

The Herald of Christ's Kingdom

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FALLING AWAY FROM STEADFASTNESS

[The article which follows, written by Brother RUSSELL in 1897, was recently brought to our attention. It reminds us indeed of the broad comprehension of our Pastor, and the scope of his knowledge and insight into the tactics of the Adversary and the subtlety of the tests that would come to the Church increasingly as she would approach the end of *her earthly career*' Because the article contains such faithful words of wisdom and warning almost to the extent of being prophetic, we are commending it to the careful consideration of all.-Ed. Com.]

,"Ye therefore, beloved, seeing that ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness." -- 2 Pet. 3:17.

THIS exhortation applies to the Lord's consecrated people living at the present time. The proof of this is found in the context: the Apostle has just been portraying some of the events connected with the day of the Lord in which we are living -- the "Day of Vengeance." In verse 10 he has pointed out that the present Age will end with the dissolution of the symbolic "heavens" and the symbolic "earth," which, as we have elsewhere shown, signifies the utter disruption of the present social and ecclesiastical order. In verse 13 he points out that we are looking for a new order of things, and not hoping either to patch up the old order ourselves, or that others will succeed in patching what the Lord has declared "shall pass away." And now in our text he refers to "these things." In the eleventh verse he points out that those who have such expectations should be separate and distinct from all other people in the world, saying, "What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" And then in our text and the verse preceding it, he points out that at this particular time the Adversary will get advantage of certain ones, will beguile them, get them to wrest the Scriptures, and thus to deceive themselves to their own destruction; -- to their loss of present light at least.

Finding thus that the Apostle is particularly addressing ourselves, let us indeed give earnest heed to his counsel; for we well know that we live in what the Apostle Paul calls that "evil day."--Eph. 6:13.

We notice further that the Apostle is not addressing the worldly, nor even the average nominal Christian; but he specifies that his warning is to the "beloved," who already had attained to "steadfastness." This implies that they had become, rooted and grounded and built up, both in -the knowledge and in the love of God; for only such ever become steadfast. Does it surprise us that the Apostle should address such a developed class of Christians and warn them of their own personal danger of falling into the "error of the wicked?" It does strike us as peculiar, and we are inclined to think that there must be some hidden meaning in the expression--"error of the wicked." It would be past comprehension that such a class as the Apostle has just described should be in great danger of falling into such errors of the wicked as blasphemy, or murder, or arson, or theft. We must look the matter up more carefully, and see whether or not the translators have given us a faithful rendering of the Apostle's words. We find that they have not,

and that the word *wicked* is too strong: the Greek word is *athemos*; according to Prof. Young's Analytical Concordance (undisputed authority) it signifies "unsettled," or "lawless." Now, the passage seems more reasonable. There is danger, we can readily see, that those once established in the Truth might be so led away as to become unsettled, and to wrest the Scriptures, "handle the Word of God deceitfully," and thus become lawless in the sense that they would set aside the Word or Law of God, and take instead thereof a twisted interpretation "Which would the better suit some theory of their own. Such a wrong course the Apostle points out would surely *unsettle* them, and eventually mean the destruction of their spiritual interests; and that they would go into "outer darkness" in respect to "present truth." "Beware, lest ye *also*, being led away with the error of the *unsettled*, fall from your own steadfastness."

STRONG DELUSIONS THAT THEY MIGHT BELIEVE A LIE

The Apostle's language not only points to the present time, but seems to imply that there would be previous fallings away or siftings, which he calls "the error of the wicked"--literally, "the delusions of the unsettled or lawless." The implication seems to be, that the not settled ones would first be shaken out, and that subsequently there would come a still more insidious trial which would test even the "steadfast." We inquire, therefore, have there been, during this "Harvest" time (whilst we are waiting for the dissolution of the present order of things and for the establishment of the new order of things have there been such siftings or failings away by delusions which have affected those not settled?

We answer: Yes, there have been several: we might recount some of these. First of all came a shaking directly upon the subject of the ransom: Certain lawless ones, "heady," rejected the testimony of the Lord's Word, denying the Lord having "*bought us*" with His own precious blood, They would accept Christ as an example only, and claimed to be able to follow that example, and that they needed no sin-offering to compensate for their imperfections, inherited or personal. This the Adversary's first move was remarkably bold, yet it found adherents who were not rooted and grounded upon the testimony of the Lord's Word. Then came the "flat earth" theory, Whose advocates strangely concluded that the shape of the earth is a part of the Gospel; the result was that certain others of the unstable were "led away" in that delusion, by not settled leaders who wrested certain Scriptures to their own confusion and to the extinguishment of what light they had enjoyed.

