths.

The antitypical significance of the Prophet's exhortation in our text is that as in the type God required that everything should be clean, so we must be clean, pure of heart. "Blessed are the pure in heart." We have not perfection of flesh at the present time. When we have come into Christ, this imperfection of the flesh is said to be covered by a clean, white robe, representing the righteousness, the merit, of Christ. We must abide in Him. So long as we are in the flesh, we must have the Robe of Christ's Righteousness, in order to be clean.

Moreover, as it was required of the priests that they keep their robes clean, so we are exhorted to put away all filthiness of the flesh and to keep our robes clean. We are told that the Church will be without spot, and clean. (Eph. 5:26, 27.) And if we marvel how this could be, the Scriptures show us how it is. We were cleansed from sins of the past when the robe was given us, and this means also a provision on God's part for the continued cleansing of all the sins that are ours through weakness, through temptation, through unavoidable failures. But nothing in this provision indicates a cleansing from wilful sin.

PURITY OF HEART ESSENTIAL

We as New Creatures could not have wilful sin and still remain New Creatures; for the New Creature represents the mind of Christ, which is holy. Whatever weaknesses and imperfections there may be are attached to the flesh; and all these are covered by the Robe of Christ's Righteousness. We approach the Throne of Heavenly Grace and find grace to help in every time of need.

The context seems to make the text applicable in the present time. It was applicable in our Lord's day. He was holy, harmless, undefiled. It was applicable in the Apostles' day. All these must be clean. One, who was unclean, Judas, went to his own destruction. We believe that he went into the Second Death because he failed to use the opportunities that had been given to him.

As it was possible for Judas to fail, it is also possible for us to fail--to a greater or a less extent. As he was put out of the Divine service because of impurity of heart, love of money, etc., so we may be sure that all *not pure in heart* will be put out of this service. Just as none would be placed in this service if not pure in heart, so if any become impure they will be put out of it.

This is illustrated by the case of Ananias and Sapphira, who were put out of their affiliation with the Priesthood because of their love of money and their attempt to deceive. We remember this also in the case of Simon Magus and others mentioned in the New Testament. There might be some defiled of heart and other people not know of it. As the Scriptures intimate, there might be some highly esteemed among men, and not highly esteemed in God's sight. And there might be some not much esteemed among men, but highly esteemed of God. "The world knoweth us not, even as it knew Him not."-- I John 3:1.

PRESENT-DAY OPPONENTS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

No doubt there are those occupying pulpits who may esteem themselves as really the ministers of God, and be thus esteemed of others, who do not honor His Word. We are told that some of the ministers of Satan are thought to be ministers of God. (2 Cor. 11:13-15; Rev. 2:2; 3:9.) Some of them confess that they have no faith, no God at all. Some of them say that God is simply the god of nature. And others, again, say that they believe in God, but do not believe in the Scriptures.

We cannot suppose that these are bearing the vessels of the Lord's House in any sense of the word. Probably they never did bear these vessels. Or possibly they might have done so, and then

gone into error, gone out of the Court condition altogether, become enemies of the cross of Christ. (Philippians 3:18.) The Apostle speaks of some such who hold *down* (Greek *katecho*) the Truth in unrighteousness. In this text the word *hold* is used, not in the sense of *retaining* the Truth, but of *oppressing* it.-- Romans 1:18.

In another Epistle the Apostle speaks of some who preach Christ with contention (Phil. 1:15, 16.); but he is not in any way here referring to those bearing the vessels of the Lord's House. He seems to refer to those who have not known Christ, but who nevertheless were drawing attention to the fact that there is a Christ; that they had heard that there was such a claim put forth--that there is a Christ--just as there are some today who are more or less calling attention to certain features of the Truth. We would not think that these in any sense of the word are bearing the vessels of the Lord's House, but rather that they are opponents.

The passage from which our text is taken seems to indicate that those who bear the vessels of the Lord's House would have a special force and influence at the present time. This is shown in the statement, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him who bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" (Isaiah 52:7.) This seems to be applicable now in a sense that it never was previously; for the time for the Kingdom reign is practically here, the time for this Message of God is at hand. We believe that the Kingdom of God is in process of erection, and the gathering of the saints now in process of completion. With the completion of this class will come the inauguration of the Kingdom.

The context also shows that the time is near when the Message shall be preached to every creature. We believe that this is even now being fulfilled. Many are seeing the Restitution of all things and the glorious outcome of the Divine Plan. All who would be thus engaged in proclaiming the Message are exhorted to be clean.

THE PURE IN HEART THE TARGET OF THE ENEMY

The intimation of the Scriptures everywhere is that there are adverse influences at work in the world, tending to defile the people of God. They all have, of course, through the weaknesses of their own flesh, a sufficiency of temptation, we might say, to overcome. But the Scriptures say that this is not all they have to contend against. There are fallen angels that operate through occult influences and that are intent upon defiling especially the saintly class. But they are intent upon defiling all.

The purer the person, the more surely will he be the target. You notice that the speckled birds are more a mark for the huntsman than are the others. Thus all who are bearing the vessels of the Lord's House are special targets for the fiery darts of the Wicked One. So we must contend against the world, the flesh and the Adversary. Those who are in the right condition of heart, the pure in heart, earnest as the Lord's children, watch to keep their garments clean. Unless they watch, they will surely get their garments defiled. Satan is specially endeavoring to touch them; and we know that wherever he would touch there is defilement. Whoever the Wicked One touches receives a measure of injury. And there is a measure of culpability in the individual before he is touched.

The suggestion is that to whatever extent one becomes defiled, unclean, in that proportion he would not be fit to be entrusted with the vessels of the Lord's House. Perhaps all of God's people can say from experience that they know something of what this means. Doubtless it is the experience of

all of the Lord's children that in proportion as their hearts are clean their spiritual vision is clear. And in proportion as they depart from this purity, in that proportion they would have less and less opportunity for service--for bearing the vessels of the Truth.

Reprint 5258

FROM GLORY TO GLORY.

“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord.”--2 Cor. 3:18.

A FULL transformation into a likeness of character to our heavenly Father should be the constant effort of every true child of God. It is not enough that we gain a knowledge of his plan and a pleasurable realization of his mercy and grace toward our unworthy race, and that we joyfully tell the good news to others; and it is not enough that we exert ourselves with uncommon zeal to bless others with those good tidings of great joy for all people; for we may do all of these things and more, and yet, if we do not let our Heavenly Father's goodness and grace have its due effect upon our own hearts, our knowledge, and even our good works, will profit us but little.

Our main object, therefore, in studying God's Word and his character as therein revealed, should always be to bring our own hearts and minds into closer sympathy and likeness and co-operation with his. As the Apostle says (1 Thes. 4:3), "This is the will of God, even your sanctification"--our full setting apart, or consecration of mind and heart entirely to the Lord, that he may complete the good work of transforming us into his own glorious likeness, by the operations of his Spirit through his Word, and thus fit us for the enjoyment of his abounding grace in the ages to come.

In the above words of the Apostle we notice particularly that the statement is made of all the Church-- *we all* are being changed from glory to glory. And the inference is consequently a strong one, that those who are not being so changed are not of the class addressed. This is a solemn thought, and one that claims the most careful consideration of all the consecrated. The question with us is not, Have we made a full consecration of ourselves to the Lord? but, having made such consecration, are we, in accordance with that consecration, fully submitting ourselves to the transforming influences of the Spirit of God to be changed daily more and more fully to the glorious likeness of our God?

Like the Apostle, then, addressing all the consecrated and faithful, we also of today may say, We all are being changed from glory to glory under the molding, fashioning influences of the Spirit of God. We can see it in each other, thank God! and we glory in it. Yesterday the mallet of divine providence struck a blow upon that member of the body of Christ, and an unsightly excrescence of pride fell off, and he looks so much more beautiful today, because he did not resist the blow, but gracefully submitted to it. The day before, we saw another under the wearing, painful, polishing process, to which he patiently submitted, and oh, how he shines today! And from day to day we see each other studiously contemplating the divine pattern and striving to copy it; and how we can note the softening, refining and beautifying effect upon all such! So the Spirit of God is at work upon all who fully submit themselves to his will.

But while the mallet and chisel and the polishing sand of divine providence do a very necessary part of the transforming work, by way of relieving us of many of the old and stubborn infirmities of the flesh, which cannot be so promptly and so fully eradicated by the gentler influences of the Spirit, the Apostle points us to the specially appointed means for our transformation in the careful and constant contemplation of the glory of God as revealed in his Word, and also in his blessed Ambassador, Jesus Christ, saying, "We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory."

"With open face" would signify without any intervening veil of prejudice or fear or superstition, but with simplicity of heart and mind. So we behold the glory (the glorious character) of the Lord--not with actual vision, but as in a glass, as reflected in the mirror of his Word and as exemplified also in his living Word, Jesus Christ. And to aid us in this study we are promised the blessed influences of the Spirit of the Lord, who will guide us into all truth and show us things to come.

As we look into the mirror what a glorious vision we have of the divine justice, which we promptly recognize as the very foundation of God's throne (Psa. 97:2), as well as the foundation of all our present and future security. If we could not recognize the justice of God we could have no assurance that his gracious promises would ever be fulfilled; for we would say, Perhaps he will change his mind. But, on the contrary, we can say, He changeth not, and whatsoever he saith shall surely come to pass. See with what inflexible justice the sentence upon our sinful race has been executed! Generation after generation, for over sixty centuries, has witnessed it; and no power in heaven or earth could revoke that sentence until the claims of justice had been fully met by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Justice, says the Word of God, must be maintained inviolate at any cost. And herein we read not only our rightful condemnation as a race of sinners, but also our final, complete and glorious deliverance, because "God is just to forgive us our sins" (1 John 1:9), since the precious blood of Christ redeemed us from the curse of death.

And while we thus read justice in the character of God, and mark with what scrupulous care he regards and respects this principle in all his dealings with his creatures, we see how he would have us respect the same principle in all our dealings. Thus we are led to consider what is the exact

line of justice in this and that and the other transaction; and to remember also that this must be the underlying principle in all our conduct: or, in other words, that we must be just before we can be generous. This principle should, therefore, be very marked in the character of every Christian.

Next we mark the love and mercy of God. The death sentence upon our fallen race was a most merciful sentence. It was equivalent to saying: See, I have of my own free favor granted you life and all its blessings to be enjoyed forever on condition of its proper use; but now, since you have abused my favor, I take it away and you shall return to the dust from whence you came.

True, in the process of dying and of bringing forth a dying race to share the penalty, the mercy of God is not so manifest to the unthinking; but those who see the plan of God, discover in all this, not the decree of a merciless tyrant, but a merciful wisdom, but faintly disclosed in the promise that the seed of the woman shall in due time crush evil effectually--bruise the serpent's head--and deliver the entire race once generated in sin, by afterward regenerating all who will to life and all its blessed privileges. And in this mercy, in all its multiplied forms, we see the verification of the statement that "God is love." Thus we learn to be loving and merciful and kind both to the thankful and also to the unthankful.

We mark also our Heavenly Father's bountiful providence and his tender care for all his creatures; for even the sparrows are clothed and fed, and the unconscious lilies are arrayed in glory. Here we learn precious lessons of divine benevolence and grace. And thus, through all the catalogue of the moral and intellectual graces which go to make up a glorious character, we see in the mirror of the divine Word the model for our imitation; and in contemplation of all that is lovely, as embodied in him, and of all that is pure and holy and beautiful, we are changed little by little in the course of years to the same blessed likeness--from glory to glory. So be it: let the good work go on until every grace adorns the spotless robe of our imputed righteousness, received by faith in the blessed Son of God, whose earthly life was a perfect illustration of the Father's character, so that he could say--"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Let us, therefore, mark well the love of Christ, the gentleness, the patience, the faithfulness, the zeal, the personal integrity and the self-sacrificing spirit. Mark well, then imitate his example and shine in his likeness.

The Apostle adds (2 Cor. 4:7) that the fact that we thus hold this treasure of a transformed mind in these defective earthen vessels proves the excellency of the power of God, and not of us. And so, by constant yielding to the influences of the Spirit of God, we may show forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light. (1 Pet. 2:9.) Oh, let our efforts and prayers continually be that these poor earthen vessels may more and more show forth the praises of our God! Let them be clean in body and mind; let no evil communications proceed out of the mouth; and let no actions unworthy of the sons of God dishonor these living temples of the holy Spirit. True, on account of our deformities we may very imperfectly perform good works; but, by the grace of God, let us at least refrain from known evil.

Reprint 3655

THE ONENESS OF THE DIVINE FAMILY

“I pray for them . . . which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.”--Jno. 17:9, 10.

THERE is a touching pathos in this prayer of our Lord for his disciples as he was about to leave them, which draws us very near to his loving heart; especially when he adds, "Neither pray I for these alone [then present with him], but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one--I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me and hast loved them as thou hast loved me."-- Verses 20-23.

As we come to consider this beautiful expression of the Lord's sentiments with reference to the Church, we catch a glimpse of the glory of the blessed oneness of the divine family. It is a oneness of purpose, a oneness of confidence, a oneness of sympathy, a oneness of love a oneness of honor, and a oneness of mutual possession. This oneness our Lord described as already existing between himself and the Father, but so far as his disciples are concerned it was and still is only prospective; and its full accomplishment is the ideal goal toward which we are taught to aspire.

But let us study this exemplified oneness more closely that we may be enabled the more fully to enter into it. In the first place we notice that the one purpose which is common to both the Father and the Son is the Father's purpose, which was gradually revealed to the Son in due time and order, whose it also became by adoption. Since Jesus himself said, "Of that day and hour knoweth no man; no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" only (Mark 13:32), it is manifest that the revelation of that plan to him was a gradual one; and that he was led into the knowledge of its various features as they became due to be worked out through his instrumentality. Thus he was allowed to grow in knowledge; and thus, too, he was spared the sad spectacle of subsequent trouble which also lay along the pathway of the divine plan. Thus, while he joyfully worked out the grand plan of creation (John 1:3; Prov. 8:22-31), he probably knew nothing of God's purpose for the subsequent permission of evil and the necessity for the great work of redemption. Before he came to that test of faith in God his confidence in his almighty power, wisdom and love had been firmly established by the experiences of the past. For centuries he had seen his mighty works, marked his wondrous wisdom and experienced his tender love. Could he doubt him, then, when another feature of his plan made manifest the great work of redemption and restitution, and gave to him the privilege of undertaking this work also, for the joy that the Father set before him? No; doubtless he did not at first realize the depths of humiliation and sorrow through which he must pass; but, step by step, along the painful way of humiliation and suffering, his faith in the Father, founded upon his previous experimental knowledge, sustained him, as it is written--"By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many." --Isa. 53:11.

We next notice between the Father and the Son a beautiful oneness of confidence. The Son trusted the Father fully--at first, because it was easy and natural. Created in the likeness of God, trust in the Being who brought him into existence was spontaneous, and experience served but to develop and establish it. And the Father trusted the Son fully--first, because he recognized in him the inherent principles of righteousness and truth and filial loyalty which he himself had given him; and, as the course of time and experience developed and the more firmly established his Son in righteousness, his confidence in him became firmly established. And so strong was the Father's confidence in the subsequent fidelity of his beloved Son, that he did not hesitate to declare the results of his faithfulness thousands of years before he even began the work of redemption. He even declared all the special features of the work, by the mouth of his holy prophets at various intervals for four thousand years before he began the work. And still he declares that the work shall in due time be gloriously accomplished. How wonderful and how beautiful is this mutual confidence!

We further notice a oneness of sympathy between the Father and the Son. The Son glories in the Father's plan, saying, "I *delight* to do thy will, O my God." He delighted in it because he discovered therein the worthy features of his Father's glorious character; and though his faith may have been temporarily tested by the permission of evil, his knowledge of God's character and resources, and of the depth of his wisdom did not permit him to doubt, but held him still in loving trust in his infinite goodness and grace, and, therefore, in readiness to acquiesce fully in the measures proposed for the final triumph of righteousness and truth.

And the Father was likewise in loving sympathy with the Son, not permitting him to be tried above what he was able to bear; and not leaving him to bear any trial alone, but always granting him the light of his countenance and a joyful sense of admiring approval (John 11:42; Matt. 3:17), except when, for our sakes, he permitted him for a moment to feel that he was forsaken; when, in the anguish of his soul, he cried out at this unusual experience, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Now, mark the oneness of love manifested. In every act we have already noted we have seen it expressed. It was mutual love that delighted to manifest and express mutual confidence, that gloried in the same loving and benevolent purposes, that sympathized fully with each other's thoughts and feelings, and that delighted in the close and blessed relationship of Father and Son. The Father did not treat the Son as a servant and hide his purposes from him; but delighted to take him into his confidence in so far as his wisdom and prudence dictated--i.e., as the truth became meat in due season to him. And, in turn, the Son did not serve the Father as a hireling, but as a son with a common interest. The Father declared, "This is my beloved Son;" and the Son said, "I *delight* to do thy will."

How blessed the fellowship! It was a fellowship of joy and a fellowship of suffering--of joy in a common anticipation of the future glory; and of suffering in mutual participation of the preliminary trials to secure that end. The Son suffered in his humiliation and his dying agony; and the Father suffered in giving his only begotten Son--an intensity of suffering which the loving, yearning hearts of devoted parents can best imagine and appreciate.

There was further a recognized oneness of possessions clearly expressed by our Lord, who declared, "All things that the Father hath are mine." (John 16:15.) And the Apostle says, God hath appointed the Son the "heir of all things," and hath "set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come."--Heb. 1:1, 2; Eph. 1:20, 21.

And, lastly, we notice a oneness of honor. In honor each seems to prefer the other. The Father says: Let all men honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. (John 5:23.) God has made him the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person, and exalted him to his own right hand, to the chief seat of power in his kingdom, giving him all power in heaven and in earth.--Heb. 1:2, 3; Matt. 28:18.

In the work of creation he has set him forth in great prominence and glory, saying, "Without him was not anything made that was made." In the work of redemption and restitution God has set him forth so prominently that his name is the theme on every tongue, almost to the eclipse of the Father's own glory, who of necessity is himself greater than the Son (1 Cor. 15:27), and to whom the glory pre-eminently belongs, as the Son also declares, saying, "My Father is greater than I;" and again, "I can of mine own self do nothing;" "the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works."--John 5:30; 14:10, 28.

The Son's corresponding anxiety to glorify the Father is most marked in the instance when, realizing that he was approaching the dreadful hour of his dying agony he exclaimed, "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name"--even at this cost to me. (John 12:27,28.) Again we hear him say, "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee." (John 17:1.) And when the great work of redemption and restitution is accomplished, we see him delivering up the Kingdom to God, the Father, and subjecting himself to his further direction, that Jehovah himself may be universally recognized as all in all. (1 Cor. 15:24,28.) And we, like him, may surely trust that his purposes for the ages to follow will but the further express and emphasize the same lines of his glorious character-- his justice, his wisdom, his love and his power.

Glorious oneness! who could suggest an improvement to its wondrous beauty and completeness? But the wonder and joy increase when we learn that it is also our privilege to come into this same blessed oneness with God. What! we inquire--the very same oneness as above

described? Yes; undoubtedly it is our privilege to enter into the very same relationship and privileges and blessings. To this end consider the exceeding great and precious promises and see that it is ours to have the same oneness with God-- of purpose, of confidence, of sympathy, of love, of honor and of possession.

The same plan of God is presented to and adopted by us, and we also are invited to become coworkers with God in carrying it out (2 Cor. 6:1); and in so doing we are counted in with Christ Jesus as filling up the measure of the sufferings of the anointed body necessary to the accomplishment of that plan. Our heavenly Father also similarly manifests his confidence in us--in the loyalty of our hearts toward him and in the sincerity of our consecration to him--even though he recognizes our inherent weaknesses and our inability to carry out fully our own determinations. But, notwithstanding this, so great is his confidence in our sincerity and integrity of heart, that, on our profession of faith and consecration, he fully accepts us as his sons and heirs, supplementing our weaknesses and shortcomings with the all-sufficient merit of our Redeemer, in whom we humbly trust. And not only so, but as sons, honored and beloved, he makes known to us, also, his secret counsels, which others cannot know (Matt. 13:11), and invites us to confide in him as children, and to speak to him freely of all that concerns us, in full assurance of his loving interest, even in our smallest affairs. (Psa. 103:13, 14.) And then he commits a portion of his great work to us. He gives us certain talents, certain portions of his goods, and tells us to invest them for him according to our best judgment as to the profitableness of the results, not dictating all the minutiae of the management as to hireling servants, but merely submitting to us the general principles which should govern us. Thus, for instance, he gives us his plan as to the work in hand, with such general directions as, not to cast our pearls before swine; to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves; to give meat *in due season*; to do good to all men as we have opportunity, but especially to the household of faith; and to observe the times and seasons, and the character of the work in each--seed-sowing in the spring, and reaping in the harvest time; etc., etc. Thus with general directions he sends us forth--not like machines, to do a monotonous treadmill service, but as intelligent beings, to use our brains as well as our hands and feet. So he counsels us to "study" to show ourselves workmen approved, and to *consider* and *think*, and not to be "as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding, whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle." (Psa. 32:9.) Then, according to our zeal and faithfulness, not only in the use of our hands, but also of our brains, in the Lord's service, his confidence in us increases and we are entrusted with more and more of his goods and given a corresponding sense of our heavenly Father's approval. And the mutual confidence and fellowship of purpose and work, draw our hearts closer and closer to the heart of the Eternal, and the joyful realization of sonship and mutual interest and confidence and sympathy fills our hearts.

We are also assured of the same love from our heavenly Father which he exercises toward our Lord Jesus. The statement seems almost startling; but yet, hearken to our Lord's prayer--"I pray for them . . . that they may be one . . . that they may be made perfect in one . . . that the world may know that thou hast . . . loved them as thou hast loved me." (John 17:20-23.) In amazement we inquire, How can this be? Our Lord Jesus was always in perfect harmony with the Father; a son who gloriously reflected his likeness; but it has not been so with us: we were sinners and had nothing in us worthy of love. Yes, but we have been washed and cleansed, and, however imperfect our earthen vessels may still be, our hearts are perfect in his sight who is able to read the heart. And, as he sees us with a perfect heart--a perfect purpose and intention--striving to overcome the weaknesses and disabilities of our imperfect flesh, and with painful, yet determined, effort to do his will, and humbly trusting in the provisions which he has made for our redemption from the fall, God recognizes in us that which is worthy of his love. And so our Lord Jesus gives us clearly to understand that the Father loves us, even as he loved the Son.

And not only is this equality of the Father's love for us as for Christ Jesus thus declared, but it is also manifested; for we are called to be *joint-heirs* with his Son, and partakers of his glory; and even as all things are his, they are also said to be ours.--Rom. 8:17; 1 Cor. 3:21-23.

While such is the oneness between the heavenly Father and all his anointed sons, it is blessed also to mark the same oneness between Christ Jesus and his anointed brethren. The Lord Jesus does not selfishly grasp all the glory and seek to retain it for himself, but the rather with admiration he contemplates their acquired worthiness and says, They "are mine and I am glorified in them" (John 17:10); and he would have them all bound up together with himself in the Father's love. He would also have them with him, beholding and sharing the glory which the Father had given him from the foundation of the world--the glory of his mighty creative works, with all the other evidences of his Father's love.--John 17:22-24.

Thus all the divine family are bound together in one bond of love and fellowship and confidence and sympathy and harmony and common interest; and the honor and glory of one are the honor and glory of all. The Lord's prayer abounds with petitions for this oneness. Mark the expression (verse 21)—"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee" [thy spirit or disposition and purposes and aim being common to us all]. Hence, he would have us adopt the same Father's spirit, aim and purpose, and devote all our powers with zeal and faithfulness to the accomplishment of the Father's will. Amen, so let it be.

Reprint 3160

THE MINISTRY OF SORROW

"Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord!" "When He giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?"--Psalm 130:1; Job 34:29.

THE life of every human being has its lights and shadows, its heights of joy and its depths of sorrow. These make up a large part of the warp and the woof of experience; and the web of character which flows from the active loom of life, will be fine and beautiful or coarse and homely, according to the skill and carefulness with which the individual weaves into it the threads of experience. In every life, in the present reign of sin and evil the somber shades predominate; and to such an extent is this true that the Word of God aptly describes the human family in their present condition as a groaning creation. "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together until now," says the Apostle. The children of God are no exception to this universal rule; we also "groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, the deliverance of our Body"--our company, the Body of Christ.--Romans 8:22, 23.

But while we are waiting for our deliverance, the daily experiences of life have a most important mission to us, and the manner in which we receive them should be a matter of deepest concern; for according to the use we make of them, each day's prosperity or its adversity and trial

bear to us a blessing or a curse. Those experiences which we are accustomed to regard as prosperous often have in them subtle dangers. If wealth increases or friends multiply or a large measure of earthly joy comes to us, how almost imperceptibly the heart finds its satisfaction in the things of earth! But when the keen edge of sorrow and disappointment is felt, when riches or health fail, when friends forsake, and enemies take up a reproach against us, the natural tendency is to despondency and despair.

Just here is a very important part of the great warfare of the Christian's life. He must fight the tendencies of his old nature and must confidently claim and expect the victory, in the strength of the great Captain of his salvation. He must not yield to the alluring influences of favorable outward conditions, neither must he sink beneath the weight of trials and adversity. He must not permit any experience in life, however hard and painful, to sour and harden him or make him bitter, morose or unloving. Nor may he allow pride or love of show, or self-righteousness, to feed upon the temporal blessings which the Lord in His loving providence has given him to prove his faithfulness as a steward.

DEPTHS OF SORROW LEAD TO HEIGHTS OF JOY

Sorrow and griefs may, and perhaps often will, come in like a flood, but the Lord will be our Stay and Strength in every experience which He permits. The soul that has never known the discipline of sorrow and trouble has never yet learned the joy and preciousness of the Lord's love and helpfulness. It is in seasons of overwhelming sorrow and grief, when we draw near to the Lord, that He draws especially near to us. So the Psalmist found it, when in his deep affliction he cried to God, saying, "Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord! Lord, hear my voice; let Thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications!" (Vs. 1, 2.) Feeling his own weaknesses and shortcomings, longing for full deliverance from every imperfection, and prophesying of the bountiful provisions of the Divine Plan of Salvation through Christ, he adds, "If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities [imputing them to us], O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared [reverenced]."--Vs. 3, 4.

How precious are such assurances when the soul is painfully conscious of its infirmities, of its utter inability to fully measure up to the perfect law of righteousness! How blessed it is to know that when our hearts are loyal and true, our God does not mark against us the unavoidable blemishes of our earthen vessel! If we come daily to Him for cleansing, through the merits of our Redeemer, our failures are not imputed to us, but freely forgiven and washed away. The perfect righteousness of our Savior is our glorious dress, arrayed in which we may come to God with humble boldness, courage--even into the presence of the great Jehovah, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

If thus God ignores the infirmities of our flesh, and fully receives us and communes with us as His dear children, we should so regard one another, considering not and charging not against one another the infirmities of the flesh, which each humbly confesses, and which they, like us, are earnestly endeavoring to overcome by the grace of God, to the best of their ability. To each one of the Lord's true children the words of the Apostle apply: "If God be for us, who can be against us? . . . Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's Elect? Shall that God that justifieth? Who is he that condemneth? Shall Christ that died?" (Romans 8:31, 33, 34 --Diaglott.) The case is different, however, when the infirmities of the flesh are cultivated, indulged in without proper effort to correct them, and are justified, in order that the faults may be continued. Then, indeed, they are charged against us, and if we do not speedily "judge ourselves," and take decisive measures to correct them, the Lord will Himself judge and chasten us.--1 Cor. 11:31, 32.

In the midst of the cares, perplexities and difficulties that come to the children of the Lord, we are to trust Him fully, and to possess our souls in peace and patience! We are to wait patiently for the Lord to outwork the issues of our experiences in His own good way. How *necessary* is the patient waiting on the Lord! The Psalmist says, "I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in His Word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning." (Psalm 130:5, 6.) In every experience of sorrow and distress, and when the strain of the jarring discords and the stinging vexations, and wounds that make the heart bleed, threaten to overwhelm the spirit, let the child of God remember that "He knows, and loves, and cares," and that His ministering angel is ever near us, and that no trial will be permitted to be too *severe*. The dear Master is standing by the crucible, and the furnace heat will never be permitted to grow so intense that the precious gold of our characters shall be destroyed, or even injured. Ah, no! If by His grace the experiences may not work for our good, they will be turned aside. He loves us too well to permit any needless sorrow, any needless suffering.

THE REWARD OF PATIENT WAITING

"Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. And He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him." (Psalm 37:5-7.) We must not be disappointed and allow our faith to falter when the test of patient endurance is applied, while the outward peace and quietness which we crave tarry long. Our Father has not forgotten us when the answer to our prayers seems to be delayed. Outward peace and calm are not always the conditions best suited to our needs as New Creatures; and we would not desire conditions in which the precious fruits of the Spirit would not grow and develop in us. Therefore, "Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which shall try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you, but rejoice." (1 Peter 4:12, 13.) He who numbers the very hairs of our heads is never indifferent to the sufferings and needs of His weakest and humblest child. Oh, how sweet is the realization of such loving, abiding care! "When He giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?"

The saints have indeed in every sorrow and grief a blessed consolation of which the world is wholly in ignorance. None but the true child of God can know it. What is this consolation? Oh, you who have never enlisted under the banner of the Cross, who have never put yourselves wholly into the hands of the Lord to be moulded and fashioned into His glorious likeness, who have never made an earnest effort to stem the tide of the tendencies of your own fallen nature, who have never contended earnestly for Truth and righteousness in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, what can you know of the sweets of this Divine consolation? It is the precious balm of Gilead for wounded spirits on the battle-field of life, it is the stimulating, refreshing draught for fainting souls, hard pressed by the relentless foe. It is the soothing caress of a loving hand upon the fevered brow of the noble contender for Truth and godliness. It is the gentle whisper of hope and love and courage when heart and flesh are almost failing. This is Divine consolation, the only consolation that has in it any virtue of healing or refreshment. It is reserved alone for those noble souls who are faithfully bearing the burden and heat of the day in the service of the King of kings; while those who listlessly drift with the current of the world and the downward tendencies of the carnal nature can never have an intimation of its sweetness.

How loving and tender is our God, and how wise and strong! His promises have never failed those who have put their trust in Him. We may feel that our efforts to be good and to do good are very unproductive, that the opposition from without and within is very strong. But it is when we are weak, when we realize our own helplessness and incompetency, that we may be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. It is then that we may realize that His strength is made perfect in our

weakness. The fact that we are weak and lame does not separate us from the love and power of our God, while we are striving to do His will; for "He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust." Then let us more and more lay hold of this strength of the Lord, that we may courageously pursue our course in the narrow way of difficulty and trial. Precious indeed to the saint of God is the ministry of pain and sorrow!

“YE HAVE SEEN THE PATIENCE OF JOB”

The saints of every Age have learned the blessing of afflictions and sorrows. The Psalmist David says, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn Thy statutes"; and again, "Before I was afflicted, I went astray; but now have I kept Thy Word." (Psalm 119:67, 71.) God's faithful servant Job suffered almost overwhelming troubles, but the Lord brought him out into a large place when his testings had accomplished their designed effect. He was proven and strengthened by his sore experiences. Few if any of us could suffer more. He suffered the loss of all his property, then of all his children, whom he loved, then of the love and loyalty of his wife; and finally, he was smitten with sore disease-- boils, from head to foot. To crown all, three of his friends came to see him on hearing of his great trials; and instead of being true comforters, they added to his sorrows by insisting that his own sins must have been the cause of all these disasters; that his experiences must surely be punishments from the Lord because of unfaithfulness on his part. Surely poor Job was afflicted!

But did he lose his faith in God? Hear him: "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord!" (Job 1:21.) "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." (Job 13:15.) Job was indeed much cast down, but he maintained his integrity of character and his faith in the Lord through all. He did not charge God with injustice, and God did not desert His faithful servant. He reproved his accusers and required them to offer sacrifice, and instructed Job to pray for them, that their trespasses might be overlooked. In the end he was blessed more abundantly than ever before. God made him a great type of the human family, of the troubles of their fallen condition and of their final restoration to all that was lost in Adam, with the blessings of added experiences to make them wise. How faithful is the Lord in all His dealings! Truly His children should never doubt His love; for

"Faith can firmly trust Him,
Come what may."

PRECIOUSNESS OF INTIMATE FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD

It is when continued trust in the Lord and His many responsive providences in our lives have ripened into precious personal acquaintance and intimacy that we learn to delight in Him. Yes, it is when heart answers to heart, when pleading prayer brings recognized answers of peace, when the Divine love and care have been clearly seen in the guidance of our way, that we can recognize the abiding presence with us of the Father and the Son. Then, however dark may be our way, however severe may be the storm that rages about us, the thought of Divine protection is ever with us, so that as the children of the Lord we are never in despair; though cast down, we are not destroyed; though persecuted, we are never forsaken. We know our Father's hand is ever at the helm, that His love and care are sure and unfailing.

Those who have come into real heart sympathy with God have learned to see Him as the Fountain of all goodness and Truth and blessing. To them He is the One altogether lovely. His Law is their delight. His friendship and love are their very life. When the heart has become thus centered

in God, it is the most natural impulse to commit its way unto Him. These can truly sing with the poet:

"So on I go, not knowing,
I would not if I might;
I'd rather walk in the dark with God
Than go alone in the light;
I'd rather walk by faith with Him
Than go alone by sight."

Surely these have the desires of their heart, and no good thing shall be withheld from them. Their fervent prayers avail much, and in the Lord's good time their righteousness, however much it may now be misunderstood, misrepresented and evil-spoken of, shall be brought forth as the light--clear, cloudless and widely manifest; and their judgment, the justice and righteousness of their course and of their hearts, shall be brought forth as the noonday. Even while we remain here as aliens and foreigners in the enemy's land, we shall be fed, nourished, temporally and spiritually, and shall rejoice and be glad in the "house of our pilgrimage." Precious indeed are the promises of God; and to the praise of His abounding grace, His saints of the past and of the present all bear ample testimony to their fulfilment.

"Who need faint while such a river
Ever flows their thirst to assuage?--
Grace, which like the Lord, the Giver,
Never fails from Age to Age!"

Reprint 5802

GOD'S SYMPATHY FOR HIS PEOPLE

"Thus saith the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose Name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."--Isaiah 57:15.

JEHOVAH is the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity. Before the mountains were brought forth, or the hills, before the First-born was created, He is God. To Moses at the burning bush, He said, "I AM THAT I AM." (Exodus 3:14.) Our God is very great, very wise, very high. Nevertheless, the Scriptures show us that He is also very sympathetic. He is a God of Mercy and of Love.

The passage from which our text is taken informs us that if God were to contend with humanity, the end of the strife would be that mankind would be blotted out of existence. But He remembers that we are dust, and has compassion upon us. In this respect He is different from the gods of the heathen, who are domineering, apparently bent on wreaking vengeance upon those in their power.

Besides being very great and lofty, our God is particularly sympathetic towards those who are of a broken and contrite heart, whose spirit is humble, who realize that they are imperfect, who desire to be in accord with Him, and to dwell in holiness. To such He is ever near-- to revive the spirit of the humble, to give them strength. He will not trample them into the dust, as many an *earthly*

potentate has done to his subjects, but will assist them in the right way, and revive the heart of the contrite. These are to know that our God is a God of sympathy, compassion and love, who takes pleasure in reviving their hearts and in bringing them back into harmony with Him, if they are willing to be led.

DISCOURAGEMENT WITH SELF A FAVORABLE CONDITION

There is a difference between a broken and a contrite heart. A heart is broken when it is bowed down with grief and sorrow; a heart is contrite when it has a quiet, deep, continual sorrow for acts not in harmony with righteousness. A broken *will* is not necessarily the same; for there are those whose wills are broken, but who are not submissive to the Divine will.

To be repentant is to be thoroughly submissive to the Divine will, and implies a change of mental attitude toward sin. This humble, discouraged condition becomes a very favorable one if the person will seek Divine assistance, if he will become submissive to the Lord and ready to do the Divine will. Such will surely receive the blessing of God; for the Lord is very nigh to every one who is broken-hearted. The way to full consecration would be very short to him.

If such as be of contrite heart will be submissive to the Lord, He will save them from their difficulties and bring them into a large place, as the Prophet David states. (Psalm 18:19.) This does not necessarily mean that He will deliver them from financial troubles, but that He will give them peace and rest, which are better than money. If they have family troubles, they will find in Him a superior Friend, who is able and willing to administer superior consolation and refreshment.

Come, ye disconsolate! where'er ye languish,
Come to the mercy-seat, fervently kneel;
Here bring your wounded hearts; here tell your anguish;
Earth hath no sorrow that heaven cannot heal.

Joy of the desolate, light of the straying,
Hope of the penitent, fadeless and pure!
Here speaks the Comforter, tenderly saying,
Earth hath no sorrow that heaven cannot cure.

THE LORD'S METHOD OF DELIVERANCE

The Scriptures assure us that, "There is none righteous, no, not one." There is *relative* righteousness, however, which God can approve. Those who are seeking to be in harmony with Him to the best of their ability, who are walking in the ways of righteousness, and at the same time are trusting in the precious blood of our Redeemer-- such are spoken of as righteous. Of these it is said, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled."--Matthew 5:6.

This class, however, shall have afflictions. The Scriptures tell us that all who will live godly lives shall suffer. (Acts 14:22; 2 Timothy 3:12; Romans 5:3-5.) The reason why this is true is that the world is traveling in the opposite direction to righteousness--in the way of selfishness and gratification of the flesh. We read, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (I John 2:15.) This is especially true of this Gospel Age, when some are following in the footsteps of the Master. It was also true of the Jewish Age, when some were seeking to walk in the way of

righteousness. The Lord delivered them out of their afflictions, not in the sense of shielding them from trials, but in that of not permitting them to be overcome by their difficulties.

The Ancient Worthies fully appreciated the Divine favor exercised in their behalf, and took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, in order that they might have the continuance of that favor and larger blessings by and by. God delivered them out of their trials and difficulties by not permitting these to overcome them. This was also true of our Lord, and is true of the Church as well. The Lord delivers us out of our trials and difficulties, so that mentally we are not oppressed by them in the same way as are others. He will sustain and support us in our experiences and will eventually deliver us by giving us a share in the First Resurrection.

The sons of God by adoption are, during this Gospel Age, especially beset by trials and difficulties. If they should fall, however, the fact that they have stumbled will not make them feel like going back into sin, if their hearts are of the right stamp. On the contrary, they will feel like St. Peter, who, when others were stumbling, said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." (John 6:68.) The true people of God have no desire to go to any one but Him. If they stumble, they recover themselves, avail themselves of His arrangements for forgiveness and press on. By these stumblings they learn of their own weaknesses, and then fortify themselves so that they may be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.--Ephesians 6:10.

A just man will not fall into sin. The very most that could happen to him would be to stumble. There are various causes for stumbling. But if the heart is right, the man will rise again; for the Lord will show him that he has made a mistake and will point out the way to him by which he may recover himself. If he is a lover of righteousness, he will desire to press on toward that which is right, just, approved of the Lord, even if he should stumble many times.--Psalm 37:23, 24; Prov. 24:16.

THE EVIDENCE OF FAVOR WITH GOD

So far as our humanity is concerned, we are undone by reason of the fall. It behooves us, then, to be very humble, to feel our own littleness, our own fallen condition. It becomes us to be very contrite, very much in opposition to sin, to feel that sin is the great blight upon the whole race, and that God will not be in harmony with anything except that which is righteous and holy.

All, therefore, who would be in harmony with God must be repentant in respect to their own shortcomings and must be appreciative of His lofty standards--His holy standards. He, in turn, informs these that they have His sympathy, and that they shall have His succor. He appreciates the attitude of mind in which they are; and therefore, as our text tells us, He is ready to revive the spirit of the humble and contrite ones. To such He will show His salvation; to others He will not.

Only the humble-minded can really appreciate their own condition. God not only will revive their spirit, but is willing to lift them up and to make them again sons of God, with all that this implies of blessing. He has this attitude toward the humble and contrite in the present time, and He has *always* had this spirit toward the humble and contrite ones. Throughout Christ's reign this humble class will have His favor and blessing. Only the humble and contrite ones have the opportunity of becoming joint-heirs with our Lord.

God resists the proud. To the humble He gives grace, and opens the eyes of their understanding. They become His children because they are in the attitude to receive His blessings and to be guided by His instruction. The text applies not only in the present time, but will have an application in the next Age. "Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people." (Isaiah 62:10.) These words are all intended to indicate the preparations for the incoming Age. There is no provision for the proud, none for the haughty, none for the self-conscious--but all for the humble-minded.

If God has these blessings in store for the humble only, and if the humble are few in number at the present time, what of the others of humanity? God is allowing now a humiliating influence to work with people, which should teach them humility and lead them to be contrite of heart. But much more will this be the case in the next Age. "When Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." (Isaiah 26:9.) All the blessings will be upon the contrite and humble. And this will be so markedly before the attention of the people that all will know a change has taken place.

Now the humble and contrite are trodden down in the street. Now the proud are happy. "Now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, even they that tempt God are delivered." (Malachi 3:15.) But in the new Kingdom every one that exalteth himself shall be *abased*, and the *humble* shall be *exalted*. (Luke 14:11.) God has provided a thousand years for the education of all. A thousand years may seem a short period for this work when we know that for six thousand years things have been going wrong. But we must recollect that during the six thousand years, many of the people have lived but a short time--many dying in infancy.

In the new order of things this will be changed, and each will live longer. "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days; for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed." (Isaiah 65:20.) "Judgment [*justice*] also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding-place."--Isaiah 28:17.

And then it will not be necessary for one to say to another, "Know the Lord; for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord." (Jeremiah 31:34.) The high standard that God has for His people will be recognized. Then all who have humility and the right condition of heart will come into harmony with God. All who refuse to come into harmony with God will get the wages of sin--the Second Death.

Reprint 5217

THE TRANSFORMING INFLUENCE OF THOUGHT

“As he thinketh in his heart, so is he.” (Proverbs 23:7.) “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.”--Proverbs 4:23.

THE HEART is one of the most important organs of our body. If it ceases to work, death is sure to follow. The blood that flows through the heart constitutes the life, the energy of the body. If the blood current is interrupted for a little while, a clot is formed. This is so much of a preparation for death. There must be a continual stream of blood circulating through our bodies to keep life there.

In view of this important function of our natural hearts, the Bible very properly uses the heart, the center of life, as a symbol of the center of our affections, including the will. Our will has to do with everything we do. Whoever of the Lord's people wills to seek more and more to purify himself becomes more and more alive. If we are pure in heart, we resolve to live righteously and soberly in the present life. Whoever appreciates the principle that right is *right*, and wrong is *wrong* will desire to live right --whether Jew or Gentile or the Church of God.

The Church, having accepted God's terms, have made a consecration of their lives to Him. They have engaged to fight a good fight against the world, the flesh and the Devil. They are under special obligations as New Creatures. Their hopes and ambitions are separate from those of the world. They are therefore doubly responsible in respect to their hearts, which represent their inmost sentiments.

According to a man's innermost sentiment, so is he. As a man thinketh in his heart, so is his real character. What is your real will? What are your real sentiments? Not, What *words* do you use? not, What are your *actions*? but, What is the *motive* underlying all these?

The New Creature is to be God-like, spiritual, eventually of the spirit nature in glory--perfect. But before it attains that perfection, the heart of the New Creature is required to prove its loyalty. Some will be overcomes in a higher sense than others, but none will be overcomers except those who are true, loyal, pure. If, therefore, we have made a consecration to God, it would be our endeavor that our hearts, our desires, our motives be perfect. The only proper attitude is to confess our imperfections, if we are wrong. God expects us to be loyal of *heart*. And that loyalty of heart should reach out and control the whole life.

If our thoughts are not according to our ideals, we should endeavor to make them so. We should put away anger, malice, hatred, strife, and all such works of the flesh and the Devil. With some people, in some conditions, these thoughts go very deep. It is not the transitory thoughts of the mind--the passing thoughts--that are meant in our text. Even people of very bad character may at times have deep emotions. The eyes of some persons will be suffused with tears over some trivial matter. This makes them appear to be very tender-hearted, and yet their lives may show that they would as easily be moved to some vicious deed as to sympathy.

We see this fact illustrated in the conduct of mobs. The people who hailed Jesus as King were five days later crying, "Crucify Him!" Those who shortly before had seemed to be so appreciative of Him appeared to lose that appreciation.

IMPORTANCE OF RIGHT THINKING

In reality a man is not always what on the surface he seems to be. His real character is deep down below--the purpose of his life. These are not the mere transitory thoughts, but the deep fissures of thought, if we may so designate those which involve the whole life. The Scriptures bring to our attention the fact that we are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds--by having them made over.--Rom. 12:2.

The Apostle, speaking of some very vicious traits of character, says, "And such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Cor. 6:11.) This cleansing, this sanctifying, comes not merely through the reading of the Truth, or the *mental* application of the Truth, but through the *heart*--thinking on the Truth. This heart-thinking, these deep resolutions, are ours as Christians, and are to be guided by certain principles. These have to do with the real man whom God is considering--not the old creature, more or less blemished, according to the degree of depravity. God looks at the New Creature.

These deep heart convictions and purposes constitute a transformation of character. This is the man's *real* condition, and so is *he*. If he have some transitory emotion of anger or of malice, it would not be his *real* thought, his *real* intention. Therefore it would not be *he*, but his old *nature*, temporarily asserting itself. As a New Creature, he is to watch his words, his thoughts, his actions. If a transitory, wrong thought should pass through his mind, it would not be the thought of his heart. And he as a New Creature, should stop it, put it away, so that it may not take root in his heart, and choke out better sentiments.

This right thinking of the heart has very much to do with the whole life. The Apostle says that we are transformed by the renewing of our minds, to know what is the perfect will of God. This is the Christian's standpoint. How glad we are that our Heavenly Father is judging us from this standpoint! How glad we are that He is able to read the heart, that He knows our hearts, that He knows our inmost thoughts!

At one time we might have thought that we were doing God service when we were not. We show our loyalty to God by giving attention to His Word, that we may know what is His will. The more we study God's Word, the more we receive the spirit of the Truth, and the more we appreciate it. And in proportion as we understand God's regulations and desire to be guided by them, our hearts will become purified. Then the more care shall we take of our hands, what they shall do; and of our tongues, what they shall say. Thus we shall keep our hearts--submit our wills to the will of God.

The will is a part of our heart, just as the rudder is a part of the ship. The new will is the rudder to steer us this way or that way. The more we understand the Word of the Lord, the better we understand how to guide our lives. Therefore we are to keep our hearts and purify them by the *knowledge* of God's Truth, the *study* of God's Truth. To do this, the will must ever be on the alert, watching with prayer and thanksgiving.

THE CHURCH ON TRIAL FOR LIFE

Some one may ask, why should we do all this? In a general way we might answer, that we may do right-- because right is *right*. But that reason is not sufficient for us. While all appreciate the superiority of right over wrong, yet in our fallen condition we need to have some inducements to action. So the Lord puts certain inducements before us. He says, "If your heart is right, I desire to give you everlasting life. If your heart is wrong, then you will not be of the kind to whom I will grant this boon. You will die the Second Death."

Six thousand years ago there was a trial. Our first father, Adam, was tried, and failed. Consequently we have no right to life. But God has arranged through our Lord Jesus that every member of Adam's race may have another trial. The Father is willing to give life everlasting to all who love righteousness.

So we thankfully accept this provision, and say, "Heavenly Father, wilt Thou indeed give us another opportunity for gaining everlasting life? We would love to have that life! We are very thankful for the opportunity! We love righteousness! If we are loyal to the principles of righteousness, shall we get everlasting life? It is our desire that Thy will be done in us--even that we love righteousness and hate iniquity." "Very well, then," the Heavenly Father says, "I will put you into the School of Christ, where you will learn righteousness."

Day by day we are learning in the School of Christ. Our different experiences are a part of the general instructions for those who love righteousness and who desire to be taught of the Lord. The

issue of our trial will be life or death. The world is not now on trial. There is no possibility for the world to gain life as yet. During this Gospel Age the Church are the only ones who are under this Covenant of Sacrifice--who are on trial, therefore, for everlasting life or everlasting death. In the next Age, the world will have their opportunity for learning obedience. Then the issue for them will be life or death.

God says, "I have set before you life and death, blessing or cursing." There is a curse for every one who loves unrighteousness; there is a blessing for every one who loves righteousness. So during the thousand years of Christ's Reign the world will be on trial for everlasting life or everlasting death. All who are obedient will get everlasting life. But all who have the spirit of Satan will be destroyed in the Second Death.

Only those who are more than mere overcomers will be of the Royal Priesthood. There is no excuse for our getting into the Great Company. Let us keep our hearts with all diligence. Let us watch our hearts. If they are in full harmony with God's will, we shall have little trouble with our tongues. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."--Math. 12:34.

Our heart is the most wonderful organ of our body. The tongue is the most subtle of all our members. The Lord takes our words as an index of our heart condition. But since we are imperfect, it is not possible for us to be faultless in word and deed. Yet we are diligently and faithfully to seek to attain the perfect mastery of our words. We should be especially on guard in respect to evil speaking. Every tendency toward slander is to be checked. Whoever of us is reviled is not to revile again. These tendencies belong to the old nature. To be pleasing to the Master, we are to keep our hearts free from every form of evil. If this be done, the heart is rightly instructed of the Lord. Then we will know that we must make good whatever is wrong. We are bound, thoroughly bound, to make it good to the best of our ability. Our heart must keep itself right.

DEFICIENCY IN MODERN EDUCATION

This same principle is applicable to the whole world, though not on a scale so far reaching. Mankind are influenced by thought, by experience. So vicious children may be trained up under favorable environments to become useful citizens. We have seen where, even with people of the world, good resolutions to live honestly, justly, soberly, have had a blessed influence on the life, making noble men and women, although these may not be Christians.

We have also seen the reverse of this--those who were criminals, but not so of necessity. Some of them were born under good conditions; but have read bad books and meditated upon sinful things. Thus the thoughts of their hearts have been evil instead of good. Thus they have become inclined toward evil. As they allow their minds to run in a certain direction, and allow these thoughts to become deeply rooted in their hearts, some of them become very vicious.

We were deeply impressed with this fact in noticing the photographs of the four gunmen recently convicted of murder in New York. Had we seen their pictures before knowing who they were, we should have said, "Those are strong characters." Their hearts had gone wrong, doubtless because of wrong education and a failure to appreciate the principles of righteousness. This seems to be largely the case at the present time. Very few see the principles of righteousness at all. The majority are swayed by superstition, by fear and by hopes which are more or less ephemeral, more or less deceptive.

So we see that the general education of our day is lacking in a very important respect. Although the schools have taken away to some extent the veil of ignorance and superstition, yet they are not giving instead the full, proper view of righteousness. This is because in a general way the Divine character and the Divine laws are being ignored. There is an attempt to teach mortality entirely aside from the Divine Law. But this course seems to be undermining faith--separating the pupils from faith in a Supreme Creator. Thus we see that while the world is making wonderful progress in education, yet it is not reaching its own ideals. The human mind in its fallen and perverted condition, is unable to see the subject of morality from a standpoint which educators would put before it.

The human mind needs the influence of its higher organs to assist the lower organs. Hence, although these educational influences are beneficial in many respects, yet they are very injurious in others. They do not inculcate veneration for God and for the Divine will. Therefore people are unable to grasp the best principles. The only persons who are in the right attitude are those who are seeking to have new thoughts, to have thoughts conformed to the Divine arrangement, taking the mind of Christ instead of their own imaginations and judgment, and thus growing up into Him in all things. This is our happy position.

INFLUENCE OF THOUGHT UPON HEALTH

There is another view of the text--"As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he"--given by Christian Scientist; namely, that according to our minds, so be it unto us. They get some good out of this view. They say that if one thinks about kind, noble things, he will be influenced thus. We think our Christian Scientist friends are partly right and partly wrong. They hold that if one thinks himself to be well, he will be well; that if one thinks himself to be sick, he will be sick. There is a *measure* of truth in this view.

One-half the people in the world are sick because they think they are so. If they thought, not about their aches and pains, but about more helpful things, they would no doubt be better and stronger in every way. The mind has something to do with our condition. Whoever mopes about a headache will undoubtedly make it worse. Whoever tries to put the thought of his condition away and to give attention to other things will undoubtedly help himself.

The less we think about our aches and pains the better for us. If we talk about them we aggravate them. It is also bad to exercise too much sympathy with each other. Of course, there are times when it would be cruel not to show sympathy. But it is not wise to encourage those who are weak to complain about their condition. We become stronger in proportion as we try to avoid thinking of our ailments.

The mistake made by our Christian Scientist friends is that they carry this principle too far. *Thinking* ourselves sound will not *make* us so. And it would not be right to lie about the matter, and to say that we have no aches and pains when we have them. The middle line is the one which the Bible encourages--not to say that we have neither aches nor pains, not to say that death is "mortal error," and that there is no death. But we can help the dying process along, or we can seek to cultivate the more helpful thoughts, and thus exercise a helpful influence upon ourselves and others.

One notices this principle in action in a sick room. Some people will go into the sick room, express a great deal of sympathy, and leave the sick person under the impression that he is in a much worse condition than he really is; whereas they should have helped the person by encouraging remarks. It is not necessary to say to the sick, "You are looking extremely bad!" But we might say,

"Are you feeling better this morning? Have you had a good rest?" Many people do not know how much they do rest, and do not feel thankful enough. So we might suggest, "I hope you are feeling thankful to the Lord, and that you are glad because of this beautiful day. See how the sun shines into your room! Hear the birds sing!" The condition of some people when they are sick is that of "groanings which cannot be uttered." Sick people need some one to bring sunshine into the room.

So, then, dear friends, let us resolve that since we have covenanted with the Lord to become dead to the old life, to the old ambitions, to the things of the past, these are to be all given over. We will wish to think as the Lord would have us think, to view all the affairs of life as He would have us view them, and to be influenced by the ambitions which He sets before us in His Word. Thus doing, we shall as New Creatures grow into the character-likeness of the Lord.

Reprint 5246

EARTHLY LOVES VS. HEAVENLY LOVE

JOURNALISTS realize that for some years past the civilized world has entered upon an epoch of passion, lust and crime. Editors, especially of the better journals, realizing that the publication of details tends to stir up anger and lustful passions, are unitedly suppressing these. Their wisdom is to be commended, especially in view of the fact that their business managers, knowing the depraved taste of the people, realize that the more nauseating the details, the greater the interest of the public in general, and the greater their appreciation of the journal which panders to their taste.

There are different ways of accounting for this wave of passion and crime. Our enemies would doubtless charge that our teachings, favoring the idea that the Bible Hell is not a place of eternal torment, but the *tomb*, are setting at liberty human passion by taking off the brake of fear. Our reply is that the vicious do not receive our message. As the Scriptures declare, "None of the wicked shall understand, but the wise [in wisdom from on High] shall understand." The viciously wicked are not sufficiently interested to find out what we believe or teach. Their beliefs are not built upon the Word of God, but upon the general weight of denominational prestige.

On the contrary, our charge is that the general unbelief in God and in the Bible--unbelief in any kind of Hell or Heaven--more likely has to do with this wave of crime. For the past thirty years our great colleges have been turning out agnostics by the thousands. Nearly every graduate is an agnostic. The influence of their unbelief in the Bible pervades every stratum of society, because of their influence in the higher walks of life--in the pulpit, in social circles, etc. And be it noted that the crimes of our day are frequently committed by college-bred men and women, and by others who, under their influence, discredit the Bible as the Word of God.

But we believe that there is something peculiar to our time, in addition to the foregoing. Ours is a day of great mental activity in every direction--a day of push, of feverish excitement, along all lines. Highly seasoned foods and drinks whet the physical appetite, and lead on to spicy desires in every direction. The strain is too great for our race, considering its weakness, its degeneration attained during the past six thousand years. But whatever is the philosophy, the fact remains that the world is in a very feverish condition, in a condition of intense excitement, easily aroused to expression along every line--anger, malice, hatred, strife, envy, pride.

God's consecrated people, although not *of* the world, are in the world. Although they are New Creatures, with new wills, "sanctified in Christ Jesus," nevertheless they "have this treasure in earthen vessels." Their earthen vessels are subject to like passions and storms to those which assail the world in general. If we are right in supposing that the Adversary himself and the fallen angels have much to do with the excitement of passions in wrong directions, then we may feel sure also that these spirit adversaries would be especially on the alert to entrap and ensnare the consecrated followers of the Lord. As St. Paul expresses it, "We are not ignorant of his devices" (2 Cor. 2:11), and we realize that flesh and blood is not competent for a struggle against the "wicked spirits in influential positions." (Eph. 6:12.) The Lord's people, therefore, need to be on the alert more than do others, even though all need to be specially alert now to withstand the evil tendencies of our day, which *all admit*, however they may explain them.

“KEEP THY HEART WITH ALL DILIGENCE”

The secret of the Christian's strength consists in his having given up his own will--the will of his own flesh-- and having taken instead of it the will of Christ. His danger consists of the endeavor of his flesh to override the decision of his new will. The flesh covertly insists that this and that and the other things are not wrong, because they are natural. It insists that its rights should be conserved; it even sometimes insists that the New Creature would commit a crime in mortifying the flesh, with its affections and desires.--Col. 3:5; Gal. 5:24.

The New Creature cannot rely upon the suggestions of the flesh in every matter. Experience teaches it that it would be deceived and ensnared if it gave heed to the counsels of the flesh. Hence the New Creature must rely wholly upon the Lord and His counsel--the Word of God. The New Creature's reasoning upon any subject must be along the lines of Divine instruction. He *dare not* trust his own judgment, the judgment of his own flesh in the matter; neither dare he trust the judgment of fellowmen, who might be more or less influenced by their fleshly minds, however conscientious, and however proper they might intend their advice to be. The New Creature must hear from the Word of God the outline of his proper course, and must follow. He dare not deviate from it, not knowing what dire results might follow.

As the Christian advances in spiritual development, in control of the flesh, in the appreciation of the mind of Christ, he certainly does, in one sense of the word, become "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might" --the power of the Holy Spirit. He becomes more gentle, more meek, more

patient, more brotherly-kind, more loving. He is thus developing the fruits and growing in the graces of the Holy Spirit and in character-likeness to the Master and Pattern. But his dangers are not over; for he finds the Adversary and the flesh ready to attack him along new lines--totally different from those of the attacks when he first gave his heart to the Lord.

These later attacks are along the lines of love--the very climax of spiritual attainment. As a New Creature, he desires that his love shall be pure, holy, spiritual. He desires that his love for the brethren shall be along the same lines as is his love for the Father and for the Son and for the holy angels. But as he attempts to adjust this love to present conditions, his holy and pure intentions and ambitions and desires are assailed by the flesh.

Not merely do the brethren and sisters, like himself, appreciate spiritual things, purity, truth, etc., but their development in the fruits of the Spirit tend to make them more attractive in the flesh, as well as more attractive in mind and disposition. As the spiritual love and confidence and fellowship increase, there is a new danger through the weaknesses of the flesh. Hence there is necessity for every child of God to be constantly on the alert--watching unto prayer against any and every intrusion of the fleshly mind, its appetites and desires. It must be mortified, crucified, killed, *whatever the cost*, in order that the New Creature may survive. The *life* of the one means the death of the other. The sooner we comprehend this great truth, the better for us.

“SET YOUR AFFECTIONS ON THINGS ABOVE”

These earthly loves do not always tend toward sensuality, but they do always tend in another direction from the interests of the New Creature. We have known instances in which very strong attachments grew up between brethren, and similarly between *sisters*, to their spiritual injury. The injury consists in a satisfaction of the longings of their souls in an earthly companionship, however pure. It is not the Lord's intention that His people should have heart-satisfaction in anybody, on the earthly plane. It is His intention that thorough loyalty to Him and to His Word will make us realize our individual responsibility to Him, and draw us individually close to Him, that in Him we may each find the companionship, joy, and peace which all true hearts crave.

Any satisfaction, therefore, in the fellowship of the old creature, however pure-intentioned, is to the discredit of the New Creature and his spiritual fellowship with the Lord. The fact that we would be fully satisfied in any one on the earthly plane should be an evidence to us that we have not attained that lofty sentiment and aspiration which the Lord designs for us and which He alone can satisfy.

The admission into our lives of a close, absorbing fellowship in the flesh, however pure the intention, would be a disadvantage to the New Creature in another way. Not only would it imply his failure to rightly appreciate the Lord and fellowship with Him, but it would imply a failure to rightly appreciate the fellowship of the entire Body of Christ, which is the Church.

The Spirit of Christ is too broad to permit the centering of our sympathy and interest upon one individual, except that individual be the Lord Himself. As for others--the Body of Christ, the Church--our interest should be in all of them, not merely in the rich, but in the poor; not merely in the wise and noble, but in the less wise and ignoble; not merely in the educated, but also in the ignorant and stupid. Our interest must not be in the flesh, but in them as New Creatures in Christ. And those who have the greatest handicap as respects earthly teaching and weaknesses of the flesh are the ones deserving of our earthly sympathies and affections, as they strive to fight the good fight and overcome their blemishes.

We exhort, therefore, that we as the Lord's people set our affections more and more upon the things above, and not on the things of the earth, that we may be transformed, that we may thus prove what is the good and acceptable will of God--that His will may be done in us perfectly. His will is not unreasonable. He remembers our frame--that it is but dust. He desires our will to be that our consecration shall be to Him, that it shall not be along lines of the flesh, but of the spirit, and not merely toward one individual, or little clique of the Church, but toward all who have named the name of Christ and who have set their faces Heavenward as soldiers of the cross marching toward the antitypical Mount Zion and the general Assembly of the Church of the First-born.--Psalm 103:14; Romans 8:4; Hebrews 12:23.

Reprint 5248

THE REFINER'S FIRE

He sat by a fire of seven-fold heat
As He watched the precious ore,
And closer He bent with a searching gaze,
As He heated it more and more.
He knew He had ore that could stand the test,
And He wanted the finest gold,
To mould as a crown for the King to wear,
Set with gems of a price untold.
So He laid our gold on the burning fire,
Tho' we fain would have said Him, "Nay";
And He watched the dross that we had not seen
As it melted and passed away.
And the gold grew brighter, and yet more bright,
But our eyes were so dim with tears,
We saw but the fire--not the Master's hand--
And questioned with anxious fears.
Yet our gold shone out with a richer glow
As it mirrored a Form above,
That bent o'er the fire, unseen by us,
With a look of ineffable love.
Can we think that it pleases His loving heart
To cause us a moment's pain?
Ah, no! but He saw thro' the present cross
The bliss of eternal gain.
So He waited there with a watchful eye,
With a love that is strong and sure,
And His gold did not suffer a whit more heat
Than was needed to make it pure!

Reprint 5264

COVENANT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD ESSENTIAL TO LIFE EVERLASTING

GOD IS NOT in covenant relationship with the brute creation; for to them He has made no promises, although He has made a general provision for their needs. But we may understand that with all His *intelligent* creation He has a covenant, or agreement, to the effect that so long as they will do His will they shall possess life. Because of violation of that arrangement, the fallen angels were cast off, "reserved in chains of darkness unto the judgment of the Great Day" (Jude 6), to receive their final punishment. When Adam and Eve were disobedient, they violated this covenant, and came under the sentence of death. "They like men [Heb. Adam], have transgressed the covenant; there have they dealt treacherously against Me."--Hos. 6:7, margin.

Because of Adam's transgression, the world is not in covenant relationship with God in any sense of the word. On the contrary, they are aliens, strangers, foreigners. (Eph. 2:11-13.) To some extent God brought Abraham back into covenant relationship, but *not fully* so. To the nation of Israel He made certain promises in the form of a Law Covenant, to the effect that whoever kept that Covenant would thereby demonstrate his worthiness to receive God's blessing promised to Abraham--that through him should all the families of the earth be blessed.-- Gen. 12:3.

The Law Covenant was given to the Jewish nation; Moses was the mediator, for it was impossible to make the Covenant with Israel directly. Although they were unable to keep that Covenant because of inherited weaknesses of the flesh, yet it brought them a measure of blessing, as St. Paul points out. (Rom. 7:7.) While it lifted Israel above the degradation into which the Gentiles were falling, nevertheless it did not bring the blessing for which they longed. It did not remove the death penalty --it did not give them life.

In the clear light now shining for the people of God, we see that the Law Covenant was only a type of a better Covenant to be made with Israel after the Church of Christ has been glorified; that Moses himself was only a type of a better Mediator; that the sacrifices of the Law were only types of the "better sacrifices" mentioned in Heb. 9:23, and that their priesthood was a type of the Royal Priesthood of the Gospel Age.--Heb. 7:27.

In the Scriptures, the words covenant and promise are used synonymously. The children of Israel were under the Abrahamic Covenant long before they entered into the Law Covenant. They are still under those Covenants. St. Paul says, "God hath not cast away His people whom He foreknew." (Rom. 11:2.) Then he proceeds to say that after the Elect Church has been gathered from among the Gentiles, the favor of God will return to Israel; for they are still beloved for the *father's sake*. The fathers of Israel are the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The Jews are, therefore, under the Abrahamic Covenant.--Rom. 11:25-28.

ISRAEL'S COVENANT RELATIONSHIP ACTUAL

An actual covenant relationship is one that is fully established--not merely suggested, or proposed, but accomplished. As Israel approached Mt. Sinai, God proposed to make a covenant with them. When all was in readiness, the Covenant was made through Moses as the mediator. The work of mediation was twofold; the first part was the sprinkling of the Law, representing the satisfaction of Justice; the second part was the sprinkling of the people, representing the bringing of the people into covenant relationship with God. That Covenant was then fully made, and has remained in operation ever since.-- Exod. 24:3-8.

With the Israelites, God was making a covenant which was to last for centuries. It was good for only one year at a time, however. For the first year the people were in harmony with God, but at the end of that time the cancellation of sins ceased; for the blood of bulls and of goats cannot take away sin. The whole arrangement was only a type. At the end of that first year, the Day of Atonement was inaugurated, and sacrifices were made for another year. The fact that the Atonement Day sacrifices were repeated year by year shows that they were efficacious for only a year at a time, and so never really took away sin.--Heb. 10:1-4.

After the Day of Atonement, the people made various kinds of offerings. Some of these seem to typify the presentation of the worshiper himself to God, as an indication that he wished to do the will of Jehovah. Others were for sin-offerings, indicating that the worshiper realized that there had been a measure of wilfulness in his conduct. So rigid are the requirements of the Law Covenant that only one Jew, the Lord Jesus Christ, was able to keep them. This He could do because He was perfect, and the Law is the measure of a perfect man's full ability.

That the Israelites were in covenant relationship with God through Moses, the mediator of their Covenant, is demonstrated by the fact that Moses said, "He hath declared unto you His Covenant, which He commanded you to perform, even the ten commandments." (Deut. 4:13.) Therefore the Jew is bound by the Law so long as he lives. (Rom. 7:1.) Although the Law Covenant

is not intended to be an everlasting arrangement with the Jew, yet the only ones who have been able to get from under it are those who have come into Christ; the remainder cannot rid themselves of it. But the days draw nigh when the Lord God will make a New Covenant with them through a new Mediator, The Christ, who will assist them to keep the Law satisfactorily and thus to be delivered from the evil features of their Covenant.

At the close of the Babylonish Captivity, the Prophet Daniel asked the Lord for an explanation of the prophecies relating to his people. The answer to his prayer is given in detail. "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy and to anoint the Most Holy."--Dan. 9:24-27.

For an elucidation of this prophecy, the reader is referred to STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, Vol. II, Study III. All these things were to be done in those seventy weeks. Of this period of time, we find that the seventieth week was the most critical, for it was the week during which Messiah was to confirm the Covenant. In our Study III, we show that this week began October, A.D. 29 and closed October, A.D. 36--from the beginning of our Lord's ministry until the conversion of Cornelius, the first Gentile to receive the Holy Spirit.

THE COVENANT CONFIRMED FOR ONE WEEK

During that period of seven years, God bestowed special favor upon the Jews. At the beginning of that week of years, our Lord, who was then thirty years of age, presented Himself to God as a sacrifice. This presentation was the first feature of the antitypical Atonement Day work, and corresponded to the sacrifice of the bullock in the type. Our Lord began the antitypical sacrifices; as St. Paul says, "Then said He, 'Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God.' He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second." (Heb. 10:9.) Our Lord there began to take away the type and to establish the antitype. It was necessary not only to begin the work with the antitypical bullock, but to complete it and to take His place as the antitypical Moses, so to speak. This He did not accomplish until after His death on the cross.

Many other features of that antitypical Atonement Day work are not yet completed. It was a part of the Atonement for the High Priest to offer the Lord's goat and to take its blood into the Most Holy and to sprinkle it there. It was also a part of the Atonement Day work for him to come out and confess the sins of the people on the scape-goat, and a still further part for him to bless the people. During our Lord's ministry, He fulfilled various features of the types. At Calvary His work of sacrificing Himself was finished, and the Divine acceptance of that sacrifice was manifested.

The Prophet's statement that in the midst of the week Messiah would cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, implies that our Lord would there terminate the efficacy of the typical work for Israel as a people, and that they were rejected from Divine favor at the time that they crucified Him. A few days before His death, our Lord had said, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." (Matt. 23:38.) This rejection seems to have been symbolized when the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the *top* to the *bottom*, an indication of a breaking down, rather than of an opening up.

This rejection of the Jewish nation does not indicate the end of their Law Covenant. To the Church of Christ, who have been given the privilege of understanding the deep things of the Spirit of God, it appears that the efficacy of the typical sacrifices, which were offered year by year continually, ceased at the death of our Lord; and that since that time, as a nation they have had no Divine favor; but that the only ones who have had favor since then are those who have come out of

Moses into Christ. The typical sacrifices continued until the time when Christ died, for the reason that Jesus Himself was under the Law, a part of which He fulfilled, and no feature of which can pass away until all has been fulfilled.--Matt. 5:17, 18.

After our Lord's ascension, it was possible for greater work to be done than ever before. Under the Lord's blessing, thousands of Jews were gathered into the Gospel garner within comparatively a few days. The work of our Lord was cut short nationally, but it increased the opportunity of the Jews individually. There were only five hundred Jews who believed on Jesus until after His death, when there were thousands added to the number. (1 Cor. 15:6; Acts 2:41.) During the three and a half years following our Lord's death, God did not recognize the Gentiles, for He had said that He would give seventy weeks to the Jews, and therefore He allowed no favor to go to the Gentiles until that period had expired.

After the expiration of the seventy weeks of years set apart for Israel, the Gospel began to go to the Gentiles, to gather from among them "a people for His name." (Acts 15:13-18.) During this Gospel Age, the antitypical Atonement work has been progressing. Our Lord has already offered the antitypical bullock in the sacrifice of Himself. Since Pentecost, He has been offering the antitypical goat--the Church class. This work has been in progress for more than eighteen hundred years. As soon as it shall have been finished, the blood will be taken into the Most Holy, to sprinkle the Mercy-Seat and to "make atonement for all the people," as in the type.

THE COVENANT OF SACRIFICE

The Abrahamic Covenant, as it was given to Abraham, is a complete covenant, whose provisions include all mankind; for it reads, "In thee and in thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 12:3; 28:14.) Its promise is to THE SEED: (1) Jesus; (2) The Christ, Head and Body; (3) the earthly seed through them. Its provisions extend to all who have the faith of Abraham. The promise of God was that a blessing shall come to all the families of the earth. This promise was confirmed by an oath on the part of God, so that by two immutable things--the oath and the promise of God--the heirs of the promise may be sure of its fulfilment.--Heb. 6:13-18.

The Seed of Abraham, which is to bless all the families of the earth, was intended to be a Spiritual Seed. Since Abraham and his posterity were natural men, the only way by which they could become the Spiritual Seed was by the sacrifice of the earthly nature and the attaining to the spirit nature. The opportunity for making this sacrifice was first given to our Lord Jesus. By carrying out His covenant of sacrifice, He became the Head of the Seed which is to bring the blessing.--Psa. 50:5; 40:7-10.

During the Gospel Age, Jehovah has been selecting the members of this Spiritual Seed, that they may lay down their human life and earthly interests in order to attain to the spirit nature. The selection of this Seed has been the work of the Gospel Age. Soon the Seed will be all gathered; then the work of blessing the natural seed will begin, and through them the blessing will subsequently spread to all nations, as these shall accept the Divine favor.

The Church will always be in covenant relationship with the Father. The fact that He calls them sons implies that they are bound to Him. (John 1:12.) Every father is in covenant relationship with his children, and they with him. Every child has a responsibility to its father, and the father to the child. The fact that God has received the Lord Jesus and the Church as sons (Heb. 3:6) signifies that they are in covenant relationship with Him. St. Paul says, "We are the children of God; and if

children, then heirs." (Rom. 8:16,17.) His statement not only implies that relationship, but *proves* it; for the sons have a right to the things which the father has provided for his children.

All who hunger and thirst after righteousness (Matt. 5:6), all whose souls long for God "as the hart pants after the water brook" (Psa. 42:1), and who, having found Him, have consecrated themselves to Him--these have received the anointing of the Holy Spirit, witnessing with their spirit that they are sons of God. (Rom. 8:14-16.) As anointed sons these can discover in themselves the worthy traits of true sons--loyalty, zeal, energy, discretion, faithfulness, obedience.

There are, however, conditions attached to this covenant of sacrifice; there are certain requirements which must be fulfilled. All must become partakers of the *sufferings* of Christ, if they would participate with Him in the glories to follow. But the arrangements for keeping our contract are complete in Christ. Therefore if we put ourselves under His care, this covenant will be everlasting with us, and we shall have "the sure mercies of David."-- Isa. 55:3.

COVENANT RELATIONSHIP TO BE RE-ESTABLISHED WITH HUMANITY

In Jer. 31:31-33, we read, "I will make a New Covenant with the House of Israel and with the house of Judah . . . after those days." The expression, "those days," we understand to refer to Israel's "seven times" of punishment, promised by the Lord for the violation of their Law Covenant. This New Covenant is to be made with Israel alone; for God never purposed to make a covenant with the Gentiles. The New Covenant will properly be so called because it will take the place of the old Law Covenant, which God made with Israel and which was broken by them. After Israel shall have been fully established under their New Covenant, all other nations will be privileged to come into this relationship after the manner set forth in the Law. All the world will eventually be blessed thereby.

The New Covenant, then, is to be made with such of Abraham's descendants as are able to receive it. Since the people are not worthy to enter directly into relationship with God, that Covenant must have a Mediator. The Mediator is the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Church, His Body. The Scriptures indicate that the Mediator is nearly completed.

The Word of God distinguishes between a covenant and its mediator. A covenant does not go into operation until after it has been fully mediated. When Moses mediated the Law Covenant, he first offered sacrifices; then he took the blood of the animals and, dividing it into two parts, sprinkled both the Book of the Law and the people. (Exod. 24:4-8; Heb. 9:19-24.) After he had done this, the Law Covenant was in force; and it will continue until superseded by its antitype, the New Covenant.

The Mediator of the New Covenant will be The Christ. For more than eighteen hundred years, our Lord has been offering the great antitypical sacrifices of Himself and His Church. As soon as He will have finished making application of the blood, He will have made satisfaction for the sins of the world. This act will correspond to the sprinkling of the Book by Moses. Divine Justice having accepted this arrangement, the Mediator will antitypically sprinkle the people; that is, he will show them how to come back into full accord with God.

The New Covenant will begin to swallow up the old Law Covenant as soon as the Kingdom is established. The Scriptures indicate that the first to receive it will be the Ancient Worthies. Raised from the dead to human perfection, they will form the nucleus of the new arrangement in the earth. Next in order will be those who have been known as Christians, but who have not been consecrated to death, and Jews who have been consecrated to the *Law*, but who have been *blinded*. Gradually the

light will come to all who love righteousness and hate iniquity. Sprinkled from all sympathy with evil, they will make their declaration of full loyalty to God. In due time this light will spread to all kindreds and tongues and nations.

CHANGE OF HEART IN THE MILLENNIUM

The Prophet Jeremiah, speaking of the New Covenant (31:34), says, "They shall know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." The sins and iniquities of Israel will no longer be remembered against them. Christ will have appeared on their behalf and made satisfaction for their sins. They will then be as free from original sin as the Gospel Church are. The Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ is the sufficiency for all.--I John 2:2.

The Prophet Ezekiel tells us that during the next Age the hearts of mankind will be changed. He says, "Thus saith the Lord God;...A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh." (Ezek. 36:22-27.) This *change of heart is entirely aside from the making of the New Covenant*. It will take a thousand years to remove the stoniness out of the hearts of mankind and to make them stand without a Mediator. Those who receive everlasting life must attain this condition; for all of God's creatures who would live forever must keep His Law perfectly.

During the Millennium, God will not recognize the people, *because of their imperfection*, their weakness; but all of their dealings will be through the Mediator, until they shall have been brought up to perfection. At the end of the thousand years, they will be delivered up to the Father, unblamable before Him. (I Cor. 15:24.) God will then receive them as sons, heirs of the earthly blessings which He has provided for mankind--the things given to Adam. The very moment when the merit of Christ is applied for the world is the same moment when they will be turned over to the Mediator. Then they will be in covenant relationship with God, *but only through the Mediator*, until they shall have reached human perfection and shall enter into this relationship *directly* with the Father.

The New Covenant will continue everlastingly; and as it is proper to say that Moses mediated the Law Covenant, so we may say that Christ will mediate the New Covenant. But it would not be proper to say that Moses *is now* the Mediator of the Law Covenant; for a covenant does not need a mediator after it has been mediated. So the New Covenant will need no Mediator after the thousand years. But the title "Mediator" may belong to Christ to all eternity, just as one who has been a judge, ever after receives the title of "Judge."

At the end of the thousand years, when the Messiah will have accomplished His work of Restitution, He will cease to act as Mediator. But the Covenant will continue to stand; for if that *relationship* with God were to be *removed* from the people, they would have no blessing of everlasting life. That blessing *depends upon covenant relationship* with God. Under the favorable conditions of the New Covenant, whosoever will may have an opportunity to become the children of The Christ, the Seed of Abraham.

At the conclusion of the thousand years, the willing and the obedient receive the commendation, "Well done," and will be accepted as fit for the condition of everlasting life on the human plane. Those who prove to be unworthy of life will be destroyed in the Second Death.

THE PALACE OF BLESSEDNESS

--APRIL 28.--MATTHEW 5:1-12.--

Text:--“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”--Verse 8.

OF THE GREAT TEACHER we read, "He spake as never man spake." He was the Man Christ Jesus, but He was not a fallen man, not a sinner. His life was transferred from a heavenly to an earthly condition; hence, as a Man, He was "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners." (Heb. 7:26.) More than this, at the time of His consecration to death, He entered into a covenant of sacrifice with Jehovah, and thereupon He received His anointing of the Holy Spirit --this was the power of the Highest. What need have we for wonder, then, when we read that He taught as one having authority--as one who knew, who understood clearly and positively the things which He presented!

The eight Beatitudes illustrate the difference between the teachings of Jesus and all other teachings from every other quarter. He had a new view of what to present. His is a different Message from all other messages to this day. While other teachers instructed the people to hold up their heads, to remember noble ancestors, etc., and thereby be blessed, Jesus encouraged His hearers to realize that the poor in spirit, the humble-minded, would receive the great blessings.

While other teachers held forth the rich, the great, the learned, the mighty, the influential amongst men as the patterns to be copied, if happiness would be attained, Jesus, in these beatitudes, sets forth the reverse. His prescriptions for happiness have indeed been followed by a few, and these alone appreciate their merit and are finding the blessings promised, both for the present life and for that which is to come.

The contrast between the Ten Commandments of the Mosaic Law and the eight Beatitudes declared by Jesus on the Mount, illustrate in considerable degree the difference between the Law Dispensation, and the Dispensation of Grace. The Law commanded the "house of servants" what they should and what they should not do. "Moses was faithful as a servant over all his house." (Heb. 3:5, 6.) He delivered to the "house of servants"--typical Israel--the Divine Law, by the keeping of which they might be blessed and used in the Divine service.

But the Gospel Message is a still higher one. It does not ignore the Law given by Moses to the "house of servants." It recognizes the Law as just, and holy, and good, and that Israel did not obtain that which they sought, because unable, through the weakness of heredity, to keep the spirit of God's perfect Law. The New Dispensation, which Jehovah inaugurated through Jesus, provides a full Ransom sacrifice for all sinners, and proposes ultimately to bless and to assist all out of all the weakness of heredity--not only Israel, but the entire race of Adam. The Law feature will be maintained, but grace and mercy will come in to render the necessary assistance to the keeping of the Law. But before that New Era of world blessing is introduced, the Divine arrangement proposes to gather a special class, all of whom must be "copies of God's dear Son." (Rom. 8:29, Diaglott.) These are to be His joint-heirs, in every sense of the word --in the sufferings and self-denials and persecutions and sacrifices of the present life, as well as in the glories, the honor and immortality of the future life.

CALLED TO BE THE ELECT

The Mission of Jesus and His teachings, at His first advent, were not to the world, but to a special class: "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear." The Message for the world will go forth at His second advent, and we have the assurance that then all the blinded eyes will be opened and all the deaf ears will be unstopped, and the knowledge of the glory of God will fill the whole earth.

In today's study, Jesus was addressing such of the Jews as had the hearing ear, such as had an inclination to be His disciples. He was addressing the class to whom He said, "If any man will be My disciple, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me, that where I am there shall My disciple be." It was to this class that the Beatitudes were spoken, not with thunderings of Sinai, not with threats of vengeance and death if the lessons were not learned.

The Master was addressing such as believed on Him, the class for whom He was about to appear in the presence of God, after finishing His sacrificial work, to impute to them His covering for their blemishes and imperfections, and to give them a standing with the Father, and to make their sacrifices "holy and acceptable to God." (Rom. 12:1.) He was instructing these as to how they could best make their calling and election sure, how they could the more successfully win the great "prize" to which they were called. Others may gather precious lessons from these Beatitudes, but only the spirit-begotten can appreciate them fully.

THE PALACE OF BLESSEDNESS

The foundation of the Palace of Blessedness is *Humility*. None can ever hope for a share in the Messianic Kingdom except as he is humble-minded: "Blessed are the *poor in spirit*, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." To such and such only will this great blessing come. It would never do for God to accept as a member of the Kingdom class one possessed of the spirit of pride and selfish ambition. In Satan's experience we have an illustration of what pride might accomplish. God proposes that humility shall be a primary test as respects the Bride class.

The Palace Reception Room, upon the foundation of Humility, on the ground-floor of the Palace, is the chamber of Sorrow--mourning. Only such as know what it is to be touched with the feelings of human infirmities can be members of the Royal Priesthood, which by and by is to deal with and assist back to harmony with God whoever wills of all humanity. Besides, this Reception-Room of sorrow and mourning seems necessary for our complete separation from the things of the world, the flesh and the Devil. Few have ever been saints without passing through sorrowful experiences. We remember Jesus' words, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Yes, the Reception Room of mourning is necessary for us before we can appreciate the comfort which God has provided for this particular class--"His elect": "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."

The Palace Library is Meekness. None can be successfully taught of the Lord and fully enjoy the Palace of Blessedness without the quality of meekness or teachableness. Into this Library the follower of Jesus must frequently go, there to learn valuable lessons, without which he could not make progress in his faith-building and character-development: "Blessed are the *meek*, for they shall inherit the earth." As members of Messiah, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus, their Lord, these will come into the full possession, the full control of the earth. For a thousand years this control will be maintained while mankind will be taught valuable lessons and be uplifted out of sin and degradation and death to the perfect manhood lost by Father Adam, redeemed by Jesus. Only at the close of the Messianic reign will The Meek turn over their inheritance, the earth, to mankind. Then those of the earth who will receive the control will be such of mankind as will have learned their lessons of meekness.

The Dining Room: Hunger for Righteousness. All who will be joint-heirs with Christ will be lovers of righteousness and haters of iniquity, in likeness of the Redeemer. It is very important, therefore, that in our Palace of Blessedness we have a large and well-appointed Dining Room, where our *hunger and thirst for righteousness* may be encouraged and satisfied at the same time. "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." They will get their fill of it, for their own perfection in the First Resurrection, and in the establishment of righteousness in all the earth, during the thousand years of Messiah's reign.

The Door of the Palace: Mercy. One of the most important lessons for the New Creature to learn is love, sympathy, mercy. In the Divine arrangement we must go out and in this door constantly. Our own imperfections continually require Divine mercy and should as continually impress upon us the merciful disposition toward those with whom we have to do. Only thus will we be fitted and prepared to be faithful and merciful members of the Royal Priesthood in dealing with and blessing the world of mankind during the Messianic Kingdom. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy"; "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses"; "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."

The Palace Window, through which we may see God, is Purity of Heart. We cannot, while in the flesh, attain absolute purity in thought, word and deed, but we can have heart purity--pureness of intention and desire. Only such as have this heart condition may hope to attain the Kingdom honors and to see Him whom no human has seen, neither can see. "*Blessed are the pure in heart*, for they shall see God."

The Parlor of our Palace is represented by the characteristics of the Peacemaker. It implies a certain resistance and victory in respect to our own affairs, furnishing us the opportunity to help others. "Blessed are the *peacemakers*, for they shall be called the children of God."

The Kitchen of our Palace represents the trials and difficulties incidental to the rounding out of our characters as a whole and our proper nourishment and upbuilding spiritually. "Blessed are ye when men shall *revile* you and say all manner of *evil* against you *falsely*, for My Name's sake; rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven."

Reprint 5003

CHARACTER-LIKENESS TO THE LORD

"I pray for them . . . that they may be one . . . that they may be made perfect in one . . . that the world may know that Thou hast . . . loved them as Thou hast loved Me."--John 17:9,20-23.

THESE WORDS, we remember, were uttered by our Lord on the night of His betrayal, supposedly while on the way from the "upper room" where the Memorial was observed to the Garden of Gethsemane. The ones He evidently prayed for were the twelve Apostles, or rather the eleven, by this time; for in conjunction He says, "I have lost none of them, save the son of perdition." But the context shows that His prayer includes His faithful followers all the way down the Age. He says, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for all those who shall believe on Me through their word." He prayed that His followers might be one, even as He and His Father were one--the same kind of oneness, a oneness of mind.

This text is one of the best proofs that the Lord Jesus and the Father are not one in person. He could not have prayed for all of the Church to be one in person. It is a oneness of will, a full harmony of will, a oneness of purpose. The Lord said, "Not My will, but Thine be done." He thus came into full oneness, harmony with the Father--with the Father's will, the Father's Plan. It is not a mutual concession, where each gives up some of his rights in order to become one.

His first work for dealing with the world of mankind --before He would become the world's Savior and the Mediator of the New Covenant--was the election of the Church. This was the work which He had now begun, and He was committing to them the testimony. He desires that all the Church have a oneness of purpose, a oneness of will with His will. And we can see that this could be obtained only in the one way--by fully surrendering our will. And this, the Scriptures declare, is done by becoming dead.

TWO CAUSES OF DISSENSION

A man or woman is merely what his will is and what that will can make out of the body and its circumstances. And so at the very beginning of our discipleship, the first thing is to see that we are dead as respects our will, and alive toward the Lord Jesus Christ. All who do this He calls New Creatures. He grants them the Holy Spirit, that the new mind, the new will, may be theirs. In proportion as they obtain the new mind, the new will, in that same proportion will the oneness with one another exist.

That which causes dissension amongst the Lord's people is either a lack of loyalty or a lack of knowledge. If it is a lack of loyalty, they will gradually drift away. The Lord does not choose to force any of His family. He is choosing such as worship Him in spirit and in truth, such as are in every respect loyal. He has set aside for the purpose of selecting this class the entire Gospel Age. This work of selecting has been in progress for nearly nineteen centuries. And this company will be a Little Flock. They will, evidently, be a very select class. They are required to walk by faith, not by sight.

Not many have the loyalty to God and to righteousness to walk that way and to count the world as loss and dross--as nothing, with all its projects. As the disloyal ones leave the ranks, more and more the loyal ones will find themselves drawn together, and more and more of oneness will be found among those who are faithful. This would necessarily be true in every time and in every country. All who are thoroughly loyal would desire to do the Father's will, desire to lay down their lives in the Father's service. And this desire would make them one.

FRICTION MINIMIZED WITH MATURITY

The Lord speaks of their being perfected in one. As each individual member makes progress, he becomes more worthy to fill the place or use the opportunity provided for him. And thus the Body becomes more efficacious. But the thought that our Lord here expresses is rather that of *completeness*. He is referring to the end of the Age, when the work will be completed, perfected, when they will all be one. But the grand consummation will be effected by something which the Lord will Himself do. We find that, necessarily, because of the differences of our flesh, we cannot in everything see exactly alike. Now we can only see more or less obscurely.

At present we cannot see fully and completely. Consequently there will always be more or less friction, even amongst those who are fully consecrated to do the Father's will. This friction should become minimized, as we become mature. But we cannot see eye to eye until the glorious consummation, when we shall have experienced the resurrection change, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God." We are to have our trial in these imperfect bodies. And those who show their loyalty in fighting against the world, the flesh and the Adversary, to the end, will be joint-heirs with Christ, sharers in His Kingdom, executors of the Divine Program for the blessing of the world of mankind.

AN ASTOUNDING STATEMENT

At the *Epiphania*, or bright shining, of the Lord's manifestation, God will have completed His present work of directing the Church, and the world will be informed that they are under a different Dispensation. When the world shall have come to understand the matter fully, they will know the truth of our Lord's words, in His last prayer with His disciples, that the Father loves the Church as He loves the Lord Jesus Christ. This is a very astounding statement. It shows that there is nothing selfish in our Lord. He did not say, "They will always be inferior to Me. They will never have the glory that I shall have."

On the contrary, the Lord Jesus knows that the Heavenly Father will exercise His Love along the lines of principle, character. And all who will be members of the same glorious company must have the same glorious character that our Lord had; that is to say, they must be loyal to the core. They must have demonstrated that they loved righteousness and hated iniquity. We read, "Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows." (Hebrews 1:9.) So He was anointed to be the Head of the Church class. But the Church class are declared in this Scripture to be His associates--not of inferiority, but of common fellowship, being on one plane. And the world will then know that the Father loved the Church as He loved Jesus. We understand that the Church will be on the same *plane* with her Lord Jesus. Nevertheless, we are to keep in mind that God "made Him to be Head over all--God blessed forever!" The Church will never be on an equality of position with Christ.

This is very wonderful to us, that our Heavenly Father should love us as He loved Christ, that the Lord would love the jewel, in the mire or wherever it might be found! The Lord Jesus has been selecting these characters out of the mire of human sin. And those who prove to be of the "more than conqueror" class--loyal as the Lord Jesus was loyal--the Father will love as He loved the Lord Jesus, and will glorify them with His Son.

Reprint 5358

THE TRANSFORMATION

TO THE Potter's house I went down one day,
And watched him while moulding the vessels of clay,
And many a wonderful lesson I drew,
As I noted the process the clay went through.
Trampled and broken, down-trodden and rolled,
To render more plastic and fit for the mould
How like the clay that is human, I thought,
When in Heavenly hands to perfection brought!
For Self must be cast as the dust at His feet,
Before it is ready, for service made meet.
And Pride must be broken, and self-will lost--
All laid on the altar, whatever the cost.
But lo! by and by, a delicate vase
Of wonderful beauty and exquisite grace.

Was it once the vile clay? Ah! yes; yet how strange,
The Potter hath wrought such a marvelous change!
Not a trace of the earth, nor mark of the clay--
The fires of the furnace have burned them away.
Wondrous skill of the Potter!--the praise is his due,
In whose hands to perfection and beauty it grew.
Thus with souls lying still, content in God's hand,
That do not His power of working withstand--
They are moulded and fitted, a treasure to hold,
Vile clay now transformed into purest of gold.

Poems of Dawn, p. 43

DWELLING TOGETHER IN UNITY

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!”--Psalm 133:1.

IN SOME earthly families there is a considerable degree of unity. Of such we sometimes say, "This family all seem to pull together." In other families there seems to be a pulling apart. When we see husband and wife, brothers and sisters, seeking to help one another, we say, "There is a great deal of love in that family." By this we mean an earthly love--a certain amount of animal love. This disposition is a right one. The Bible seems to imply that there is an obligation, a special duty, to those who are near to us. The Scriptures say that a man should not neglect his own household. He that careth not for his own is worse than an unbeliever. --I Timothy 5:8.

Man was originally created in the image of God, and had love Divine as the inspiring influence in his life. This love has been largely effaced by selfishness, which is the representative of sin. In proportion as people are fallen, to that extent they are selfish. Some are kind and generous to the members of their own family, and seek to co-operate in helping one another. We cannot say that

this is not a right principle, if, in seeking to do for its own, it does not injure others. Brothers and sisters should sympathize with one another, and have a spirit of helpfulness one toward another. Wherever we see this spirit in a family we say, "That is a delightful family."

There are other families where there seems to be a personal selfishness, and no brotherly sympathy at all. In such families there is a desire to do more for an outsider than for one of their own. The members see more blemishes in their own than in others. In such cases, justice is lacking. Whenever the principle of justice is overridden, a spirit of antagonism is engendered instead of love, and under such conditions there is no unity possible.

FRICTION THE RESULT OF SELFISHNESS

Let us apply this rule to the Lord's family--the Church. God has organized a new family in the world-- not according to any earthly ties, but according to the Spirit of God. This family consists of those who have been begotten of the one Spirit of the Father. What a beautiful family it is! We see a type of this family in the days of Gideon. All the sons of Joash, Gideon's father, were different from the others of Israel in their general appearance. It is written that they resembled the children of kings. (Judges 8:18.) So should it be with us. As we have the Spirit of the Lord, we should shine out in our words and deeds, and in every way should "show forth the praises of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light."--I Peter 2:9.

Evidently the principle of selfishness is the root from which all disagreements emanate. Surely there is nothing of selfishness in the Lord's Spirit. Whence then is this spirit of strife and discord which sometimes manifests itself among the Lord's people? One sets himself up and seeks to take away the rights and liberties of others. Others, having a similar spirit, may desire to be clannish. One says, "I am of Paul"; another, "I am of Apollos," a third, "I am of Christ." This spirit is wrong. St. Paul points out that there is none other than Christ to whom we should be united.

The most favorable condition for unity is that all seek to have the Lord's will done in their mortal bodies. The only difficulty that could then arise would result from ignorance or from weakness of the flesh that had not been overcome or that could not be overcome. The other members of the congregation, having the Spirit of the Master, would assume that the erring brother was merely ignorant, and not wilfully in opposition. Therefore in all kindness and gentleness they would seek to point out the will of the Father as expressed in Christ. The younger brother would be glad to have this done, because he would have the Spirit of Christ.