Then came another delusion in effect teaching. the old doctrine of Universalism-that God would finally force eternal salvation upon all men and even upon Satan him.self. This theory of course also denied the ransom; because to have admitted that the condemnation to death -pronounced in Eden could not be set aside without a ransom, *a corresponding price*, would logically have implied that disobedience under the second trial, secured by the ransom, would similarly bring an everlasting punishment--everlasting death-from which there could be no resurrection. Hence, this theory boldly denied the ransom, wrested or twisted the Scriptures which speak of the Second Death as "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord," handling this and other Scriptures so deceitfully as to declare that the Second Death would be a great blessing to all upon whom it would come. Of course none but *unstable souls* could be beguiled by such open and arrogant perversions of the Word of God.

But, still another sifting came for the "unlearned" and unsettled, not thoroughly furnished with the whole armor of God; this was the teaching that God is the author and instigator of all the sin, crime and wickedness there is in the world; and that after He shall become weary of evil doing He will reform, change His course and incite all mankind to righteousness and holiness, as He now (this theory claims) incites the majority to sin, etc. Of all the theories which the Adversary has brought out in this "evil day;" this one seems to be the most blasphemous. So-called "orthodoxy" is certainly quite blasphemous enough, in claiming that God, after permitting His creatures to be "born in sin and shapen in iniquity" (which He had nothing to do with bringing upon them), claims that, as a punishment for sins which they could not avoid, the vast majority of the human family will be imprisoned in a flaming hell of unspeakable torture, and divinely provided with everlasting life, so that they shall never be able to escape those sufferings by death, and that the Devil will be similarly supplied with eternal life (but free from pain) for the purpose of torturing them; and that fuel for the torture will to all eternity be provided by Divine power. We say that this is extremely blasphemous of the Divine character, yet it is, as nothing at all-in comparison to the teaching which claims that God is the instigator, the first cause, of all the sin and crime and wickedness in the world. This theory also wrested some Scriptures to its support, just as Spiritism and Christian Science do. Of course, only those who had never become thoroughly rooted and grounded in the truth could ever be "led away" by such a blasphemous delusion as this.

The Anglo Israel question, and communistic and social questions, "led away" from the Truth, and into more or less darkness and confusion, some others who were not well rooted and grounded in the knowledge of the fact that all present -institutions will go down, and that the new order of things to be introduced will not be of human institution, but the work of God through, the glorified Christ.

WARNING TO THE STEADFAST

But the Apostle comes in our text to a time *after* such delusions had "led I away" those not established or settled: and his warning is given to the *steadfast*. The implication seems to be that the Adversary has more subtle delusions before us than any of those in the past; and that the fully consecrated of the Lord's people may need to be more than ever on guard against "the wiles of the devil." -"Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things

[that all of the affairs, reforms, etc., of the present time will avail nothing, and that all the present institutions will pass away, and that God is about to establish His own Kingdom in His own way;--and knowing- further, that just at this particular time there will be a special sifting and testing of those who are in the light], *beware lest ye ALSO, being led away* with the error of the wicked [the *unsettled* or *lawless* who do not bow implicitly to the Lord's Word, but wrest it to establish theories of their own], fall from your own steadfastness."

(While the "siftings" specially affect those who have been brought by the Lord into the light of present Truth, yet in a more general way and along different lines slightly different siftings are in progress with the nominal Church as a whole. Each denomination is being shaken, and the theories of Evolution, Spiritism, Christian Science, Theosophy and Moralism are making great inroads upon all

who have named the name of Christ, even if they have not come into the light of the "Harvest" Truth. Unsettled, lacking the knowledge of the Divine Word and Plan, *necessary in this evil day*, the whole nominal Church is gradually losing its faith in the Bible, under the lead of its most able ministers, who, blinded to present Truth, and unable to rightly divide the Word of Truth, are generally coming to hold the opinion, that their own ideas respecting truth ("higher criticism") are superior to the Scripture presentations.)

The Apostle in our text cautions that we beware against being "led away." The word here rendered "led away" occurs in only one other place in the Scriptures (Gal. 2:13), where the Apostle Paul says, "Barnabas also was *carried away* with their dissimulation." The words "*carried away*" give the same thought as "led away" but a little more strongly: they imply that the danger to the steadfast will be along some line which would *sweep away* or *carry away* their judgments from the fixed statements of the Divine Word, through personal preference, or sympathy, or through the influence of someone held in respect or esteem. Let us all therefore be on guard, that whoever may, consciously or unconsciously, become the instrument of the Adversary, and seek to lead us away from the sure testimonies of the Lord's Word (whether congenial to our natural tastes or uncongenial), we may *not be "carried away"* but that we may be more determined than ever that

"To our Lord we will be true
Who bought us with His blood.
Only Jesus will we know,
And Jesus crucified."