If the difficulty were one of the flesh, the brethren should recognize that it was merely a weakness of the flesh, and sympathetically they should point out to the brother wherein he had come short. In turn, he should make apology for his mistake. Then he should be freely forgiven. So he would learn and would come into proper unity with the other brethren. Thus we are all, at the present time, to have the Spirit of the Master, and so far as possible to live together in unity.

"NO SCHISM IN THE BODY"

It is, however, not possible always to "dwell together in unity" with everybody. It would be impossible for God and Satan thus to dwell. There are some people who have the spirit of Satan. We could have no unity with such a one. There would be polishing from coming in contact with such, but there could be no unity; for what fellowship could light have with darkness? On one occasion St. Paul wrote to the Corinthian Church, "I hear that there are divisions among you." Then he proceeded to say that it must be so, in order that whatever was wrong might come to the surface, that the

in harmony of the situation might be realized, and that the one in the wrong might be led to go out, because he was an intruder. (I Corinthians 11:18, 19.) Recognizing his position, such a one would go out, saying by his action, "I am not a member of the Body of Christ; these are the Lord's people." Or, failing to go out, he should be advised to do so.

Those who are not brethren, who are not children of light, but children of darkness, associating with the brethren, must be dealt with along the lines of the Divine direction laid down in Matthew 18:15-17. We may not take any measures not Scriptural. This is the only method.

We have seen great machines running with great precision and very little commotion. The parts are dwelling together in unity; all are working in perfect order, because they are well put together. They could not fall together, or there would be merely a rattling. The family of God are like a great machine. The setting of the members in the Body is under the supervision of the great Engineer, who brings them into the spirit of harmony, through the impartation of His own Spirit.

The working of a new engine or other machine is very slow at first, because there is a certain amount of friction engendered when the parts begin to move. So when the engineer finds that there is friction in any of the parts, he puts on a little lubricating oil, and thus prevents injury. When the parts are worn smooth, there is little danger of friction. So with the members of the Body of Christ. When they are new in the Body we must expect some friction, and then we should exercise more of the Spirit of the Lord. And we should be very sure of our own spirit, of our own intention.

Even if the one causing friction should not be of the Body, even if he were a stranger--no part of the machine to which he is attaching himself--there would be all the more need of oil. We should, therefore, remember that no matter how well developed each member may be, he will need the Holy Spirit. If we find any member unendurable, we should go to the Lord in prayer and ask for more of His Spirit, that we may exercise more patience and more brotherly-kindness in dealing with that one. So shall we be pleasing to the Lord, and helpful in building one another up and in doing good unto all men, especially to the Household of Faith.

Reprint 5229

SOWING AND REAPING

“Be not deceived . . . he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”--Gal. 6:7, 8.

THE thought of sowing is that of planting with a view to development or result. Some time the harvest will come. All of our thoughts, all of our actions, have an effect on future character. Little by little the character is made up. The sowing of today will bring the reaping of tomorrow. If our thoughts and our attention are given to earthly things, the result will be an increase of development along earthly lines; but if our thoughts and attention are given to heavenly things, the development will be along spiritual lines.

Sowing to the flesh, minding the things of the flesh, means gratification of the desires of the flesh, minding the things that are craved by our fallen nature. If yielded to, these cravings will grow stronger and stronger. It is a mistake to suppose, as some do, that a reasonable gratification of the flesh is proper. Every gratification of the fallen flesh satiates only the animal propensities. Those

who continue to yield to these propensities will ultimately reach corruption, death--the Second Death. Those who mind spiritual things set their affections on things above, not on things of earth; those who seek to develop themselves along spiritual lines, will progress in spiritual attainment. In due time such will reap a character likeness to the Lord, and become copies of God's dear Son, sanctified more and more through the Truth. To such is promised the gift of life eternal.

The words of our text are addressed to the Church, and relate, therefore, to "those who have made a covenant with the Lord by sacrifice." If these live after the flesh, they shall die, as the Apostle says; for they have already surrendered their human life-rights. If by earnest endeavors they seek to lay down their lives and to develop the new life by mortifying the flesh, by putting it to death, by striving to overcome the weaknesses which they inherit, they shall shortly be rid of all the impediments and be clothed upon with the new body. Then they shall be like the Lord.

FEW REALIZE THE EXTENT OF PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHARACTER

Comparatively few realize to what extent we form our own characters, to what extent our minds, our affections, are gardens in which we may plant either the thorns and thistles of sin, or the merely moral and practical qualities corresponding to the useful vegetables, or those seeds which produce the fragrant and beautiful flowers and fruits which more particularly represent the heavenly and spiritual graces. Whatsoever a man soweth he shall also reap, whether he sow to the flesh or to the *spirit*. Whoever, therefore, seeks for the heavenly things, joint-heirship in the Kingdom, etc., must plant, or set out in his mind, in his affections, those qualities and graces which the Lord marks out as essential to the development of characters such as will be "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light."--Col. 1:12.

Thus the Father throws upon all those whom he calls to this "high-calling," this "heavenly-calling," and who accept the call and make a covenant thereunder, the responsibility for their success or their failure in attaining the prize. Through his Word he tells them of their own natural weaknesses and imperfections, and shows them how he has provided a full off-set or counterbalance for these imperfections in the merit and sacrifice of the Redeemer; he shows them also what are the fruits and graces of the Spirit which they must possess, in heart, at least, if they would be joint-heirs with Christ; he shows them also, in the Redeemer's life as well as in his teachings, the copy which all must follow who would reach the same glorious station and be his joint-heirs.

We might look at this matter merely from the standpoint of the responsibility which it throws upon us, and might well feel overawed thereby. Rather, however, we should view it from the standpoint of Divine grace, and consider what a blessed privilege has been granted us, of being transformed by the renewing of our minds, that we may come more and more to know and to strive for the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. In addition to all this, God has set before us the grandest reward imaginable for the doing of that which is merely our duty and our reasonable service--the doing of that which would bring us the largest measure of joy and peace, aside from a future reward.--2 Pet. 1:3, 4.

WE NEED CONSTANTLY TO PLANT GOOD SEEDS AND WEED OUT THE EVIL

There is for all mankind a natural attraction toward earthly things; even though, during this reign of evil, the earthly things are blemished and in many respects distasteful to those who have learned to love righteousness and hate iniquity, there is still, nevertheless, a strong attraction toward

the marred and blemished earthly things. Like weeds, earthly affections and desires spring spontaneously from seeds which come we know not whence. The Christian, therefore, who would keep his heart in the love of God, must not only keep planting good seeds, keep setting his affections on heavenly things, but he must keep rooting out the weeds of earthly desire and attraction.

Our new life is not manifest to all, nor upon all occasions to any. This the Apostle intimates when he says, "Your life is hid with Christ in God"; it is a life of new desires, new aims, new aspirations, which the world can neither see nor fully appreciate, though it sees some outward manifestations of the new life in our daily conduct. Even the "brethren" may not be able to appreciate the progress of the new life in us; and we ourselves may at times be perplexed respecting the rapidity and strength of its growth; and we may need to look back over weeks or months, or perhaps years, in order to determine unquestionably that it is growing. Our new life, represented by our endeavors to follow the will of Christ, is *hidden* thus in Christ and in the Father.

In harmony with this thought the Apostle in one place declares that neither the world nor the brethren were capable of judging him--that only the Lord, who could read the heart and know all the conditions, testings and weaknesses to be striven against, could properly judge him. He even declares, "Yea, I judge not mine own self." (I Cor. 4:3.) It is an excellent plan neither to condemn others who claim to be walking conscientiously as children of the Lord, nor even to condemn ourselves if we are sincerely striving to do the Lord's will. We should simply press along, day by day, doing the best we can to cultivate the heavenly graces and to serve our Master, leaving all the results with the Lord. He careth for us, and so long as our hopes and aims and objects of life are centered in the heavenly things and our lives thus hid with Christ in God, we need fear no evil, present or future; for the Lord will be with us and bless us and keep us from falling and, ultimately, present us to the Heavenly Father both blameless and faultless.

PUTTING OFF AND PUTTING ON

Coming down to a particularization of the changes which take place in those who have consecrated themselves wholly to the Lord, the Apostle enumerates certain alterations of disposition which should be attempted and, so far as possible, accomplished, namely, the putting away of all the following: anger, wrath, malice, evil-speaking, impurity of language and falsehood in its every form. (Col. 3:8, 9.) The necessity for such correction of life might, at first thought, seem to be unnecessary to mention, such evil traits being too coarse and entirely opposed to every true Christian principle; but, as we scrutinize the matter we find that the Apostle has really taken into his list nearly all the weaknesses of the flesh which beset those who have become "New Creatures in Christ."

What is more common with Christian people than to become angry? How many there are who have named the name of Christ, but who have malicious or, at least, unkind thoughts respecting others, and who harbor these, permitting them at times to influence their conduct! How many are there who indulge in evil-speaking --that is, slander (here translated *blasphemy*)! This is often done in such a manner as to deceive, not only the hearer, but also the speaker as respects his real intention in speaking of others discredibly, unkindly.

If all evil and impure language were avoided, what a wonderful world this would be! Every Christian should see to it that, henceforth, every word which proceeds from his mouth shall be such as will minister grace to the hearers, such words as will do only good and be *edifying*. Finally, how much need there is, not only of having good intentions in the heart, but also of expressing those good intentions truthfully one to another, without deception, without hypocrisy. But it requires that a heart be very pure and very full of love if it would be very truthful; otherwise it would lead to trouble

continually. If the unloving, ungenerous, unkind hearts, full of evil surmising, malice, hatred and strife, were to express themselves frankly it would add immensely to the trouble of the world. The Apostle therefore urges, first the *purifying of the heart*, and then general candor.

With the thought before our minds of the oneness and equality of those who have been accepted into the Body of Christ, the Apostle urges upon our attention the necessity not only of putting off the evil dispositions of our fallen flesh, but also of putting on, cultivating, the various graces of the Spirit exemplified in our Head, Christ Jesus.--Col. 3:12-14.

He specifies these: (1) Compassionate sentiments; a disposition of largeness and generosity of heart toward everybody and everything--toward the saints, toward our neighbors, friends and relatives, toward our enemies, and toward the brute creation. Amplifying, he continues, showing that it would imply (2) kindness toward all; (3) humbleness of mind, the reverse of boastfulness, headiness, arrogance; (4) meekness, or gentleness of disposition; (5) long-suffering, or patient endurance with the faults and weaknesses of others. It implies that we should bear with one another's peculiarities of temperament and disposition, freely forgiving one another, if there be found cause of offense in each other-- learning the meanwhile to correct ourselves, as we see our own blemishes mirrored in others. And the standard for all this course of conduct is found in the Lord's course toward us; for he surely has been generous, kind, forbearing and forgiving.

THESE INJUNCTIONS ARE ADDRESSED TO THE CHURCH ONLY

The Apostle brings to the attention of the "holy and beloved," the Elect, the fact that he is not attempting a reformation of the world along these lines, but merely a transformation of those who have entered into a special covenant with the Lord. All who have thus covenanted with the Lord and who hope to make their "calling and election sure" to membership in the glorified Church, will not only seek to cultivate these fruits of the Spirit in their own lives, but also to assist in the cultivation of the same fruits, as they may have opportunity, in their Christian friends and neighbors; and above all, will seek to exercise so good an influence upon their own families that, as their children receive from them, as parents, the natural life and the necessary instructions and start therein, these may also, if possible, receive from them a start in the new life, and the necessary instructions and equipment for it.

But the Apostle, as the mouthpiece of the Holy Spirit, is a thorough instructor. Not only does he tell us what *dis-graces* to put off and what graces to put on, but, viewing the Lord's Body arrayed in these qualities of heart-- compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patient endurance, forbearance and forgiveness, he adds, "And *above all these* put on love, which is the bond of perfectness." Love is thus pictured as the "girdle" which binds and holds in place the folds of the robe of Christ's righteousness with its various graces. In other words, the Apostle would have us see that forbearance, meekness, patience, etc., must not be matters merely of courtesy or merely of policy. However much they might partake of these qualities in the beginning, the wearers will not be perfected in heart, nor be fit for the Kingdom, until they have reached the place where these various graces of their wills, or intentions, are bound to them by the cords of love--love for the Lord, love for righteousness, love for the "brethren," and sympathetic love for the whole groaning creation. Love is, indeed, "the bond of perfectness," the very Spirit of the Lord.

CAN WE BE DECEIVED IN THIS MATTER?

In our text the Apostle says, "Be not deceived." The question naturally suggests itself, Is there danger that we may not know whether we are sowing to the spirit or sowing to the flesh? We answer, there is danger of being deceived along this line. The Scriptures represent that the flesh is very crafty; that the natural mind is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, and that the new mind needs to guard continually lest it fall into a trap of the old nature. If one is living according to the flesh, he may expect to reap accordingly. Though others may be deceived, God cannot be mocked by our outward service of him and his Truth while we inwardly live according to the flesh. If we plant corn, we reap corn; if we sow wheat, we reap wheat. In all the affairs of our lives we are either building up the old nature that we agreed should be destroyed, or faithfully seeing to it that the deeds of the flesh are mortified and killed, that we may prosper as New Creatures.

We "Sow to the flesh" every time we allow the fleshly, selfish, unjust, unrighteous desires of the flesh to have sway in our hearts and lives. Each sowing makes more sure the end of the way, which is death-- Second Death. On the contrary, each sowing to the Spirit, each resistance of the desires of the flesh toward selfishness, etc., and each exercise of the new mind, of the new will, toward the things that are pure, the things that are noble, the things that are good, the things that are true, the things that are spiritual, is a sowing to the Spirit, which, if persevered in, will ultimately bring the attainment of the Lord's gracious promises and arrangements --everlasting life and the Kingdom.

Reprint 4828

GOD'S WILL CONCERNING THE CHURCH

"This is the will of God [concerning you], even your sanctification."--1 Thess. 4:3.

IN OUR TEXT the expression, "This is the will of God," is in the nature of advice rather than command. Considering the class to whom this advice is given, we find them to be those who desire to draw near to God and to have Him draw near to them. God has promised a great reward for submission to His will in every particular; and the Apostle Paul is stating what the will of God is concerning those who desire to live in nearness to Him. He tells them that it is God's will that they be fully set apart to His service; that they lay down their lives in His work; that in all the affairs of life their hearts should be set to know and to do His will.

In words of loving entreaty the Apostle elsewhere addresses this class, saying, "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable

unto God, which is your reasonable service." (Rom. 12:1.) The phrase, "Present your bodies," includes not only the primary presentation, but the continuation of the living sacrifice to the completion of the work. In other words, the Gospel Age is the acceptable time when God is willing to receive those who come unto Him through Christ. It is the time for His drawing, calling, those who are to become members of the Elect Church.

God's will for His believing people, justified by faith in the Ransom and consecrated to His service, has always been the same as the Apostle stated, namely, "This is the will of God [concerning you], even your sanctification." To produce this sanctification in believers God has given unto us "exceeding great and precious promises," and declares that the truth of His Word will produce the sanctification of character acceptable to Him--conformity to the image of His dear Son, our Redeemer.

Sanctification does not mean human perfection. It is the consecration, or devotion of the *will*, which through Christ is accepted of the Father as perfect; it is a consecration of the body to sacrifice--even unto death. As we have seen, that body is not made actually perfect through justification by faith, but merely reckonedly perfect, according to our will, our heart, our intention. The new will should seek to bring every power, every talent, every endowment of its body, into full accord with the Lord, and should seek to exercise an influence in the same direction upon all with whom it comes in contact.

This does not mean, however, that in the few short years of the present life it will be able to bring its poor, imperfect body to perfection. On the contrary, the Apostle assures us in connection with the Church, that in death it is sown in corruption, sown in weakness, sown in dishonor, sown a [an imperfect] natural body (I Cor. 15:42-44); and that not until in the Resurrection we are given new bodies, strong, perfect, glorious, immortal, shall we have attained the perfection which we seek and which the Lord promises shall be ours eventually, if in the present time of weakness and imperfection we manifest to Him the loyalty of our hearts.

Our text, as well as many other portions of the Scriptures, teaches us that the great work which God asks of us is not for others, but is a work in ourselves, subduing, conquering, ruling self. Everything else, therefore, our doing service to the household of faith, our doing good unto all men, by home or foreign missions, etc., is subservient to this most important work within. For, as the Apostle by inspiration declares, though we should preach the Gospel eloquently to others, and though we should give all our goods to feed the poor, or become martyrs for a good cause, we should be nothing from the Divine viewpoint, without love--the Spirit of Christ and of the Father--developed in us as the ruling principle of life. (I Cor. 13:3.) But before we can "put on love--the bond of perfectness"--and have its rule established, we have many enemies to *put out*.

OUR THREE GREAT FOES

The heart is the battleground on which the Holy Spirit helps us to wage warfare against the enemies which since the Adamic fall have taken possession of the human mind. Our battle is to be against Sin, the great taskmaster, which captured our race more than six thousand years ago. Satan, the great master or general of Sin, is our enemy, and has largely to do with the various influences against which we must contend. We are not, however, to battle directly with Satan, though we are to "resist" him; that is, we are to resist his influence, his deceptions, and his endeavors to lead us into error and into sin. We should be powerless against this great enemy were it not that our Lord Jesus has conquered Sin, and that He is on our part, so that we can confidently say, Greater is He that is on our part than all they that be against us.

Again, our battle is with the world. By this we do not mean with our fellow-creatures; for, blinded by the Adversary, they are little, if at all, accountable for their course. We are to do battle with “the spirit of the world” and its influences. The disposition of the world, the mind of the world, the motives which actuate the world, the ambitions of the world, the pride of life and the deceitfulness of riches--the wrong views of matters as seen from the worldly standpoint--we are to resist, to fight against. And it is a daily battle.

Finally, our battle is with the flesh--our own flesh. Ever since Sin captured our race, its slavery has been conducive to mental, moral and physical degradation. Its every tendency has been toward evil, and that continually; and although our Lord Jesus had compassion on us and redeemed us from slavery to Sin, with His own precious blood, yet we have in our bodies the motions, the tendencies toward sin.

So, although we are now free, and are with the mind serving the Law of Christ, and although we have covenanted to battle for righteousness, truth, goodness and purity, we find our new selves harassed by the old, perverted tastes and inclinations of our own flesh toward the service of the old taskmaster. Not the least of our battles, therefore, is against these perverted tendencies of our flesh; and the battle with these is also a daily battle. With the great Apostle Paul we should be able to say, “*I keep my body [my flesh and its desires] under*”--in subjection to my new will, the New Creature.

From the moment we make a full consecration of ourselves unto death in the service of the Lord, He reckons our flesh as dead, and begets us as New Creatures. Our new minds are alive toward God with a newness of life. Hence those motions of sin which we are seeking to bring into absolute subjection to the will of God in Christ are not recognized by the Lord as the will or the motions of the New Creature enlisted in His service, but merely as a part of the general enemy, Sin, pursuing after and battling with us. These we are pledged to resist, and to war against; and to overcome these He promises sufficient grace and help.

OUR DAILY BATTLE WITH SELF

These enemies in our own flesh cause us the greatest difficulties. To these Satan appeals; these he seeks to encourage in the warfare against the new spirit of our minds; through these the spirit of the world gains closest approach to us, and seeks to capture us and lead us back as captives to Sin. So to speak, the “New Creature in Christ” is beset, surrounded on every hand with enemies seeking its disaster and re-enslavement. We must battle for ourselves, for our own liberty, for victory over our own weaknesses; we must battle against the spirit of the world, against delusions and snares of the Adversary by which he would make evil things appear good, and right to appear undesirable. No wonder that the child of God is urged to be continually watchful; that he is urged to “put on the whole armor of God”; that he is cautioned in respect to his various wily foes and especially against those of his own flesh; that he is urged to faithfulness and loyalty of heart!

Heart-loyalty to the Lord means continual effort to bring all the conduct of our lives, yea, the very thoughts and intents of our hearts, into subjection to the Divine will. (2 Cor. 10:4, 5.) This is our first duty, our continual duty, and will be the end of our duty; for “This is the will of God, even your sanctification.” “Be ye holy; for I [the Lord] am holy.”--I Peter 1:16.

Absolute holiness is to be the *standard* which our *minds* can gladly and fully indorse and live up to, but to which we can never attain actually and physically so long as we are subject to the frailties of our fallen natures and the besetments of the world and the Adversary. But day by day we are taught of God; and as we come to a fuller knowledge of His glorious character, and as the

appreciation of it more and more fills our hearts, the new mind will more and more gain influence, strength, power, over the weaknesses of the flesh, whatever they may be--and these weaknesses vary with the different members of the Body.

If we be sanctified to God by the Truth, if our wills be dead and the Lord's will be fully accepted as ours, in thought, word and deed, then we have attained the will of God, and shall win the prize as "overcomers" even if we have never had opportunity to preach, to give to the poor, or to suffer as martyrs for the Truth's sake. Let us all note well this point: "This is the Lord's will [concerning you], even *your* sanctification." *Let nothing* becloud or obscure this truth; but let it *dominate* our course in life. Then if God's will is really our will, we have a clearly marked pathway before us.

But without doubt, before all such God will open opportunities to serve the Truth to others, to let their light shine to the glory of the Father and the blessing of fellow-creatures; for this is His command to us, and we may be sure He gives us no commands impossible to be obeyed. If you have been seeking opportunities of service and have found none, there must be something wrong; you may have been seeking some *special* service of your own preference (your old will meddling with your newly adopted will--the Lord's).

Possibly the great Teacher sees in you pride, which you would have been prompt to crush had you recognized it, but which hid itself from you under the cloak of "self-respect." Possibly the great Teacher by His providence and His Word is saying to you, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." (Eccl. 9:10.) Possibly He sees that you would be spoiled were He to give you a more important service for others, before you have learned the lesson of humility--all important in God's sight. Act quickly, therefore; the time is short. "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God [to do whatever service His providence has made possible to you], that He may exalt you in due time."--I Peter 5:6.

SANCTIFICATION THE RESULT OF LOVE OF GOD

True sanctification of the heart to the Lord means diligence in His service; a declaration of the good tidings to others; the building up of one another in the most holy faith. It also means that we do good unto all men as we have opportunity, especially unto the household of faith; that in these various ways our lives, consecrated to the Lord, shall be laid down for the brethren day by day, opportunity by opportunity, as they shall come to us; that our love for the Lord, for the brethren, for our families and sympathetically for the world of mankind, will increasingly fill our hearts as we grow in grace, knowledge and obedience to the Divine Word and example. --Gal. 6:10; I John 3:16.

Nevertheless, all this exercising of our energies for others is merely one of the many ways in which by the Lord's providence *our own sanctification* may be accomplished. As iron sharpeneth iron, so our energies in behalf of others bring blessings to ourselves. Additionally, while we should more and more come to the condition of loving our neighbors as ourselves--especially the household of faith--yet the mainspring back of all this should be our supreme love for our Creator and Redeemer, and our desire to be and to do what would please Him. Our sanctification, therefore, must be primarily toward God and first affect our own hearts and wills and, as a result of such devotion to God, find its exercise in the interest of the brethren and of all men.

Reprint 5126

JEHOVAH

JEHOVAH, our God, is the great Emperor of the whole universe, and his wisdom. Power. Goodness and benevolence are abundantly equal to all the responsibilities of so exalted an office. The human mind stragglers in its efforts to comprehend the mental resources of a being who is able to assume and to bear such responsibility. Think for a moment of the memory that never fails; of the judgment that never errs; of the wisdom that plans for eternity without the possibility of failure, and that times that plan with unerring precision for the ages to come; of the power and skill which can harness even every opposing element, animate or inanimate, and make them all work together for the accomplishment of his grand designs; of the tireless vigilance that never ceases, nor seeks relief from the pressing cares of universal dominion—whose eye never sleeps, whose ear is ever open, and who is ever cognizant of all the necessities, and active in all the interests, of his broad domains.

Reprint 1560

HOPE AN OUTGROWTH OF CONFIDENCE

“Cast not away, therefore, your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward; for ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God ye might receive the things promised.”--Hebrews 10:35, 36.

CONFIDENCE is another word for trust. The Apostle's thought, then, is, Cast not away your faith, cast not away your trust, which hath great recompense. It seems strange to us, sometimes, that God should purpose to reward faith rather than works. Surely almost anybody else would have made a Plan which would have said, I will reward you according to what you can accomplish. But God has declared that He will reward us according to our faith, our confidence, our honesty, our sincerity. Under the present conditions God can do nothing with a dishonest man. During the Millennial Age this class will receive the necessary stripes--just exactly what they need--to bring them rightly into accord with righteousness. But for the time being, God is making an appeal only to the honest-hearted.

As we come to the Bible and get it clearly before us, as our eyes become anointed with the Holy Spirit and we see into the deep things of God, we find that He has a great, a wondrous Plan. When His Kingdom shall be established, then all the families of the earth shall be blessed, and the light of the knowledge of the glory of God shall fill the whole earth. None shall need to say to another, Know thou the Lord; for all shall know Him, from the least unto the greatest of them.--Jer. 31:34.

God is not dealing with the world yet, but is dealing with the few. There was a time when He dealt with typical Israel alone. Then, beginning with our Lord Jesus, who kept the Law which the Israelites could not keep, and who obtained the blessing accruing from the Law Covenant--from that time God's Plan has been, we see, to gather out of all nations and out of all parts of the earth a people for His name, to bear the name of Jesus, to be the Bride, the Lamb's Wife.

As a woman is joined to a husband and bears his name, so this company is called out from the world to bear the name of Christ. The word Christ signifies, as we know, The Anointed of God, and includes Jesus, the Head of The Christ, and all the members of the Church which is His Body. God purposed the selection of the Church, and He purposed that it should not be accomplished by force, by compulsion. If any have thought that God has been dealing with the world, they have been mistaken. We are told in the Bible that God has been drawing a class, *calling* a people, a very different thought. Our Lord Jesus is the great Shepherd of the sheep. The sheep hear His voice and follow Him.

It is a wonderful privilege to become a member of the Body of Christ. God is not forcing any one to become a member. How strange it would be for us to think that He said, If you do not become a member of the Bride class, you shall go to eternal torture! Nay, dear brethren, He lays before us the grandeur of the Divine Plan, that seeing it, we might be eager to become heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord. This is set before us in the Bible as a great Prize, "a Pearl of great price." If we do not care to come in under the invitation given, then we need not come at all.

AN HONEST HEART--A WILLING MIND

We remember that the Apostle declares that the Gentiles rejoiced that they had been accounted worthy to hear. (Acts 13:48.) Do we realize what an honor it is that God has asked us to hear His Message? It is a great honor, to our understanding. The one thing that is the basis of God's favor is *sincerity*. There are people who are born dishonest, born insincere. The Message was never designed of God for a dishonest mind.

There is something about the dishonest, insincere, self-sufficient, that would surely lead them to take a wrong course. We think of a gentleman--a well educated man, an engineer. He was well-balanced mentally and could talk on any subject. One day we told him something of the Divine Plan and of the call of the Church. He replied, "Well, I do not care to have anything to do with it. I do not *wish* to have my sins *forgiven*; I wish to bear the penalty of my own sins. If other men are going to get along, I shall get along, too."

Jesus said that if one would receive His Message, he must receive it as a little child--in that pure, simple manner that a little child would receive a message. It is natural for a little child to be full

of confidence. How often we hear a child say, "My papa can do anything! My papa says thus and so." And so the Heavenly Father would have us honest, faithful, full of confidence in Him, trusting what He has said, not doubting. He would have us to be loyal to Him.

"Cast not away, therefore, your confidence," said the Apostle. He had been telling these Christian Hebrews that they had a good degree of confidence. They had accomplished a good work. They had endured hardness in various ways, partly while they themselves were made a gazing-stock, and partly while they were the companions of those who were so used. The Apostle went on to say that God was not unjust to forget their labor of love.

A POTENT TEST OF LOYALTY

But, dear brethren, it is not enough to make a good consecration; it is not enough that for a time we fight a good fight. No, indeed! God is not accepting to the Kingdom those who once were faithful. He desires to have those who were once faithful, who were afterwards faithful, who are *always* faithful! He desires to have in the Kingdom class those whom He can trust implicitly, those to whom He can safely give the glory, honor and immortality that He has promised to the faithful. And before they receive this high reward and exaltation, they must be thoroughly tested and proven. We see the reasonableness of this arrangement in every particular. If "He has called us to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ," He expects us to be found worthy of that honor--not that we could do anything to make ourselves worthy of so great exaltation, not that we could merit it in ourselves, but He expects us to be true overcomers, and to develop the character necessary for so high a position of responsibility and glory.

Have you given God the glory in all the affairs of your life, in whatever measure of success you have attained in His service? or have you often taken the glory to yourself? This is a good question for each one of the Lord's children to ask himself. We know that we have deserved no glory whatever in connection with what we possess or what we have accomplished. If any have attempted to take glory to themselves, they have taken the glory from the Lord. We must be so loyal that in presenting the Truth to others we will say, "This is not my Plan. I am glad to tell you anything that I know about it, but it is not man-made. It is all *God's* Plan."

So, then, let us remember the Apostolic injunction: "Cast not away your confidence." What confidence are we to have? Confidence in God. In whom else could our confidence be placed? Many of the world have no confidence except in themselves. Others place their confidence in some earthly hero. One man says, I have confidence in King George; I will follow him to death. Another man says, I have full confidence in Kaiser Wilhelm; I will follow wherever he leads. A third man declares, I have great confidence in President Wilson. What does President Wilson or any of these rulers know about the future? No one but God and He who is executing God's will, know to a certainty, except in so far as God has seen fit to reveal His purposes.

We as the Lord's people look up and see our great Creator's wonders in the heavens, and we say, How great is our God! Then as we look at ourselves and find how wonderfully we are made by our Creator, so that by thinking, by the power of the mind, we can move the different parts of the body--the hands, the feet, the eyes-- oh, we say, this is the most wonderful machine in all the world! And so we are led to exclaim, Surely this great God, our God, our Father, is willing to tell us, His people, who love Him and desire to know His will, what His will *is*! He must have a good Plan; for He is wise, He is loving, He is just.

CONFIDENCE PROPORTIONATE TO KNOWLEDGE

And so we have found our old Bible, which perhaps was long covered with dust, and we have studied about God's Justice, Wisdom, Love and Power. And we have learned to have confidence in that dear old Book; for its Message is so consistent, so reasonable, so loving. The Bible explains how sickness, sorrow and pain came to be in the world. It informs us that all these came as the result of sin, and that from the very beginning God foreknew the fall, and purposed the restitution of mankind from sin and death. The Bible points out that the blessing to all men would come when Messiah would come.

Thus we have confidence in the Word of the Lord and in the great Plan presented in that Word. And we have confidence that God has invited us to be joint-heirs with Christ in His Kingdom, that He is taking out a people for His name--those who will confess their sins, will acknowledge that they themselves are not great--those who will, when they receive God's favor, be so loyal to Him that they will be ready to lay down their lives.

Ah, yes! Others lay down their lives for earthly kings, and we have a King of kings and Lord of lords, and if we could not lay down our lives in loyalty to Him, what would we think of ourselves! We have a good God, worthy of all confidence, and we trust Him. In proportion as we have knowledge of God, of the Bible, in proportion as we have grown in grace by seeking to walk in the narrow way, in that same proportion our confidence is growing stronger and stronger.

CONFIDENCE INDICATIVE OF HEART CONDITION

The only question remaining is, Will we be found faithful? The Scriptures declare that He is faithful who has promised, and that He will do exceeding abundantly more than we could ask or think. He has determined that all who will receive the great blessing will be those who will demonstrate their loyalty to the fullest degree. Hence the Apostle urges, "Cast not away your confidence, which hath *great recompense of reward*."

God will one day reward our confidence. Why is it that the Lord will especially reward our confidence? The reason is this: Our confidence in God represents our heart condition, and it will go down like a barometer in falling weather if we lose our faith. Our hearts cannot be wholly stayed on God except as we are strong in faith. The only instances in which Satan will be permitted to take away the confidence of God's people will be in the cases of some who have not been living up to their light. The Lord will permit such to go gradually into darkness.

So we are to keep firm hold of our confidence; for this assures us that God is our Father. We all know something of the wireless telegraphy which is now being used in a marvelous manner on the sea and on the land. And this is only a feeble illustration of the wireless communication that maintains between the true Christian and the Heavenly Lord. In every circumstance this confidence, leaning on the Lord, will look to Him. There will be the wireless communication between Father and child.

When the Lord's people find themselves in difficulty, they should reason like this: What is the Lord's will? What does His providence indicate? He has said that all things shall work together for good to me because I love Him; therefore, having confidence in God, I am sure that *all things* shall indeed work out for my good. I have faith in His Wisdom and His Power and His Love. He could have protected me from this difficulty had He seen best. So the fact of its reaching me proves that He saw fit to permit it for a wise reason. He has promised that He will not suffer me to be tempted, tried, beyond what I am able to bear. As He is faithful, He will never fail to keep that good promise. So then, I will "not cast away my confidence, which hath great recompense of reward."

CONFIDENCE IN GOD TO BE TESTED

If God would reward according to works, some of His children would get very little. The very ablest of God's people cannot do very much. We spend one-third of our time in sleep; we need perhaps eight hours more for preparing our food, etc.; and we have a thousand and one things to do in the remaining eight hours. How little time we have, after all, even if we have cut off many things that once took more or less of our time! The most intelligent people have very little time to spare.

Do your very best, and try to note how little you will be able to accomplish by the close of the day. Think of those five minutes, that half hour, etc., and count up and see how much you render to the Lord your God daily. We fear that each of us would be ashamed to see how little time the sum total would make. And if the reward depended on our works, it would surely be a very small reward. God knows also that some have more time at their disposal and some less, and that some have more talents and some less.

Some are able to give ten times as much as others. How much would you like to do for the Lord? How much do you strive to do for the Lord? It will be in proportion as you have confidence in Him. As you come to have more trust in the promises, you will try harder and harder to live up to all the terms and conditions of discipleship. If you have but little confidence in the Lord, you will be like the man who was told that if he would go to a certain place he would find a fortune, and who replied, It is absurd to consider anything of the kind! If some one should say, Behind a curtain in a certain corner there is hidden a bag of gold, and any one who will go there for it may have it, it would be safe to say that not two persons out of a hundred would go to look for it.

God is testing your faith, your confidence, and our own. And, oh, that is worth so much more than all the wealth of the world! We have been invited to try for the great Prize. We said, Yes, Lord! Yes, Lord! Then He said, Will you be faithful under the conditions which I impose? I am watching to see how faithful you are every hour, every minute. I will protect you from the pitfalls in the way, as you strive to show forth My praises; I will uphold you in every trial. My dear children, I want to give to you a great blessing. You have all entered on a common basis. You would be very unequal in the race if I should take you according to your natural qualifications. I will judge according to your heart and how you do in little things. He that is faithful in the little things, in that which is least, will be faithful in that which is greatest. I will *reckon* the matter thus. That is a fair proposition, and exactly what the Lord says. God purposes to reward greatly all faithfulness.

THE NATURE OF THE PRESENT TEST

But there is another phase of the confidence. Bible students all over the world have been expecting certain things to occur; and we have been hoping that the Lord's time is near for the setting up of the Kingdom, the time for the fulfilment of the prayer, "Thy Kingdom come." We have been hoping for this; but if it should not come as soon as expected, we will still hold fast our confidence.

There are not many people in the world who are hoping to die soon; and it is only *our confidence* that makes us have this hope. If we did not have a strong confidence in the outcome, then we would not have the desire to pass beyond the veil. We are speaking of our confidence to those whose eyes of understanding have been enlightened to see the lengths, the breadths, the heights and the depths of the love of our God, and to know something about the times and seasons of our Father's Plan.

The Apostle tells us, "Ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that Day should overtake *you* as a thief. *Ye* are all children of the light, children of the Day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness."

(1 Thess. 5:4, 5.) God has promised that He will give His true children the light at the time appointed, and that they shall have the joy of understanding His Plan at the appropriate season.

"What more can He say
Than to us He hath said!"

The Editor has been rejoicing in these blessed experiences. Even if the time of our change should not come within ten years, what more should we ask? Are we not a blessed, happy people? Is not our God faithful? If any one knows anything better, let him take it. If any of you ever find anything better, we hope you will tell us. We know of nothing better nor half as good as what we have found in the Word of God. As the hymn expresses it:

"It satisfies my longings
As nothing else can do."

Personally, we can say, If God has some further experiences for us, we are glad that He has; if we need further polishing, we hope He will give it to us. If it takes a year to get the polishing necessary, we desire to have this time allotted. Or if He desires to have us do some work in the polishing of others, and if we should not get into the Kingdom ourself, we would be glad to have His will done.

We have sometimes asked, How many brethren would be willing to take a thousand dollars for what they know of the Truth? Not a hand was seen! Who would take ten thousand dollars? None! Who would take a million dollars? Who will take the *whole world* in exchange for what he knows about the Divine character and the Divine Plan? Nobody! Then we said, You are not a badly discontented crowd, dear friends. If you feel so rich that you would take nothing in exchange for your knowledge of God, then you feel just as rich as we do.

CONFIDENCE LOST

The Editor has known from earliest childhood what it is to call God his Heavenly Father; for he had Christian parents. And then, when fifteen years of age, we gave Him our heart, and revered and worshiped Him with what amount of knowledge we had. Although indoctrinated along Calvinistic lines to believe that only the Elect would reach glory, and that all the non-elect would experience eternal torment, we were accustomed to think of ourself as one of the Elect, and to appreciate the Love of God, which had provided for the salvation of the Elect.

A few years later, however, reason began to assert itself over superstition. We inquired of ourself, Where is this Hell which you preach? What do you really *know* about it? Confessing our own ignorance, we went to our teachers and Elders; but to our amazement we found that they knew no more about it than ourself. Then we stopped preaching and began to think and to examine the creeds. We found that the difference between them was trivial. All had the one foundation of Heavenly salvation for the few and eternal woe for the thousands of millions.

The more we investigated, the more sure we felt that a great mistake had been made; that a real God could not have made such an arrangement as our creeds declared. We threw them all away; and thinking that the Bible was the basis for them all, we threw the Bible after them.

SOUL-HUNGER FOR GOD

But having once known our Heavenly Father, we could find no rest without Him. Our soul hungered for His love and care. We still held to the great fact that our Universe had an intelligent, personal Creator; for His Wisdom and Power were before us on every starry night. The more we studied anatomy, the more thoroughly we became convinced that all humanity, yea, every creature, is "fearfully and wonderfully made," and that the eye, the ear, the nerves, the power to move in response to mere thinking, could not have come by chance, could not have been evolved by a nature god. We worshiped the God of Wisdom and Power, and sought to know more of Him, confident that we should find Him good.

Left to the resources of our own brain, we reasoned, Could others and ourself possess as the gifts of our Creator the qualities of justice and love, which we esteem to be the very highest of our faculties, and yet the Creator Himself be devoid of these attributes? Our mind answered, Surely He who formed the eye to see and the ear to hear and who gave humanity the qualities of justice and love must possess these qualities in infinite measure.

Thus with the eyes of our understanding we beheld the great God of the Universe, infinite in Wisdom, Justice, Love and Power. Again we worshiped Him, rejoiced that we could have confidence in our God and realize that He had made neither the earth nor the race of mankind in vain, but that He had some wise, just, loving purpose in connection with our creation.

CONFIDENCE REGAINED

Our next thought was, Would not a just and loving God be pleased to make known His purposes to those of His creatures who desire to do His will? Would He be ashamed of His purposes? Would He ignore the qualities of mind which He has given us? Again our mind answered, You may confidently seek God's Message to humanity. Thinking that we had already examined the Bible sufficiently, we turned our attention to heathen religions, only to find them less rational in some respects, though less fiendish, than our own creeds. Evidently the most intelligent peoples have been the most thoroughly seduced by Satan and his doctrines of demons, into believing the most horrible things respecting the Creator and His purposes toward His human creatures.

Finally, we resolved to begin anew the study of the Bible, first assuring ourself that our colored creed-spectacles were thoroughly broken and our mind entirely untrammelled. Gradually the Lord led us to clearer and yet clearer light upon His Word, until we found that the basis of all our difficulty lay in the fact that we had followed Satan's lie told to Mother Eve in Eden--"Ye shall *not surely* die." From that time onward the entire Bible became illuminated, grand, beautiful, harmonious; and now it stands pre-eminent before our mind as God's Word!

No tongue or pen can tell the peace, the joy and the blessing which a clear knowledge of the true God has brought into our heart and life. The Story of God's Wisdom, Justice, Power and Love fully satisfies the cravings of both our head and our heart. We are seeking no further. There is nothing more to be desired than to get this wonderful Story more clearly before our mind, and to appreciate more and more the Divine character as illustrated by the great Divine Plan of the Ages, which our Heavenly Father is gradually outworking for the blessing, first of the Church, and afterwards of all the families of the earth.

**BY THY WORDS ACQUITTED
BY THY WORDS CONDEMNED.**

“Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things; and an evil man, out of the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, that every idle [unprofitable or pernicious] word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof on a day of judgment. For by thy words thou wilt be acquitted, and by thy words thou wilt be condemned.”--Matt. 12:34-37.

REALIZING that we, the Church, are at the present time under the inspection of our kingly Bridegroom, who is now present (Matt. 22:11) to gather out of his Kingdom [in its present embryo or formative condition] all things that offend" (Matt. 13:41), and to gather unto himself his jewels, his bride (Mal. 3:17), we cannot too carefully consider the principles upon which this judgment and this selection are made.

The above words of our Lord indicate that the heart and the mouth are under very special scrutiny, the former representing the individual character, and the latter being an index of the

character. It is in this same view of the matter that those words of wisdom were penned,--"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee." (Prov. 4:23, 24.) The indication is clear that a right condition of heart is necessary to right words; for "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," as experience testifies to every man. It is therefore just that our words should be a criterion of judgment in the Lord's estimation, as he tells us they are. True, honied words are sometimes only the masks of deep hypocrisy; but the mask is sure to drop off some time, as soon as selfish policy renders a change of tactics necessary. The fact therefore remains that the words, the entire course of conversation and conduct, are an index of the heart.

Our first concern, then, should be for the heart--that its affections and dispositions may be fully under the control of divine grace; that every principle of truth and righteousness may be enthroned there; that justice, mercy, benevolence, brotherly kindness, love, faith, meekness, temperance, supreme reverence for God and Christ, and a fervent love for all the beauties of holiness, may be firmly fixed as the governing principles of life. If these principles be fixed, established, in the heart, then out of the good treasure of the heart the mouth will speak forth words of truth, soberness, wisdom and grace.

Concerning our Lord Jesus, whose heart was perfect --in whom was no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth, it was said, "Grace is poured into thy lips;" and again, "All bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth." (Psa. 45:2; Luke 4:22.) Moses, personating Christ, foretold the blessed influences of the Lord's words, saying, "My doctrine shall drop as the rain; my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass." (Deut. 32:2.) And Jesus said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." (John 6:63.) So wise, just and true were the Lord's words, that, though his enemies were continually seeking to find some fault, it is said, "They could not take hold of his words before the people; and they marveled at his answers and held their peace." (Luke 20:26.) And others said, "Never man spake like this man."--John 7:46.

Thus our Lord left a worthy example to his people, which the Apostle urges all to follow, saying, "Let your speech be always with grace [with manifest love and kindness], seasoned with salt [a purifying and preservative influence]." (Col. 4:6.) And Peter adds, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God,"--wisely, and in accordance with the spirit and Word of the Lord. Again, it is written, "Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile [deceit]." "Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue, keepeth his soul from troubles." "The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious words: but the lips of a fool [an unwise, reckless talker] will swallow up himself. The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness, and the end of his talk is mischievous madness." "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be hasty to utter any thing before God; for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few."-- Psa. 34:13; Prov. 21:23; Eccl. 10:12, 13; 5:2.

Job, in the midst of all his afflictions, was very careful not to sin with his lips. (Job 2:10; 31:30; 1:21, 22.) He knew that his words would be taken by the Lord as an index of his heart, and he was careful to keep both the heart and the words right, saying, "What! shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil [calamities, troubles--for discipline or refining]? . . . The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." There was no spirit of rebellion in a heart out of whose abundance came such words of loving submission, patience and faith under severe testings, and that, too, without a clear apprehension of the divine wisdom in permitting them.

The Psalmist puts into the mouth of God's consecrated and tried people these words of firm resolution:--"I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue. I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked [who tempts and tries the righteous] is before me."--Psa. 39:1.

How necessary to the stability of Christian character is such a resolution, and the self control which develops under a firm adherence to it. In an unfriendly world we can expect to receive only the reproaches of our Master; for the servant is not above his Lord. The world, the flesh and the devil oppose our way: there are fightings within and fears without, and many are the arrows and fiery darts aimed at the righteous. But what is the safe attitude of the soul under afflictions and severe testings? Is it not in silence before God, waiting and watching first to see his leading, his will, in every matter before presuming to touch things that often involve so much? So the Psalmist suggests, saying, "I was dumb with silence: I held my peace, even from good [even from doing or saying what seemed good in my own sight]; and my sorrow was stirred. My heart was hot within me, and in my self-communing there burnt a fire [description of a fiery trial]. Then spake I with my tongue"--not to the revilers, nor to others, but to the Lord.

Yes, it is always our blessed privilege to carry our sorrows and vexations to the Lord;

"For he knows
How to steal the bitter from life's woes."

He does it, as the Psalmist suggests (vs. 4-6), by showing us, through experience, the vanity of all earthly things and their utter inability to satisfy the soul's cravings, or to comfort the wounded spirit. Then comes the thought that the present life, with its cares, vexations and sorrows is passing away, that our days are but as a handbreadth, and however vexing our experiences, they will soon be over; and if we permit them to do so they will only work out in us the peaceable fruits of righteousness, and develop in us strong and noble characters, disciplined to thorough self-control, thoughtful consideration, patient endurance of affliction and loving loyalty and faithfulness and trust in God. Then the assurances of the blessed rewards of righteousness in the life to come begin to have a new and deeper significance, and we are made to realize that this is not our continuing city, but we seek one to come. Thus the heart is separated from earthly things, and made to realize the superior worth of heavenly things. Nothing but the Lord himself can satisfy the longings of the soul, which, tempest-tossed and tried, comes to realize--

"How vain is all beneath the skies,
How transient every earthly bliss,
How slender all the fondest ties,
That bind me to a world like this!"

Thus chastened and comforted, we learn to look beyond the present to the glory that shall by and by be revealed in the faithful overcomers, who, by patient continuance in well-doing in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, seek for the prize revealed to faith alone. Thus disciplined and blessed under fiery trials by going to the Lord for comfort and help, the child of God begins to realize what it means to be dead to the world and alive toward God, with a keen appreciation of his love and goodness and grace; and being thus separated from the world, and more firmly united to Christ, the language of the heart is, as the Psalmist further suggests, "And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee." (Vs. 7.) Thus

"E'en sorrow, touched by heaven, grows bright
With more than rapture's ray,
As darkness shows us worlds of light
We never saw by day."

Such is the blessed result of bridling the tongue under circumstances of trial and vexation, and humbly taking all our cares to the Lord in prayer, to the end that, when we speak, our speech may be with grace, seasoned with salt, and that under all circumstances we may speak as the oracles of God.

Considering our Lord's words above quoted--that we must give an account for "every idle [unprofitable or pernicious] word"--in view of the fact that the present is our (the Church's) judgment day, we see what great importance attaches to our words. All our words are taken by the Lord as an index of our hearts. If our words are rebellious, or disloyal, or frivolous, or flippant, or unkind, unthankful, unholy or impure, the heart is judged accordingly, on the principle that, "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Thus our words, in all the varied circumstances of our daily life, are bearing testimony continually before God of the condition of our hearts. So our Lord's words imply: and in this view of the case how timely is the admonition,--"Be not rash with thy mouth; and let not thy heart be hasty to utter anything before God [And remember that "all things are naked and opened to the eyes of him with whom we have to do."--Heb. 4:13]; for God [our Judge] is in heaven [upon the throne], and thou upon earth [under trial before the bar of God]: therefore let thy words be few." Let them be thoughtful and wise, as uttered before God, and not rash, hasty and illy considered.

Again, in harmony with the Lord's statement of the responsibility incurred by our words, it is also written, "He that keepeth his mouth, keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction." (Prov. 13:3.) What a fearful responsibility attaches to the tongue that wags in an evil, or even in a flippant, way, which is also dishonoring to God! And how necessary is the injunction of the Apostle Peter, "Be sober and watch unto prayer!"--1 Pet. 4:7; 1:13; 5:8.

The Psalmist puts this prayer into the lips of all who feel this responsibility, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth: keep a guard at the door of my lips. Permit not my heart to incline after any evil thing." "Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer." "My lips shall utter praise when thou hast taught me thy statutes. My tongue shall speak of thy word; for all thy commandments are righteousness. Let thy hand help me; for I have chosen thy precepts. I have longed for thy salvation [from all sin, and for the perfection and beauty of holiness], O Lord; and thy law is my delight."--Psa. 141:3,4; 19:14; 119:171-174.

That, as imperfect beings, we may always be perfect in word and deed is not possible. Despite our best endeavors we will sometimes err in word as well as in deed, yet the perfect mastery of our words and ways is the thing to be sought by vigilant and faithful effort. But, nevertheless, for every idle word we must give an account in this our day of judgment. If, in the daily scrutiny of our ways, which is the duty of every Christian, we discover that in any particular our words have been dishonoring to the Lord, we should remember that, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1); and in the name of our Advocate we may approach the throne of grace, explain to our Heavenly Father our realization of the error, our deep regret at our failure to honor his name and his cause by a holy walk and conversation, and humbly request that the

sin be not laid to our charge, but that it may be blotted out through his gracious provision for our cleansing through Christ, humbly claiming that in his precious blood is all our hope and trust.

Thus we should render up our account for every idle word; and by our words of repentance, supplemented by the merits of Christ applied by faith, shall we be acquitted. Otherwise the idle words, dishonoring to the Lord, will stand against us and condemn us, and we will be obliged to suffer the consequences. The first consequence will be self-injury, for every evil thought or word indulged hardens the character and inclines it the more toward unrighteousness. The second consequence is a bad example to others, and the stirring up of evil in them. "A soft answer turneth away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger." (Prov. 15:1.)

Thus, as the result of unwise or unkind words, we may stir up about us difficulties which will become the agents of retributive justice to teach us the lesson of self-control, and consideration for the feelings and opinions of others. It is often the case that the Lord (or the devil) is blamed for sending trials which are simply the natural results of our own mistakes. And those who fail to locate the root of the trouble (*in themselves*) pray in vain for the Lord to remove miraculously what they themselves could obviate by obedience to the Word, and vigorous self-discipline. "If we would judge [and correct] ourselves, we should not be judged; but when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord [largely by the experiences through which our own faults put us], that we should not be condemned with the world." (1 Cor. 11:31, 32.) But even should it be admitted that the difficulties are not directly caused by God, or the devil ("Every man is tempted [tried] when he is drawn away of his own lusts [desires] and enticed"), the natural tendency is to blame the matter on some one else, and to think that our loss of patience, our hasty word or act was the fault of another. How many deceive and encourage themselves with the thought: "If every body else had as reasonable and generous a nature as I have our family or church gathering or community would be a veritable heaven upon earth!" Beloved, let us examine ourselves, let us be very humble, lest the very words of self-congratulation and self-satisfaction which we consider in our hearts (if we do not utter them aloud) bring our condemnation. "If ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye [what merit is there in it]?" (Luke 6:33-38.)

It is only when we "endure grief, *suffering wrongfully*," that our suffering is acceptable to God as a sacrifice of sweet incense. "What glory is it if, *when ye be buffeted for your faults*, ye take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God; for even hereunto were ye called." (1 Pet. 2:19-21.) Beloved, let us see to it that our sufferings are for righteousness' sake only, and let us not charge God or our neighbors for tribulations resulting from the indulgence of our inherited or cultivated faults.

"In many things we are all faulty. If any one does not err in word, he is a perfect man, able to control the whole body." (Jas. 3:2.) But such a man does not exist. We all need and must continually plead the merit of our Redeemer and Advocate, while we strive daily to bring every thought into captivity to the will of Christ, and to perfect holiness in the fear (reverence) of the Lord.

In view of this fact, which we trust all of the Lord's people will endeavor more and more fully to realize, viz., that we now stand before the bar of judgment, we inquire, in the words of Peter, "What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" God-likeness certainly cannot include any harmful gossip, any unclean or unholy conversation, any disloyal or rebellious words. Let such things be put far away from all who name the name of Christ in sincerity and truth. And let us remember daily to settle our accounts with the Lord, to make sure that no record of idle words, unrepented of, and consequently unforgiven, stands against us. "Let your conversation

be as becometh the gospel of Christ." "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." Thus out of the good treasure of the heart we shall be able to speak the words of truth and soberness, to honor our Lord by a godly walk and conversation, to subdue the evil tendencies of our fallen nature, and to have our conversation "honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evil doers, they may, by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." --Phil. 1:27; 4:8; 1 Pet. 2:12.

If daily we render up our accounts to God and seek his grace for greater overcoming power with each succeeding day, we shall be acquitted in judgment and stand approved before God through Christ, having the testimony of his holy spirit with our spirits that we are pleasing and acceptable to him.

Reprint 1937

THE PRIVILEGE AND THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER

"Let us . . . come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."-- Hebrews 4:16.

PRAYER is a general term for all manner of petitions--whether a request, a hymn, or an expression of thanksgiving and praise. The word supplication seems to carry with it the thought of a continuous request, a repeated prayer, a longing desire, a waiting for the Lord to grant our petitions. Well has the poet said,

"Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed."

The first intimation of approach to God on the part of humanity is that in connection with the sacrifices offered by Cain and Abel. They did not come, however, with a petition to a Father, but with sacrifices, thus acknowledging sin. The one who brought a sacrifice symbolically representing a sin-offering God accepted; the other, He declined to accept in any sense of the word.

Two thousand years later, God made choice of Abraham as the person through whom the vague promise made to Eve should be fulfilled; and to him He made the very definite promise that in him and his Seed all the families of the earth should be blessed. With Abraham God made a Covenant, which He renewed to Abraham's posterity-- to Isaac, but not to Ishmael; to Jacob, but not to Esau. These men were privileged to pray, because by their faith they were justified to fellowship with God.

Eventually these blessings of Divine favor and grace extended to Israel as a nation; and they entered into these privileges in the full sense of the word, under the Covenant of the Law, of which Moses was the mediator. From that time on they had the same opportunities to appeal to God as had Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Indeed, in some respects, they had a preferred condition. They had a typical Atonement Day, on which they were typically cleansed; and because of this typical cleansing, they were permitted to come to God, as did David, Hezekiah and others.

The temple at Jerusalem was called the House of God, and the people went up to the temple to pray. Apparently it was generally understood that they might not pray anywhere and everywhere. This is indicated by our Lord's conversation with the woman of Samaria. Suppliants were heard only when they went to the temple to pray. The Samaritans claimed that the proper place to pray was on Gerizim, the mountain of Samaria. When the woman asked our Lord in regard to this matter, He intimated that the Jews were right in claiming that Jerusalem was the place where men ought to worship.--John 4:20-24.

The Jewish nation, by means of their Law Covenant made with God, were in covenant relationship to Him, and were, therefore, permitted to pray to Him. God does not regard all prayers, but only those offered by persons in a particular attitude of mind, and in a certain covenant relationship. Those outside--even sincere, honest Gentiles --did not have the privilege which Israel possessed.

ACCESS TO THRONE OF GRACE A SPECIAL PRIVILEGE

During the Gospel Dispensation, all who have made full consecration to God have become spiritual sons of God and may ask of Him as their Father, may come boldly, confidently, to the Throne of Grace in prayer. Those who have not made a consecration to God have no Advocate through whom to approach Him. Those who come in the spirit of prayer and with a real desire for those blessings which God has promised to give, will see that prayer is a privilege restricted to a certain class. Those who do not esteem it a privilege may as well not come; for God has not as yet made any proposition to the world. Prayer is the privilege of God's children.

Cornelius was a man who sought harmony with God. Although he prayed for years and gave much alms, yet his prayers and alms did not come up before God until an appropriate time--not until Jesus had died and ascended up on High, there to appear in the presence of God for us. (Acts 10:1, 2, 4; Heb. 9:24.) Three and a half years after the Cross, at the end of the time of special favor to the Jews, this man's prayers and alms came up before God as a memorial. But even then he must send men to Joppa to invite St. Peter to come to his home and instruct him how to receive the blessing of God in Christ. When Cornelius accepted Christ, our Lord became his Advocate, and the Holy Spirit came upon him. Thereafter he had the privilege of access to the Father at the Throne of Grace.

So is it with humanity today. There is but one way for any to avail himself of the privilege of prayer. Each must recognize the fact that he is a sinner, and that there is no access to God except through Christ. In an earthly court, etiquette demands that one who desires to be presented to the king must first receive an invitation to appear in the king's presence, then at a set time he must appear, dressed in a certain kind of clothes. It is the same at the Heavenly Court. No man can come to God except through Christ Jesus. After he has accepted our Lord as his Redeemer, and has offered himself in consecration, our Lord, as his Advocate, must cover his imperfections with the Robe of His own Righteousness, and present him to the Father. Then he will be accepted and given the privilege of prayer.

POSSESSORS OF PARTICULAR QUALITIES OF MIND NATURALLY DRAWN TO GOD

The question then arises, If the world cannot approach God in prayer, what is the method by which He draws men? The Scriptures say that no man can come unto Christ except the Father draw him. (John 6:44.) The answer is that the drawing cannot be done through the Holy Spirit; for the world has not yet received that Spirit. The drawing power which the Almighty exercises over humanity is in different degrees. Some have a strong desire to worship God, others have a weak desire, and others have no desire at all. This difference is due to the shape of the brain. Mankind are born with differences in this respect.--Psa. 51:5.

Various imperfections were stamped upon us before our birth. As the Scriptures say, "There is none righteous, no, not one"; "for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3:10, 23.) All come short of that standard which God would be pleased to recognize. But amongst mankind there are some who have not lost their reverence, whatever else they may have lost in the unbalance of mind resulting from the fall. Or perhaps they have the quality of conscientiousness or appreciation of justice well developed. These qualities draw or incline their possessors toward God; and they feel as if they cannot be happy without Him. This is the drawing influence.

This drawing influence may be illustrated by the effect of a magnet. If a quantity of steel filings were scattered throughout a box of sawdust, and a magnet were held close to the surface, the steel filings would immediately respond to the attraction of the magnet. On the other hand, the sawdust would not be affected; nor would the steel filings respond to any other influence than that of a magnet, exercised either directly or indirectly.

Man was created in the image of God. The fall has greatly marred that image, but no one is totally depraved. All have unbalanced brains, some in one direction, others in another. When the Truth comes in contact with those whose organs of veneration or conscientiousness are less impaired, they are drawn to investigate it, with the hope of being drawn close to God. Those whose organs of veneration and conscientiousness are more impaired, do not have this experience, and are not drawn unto God, if haply they may find Him.

Those who are without this drawing influence are not to be blamed; for they were born under those unfavorable conditions. Those who are reverential are, however, favored in that whoever would come to God must exercise faith in Christ; for without this faith there can be no blessing. At first this blessing and privilege are not clearly discerned by the seeker after righteousness. He merely longs to know God, and as he seeks, he finds; and as he knocks, it is opened unto him.--Matt. 7:7,8.

Any one, therefore, who seeks God will find Him; for the Scriptures promise, "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you." (James 4:8.) Those who thus find the way to God have something for which to be thankful in the possession of the quality of mind which led them to appreciate God. Persons of a particular character will follow on in the way and will, if faithful, attain to the reward. Those who have it not will not be drawn of the Lord until they shall have been made over in the next Age. We are not, therefore, to suppose that everybody is being drawn during the present Age.

After a person has been drawn, guided and instructed, then his will comes into action. It is for him to decide what course he will pursue. When he sees that no man comes to the Father except through Christ, and that the conditions are self-sacrifice, then he has the matter squarely before his mind. There are Scriptures which warn him that the path is difficult, but there are other Scriptures which tell him of the glory, honor and immortality at the end of the way. It is for the person to decide what he will do. But he does not come fully into the family of God until he has decided, and has taken the step of thorough consecration unto death; only then can he be begotten of the Holy Spirit and enter the School of Christ.

PRAYER A PRIVILEGE OF THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH

During the Jewish Dispensation, the Jews had the privilege of approaching God in prayer; but during the Gospel Age they have not had this privilege. As long as the Atonement Day sacrifices were offered annually, they had the privilege of prayer under the Law Covenant; but as soon as the typical sin-offerings ceased, all those privileges which that Covenant secured for them terminated; therefore the Jews have no access to God. They are still under the Law Covenant; but they have lost this special feature of it, because the typical priesthood ceased to be recognized as soon as the Antitypical Priest appeared.

The Church of Christ alone, therefore, at this time has the special privilege of coming to God in prayer; for the great Antitypical High Priest has made a satisfactory Sin-Offering of Himself. Whosoever will, through faith in Him and under the covenant relationship of sacrifice, may draw near to God in prayer, nothing doubting.

But while only the consecrated class, the under priesthood, the New Creation, are thus encouraged to approach the Throne of Grace with confidence and courage, very evidently all who in any proper sense belong to the "household of faith" may to some extent enjoy the privileges of prayer, the privileges of thanksgiving and intercession, and may rejoice in the peace of God, in a realization of the forgiveness of sins through faith in the Atonement.

During the Millennial Age, every good trait which any one possesses will be an advantage to him, and every evil trait will be a disadvantage. But no advantage will be so great that it will enable any to rise without the aid of Messiah. The less degraded will not have so far to retrace their steps; but where much grace is needed, much will be supplied. The power of the great Mediator will be adapted to all conditions; for the Scriptures give us the assurance that Christ's Kingdom will be

instituted for that very purpose. Since there is none righteous, no, not one, therefore all must have the great Messiah to assist them back into full harmony with God.

PRAYER AN OPPORTUNITY AND A NECESSITY

While prayer is a privilege and not a command, yet our condition makes it a necessity. Because of the fall of man from his original perfection, our flesh has imperfections, frailties; and yet we, as New Creatures, have responsibility for these weaknesses. The only way to discharge these responsibilities is to go to the Throne of Grace and there obtain help in time of need. Whoever, therefore, goes frequently to the Throne of Grace in prayer thus indicates that he recognizes the necessity of using the opportunity which God has provided in his interest and as his privilege.

Prayer is necessary to the well-being of any one who would properly enjoy the blessings and privileges of his organism. We have the organ of veneration, which appeals to us for the worship of God. If we decline this worship, ignorantly or wilfully, our best interests could not be served. In this respect, the majority of the world are not serving their best interests; but the Christian is so doing.

The person who does the proper amount of watching will have no difficulty in determining when he ought to pray. If he watches properly, he will continually see something about which to pray. If he foresees trouble and says, "Tomorrow morning I will pray about the matter," he is making a mistake. As soon as one has any thought or idea of a coming difficulty, he should make it the subject of prayer. "To him that knocketh, it shall be opened." Whoever seeks the Divine pleasing will find it.

The Lord's people are to watch in every direction. Our time is consecrated to the Lord, and it is our duty to watch that we render it to Him. If we consecrate our time to Him, and then waste it in reading novels and other worldly literature or in playing games, we are not using our time properly, although these practices are not sinful. Likewise we are to watch our own temptations, and to seek to control self and to guard against our own weaknesses, as well as those of others. We are also to watch the Word of the Lord, that we may be thoroughly furnished unto every good word and work.

Every trial, every temptation, is a special trial, a special temptation. No one knows whither the smallest temptation may lead. The Scriptures warn us to take heed; for what may seem a *small* matter may lead to something *great*. The fact that a thing may seem small does not imply that it may not be the most serious event of our whole life.

Those who have more opportunities for service are less liable to be led into temptation than are those who have fewer. We are, therefore, to be "not slothful in business"; but "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." (Rom. 12:11.) Watching against the world and its temptations, against our own flesh and its weaknesses, against the Adversary and his delusions--these duties will keep us busy enough.

We are also to watch the signs of the times. In our Lord's day He reproved some because they knew not the time of their visitation. His words were, "Ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this *time*?" (Luke 12:56.) If we are too much engaged in work or in pleasure to have time to study, to watch properly, we find ourselves in difficulty.

WATCHING UNTO PRAYER COMMENDED

It is one thing to be *tempted*, and quite another thing to enter into temptation. Our Lord was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet *without sin*"--He did not in any manner *give way* to the

Tempter. So it should be with us. We are to resist the Devil and to watch and pray that we yield not to temptation. If we are negligent, if we think, "Oh, a little indulgence this once will not hurt us!" we are in danger. The only safe position for us to take is to watch and pray *continually*, for if we should enter temptation we know not where the matter may end. As some one has aptly said, "We cannot prevent the birds from flying over our heads, but we *can* prevent their nesting in our hair."

On the night in which our Lord was betrayed, St. Peter was amongst the most confident of the Apostles. He said to the Lord, "Though all men shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended." (Matt. 26:33.) He did not know how much weakness was in him; therefore, when *the Lord was watching and praying* that momentous night, St. Peter was one of the first to fall asleep! Afterwards he was the very one to *deny* the Lord, and denied Him with cursing!

We recall our Lord's words to St. Peter, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." (Luke 22:31,32.) St. Peter's very courage led him into a trap placed before him by the Adversary. This quality he showed when he went into the courtyard of the palace and mingled with those who were there. St. John, who accompanied him, was a relative of one of the priests; but St. Peter, who was recognized by his speech as a Galilean, was courageous enough to enter, even after having cut off the ear of one of the priest's servants. --John 18:15, 16.

Our Lord had foretold what would take place, saying, "I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest Me." (Luke 22:34.) After this had happened on the night of the trial, St. Peter remembered the words of Jesus, "and went out, and wept bitterly." (Luke 22:62.) Had he not done so, we know not what might have happened to him. The weeping showed that the denial was merely the result of weakness of the flesh.

St. Peter could have taken a wrong attitude. He could have said, "I had a right to stand up for my own life, and not to be implicated in this matter." Thus he might have gotten into a wrong condition of heart; but his crushing out of this evil inclination toward self-preservation proved that in spite of his thrice repeated denial he was at heart loyal to his Master. So is it also with us; he who resists the smallest temptation thereby strengthens his character that he may be able to withstand the greater ones.

A good story is told which illustrates the wisdom of not entering into temptation. A man who desired to hire a coachman had a number of applicants for the position. They were ushered into his office, and he asked them, "How near could you drive to the edge of a precipice without danger of accident?" One said he could drive within a foot without fear of falling over; another thought he could safely come within six inches of the edge; and so on. Finally, one man who had listened in silence to the others, said, "I do not know how near to the edge of the precipice I could safely drive; but I do know that I would keep as far away from it as I possibly could." This man was given the position.

This is the principle upon which we should act. The one who keeps the farthest away from temptation is on the safe side. Those who feel too confident of their own strength and power and go too near the danger line are liable to slip over the edge. Let us ever pray that we may not enter into temptation; let us also *watch* that we may keep out of danger.

PRAYING FOR TEMPORAL THINGS

On His last evening with His Apostles, our Lord said to them, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." (John 16:24.) Undoubtedly there is a special blessing to those who look for a fulfilment of His promise. Our Lord said, on one occasion, that the Heavenly Father is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him, than are earthly parents to give good gifts to their children. (Luke 11:13.) He did not mean that we must necessarily use the words, "Give us the Holy Spirit," or that we should pray for a Pentecostal blessing, as do some well-meaning friends; but that we should ask for the spirit of the Truth, of a sound mind, for the wisdom which comes from above.

We are not wise enough to guide our matters aright. We are instructed, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." (James 1:5.) This wisdom seems to be especially necessary to us as the servants of God, that the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts may be acceptable in the sight of the Lord.--Psa. 19:14.

Our Lord instructed His disciples, "Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (for after all these things do the Gentiles seek); for your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." (Matt. 6:31, 32.) His words seem to imply that we are to be different from the world. They would be ready to ask and pray for every imaginable blessing--different kinds of food, houses, money, and what not! They could not pray for spiritual things; for they have no appreciation of such gifts. Be not like them.

Why, then, did our Lord in His prayer say, "Give us this day our daily bread"? This is a very different matter from specialization in prayer. The Lord has promised that, if we are faithful, our bread and water shall be sure. (Isa. 33:16.) We shall not be neglected. It is very proper that we acknowledge the Lord as the Giver of all good. According to His promise, we look to Him to give us food and raiment. Whatever we have, we acknowledge our dependence upon the Lord for what He provides for us; and we ask for nothing beyond what He does provide.

The more we advance in spiritual development, the less we feel like dictating to the Lord and the greater confidence we have in His Wisdom and the more faith in His promises. The most that we should do is to make mention to Him of those promises for temporal provision and of our trust in them. Of one thing we may be sure--that the Lord, who has called us to be His followers, has us under His supervision, and will see to it that all things shall work together for our good. If he calls us to be members of the Body of Christ, neither lack of food nor anything else can hinder us from the full opportunity of making our calling and election sure.

Those around whom the Angel of the Lord encampeth (Psa. 34:7), may be said to have a charmed life. The Lord is directing His Church. Therefore, think you that He will permit loss of life through accident or illness before we have had time to comply with the terms of His invitation? Surely not! Therefore, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Matt. 4:4.) We are trusting in the promises of God. He will accomplish His Divine purpose in us, if we abide in Him and His Word abides in us, and if we are faithful in obedience.

The Editor does not recall having from childhood asked the Lord for physical strength or health. He has known times when his physical strength was not great and when there were opportunities for service which seemed to require more strength than he had. Then he has taken pleasure in going before the Lord in prayer and saying that he was trusting that the necessary strength and all else which the Lord saw best to give him would be provided; but that if the Lord saw

best that he should not be able to make a satisfactory presentation, he would still do his part and leave the rest with the Lord, knowing that whatever the Lord permitted would be the best experience for him.

This course has always been sufficient. In forty years of active service, he has never missed a meeting because of lack of strength, although there have been times when his friends have said, "You cannot possibly speak tonight!" His reply invariably has been, "If the Lord gives me strength, I will go to the meeting place, and will trust Him for strength to speak." At one time he almost fainted on the platform; but grace sufficient has always been his portion. So long as he remains on this side of the veil, he intends to speak whenever he has an opportunity, unless he is unable to do so. He is sure that if the Lord gives him the opportunity to speak, He will also furnish the needed strength.

PROPER SUBJECTS FOR PRAYER

When we recall that St. James said of some of his day, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss" (James 4:3), we feel that we should be careful what we ask for. Our Lord instructed His Apostles that it is very important to abide in Him and to see that His words abide in us, if we would have our prayers answered. His words are, "If ye abide in Me and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." (John 15:7.) In other words, petitions according to the Lord's will shall be answered, but those contrary to His will shall remain unanswered.

To ask selfishly for the things of the earth would not be true prayer. Many Christians have a mandatory way of telling the Lord what they would like to have Him do for them--that so many should be converted to Him at a meeting; that this meeting should be thus prospered; etc. Our prayers should be along higher lines than these. Temporalities should be presented in a casual way. We should have the desire to subsist in such a manner as would be pleasing to the Lord and should be thankful for whatever His providence may give us--whether much or little.

It has been suggested that to pray for anything which God is *willing to give* is entirely proper. We may pray for the Holy Spirit, for more love, more gentleness, more patience, more wisdom from on High. We may pray that all these things will work together for our good; for He has promised that this shall be. We may pray for guidance from the Lord as may be best in His sight. But we may not tell Him what to do; for we have no means of knowing what is His will in matters in general.

Our Lord did not pray in a mandatory fashion. With His petitions, He said, "Not My will, but Thine, be done" --I have no will of My own; for I have given up My will and I desire to have Thy will done. This is a prayer of full submission. It did not mean that our Lord did not pray in faith, nor that He would not get what He desired. It meant that He desired to learn the Father's will; and He learned that the Father willed that He should drink the cup of suffering to the very dregs.

If we are submissive, our prayers will become more and more messages of thanksgiving. We shall increasingly desire to walk in the Master's footsteps. We shall desire that His will be done in us rather than anything that we could attempt to tell Him. Everything will be according to His Plan, which will come to pass, and which He will not alter for us nor for anyone else in the world. Those who have reached this development of Christian living will realize that it is not necessary to pray that God will *save* this or that one; for has He not promised to save all the people of the earth who will come to Him in His appointed way?

Consider the case of Saul of Tarsus. He was seeking to do God's will, but was blinded. After God had opened his eyes to the real facts of the case, he went forward in the right way. He was a

holiness man both before and after he received the Truth; but the enlightenment which he received taught him better how to do the will of God. If he had not been a chosen vessel of the Lord, he would have had no such experience, but rather he would have been treated as was Simon the Sorcerer.

ANSWER TO PRAYER DELAYED FOR OUR GOOD

Amongst some Christian people, agonizing in prayer, wrestling with God as Jacob wrestled with the angel, is very much encouraged. Frequently these people do so much praying that they do no studying, much to their disadvantage. The Scriptures instruct us to study to show ourselves approved unto God (2 Tim. 2:15), and not to seek to get something in a miraculous way, but rather in an intelligent manner. People who pray after this fashion are proceeding somewhat as did the prophets of Baal in the time of Elijah. Those men ran along the altar, cutting themselves with stones and crying to their god to consume the sacrifice.--I Kings 18:26-29.

The Prophet Elijah, on the contrary, was very calm. He worshiped an intelligent God, who needed not to be shouted at to attract His attention. When the time came for Elijah to pray, he did so, using few words, but going straight to the point.--I Kings 18:36-38.

There is a lesson for Christians in this narrative. Some who misunderstand the Divine Character and Plan in general, pray for the things which they should not, and neglect to ask for the right things. If we abide in the Lord and His words abide in us, we shall know what to ask for; and we shall be so careful about our asking that we shall not ask amiss.

If one's prayers seem not to be answered, he should not become faint-hearted and cease to pray. Our Lord says that we should pray and not faint. (Luke 18:1-8.) Our Heavenly Father may will to bring us into such a condition of heart that we can appreciate His blessing. It may be God's will to delay the answer for our highest good.

Thirty-nine hundred years ago, God promised Abraham that he should have the land of Canaan, and that in his Seed all the families of the earth should be blessed. That promise is not yet fulfilled. (Acts 7:5.) For more than eighteen hundred years the Church has prayed, "Thy Kingdom come! Thy will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven." The Lord has not answered the prayer yet; nevertheless we are to continue to pray and to wait patiently. We have faith that God will do as He has promised. "Wait ye upon Me, saith the Lord, until the Day that I rise up."--Zeph. 3:8.

There is a great blessing in store for all those who delight their hearts in the way of the Lord. We are in line with His gracious promises. We are waiting and praying. By and by, the Lord says, He will avenge His own Elect --in the end of this Age. He will deliver them from all the opposition of the flesh and of the Adversary. He will set them on High and pour them out a blessing such as He has promised. Then the prayers will be answered. Meantime, the prayers continue to go up, earnestly, trustfully.

There is a difference between "saying one's prayers" and praying. In prayer, we should have some definite request before our minds, in order that we may look intelligently for an answer. A brother, who was carefully scrutinizing his thoughts, words and doings, with a view to discovering what trait of character most needed upbuilding, concluded that he needed patience. Sometime after, he wrote, "I have been wondering what is the matter. I have been praying for more patience; but my trials are of such a character that my patience is actually growing less. But lately I begin to see that the Lord is answering my prayer for patience in this very way, and is permitting these trials for the very purpose of developing this trait of character in me."

This experience is in line with the Apostle's injunction, "Take unto you the whole armor of God." (Eph. 6:13.) Whatever our prayer may be, we should watch to see in what manner the Lord is answering our petitions. This attitude on our part will demonstrate our faith, trust and loyalty. In turn our faith will be strengthened. Thus shall we be pleasing to the Lord because of our confidence in Him. He knows the way that we take better than do we ourselves. Then if something which we had not been anticipating should come into our lives, we should think, "Here is a lesson for us to learn--of patience, of obedience."

It is the privilege of the Lord's people to ask, in order that they may have fulness of joy. We have this joy and the "peace of God, which passeth all understanding," and we rejoice greatly in hope of the glorious things which the Father has in store for us and which the Holy Spirit reveals through the Word. The joyful Christian is the thankful Christian. The thankful Christian is the one who is making the best use of his life. By reason of having exercised thankfulness of heart, he will be the better prepared for the Kingdom. Those less thankful may attain the Kingdom, for aught we know. But the thankless heart will not get the Kingdom.

THE ATMOSPHERE OF PRAYER

The text, "*Pray without ceasing*," would seem to be the equivalent of the statement, "Cease not to pray"--the petition continues, as if the person were in an expectant attitude. In one way or another that petition may be still awaiting an answer. This idea is carried out in a court of law. It is the custom to address the court, saying that the applicants pray for such and such release from such and such difficulty in certain cases. That request might be withdrawn, or it might be continued. So it is with the prayers which we make to the Heavenly Court. We have made our petition; and if it is worth asking for, it is worth waiting for.

We should not be as the Gentiles, who thought that they would be heard for their much speaking. But we should seek first the Kingdom of God. Our prayers should be along that line. Whatever temporal experiences we would have the Heavenly Father might see to be helpful to us in the attainment of the Heavenly things of the Gospel. We should not cease our praying, although we are not bound by an iron law. God has not commanded us to pray, because that would be in the nature of a fixed rule, to disobey which would be sin. But we believe He will bless those who ask. The more we feel our need of things, the more we appreciate them when we get them. The Lord would have us appreciate these gifts by going frequently to request them; then, when they come to us, we are in a condition to receive and to make a better use of them.

We have many reasons for giving thanks--the heart that gives thanks will find itself more and more in a thankful attitude. At first when we begin to give thanks, we do so for the more pleasant things; but as our experience increases, we find joy in the afflictions and the persecutions of life; for these experiences refine our hearts and make them more susceptible to the right as against the wrong--the Truth as against the error, the purity as against the impurity.

Not only should we pray frequently and with regularity, but we should be always in the attitude of prayer. The children of God should be in that attitude of heart which looks to the Lord for Divine guidance in every perplexity and every experience. Just as the needle turns to the pole, so our hearts should turn to the Lord. If there is pain or trouble or difficulty in our pathway, we should look to Him. If there is privilege of serving the Lord, we should not think ourselves competent for the service without turning to the Lord for help. In other words, the Christian's prayer should ascend not only in the beginning of the day; the atmosphere of prayer should surround him continually. It should not be a mere sense of duty, but an appreciation of a great privilege.

Those who appreciate the Lord at all could not afford to be without this privilege. Those who do appreciate this privilege rejoice to go to the Heavenly Father many times a day. Our advice to all who are seeking to walk the narrow way, would be that they forget not this privilege. But in their families or in their rooms with their roommate, the prayer should be in such a form as would be reasonable and proper, according to what would be their best judgment of pleasing the Lord--and not to be an intrusion in any sense.

FAITH STRENGTHENED BY PRAYER

As to just how the prayers of one may benefit another we may not know. We have not sufficient information to philosophize on it very deeply. We might surmise certain mental influences proceeding from one to another, just as we know electrical influences to proceed from one station to another thousands of miles away. The powers of the mind are something not comprehended. We can influence ourselves, and, to a certain extent, influence another. One mind can influence another without a word, by some telepathic power. As to why God permits this and gives blessings in answer to prayer we cannot say. We are left to philosophize, to speculate.

If we are in the School of Christ, we are there to be taught, to learn certain lessons of life. One of the lessons is to have full, perfect faith in God--absolute trust. Such a trust is exercised by our prayers for ourselves as well as for others; and this trust is cultivated by our prayers. God is pleased to bless these prayers, and thus to cultivate and strengthen our faith. We cannot suppose that God would leave any important work undone if we failed to pray for it, or that the answer to our prayer would come as we look for it; but blessings may come from one channel or another. God is quite able to overrule any matter so that He can give blessings, either by our co-operation and prayers, or without our co-operation and prayers.

We have reason to believe that when we pray for others our prayers avail. We have known instances where prayers have been answered very remarkably. The Lord's Word seems to inculcate this faith in us. God's people *have been* people of prayer, and are people of prayer. We cannot imagine how one could be a consistent follower of Christ without prayer.

FOR WHOM MAY WE NOW PRAY?

We understand that promiscuous praying for health during the Gospel Age would have been improper, and that only by means of the *gift* of healing were the early cures of the Age performed; that it ceased with the death of the Apostles after accomplishing its object; and that the proper prayers relating to sickness, on the part of the saints, would have been those offered for the forgiveness of sins--as a result of which healing followed. But we see, too, that as the Millennial Age is dawning--lapping upon the Gospel Age, which is closing--we should expect that healing and general restitution would begin to be manifested, much as we do see it. And this leads us to inquire, In the light of the foregoing examination of the Bible teachings, and in the light of our present location in the dawn of the Millennium, for whom may we now pray?

We answer, the saints cannot properly pray for their own health now, any more than could their Master. They cannot properly ask the Restitution privileges which they have consecrated, nor can they ask that their sacrifices be nullified, by having all the cost of weariness, exhaustion, stripes or sickness miraculously removed. But when they realize their afflictions to be punishments for sins, they can still feel at liberty to confess their sins one to another, and to pray God for forgiveness. Thus they may as a result be healed.

The saints who abide in Christ, and in whom His Word abides, may pray for others than themselves, especially in view of the fact that we are now in the beginning of the Times of

Restitution; namely, in cases where they are sure their object is not self-exaltation; where their desires for the recovery of the sick are not selfish, and where they have reason to believe that the restored health would be consecrated to good works and the glory of God.

In such cases we may upon request pray for the recovery of the afflicted or imbecile not of the consecrated Little Flock--the sacrificers, the Royal Priesthood. Yet even in such cases, though our faith must necessarily be strong, because confident of asking from right motives, and at a time when the Lord is pleased to grant a beginning of Restitution blessings, we should always say, as the Master did in His prayers--"Nevertheless, not My will, but Thine, be done."--Luke 22:42.

However, it is not time yet to expect general healing and full Restitution work, as that evidently will not be due until the entire Priesthood shall have finished sacrificing and entered with their Head and Chief Priest, Jesus, into the glories and perfections of the Heavenly state, or condition, typified by the Most Holy.

PRAYER FOR KINGS AND GOVERNMENTS

In his Epistle to Timothy, St. Paul says, "I exhort, therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." (I Timothy 2:1, 2.) Other Scriptures tell us clearly that the kingdoms of this world are not the Kingdoms of our Lord. (Luke 19:11, 12.) They inform us in an indirect way that the world would not appreciate the fact that the affairs of the present order of things are all under the supervision and care of Satan (Matthew 4:8, 9; John 14:30); that the Lord will not set up His Kingdom of righteousness *until His appointed time*. When that time shall come, all kings and priests and people will serve and obey Him. (Daniel 7:27.) His reign will be the one that will be "the desire of all nations."

But the Bible gives us to understand that, in the meantime, these present kingdoms are given the opportunity of seeing what they can do under these conditions. (Daniel 2:37-44.) When the typical kingdom of Israel was destroyed and the kingdom was given to Nebuchadnezzar, it was for the opportunity of seeing what his kingdom could do. It might be righteous or unrighteous.

And so it has been from the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar down. They are all Gentile kingdoms, and not representatives of God. All these various kingdoms are demonstrating various principles of government. Mankind under these kingdoms are learning lessons of experience which will be valuable to them in the future. Under these kingdoms we have seen man battling for rights. Sometimes they have been defeated, and sometimes they have been victorious--as the case may have been. In the various battlings we have seen righteousness and unrighteousness striving together; but with all, *policy* rules.

Under all the kingdoms mankind has demonstrated that no government by imperfect man can rectify the difficulties which confront humanity. We cannot abolish sin and sorrow, crying and dying. Had only *one* king or one nation been permitted to experiment with the race, we would not have known whether or not other nations might not have been successful, had they had the opportunity. Each nation in turn seeks to be the universal power, and each claims to be the better government; as, for instance, the American Government wants to give better government to the Filipinos, and Great Britain wants to give better government to the people of South Africa. What do civilized nations and tongues do in less civilized lands? What can they do for the betterment of conditions? In all these countries, in all their endeavors, they show that selfishness dominates.

POWER USED FOR SELFISH PURPOSES

We see the fact demonstrated that if one nation had really the power to bless others, it would not bless them without taking advantage of them. Our civilized nations in heathen lands use their power in a selfish way, taking money away from their fellow-creatures. Instead of leading them to higher and better conditions, things have generally been conducted upon a commercial basis. And these very people who have more or less taken advantage of others in their extremity and need, and those people who have been taken advantage of by fear, will all no doubt learn some good lesson from these experiences.

God is permitting the nations to learn these various lessons, before setting up His Kingdom in great power and glory. When His Kingdom shall be established, the contrast between its government and all these other governments will be so marked that all will have a great deal to learn. No doubt many who suffered from injustice will be all the better prepared to appreciate the better government when it shall come in.

In the meantime, God's people who are being called out to be members in the Body of The Messiah are not told to say, "These kingdoms are not doing well and our Kingdom will show this." On the contrary, we should speak encouraging words: "Your nation is seeming to do about the best it knows how to do. As it gets more intelligent, it strives for a better government."

SYMPATHY FOR THOSE IN AUTHORITY

We who belong to the new Kingdom are as citizens in a foreign country. We see that we are more or less influenced by the condition of the things of this world. We have sympathy with mankind. We are glad that a New Dispensation is coming in. We see that these who are striving to make things better have a herculean task. If they were to give it up to us it would take all of our time; and under present evil conditions we could do no better than they are doing. We have great sympathy for kings and princes. They do well to accomplish so much, with sin in every direction.

Our sympathy would lead us to consider them kindly in our minds. And we may pray for them such wisdom as God sees best. It would not do for us to request of God that one of them should be healed, if he were sick. If we had some means of helping, we should use that means; but as for the results, we should remember that these lie in the hands of God. We should help in any way we can. We are not to specify, but merely to pray God's blessings upon these kingdoms.

We are interested in these kingdoms because we are interested in mankind in general. We wish to live a peaceful and godly life, that we may have that much more opportunity for reading and studying. (I Timothy 2:1, 2.) We are glad if there is peace in the earth now; and we do not intend to quarrel. We intend to pray for these rulers; for we do not believe that they are at heart black or evil intentioned. Perhaps they are trying to do to the best of their knowledge what would be best for all. Most of the monarchs of Europe are not wishing to pull the people into war.

PRESENT DAY BLESSINGS

As to the people who are keeping such a wonderful government in our own land, we see how they are having persons to watch every building that is being erected; how they give special attention to the fire department and the water department that there may be a proper supply and purity of water; and how they care for the general health of the city, providing for quarantine, etc., etc. Those who have charge of the school systems for the education of the young, and of the hospital systems, are doing a great work!

We should reflect that ours is a happy day in comparison with what it would be if we were living as people did in the time of the barbarians. When we see the wonderful things which are being done today--the great buildings, bridges and other wonderful improvements--we say, "What is man! Surely a wonderful piece of Divine mechanism! What things he can do even in his imperfect condition! And what will he not be able to accomplish when Messiah's Kingdom is here, which will put stripes on the disobedient, and utterly destroy those who will not come into harmony with its rule of righteousness!"

We are glad that things are moving as well as they are. Instead of berating the people who are the leaders, we prefer to think that they are well intentioned people. We can well pray for such without any difficulty in mind. And we can feel glad and thank God that these people take care of us as well as they do.

Our prayer to God for kings, etc., is that He will so overrule and direct among the nations as would be most in harmony with His wise plans, for the blessing and development of the Church now being selected. For though God has given over the world to the rule of the "Prince of this world" *until* the full end of the Gentile Times, yet God has not given unlimited power. The wrath of man shall not work ruin to the Plan of God; for He will cause the wrath of man to work to His praise, and all that will not so work He will restrain. (Psalm 76:10.) This is what the Apostle has in view: Pray God's guidance and direction over all the affairs of life and over rulers to the end that the piety, sobriety and growth of the Church may be conserved.

FORMAL PRAYER

"I often say my prayers;
But do I always pray?
And do the wishes of my heart
Go with the words I say?
I may as well kneel down
And worship gods of stone,
As offer to the living God
A prayer of words alone;
For words without the heart
The Lord will never hear,
Nor will He to those lips attend
Whose prayers are not sincere."

Reprint 5200

PRAYER--ITS USE AND ABUSE

"And He spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray and not to faint." "Pray without ceasing." --Luke 18:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:17.

IN THE first text under consideration, we see that our Lord used a parable to point out the lessons He designed to give. A parable is a word-picture designed to illustrate some truth, but is not necessarily a statement of facts. On the contrary, it seems very rarely to be a statement of facts, but is merely a suppository case. More than this, in a parable the thing said is never the thing *meant*,

literally. The wheat and the tares of one of Jesus' parables were not literal wheat and tares, but were the children of the Kingdom and the children of the Adversary. So the parable here is of an unjust judge, who had no appreciation of justice. Notwithstanding this, a poor widow came to him again and again importuning for help. To get rid of her he finally gave her the relief desired.

The Lord uses this parable as an illustration of our coming to the Heavenly Father--not that the Heavenly Father is an unjust Judge nor that the Church is a widow, but that the parable is merely an illustration of the reward of importunity in prayer. The woman's persistency in continually coming to the judge illustrated what Jesus wished to emphasize. In concluding the parable, He says that if an unjust judge would grant this poor widow her petition because of her continued asking, what might we expect of our Heavenly Father? When His children cry unto Him day and night, He is sure to hear their prayers. This implies that the prayers are proper ones for the Lord to answer. We cannot think that God would do anything but that which is just and right and proper, and in harmony with this thought the instruction to the Lord's people is that in coming to the Lord in prayer we should make sure that we ask only for the things pleasing to Him. Therefore Christians who live near to God are the best qualified to offer prayer that would be acceptable and would be answered.

“ABIDE IN ME, AND I IN YOU”

Our Lord Jesus was thoroughly informed regarding proper prayer. We have His own testimony, "I know that thou hearest Me always." He never had a refusal, because he always asked the things in harmony with the Father's will. There must be two conditions met in order that our prayers may be answered. We must first have accepted Jesus as our Savior, and then have made a consecration to God in His appointed way. These steps must both be taken before we can be in Christ at all. When accepted of the Heavenly Father in Christ Jesus, we become New Creatures in Him. It is to the New Creature that all God's promises apply. Whoever has not become a New Creature by being begotten of the Holy Spirit is outside of all these promises--but not outside of hope; for we see that, in God's Plan, there is a broad hope for all the world. But in this "acceptable time," none can offer acceptable prayer except in this special appointed way.

There is but one sheep-fold in the present time. Only those who are in this fold are in God's favor. These have a right to pray. But there is a second consideration, after consecration has been made; namely, Are these abiding in Christ or are they going out of harmony with Him? God's Word must abide in us--not merely that we should once have read the Bible through, or that we read so many verses or chapters each day--but the Word must remain in us, its teachings and principles must be assimilated and incorporated into our lives. Thus we shall be able to see what God's mind is, what is pleasing to Him, what we should ask for and what we should not ask for, under His terms. All who thus abide in Christ, and in whom His Word abides, may ask "what they will." They may ask anything that is guaranteed in God's Word, and this means that they may ask whatsoever they will; for His Word dwells in them richly, and they would not think of asking anything not authorized therein.

BLESSINGS EASILY GAINED NOT APPRECIATED

Our lesson teaches continuity in prayer--not merely that we pray once, and then say, "I have prayed about this matter, and now I will leave it." But the question may arise, "Why continue to ask? God knows every need. Why not leave the entire matter with Him?" The Scriptures seem to answer this question by showing us that we need to ask for our own benefit, that we may be ready to appreciate the answer when it comes. If we get things without our realization of our need of them, they would come to us so easily that in our fallen condition they would be unappreciated.

Indeed it is true that the majority of people receive daily many, many blessings that they are never thankful for; they do not appreciate them. God sends the sunshine and the rain, as our Lord Jesus told us, upon the evil and the good; and He intimates that these are great blessings from God. Yet how few people really appreciate the rain as a blessing from God! How few, when they see the sunshine, appreciate the blessing God is sending to them through the sunshine! Because these blessings are very common, and come without the asking, they are very little appreciated by the majority.

But the Christian, having the eyes of his understanding opened, appreciates more and more all these blessings as from the Lord. Therefore as he comes to realize his needs, and what is promised in the Lord's Word, he knows that he may advantageously go to the Lord in prayer that these needs may be supplied. His heart has come into that receptive attitude where he is ready to receive God's blessings thankfully and profit by them.

What, then, should we ask for as God's children? What do the Scriptures tell us to ask for? In the first place, they tell us not to use "vain repetitions." How should we understand this? Our Lord explains that we should not use vain repetitions "as the heathen do," who think that they will be heard on account of the number of times they repeat the prayer. The Chinese, for instance, have praying wheels, by which they can say a hundred prayers a minute. Thus they save time, voice, etc. But such prayers are only vain repetitions. Many professed Christians, we believe, practise vain repetitions; they say many prayers, which we fear often do not come from the heart, but are said over and over from an imaginary sense of duty or obligation.

NOT FOR OLD CREATURE, BUT FOR NEW

The proper heart condition would be one in which we would feel the need of the Lord's blessing and assistance, and would go to Him in a trustful attitude, presenting our petition, and waiting for His time and way to answer. As to the things that we should ask for, the Master points out in one of His discourses that the heathen, the people of the world in general, all not believers, ask for earthly blessings--"What shall we eat? What shall we drink? Wherewithal shall we be clothed?" So might a child pray for these earthly things in its innocence of mind. But children of God should pray for earthly blessings only to the extent that they would minister to the growth or usefulness of the New Creature.

As the Christian grows in grace and in knowledge he should come to realize more and more that he is a New Creature, and that the New Creature is to pray for itself and not for the old creature. The New Creature must take into consideration the needs of the mortal body which is its tabernacle and its servant, but must ask for this body only what will be necessary that the New Creature may properly develop, and may accomplish the work given him to do by the Lord. He may ask nothing merely that the old creature may be gratified; for the old creature is reckoned as dead. He may ask the Lord to supply his real needs according to His unerring Wisdom.

We should pray for strength to overcome the flesh, for wisdom to know how to deal with ourselves, for strength of character and for the development of the fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit. We should pray for spiritual food, for grace and wisdom to keep our garments unspotted from the world and to put on the whole armor of God. We should ask for wisdom as to how to understand the Word of God, and how to appreciate the Spirit of the Truth. All these things would be proper subjects of prayer, because they are part and parcel of what goes to make up the New Creation.

In these prayers for the higher things, we are not ignoring the body and its needs, though we are not to seek after the things that the Gentiles seek (the name Gentiles including all those who are

not in covenant relationship with God). Those who are in this covenant relationship with God should not ask as do those who are not in such relationship. God does not hear the prayers of those who have never come into His family. They have not been instructed to pray. And we are to pray for things different from those for which they would pray. In all the words that Jesus spoke there is no suggestion that His disciples should pray for better shoes or dress or better home or how to pay off the mortgage. Jesus and the Apostles never prayed for such things. What they prayed for is a suggestion of what we should pray for.