"DECEIVED AND BE [THEMSELVES] DECEIVED"

While we see that the danger to the majority of God's people will be through being "*carried away*" by sympathy, influence, etc., we must remember that this implies that there will be certain *leaders of thought* whose conduct will tend to carry away the others. It is not necessary for us to suppose that these leaders into error will knowingly and intentionally get wrong themselves, and carry away numbers with them into their delusions and lawless disregard for the testimony of the Lord's Word, wresting its statements. We may rather assume that in a majority of instances these leaders will be themselves deceived; as the Apostle expresses it--"deceiving and being [themselves] deceived."--2 Tim. 3:13.

All who seek to teach the Divine Plan to others are exposed to peculiar temptations, so that the honor of serving the Lord and His people demands a correspondingly larger measure of the graces of the Holy Spirit, as well as of knowledge. The tendency of knowledge, as the Apostle points out, is merely to puff up, make vain and conceited, and to become a temptation of the Adversary, to draw away followers after them. (Acts 20:30.) Whoever therefore would be an instructor of others, a mouth-piece of the Lord, should cultivate all the various graces of the Holy Spirit, including meekness; that these combined (Love) with knowledge, may build up himself as well as build up those to whom he ministers. "Knowledge [alone] putteth up, but Love buildeth up." -1 Cor. 8:1.

Let us not forget that there is a way, and one way only, whereby we may *insure* ourselves against falling into any of these traps of the Adversary. This insurance is not secured wholly by knowledge, although knowledge is a very important

element in it: it is secured chiefly by obedience to the principles laid down in the Lord's Word, and illustrated in the life and character of our Lord and His Apostles. The same Apostle who addresses us this caution against falling from our own steadfastness, tells us in the same epistle (1 :5-12), "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 Savior Jesus Christ."

What, things? Does. he give us the particulars of this work of grace that will so *insure us* against falling that we shall receive the-great prize? Yes. He tells us that it is by continually adding to our stock of the heavenly graces,--"Add to your faith -fortitude, and to fortitude knowledge, and to knowledge self-control, and to self-control patience, and to patience piety, and to piety brotherly-kindness, and to brotherly-kindness Love; for these things being in you and abounding, they will not permit you to be inactive or unfruitful in the knowledge [personal intimacy, acquaintance] of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . Therefore, brethren, give the more earnest heed that you may make your calling and election sure, for if ye do these things ye shall never fall."

CHOOSING THE BETTER LIFE

"The entrance of thy words giveth light."--Psa. 119:130.

WE are submitting below a letter recently published in the *Houston (Texas) Chronicle*, believing it to be both interesting and profitable. This case is no doubt a fair sample of the real state of multitudes of poor fallen humanity, and serves well to illustrate how this life of experience in contact with evil is impressing its many valuable lessons with regard to the unprofitableness and exceeding sinfulness of sin. It reminds us further that the human family is not pursuing the present course of evil because, they really prefer it and have intelligently chosen that course, but rather because of inherited depravity and because of their unhappy and unfavorable environments, and the general influence of evil surrounding them under the prince of this world Satan.

The Prophet assures us that "when the judgments of the Lord are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." Thus we can well hope that under the wholesome discipline and correction in righteousness which the world will receive in the new dispensation many will be aroused to seek after the Lord and to choose the better way-life that they may live. The letter referred to follows:

"To the Editor of the Chronicle:

"Believing that it is your purpose and spirit to have your paper make folks and the world better and happier, I am asking if you will kindly give this letter space in its columns. I journey to the state prison today to begin the serving of a four-year sentence. I go to receive a deserved punishment, for I am in no way sinned against but am entirely the- sinner. I have adventured through 36 years of life and am convinced that there is but one kind of living that is worth while; living that is noble, good and kind. And there is but one way to give days to such living; by following the precepts and examples of Christ.

"I am not concerned about the punishment that is to be mine; not about the days I am to be exiled from the world. I am thinking about how I can use the coming prison days as a preparation for some service in the world, when I am of it and in it again, that will keep other people from the paths of shame, sorrow and failure that my feet have traveled. As there is but one way to live uprightly, as a follower of Christ, so there is but one way to -bring goodness, courage and happiness to other hearts and that is as a servant of the same Christ. So I have given my heart and life to Him because I am convinced it is great wisdom to do so.