We are to distinguish between prayer, petitions to God, and adoration. *Any one* may worship God, may bow down and adore Him. But in the matter of prayer there is a *limitation*. Only certain persons may pray to the Lord with any assurance of being heard. And these are they who have become His people by a definite covenant. Any who have come into such covenant relationship with God have the privilege of prayer. This was true of the Jews under the Law Covenant arrangement; and it is true of us who have made a Covenant of Sacrifice with the Lord through Jesus Christ. But even when privileged to pray, we must note the conditions of acceptable prayer. The conditions are that we should pray in harmony with the Divine will and not seek to bend the Divine will to ours. This would lead us to study the Word of God to find out the things which the Lord has promised us, and we should not ask outside of the Divine promises.

BODY CARED FOR AS PROPERTY OF NEW CREATURE

We should appreciate the fact that throughout the Gospel Age the Lord deals with His children as New Creatures in Christ, and that all His promises to us are to the New Creature. The New Creature is interested in the old body, because this body is its property. The body's interests are ours as New Creatures only in so far as these interests are beneficial to us in making our calling and election sure to our Heavenly inheritance, in so far as their consideration will in no wise interfere with our spiritual interests--but no farther. We are not, therefore, to tell the Lord what we prefer, but are to take what He sees best to give; for this will be what is for our best interests. This does not mean that we are not to mention to God our bodily needs. But we are to do so in the way that our Lord indicates to us in His sample prayer: "Give us this day our daily bread," our daily provisions, acknowledging that the daily food comes from Him, whether it is fine or common, bountiful or not. It will all be for the best interests of the New Creature.

The prayer of one who asks only in harmony with the Lord's Word is certain to be answered. Good earthly parents are pleased to give good gifts to their children, gifts that they see are for their children's real interests. But if they see that the child is unappreciative of favors received, they might the next time withdraw the favors until proper appreciation is manifested. And so it is with our Heavenly Father. In bestowing His best gifts He waits for us to become really hungry for them. He does this that His blessings may do us the more good when they are granted.

PRAYER FOR SPIRIT-BEGETTING UNNECESSARY

In respect to the giving of the Holy Spirit some people have a wrong conception. Many not consecrated pray that the Lord would give them the Holy Spirit; but they have not studied the Scriptures enough. The Lord gives the Holy Spirit without our asking for it specifically, just as with the disciples at Pentecost: they presented themselves before the Lord and waited. They were praying, but they did not know enough about the Holy Spirit to pray for it. But the Lord gave the proper thing at the right time. And so it is with us, irrespective of prayer for the Spirit, provided we meet the required conditions. When we make our consecration to God through Christ, we do not need to ask

for the begetting of the Holy Spirit--no more than a child in its natural conception. The child does not ask for its own begetting. How could it? But after we have received the spirit-begetting, we should pray that we may have God's sentiment, God's mind, God's will, as our sentiment, our mind, our will.

God loves righteousness and hates iniquity. So we, realizing that we are surrounded by evil and selfishness, need to cultivate the spirit of love, that we may have that spirit which would appreciate and love righteousness. We are to learn gradually to love righteousness and to hate injustice and iniquity in large things and in small. We are to hate unrighteousness so much that we would scorn to do an injustice or an injury knowingly to anybody. The New Creature sees these things but dimly at first-- what are just and what are unjust things, what are righteous and what are unrighteous things. We wish to have the Lord's sentiment as our sentiment in everything. Thus by studying the Lord's character as revealed in His Word, and striving day by day to be conformed thereto, we are "changed into the same image, from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord." And thus we become more and more filled with the Spirit.

EVIDENCES OF POSSESSION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

As the child of God develops, the possession of the Holy Spirit is more and more evidenced in his meekness, patience, long-suffering, brotherly-kindness, love. These are the elements of character, of disposition, that God wishes us to have. These are to rule in our hearts, in our thoughts, and more and more in our outward lives. Anger, malice, hatred, strife, evil-speaking, envy, jealousy, all these are evidences of the unholy spirit, the spirit of the world and the Adversary, which we as children of the Heavenly King are to put away. They are the works of the flesh and the Devil.

Since all of us have a measure of the unholy spirit in our flesh, some more and some less, it is right to pray daily for a larger measure of the Spirit of the Lord, more and more of the spirit of harmony with His perfect will. But we must cooperate with these prayers; for the Lord never arbitrarily fills any heart with His Spirit, even after the begetting has taken place. By coming to the Lord in sincere prayer for these blessings continually, by asking along these lines, we shall be preparing ourselves to look for the evidences of the Holy Spirit in our life. We shall be enabled to see whether we have more meekness than we once had, or whether we still lack in meekness. We shall perceive whether we are more gentle and more patient, whether we have more self-control, and in what respects we especially need to develop more in spiritual fruitage. Undoubtedly all of these qualities are lacking to a greater or less extent; but as we watch and pray, we shall learn to find the answer to our prayers; and as we grow in knowledge, in love, in Christlikeness, we grow in likeness also to our Father in Heaven.

IMPROPER VIEWS OF PRAYER

Prayer, as we have shown, is very essential, absolutely indispensable, to Christian growth, yea, to spiritual existence. Yet we have never thought of praying in the extreme way that some do. We have never thought of telling the Lord all about His Plan and of our wishes as to how He shall govern the Universe, and when and how to bring to pass our own will. We think there is far too much praying along this line. The sooner it is stopped the better. In answer to the request of His disciples, the Master gave them a sample prayer, which was surely very different from the prayers that the majority of people offer, who seemingly do not heed the example at all.

The proper thing is to hearken to the Word of the Lord and not do too much speaking to Him. We are to do a great deal of listening, while He speaks to us. The poet has well expressed this important thought:

"Master, speak! Thy servant heareth,
Waiting for Thy gracious Word,
Longing for Thy voice that cheereth,
Master, let it now be heard!
I am listening, Lord, for Thee!
What hast Thou to say to me?"

We understand that the Bible is the Divine presentation of the Divine will, purpose, plan, concerning us as His children. It is the Truth that the Lord designs shall sanctify us. "Sanctify them through Thy Truth; Thy Word is Truth." So declares our Master. He does not say, Sanctify them through prayer! The Master's prescription is that we study the Word and become sanctified thereby. And who is wiser than He? If we have not written a volume on prayer, it is because we find no Scriptural authority or precedent for so doing.

While prayer is absolutely indispensable to the Christian, as we have said, yet it is the Word of God which teaches us God's will and Plan and which points out the way for us to go. We believe it is the failure to see this that has been largely responsible for the great want of faith of many professed children of God. No amount of praying will make up for a neglect of the study of the Lord's Word, which is the only Lamp to our feet given us as our Guide in this long, dark night in which sin has reigned in the world. "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path."-- Psalm 119:105.

We are to "pray without ceasing." We are to do this in the sense of not being discouraged when the good things promised us and asked for do not come quickly. We are to remember that the Word of Promise is sure. We are to rest in these promises and to continue to ask and to wait for their fulfilment--patiently, hopefully. Thus we pray unceasingly, "Thy Kingdom come," not by repeating the words every moment or every hour, but by continuing the thought, the expectation, the waiting for it, and by laboring in the interests of that Kingdom and in the preparation of our characters in order that we may have a share in it. We have known some to fall into difficulty by supposed communion with God--remaining on their knees for some time beside an empty chair on which they tried to imagine the Lord to be seated, etc., etc. We believe that they were in danger of falling into a snare of the Adversary by such unscriptural proceedings.

For our part we feel that the Lord has already granted so many blessings that we would be ashamed to ask for many more. Our own requests, therefore, must be few. The Editor's presentations at the Throne of Heavenly Grace are thank-offerings, praise-offerings, indications of his devotion to the Lord and trust in Him, petitions for wisdom and grace to guide in life's affairs. We recall the Divine promises all the time, and not merely when on our knees. We seek to live in harmony with our prayers, and would encourage others to do the same. However, we are not all constituted alike; and having stated the matter from the Bible viewpoint, as we believe, also as viewed in the SCRIPTURE STUDIES and in other WATCH TOWER articles, we must leave it, trusting that the Lord's providence will guide His people aright.

THE HOLY SPIRIT THE SPECIAL OBJECT OF PRAYER

The reason why the prayers of so many Christians are unanswered is that their prayers are for things God has not told us to pray for or that they were not offered in sincerity. They have asked for wealth or temporal blessings, or perhaps for the conversion of a specified number of souls at their revival meeting, or something else unauthorized, or they have not really desired what they asked for, if it was for spiritual blessing. The Lord *might* grant a request for some temporal thing to a babe in

Christ who prayed in his ignorance, not being properly instructed. But it would be different with an advanced Christian. The little child at the table might ask for something improper and violate the rules of etiquette without blame; while a person of mature age, advanced in education and in knowledge of etiquette, should know better. The things for which the Lord's children should especially pray are specified in His Word. The Holy Spirit is the special gift of God to His children.

When we come to know that the Holy Spirit is the influence, the disposition of God, then we know what we are praying for. We want more and more of the Holy Spirit of God, that it may make us more gentle, more kind, more loving; we want more and more of the mind of Christ (mind and Spirit being used here interchangeably). We realize that we must strive to have this mind of Christ. If we day by day cultivate the spirit of the Devil, we cannot expect ever to attain the mind of Christ. If we determinedly cultivate the Spirit, the mind, of Christ, then the spirit of the Adversary can gain no entrance into our hearts; and we shall become more and more sound in mind. We come to know more and more the perfect will of God as we are filled with His Spirit. Thus we are being prepared for an abundant entrance into the everlasting Kingdom.

PRAY IN FAITH, NOTHING DOUBTING

The Lord in the lesson under consideration, tells us that we must not “faint,” the word faint being used in the sense of faint-heartedness—“Consider Jesus . . . lest ye be weary and faint in your minds”; “for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.” We may ask for more of the Holy Spirit, feeling that we need grace along some particular line. For instance, we may feel that we need more patience. While praying for patience, we should not say, “I shall never be patient; I was not born that way!” But we are to expect our prayer along this line to be *answered*. We are to ask and then wait for the patience, continuing our petition, knowing that the patience will come, if we strive for it in harmony with our prayers. An excellent and practical way to assist in this is to impose a punishment upon ourselves for every outbreak of impatience.

The Lord's people have long been praying, “Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth.” This prayer has been offered for more than eighteen hundred years, and God's children have not yet seen His Kingdom established. Shall we cease to pray? Ah, no! We are assured that it will indeed come. Even now it is at the very doors! God's Kingdom shall be fully set up; and the time will come when there will be no disloyalty in all the earth, as now there is none in Heaven. Our prayers will not bring God's Kingdom one minute sooner than He has planned, but we pray by way of assuring the Lord that we are waiting for the Kingdom and expecting it in harmony with His sure promise. By so praying and not fainting, the children of the Lord are strengthening themselves. God's glorious Kingdom will be manifested--and *soon*! Then all who have attained the character-likeness of our Lord Jesus Christ shall be exalted to reign with Him in this Kingdom.

Reprint 5707

PRAYER THE VITAL BREATH OF THE NEW CREATURE

“And He spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.”--Luke 18:1.

JESUS spoke a parable, of which the gist, or import is, "That men ought always to pray and not to faint." That parable tells how even an unjust judge would, because of importunity, heed an appeal for justice and would finally yield to its demands, although he cared little for the principle itself. In the parable the woman was importunate in her petitions for justice against those who were doing her injury. The Lord seems to inculcate just such importunity in prayer, and gives this as an illustration of how His people should continue in their prayers; not that they should pray all the time, in the sense of never getting off their knees, or of never doing anything except to pray, but that they should *continue* in their prayers and not grow faint or disheartened.

In order to pray properly, the child of God should know what he may pray for. Otherwise he might be asking for the wrong things, such as God would never be pleased to give him. How may we know what things are proper to pray for? The Lord gives us an intimation along this line, of what is proper. He says, If earthly parents are pleased to give good gifts to their children, how much more is the Heavenly Father pleased to give good gifts to His children. The things which earthly fathers give to their children are *earthly* things. The things that the Heavenly Father is pleased to give to His children are Heavenly things. The world of mankind are not permitted to call God their Father. He disowns them as children. There is only one way to come back into relationship with God, and that is the way that Jesus opened up by His death.

Were not the Jews children of God before Jesus came and died? We answer, No. The very highest expression of God's favor toward any of them was shown in Abraham. And he was called only a *friend*. "Moses verily was faithful in all his House, as a servant." Those Jews who were not faithful were not even servants. But when Christ came, He made it possible for some to come out and pass from the House of Servants into the House of Sons. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God." (John 1:11, 12.) This privilege was not actually granted immediately, but merely in a reckoned way, up to the time when Jesus finished His course, ascended up into Heaven and poured out the Holy Spirit upon His followers. Then they were privileged to become sons of God.

All down the Gospel Age those who receive Him have been privileged to become sons of God. All the good promises of God's Word appertain to these. This class includes not only Jews, but Gentiles, to whom the door of opportunity was thrown open, after the special opportunity which had been granted to the Jews came to an end. Thus we have become Spiritual Israelites and heirs of all the things God promised to this class of sons of God. So when we go to the Father in prayer, it is the privilege of prayer as a New Creature. Whoever has not ceased to be an old creature and has not become a New Creature has no privilege of prayer whatever. The only exception to this is in the case of the children of consecrated parents, and God's favor to them is only on account of their parents' spiritual interests.

THE NEW CREATURE'S GREATEST NEED

Our text means that New Creatures should be persistent in their petitions to God. These may know what is proper to pray for, by studying the words of Jesus and the Apostles and the Prophets of old. The spirit-begotten ones may thus understand what are the rights and privileges of sons of God. To these the Heavenly Father is more willing to give the Holy Spirit than earthly parents are willing to give good gifts to their children.--Matthew 7:11.

The *Holy* Spirit is the one thing which the New Creature needs. The New Creature is on trial for the new nature--for glory, honor, immortality. And he can receive these only as he is worthy. The terms on which he is received into spiritual relationship with the Father are that he shall mortify, deaden, the earthly impulses and seek to have the spiritual impulses quickened. What, therefore, he

especially needs to strengthen him and bear him up as a New Creature is the Holy Spirit of God. Consequently God is particularly willing to give us this, and especially pleased that we ask for it. This does not mean that earthly interests will be ignored. It means that our Heavenly Father knoweth what things of an earthly character we have need of, just as He knows what we have need of for our spiritual welfare.

The Scriptures indicate that God has given us the instructions we need in His inspired Word, the Bible. This Word will make us more and more wise, as we grow in grace and knowledge and in His Spirit, so that in time we shall know exactly what things to pray for and what things not to pray for. At the beginning of our experience, we might not know this so well. The Lord said in speaking of prayer, that the heathen think they shall be heard for their much speaking, and that they use vain repetitions. Their prayers are *all* vain repetitions. The first petition was vain and all the subsequent petitions were vain, because they are not based upon the conditions necessary to acceptable prayer.

THE MOTIVE AN IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION

All who have come into the Covenant of Sacrifice with Christ may realize that they have the privilege of prayer. What may they pray for? They may not pray with definiteness for earthly things, as the Heavenly Father would not answer any petitions that would not be for the good of His children. St. James speaks of some who offer improper petitions. He says, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts."--James 4:3.

The word *lusts* here signifies *desires*. We are not to ask to gratify fleshly desires. For instance, suppose we should pray to the Heavenly Father to send us a million dollars, telling Him that we knew what to do with the money, and how to use it in His work. The Lord probably would not give it--for we would probably be asking amiss. But it might be that we would think that we were asking wisely. Whenever we ask anything from the Lord, we should scrutinize our motives to see if there is any personality connected with the matter. In our own case we should ask ourselves: Do we want that million dollars in order that we may shine in the use of it? If so, such a prayer would be a grossly improper prayer. We might offer such a prayer at the beginning of our Christian experience, and the Father would not chide us for it. We would excuse a child for doing what we would not excuse in one of adult years.

In respect to this matter of prayer our Lord gives us a cue. It is this: "If ye abide in Me and My Words abide in you, ye may *ask what ye will*, and it shall be done unto you." (John 15:7.) How broad a statement this is! It might seem at first as though we might ask for anything. But it has very particular limitations. Who are these who may pray thus? These are such as have already become members of His Body--such as have made a full consecration of themselves, and have received the begetting of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, the word abide means not only that they have entered into this relationship, but that they are *remaining* there, *dwelling* there; that they are members of the Body of Christ in good standing with Him.

"If My Word abide in you." For God's Word to abide in us implies that we have a *knowledge* of God's Word. This necessitates the studying of the Word of God, that we may know what to pray for. We should not hasten to offer petitions, and make a great mistake, and then say, I have made a mistake, and have asked for the wrong things. We should consider what the Word of God teaches on this subject, and if any one has become well acquainted with the Word of God, he should know whether or not he has met the conditions which will sanctify his prayer. It is only after he has come to this position that he may continue to make his request, nothing doubting. But very likely he will then find that he has not a very large list of petitions that he can present. What are some of the things we may ask for?

SOME THINGS FOR WHICH TO PRAY

One of the things for which we may pray is that God's Kingdom may come. We may go continually to the Throne of Grace, then, appreciating the fact that God has said that He purposes to have a Kingdom here on earth. And nothing doubting, we are to pray for that Kingdom. And as we pray, we are strengthening our faith more and more. What else may we pray for? We may also pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." But is not this something for the flesh? This is a necessity, and the Lord has warranted us in praying for our necessities. We are to use our judgment the best we may; yet we are not to trust to our own efforts alone, but to the Lord's supervising care. If, therefore, the temporal supply be scant, we are to learn the lesson of frugality and care of what we have.

We should learn very early in life not to be wasteful. When Jesus fed the multitude with the loaves and fishes, and then instructed His disciples to take up the remainder of these in their baskets, He illustrated His economy. We are to eat with thankfulness what we have, if it is merely bread and water, or potatoes and salt. There is nothing to indicate that we are to ask for pie or cake or ice-cream, but for the necessities. If in God's providence He furnishes the necessities and withholds the luxuries, then we are to be satisfied, to be thankful. But we are to pray and not to be fearful.

What if we do not get anything, *tomorrow*? Did you waste anything today? Did you eat too much today-- twice as much as you had need for? If so, the Lord will probably teach you some lesson, and it will be for your good as a New Creature. But if you have used wisdom and economy, He will provide the things needful. As the Prophet says, "Bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure"

We may pray for deliverance from the Evil One. This should lead us to see that *there* is an Evil One, and that we are not sufficient of ourselves to resist his attacks successfully. We need the Lord's help at all times, and we need to pray continually and not to faint.

We may pray for the forgiveness of our trespasses. What the Lord indicates in His model prayer is the forgiveness of our daily trespasses--"day by day." And these trespasses are the result of our fleshly imperfections. Our trespasses of the flesh today should be a great deal less than similar trespasses with us ten years ago or five years or even one year ago.

It is best not to use any set form of words in prayer, but merely to think in advance what you desire of the Spirit--more faith, more patience, more meekness, more love. Of course, we shall want to express thanks for Divine care and to request a continuance of the same. With such prayers, however simple, the Heavenly Father is pleased. The prayers recorded in the Bible are generally not lengthy. God accepts as our prayers all the good thoughts and sentiments of our minds, as well as those expressed by our tongues.

Other statements of our Lord and also of the Apostles seem to imply that we should not grow faint-hearted. After we have prayed for a certain thing, we should continue to keep it before our mind, and not conclude that because the prayer was not answered quickly God would never answer it. This would seem to apply to particular, individual things. Our text seems to include the thought that we should have in mind the advantages of prayer in all the affairs of life, coming repeatedly to the Throne of Grace to obtain the necessary aid.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF PRAYER

Will God forget us if we do not ask Him for things, and neglect to do the part of a Father? The answer of the Scriptures is, that this is not so. God has made abundant provision for His

children. But we are so constituted that reverence for God and desire for prayer are among the highest qualities of our nature. The organs of veneration and spirituality lie at the top of our head. And those who are not enjoying the exercise of these highest qualities are not getting the proper blessing out of life. Instead of living in the parlor of their brains, so to speak, some people live in the basement. Our true enjoyment comes from the exercise of the highest faculties of the head. Here we can commune with God respecting the highest things, the noblest things, the best things.

The natural tendency of some is toward the baser qualities of the human mind, rather than the higher ones; that of others is toward the *nobler* sentiments. But all are imperfect. Therefore when any have turned from sin and come into the School of Christ, they are instructed to pray, because this will enable them to get the best results from their own natural combination of faculties. By coming to the Lord with regularity in prayer they are enlisting the best qualities of their own minds. Thus the New Creature is using the highest faculties of the old nature to wean the old creature from the natural habits which he had cultivated through weaknesses of the flesh.

BLIGHT FOLLOWS NEGLECT OF PRAYER

There is a great blessing that comes from prayer! We see that if prayer be neglected, a certain amount of blight comes in; whereas if the New Creature persists in coming to the Lord in prayer, he thus uses the higher organs of the mind. He brings out the highest qualities, which will make for Righteousness and Truth, and for the growth of the New Creature. And the New Creature, making use of the higher organs of the brain, makes progress in character-structure and in the Lord's service.

Prayer is the vital breath of the New Creature. We cannot control, nor get the best out of our old bodies except we conform to our Lord's instruction to pray. If prayer was appropriate for our Lord, who was perfect, if He needed to go often to the Father in prayer, even so it is necessary for us to go to the Lord in prayer that we may be more and more transformed by the renewing of our minds. This does not mean that we should be always on our knees, but that we should go with regularity; if possible at least every night and morning.

Some may prefer to stand when they pray, and some to kneel; some to have their eyes open, others to have them closed. In all this the Lord leaves us free to exercise our own judgment. But some *formal* approach to the Lord every day should be observed. Not only should we have special *seasons* of prayer, but we should have the spirit of prayer, which should be with us in all life's affairs. As we are going about the duties of life, we should think, Now I am looking for the Lord's will and way. What shall I do about this matter? And, not stopping to pray again, we think as to what would be the Lord's will. Thus we shall have the Lord's blessing and guidance on that day in everything that is good.

Some persons of active mind have the tendency to make light of Divine guidance and to say, I know what to do. Nobody need tell me--neither the Lord nor anybody else. Such are likely to have this tendency grow on them, and to be unlikely to seek any special counsel.

But the child of God should feel that it is a privilege to have the Lord's approval of every thought, every act and every word. What we do is God's work, not ours. And because it was done a certain way today, does not mean that it would necessarily be done so always. There are certain things that are as fixed as the hills, and others that are not. So with our experiences. The Lord may give us one experience today, and another tomorrow. Today He may be leading us by the still waters and in green pastures; tomorrow the pathway may be thorny and through rough places. Thus day by day we grow in knowledge and grow in love, and we should be ready for whatever experiences may come to us:

"Content whatever lot I see,
Since 'tis God's hand that leadeth me."

Reprint 5310

PART III

SELECTED SERMONS

by

PASTOR CHARLES TAZE RESSELL

THE QUEEN IN GOLD ATTIRE

“Hearken, O daughter, and consider, incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty; for He is thy Lord and worship thou Him.”--Psa. 45:10, 11.

The beautiful imagery of our text and context relates to the Elect Church of this Gospel Age, which is here pictured as a Bride, the Spouse, and ultimately the Wife of the great King,

Immanuel. The Scriptures abound with this view of the Church. Notice, for instance, the Apostle's words to the Church of his day: "I have espoused you to one Husband, that I may present you as a chaste Virgin to Christ." (2 Cor. 11:2.) Note again the words of John the Baptist, "He that hath the Bride is the Bridegroom; but the friend of the Bridegroom, which standeth and heareth Him, rejoiceth greatly because of the Bridegroom's voice; this my joy, therefore, is fulfilled." (John 3:29.) The speaker does not identify himself with the Bride class and this with propriety; for, as our Lord declares, John the Baptist was the last of the Prophets; he belonged to and was faithful as a member of the House of Servants, but did not come in under the Gospel privilege of the Pentecostal blessing following our Lord's redemptive work. Of him our Lord says, "There has not arisen a greater than John the Baptist, and yet I say unto you, the least one in the Kingdom of God is greater than he." (Luke 7:28.) In other words, our Lord assures us that to have the humblest position in the Church class, in the Bride class being selected during this age, is an higher honor than that which belongs to the very noblest of the previous dispensations.

Failure to notice God's dispensational dealings with the patriarchs in the Jewish nation and with the Gospel Church has hindered many of the Lord's people from making good progress in the study of the Word; and it is time that all awake to this fact and realize that various features of the Divine Plan belong to various dispensations or epochs, and that all these are working together for the grand fulfilment of God's glorious purposes, of which the Apostle writes, "He will gather together in one all these things in Christ, both which are in Heaven and which are on earth." (Eph. 1:10.) This great work is not yet accomplished. The angelic hosts do indeed give reverence and obedience to the glorified Son of God. A "little flock" of footstep followers of the Lord Jesus from amongst men so glorify and honor Him as King of kings and Lord of lords. But as for the masses of mankind, living and dead, they have never even heard His name, or known of the grace of God in Him.

But according to the Lord's Word these all must hear and know and have an opportunity for salvation through Christ—"in due time." That due time is the coming Age or new epoch called the Millennium, the great thousand-year Day which God has appointed for the world's trial or judgment; as we read, "God hath appointed a Day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness." (Acts 17:31) But prior to that appointed Day He called out of the world a special class of those who have the hearing of faith and the eye of faith, that He may thus select the Bride of Christ to be His joint-heir in that Kingdom and His joint-associate in that glorious work of blessing all the families of the earth and granting to all of them a trial or judgment--a knowledge of the Truth and an opportunity to show their willingness to obey it.

THE BRIDAL ROBES

The context declares (V. 13), "Her clothing is inwrought with gold." But this pictures her as the Bride when all the trials, difficulties and testings shall have been successfully passed and she shall be accepted as the Very Elect, to be forever associated with her Lord and a sharer of His glory. In the Scripture symbology gold is used to represent the Divine nature. Hence the picture as a whole teaches us that when the King of kings shall present His Bride before the Heavenly Father at the close of this Age, after she shall have been glorified by the First Resurrection, she will be possessed of the Divine nature—"glory, honor and immortality."--Rom. 2:7.

This is what the Apostle Peter assures us will be the outcome. Speaking of the promises of God's Word to this Bride class he says that God "hath given unto us exceeding great and precious promises whereby we might be partakers of the Divine nature." (2 Pet. 1:4.) We do not get this Divine nature or this gold raiment in the present life; our immortality is a hope and not an actuality. As the Apostle says, "we seek for glory, honor and immortality." How difficult it is for us to grasp

the thought that the great Creator, desiring that the elect "little flock" should be associated with His Son in the great work of the Millennial Age, the blessing of all the families of the earth, did not invite the holy angels, but instead has sent the invitation to our fallen race, to such of its members as would have the ears to hear and the hearts to respond to the call of this Gospel Age--to walk the narrow way in the footsteps of our Redeemer!

No wonder the Apostle declares that although we have God's assurance that we are sons of God, and although this signifies that we shall be heirs of God, yet it does not appear what we shall be, how great we shall be. It is too wonderful a matter for us to comprehend; too wonderful to even be described in the Scriptures. Hence, the only information granted to us is that when our Lord Jesus shall be manifested at His Second Advent in power and great glory, then the First Resurrection change shall make His faithful "little flock" like Him, that they may see Him as He is--not as He was--and share His glory; for flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God-- though all flesh shall see the salvation of God, shall experience the blessings that will flow from that Millennial Kingdom and be recipients of the Divine favors which will then be poured out upon all flesh with lavish hand and blessed results.--1 Cor. 15:50; Isa. 40:5.

But the context says more respecting this raiment. Note (V. 14) "She shall be led unto the King in raiment of needlework." This word "led" properly enough applies to the present life. All through this Gospel Age, from Pentecost until now, the Lord has used various instrumentalities to call out from the world this peculiar people; and by various instrumentalities He has led them from grace to grace, from knowledge to knowledge, and changed them from glory to glory, to prepare them for their final acceptance, in the First Resurrection, of the clothing of gold--glory, honor and immortality.

It is in full accord with all this that the Scriptures represent that all accepted of the Lord throughout this Gospel Age have been granted a wedding garment clean and white, "pure linen which is the righteousness of the saints." (Rev. 19:8.) That robe figuratively represents justification, the covering of our blemishes; and it is a wedding garment because it constitutes a basis of our ultimate acceptance by the Lord in the end of this Age, when the marriage of the Lamb shall come. These espoused ones are cautioned that their treatment of the robe will determine whether or not they will ultimately be of the Bride class: (1) They must keep their garments unspotted from the world (Jas. 1:27), and (2) must embroider them with fine needlework. Painstakingly they must endeavor to fix and establish in their robes the glorious pattern outlined for them by the word and example of their Bridegroom and His mouthpieces, the Apostles.

REMOVING SPOTS AND WRINKLES

If any of those "called to be saints," on accepting that invitation and receiving the robe, supposed it would be an easy matter to keep it without spot or wrinkle or any such thing he was soon undeceived. Each one of this class has found out that it requires great circumspection, great care, to live in a world in which sin abounds and, as a New Creature, to act through a body the imperfections of which are continually coming to light as growth is made in grace and knowledge. The great Apostle acknowledges the impossibility of perfection under present conditions--except that our hearts, our intentions, our wills, might be perfect, should be perfect, must be perfect, thoroughly loyal to God and to righteousness. He says, "When I would do good evil is present with me"; and again, "We cannot do the things that we would."

The Scriptures declare that "There is none righteous, no not one" (Rom. 3:10); and when the thought of our own imperfections and the sin abounding all about us would make us fearful,

convincing us of the impossibility of preventing our garments from receiving spots or wrinkles, what then? Ah, they tell us how these are to be gotten rid of; they tell us that the merit of our Lord's sacrifice not only cancelled for us our past sins and covered us with His robe of righteousness, but that all subsequent imperfections, resulting from original sin, weakness and ignorance, may all be forgiven us and not remain as spots upon our robes. The Apostle says, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin." (1 John 1:7.) The thought of this text is not the original justification which we received when we received the robe, but a cleansing which may be ours after we are the Lord's and have the robe. The word cleanseth here refers not to something already past but to that which is now at our disposal, which is now in progress, a cleansing or forgiveness which all of the Lord's people need to pray for and to accept, as in the Lord's prayer, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us."

Thus through the Age from Pentecost down, those who have been called, accepted and robed with the wedding garment have been obliged to strive to keep their garments unspotted, and oft with tears to apply for the cleansing when a spot would be seen. Their consciences are so tender on the subject that their neighbors and friends of the world and nominal Christendom think them strange, peculiar people. They are more distressed to see one spot upon their robe than are many whose garments are filthy. But the effect upon them is a blessed one, as it develops in them more and more love for righteousness and greater zeal and strength in overcoming. They are making progress, even though to themselves it may appear slow; they are becoming fortified, strengthened and built up in character--in their love for whatsoever things are just, true, lovely and of good report. (Phil. 4:8.) We are now referring merely to that class of the called ones who will ultimately be accepted as the Bride. We are not referring to all who make a consecration and are accepted of the Lord, but who fail to be thus particular about the spots and wrinkles on their robes. These we will consider later.

"IF YE DO THESE THINGS"

When the Apostle Peter said, "If ye do these things ye shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 1:10,11), he is referring to the same things that are represented by the embroidering, the needlework upon the wedding garment. All the espoused ones are shown the pattern on the robe. They are all informed of the necessity of working out their own salvation, of cooperating with the Lord in the matter of making their calling and election sure to the glorious station to which they have been invited. They are informed that through much tribulation shall they enter the Kingdom. (Acts 14:22.) This tribulation is the painstaking "fine needlework" of our context.

Not all tribulation that may come to mankind is a part of this embroidery. The Apostle speaks of some in these words, "But let no man suffer as an evil-doer or as a busybody in other men's matters." (1 Pet. 4:15.) The intimation is that such sufferings are not incidental to the embroidering we are to do, but the result of our not being engaged in our embroidering work and having time to meddle with sin or with other matters and affairs. Such tribulations add nothing to our embroidering on the robe, except as they might awaken us to a sense of our neglect of the important work which must be done in our own characters if we would be fit for a share with our Lord in His Kingdom, fit to be accepted as members of the Very Elect, the Bride, the Church in glory.

The baneful experiences which come to us as a result of our faithfulness to the Lord, to the Truth, to the brethren --these constitute parts of the embroidering. These help us to fix in our hearts and characters the principles of righteousness and of love divine. How tedious the work appears to us sometimes! At the close of each day we are astonished at how little we have accomplished; and the

weeks and months go by with similar experiences. With the close of the year, when we give our robes particular attention we behold the comparatively little that has been accomplished since the examination of the year before. But how does the Lord view this matter? Is He expecting that you and I and all of His followers will be able in every detail to follow the glorious pattern that is stamped upon our robes? Will He require of us as a condition of our acceptance as His Bride that not a feature or detail shall be lacking? Oh, no! Such a view would swerve and at once discourage us from further effort. The entire tenor of Scripture is to the contrary. As, for instance, in the parable of the talents, our Lord represents some as having less ability and some more, and indicates that His approval will be in proportion as we have endeavored to accomplish His will. The one who had faithfully used the two talents heard the same words of approval as the one who had five talents and used them--"Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."--Matt. 25:21.

And so with the robe: If the Lord, who takes cognizance of our endeavors, sees persistency and the right intention He counts it unto us as being perfect. We shall not be married in these robes. These are merely the ones in which we are being led to the marriage. More and more they should show our love, our zeal and patient endurance. As the Master examines the work will He not expect to find the last better than the first, even though none of it be perfect? Will not this be the basis of His approval of our endeavors and on account of which He will be willing to give us the new robe of gold?

Some of us, perhaps, remember that when we were children at school we had writing copy-books with perfect copper-plate engravings at the top of each page as copy. Alas! and do we not remember also that in many instances the first few lines were the best on the page and that carelessness and indifference to the copy and to the necessity for the lesson became more and more marked as we proceeded to the bottom of the page? We remember that we copied our own instead of looking to the engraving at the top. So it is with this matter of the embroidering of our robes. If we become heedless, careless, indifferent, overcharged with the cares of this life, the deceitfulness of riches and the affairs of this world, our robes will show it. Little embroidering will be done and it will be of poor quality. Spots will get on; and we shall neglect to have them cleansed away. Soon our robes will be entirely unfit for the Inspection of the Lord or for the marriage. It is time, dear friends, that we awake to the responsibilities of the hour, that we realize that the Bridegroom is nigh, even at the door; that the last of the wise virgins will soon enter into the marriage and the door will be shut; and that the choicest blessings of all time will soon be won or lost as far as we are concerned. --Matt. 25:1-13; Eph. 5:15-17.

LOVE FULFILLS THE LAW

Let us make no mistake as respects what constitutes this needlework, this embroidery. It is not knowledge, though knowledge is very necessary to its proper in-working. It represents not natural talents, though these may be utilized in connection with it. It represents not merely laborious works, though these may be very proper and perhaps necessary to it if conditions are favorable. This embroidery represents love; for "Love is the fulfilling of the Law." (Rom. 13:10.) This is the new commandment which our Lord has given, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another." (John 13:34.) Love for the Lord, and His Truth He places on a parity when He says, "Me and My Word." One of course, comes first. To our Lord and His Word we must be true at all hazards. Then comes love for the brethren—because they are His--because they have His spirit—because they are seeking to walk in His footsteps. "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"--1 John 4:20.

This is the forceful argument of the Apostle. The love must continue and extend to neighbors, friends, yea, to enemies, so that those who would have the full pattern on their robes must have in their characters a true, genuine, staunch love for all these. And if, perchance, the enemy should be a brother, the testing to love might be all the more severe. But that this feature of the embroidery be worked is our Lord's requirement. Whoever does not love even his enemies is not fit for the Kingdom—whatever he may be fit for. Love as brethren, be pitiful, be sympathetic, be generous, be helpful, be self-sacrificing, do unto others as you would they should do to you. Let the Golden Rule measure your thoughts, words and deeds --measure the length of the stitches in your embroidery and assure yourself that it is "fine needlework."

Our context declares that when the Bride class shall be the Queen and shall be presented before the Father, the virgins, her companions, shall follow after. Who are these virgins? They are those represented in the parable as the foolish virgins. They were as truly virgins as the wise ones, as truly justified and as truly consecrated to the Lord. They also got the wedding garment. Theirs also was stamped with the pattern for embroidery. But they neglected the work. They became overcharged with cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches. The first spot upon their robe distressed them; but subsequently they became accustomed to seeing it spotted, and thought less and less of the matter. They were themselves free to admit not only their consecration and their possession of the robe, but also its disfigurement by the spots and wrinkles which they did not approve, but which they had given up the thought of removing as too great a task to perform.--Mark 4:19.

What they should do is to apply to the Bridegroom for the cleansing fluid, the precious blood--that He would take away these spots and blemishes, giving such chastisements as His wisdom would see best for the inattention, carelessness--and to entreat that they might no longer be of the foolish virgin class but of the wise--wise toward God, wise to appreciate the fact that the great blessing now being proffered to the Very Elect is valuable beyond all estimate. But the more spots and wrinkles that get upon the robe the more likely is the wearer to be careless. Noting that the majority of even the consecrated have spots and wrinkles, he is apt to conclude that he is no worse than others, and not nearly so bad as many. How we would like to awaken some of these to a realization of their proper position and need of prompt action and redoubled energy not only in securing the cleansing of the robe but also in the work of embroidering it with the fruits and graces of the Spirit which they have so sadly neglected!--2 Cor. 10:14.

Our father's house is the world; for as the Apostle declares, "We were children of wrath, even as others." (Eph. 2:3.) In accepting our Lord's invitation to be His Bride we are joining a new family, a new house. We are exhorted to show our appreciation of our espousal by forgetting the house and family to which we formerly belonged and held allegiance. This is in harmony with the Apostle's exhortation, "Forgetting the things which are behind, I press on to those things which are before"; and again, "the things that I once loved, now I hate"-- things highly esteemed amongst men I now see to be unworthy of those called to be heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord.--Phil. 3:13; Rom. 7:15.

“FORGET THY FATHER'S HOUSE”

Here, dear friends, is the gist of the entire question: Our Lord declares that we and the entire world are either for Him and His cause or against the same. There is no neutral ground; and hence in leaving the father's house, the world, and our own people, and in becoming members of the New Creation, the Church, the Body of Christ, begotten of the Holy Spirit, we should understand that the change is a radical one and not any longer seek for our fellowships and joys from the worldly sources

but only amongst those who with ourselves are consecrated to the Lord and waiting for His return, and for the marriage and for membership in the elect class, the Bride. The more we attempt to mix worldly things and prospects and aims with our high calling the more it will be shown that we are at the very most foolish virgins; for we cannot serve God and Mammon. This, of course, does not signify unkindness toward friends or neighbors or kindred. The Lord's saints are exhorted to do good unto all men as they have opportunity but especially unto the Household of Faith. And with the latter and their aims they must specially identify if they would come off conquerors, and be received by their Lord and King as His Joint-heir and Bride and introduced as such to the Heavenly Father.--Gal. 6:10; 2 John 8.

Sermon Book 251

THE SECRET OF TRUE PEACE

“Let not your heart be troubled.”--John 14:1.

The world is full of troubled hearts; for it is full of imperfection, directly or indirectly the result of sin and its death penalty, which for 6,000 years has been preying upon our race, impairing our

mental, moral and physical powers and bringing us instead depravity, disappointment, sorrow and pain. If each of us only had his own burdens he would have too much for his strength; but additionally each is in touch with others in life, in the home, in business, in society, in all of life's affairs; and his own weaknesses and blemishes are augmented and his troubles increased by his contact with the idiosyncrasies of others, their troubles, blemishes and peculiarities --mental, moral and physical. Well did the Apostle write, "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together." Well did the Prophet write, "Man that is born of woman is of few years and full of trouble." --Rom. 8:22; Job 14:1.

None know more respecting the burdens of life than do sympathetic physicians, attorneys and ministers. The groaning creation in the time of its special perplexity and anguish, physical, mental and moral, turns to those whose knowledge of balms, physical and spiritual, and of legal relief are loopholes through which the light of hope streams in a little upon the troubled soul. These three professions, therefore, are esteemed to be amongst the most honorable and most beneficial known; and where backed by sympathy and love they are sure to accomplish much good, to afford great relief, to inspire new hopes. But alas, not all physicians, not all lawyers, not all ministers are actuated by love and sympathy! Without judging them individually we are safe to suppose that like the remainder of the race, these men, possessing the highest opportunities in the world for the relief of their fellows, are sharers in general of the selfishness that has developed in the hearts of men as part of the fruitage of sin, as a result of its partial destruction of the Divine likeness in which man was created--a perfect image, in the flesh, of God--the God of love, "the God of all grace."

"WONDERFUL WORDS OF LIFE"

Our text was part of our Lord's message to His disciples just before His crucifixion. Himself bowed with grief and exceeding sorrowful in anticipation of the shame of the death He was about to suffer, our Lord's thoughts and comforting words went forth to His disciples, who were perplexed and distressed. Hiding his own sorrow He comforted them, and thus has set an example to all of His followers who, walking in His steps and imitating Him, are at once in the world good physicians, expounders of the Divine Law and ministers of the Divine Law of Love. Indeed, however much we appreciate the miracles wrought by our Lord--the healing of the sick, the awakening of the dead, the opening of the blind eyes and deaf ears--that which appeals to us as the most wonderful manifestation is His teaching, His doctrine. Truly did some of His day say, "Never man spake like this man" (John 7:46); and again, "And all bare Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth"--"Beautiful words, wonderful words of life."--Luke 4:22.

And so must it be with the footstep-followers of Jesus. Our Lord might have spent all of His time and all of His energy in healing the sick, in awakening the dead. But this was not His mission. He merely in these miracles gave evidence of the power of God residing in Him, and foreshadowed the blessings yet to come to the world at His Second Advent--Times of Refreshing that then would come, "Times of Restitution of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy Prophets since the world began." (Acts 3:19-21.) At the Pool of Bethesda were multitudes waiting for healing, but our Lord healed only one; for this was sufficient for His purpose, and not because of lack of sympathy. The due time had not yet come for the healing of the woes and difficulties of the world. Those whose interest was awakened by the physical healing had their attention promptly drawn to the Lord's readiness to heal all the broken-hearted, to give the oil of joy for the spirit of heaviness, and to awaken those dead in trespasses and sins to a newness of lifethrough faith.--Isa. 61:1-3.

Similarly all the footstep-followers of Jesus are commissioned as His representatives to tell the Message of Good Tidings to all who have ears to hear--to announce to such the Divine Program,

that as sin and death came by one man's disobedience, so a redemption has been accomplished by another, by "the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a Ransom for all, to be testified in due time." (1 Tim. 2:5, 6.) They are authorized to do the work of a good physician and to bind up the broken-hearted. They are authorized as lawyers versed in the Law of God to point out to those willing to hear that sin, the violation of the Divine Law, has brought all the havoc upon our race which causes countless thousands to mourn. They are authorized further to point out that Jesus our Lord gave Himself a full Ransom-price, meeting the demands of the broken Law; and that thus it is possible for all who have turned from sin, and who are seeking to come back into harmony with God and His perfect Law of Love, to approach Him through Christ as their Advocate, and to realize that they are no longer condemned, but justified freely from all things through their faith in their Redeemer and Advocate.

They are further authorized as ministers of the Gospel, the Royal Priesthood, to point out to those who have the hearing ear that the reconciliation accomplished by our Lord Jesus not only covers our sins of the past, but also covers weaknesses and imperfections of the present and of the future for the believer to the extent that these are involuntary, disapproved, striven against. They are authorized in the Master's name to assure all such that "the Father Himself loveth you"; that "all things are working together for good to those that love God, the called ones according to His purpose"; and that eventually through the glorified Christ, Head and Body, Bridegroom and Bride, a blessed opportunity for reconciliation to God under the terms of the New Covenant are to be extended to "all the families of the earth"—including those who have gone down into the great prison-house of death without having had a full, proper knowledge of the Lord and of His Plan, such as the death of Christ has guaranteed that all shall have ere they could die the Second Death.--John 16:27; Rom. 8:28.

“BIND UP THE BROKEN-HEARTED”

Thus seen the Lord's consecrated Little Flock, the Royal Priesthood, have even in the present time gracious opportunities for serving the brethren and such of the world as have hearing ears and a desire to become of the "brethren" class. It is not true that God gave a commission to His ambassadors to go through life breaking the hearts of their fellow-men. On the contrary, the commission reads that those members of the Body of Christ who have received the anointing of the Holy Spirit from the Lord Jesus, their Head, are commissioned to bind up the broken-hearted, to comfort all that mourn in Zion, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

If some are disposed to object that the comforting of mourners and the binding of broken hearts imply that God's ministers, servants of the Truth, are first of all to break the hearts, to cause the mourning, we answer, No! It is not thus written, and we are not to add to the Word of God. Various agencies are at work all about us, doing the heart-breaking and the wounding. It is for us to receive so much of the Lord's spirit that so far as possible we shall break no hearts, wound none, but on the contrary do all in our power to effect the proper healing of such as are within the range of our influence. Sin is breaking the hearts of thousands. Disappointment in themselves, in their own ambitions, in their own efforts, disappointment in their friends, in business, in pleasure-- all of these are doing the wounding and the breaking. So many more hearts are troubled and broken that the Lord's people can possibly heal that we can rest well content to do the work which the Master gave us to do, and to leave to the Adversary and those who are in outer darkness of sin and ignorance of the Lord and His Spirit to do the heart-breaking.--Isa. 42:16.

In our understanding the Scriptures teach that a great Time of Trouble is near at hand--the great final trouble of this world's history, in which, during a period of anarchy unparalleled, all

human hopes and ambitions will utterly fail. As the Scriptures declare, "There shall be a Time of Trouble such as was not since there was a nation--no, nor ever shall be afterward." (Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:21.) That great trouble, as the Scriptures point out, will be the result of selfishness reaching its limit, becoming ripe and going to seed. The world has always been selfish; but according to the Scriptures and according to our observation, this spirit of greed and selfishness is extending more and more widely, and impressing almost every member of the race. Eventually it will be true, as the Scriptures describe, that "every man's hand will be against his neighbor" with the result that there will be "no peace to him that goeth out or to him that cometh in."--Zech. 8:10.

The world, ignorant of God and of the Plan He has prepared for the blessing of all the nations during the Millennium, will feel the Time of Trouble most keenly. But the Scriptures give us to understand that their sorrows, woes and heart-breakings will eventually be favorable to them, so that that general plowing of the world with the plowshare of trouble and the perplexity of that time, when all its hopes will be dissipated, will work for good to them eventually, and draw their attention away from the false hopes which many of them had long been vainly chasing--to the better, the true hope which the Lord has provided, the center of which is Christ's Kingdom and the ground of which is His Ransom-sacrifice at Calvary.--1 Tim. 2:5, 6.

THE FUTURE WORK OF BLESSING

How wise is the Divine arrangement that those who are to be associated with the Lord Jesus during His Millennial Reign in the work of uplifting and helping mankind over their difficulties and out of their various degradations are to be the same ones who gain practice in this matter now by binding up the broken hearts of the comparatively few, and who have the ear to hear and the desire to respond to the grace of God during this Gospel Age. Thus we see illustrated the statement elsewhere given us in the Scriptures that we are in the School of Christ, in preparation for future usefulness. Thus we see that, as physicians and nurses are given a training for their future work, so those whom the Lord has called to the glorious "Royal Priesthood" of the future for the blessing of mankind are now given a practise-work in their own hearts, in their own families, amongst their own kin and in the Household of Faith.

What a thought, that our future graduation and the possibility of our sharing in the Kingdom work is dependent upon how we shall learn now the art of binding up the broken hearts of those with whom we are in contact! Not that the skill is the important matter, but the love. He who loves much and who now sees the broken and troubled hearts around him will be led to "do good to all men as he may have opportunity, but especially to the Household of Faith." If, on the contrary, his love and sympathy do not go out toward these troubled ones, if his best energies are spent on money-making or in some other selfish channel, how dwelleth the love of God in him? Let us remember the words of Scripture, "The Lord your God doth prove you whether ye do love the Lord your God with all your heart or not." (Deut. 10:12.) For, as the Apostle tells us, he who loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen? (1 John 4:20.) The test then upon us all is Love--"He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and he that loved not is not begotten of God."

"Here we note that, with sympathetic minds, some are improperly, injuriously binding up broken hearts. It has become the general message of what is termed the New Thought and the New Theology that there is no exclusiveness in God's Plan--that all mankind are children of God, that our Lord Jesus made a great mistake when He declared to some, "Ye are of your father the Devil." (John 8:44.) It has become with many a stock phrase, the "Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man." But we warn all that there is no Scriptural authority for such teaching, but that on the contrary they are drawing away the hearts of men from the good Physician and the Divinely given balm; for

"there is none other name given under Heaven and amongst men whereby we must be saved," but the name of Jesus. There is none other, therefore, qualified to speak true peace to the troubled soul or to properly bind up the broken heart.

“ONLY JESUS WOULD I KNOW AND JESUS CRUCIFIED”

Our Lord forewarned us of these various theories of salvation through another channel than that which God has provided. He declared Himself to be the only Door into the sheepfold, and that all who attempt to get into it otherwise are thieves and robbers--that no man can come unto the Father save through Him. (John 14:6.) We therefore warn against every theory which attempts to present mercy and restoration to Divine favor otherwise than through faith in Christ's sacrifice. And we denounce as unscriptural all those teachings, growing increasingly prevalent because of the Evolution theory, which present the thought that there was no original sin, no original sentence, and hence no need of a Redeemer and no need of an uplift by Restitution, such as God has promised and made provision for, and which He assures us will be accomplished during the Millennial Age, when Satan shall be bound. We hold forth as God's olive branch, as His message of peace, the invitation that all the "called" may come unto the Father through the Redeemer--through the merit of His sacrifice, and, coming, may realize their sins forgiven, their restoration to Divine favor, the Lord's loving interest in all of their affairs, and His willingness and ability to make all things work together for their good, and His promise that, if faithful, ultimately they shall be made sharers with their Lord in the blessings of the resurrection of the just-- glory, honor and immortality; and that by and by, during the Millennium, all those now blind and deaf may taste of Divine grace.

Another error which we should warn against is that of acceptance of Jesus and a hope in Him contrary to the presentation of the Scriptures. Some tell us that they reject the thought that Jesus died to be man's Redeemer, but that they, nevertheless, accepted Christ as their Teacher and Example. Our reply is that as our Teacher the Master taught us that He "came into the world to give His life a Ransom for many"--for all. If His life was not a Ransom, or Corresponding-Price, then He falsified in so stating; and those who believe that He did falsify could not consider Him a proper teacher. Furthermore, if He came into the world merely to be our Exemplar and not to be our Redeemer, our Ransomer, then His mission was a failure; for no one since His coming has been able to follow the example He set. To view our Lord as merely as Example for proper living for the world would be an absurdity, since no one of the fallen race can possibly live up to the perfect standard which our Lord set in sacrificing all of His rightful interests as a man.--Matt. 20:28.

The Scriptures present the opposite view--that mankind are all imperfect through the fall, and under the death sentence; and that "Jesus Christ by the grace of God tasted death for every man"-- "gave Himself a Ransom for all, to be testified in due time." They teach that this sacrifice for the sin of Adam, and applicable through him to the sins of the whole world, was necessary for the meeting of the Divine sentence before Divine forgiveness and restoration to eternal life and favor would be possible. They represent that for the majority of mankind such a restoration will be effected during the Millennial Age. They represent that to a very small minority, even "as many as the Lord your God shall call," our Lord was not only a Redeemer but an Exemplar: that these called to a separation from the world to walk in the narrow way of self-sacrifice are to copy Christ's example as far as possible, though admittedly they will never be able to come up to His standards. The Scriptures assure us that the best endeavors of this class, covered by the merit of Christ's sacrifice, will be acceptable and reckoned to them as though they were perfect sacrifices, and that thus they may have their share with their Redeemer in the glory, honor and immortality of His Kingdom, and be participants with Him in the great work of bestowing upon the world during the Millennium the blessing of Divine forgiveness and favor secured through the sacrifice of Christ.

“YOUR HEARTS NOT TROUBLED”

We come finally to the application of our text to the Apostles and those who have believed through their word. The hearts of these are not to be troubled under any circumstances. They are no longer of the world, because separated from the world through their acceptance of the Lord and His acceptance of them. While still sharers in the trials, difficulties of the world in general, these have now the consolations of the Scriptures to offset these troubles and to make of them "light afflictions"--not worthy to be compared with the glories promised to be revealed in us. (2 Cor. 4:17; Rom. 8:18.) Indeed, it is not an unusual thing for the Lord to permit trials and difficulties to come upon His faithful much more severe than those which fall to the lot of the world.--Heb. 12:6-11; Rev. 3:19.

Yea, as the Apostle says, so it should be with us all that "none of these things move me"--none of these experiences in life cause anxious thought. Why? The Apostle tells us, "Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts." (Acts 20:24; Rom. 5:5.) We have not only learned that God has forgiven our sins, that He is our Father and our best friend, that He is merciful to our imperfections, that He has called us to glory and association with our Redeemer, but that these blessings are to be ours at the Second Coming of our Lord, the resurrection of the just and the establishment of the Kingdom. Additionally also, we have now the peace, the joy, the blessed hope which these gracious promises afford. These the world can neither give nor take away.

What wonder if the hearts of this class are not troubled! Their Father knoweth the things they have need of. Day by day they are learning more distinctly than ever before that He who cares for the sparrows and for their necessities, He who clothes the grass of the field, is much more interested in them, will be much more careful of their interests, so that figuratively speaking not one hair of their heads could fall without Divine attention. "Nothing shall by any means hurt you," is the Master's assurance. (Luke 10:19.) Why then should we be troubled? Surely anxiety on the part of such would be a lack of faith, a lack of confidence, or else ignorance of the Divine promises, character and arrangement.

Sermon Book 262

“THE VESSELS OF A POTTER”

“Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor?”--Rom. 9:21.

In our text you will note what the Apostle here calls attention to, that from the same lump of clay the skilled potter can make a graceful ornament--a vase, for instance, for the mantel and for the

holding of flowers, or a loving cup, or a ewer for the carrying of water, or a slop urn, a receptacle for filth. All of these vessels are useful, hence in one sense of the word they are all honorable, all valuable. Nevertheless there is a dignity, an honor that belongs to the vase, the cup, the ewer, that does not attach to the slop urn. The clay is the same for all of these, but the choice or election as to which shall be which is with the potter. This is the lesson of our text. It points us to God as the One who has begun the good work in us, and who, if we submit ourselves to Him properly, will complete that good work unto the Day of Jesus Christ, when it shall be finished in the First Resurrection in the Millennial Morning.

The Apostle declares that as the potter has the power or right to make such vessels as he may please, so God has the right or power to do what He will with His creatures. As to what the great Divine Potter will make of the human clay must be left to Himself; and only as we learn the real character of God can we judge of what would be His good pleasure in respect to the varieties of His handiwork. Knowing Him as we do--as He reveals Himself in His Word to us--as a good God who delights not in iniquity, but delights in the truth, and all of whose works glorify Him, we have this assurance that His work is perfect, and when brought to completion the variety of more honorable and less honorable vessels of His creation will all be found to His praise. The remainder He will destroy--all that will not be praiseworthy, all who refuse to have His good work accomplished in them.

So, then, we may expect that eventually God's great work in humanity will show a variety of vessels, some to more honor and some to less honor; but that amongst His works will be none evil, none devilish, none bad. The Scriptures nowhere intimate that Satan and his associates, the demons, are adversaries of God because they were created thus. On the contrary they tell us that, while God's work was perfect, these fell from their first estate of harmony with God by disobedience to Divine regulations--in other words, that they defiled themselves. Similarly our race, the Scriptures inform us, was created perfect, upright, in the image of God, in the person of Father Adam. The sin, the imperfection, the blemish we see, we are distinctly told is not the work of God, but the work of the Adversary and the penalty for disobedience.

“OUT OF THE SAME LUMP”

The Apostle is not discussing the good angels nor the fallen ones, but merely mankind. Adam and his race are the clay in the hands of the Potter in the Apostle's illustration. The unfitness of this human clay for any purpose through Adam's disobedience is the teaching of the Scriptures, but they also teach us that God Himself provided the great remedy for the healing of this unfitness, so that now as the great Potter He can deal with the clay and fashion it as it has pleased Him. It is from this standpoint that the Apostle discusses the subject, the standpoint of redeemed humanity.

Of the same lump, of the Adamic family, the Lord made choice first of all of the nation of Israel, Abraham and his seed. That lump of clay was specially mixed, ground, reground and made more and more plastic during the centuries in which they were specially under the Divine handling, to make them ready for the moulding and shaping influences of the Holy Spirit, which came at Pentecost. Indeed, vessels of a certain kind, quite honorable, too, were formed during the Jewish Age, as the Apostle points out to us in Hebrews 11, when recounting those whose lives were shaped by their faith in God and in His promises. Honorable vessels were they-- Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and all the Prophets. But really the great work, and in some senses of the word the first work of the great Potter, began with our Lord and His Apostles and has proceeded throughout this Gospel Age. During this time the Divine Potter has been making His artistic vessels, the vessels to the highest honor--vessels of glory, honor and immortality. These vessels of glory and honor are represented in the

Scriptures under various names--members of the Body of Christ, the Bride of Christ, the Lamb's Wife, the Little Flock, the Heirs of God, the heirs of the Abrahamic Covenant promise, the more than conquerors. Of these the Apostle writes, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him." These, then, are pertinently mentioned in our text as—

“VESSELS UNTO HONOR”

The great Potter will not exhaust His skill in His preparation of these vessels of honor; but having use also for other vessels to lesser honor--vessels, however, of great usefulness in His plan and purpose--He will proceed during the coming Age to the preparation of these other vessels, and their preparation indeed will proceed much more rapidly than has the work of this present Gospel Age. Why? Because, first, the work that is now in progress is a much more delicate one, requiring special skill and care, as each vessel of honor receives peculiar shaping and forming for its own position of honor in the Heavenly Kingdom. On the contrary, the work of the coming Age in dealing with humanity in general as clay will be along more mechanical lines; as, for instance, articles of utility for menial service not only receive less care at the hands of the potter, but are turned out very largely by machinery which the potter merely superintends. So it will be with the great Potter in the handling of the human clay during the Millennial Age; the machinery, the patterns, the grinding of the clay, etc., will all be very largely accomplished in advance of the introduction of the Millennial Day, and the shaping of humanity under the laws of the Kingdom will be a uniform and a comparatively rapid work. General laws will govern, and each will make his progress as he conforms to those laws.

Now, however, the Lord deals with His Church as with sons. He considers our frame, He deals with us not according to the flesh, but according to our individual minds, spirits, intentions of heart. Each son, each vessel of the class now being developed, has his own special fitting and preparation, his own special place in the glorious Kingdom to which he has been invited. It is God that worketh in us, not only to produce the new mind, the consecrated heart, through the promises of His Word, but also works in us to do, to accomplish so far as in us lies, His good pleasure. The same influence, the exceeding great and precious promises of God's Word, operate by faith upon these special vessels of honor now being produced under the Potter's hands.

“THE FLAMES SHALL NOT HURT THEE”

Not only does the choicer product of the ceramic art receive a special moulding and shaping of the potter; but after all of its lines and curves have been studied carefully and fashioned it is specially fired, burned. Indeed, it is not exposed to the flames at all, but is carefully covered with an earthenware case or sagger. How this speaks to us of the special moulding and fashioning care with which the Heavenly Father deals with every son whom He receiveth during this Gospel Age, forming, shaping, transforming, conforming the lines of his character likeness in harmony with those of the great Pattern which He has set for us. And this transforming work is not done by might or by power, by force or compulsion, but "by My Spirit, saith the Lord."--Zech. 4:6.

The fiery trials which must try these for their perfecting, for the fixing of their character, for their completion, are all subject to the Divine supervision, and the assurance is given us that all things shall work together for good to these because they love God and because they have been called according to His purpose to be vessels of highest honor and kingly glory with their Redeemer during His Millennial Reign. These, styled the Lord's jewels or precious ones, whose number will be completed and who will be gathered at the beginning of His Second Advent, have required a long

time for their development--more than eighteen centuries—notwithstanding the fact that they are in all but a Little Flock, 144,000, who will stand on Mount Zion, having their Father's name written in their foreheads. The Apostle inquires, Shall the clay say unto the potter—

“WHY HAST THOU MADE ME THUS?”

The intimation of the Apostle is that the clay, whether formed by the potter into a vessel of honor or one of less honor, has no right whatever to complain. Whatever the potter shall do to the clay will be an honor to the clay. Without the exercise of his power and skill it would never be anything more than clay; and to be made into a vessel of more or less honor would be a blessing indeed. Hence the bulk of humanity with whom the Lord will deal during the Millennial Age and by the machinery and laws of the Millennial Kingdom, will be shaped and fashioned along the lines of restitution to human perfection, will have no cause whatever to complain or murmur against the great Divine Potter that they were not elected vessels of highest honor and distinction--that they were not of the Elect Church, called during this Age to be the Bride of Christ and Joint-heir with Him in His Kingdom.

On the contrary, mankind will have everything to be thankful for, and so the Scriptures indicate that eventually every knee will bow and every tongue confess, to the glory of God, His work of grace, truth and restitution. They declare that ultimately, when the plans of the great Potter shall be fully accomplished, every creature in Heaven and in earth shall be heard ascribing praise and thanksgiving, honor, dominion, majesty and might to Him that sitteth on the Throne and to the Lamb.-- Rev. 7:12; 5:12, 13.

That great Millennial Day and its great work of fashioning humanity according to the designs of the great Creator will be very different in many respects from the present Age; but instead of a fiery trial for each individual, Satan, the great Adversary, will be bound for the thousand years and be permitted to deceive the nations no more until the thousand years are finished. The grinding, humbling and preparing of the human clay for that glorious epoch are being accomplished now, when the forces of evil through the reign of Sin and Death are causing the entire human family to suffer, to groan, so that the Apostle speaks of the world as a "groaning creation"-- groaning and travailing together in pain, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God.--Rom. 8:19, 22.

The manifestation of the sons of God signifies the manifestation in glory of the vessels of honor which the Lord is now preparing, His Little Flock, the Church. When these shall shine forth with Jesus in the glorious Kingdom of the Father, the world's groaning and travailing in pain shall be ended; for the Adversary will be bound and the curse will be lifted. Henceforth none shall suffer except for his own wilful wrongdoing, and the restitution processes of moulding and fashioning mankind shall gloriously progress throughout that epoch.

But will there come any burning day and fiery trials upon those of the Millennial Age? Yes, we answer; the Scriptures clearly point out that at the close of that Day the whole earth will become a furnace of trial to humanity in general. The Scriptures inform us that Satan will be loosed from his prison-house and go forth to tempt, to try, to test, all those that dwell upon the whole earth, whose number will be at that time as the sand of the sea--thousands of millions. The test will be applied to all; for it is the Divine purpose that such should be tested. Those in perfect accord with the Potter will stand the test, and prove their characters to be strong, crystallized by this test, while others not in fullest harmony with the great Potter shall be melted under the fiery trial of that time. The proportion of those who will stand to those who will then fall is not indicated in the Word of God; and we must not be wise above what is written. It is sufficient for us to know that every true and loyal member of the race, redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, will have the fullest opportunities for becoming a

vessel of the Lord to some honorable purpose and service if he wills, and that those whose wills are not fully submissive to the Lord will be ultimately destroyed from amongst the people and not be preserved for torture. --Rev. 20:7-10.

“VESSELS OF WRATH FITTED FOR DESTRUCTION”

Following our text, which speaks of the vessels unto honor and unto less honor, the Apostle speaks of vessels of wrath, saying, “What if God, willing to show His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much long suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction; and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore ordained to glory, even us?”

The Apostle's showing that the fact that God has refrained from manifesting outwardly either His love for the Church or His wrath against evil doers is no argument against the lesson He is teaching. It is true the riches of God's grace for the Church called to glory and being prepared for glory has not yet been made manifest, but this is no proof that this will not be made manifest in His own due time. Similarly, the fact that the Lord has denounced those who love and work iniquity, but has not yet manifested His opposition to them and is not now fighting against them, but really allowing them in many respects to prosper--this is no argument against the ultimate fulfilment of His designs. He awaits the revelation of His glory in the Church, and of His wrath, His displeasure, against those who are His opponents. But the tarrying time both of glory and of wrath is sure to end, and the purposes of the Lord are sure to be accomplished. We have seen who constitute the vessels of glory, that they are the very Elect, the saints, the Royal Priesthood of this Age. Who then constitute the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction? The answer will be apparent to all familiar with the potter's art--they are the vessels which, after experiencing the potter's care and skill, prove defective, blemished, unfit for his use. These represent such as receive the grace of God in vain, or such as the Apostle describes as dogs who return to their vomit, as sows that return to their wallowing in the mire after being washed.--2 Peter 2:20-22.

This same class St. Paul describes in Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:28-31, as falling away from the grace of God after they had received mercy and forgiveness, and the begetting of the Holy Spirit and instruction from the Lord, being made partakers of the Holy Spirit. For such, the Apostle says, “There remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins—nothing but a certain fearful looking forward to judgment and fiery indignation which would devour them as adversaries” --utterly destroy them as vessels fitted for destruction. We are to remember, however, that these vessels fitted for destruction include none of those whose hearts are right toward God, and whose difficulties are merely of weakness of the flesh through heredity, besetments and temptations. No; the Lord has made full provision for these, and all their blemishes according to the flesh are covered from His sight. He is dealing with them not according to their flesh, but according to their spirits, their minds, their wills, their intentions. So long as they are at heart the Lord's and seeking to fight the good fight of faith and to have His will accomplished in them, so long they are His; and nothing shall by any means pluck them out of His hand.

The vessels fitted for destruction are not condemned because of any unintentional weakness, but because of disloyalty of heart through pride or ambition or intentional preferences for sin. The decision of the Lord in respect to both of these classes will be manifest at the close of this Age, when the vessels fitted for destruction will be recognized as having gone to the Second Death, and when the vessels of mercy fit for glory shall shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father as joint-heirs with their dear Redeemer.

“VESSELS OF A POTTER DASHED TO PIECES”

Our Lord (Rev. 2:27), pointing to the time of His Second Advent and the establishment of His Kingdom, declares that the nations of that time will come under the rule of His iron rod, under the Reign of Justice and Divine Law, and that they all shall be dashed to pieces as potters' vessels. In many respects this is a different figure from the one we have just been discussing. Nevertheless there is a relationship, as we will show. While the Lord as the great Divine Potter has been moulding and fashioning the vessels of mercy and of glory to be the Kings and Priests of the world during the coming age, the Adversary has undertaken to be a potter, and, cooperating with human tendencies and ambitions, has created some wonderful vessels. These are found in high positions in Babylon, in the Church and in the seats of popes, cardinals, bishops, kings, princes, financial magnates, etc., etc. The work of the Adversary seems to be much greater, much more glorious, much more honorable, than the work of God, who, describing His vessels of mercy, declares that amongst them are not many wise, not many learned, not many great, not many noble, not many rich, according to the course or judgment of this world.--1 Cor. 1:26-29.

On the contrary, Satan has found and exalted many of the rich and worldly great as his vessels. The kingdoms of this world make a great show in many respects, a show of power, a show of strength, a show of virtue. But from the Lord's standpoint they are all unfit for His purposes, are in His way. He purposes the establishment of the Heavenly Kingdom as instead of these, and in the context under consideration shows that when His time shall come for establishing His Little Flock, for establishing the Reign of Messiah and his faithful saints, the Royal Priesthood, the power shall be exercised in the hands of the great Redeemer, which will utterly dash in pieces all the existing institutions, that seem so great and so wonderful, those vessels of the Adversary potter. They shall be broken to shivers. The Holy Spirit foretold this long before our Redeemer's birth, using through the Prophet David the very same words. (Psa. 2:9.) The Prophet Daniel refers to the same great events, and calls that period of dashing to pieces earthly institutions a Time of Trouble such as never was since there was a nation; and our Lord, after quoting that prophecy, supplements it with the statement, "No, nor ever shall be." (Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:21.) He thus gives us His assurance that the Time of Trouble upon the whole world, which is nearing, which will wreck present institutions and establish the Kingdom of God, will be the end of all such troublous times--the poor groaning creation shall never again pass through such an experience.

The Apostle Paul, pointing down to this same Time of Trouble and to the overthrow of present institutions in conjunction with the establishment of God's Kingdom, tells us that that will be the time for the inauguration of the New Covenant, under which God will have mercy upon the whole world of mankind and forgive the transgressions of the past that are properly attributable to Adamic weaknesses, and begin through Christ the glorious work of restitution, in harmony with all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy Prophets since the world began. (Heb. 12:18-29; Acts 3:19-21.) He says that the introduction of this New Covenant will correspond to and be the antitype of the introduction of the Law Covenant; that as in the introduction of the Law Covenant there were fearful sights and sounds, the voice of trumpets and of words, and the entire mountain shaking until all the people were in fear, so the antitype of this will be still greater, when not only the social structure (the earth) would be shaken, but also the ecclesiastical structure (the heavens). He declares that all things that can be shaken will be shaken, and then adds that we, the Gospel Church, the vessels of mercy prepared for glory, will receive the Kingdom which cannot be shaken, intimating that all other things will be shaken and overthrown. Our Kingdom alone will stand the tests of that time; in it alone God will be well pleased, and its influence will then begin to be felt throughout the whole earth, to the glory of God and to the blessing of mankind.

Seeing that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be? Seeing that present earthly institutions will come to naught very shortly because not pleasing to the Lord, what should be our course? Ah! as the vessels of mercy being prepared for glory, we should see to it that we are fully submissive to the moulding and fashioning influences of the great Potter, that our words and thoughts and doings be all conformed to harmony with His perfect will, that we be so thoroughly plastic in His hands that He can form us into vessels of the highest honor and glory and usefulness in His Kingdom for which we pray, "Thy Kingdom come!"

Sermon Book 708

JESUS ADVOCATE OF BELIEVERS ONLY

"I write unto you that ye avoid sin. Yet if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous; and He is a propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."--1 John 2:1, 2.

In the past we have not been sufficiently discriminating in our study of the Word. Failing to notice that the salvation of the elect Church is a matter separate and distinct from the world's salvation, we have applied the various Scriptures dealing with sin and its forgiveness in a loose manner, which has failed to bring us clear-cut views on the subject. For instance, with the gradual opening of the eyes of our understanding we note in our text the declaration that our Lord's sacrifice is a propitiation, satisfaction for our sins, the Church's sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. We perceive that in this text the Lord sharply differentiates between the Church and the world, between our salvation and the world's salvation.

True, at one time there was no difference, for we were all "children of wrath even as others" still are; but we who have heard the voice of the Heavenly Father speaking peace through Jesus Christ, we who have accepted that Message, we who have been reconciled to God through the death of His Son, are no longer of the world, but, from God's standpoint, constitute a separate and distinct class, a small minority, "a little flock." The Scriptures tell us that we are called, chosen, separated from the world. Our Master's words are, "Ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world." "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you."

OUR ADVOCATE, THE WORLD'S MEDIATOR

At another time we hope to take up the subject of Christ the Mediator, and to then show that it will be during the Millennial Age that Christ will act as Mediator between God and man: that as He has already laid the foundation for the great work of reconciling the world unto the Father through the sacrifice of Himself, he will during the Millennial Age complete that work by reconciling the world to the Father--as many of the world under favorable opportunities will be glad to come to a knowledge of the Divine character and plan and to obedience to the Divine requirements. The Scriptures properly enough speak of our Lord Jesus as already the Mediator, from the standpoint that He has already been honored by the Father and indicated as the One who shall perform that great work of mediation--the One who must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet, and caused every knee to bow and every tongue to confess to the glory of God the Father. (1 Cor. 15:25; Phil. 2:9-11.) The time for doing this work, however--the time for exercising His power as the Mediator and putting all things into subjection--is still future.

Just now we wish to emphasize the thought that our Lord Jesus is not the Church's Mediator before the Father, but the Church's Advocate. There is a sharp distinction to be drawn between the two thoughts. A mediator implies a hostility between two principals, requiring the intervention of a third party; and this is not the case with the Church. We are not rebels. We are not alienated from God, but now through faith in the blood we are children of God, and our Redeemer assures us, "The Father Himself loveth you." (John 16:27.) Even before the time came in the Lord's plan when the Kingdom would be established, the rebels subdued, we were glad to hear the Father's voice speaking peace through Jesus Christ, and we came to Him. Surely, then, there is no need of a Mediator between the Father who loves His children and the children who love their Father. However, the basis of our acceptance with the Father was our hearty renunciation of sin and our acceptance of the sacrifice of Jesus as covering our blemishes and condemnation of the past, and our acceptance of the Father in Christ was on condition that we would henceforth walk in His steps--not after the flesh but after the Spirit, as set forth in the perfect Law of Liberty, the Law of Love to God and man.

It may be asked then, If we are children of God and the Father Himself loveth us and has accepted us in Christ through the merit of His atoning blood, why should we need an Advocate with the Father? We reply that the Father's requirement that our hearts be perfect in love to Him and to all

is beyond our ability--not beyond our desires, our endeavors, our intentions, but beyond our accomplishment, because we have the treasure of the new mind in earthen vessels--in imperfect bodies, born in sin, shapen in iniquity, on account of which the Apostle says, "We can not do the things that we would." (Gal. 5:17.) This constitutes our need of an Advocate with the Father; otherwise we should lose the standing already granted to us through faith.

“FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES”

This brings up the subject of forgiveness of sins. Some are inclined to say: If our sins were forgiven once why should we repeat the matter at the Throne of Grace? Why should we continue to acknowledge ourselves sinners when the Word of the Lord assures us that our sins and iniquities are covered from His sight, that we are justified freely by His grace from all sin? There is a measure of correctness in this argument, but in other respects it is incorrect. So far as the original sin is concerned--our share in the Adamic condemnation that passed upon all men--the Scriptures assure us that we have escaped the condemnation which is on the world.--Rom. 8:1-4.

To whatever extent, therefore, we believe the testimony of the Lord's Word that our sins are covered, that we are escaped from that condemnation, it would not be proper for us to reiterate to the Lord prayers for forgiveness of our share in original sin. That is all past and gone, and the proper attitude of faith in God's assurance forbids that we should repeat requests along that line. However, it would always be proper for us to acknowledge the Lord's goodness in having forgiven us for our share of original sin, and to thank Him for having lifted our feet out of the horrible pit and out of the miry clay of sin and its condemnation, for having placed our feet upon the Rock, Christ Jesus, and having put in our mouths the new song of rejoicing, thanksgiving and praise, which is our privilege and our joy since we have passed from condemnation to justification, from being children of wrath to joint-heirship with Jesus our Lord.

There are more sins than our original sin. These in the Lord's prayer are designated trespasses; and these should be considered, should be mentioned at the Throne of Grace daily. As New Creatures we have entered into a covenant with the Lord to walk in Jesus' steps in the narrow way, according to the Law of Love. And we all find continually that, however sincere and loyal our hearts are to the principles of righteousness and love, we come short of the perfect standard because of weaknesses, blemishes and imperfections of the flesh. These trespasses against the Law of Love should be mentioned at the Throne of grace. It is to these that the Apostle is referring in our text. In the preceding context he is directing us how we should maintain fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, that, so far from our imperfections separating us again from the Father and from the Son, our joy may be full, our fellowship complete. He tells us that as New Creatures we must walk in the light according to the new nature, according to truth, according to righteousness: we must not walk in sin, in darkness, according to the fallen human nature.

But since we have the treasure of the new mind in a blemished earthen vessel, since our spotless robe of Christ's righteousness must be worn continually, and thus be brought in contact with the world, the Apostle intimates that it would be impossible for us to preserve it without spot or wrinkle. Nevertheless our wedding-robe must be without spot or wrinkle if we would be acceptable at the end of the age as members of the Heavenly Bride at the Marriage Feast. How then shall we do? What must be our course in view of these apparently contradictory conditions? The Apostle explains that the blood of Christ not only met first the obligations of the past, satisfying, setting aside the condemnation which was against us as members of Adam's race--but that the same merit of the same sacrifice of Christ may be used for the cleansing of every spot, every imperfection, every blemish. He says, "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us [keeps cleansing us] from all sin." (1 John

1:7.) Thus and thus only can the Lord's children in the present time continue to abide in fellowship with the Father and with the Son, and be prepared for the glorious change of the First Resurrection.

“IF WE DECEIVE OURSELVES”

The Apostle, surmising that some would claim that they had reached perfection and that their daily life was perfect, puts in a warning word, saying, "If we say that we have no sin [that we are free from any breaches of the perfect Law of Love toward God and man] we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." We make God a liar, and indicate that His Word is not in us--that we have not properly studied or understood His Word. There is no more serious condition for the Lord's people to get into than to imagine that they are perfect in the flesh. It implies that they are blind to many of their own failings. We may be sure that their neighbors and friends and kindred can discern blemishes in them, and that much more the Heavenly Father discerns, as He declares in His Word that they come short of glorifying Him--that they come short of the full glory of perfection which the perfect Law of Love demands.--1 John 1:8-10.

While, therefore, faith in the Lord and a knowledge of His Word shows us clearly that we are purged from our old sins, that from the Divine standpoint these are all covered for the Household of Faith by the robe of Christ's imputed righteousness, we see on the contrary that daily imperfections crop out, notwithstanding our best endeavors to walk as nearly up to the standard of the Divine Law as possible--we see that we can not do the things that we would.

More than this, as year by year we grow in grace and knowledge and love we see ourselves more clearly, so that after making progress in the Christian way for years, the best of the Lord's people will see more of their own blemishes than they noted in the beginning of their Christian experience. They daily see more clearly than before the lengths, breadths, heights and depths of the Divine Character and of the Divine Law; and as they look into the perfect Law of Liberty they discern more clearly day by day, and behold as in a mirror their own natural imperfections and shortcomings. Such would be completely discouraged did they not realize the significance of the Apostle's words in our context. He says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

The Apostle, we see, is not referring to the question of mortal sin again, and the applying for a new robe of Christ's righteousness. All that was done in the past. That robe is now ours, and must never be laid off if we would abide in Divine favor. But our robe must be spotless, and hence the gracious provision of the Father through the Son that the blood of Christ may upon our application be applied to cleanse us from all sins, even the slighter ones. Thus has the Lord provided that we may keep our garments unspotted from the world by making use of this privilege granted us of coming with courage to the Throne of Heavenly Grace that we may obtain mercy (in respect to our shortcomings or trespasses) and find grace to help in time of need.--Heb. 4:16.

Nothing in this, properly understood, suggests any carelessness on the part of those who would keep their garments unspotted from the world. Imbued with the Spirit of the Father and of the Son, with a love for righteousness, they are, as the Apostle suggests, to "hate even the garment spotted with the flesh" (Jude 23), and strive continually and with growing persistency and carefulness to avoid such blemishes and the necessity for confessing trespasses. But although this necessity grows less and less as we grow stronger and stronger in the Lord and in the power of His might, nevertheless, so long as the New Creature must operate through the earthen vessel, we must not feel discouraged with our best endeavors for righteousness, but the more earnestly wait for and hope for the glorious resurrection change, in which we shall receive glorious spirit bodies, which our

Lord has promised to the faithful--perfect in every particular. Thenceforth we shall know no sin, and need no further to confess trespasses; for that which is perfect shall have come, and the new mind, the New Creature, thenceforth will be able to express its high and glorious sentiments of obedience to righteousness perfectly.

“THEY WASH THEIR ROBES”

The Lord brings to our attention the fact that there will be two classes saved during this Gospel Age, as well as another class that will be saved during the Millennial Age. All saved during this age are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, “justified through faith in His blood.” (Rom. 5:9.) But the classes saved during this Gospel Age do more than believe, do more than repent, do more than seek to live righteously. Both classes make a covenant with the Lord to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Both classes receive the white robe of justification as a result of such faith and consecration. One of these classes we have already referred to--the class which seeks to live up to its consecration daily, hourly, and which keeps its garments unspotted from the world, "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing." This class in the Scriptures is designated a "little flock."

The other class is designated the Great Company. Concerning the latter company note the statement, “These are they who come out of great tribulation, having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” (Rev. 7:14.) This class, failing to keep their robes unspotted, failing to go to the Lord in prayer with every discovery of trespass, get their robes sadly bedraggled through contact with the world. They were vexed with the first spot, and with the second, and so on, but gradually they became more careless and less and less appreciative of the absolute spotlessness of the robe. For this reason they will not be accounted worthy of the high honor which the Lord proposes to give to the "little flock." But before they can obtain any honor or any place in the everlasting Kingdom it will be necessary that they should pass through fiery experiences, disciplines, for their correction, for their purification. In some parts of the Scriptures this trial is referred to as the "fiery trial which shall try you." (1 Pet. 4:12.) Its primary reference is to a great tribulation in the end of this Age, through which all except the Little Flock may be expected to pass.--Luke 21:36.

In this tribulation time there will be a general cleansing, a general turning to the Lord on the part of these consecrated ones and an acceptance by the Lord; for we read that they shall come up out of the great tribulation and be granted palm branches, and be permitted to serve the Lord in His Temple before His Throne. We notice, however, that the Little Flock, who keep their garments unspotted by daily, hourly, applying for their share of the precious blood for this purpose--these receive the higher honor; and instead of being before the Throne are in the Throne as the Bride, the Lamb's Wife. Instead of having palm branches, representing victory, they have crowns, which represent victory on a higher, grander plane, approving them as "more than conquerors" through Him who loved them and bought them with His precious blood.--Rom. 8:37.

In other words, the Great Company mentioned here are chastened through tribulations to the point of the abjuration of sins and the cleansing of the robe, and attain to the spiritual nature and will be highly honored servants of the Lord during the Millennial Reign, while the Little Flock will be joint-heirs with their Lord in that Kingdom. The two classes are represented to us in Psalm 45. The Little Flock is the Bride, all glorious with raiment of fine needlework and gold, representing the embroidery of the fruits of the Spirit and the gold of the Divine nature, while the Great Company are represented by a larger company--"the virgins, her companions, that do follow her" into the King's presence.

The little flock in this symbolization of Revelation are pictured as 144,000, 12,000 out of each tribe of Israel. Natural Israel, as we have previously seen, was a typical people. The real Israel of God is Spiritual Israel. The promises and opportunities, however, went first to Natural Israel; and as many out of all the tribes who were of right condition of heart and received the Master were granted the liberty to become members of the House of Sons. (John 1:12.) The remainder of that nation were cast off from participation in the chiefest blessing—to subsequently have an opportunity in the Millennial Age of attaining to an inferior blessing. Their casting off left vacancies in the appointed numbers of the twelve tribes; and it is to those vacancies that the Lord during this Gospel Age has been inviting those who have an ear to hear the Truth and who have earnest desires of accepting it. Many more will be called than will be chosen to this place. The world in general is not called, but only those who have an ear to hear. The Great Company, although called, failing to respond with full appreciation, fail to secure membership in this Spiritual Israel class, the Little Flock. Yet, as we have seen, they will come through much tribulation and disciplines of the Lord to a grand position, but far inferior to that of the “Very Elect.”

“WE HAVE AN ADVOCATE”

The world has no advocate with the Father, but "we have." The consecrated Household of Faith is represented in Heaven itself by Him who redeemed the whole world. After our Lord had finished His sacrifice at Calvary, been raised from the dead on the third day, spent forty days with the disciples, establishing them and preparing them for the work before them, He then ascended up on High, there to appear in the presence of God on our behalf, as today's text declares, to be our Advocate. (Heb. 9:24.) The figure is a peculiar one. An advocate, an attorney, appears to answer for his client, not to answer for others; and so, although our Lord has laid down the Ransom-price for the sins of the whole world, or, as today's text says, is a Propitiation for the sins of the whole world, nevertheless He did not appear for the whole world. The world has not retained Him as an Advocate. Only believers have come into this relationship, and consequently only for these does He appear, only for these has He made satisfaction. Only these, therefore, have been brought into covenant relationship with the Father, as the Scriptures indicate.

The same Jesus, on the basis of the same Sin-offering finished at Calvary, will in the next Age take up the cause of the world—not as an Advocate, not as appearing before the Father for them and having them justified through faith, but as a Mediator between God and man. God stands for His own Justice. Mankind in general, the world, are in more or less of a rebellious attitude, lovers of sin, blind to their true interests. The Mediator undertakes a work on their behalf, to bring in reconciliation between God and these His rebellious subjects, and to recover the latter by opening the eyes of their understanding, by giving them valuable lessons and experiences respecting the blessings of righteousness and the undesirableness of sin, and thus to bring back as many as possible to fellowship with the Father, and to restore them mentally, morally and physically to the original likeness of God. By the end of that Millennial Age the Mediator will be ready to introduce the perfect members of the race to the Father, blameless and irrefragable; for all those rejecting His ministries of reconciliation will have been cut off in the Second Death. Thenceforth there will be no more sorrow, pain, sighing, crying, dying, because all the former things will have passed away. The Mediator will have effected His grand work of destroying sin and bringing in everlasting righteousness.

How precious the thought that, while the world is mentally, morally and physically poisoned by sin and blind to its own best interests, the time shall yet come when they will be blessed with the opening of the eyes of their understanding and with all the assistances necessary for their recovery! And how the Lord's words resound in our ears, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears,

for they hear." (Matt. 13:16.) We may well thank God that the light of the knowledge of His goodness has shined into our hearts; and that we no longer need to wait for the Mediator's work to reconcile us, but that now in advance turn to the Lord promptly, as soon as we have heard of His grace in Christ. And how gracious is His provision in all respects, for our adoption into His family, our begetting of the Spirit to a new nature, that we may become heirs of God and joint-heirs with His Son in the glorious Kingdom, which is to bless the world--"all the families of the earth."

Sermon Book 719

**“THE SIGN OF
THE SON OF MAN IN HEAVEN”**

“Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”--Matt. 24:30.

Various suggestions have been made by scholars respecting the import of this prophecy by the Master. Some guessed that the sign would be a Cross in the sky. Others thought that it would be Christ Himself, who would appear in some wrathful form to humanity, causing fear and dismay.

We cannot say that the sign of the Son of Man in heaven will be His Parousia. On the contrary, the Parousia of Christ will not be known to the tribes, or families, of the earth in general, but will be known only to the most saintly ones of the Church of Christ. Consequently, the sign of the Son of Man must in some sense stand related to His Epiphania, or shining forth in the "flaming fire" of judgment, which the whole world of mankind will recognize. --2 Thess. 1:7-9.

The word "sign" is of broad meaning; for instance, crepe is a sign of mourning; the Cross represents Christianity; the Crescent, Mohammedanism. In other words, a sign is merely an indication. So when we read of the "sign of the Son of Man in heaven," the thought might properly be that something will occur indicative of the presence of the Son of Man--that He has taken to Himself His great power and has begun His reign. Since the Son of Man is to be revealed in flaming fire, taking vengeance, it follows that this sign must be some sign of vengeance, some indication of righteous indignation against wrong.--Isa. 59:17, 18.

JUDGMENT TO BEGIN WITH THE CHURCH

The question, then, arises, How would such a sign, or indication, appear in the sky, in the heavens? We reply that this is not the thought. On the contrary, let us remember that the Bible repeatedly uses the words heaven, mountain, sea, in a symbolical manner--the earth representing organized society; the mountains representing kingdoms, as the backbones of this organized society; the seas representing the restless masses of humanity, continually seeking to swallow up the social "earth." In

the same symbolic terms the heavens represent the ecclesiastical powers of the world--churchianity. The sign appearing in the heavens signifies that the beginning of Christ's judgments will fall upon the ecclesiastical systems of our day. The flaming fire of judgments will first manifest itself in ecclesiastical affairs and circles.

Mankind will gradually become awakened to the thought that a new Government is in control, and that its policy will be the law of "judgment to the line and righteousness to the plummet." Since unrighteousness is prevalent as a result of man's fallen condition, the conscience of the whole world will be awakened, quickened; and fear, dread, will come upon all classes everywhere. This will be not only because they will see the primary sign of Christ's righteous judgments in religious circles, but because they will see Him coming--drawing nearer and nearer in judgment; and they will recognize that they, too, must shortly be involved. Hence there will be mourning because of Him.--Rev. 1:7.

Furthermore, it will be remembered that all the families of the earth have very crude and incorrect views of Messiah and of the object of His Second Coming and Kingdom. The "doctrines of devils," brought into the church creeds during the Dark Ages, have so made void the Word of God that the majority of mankind fear the Almighty, dread Him as their Almighty Foe, instead of realizing Him to be the God of all grace and the Father of all mercies, "from whom cometh every good and perfect gift."--1 Tim. 4:1; James 1:17.

The eyes of the world have been blinded to the goodness of God. Terrible dread in the hearts of humanity will lead to the wail of fear as they perceive Christ's righteous judgments encircling all the earth--

"The signs and groanings promised
To precede a second birth."

Not knowing of a "second birth" and all the glorious blessings which Messiah's Kingdom is designed to bring to mankind, human hearts will be filled with dread and apprehension. Only those who are truly the Lord's and are rightly informed respecting the Divine Plan of the Ages will be able to lift up their heads and rejoice, knowing that their "deliverance draweth nigh."--Luke 21:28.

“THE HEAVENS BEING ON FIRE”

St. Peter apparently described this sign of the Son of Man in the heavens, revealed in flaming fire. His words are, “The heavens being on fire shall be dissolved,” and “the earth also [shall take fire] and the works that are therein shall be burned up.” (2 Peter 3:10-12.) Let us not make the mistake of our forefathers in supposing that these descriptions mean a literal burning of the literal earth. Let us, on the contrary, realize that the symbolical earth and the symbolical heavens are to catch fire and pass away with a great commotion, while the physical earth will remain practically as it is, and will begin to undergo the transforming influences of Restitution under the new King, the Restorer of all things--The Christ.

It will be noticed that St. Peter mentions the fire as coming to the heavens before it reaches the earth, in just the same order that Jesus stated the matter. The sign, manifestation, of the flaming fire of judgments will appear in the heavens; and subsequently the sign of the Son of Man in judgment will be seen coming nearer and nearer to earth's affairs, with a view to purging them absolutely from everything sinful, selfish, unjust.

We are told that the elements will melt with fervent heat. We see the Capitalistic element and the Labor element separating, the one from the other. We see the preparations for the great conflagration, the great Time of Trouble. We sometimes speak of it in this language, saying, "Things are getting very hot." They will presently be so hot that spontaneous combustion will set in. And the fire of that Day will be so extreme and its results so drastic as to fulfil the Master's words that unless those days should be shortened no flesh could survive.

But because of the Elect, because of the Kingdom which will then be set up, those days will be shortened-- brought to an end. Nothing will be destroyed except that which is injurious. The world-wide results of that flaming fire of Divine judgments will be corrective, preparing men's hearts for the blessings which the Lord is prepared then to give. Thus it is written, "When the judgments of the Lord are abroad in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness."--Isa. 26:9.

It will be noted that St. Peter, in speaking of that Time of Trouble, mentions that the heavens--ecclesiasticism-- will be on fire first; and that later, the earth--society and its political, financial and social organizations--will be involved also. In harmony with this, our text tells that this sign, or indication, for the revealing of Messiah inflaming fire, will first be in the Church. Furthermore, according to St. Peter's statement, we are to expect that the ecclesiastical heavens will pass away with a great noise--a great commotion--before the social order is fully reached by the consuming fire.--2 Peter 3:10.

The same thought is brought to our attention in Revelation, where a wide distinction is made between the nominal church systems, called Babylon, and the true Church, which is admonished in advance to come out of Babylon and to stand in personal relationship to God through Christ. This

general call, which belongs to the end of the Age, before the judgments come upon Babylon, reads, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." The intimation is that as soon as the loyally obedient have been gathered out of Babylon some drastic trouble will come upon her.--Rev. 18:4, 5.

We should not apply this term "Babylon" to individuals, but to great systems, outwardly having a form of godliness, but really misrepresenting the Divine character, the Divine Plan, the true teachings of the Bible. Of course, the individuals identified with the systems have more or less responsibility, according to their official position and their intelligence. In similar proportion these individuals may have tribulations in conjunction with the fall of Babylon. We do not understand the term "Babylon" to be applied Scripturally to any sect or party, but rather to refer to the general conglomeration of systems and denominations. Likewise, when reading of the utter destruction that is to come upon Babylon, we are to differentiate between the systems and the individuals connected with those systems.

The judgments of the Lord are not designed to crush or destroy humanity, but to destroy utterly the systems of error, bondage and superstition which have fettered humanity and hindered them from fuller progress and development in the knowledge and favor of God. With the fall of the great systems (Babylon, confusion) men's eyes will begin to open; the blind will begin to "see out of obscurity." (Isa. 29:18.) As a result, the high praises of God will arise as a sweet savor.

The fall of Babylon is declared to come speedily, suddenly --figuratively, "in an hour." The descriptions of her fall are various. In one place we read that she shall be utterly burned with fire. The same symbol of fire is used by St. Peter in referring to the same trouble and destruction. In another place we read that Babylon shall be cast like a great millstone into the sea and be found no more at all.--Jer. 51:58; Rev. 18:8, 21.

"EVERY EYE SHALL SEE HIM"

Throughout this Gospel Age, the Lord's people have with the eye of faith recognized Jesus as their Redeemer and Deliverer. But comparatively few have had such eyes of faith and understanding. The majority, as the Apostle declares, are blinded by Satan and by error, and fail to get a proper, true view of Christ. He says that "the god of this world" has blinded the minds of all unbelievers. But the gracious promise of the Lord is that all the blinded eyes shall be opened.

The experiences of eighteen centuries have done little toward opening the eyes of the world; but the revelation of Messiah in flaming fire will appeal to them quickly. They will see Him thus—"Every eye shall see Him, and those also who pierced Him"--the Jews. Instinctively they will fear. It may require a considerable time for them to become fully persuaded that the One feared is their best Friend, who gave His life as their Redemption-price, and whose judgments in the earth are for the very purpose of breaking the bondage of fear, ignorance, superstition, sin, selfishness and injustice, and of allowing the whole world to go free from a sin-slavery which has long oppressed them.--Rom. 11:25-27.

In due time they will learn that the fire of God's anger does not burn against the sinners for whom Christ died, but merely against their sins. The learning of this lesson will open their eyes still more widely and enable them to see something of the length, the breadth, the height and the depth of God's Love, of which the Apostle tells.-- Eph. 3:14-19; Rom. 5:6-8.