"Thoughts of the future and of eternity do not alone turn me to this choice; it is the today, the present moment, from which the future is made, that convinces me this is what I should do-because I can see and feel the present and my senses tell me that it brings nothing of happiness, success or permanence when lived as selfishness, passion and forgetfulness of God, dictate. Thus it is that I mean the days of my incarceration to be ones of preparation for the service I can give after they are ended.

"Being in deadly earnest about this matter I want to reach out into the world and gather to me all the advice, counsel and inspiration that the lives and souls of other folks can offer.

"So I ask the folks who read this for what they can give. Whether it be a word of -encouragement or advice; reference to what I should read and study; some experience of other days that will inspire me-anything that will bring the fullest preparation to me so that I can give the greater service when the opportunity offers. I thank you for your kindness, also for those who recognize the earnest, sincere spirit that is behind these **words and find pleasure** in offering from their lives what of this service to Christ they can give. Some will read this who are feeling the weight of failure and sorrow in their lives. To such, I commend the greatest success of the ages, Christ-history cannot reveal a follower of His whose life can be counted as a failure or unhappy. Sincerely, Harry Lee Watson, care of State Prison, Huntsville, Texas."

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

SERIES XLVI

SATAN "LOOSED OUT OF HIS PRISON"

"But the Rest of the Dead did not live till the Thousand Years were ended. This is the First Resurrection. Blessed and holy is He who Has a Portion in the First Resurrection; over these the Second Death has no Authority but they shall be Priests of God and of the Anointed, and shall reign with him a Thousand Years. And when the Thousand Years may be completed, the Adversary will be loosed out of his Prison, and will go forth to - deceive Those Nations which are in the Four Corners of the Earth, Gog and Magog, to assemble them together for War; whose Number is as the Sand of the Sea."--Rev. 20:5-8.

"THE REST OF THE DEAD"

CONCERNING the first clause of verse 5, "the Rest of the Dead did 'not live till the Thousand Years were ended," there seems to be good and sufficient reasons for believing that the words do not belong to the original Greek text. It is a well known and an incontrovertible fact that there is a number of spurious passages in the Bible, some of which are found in the book of Revelation--texts that were probably inserted into the more modern manuscripts by copyists of 'the original, written by the Apostles. Amongst these, this passage is listed.* PASTOR RUSSELL, using as an authority Prof. C. Tischendorf's Notes on the Readings of the two oldest Greek MSS.--the Sinaitic and the Vatican No. 1209--has thus remarked: "In this verse the words 'But the rest of the dead, lived not again until the thousand years were finished,' are spurious. They are not found in the oldest and most reliable Greek MSS., the Sinaitic, Vatican Nos. 1209 and 1160, nor the Syriac MS." He further calls attention to the fact that "many passages found in the, modern copies are additions which do not properly belong to the Bible. Since commanded not to add to the Word of God, it is our duty to repudiate such additions as soon as their spurious character is established. The words indicated probably crept into the text by accident, in the fifth century; for no MS. of earlier date (either Greek or Syriac) contains this clause."--STUDIES, VOL. 1-288, *Footnote.*

*A list of these will be found in the Berean Bible Teachers' Manual.

As further bearing on this matter, it will be noticed that the very location of the words, coming as they do between the two passages: "and they lived and reigned with Christ the Thousand years," and, "This is the First Resurrection," seems almost in itself to be convincing evidence that that part of the I text is spurious, as it is not only con fusing to the sense -but meaningless. Considered as an interpolation, the sense is in perfect harmony with all other Scriptures that plainly teach the priority of the resurrection of the overcomers of the Gospel. Age. That - this may be clearly seen we quote the words with the spurious passage eliminated: "And the Persons of Those who had been Beheaded because of the Testimony of Jesus, and because of the Word of God, even those who did not worship the Beast, nor his Image, and did not receive the Mark on their Forehead, and on their Hand; and they lived and reigned with the Anointed one the Thousand Years. This is the First Resurrection." It would, therefore, seem that there are the very best of reasons for concluding that the clause is spurious. And furthermore, its omission makes the whole passage harmonize with the many Scriptures describing the thousand years as the great judgment Day during, the progress of which the awakening, trial and resurrection of the World will be going on.