That the Jews will be in that trouble, the Bible distinctly marks out. It will be "the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it." (Jer. 30:7.) The Gospel Church having been completed by that time and having passed beyond the veil, God's favor will be restored to Natural Israel; and the time for the special manifestation of that favor will be in the dark hour of Jacob's trouble, when the Jews are surrounded by enemies. In and through that trouble the Lord will pour upon them the spirit of grace and of supplication, and they will look upon Him whom they pierced. (Zech. 12:10.) They will discern that they made a great and horrible mistake in crucifying the Friend of Sinners, their long-promised Messiah. We are told that they shall mourn because of Him, and that then the spirit of supplication will come to them and they will see Jesus in His real character.

At or about that same time Divine favor will be manifested on Israel's behalf, and the Lord will deliver them, as in olden times. Their eyes of faith and understanding will open more and more widely. Eventually, according to the Bible, they will become the leaders of mankind in returning to God, who will abundantly pardon their iniquity and grant them a prominent share in the blessings of His Kingdom.

"FEW STRIPES" AND "MANY STRIPES"

The great Messianic Kingdom will not spare the rod, but will inflict punishments for the world's correction in righteousness. Some will suffer more and some less, according to the Master's own statements. Those understanding the principles of righteousness and wilfully violating them will be beaten heavily, "with many stripes"; while others, such as the heathen, for instance, who knew little, will receive fewer stripes, proportionate to their ignorance. All the stripes, however, will be reformatory, and with a view to helping and encouraging the transgressors to abandon the ways of iniquity and to walk in the paths of righteousness.--Luke 12:47, 48.

That will be a happy Day for earth's thousands of millions --a Day with the Lord, a thousand years. Everywhere there will be evidences of the operation of Divine Mercy and Justice, and the necessary lessons will be quickly learned by all people. We cannot doubt that even fifty years of Kingdom influence will make a wonderful change in human affairs and conditions. The blessing of the Lord will come to the earth in proportion as God's will shall be done by mankind.

Finally, with all sin eliminated, all imperfections gone and all the wilfully wicked destroyed, every creature on earth, as well as in Heaven, will be heard saying, "Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the Throne and unto the Lamb forever and ever." Then, and not till then, will God's will be done on earth, even as it is done in Heaven; for not until then will there be a perfect race capable of doing God's will, and a tested race, all of whom will delight to do His will.

A special lesson to God's people today is that now is the Church's time of calling, accepting and making their election sure by hearty obedience to the Divine will. Thus neither shall we be of the world, who will wail because of the sign of the Son of Man in the dissolution of the ecclesiastical heavens, nor shall we be identified with the ecclesiastical heavens, which are to be dissolved. Rather, it is our privilege, as followers of Jesus, to walk in His steps, to stand for the right, to be guided of the Holy Spirit, to "come out of Babylon," to "touch not the unholy thing," that we may have relationship and fellowship with the Lord, with the Savior, with the holy Apostles and with all the faithful martyrs and footstep followers of our Master.

We've been watching, we've been waiting,
For the star that brings the day;

For the night of sin to vanish,
And the mists to roll away.
We've been watching, we've been waiting,
For the beauteous King of day,
For the chiefest of ten thousand,
For the Light, the Truth, the Way.
We begin to see the dawning
Of the bright Millennial day;
Soon the shadows, weary shadows,
Shall forever pass away.

Sermon Book 420

GOD'S STANDARD IS PERFECTION

“As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.”--1 Peter 1:15.

The Scriptures explicitly declare that our great Creator made man in His own image and likeness, and pronounced His creature very good. But when sin entered the world, through the disobedience of Father Adam, he was cut off from fellowship with his Creator--as a part of the penalty of sin. This alienation from God must have been one of man's most grievous trials. He must have hungered and thirsted to draw near to God once more, to have the Divine protection, the Divine love; otherwise he could not have been created in the perfect image of God.

But as centuries rolled on, Adam's posterity became more and more depraved and demoralized; the original character-likeness to God became blurred, faint, indistinct. So while the desire for God still remains, in some it is more pronounced than in others. In some it is so feeble that they care little for their Creator and are easily satisfied by the pleasures of the world.

Many are separated from God through ignorance, superstition and the doctrines of demons, as the Bible declares. Misunderstanding our gracious Creator, they are thus driven away from Him. Whatever of natural inclination they have had the Adversary seeks to thwart. As St. Paul declares, "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor. 4:4), should scatter the darkness and make known to them the true character of God; and thus they should be drawn to Him.

But with some of the race desire for God and righteousness has prevailed above the stupefying influence of the world, the flesh and the Devil. This class are drawn by the natural inclination of their minds Godward-- desiring to be in harmony with their Creator. While those who were not born of religious parents have had a large experience with sin and alienation from God, others, born in a measure of justification, have had a measure of fellowship with God always, as children of believers. This class are in a favorable condition to be drawn of God, and to hear His voice speaking peace to them and pointing them to Jesus Christ as the Way, the Truth, the Life.-- John 6:44; 14:6; Heb. 10:19-22.

"LORD, SHOW US THE FATHER!"

As these come to appreciate our Lord's beautiful character and His loyalty to the Father, and to understand that He came into the world to die for Adam's sin, their hearts respond with increasing gratitude to the Redeemer and to the Heavenly Father, whose Plan our Lord was carrying out. More and more do they long to draw closer to God, and to be recognized of Him as members of His family. Through the Word the Master instructs them that whoever will walk in His steps shall eventually see God in the fulness of Heavenly glory.

Still further study of the Scriptures informs this class that the first step to be taken is one of faith. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Those who take this step must recognize that they are sinners, under the Adamic sentence, from which no one can be freed except in God's appointed way--Jesus. Then by faith they must accept Jesus as the Redeemer of Adam and his posterity. They must perceive that His death on Calvary was a sacrificial one; and that the grand outcome of this Ransom sacrifice will be that the Kingdom of God will be established in the earth for the purpose of uplifting mankind out of sin and death conditions--back to the full image of God in the flesh.--Acts 16:31.

THE CALL OF THE GOSPEL AGE

Those who take this first step may know what is the second step; and if they have sufficient faith to take this step, their sins will be forgiven and they will be granted a new nature. This second step is to accept God's invitation to "present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, their reasonable service." Those who accept this invitation are thus privileged to sacrifice their

all of earthly time, talent, wealth, etc. When they have so done, our Lord imputes to them individually His merit, and thus makes them holy and acceptable unto God, who immediately begets them of His Holy Spirit.

Thenceforth they are New Creatures--"old things have passed away and all things become new." They are now counted as members of His glorious Church. Their sins that are past are all cleansed; and the New Creature has no defilement of itself. But attaching to the flesh are certain imperfections, which from time to time crop out. The New Creature is to be prompt to notice these; for the New Creature is the new will, which henceforth regulates the mortal body.--Rom. 12:1; 2 Cor. 5:17.

Apparently some of God's dear people have not realized what a contract they have on hand. Some are inclined to be careless about watching the very things which they have been told to watch. It is for all the consecrated to remember that their first obligation is in respect to their own flesh, not that of others. We may give each other valuable suggestions, but the responsibility for the body rests with each as a New Creature. And here we have the task of our lives; for in our flesh, as the Apostle says, dwells no perfection. Some have one degree of imperfection and some another; some are more imperfect and blemished in one way and others in another. But as the Scriptures continually assure us, there is none righteous, none perfect, no, not one. We all come short and need to recognize our shortcomings; and we are to fight the good fight against them.

THE NEW CREATURE IN SCHOOL

Whoever would be of the class to which God has called us must of necessity be developed; therefore whoever God has called, accepted and begotten of the Holy Spirit are in the School of Christ. Then begin the lessons which they must learn--they must grow in grace, in knowledge and in love. As the Apostle explains, they must be transformed --be formed over. If they are not thus transformed, they will not be ready for the Kingdom to which they are called. This transforming is not a work in the flesh, although it will affect the flesh to some extent. It is the renewing of the mind--their minds must become new. Thereafter matters are to be decided, not according to their preferences, but according to certain principles-- justice and love. The New Creatures in Christ have a set of new rules, altogether different from what they had before they become New Creatures.

The world has no such rules and regulations as those which are applicable to the New Creatures in Christ. Everything done by those who are in the School of Christ must be squared by the Rule of Justice. They dare not do anything that would be unjust to a neighbor, to a brother or to anybody. To the full extent of their ability the New Creatures must render justice. Many of the Lord's people apparently have not fully realized this fact--that obedience to the rules governing the new nature means absolutely the Golden Rule on their part toward all others. They must not do to others what they would not have others do to them.--Matt. 7:12.

Because of failure on the part of some to recognize this principle, the way of the Lord is spoken evil of sometimes. If a Christian fails to pay his debts, or if he is careless as to how he involves himself in debt, it is because this principle of justice does not stand out prominently enough before his mind. As an old creature he has perhaps been in the habit of ignoring the lines of justice and of sliding along as he may be able and of leaving others in the lurch. This will not do for the New Creature; for he has come under a set of new rules, and no matter how much the old creature may seek to shirk, the New Creature's duty is to bring the body into subjection and to see that justice rules in every act and word, and so far as possible in every thought.

“THEY SHALL ALL BE TAUGHT OF GOD”

To whatever extent the principles of justice control our minds, to that extent we have character-likeness to God. The cultivation of these principles in all our actions and dealings, in all our words and thoughts, must be our daily concern. It may be comparatively easy to be just so far as money is concerned, to say, I would pay to the very last penny, and would live on the plainest of food rather than be in debt; but it is not so easy to be thoroughly just in our words and thoughts. The New Creature is to sit in judgment on every word which his mouth may utter. It is no wonder that St. James says that if any man sin not with his tongue the same is a perfect man. The New Creature is to be on guard that he may be developed along this line, and must thoroughly show the Lord that he has no sympathy with injustice.

One must be just in his thoughts before he can be properly just in his dealings. The man who thinks unjustly will act unjustly, in spite of himself; therefore the New Creature must be disciplined even to the control of his thoughts. He must never think of any one except with an unprejudiced mind, a calm judgment, seeking to give others the benefit of the doubt, if there is any doubt whatever. Additionally, he must heed the Lord's counsel that we should exercise great mercy, and that He would rather have us err in the sense of being too lenient than have us be merely just.--James 3:2; Matt. 5:7. But beyond justice comes love, the very highest of God's attributes. God is just; but He is Love, also, which is higher, in the sense that it implies something more than mere justice. Not only will God do full justice to everybody, but He will do a little more--He will do something of love. This He shows us in His dealings with mankind. God was only just when He condemned the race of Adam as unfit for everlasting life; and He would still have been just if He had never provided redemption or any other opportunity for the world whatever.

God is more than just, however, and so in due time He provided the Redeemer. This was Grace, this was Mercy, this was Love. And Love has been working all through His great Plan of the Ages, providing first the Savior, then making provision for the Church, that through His mercy we might come from the ranks of sinners up to the ranks of glory. To accomplish this, He has forgiven the sins of the Church, has encouraged them by assurances of His love and has overruled all things for good.

“BE YE PERFECT”

This, then, is the Love of God; and the New Creatures in Christ must have this character-likeness to God. We must have love, sympathy, and not merely justice. There is nothing of grace in the giving of justice; anything less than justice is wrong. But the Lord's people must be more than just; they are to be kindly affectioned one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven them. Our Heavenly Father wishes His children to see that quality in His character and to copy it. This is what Jesus meant when He said, "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect." We cannot bring our mortal body to that degree of perfection where every act would be perfect, every word perfect; but the mind must be in full sympathy and accord with God and His arrangements, and each must strive to the best of his ability to bring the body into harmony with God.--Matt. 5:48.

As the Bible teaches, the Church class are in the School of Christ, being taught of God--His workmanship. By His providence and His Word He has been working in us, by our experiences, which He has shaped for us, and by the opportunities which He gives us. All these things are designed by the Lord to bless us and to develop us in His own character-likeness, so that, as Jesus said, we may be like unto our Father in Heaven, so that we may be holy, even as He is holy--that our intentions, aims, desires, may be of exactly the same kind as His own.

If, therefore, any one who professes to be a New Creature in Christ has in his heart a feeling of bitterness, envy or strife, let him beware! Such a condition of heart is dangerous; it is not of the Holy Spirit at all. Those who have such elements of character are not holy as the Heavenly Father is holy. On the contrary, as the Apostle explains, these qualities of character are works of the flesh and of the Devil; and to whatever extent one possesses these, they are the result of the spirit of the flesh and of the Devil at work in the heart.

THE GRAND CLIMAX OF CHARACTER

Of our Lord Jesus it was written: "Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest iniquity; therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of joy above Thy fellows" (Psa. 45:7)--above the angels, above the Church, making Him to be Head over all things to the Church and decreeing that all the angels shall worship Him. (Heb. 1:6-9.) In order to copy Him we must see to what extent He loved righteousness and hated iniquity.

This, then, is the great test of character going on with the Lord's people, and according to these lines God is dealing with them. It is not merely that they are fighting the good fight and trying to accomplish something in their flesh; for the New Creature will never succeed in getting as good control of the flesh as he could wish. But what God wishes to see in His people is that their whole hearts are set for righteousness, that they love the right and hate the wrong, and that they are striving to the best of their ability to put down the wrong and to uphold the right, especially in themselves--in their own characters and in their own acts, words and thoughts.

Sermon Book 428

**HEAD MUST RULE
MEMBERS OF BODY**

“See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh! for if they escaped not who refused Him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from Him that speaketh from Heaven.”--Heb. 12:25.

These words are not addressed to the world, but to the members of the Body of Christ, those who have left the world and entered into covenant relationship with God. The Apostle has just been describing the scenes enacted at Mount Sinai, when God by His angel spoke to His typical people Israel. He then declares that if sore punishment came to all in Israel who disobeyed the voice which then gave them commandments, much sorer shall be the punishment of those Spiritual Israelites of the Gospel Age, who, after having come into vital relationship with the Son of God as members of His mystical Body, shall then refuse to hear and obey.

In order to have harmony in the human body each member must respond promptly to the dictates of the head. Suppose that my hand were afflicted with St. Vitus Dance, so that when my brain instructed the hand to lift a glass of water that I might drink, the hand would twitch, tremble, suddenly throw the glass over my shoulder and spill the contents. What would be the trouble with my hand? It was a sick member; the connection between it and my head was interrupted; and thus the hand refused to obey the mandates of the head. Or suppose that my limb were paralyzed; and that when my head directed it to move, it would remain motionless and refuse to carry my body. The connection between this member and the brain had become interrupted, and the message from the head was not received. What confusion and trouble would thus be caused in my body!

Thus it is with the Body of Christ. If any member of that Body become spiritually sick, if the perfect harmony between the Head, Christ Jesus, and any member be interrupted, there will be trouble and distress throughout the entire Body. If the connection become altogether destroyed, the member is thenceforth useless, and is cut off from the Body. Our Lord pictures this matter when He called Himself the Vine and the members of His mystical Body the branches, and declared that every branch in Him that failed to bear fruit would be cut off.

THE HEAD THE MOST IMPORTANT MEMBER

What carefulness this thought should inspire in each member of Christ! We should realize that of ourselves we are nothing. We are only the humble instruments that God is using in the outworking of His wonderful Plan. Not one of us is at all necessary to His purposes. It is a very great favor that the Father permits us to co-operate in His great work under the Headship of His Son Jesus Christ. God formed the Plan, and is carrying it out according to His own purposes. Our Lord Jesus is the important factor in the accomplishment of God's designs. We are invited in, not to be rulers, but to follow instructions, to be obedient. The greatest blessing which we can have is to be permitted to co-operate with our great Head, who under Jehovah, the great Head over all, is guiding the work.

Through experience and observation the thought has impressed itself that there may be a considerable number cut off from membership in the Body of Christ, and not only so, but cut off from all hope of future life. There can be no place, now or ever, in God's family for one who is wilful and refractory, one who will not be guided by the Lord, one who wants his own way and who thus refuses Him that speaks from Heaven.

In Hebrews 10:28, 29 the Apostle declares that those who disobeyed Moses "died without mercy." Then he speaks of those who will receive a much "sorer punishment." Israel being a typical people, the death penalty visited upon them for certain offenses was only a type of the death penalty to be visited upon those of Spiritual Israel who wilfully disobey the voice of God speaking to us

through His Son. The penalty suffered by refractory members of Natural Israel was but a temporary one; for during the Millennial Age they will be awakened and have the opportunity, with all the remainder of the world, of accepting Christ and coming under the terms of the New Covenant, then operative. But those who during the present Age have been enlightened and begotten of God's Holy Spirit, shall, if they fall away--renounce allegiance to Christ--come under the penalty of the Second Death-- total annihilation.

This, then, is the "sorer punishment" to which the Apostle refers. This penalty of death without any hope of a recovery will be inflicted also upon those of the world at large who, during their time of trial in the next Age, shall wilfully disobey the voice of God speaking through the great Mediator of the New Covenant--The Christ, Head and Body--Jesus and His Church.

EVIL EFFECT OF REJECTING LIGHT

The Apostle's argument is, Look back, brethren, to the history of Israel in the past. See how from time to time they were negligent of the messages which God sent to them at the mouth of angels and of Moses, the servant of God; and how disasters often came upon them for their disobedience and neglect, many of them even suffering the death penalty. If the penalty was so severe for negligence under the Law given through Moses, what would be the result of neglecting and of doing despite to the words of Him who now speaks from Heaven, of counting the blood of the Covenant by which we have been sanctified an unholy thing, a common thing, and of doing despite to the Spirit of grace--despising God by ignoring His only arrangement for atonement!--Heb. 6:4-8; 10:26-31; Acts 3:23.

There are some who have never made a full consecration of themselves, who have never enlisted upon the Lord's side, and yet have had considerable knowledge of the Truth. They have heard the true Gospel Message; they have felt its power, its reasonableness; they have realized in their hearts that it was God's Message. They have felt a certain measure of drawing toward it. Yet for some reason these have turned away from the Heavenly Voice. These are not the class addressed by the Apostle in our text, however; for like all of the Apostolic Epistles, that to the Hebrews is addressed to the "holy brethren" (Chapter 3:1), "the saints."

But all who have heard the Gospel Message with a measure of understanding and appreciation have thereby some responsibility concerning it. To turn away from any degree of light brings a hardening of the heart. It would seem that whoever has rejected the Message after a measure of understanding of its import would never again be drawn to it in the same degree as before. The Message would not seem so wonderful as at first. Whoever gets a glimpse beyond into the future, whoever hears now of the goodness of God and is not melted by the thought of his own imperfection and his need of a Savior, may never accept God's favor, even during the next Age, when the opportunity for Restitution is opened to all mankind. This is a thought which all who hear will do well to consider.--Rom. 2:4.

No one becomes fully responsible, however, until he has entered into the spirit-begotten condition; for no one can be tried for eternal life until first he has gotten free from the Adamic death sentence. The first death sentence must be removed before anybody can be put on trial for life or death again. Thus we see the wonderful mercy of God in providing that those who would come now into Christ are not put on trial at the moment when they hear about Christ, when they learn that there is a door of return to God open to all who comply with conditions.

CHRIST SUFFERING IN THE FLESH

Whoever endeavors to draw near to God will find that every step nearer will bring him a blessing; for he is going in the right way--toward justification by faith. But he has not yet come into full trial, full testing. As he continues to draw nearer, learning more and more about God, cleansing himself more and more from the natural filthiness of the flesh resulting from the Adamic fall, he finally comes to the parting of the ways. He finds that he cannot go forward unless he make a full consecration of himself to God. He learns that he can have no standing with God unless our Redeemer Himself accept him and present him to God; and that our Lord Jesus will not accept any one who does not give himself fully and unreservedly to the Father through the Son.

So he has reached the point of decision. Whoever reaches this place and then gives himself unreservedly is accepted of the Lord Jesus, in harmony with the Father's Plan. Immediately after He has accepted the one presenting himself in consecration, He imputes of the merit of His sacrificial death to the one offering himself and counts that one as His flesh. Then the Father also accepts that flesh, and begets the person to a new, spiritual nature. Thus the flesh of Christ has been in process of being offered in sacrifice throughout this Gospel Age. First, our Lord Jesus offered His own flesh. Then, when He had finished that work, He appeared in the presence of God and made satisfaction for the sins of all who would follow in His steps--the Church.--Heb. 9:24.

As soon as our Lord had made satisfaction for His followers, the Father immediately accepted their sacrifices, as was indicated by His giving them the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. So all other believers throughout this Age have received the begetting of the Holy Spirit as soon as the Father had accepted them through the great Advocate of the Church. The flesh of these consecrated ones having been counted as the flesh of Jesus (Acts 9:4, 5),

Christ has been suffering in the flesh all down the Age. Thus we perceive the fulfilment of the Scripture which declares that we are filling up "that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ."--Col. 1:24.

Various Scriptures tell us that now is the time for suffering with Christ, and that afterward will come the time for sharing His glory. St. Peter says that the Prophets of old spoke of the sufferings of Christ--Jesus the Head, and all the members of the Body--and of the glory to follow. That glory will follow promptly just as soon as the sufferings are accomplished. Whoever shares in the sufferings now will also share in the coming blessings of glory, honor and immortality--the Divine nature.--1 Peter 1:10-12; 2 Tim. 2:11, 12; Rom. 8:17; 2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 3:1,2; James 1:12.

PHASES OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

The Lord Jesus counts the flesh of His Body members as His flesh. So we now have before our minds the thought that the human bodies of the Church constitute a part of our Lord's flesh, in the larger sense. Then there is the present spiritual Body of Christ, composed of the spirit-begotten new nature of the New Creatures in the Christ Company dwelling in these earthly tabernacles and seeking to bring them to the sacrificial point in every respect day by day. Then there is also the thought of the glorified Body of Christ, to be composed of the "more than conquerors" only, after the two companiesshall have been eliminated who have failed to make their calling and election sure.

The Scriptures inform us that those who compose the Body of Christ in the flesh will finally be divided into three classes, after the testings and provings have been applied by our Lord. The first class will constitute the Body of Christ in glory, the "more than conquerors" mentioned by St. Paul in Romans 8:37. The second class will be composed of those who have not been wholly faithful to the Covenant of Sacrifice which they made with the

Lord, and who must consequently lose their places in the Body. Later, these will come up out of the great tribulation with which this Age will close, and will make their robes white in the blood of the Lamb. Then they will stand before the Throne, with palm branches in their hands, instead of sitting in the Throne, wearing crowns. (Rev. 7:9-17; 3:21; 20:4, 6; 2:10.) The third class will be composed of those who repudiate their covenant with God, and who therefore will suffer the penalty of the Second Death.

During the Gospel Age God deals only with those who constitute these classes. He does not receive any one who has not come to the point of full consecration; for it is the New Creature, not the flesh, that is on trial for life or death. Whoever becomes a New Creature hears the voice of God in a special sense; for the spirit-begotten class receive, as it were, a new hearing and a new sight, so that as New Creatures they can understand spiritual things, can hear and see as never before.

SANCTIFIED THROUGH THE TRUTH

It is very important that all of the spirit-begotten keep their hearts so loyal, and their walk in life so consistent, that they shall be of the Body of Christ in glory. To this class our Lord still speaks; and it is for each of them to see that he refuse not anything that the Head says to His Church. The will of the Head is to be done in the Body.

In His last prayer with His disciples our Lord prayed for them, "Sanctify them through Thy Truth; Thy Word is Truth." (John 17:17.) We cannot be sanctified without the Word of God. Nothing else can take its place. Let us listen to His Voice speaking to us there. He tells us that we are in the School of Christ, who has become our Teacher. Through His teachings, through the prophecies and through the various experiences of life He is teaching His disciples meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, brotherly kindness, love.

Whoever has not learned meekness has not learned even the primary lesson in the School of Christ. Meekness is the foundation for love. Gentleness is very important. The person who is rude and boisterous is not in proper condition to be used of the Lord. He must become gentle in order that he may not offend or stumble the brethren. He must learn brotherly kindness in order to love them, to be helpful to them. This is the Lord's Spirit.

We must become so meek, so humble, so teachable, that in whatever way God may send us instruction-- whether through trials, difficulties, sickness, or through books, pamphlets or hymnals-- we shall be ready to learn. Whatever scatters our darkness, our ignorance, our superstition, whatever brings us out of darkness into the marvelous light of God, is surely of Him; for we cannot do this of ourselves.

THE VOICE THAT SPEAKS FROM HEAVEN

God's Voice is sounding throughout the earth today, speaking louder than ever before, telling us that the world is on the eve of a great change of dispensation--that the Redeemer is about to take His great power and reign. Let those who hear see that they do not refuse the Message of the hour. If they refuse Him who speaks from Heaven--as most of them are doing--all the more severe will be the tribulation which will come upon them--"a Time of Trouble such as never was since there was a nation, no, nor ever shall be" the like hereafter.

Centuries ago, when the Law Covenant of which Moses was the mediator was made at Mount Sinai, the Voice of God then shook the earth. St. Paul, standing prophetically down here in our day and pointing back to that time, says that once more will God's Voice shake not only the earth--

society--but the heavens also—the ecclesiastical powers. (Heb. 12:26-29.) Let us heed this Voice. Let us humble ourselves and cultivate the qualities of character which will prepare us to be used of the Master to speak of the New Dispensation and the blessings coming to all mankind through Messiah's

Sermon Book 356

SEEKING FIRST THE KINGDOM

“Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”-- Matt. 6:33.

Every Bible student has noted the great frequency of reference to the Kingdom in the teaching of our Lord and the Apostles. We read that the message which John proclaimed was, "The Kingdom of God has come nigh," and that when Jesus sent forth the twelve Apostles their mission was to declare the Kingdom of God at hand. And later, when He sent forth the seventy others, their message was the same, "The Kingdom of God is at hand." We notice that when the disciples asked the Lord how to pray, one of the principal items of the petition He taught them was, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is done in Heaven." We notice, further, that nearly all of our Lord's parables, and hence nearly all of His teachings, were in respect to the Kingdom, which was likened to a net, likened to a sower and his crop of thirty, sixty and an hundred fold, likened to a field, the wheat of which was finally gathered into the garner, likened to the merchant seeking pearls and giving all that he had for the choicest, likened in the end of the Age to the ten virgins, the five wise of whom went into the marriage.

It is with some degree of astonishment that these same students notice that in modern theology, as represented by the colleges in Christendom, there is scarcely a reference to the Kingdom of God. When sometimes inquiry is made respecting the matter--as to why this teaching is so prominent in the New Testament and so little heard in modern pulpits--the reply usually is to this effect: "Yes, the poor Jews had the opinion that God would establish them as the Kingdom; and that when Messiah would come He would receive them as associates in the Kingdom, and would honor them and use them as His instrumentality in blessing all the families of the earth. In all this the poor Jews were evidently mistaken, as our Lord did nothing of the kind for them. In some vague sort of way we must suppose the Church to be the Kingdom now, though we scarcely understand how to apply that name to it." This answer is generally taken by the students as satisfactory; for they know no better and have not learned how to reason on subjects theological. Few people understand God's Word.

BLESSINGS THROUGH ABRAHAM'S SEED

Let us look on the other side of the subject. Let us remember the falling away of the Dark Ages, in which nearly all the precious doctrines of Jesus and the Apostles were buried under a mass of human tradition and superstition and "doctrines of devils." (1 Tim. 4:1.) The Lord be praised that we are gradually getting out of that terrible darkness. But on some subjects many of God's people are still evidently far from clear, far from an appreciation of the teachings of our Lord and His Apostles. Wiping the dust of the darkness of the past from our eyes, let us examine God's Word on this subject of the Kingdom.

We find that the Jews did have as the mainspring of their religious and political system the thought that they were to be the representatives of God in the work of blessing the world in general--that He had called them out first, in advance of other nations, that He might use them as His holy nation under the Messiah, and through them communicate a blessing to the world. This thought had its foundation in the Divine promise to Father Abraham, "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." As the seed of Abraham they expected the fulfilment of that promise and took the various trials and difficulties, captivities, etc., that came upon them as a nation as so much of Divine instruction preparing them for the Divine service when Messiah should come and establish His Kingdom.

Nor is there a thought in the Old or in the New Testament contradictory to this. They had the right idea. In harmony with this thought our Lord at His First Advent preached only to Israel and said to His Apostles, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and unto the city of the Samaritans enter ye not: for I am not sent except to the lost sheep of the House of Israel." The blessing and privilege

went first to that nation. St. John (1:11,12) distinctly tells us that our Lord came unto His own people and that they received Him not, except a remnant; and that to that remnant was granted a special blessing of spirit-begetting, which constituted them the nucleus or start of Spiritual Israel. The rest of the nation of Israel, the Apostle tells us, were turned aside and blinded for a time until a sufficient number should be found from among the Gentiles to complete the foreordained number of Spiritual Israel. This gathering of Spiritual Israelites out of all nations, peoples, kindreds and tongues, and the testing of these, has been the work of this Gospel Age; and when the full number shall have been found and tested and perfected this Age will end and a new Age, the Millennium, will begin.

THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM

It will be noticed, then, that the central thought held by the Jews respecting God's purpose of establishing a Kingdom in the world for the blessing of all nations was substantially correct; and that the difficulty was that there were not enough Jews to constitute the elect class. Hence the delay of this Gospel Age, which God had foreseen and approved. The Kingdom thought, however, is still there; for, as we have just seen, the Lord and the Apostles continually referred to it and invited all the faithful to be "heirs of the Kingdom." As a matter of fact, then, the Church, as Spiritual Israel and the Spiritual Seed of Abraham, has inherited this chief blessing which God offered primarily to Abraham and his posterity. This Spiritual Israel, composed of "Israelites indeed" and the faithful ones of every nation, is to constitute the Bride of Messiah, and as such is to share with Him the Kingdom honors and Kingdom work specified in the Abrahamic promise, "In thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." That there may be no doubt of this, note carefully the Apostle's arguments in Gal. 3 and 4. Note especially his words, "If ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's Seed, and heirs [of the Kingdom and its work of blessing the world] according to the promise."--Gal. 3:29.

No wonder, then, that our Lord continually appealed to the Kingdom thought. It is along this line that the entire Divine Plan is arranged. The Kingdom class must first be found, selected, glorified. Then the Kingdom work of blessing the world will be due to begin—not before. Any blessings that may come to the world through the Church intermediately are merely incidental. This is the meaning of the various invitations given us all through the Scriptures, such, for instance, as our Lord's words in our text, "Seek ye first [chiefly] the Kingdom of God and His righteousness"; "Pray ye, Thy Kingdom come"; "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom"; "As My Father has appointed unto Me a Kingdom, so I appoint unto you"; "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My Throne"; "If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him"; etc., etc.

Another part of the same Kingdom story we shall not have time to tell you on this occasion. We merely, in passing, note the fact that the Scriptures most clearly set forth that from the Divine standpoint there are two seeds of Abraham, and that both seeds are to be blessed and to be used in communicating the Divine blessings to the world in general. Spiritual Israel has attained the highest place as the Seed of Abraham, but there is still a promise to Natural Israel--"This is My covenant with them when I shall take away their sins." "It shall come to pass after those days," saith the Lord, "that I will make a New Covenant with the House of Israel and the House of Judah . . . I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities I will remember no more." "I will take away the stony heart out of their flesh and will give them a heart of flesh."-- Jer. 31:31-33; Ezek. 11:19.

The Apostle tells us when this will be fulfilled; namely, when Spiritual Israel shall have been completed and Natural Israel shall have obtained mercy through Spiritual Israel. (Rom. 11:25-32.) It is in harmony with this that the Apostle assures us that the promise shall be sure unto both the seeds,

both that which is according to the spirit and that which is according to the flesh. (Rom. 4:16.) These two seeds of Abraham were distinctly referred to in the Lord's promise to him in which He said: "Thy seed shall be as the stars of Heaven [the spiritual class, the Heavenly, the Church], and as the sand upon the seashore [the earthly seed]," although favor to Natural Israel will gradually extend and absorb into that nation all of the entire human family who love righteousness, all others being destroyed in the Second Death.--Psa. 67:3, 4; 37:38.

HOW WE SEEK THE KINGDOM

Having now before our minds what the Kingdom is, we appreciate the fact that the Church in the present time is the Kingdom, but without power and without glory--in an embryo or undeveloped stage--in preparation for the glories that shall be ultimately revealed. We perceive the force of the Apostle's explanation that we are walking by faith and not by sight, and that the world knoweth us not. The world is not aware of the Divine purpose, nor does it recognize the heirs of salvation. Hence, as it crucified the Lord Jesus we must not marvel if it hate those who have His spirit, even as darkness hateth the light. We must not marvel if persecution, therefore, be the lot of those who shall be favored of God in connection with this Kingdom and its privileges. Indeed, these very experiences are necessary for our development and preparation for the Kingdom. Thus by faith these heirs of the Kingdom are to realize that all things connected with their interests are under Divine supervision, and all working together for good to them that love God--the called ones according to His purpose--His Kingdom class. (Rom. 8:28.) Those unwilling to walk by faith, those unwilling to endure hardness as good soldiers, those who love the world and its honors and praise, and seek not alone that which cometh from Above, will by these conditions be separated from the loyal, true overcomers. And this is the will of God, as only the latter are fit for the Kingdom.

Now we understand why the Lord said of some, "Blessed are your ears, for they hear," and intimated that many of His time were not in the condition to either see or hear or in any sense appreciate this message, this blessing of the Spiritual Kingdom now proclaimed. Not only so, but even among those who do have the hearing ear or seeing eye of understanding, the spiritual perception of the Kingdom, its call and its conditions, there is a need, as our text tells us, that they seek the Kingdom. It will not be thrust upon anybody; it is a high privilege, a high honor, and whoever shall get it must appreciate it. And whoever seeks the Kingdom under present conditions will find, as the Master said, that the way is narrow and difficult.

OTHER ATTRACTIONS CONTRASTED

Our Lord is addressing not the world, not sinners, not unbelievers. The Jewish nation was a believing nation, nominally at least, just as Christendom professedly believes in Christ. But our Lord's message was not merely to Israelites, but only to such as were "Israelites indeed" and had signified their desire as His disciples to walk in His steps and to become joint-heirs with Him and His Kingdom. He calls the attention of these to the earthly things for which the majority of mankind are seeking--What shall we eat? What shall we drink? Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

We are not to understand the Lord's words to signify that His followers should be improvident, careless, so inattentive to the responsibilities of life as to depend upon others for their food and raiment or else go naked and hungry. There are two extremes in this matter, and our Lord was controverting the one that is most troublesome to His followers. The spirit of the world is a spirit of selfishness, which spurs all the brighter minds of earth to get, to enjoy, to be, according to earthly standards. Summing the matter up, our Lord says that what we shall eat, what we shall drink, wherewithal we shall be clothed are the things after which all the Gentiles seek-- the whole world is seeking for earthly good things, but the Lord's disciples are to take a different course. Having the

invitation to joint-heirship in the Kingdom of God before their minds as the grandest possibility imaginable, they are to so esteem it that all other interests and ambitions are to sink into insignificance in their estimation and to be comparatively neglected. Our Lord's advice is, therefore, "Seek ye first [primarily-- as of the first or primary importance] the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things [food, raiment, etc.] shall be added unto you."

Be it noted that the Lord does not say that His followers shall have as much of these temporary good things as others have; but elsewhere He declares, "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of." The implication, therefore, is that to those who have put their matters entirely in the Lord's hands by a full consecration of all they possess, their every talent, their every opportunity, and who are thus seeking to please God and obtain the Kingdom inheritance which He has promised—to these He will give earthly good things according to His wisdom--those which would bring the highest measure of blessing as New Creatures, those which would prepare them and assist them best for a share in the Kingdom. Whatsoever of earthly good things would be a hindrance to their chief aim and desire in life this class would not intentionally choose. Hence they should be glad that the matter is entirely out of their hands and entirely in the Lord's hands. It is for them to rejoice that their affairs are being more wisely and more favorably ordered than if under their own control. It is for these to rejoicingly pray, "Thy will be done," in respect to all of life's affairs. Thus seeing and thus doing and thus praying this class may rejoice even in tribulation, knowing that tribulation worketh experience, patience, hope, and will ultimately make them not ashamed, because it will be God's method of chastening and polishing them for a share in the Kingdom.--Rom. 5:3-5.

SEEKING HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS

It is not enough that the Lord's Elect shall seek the Kingdom. They might seek it in a measure of selfishness, because of its honor and glory. Hence, the Lord makes another stipulation: That we shall not only seek the Kingdom, but seek its righteousness--the righteousness which the Kingdom will bring, the righteousness which God will approve. Ah, this is a searching proposition! All who will be counted worthy a place in the Kingdom must come up to the standard of perfect love toward God and toward men. This is the Divine standard, and nothing short of it will be acceptable. It means that this class will be in harmony with their God, right, just, loving, peaceable wherever found; and that they will be out of harmony with all injustice and unrighteousness wherever found--in themselves and in others.

Since we were all born in sin, since we were all tainted with selfishness, even though in differing degrees, it follows that we must all fight a good warfare against this element of our human natures--that as New Creatures we shall not be in sympathy with any of the fallen proclivities and tendencies in ourselves and in others. It is a work of days, months and years to find out and rout these selfish propensities, these Amalekites, which have entrenched themselves in our fallen flesh, and to bring in instead of them the loving, generous impulses and endeavors of the spirit of love, which seeks to do good unto all men as we have opportunity, especially to the Household of Faith. This is learning to speak evil of no man, to have no sympathy with slander, backbiting and evil surmisings, but, on the contrary, to rejoice in the Truth and in "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report."--Phil. 4:8.

The law of absolute justice, righteousness, the Law of Love, which will be introduced world-wide during the Millennium, must already, even now, have our sympathy and support. In the present time, when so much may be gained by a little deflection from the proper standards of purity or truth or honesty, when so many are in favor of graft if it works favorably to themselves, and so

unfavorable to graft if it works against their interests-- in these times the heirs of the Kingdom are to be governed strictly by the laws of the Kingdom. They are to seek after and to appropriate to themselves the principles of righteousness which they perceive will be the laws of the Kingdom for the whole world by and by.

It will be much easier for the world to conform to the laws of righteousness by and by, when every transgression will receive prompt rebuke or punishment, and when every good word or deed will receive a prompt reward. But it is comparatively difficult now for this Kingdom class to think and to act along opposite lines from those which prevail to a large degree amongst their friends and neighbors. This sympathy for righteousness, truth and purity must be sought even as the Kingdom is sought; and those consecrated believers who find the one find the other. Much of the Christian's time, therefore, must be devoted to self-examination and self-instruction in righteousness, as well as building one another up in the most holy faith, the Divine Word being the censor.

All such are really taught of God. They learn to consider honesty not merely in respect to dollars and cents, but also in regard to words and actions. Yea, more, they learn to observe honesty in their thoughts-- to be honest with the Lord, honest with the brethren, honest with themselves. As these lessons are learned, appropriated, the pupils in the School of Christ are being made meet for an inheritance in the Kingdom.

THE LESSON OF SELF-DENIAL

One great difficulty among these "heirs of salvation," "heirs of the Kingdom," "heirs of glory," lies in our inability to rightly appreciate the importance of the little things in life and the little things in our own minds. Many who would have the courage to go to the stake in defense of some principle of righteousness and truth find it very difficult to "examine themselves," and, as the Apostle suggests, to bring eventually even the very thoughts of their minds into subjection to the will of God as expressed in Christ. But our Lord's word is, "He that is faithful in that which is least will be faithful also in that which is greater." Hence we should have in mind that the Lord will instruct us along the lines of little things; and in our endeavors in all the trifling affairs of life we should cultivate and exercise the spirit of Christ, the spirit of meekness, gentleness, patience, long suffering, brotherly-kindness, love, that these things being in us, and abounding, an entrance shall be administered to us abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

An important feature of the teaching of the School of Christ is the necessity for self-denial. The repudiation of sin and sinful words, acts and thoughts is a difficult enough matter, but the Lord calls upon His followers to repudiate and fight against more than these. They must learn to be well-rounded-out characters, copies of God's dear Son. They must learn self-denial; our Master as the Great King and our Bridegroom learned obedience in His self-denials. And these were not along the lines of sinful things; for in Him was no sin; His special trials were of self-denial, self-sacrifice in the interest of and in the support of righteousness and for the blessing of others. Thus He developed and manifested the spirit which the Father is pleased to reward in the Kingdom.

All who will be counted worthy to be kings and priests to God in that Heavenly Kingdom must demonstrate now to Divine satisfaction their willingness to sacrifice their own personal interests and rights in favor of the Kingdom and the Father's will and the blessing of those whom the Father designs shall be blessed by the Kingdom. Whoever, therefore, refuses to take up his cross of self-denial and to deny himself cannot long be one of the Lord's disciples. He will fall out by the way, for ultimately only those will constitute members of the Kingdom class who shall count it all joy to gain that Kingdom and the Divine favor and the great privilege of being associated with Jesus

in the great work of blessing the world at any cost, at any self-denial. Let us, dear brethren, emulate more and more this spirit of our Redeemer, who made Himself of no reputation that He might work the works of God, who sent Him. Thus we also shall be counted worthy of a share with Him in the Kingdom and its glorious opportunities.

Sermon Book 364

WHO MAY KNOW GOD'S SECRETS

“None of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.”--Dan. 12:10.

In heathen lands as well as throughout Christendom secret societies include large proportions of the human family. Outsiders know something of their general motive and object, but their particular

methods, hopes, endeavors, ambitions are kept secret. To effect this secrecy, to protect and conserve the interests of their association, obligations to profound secrecy are fastened and clinched with oaths, some of which are reputed to be almost blood-curdling, the endeavor being to fetter liberty of expression on such matters not only by the obligations of honor but also by those of fear. It is no part of my mission to attack any of these orders nor to inveigh against their procedures. I merely refer to them here; I merely call your attention to the fact that this is a common method amongst men which evidently has the sanction of many, because I wish to draw to your notice the fact that the Almighty God Himself is the

FOUNDER OF A SECRET SOCIETY

Moreover, while there are certain correspondencies between the human secret orders and the one of Divine origin, we shall find as we should expect that the latter is in every way superior to all others. Its aim and object are wider than all, embracing the entire human family, promising good, blessing and assistance to every member of the race--"in due time." (1 Tim. 2:6.) Again, although its methods of operation are secret, this is not because they are in any measure or degree sinful, disreputable, injurious or underhanded, but merely because secrecy is to the advantage not only of the members of the society; but also specially because present secrecy as respects the work now being accomplished will be beneficial ultimately to the masses of mankind. This is in full harmony with the Divine statement. "As the Heavens are higher than the earth so are My methods higher than your methods and My thoughts higher than your thoughts."--Isa. 55:9.

As in some secret societies there are different steps or grades--for instance, all Masons are familiar with the secrets pertaining to the first degree yet not all Masons are familiar with the secrets, etc., pertaining to the thirty-second degree, so in God's Secret Order there are first principles of the doctrines of Christ which must be known to all who belong to the order, and are also "deep things of God," which may be known only to those who have made advancement by growth in grace and knowledge and love. (Heb. 6:1; 1 Cor. 2:10.) To some unfamiliar with the facts but having a knowledge of earthly secret societies it may seem strange to say that the secrets of the Divine Order of the Sons of God are so abstract, so impenetrable, that they may be discussed freely in the presence of others and not be comprehended at all. Indeed, so far from laying restrictions upon the members of this Order not to communicate its secrets they are authorized, yea, urged to make these known to all who may be able to comprehend, understand them, with many assurances that only the right class will be able to comprehend. Our text is one of these assurances, "None of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand." Another assurance is, "The natural man receiveth [understandeth] not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned"; and again, "The secret of the Lord is with them that reverence Him, and He will show them His covenant." (1 Cor. 2:14; Psa. 25:14.) The only restrictions in respect to the telling of the secrets of this Order of the Melchizedek Priesthood are, "Cast not that which is holy before dogs," "Cast not your pearls before swine, lest they turn again and injure you." (Matt. 7:6.) These secrets would be injurious to them; and, misunderstanding them, the swinish, the groveling, might be incited to violence through disappointment, recognizing no value in pearls nor appreciating anything that would not give earthly satisfaction.

THE FOUNDING OF THIS ORDER

The Scriptures assure us that our Creator purposed the founding of this Order of the Melchizedek Priesthood before the foundation of the world. In due time Melchizedek, a kingly priest, constituted its type in the days of Abraham--and then, too, a preparatory or Junior Order was inaugurated, Abraham being chosen of the Lord as its Grand Master. To him the whole secret of the Order was communicated in few words saying, "In thee and in thy Seed shall all the families of the

earth be blessed." The meaning of this was but partially grasped by Abraham himself and all of his posterity, the Jewish nation, who with him became members of that Junior Order during a period of two thousand years. They understood this to signify that at some time Messiah would come and establish a new order of things with the result that Abraham's posterity in particular and the nations of mankind in general would receive through Him a great blessing.

These hopes of the Junior Order proved very encouraging and helpful to such of them as properly entered into the spirit and designs of the Order and sought to appropriate the blessings and privileges of Divine relationship thus accorded them. In proportion as by faith they entered into this Order they took degrees of knowledge and of love and had more of the Divine approval. But as for the other nations of the world they were not admitted in any sense of the word to this Order. It was exclusively for Abraham and the Jews; and all others were strangers, aliens and foreigners from the Commonwealth of Israel, without God and having no hope.

It was at our Lord's First Advent, or more particularly at Pentecost following His redemptive work and ascension to the presence of the Father, there to appear on our behalf, as our Advocate, that the present Order of the Melchizedek Priesthood was organized--"the Church of the Living God, whose names are written in Heaven." (Heb. 12:23.) It is not an earthly organization, but a Heavenly one, and hence properly it is not composed of those whose names have been written on earth, but those whose names have been written in the Lamb's Book of Life. The earthly organization, called by various names, represents many misunderstandings of the Divine arrangement and unintentionally does violence to principles of the Order; and, whereas these sectarian lines separate some of the true members of the Melchizedek Priesthood, they also receive as members many whose names are not written in Heaven, many who have not the credentials of the true Order, who do not understand its secrets, because they have not been properly initiated by the Holy Spirit.

You will understand, therefore, dear friends, that in our view of the matter the division of the Church of Christ into various bands and companies under various banners--Wesley's, Calvin's, Luther's, the popes', etc., --represent so many mistaken ideas, represent so much of confusion and misunderstanding and bewilderment and contention and error. These organizations are not only not necessary but wrong, in that they tend to distract and divide the true members of the Divine Order who should know each other not by outward badges and names but by their acquaintance with the Lord and with His secret, which is with all those who fear Him.

The first principles of the doctrine of Christ should enable any of these who are truly the Lord's, to make themselves known and well acquainted with others without any earthly introduction or distinguishing name. Indeed, all these do know each other when they meet; but the Adversary's effort has been to keep them apart and thus if possible to hinder the progress and growth of the Divine Order. But he has not really hindered it; instead, his methods have merely assisted in making the Order the more secret and unknown to the world, including those merely nominal Christians, not spirit-begotten. So great has been the deception that the Lord Jesus, the grand and everlasting Head and Master of this Order of the Melchizedek Priesthood, was crucified by some who belonged to the Junior Order and who were in one sense earnestly waiting for the establishment of the new Order and for an opportunity to enter it! They were not permitted to enter because they were unworthy--except the few of whom we read (John 1:11, 12): "He came unto His own and His own received Him not; but to so many as received Him, to them gave He liberty to become the sons of God"--to join the Order of Spiritual Sons, the Melchizedek Order of Priesthood.

“THE WORLD KNOWETH US NOT”

Similarly all down through the Gospel Age there has been an outward Church of God and a true, the inward one. The world has seen the outward one, but not the inward. It has applauded and reprimanded the outward, but has uniformly disallowed the true and considered its members to be merely foolish. Thus the Apostle Paul assures us that himself and others, zealous in the service of the Lord and doing the work of this higher Priesthood, were counted fools all the day long for Christ's sake (1 Cor. 4:10); and St. John says, "The world knoweth us not, even as it knew Him not." (1 John 3:1.) Similarly all who live godly in Christ Jesus have, as the Apostle advised, suffered more or less of persecution and ignominy because they were not recognized of the world—so impenetrable are the secrets of this Order and its message that others cannot know them. Nevertheless, the Order has been growing, increasing, and its fixed or limited membership will soon be completed. Then no further additions will be accepted.

Let it be understood clearly that membership in this Order does not mean injury to those who are not members of it, but contrariwise it means ultimately a blessing to come to them all through the Melchizedek Priesthood, as it is written of this spiritual Seed of Abraham, of which Christ is the Head and the Church the Body, "In thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Gal. 3:29.) The selection of the members of the Order is accomplished under present conditions because they must all become over-comers, willing and able to count it all joy to be in tribulation and to suffer loss for the sake of the Order its interests, its present workings and membership and its future work. Whoever is not willing to suffer for the cause is counted unworthy to be a member --in a word, every member of the Melchizedek Priesthood must sacrifice his life in the interest of the Order, in support of its glorious Lord and Head and His teachings and in serving in general the interests of the Order and its members--"We ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren." It will thus be seen that the gateway into this Order is a very narrow one and the pathway of membership in it a very narrow one--"Strait is the gate and narrow [difficult] the way, that leadeth unto life," the special immortality and associated glory which God has provided as the eternal portion of this elect Melchizedek Priesthood.--Matt. 7:14; 1 John 3:16.

BONDAGE AND LAWS OF THE ORDER

Briefly I might say that in one sense every member of the Order is in bondage, and that in another sense every member is free. Let me explain this strange expression. Each is free to leave the Order, renounce it, denounce it and count the precious blood wherewith he was sanctified a common thing and to despise the spirit of favor which initiated him into this Order. In doing so he incurs no threat of eternal torture. He merely brings himself under death sentence, similar to the one under which he was before he was reached with the grace of God through the precious blood, excepting that it means the Second Death, from which there is no remedy, no ransom, no recovery by resurrection or otherwise--an eternal death similar to that experienced by the entire brute creation. While, therefore, each member of this Royal Priesthood is at liberty to go back to wallowing in the mire, like the sow that was washed, yet if he choose to remain he is also at liberty to follow this course--none shall be able to pluck him out of his Father's hand nor to separate him from this grace.--John 10:29; Rom. 8:38, 39.

However, as already stated, those who abide in Christ, who abide in this new Order of the Royal Priesthood, can have its blessings and privileges fully only upon the most exacting terms and conditions; namely, their full surrender to the Law of the Order so far as their intentions are concerned. "Ah!" I hear you say, "the laws of that Order must be very voluminous. Doubtless many volumes of Divine statutes and regulations would need to be studied by the members of this Royal Priesthood." We answer, No! The entire law of the Order is briefly comprehended in one word--

Love. It is demanded and required of every member of the Order that love shall be the test, not only of his deeds, but also of his words--yea, of his thoughts. Love is the fulfilling of the Law.

True, those initiated into this Order are persons of like passions with ourselves, as the Apostle said. (Acts 14:15.) Some of them naturally are more fallen than others, and have less of love and more of selfishness than others; but all who join the Order are required to make resolution in their hearts as respects this law of Love-- and all the internal workings of the Order are with a view to the perfecting of its members in love. They must learn to love the great Founder of the Order supremely, and in turn to trust to His Love as well as to His Wisdom and Power, so that in obedience to His will they consecrate to spend time, talent and influence, yea, all that they possess, in His service.

Secondly, He admonishes that to love those who love them is not the test which He will apply; but that they will be expected to sympathetically love all mankind, to do good to all men as they have opportunity, especially the Household of Faith. (Gal. 6:10.) It is required of them that they shall especially love the brethren, the members of the Order, and be ready and glad to lay down their lives for the brethren. Tests along this line are continually necessary to weed out of the Order all who are not approximating its standard of Love Divine, that all delinquents may be cast into the outer darkness, in which the whole world is, and have share with the world in its tribulations present, and especially in those which will come upon it in the closing of this Age and the inauguration of the new one, when the Melchizedek Order of Priests shall take possession of the empire of earth for its blessing and uplifting. It will be seen, then, that the statement that love is the bond of perfectness with this Royal Priesthood has a deep significance. The members of this Order need not be constrained by oaths of allegiance one toward another, as they have a stronger bond by far, the bond of love--and if any man have not this spirit of Christ he is none of His.--Rom. 8:9.

THE WICKED SHALL NOT UNDERSTAND

It is at times really amazing to note how the unconsecrated mind, attempting to understand the Mystery of God, designed only for the members of this Order, falls into such egregious blunders and makes such peculiar misstatements respecting what we endeavor to set forth as plainly and as consistently as our abilities will permit. Nor need we think that the fault is ours, since we find that the words of our Lord Himself and of His inspired Apostles were similarly misunderstood, and that they have explained to us that God hides these things from others than His devoted ones. Mark our Lord Jesus' words in His prayer, "I thank Thee, Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight."--Matt. 11:25, 26.

But how absurd it would be to think that our Lord would thank the Father for hiding things from any, if we were to associate with that thought the one which the world and the nominal Christian associate with it; namely, that all from whom God thus hides these special things or secrets of the Lord are in consequence appointed to an eternity of torture! What a travesty it would be upon Divine Love and Justice and upon the character of the Father and our Redeemer! But this is not the thought. None of the wicked understand, because for them to understand would not only mean a greater measure of condemnation upon them but would also mean an endeavor on their part to oppose and circumvent the Divine arrangement.

As for the worldly-wise they may not understand; for not many great, not many wise, not many learned are chosen of the Lord as worthy of membership in this secret Order of Melchizedek. He explains to us elsewhere the reason for this; namely, that He is seeking only the meek, the humble-minded, those who will be willing to learn of Him, and to have their minds transformed and

conformed to the pattern most pleasing to the Lord. This, under present conditions, is impossible to the worldly-wise, who feel their own superiority, etc., and seek not the wisdom that cometh from Above and the Divine approval. In a word, then, our Lord's testimony shows us that the wise who will understand the things of God and be initiated into the mysteries of the kingdom of the Melchizedek Priesthood are not the worldly-wise or great--with few exceptions. They are chiefly the poor of this world, rich in faith, who shall be heirs of the Kingdom which God has promised and for which we still pray, "Thy Kingdom come."--James 2:5; Luke 11:2.

This is another reason why the world knoweth us not even as it knew Him not. Had our Lord been one of the worldly great and bright, haughty and domineering, wealthy and influential, yet possessed of His talents and powers, no doubt the very ones who crucified Him would have hailed Him King. It was His humility, His poverty, etc., that led to His rejection and His crucifixion as a false prophet. Much the same is true of all of His followers who are members of this Royal Priesthood Order. And they are to be content with such a rejection by the world--content because of their realization of acceptance with the Father and with the Grand Master; content with the assurances granted in the Scriptures and confirmed by the Holy Spirit in their experience. They are to wait patiently and the better to cultivate under these conditions the fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit.

THE ORDER'S ULTIMATE PURPOSES

We are not hindered from telling the ultimate purposes of this grand Secret Order which our Lord organized and of which, I trust, many of you are members through faith in and consecration to the Lord. We may tell of these mysteries, knowing that none of you will be able to appreciate or thoroughly to comprehend all of these mysteries except such of you as have taken several degrees in the Order, passing from grace to grace and from knowledge to knowledge. We remind you here of the Master's words when approached by the disciples who asked, "Lord, why speakest Thou unto the people in parables?" Jesus answered and said unto them, "To you it is given to know of the mysteries of the Kingdom of God, but unto all outsiders these things are spoken in parables and in dark sayings, that hearing they might hear and not understand." (Luke 8:10.) To our understanding the total number of members in this Order of the Melchizedek Priesthood will be 144,001, the one being our Grand Master and Lord and Redeemer, the others being those of whom He says, "All ye are brethren," and of whom the Apostle declares they are members in particular of the Body of Christ, the Church of the Firstborns, whose names are written in Heaven. (Heb. 12:23.) Under another figure our Lord is spoken of as a Bridegroom, and these 144,000, now espoused to Him, covenanted to Him, are ultimately to be united to Him as His Bride, to become the Lamb's Wife and associates in His Throne and work of the future.--Rev. 21:9.

With the completion of this elect class, all shaped and polished as the Lord's Jewels by present trials, difficulties, etc., etc., the time will have come for the inauguration of the work of this Royal Priesthood. The Kingdom class will then all be in glory--Jesus their Head glorified nineteen centuries ago, the Church His Body glorified with Him by a share in His kind of resurrection, at His Second

Coming. Then the Law shall go forth and the Word of the Lord; then Satan shall be bound; then every evil thing shall be plucked up by the root! What a turmoil this will mean at the beginning may be better imagined than described. But so far as the uprooting and upturning is concerned, the Lord has a peculiar way of accomplishing this; namely, by simply allowing present institutions to "run amuck," to overthrow themselves, to develop anarchy which will sweep the world as with a besom of destruction and produce a Time of Trouble such as never was since there was a nation! It will be at the conclusion of this period of awful anarchy toward which the world is now heading rapidly and

from which it cannot be held back by human wisdom and prudence because selfishness has blinded the minds of the masses. The Scriptures tell us that when that plowshare of trouble shall have passed through the world and finally the new Order of things shall have developed, the poor world will begin to have saner ideas in respect to life, justice and righteousness; and we read that many nations shall then say, "Come let us go up to the Kingdom of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we shall walk in His path." (Micah 4:2); and again, "The desire of all nations shall come." All nations will by that time be so thoroughly weary with the awful trouble that they will be glad to welcome the Reign of Righteousness then due to be inaugurated.

The reforms of that time will be thorough-going. Justice will be laid to the line and righteousness to the plummet, and the lies will all have been swept away, Satan shall be bound for a thousand years, his deceptions shall cease, and instead the light of the knowledge of the glory of God shall fill the whole earth. (Isa. 28:17; Hab. 2:14.) When thus the judgments of the Lord shall be abroad in the earth (rewards for well doing and stripes or punishment for evil doing), the inhabitants of the world shall learn righteousness. Then the wilful, persistent evil-doer shall be cut off in the Second Death.

Ultimately the blessing of the Lord through this Melchizedek Priesthood shall accomplish all that its Divine Founder outlined in the first statement of the good news to Abraham, namely, "In thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." As a result we read that every knee shall bow and every tongue confess to the glory of God, and that Christ shall reign until He shall have put down every opposition and evil, the last enemy that shall be destroyed being death. (Isa. 45:23; 1 Cor. 15:25, 26.) The whole world shall thus be uplifted from the power of sin and death, and be brought back to allegiance to the Heavenly Father. And then, saith the Scriptures, The Christ, the Melchizedek Priesthood, shall deliver up the Kingdom to God even the Father, that He may be all in all. (1 Cor. 15:28.) However, the Scriptures clearly indicate elsewhere that the great honor of God upon Christ, His beloved Son, and upon the Church, the Bride of Christ, will be an everlasting honor; but the details of the Father's purposes for the Church are still held as an unrevealed mystery, even to those who have the secret of the Lord and to whom He has shown the signification of His Covenant made to Abraham respecting the blessing of all the families of the earth.

In conclusion, dear friends, I exhort that we who have become members of this Secret Order of the Lord, including also those who under the leadings of the Lord's Spirit, may yet become members of it, shall appreciate more and more fully its wonderful privileges and gladly conform more and more to its requirements, that we may thus make our calling and election sure to the glorious fruition of our hopes in the Kingdom of God and its gracious work under the whole heavens! We shall best do this by studying our Manual, which our Lord has given us, His Word, and by developing the various fruits and graces of the Spirit, all of which are elements of the one general law of our Order, namely, love to God and to our fellows. I remind you of St. Peter's words, "If ye do these things ye shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be administered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."— 2 Pet. 1:10, 11; Psa. 119:97-104.

"A little while;" with patience, Lord,
I fain would ask, "How long?"
For how can I, with such a hope
Of glory and of Home,
With such a joy awaiting me,
Not wish the hour were come?

How can I keep the longing back,
And how suppress the groan

Sermon Book 5

MESSIAH'S SHARP ARROWS

“Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee.”--Psa. 45:5.

With a strange and unaccountable perversity we often find that the very people most given to figurative and symbolical language are the very ones who when they come to the Bible are

disposed to take it literally, to ignore the beautiful figures of speech with which it abounds! So persistent is this habit that even when considering that book of symbols, the Apocalypse, they are disposed to take its statements literally--although in its very introduction the declaration is made that our Lord sent and signified--made signs or symbols to illustrate the things which would shortly come to pass. We are not urging such an interpretation of the Scriptures as would ignore their true significance and make them say the reverse of what they mean, as some are disposed to do; we merely urge that symbolical, metaphorical and hyperbolical language be given true and proper recognition, as we would be disposed to do were the same figures and symbols used in connection with the affairs of our daily life. Surely none can claim that this is an unreasonable position.

When friends tell us that certain words cut them to the heart or that certain experiences broke their hearts they are merely using metaphors in the same manner in which the Scriptures use them. (Acts 2:37; Isa. 61:1; Luke 4:18.) And similarly, when considering our text, we are not to think of literal arrows being shot forth by Messiah and that these will cause the world of mankind to fall wounded literally before Him with these arrows in their hearts. In another Scripture we read, "The wicked shoot out arrows, even bitter words," that they may injure the righteous. (Psa. 64:3,4.) So here also the arrows of Messiah would represent the words of His mouth; but as a bitter fountain sends forth bitter water and a pure fountain sends forth sweet water, so the arrows of Messiah, instead of being bitter words such as the wicked shoot forth, will be forceful words of truth and grace. The symbolism is analogous to that of Revelation, where Messiah, in His coming glory of the Millennial Age, is pictured as having a sword going forth from His mouth with which He smites the nations.--Rev. 19:15.

The Sword of the Spirit is the Word of God. (Eph. 6:17.) The Sword of Messiah's mouth will be the message which He will send: "My Word that goeth forth out of My mouth shall not return unto Me void, but shall accomplish that which I please, and shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." (Isa. 55:11.) Our Lord Jesus, as the Mouthpiece of Jehovah, was commissioned not only to redeem the world but to uplift it out of sin, degradation and death conditions and to restore the willing and the obedient to all that was lost in Adam and redeemed by Christ, by His obedience and sacrifice at Calvary. As the "Lamb of God" our Redeemer has already "tasted death for every man," dying "the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." (John 1:29; Heb. 2:9; 1 Pet. 3:18.) But it is not enough that He thus prepares the way by bringing mankind back to God; it is not enough that God's Justice has been appeased now on our behalf. It is necessary further that the Redeemer should grant the required assistance to the redeemed for their deliverance from the chains of ignorance, superstition, sin and death into the liberty of the sons of God.

“NOW ARE WE THE SONS OF GOD”

This deliverance of humanity according to the Divine purpose is divided into two parts: First, a special class who hunger and thirst after righteousness and are out of harmony with sin, are being blessed during this Gospel Age through the appreciation of the good tidings of God's love and favor in Christ. These are dealt with by faith, and include only such members of the race as have the hearing ear of faith--"He that hath an ear, let him hear"; for "without faith it is impossible to please God." This small company of the race, willing and able by the Redeemer's assistance to walk by faith and not by sight, now receive special truth in the School of Christ and a special testing as respects their loyalty to righteousness, in advance of the world's blessing and trial. The faithful of these, at the close of this Gospel Age, by a share in the First Resurrection will be "changed" from human nature to Divine nature and be made sharers with the Redeemer as His "Bride," His "Body," in the great Millennial Age work of blessing, uplifting the world from sin to righteousness, of bringing them out

of degradation and wrath up, up, up to human perfection and eternal life in an earthly paradise restored.

Our text does not refer to our Lord's dealings with the Church; for we are not His enemies. The enemy class will be dealt with after the Second Coming of our Lord. This He showed in one of His parables, saying, A young nobleman went into a far country to receive for Himself a Kingdom and returned and took possession of it. Before starting He called His own servants and delivered to them pounds and talents, saying, Occupy until I return. On His return, invested with the majesty, authority and power of a Kingdom, He first called His own servants (the Church class) and reckoned with them, rewarding the faithful saying, "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things. I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord"--have dominion over five cities. Then the King will say, "As for those Mine enemies, who would not have Me to reign over them, bring them hither and slay them before Me." (Luke 19:12-27.) The slaying of the enemies in the parable corresponds perfectly with the Revelation picture of the Sword of Messiah's mouth, which will smite the nations; and it corresponds also with the expression in our text respecting the sharp arrows of Messiah which shall be in the hearts of His enemies and cause the people to fall before Him. Not literal arrows, not a literal sword, not literal carnage are here represented, but a great triumph of the Word of the Lord over all during the reign of the Millennial Kingdom, following our Lord's Second Coming.

Those who are now invited to become of the Lord's "Little Flock," the "Very Elect," the "Bride, the Lamb's Wife," the "Royal Priesthood," the "Body of Christ," are not smitten down with the Sword of His mouth. Instead, they are those who through various experiences in life are already become heart weary, heavy laden, looking to the Lord in faith and desiring His assistance. The message of the Lord's lips at the present time is not arrows; not the sword to those who are invited to be His followers. On the contrary, inviting them, He says, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden; and I will give you rest!" Again He tells us that His Message is intended to bind up the broken-hearted, to give the oil of joy in exchange for the spirit of heaviness. --Isa. 61:3; Matt. 11:28-30.

The Apostle, speaking of the matter, declares that it has pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save those who now believe. (1 Cor. 1:21.) Not that the Message is a foolish one; for on the contrary the Message of God's grace is the noblest, the grandest, the most wonderful one that could come to the ears of mankind. But from the worldly standpoint it seems foolish on God's part to address the world when He Himself declares that the vast majority are deaf, and that only here and there can any be found who have the hearing ear. Again, the Gospel Message of reward to the obedient seems foolish to the world; for it would say, "If God had all power why does He not enforce His commands and send forth judgments to compel obedience rather than send forth a message of love and an invitation to obedience?" Our answer is that God is now seeking a peculiar people; and that after He shall have gathered this specially called, specially chosen, specially blessed, specially tried class, after He shall have glorified these, blessing them with the great reward of glory, honor and immortality, then will be His time for using force, compulsion.

MESSIAH SHALL BE CONQUEROR

The Apostle Paul, discussing the work of Christ during His Millennial reign following His Second Advent, declares, "He must reign until He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death." Again . . . "Then cometh the end, when He shall deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father, when He shall have put down all [antagonistic] rule and all

authority and all power . . . And when all things shall be subject unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject to Him that put all things under Him that God may be all in all." (1 Cor. 15:24-28.) The Apostle introduces this statement in his argument on the resurrection of the dead. He is proving that the resurrection is for all mankind, that as "all in Adam die, even all in Christ shall be made alive"--every man in his own order, "The Christ [Head and Body, Jesus and the Church] the first-fruits; afterward [during His presence at His Second Advent in the Millennium] they that are Christ's at His coming."

It will be during that Millennial period of Messiah's Reign that force will be used instead of preaching; that His rebuke will smite into the hearts of His enemies, and that all shall fall under Him. Every knee must bow, every tongue must confess. Happy will it be for the world when Messiah shall take unto Himself His great power and reigns. Blessed will it be for the people when His sharp arrows shall smite them and when His judgment as a hammer shall break the hard, stony hearts; for, as the Scriptures declare, He wounds to heal. (Hos. 6:1.) The healing process will be coincidental to the wounding and breaking; for the great Messiah, Christ and the Church, will be not only the King, the Ruler, but also the Priest of that Millennial time to heal, to console, to forgive, and the great Prophet to instruct the thousands of millions of Adam's race who have gone into death during the reign of Sin and Death and under the blinding influences of the Adversary. No wonder the Scriptures speak in glowing terms of that glorious Millennial Day, when the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth! No wonder they picture this symbolically as the rising of the Sun of Righteousness with healing in its beams.--Mal. 4:2.

"IN THY MAJESTY RIDE ON"

Note our context: The first verse declares that the Message relates to the King, not to the Lord, not to Messiah waiting to be invested with the authority of the Kingdom, but to Him after He shall have been thus invested, after He shall have taken to Himself His great power and begun His Reign of Righteousness. Harken to the prophetic description of the King in His beauty, "Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into Thy lips." This well pictures our dear Master's condition of humiliation when the Man Christ Jesus was demonstrated to be pure in heart, absolutely loyal to the Father and in this respect fairer than all the children of men, all of whom were sinners and out of the way. The grace of our Lord's lips is manifest to us in the message which He left. "Never man spake like this man." "They all bare Him witness and wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth."-- John 7:46; Luke 4:22.

It is because of the faithfulness, the loyalty, the grace which our Lord demonstrated as the Man Christ Jesus that the Father glorified Him, raising Him from the dead to far more than the human nature and glory--to the highest plane, the Divine nature and its glory, honor and immortality. As the Prophet declares, God blessed Him forever. (Psa. 45:2.) His exaltation is perpetual; far above angels, principalities and powers and every name that is named. Our Lord's trial and exaltation have been followed by the call and testing of the "Little Flock," invited to be His joint-heirs in the Kingdom; and soon these will be changed in the First Resurrection, that they may participate in His glorious work of the Millennial Kingdom.

Then the time having come for the establishment of the Kingdom, Messiah, Head and Body, will take to Himself His great power and His Millennial Reign will begin. This is represented in Verses 3 and 4, "Gird thy sword upon Thy thigh, O Mighty One, with Thy glory and Thy majesty. And in Thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth and meekness and righteousness." What a noble, inspiring picture of Divine knowledge as it shall go forth in due time for the binding of Satan and the liberating of all the slaves of sin and death--not only those who have not gone down into the

tomb, but the liberation of those who are in the great prison-house of death, the grave! Messiah shall not reign for the oppression of the world nor for the enslavement of the people. On the contrary the power of the Kingdom will be exercised on behalf of truth, meekness and righteousness. This however, will necessarily mean a reign of force, a reign very different from the present dispensation and its Gospel invitation to righteousness.

We read elsewhere that the "judgments of the Lord will be abroad in the earth"--His righteous dealings. In other words, His power exercised on behalf of the cause of truth, meekness and righteousness, will mean His forceful opposition to error, to pride and all iniquity, all unrighteousness. No longer will men be invited to abandon sin. The judgments, the punishments for wrong doing will be promptly and vigorously applied. The world, deaf to the Lord's Message, blind to His goodness, out of the way, degraded through sin, will learn righteousness in another way--by being made to feel a judgment, a punishment for every wrong deed and wrong word. And by the end of the Millennial Age the testing will have become so crucial that even the favorable entertainment of a disloyal thought as respects the Almighty and His rule of righteousness will lead to the Second Death.

We have no thought of suggesting that the Millennium will be entirely a time of peace, joy and blessing. It will be all of this all the time to all those who love righteousness and hate iniquity and are in accord with the Lord; but the Lord's indignation, even His fierce anger, will from the very beginning of the Millennial Age burn hotly against all unrighteousness, against all iniquity, all falsehood, to the intent that these may be thoroughly removed, completely eradicated, and that thus mankind may be most truly and most absolutely blessed. It is in harmony with this that the fourth verse of our context declares, "Thy right hand [Thy Power] shall teach terrible lessons," lessons for eternity to many, lessons which will be most salutary to the race as a whole, lessons which would be awful to humanity in some respects at the beginning of the reign. For be it remembered that the Scriptures everywhere declare that the Millennial Kingdom, although a reign of peace, righteousness and love, will be introduced by a Time of Trouble such as was not since there was a nation, by which trouble present institutions will be overthrown because they are all unrighteous, imperfect and built upon lines of selfishness contrary to the law of love, which shall be made to prevail in the interest of all. This is the same thought that is brought to our attention in connection with the symbolical picture of Revelation. The Sword of Messiah's mouth is there declared to smite the nations; and we are told that He will rule the nations with a rod of iron, and that as potters' vessels they shall be broken to shivers.--Rev. 2:26-28.

We are to differentiate, however, between the nations which are to be broken--the great systems of selfishness which are to fall and rise no more--and the people, into whose hearts the words of the Lord will enter and who will be smitten down before Him. They will acknowledge that they are sinners, and that His reproofs are just and His judgments upon systems of error and iniquity are true and righteous altogether. They will fall before Him; they will acknowledge the Divine power and its rightful control of human affairs; every knee must bow and every tongue must confess. As the Apostle Peter, referring to this time, declares, "It shall come to pass that the soul that will not hear [obey] that Prophet, shall be destroyed from amongst the people."--Acts 3:23.

The picture of the coming Time of Trouble and of the glorious epoch of blessing which will follow it is graphically depicted by the Prophet Zephaniah (3:8), through whom the Lord says, "Wait ye upon Me, saith the Lord, until that day when I rise up to the prey: for My determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, that I may pour upon them Mine indignation, even all My fierce anger: for the whole earth [social structure] shall be devoured with the fire of My

jealousy. "So terrible will be the Time of Trouble, so sweeping the overthrow of present institutions, that the Lord here symbolically pictures it as a fire consuming everything of the present social order.

But that it is not a literal fire, and that it will not consume or destroy mankind but prepare for their greater blessing, is shown by the next statement of the Prophet: "Then will I turn unto the people a pure Message [in contrast with the confused message that is now being promulgated by all the various sects of Christendom-- Babylon] that they may all call upon the name of the Lord to serve Him with one consent." They will no longer call upon themselves the names of sects and parties, heathen or Christian. All will call upon the Lord, all will recognize Him as the great Teacher; for the Lord shall be King over all the earth in that day. (Zech. 14:9.) And the Kingdom under the whole heavens shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High.--Dan. 7:27.

"HIS MOUTH IS MOST SWEET"

In contrast with the sharp words of rebuke which will be administered to the world and which they will need and which will be most favorable to them, we have the gracious words of the Master in the present time speaking to all who have ears to hear. His Message is represented as one that binds up the broken hearts and administers the oil and wine of refreshment and joy and peace and consolation. What wonder, then, that we appreciate the statement, "Blessed are your ears, for they hear." Not only have we heard the Message of our Lord Jesus, of His love for us, and that He gave Himself a Ransom for our redemption, but we have heard the Father saying that He has spoken peace to us through Jesus Christ our Lord. He tells us also, "The Father Himself loveth you."

Hearkening we not only have heard the Message of God's love and favor for our race, and how a Ransom has been provided, and that in consequence a preparation is being made for the blessing of all the world, but we learn that we may appropriate this blessing to ourselves now by faith in advance of this general application, and that being justified by faith we may have peace with God. And, furthermore, after we had thus been accepted, we heard the voice of the Master inviting us to become His disciples, to walk in His steps, to share now in the cross and sacrifice with Him and by and by in the crown.

Ah, yes! He brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel--life everlasting, life which we now see is possible of attainment by all the families of the earth, and immortality is attainable by those who now have the hearing ear of faith and the heart desire to follow in the footsteps of their Redeemer.

"WONDERFUL WORDS OF LIFE!"

The character of Him who is to ride prosperously as the conqueror of the world assures us respecting His treatment of those who shall fall down before Him and accept His righteous Reign and Law. He who loved them so that He gave His life as their Redemption-price establishes His Reign, not for their injury, but for their blessing, for their uplifting, for the destruction of their real enemies. All the weaknesses and depravity of the fallen conditions are our enemies, if we love righteousness; and we are glad to have our Lord's co-operation in fighting a good fight against these. And so will all the right-minded of the Millennial Age be glad to have all the assistance He can render them. And the Church of this Gospel Age, now gaining experience through trials and disciplines, will also be fitted and prepared to co-operate with her Redeemer and King in the work of blessing our race, instructing them in the ways of the Lord and teaching them to go up on the Highway of Holiness, at whose further end, by perseverance, they may have eternal life.

Let us continue to pray, dear friends, for this Kingdom of Messiah, when His sharp arrows shall pierce many hearts and cause the masses to fall under Him and to confess Him and to adore Him. Let us continue to pray, "Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is done in Heaven." Yes, let us be glad that in the consummation of the Plan of God all who rejoice to learn righteousness and to love it, and to hate iniquity, shall be utterly destroyed, so that God eventually will have a clean Universe.

He's come! Let all the earth adore Him!
The path His human nature trod
Spreads to a royal realm before Him,
The Life of life, the Word of God!

Sermon Book 50

“WHO, THEN, SHALL BE SAVED?”

“If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?”--1 Peter 4:18.

The words of our text are solemn, from whatever standpoint they may be viewed. But for our friends of various denominations who hold that death marks the end of hope these words should be not only solemn, but terrifying in the extreme. They note the death of friends and neighbors, and know from statistics that ninety thousand fellow-creatures die every twenty-four hours; and they well know and would not dispute that a very small number of these could by any stretching of language or any allowances be considered righteous or even to have had righteous intentions. If these dear friends would take seriously their teaching that all but the righteous, all but the saintly, go to a never-ending hell of torment, from which there is no hope of alleviation of suffering, it would be sufficient to unbalance their minds. Fortunately for them, therefore, they do not take too seriously their own unreasonable and unscriptural views on this subject.

Apparently a great many people would scarcely be willing to be saved, just as they are scarcely willing to forsake sin. We have heard people tell us that they would be glad to creep into some little, obscure corner of Heaven and enjoy its glories and blessings if they could only escape the miseries of which they have been mistaught. We are sorry for such poor creatures. They can enjoy neither the present life nor the future prospect. Instead of hoping for glory, honor and immortality, as the Apostle suggests we should do, these merely hope to escape torture by the skin of their teeth--a poor, unsatisfactory hope, quite contrary to the one set before us in the Gospel.

It is the same Apostle who urges the Church to pursue a course that would be pleasing to God and who assures us that "so an entrance shall be administered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 1:11.) It is proper that we inquire why in these words an abundant salvation is suggested, while in our text it is declared that the righteous shall scarcely be saved. Let us examine our text more particularly; it seems inconsistent as generally viewed. It seems out of harmony with what we might expect for their eternal welfare by our Heavenly Father, who is rich, wise and powerful beyond all compare.

TO WHOM DOES OUR TEXT APPLY?

We inquire first who are the righteous referred to in our text? We reply that the Apostle is not referring to any class of people, but merely in a general way referring to a principle of the Divine Law which declares that he that doeth these things shall live, and that any failure to do the perfect will of God would be sin, and that "the wages of sin is death." (Rom. 6:23.) In other words, the Apostle is speaking of God's arrangement. God has promised eternal life only to the righteous. If we should take one hundred as representing the standard of righteousness, it would be impossible for any one to have one hundred and one points; for he could not be more than righteous. And if he lacked anything of being up to the hundred mark, he would not be righteous. With a hundred as the standard the man possessing the ninety-nine points of righteous character would still be an unrighteous man; and, according to Divine Law, he could not have everlasting life. So, then, God's Law makes no allowance for sin, but condemns it and declares that all unrighteousness is sin.--1 John 5:17.

This is the basis of the Apostle's statement that a righteous person could be no more than saved under the Divine Law. He could not say, as some teach, "Lord, I have done more than was required of me; I have been more than righteous. On the score of my righteousness I could claim Thy promise of eternal life, but having been more than merely righteous I have a reserve of merit which I can apply for others." This, to some extent, is the theory of our Catholic friends. On the strength of this they pray to Mary, the Apostles and certain others of the saints whom they believe to have laid up for them a surplus of merit. The Apostle's words are in contradiction to this thought, assuring that

no one could be more than righteous and that consequently God's offer of salvation to the righteous could not be more than made. The righteous would scarcely be saved; that is to say, would have nothing of left-over merit, nothing of surplus. It would require his every effort to comply with the standard of righteousness.

From this standpoint the Apostle's words are very clear, very meaningful, very reasonable; and we see at once the significance of the latter part of our text, "Where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?"—What show would they have? In other words, his thought is that if the Divine Law has provided eternal life for only those who are absolutely perfect in God's sight, what chance, what show, would there be for any sinner condemned for either many or few transgressions; and as for the ungodly--those failing to recognize their responsibility to the Almighty--where would they appear, what show would they have? The inferential answer is, None! God's Law would condemn them, sentence them.

But nothing in the Scriptures indicate that the Divine Law would sentence them to an eternity of torture. Rather the Divine Law is that "the wages of sin is death." "The soul that sinneth it shall die." (Ezek. 18:4.) Eternal life is the gift of God (Rom. 6:23), and will be given only to those who have His approval, only to the righteous. And since the wicked will not receive this gift from the Almighty, and it would be impossible for them to get it from any other source, it is apparent that they cannot live, either in torture or otherwise, that they shall be punished with everlasting destruction.

WHO ARE THE RIGHTEOUS?

Coming now to a still fuller examination of the subject, we inquire, Who are the righteous amongst men? The Scriptures answer, "There is none righteous, no, not one." (Rom. 3:10.) They again declare that our Lord Jesus was the only righteous One, and that He died, the Just for the unjust, for our reconciliation to the Father. But now the question arises, If God's Law is so strict that only the full one hundred per cent would have His approval and be granted eternal life, what hope is there for our race, the majority of whom, instead of being ninety-nine per cent perfect or righteous, could not be claimed to be more than twenty-five per cent, with an exceptional person, perhaps, able to stand the test of forty or fifty per cent and some of the poor race, born in sin and shapen in iniquity, as low down as ten per cent, with consequently ninety per cent of unrighteousness in their natural makeup? Where is the hope under God's Law for either the best or the worst of our fallen race?

Ah, we answer, right there lies the key to the Gospel of Christ, which assures us that as we all inherit our imperfections from our parents and they from theirs, and thus originally all from Adam, so Christ Jesus, having given Himself as a Ransom or corresponding price for Father Adam, having laid down His life for Adam's sin, has a corresponding merit represented in the value of His death as a Sin-offering. This, from the Divine standpoint, is the full offset to Father Adam's transgression, and hence is not only sufficient in value to cancel his debt and condemnation but sufficient in value also to offset the influence of his sin and condemnation as it has contaminated the twenty thousand millions of our race. Here behold the Wisdom, Love and Justice of God in combination! His Wisdom permitted the arrangement of the plan by which His Justice would be fully visited upon Adam, the sinner--and indirectly upon his race through him--and yet leave abundant room that in due time Jesus by His sacrifice for all could make satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. For if all were condemned in one it would be equally just on God's part that all should be justified or forgiven through the merit of the one Redeemer, so that the cancellation of sin through the merit of the precious blood of Jesus affects not only Father Adam, but all of his children, who shared with him his condemnation.--Rom. 5:18, 19.

Whoever sees clearly the foregoing argument not only sees that there are none righteous, no, not one member of the race, but also sees that Jesus, by the virtue of His sacrifice, is prepared to justify or cover over and excuse and set aside all the unrighteousness of the world. But since it is not God's purpose to favor unrighteousness, ignorance, etc., He has arranged that only those who intelligently accept Jesus and renounce sin and turn away to righteousness to the extent of their ability--only these shall have the full benefit of His arrangement, which in the present time is called justification by faith, or making righteous by faith.

Accordingly, we perceive that there are some righteous in the world according to this reckoned arrangement, although there are none actually righteous according to the strict standard of the Law. But still we cannot claim that there are many righteous, even according to this benevolent arrangement which God has made; for comparatively few of our fallen race have yet heard of the only name given under Heaven and amongst men whereby we must be saved. Not having heard thereof they cannot believe therein, and not believing they could not be justified through faith in His blood, for faith cometh by hearing --the hearing of the message of the Lord. These righteous ones (righteous or justified through faith in the blood of Christ) are referred to by the Apostle and their relationship to the Divine Law clearly shown by his statement, "The righteousness of the Law is fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh [with its sinful, depraved tendency] but after the Spirit [after the perfect standard of God's Law, as nearly as possible up to its real meaning, coming short only where our imperfections and weaknesses of the fall render obedience impossible on our part]." For, as the Apostle again says, "We cannot do the things that we would."--Gal. 5:17; Rom. 8:1-4.

The believer in Christ who has devoted himself to the Lord and the service of righteousness and who has been begotten of the Holy Spirit is counted a New Creature, as separate and distinct from his flesh, in which the motions of sin may still prevail to some extent contrary to his new mind, new will, righteous intention of heart. With his mind he can serve the Law of God perfectly; in this respect he must not come short one jot or tittle; from the heart he must love righteousness and hate iniquity. But even so, though his flesh be gradually brought into subjection, he cannot hope to have the full victory over it until it is totally dead, until he, as a New Creature, begotten of the Spirit, shall be born of the Spirit in the First Resurrection.

DIVINE STANDARDS UNLOWERED

Not only is the Christian religion the only one which presents God as loving and merciful to the sinner, but it is the only one which presents the thought of mercifully saving the sinners without in any degree breaking or bending the Divine Law, the standard of righteousness. God does not say to the sinner, "You have but twenty per cent of character; I will blot out the requirement of the other eighty per cent and treat you as perfect." Nor does He make a similar proposition to the one professing fifty points of character. God's Law still requires of each one the full one hundred per cent, but makes it possible for all to attain that full perfection. How? By a double process: (1) To the man of but twenty per cent of character the lacking eighty per cent is imputed or reckoned as his share of the merit of Christ's Sacrifice for Adam's sin. To the man possessing the fifty per cent of character, the lacking fifty per cent is reckoned or imputed in a like manner. (2) But it is required of both that not only shall they maintain what they have, but that their hearts shall be at the full one hundred standard; that they shall be willing and attempting nothing less than perfection. They will be reckoned and dealt with according to the standards of their hearts and minds and will, and not according to imperfections of their flesh.

Meantime it will be expected of them that they shall stand tests, trials and difficulties which will be allowed to come upon them to prove the genuineness of their faith and to establish it, to prove the sincerity of their love for righteousness and their opposition to iniquity, and to strengthen their determination to keep their covenant with the Lord. If they fail in these tests they cannot be acceptable in the class that is now being called, the saints, the Royal Priesthood, the "Little Flock," to whom it is the Father's good pleasure to give the Kingdom.

Thus their standing of reckoned righteousness is dependent upon their degree of heart-loyalty to the Lord and not dependent upon their actual qualities. Where much is possessed much is required; where little is possessed less is required as respects the flesh, provided the heart is up to the standard of one hundred per cent loyalty to God and to righteousness. In this picture which we have given we have illustrated the Apostle's words, Where sin abounded, grace did that much more abound. (Rom. 5:20.) In an individual in whom sin had abounded to the extent of destroying eighty per cent of his character, leaving only twenty per cent, sin abounded more than in the person in whom it had destroyed fifty per cent and left fifty per cent. And the Apostle's message is that God's grace in Christ, forgiving and justifying or counting as righteous, is in the same proportion. That is to say, the one in whom sin abounded most can have the more favor to abound in his case. In other words, the Lord takes us just as we are according to the flesh; and, if we have accepted Christ and given ourselves fully to Him, we are judged not according to the flesh but according to the spirit, intention, will.

“WHERE ARE THE SINNER AND THE UNGODLY?”

What then shall we say of the sinner and the ungodly; where shall they appear? Let it be noted that the Apostle does not say that they shall appear in hell shrieking in torture! He did not say, as did Brother Jonathan Edwards, that the righteous will look over the battlements of Heaven and see in eternal torment their friends, neighbors, brothers, sisters and parents who died without accepting Christ. The Apostle's question is, Where shall they appear? or in more modern language, What show will they have? We answer that they have no show. Those who are not justified through faith in Christ according to the Divine arrangement have no show at all with God at the present time. They are unjustified. They are, as the Apostle declared we once were, "children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. 2:3, 12); or, as he again says, "without God, having no hope in the world."

It is not their privilege, as some would have us believe, to claim God as their Father and Christians as their brethren. On the contrary, we take our theology from our Redeemer, who said that some are of their father the Devil, for his works they do (John 8:44), and the Apostle's statement where he declares that Satan now works in the hearts of the children of disobedience (Eph. 2:2), who certainly are vastly in the majority, while the saints who walk in the footsteps of Jesus are the small minority, going contrary to the course of this world. We take the Apostle's words further where he declares that the "god of this world [Satan] has blinded the minds of those who believe not." (2 Cor. 4:4.) We have nothing therefore, to say respecting the ungodly and the sinner at the present time. We have no hope to hold out to them that they can be saved in ignorance, any more than they can be saved in rebellion. God has but the one way of salvation, and that is through faith in the precious blood of Christ and through an endeavor to come into harmony with His righteous Law through the merit of the Savior.

What then? Is there any hope for the ungodly and the sinner? We answer, Yes, there is a hope. God's Word clearly portrays this hope, telling us that in due time all the families of the earth shall be blessed; that in due time every knee shall bow and every tongue confess, to the glory of God; that in due time when His righteous dealings are made manifest, all things that God has made shall

come and worship before Him; that in due time Christ, who tasted death for every man, shall take unto Himself His great power and shall reign, and shall bring to every member of the race the blessing of knowledge with the opening of the eyes of their understanding, now closed by Satan, the god of this world, through ignorance, superstition, etc.--1 Tim. 2:4; Psa. 22:27, 28.

Our dear Redeemer assures us that these children of wrath, without God and without hope in the world, blinded by Satan, led captive by him through their fallen natures, have not been dropped down into a place of eternal torment but are merely asleep in death, in their graves, waiting for the time when God shall establish His Kingdom of righteousness under the whole heavens, the time when His Millennial Kingdom shall control the world, the time when Satan shall be bound and be no longer permitted to deceive the nations; and that then not merely will the living of that time receive the blessing of His instruction and assistance, but all that are in their graves shall come forth--not come down from Heaven, nor come up from hell, nor from purgatory, but from THEIR GRAVES.--John 5:25-29.

How strange that we were so long deluded, that we heard the voice of man instead of the voice of the Son of Man! What peace comes from His Message that the wicked have ceased from troubling and the weary are at rest, asleep in the tomb, in Sheol, in Hades, in the grave! How glad we are that He assures us that not only the Little Flock of His faithful ones, partakers of the First Resurrection, shall come forth, but also that the great mass of mankind not approved of God, who went down to the grave children of wrath, shall come forth also! And He tells us for what purpose. His words are somewhat mystifying because of the poor translation of our Common Version, the Revised Version making them more clear, saying that they "shall come forth unto a resurrection [a raising up out of sin and death conditions] by judgments"--chastisements, corrections, with reward for every good endeavor.

Thus during the Millennial Age the ungodly and wicked of this present time shall have a much more favorable opportunity than they now have of coming to know God and Jesus Christ whom He sent; and by obedience to the knowledge then granted to them they may, if they will, attain to life everlasting and full restitution, perfection on the human plane with the earth as their Paradise.--Isa. 11:1-11; 35:1-10.

“SOME BETTER THINGS FOR US”

Some one may say, "We admit that when Christ comes and Satan is bound and the true knowledge of the Lord is filling the earth and it is as easy to do right as to do wrong, these conditions will make the Millennial Age more favorable to the ungodly and sinner than is the present age. But would not this view imply an injustice on God's part in that He has made the way now so narrow, so difficult? Would it not imply that He is partial, and that He has given to those most zealous for righteousness severer trials, tests, persecutions, etc.?"

We answer that this view is the result of an imperfect understanding of the Divine Program. It ignores the Lord's declaration that those being selected by Him during this Gospel Age, who are called upon to walk in the footsteps of Jesus in the narrow way and who are to sacrifice their earthly interest, are to have a much higher reward, a much grander salvation than that provided for the world in general. Man was of the earth earthy, the earthly image of God and adapted to the earth, flesh and blood, etc. His sin losing for him perfection as a man, his redemption and restitution would restore him to the perfection of manhood in harmony with God. But this would not make of mankind spirit beings nor fit them for a Heavenly condition. God's proposition is the return of the race in general to human perfection in an earthly home, which He declares shall "abide forever." (Eccl. 1:4.) But the

Divine reward for the Church is that this "little flock" is accepted as the Bride of Christ and His Joint-heir in the glorious Millennial Kingdom. They shall sit with Him in His Throne. They shall be made partakers of the Divine nature with Him, and thus shall share His glory, honor and immortality.

The Apostle declares that God "has provided some better things for us" (the Gospel Church) than He provided for the Ancient Worthies of past times. They will be the first to reach the perfection of the human nature, while to us the promise is given of a participation with Christ in the Heavenly nature, which flesh and blood cannot inherit. When, therefore, the difference of reward is considered, and the difference of salvation borne in mind, it will be seen that those who are now drawn and justified and called to sacrifice the human nature and to receive the Divine nature, have much advantage every way over the remainder of the race in that to them is counted the very cream of Divine riches of grace and loving kindness. Nevertheless, the blessing to the world of mankind will be so great as to leave nothing to be desired. During the Millennial Age all the willing and obedient may return to human perfection in a world-wide Eden.

“MADE TO BE TAKEN AND DESTROYED”

We should not be understood to be teaching Universalism, except in the limited sense that the Bible teaches it; namely, that there is a universal redemption and that there shall be a universal opportunity for salvation that will apply to every member of Adam's race, either in the present life or in the future, under the provisions of the Millennial Kingdom. As in the present time the Apostle, speaking of the Church, declares that if we sin willfully after we have received a knowledge of the Truth, have tasted of the good Word of God and the powers of the age to come, if we should fall away, it will be impossible to renew such to fellowship with God and the blessing of eternal life. The same principle will apply to the world of mankind in general when they shall be on trial for eternal life during the Millennial Age. Whoever then shall enjoy the blessings of that glorious time and not be moved to loyalty to God and to righteousness and brought to a developed character will not be permitted to go beyond the limits of the Millennium into the eternal future, but will be utterly destroyed. The same Apostle Peter, speaking of this, says, "The soul [individual] who will not obey that Prophet [the great Preacher, Messiah, during the Millennial Age] shall be destroyed from amongst the people." On the contrary, all who do hear or obey will be guided in the right way and will gain eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.--Acts 3:23.

But such as are unworthy of life during this present Age, as well as those who will be found unworthy of eternal life in the Millennial Age, will not be preserved by Divine Power to all eternity to be tortured. On the contrary, the Apostle declares that such will be treated like "brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed." (2 Peter 2:12.) As St. Paul says, "Whose end is destruction" --not preservation in torture. (Phil. 3:19.) This is in full harmony with the Scriptural declaration that he who has the Son has life; but he who has not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God (the sentence of God) abideth on him; and through failure to accept Christ he will die the Second Death.--1 John 5:12.

Let me clearly emphasize in this connection that the Scriptures show that the degree of our knowledge measures the degree of our responsibility in God's sight. Infants and idiots, who have no knowledge whatever, have no responsibility whatever, and will evidently deserve no stripes or punishment during the Millennial Age. And as for the heathen and for those in civilized lands, each one has some measure of knowledge and some measure of conscience; and the responsibility of each is in proportion as he has discernment of right and wrong and obeys or disobeys his conscience. The more light, the more intelligence, the more knowledge the world may have, the greater will be its responsibility and the more will be the stripes in the event of unfaithfulness.

We are not now speaking of the Church, whose members are to receive their stripes in this present life, so that, as the Apostle says, they may not be condemned with the world in the future, in the world's Judgment Day, the Millennial Age. We are speaking of those who have more or less light of conscience or light from the Divine Word, but who make no use of their light, who in greater or less degree live in violation of their conscience. Let such know assuredly that in proportion as they disregard the light they have they are laying up for themselves stripes, punishments in the future, and that in proportion as they see and do right they are making the pathway of the future smooth. This is the principle which the Lord enunciated, saying, He that knew his Master's will and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes, while he who knew not and did things worthy of stripes shall be beaten with few stripes.--Luke 12:47, 48.

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