HUMANITY LIVES AT CLOSE OF MILLENNIUM

However, by way of assisting any of the Lord's people who may not feel sure about the text being spurious-who may have such a regard for the King James text as to decry any attempt to do away with any portion of it, we call attention to the clear and convincing argument offered by PASTOR RUSSELL, as showing that even though the words, "But the Rest of the Dead did not live till the Thousand Years were ended," were genuine, they do not at all conflict with other Scriptures

which teach that the awakening and raising up (resurrection) of the world of mankind will take place throughout the thousand years of Christ's reign and *not after* that reign is over:

"The repudiation of this clause is not essential to the 'Plan' as herein set forth; for the rest of the dead--the world at large--will not *live* again in the full sense, in the perfect sense that Adam *lived* before he sinned and came under the sentence, '*dying* thou shalt die' [until the thousand years are ended.] Perfect life without weakness or dying is the only sense in which God recognizes the word *life*.. From His standpoint all the world has already lost life, is dying, and might now be more properly [and' are] described as *dead* than as *alive*..--2 Cor. 5:14; Matt. 8:22.

"The word resurrection (Greek, *anastasis*) signifies *raising up*. As related to man, it signifies *raising up* man to that condition from which he fell, to full perfection of manhood--the thing lost through Adam. The perfection from *which* our race fell is the perfection *to which* they will gradually rise, during the Millennial Age of restitution or resurrection (raising up). The Millennial Age is not only the Age of trial, but also the Age of blessing, and through resurrection or restitution to life all that was *lost* is to be restored to all who, when they know and have opportunity, gladly obey. The process of resurrection will be a gradual one, requiring the entire Age for its full accomplishment; though the mere awakening to a measure of life and consciousness, as at present enjoyed, will of course be a momentary work. Consequently it will not be until the thousand years are finished that the race will have fully attained the complete measure of life lost in Adam. And since anything short of perfect life is a condition of partial death, it follows that, although the above words are no part of 'the inspired record, it would be strictly true to say that the rest of *the dead will not live* again (will not regain the fullness of life lost) until the thousand years, of restitution and blessing are complete."--STUDIES, VOL. 1-289.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE BLESSED AND HOLY

"Blessed and Holy is He who Has a portion in the First Resurrection; over these the Second Death has no Authority, but they shall be Priests of God and of the Anointed, and shall reign with Him a Thousand Years." These words scarcely require any comment. This statement "shows the holiness as well as blessedness of all that reigning company. Another thought is suggested, by the fact that these shall be priests to teach, as well as kings to reign. They will not only see to the execution of God's laws, but will give instruction and assistance to mankind, such as will enable them to render obedience." -Z March '82-7.

"The call of spiritual Israelites to joint-heirship with Jesus in His spiritual Kingdom belongs to this Gospel Age only.' The Church's change of nature from human to Divine begins with the begetting of the Holy Spirit and will be completed in the resurrection change. St. Paul explains this and declares, 'Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God! (1 Cor. 15:50.) He also tells us that the earthly rulers of the future cannot be perfected until after the Church's resurrection. (Heb. 11:38-40.) So also Jesus declared, that the least one in the [spiritual] Kingdom would be greater than John the Baptist, the greatest of the Prophets.--Matt. 11:11." -*Angelophone Hymns*--50.

Those who have come to see that the subjects of the First or Chief Resurrection comprise the overcomers of the Gospel Age who, with Christ, are called the Seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:16, 29) through whom all others of mankind are to be blessed, have no difficulty in understanding the - fact that their resurrection and, exaltation to power must precede all others. All this is implied in the statement of St. John: "They shall be Priests of God and of the Anointed and shall reign with Him a Thousand Years." As PASTOR RUSSELL has said, "Theirs is the First Resurrection. (Rev. 20:5.) - The great work before this glorious anointed company-the Christ--necessitates their exaltation to the Divine nature; no other than Divine power could accomplish it. Theirs is a work pertaining not only to this world, but to all things *in heaven and in earth--among spiritual* as well as among human beings.-Matt. 28:18; Col. 1:20; Eph. 1:10; Phil. 2:10; 1 Cor. 6:3."--STUDIES, VOL. 1, 288, 289.

The simple statements of this Scripture in themselves teach that the subjects of this "First" Resurrection have a very exalted place and occupation during the thousand years. St. John calls them kings and priests. (V. 6.) In other Scriptures they are called judges. These are not empty titles, but are full of solemn significance and mean that those to whom they are given share with Christ in the administration of the government of the coming world. As kings they are to rule, as judges they are to judge and administer and execute justice. (Isa. 32:1.) As kingly priests they are to be intrusted with the cares and responsibilities of a Royal Priesthood. The Scriptures clearly teach that when the present dispensation is fully ended Christ will enter upon a new and particular administration of human affairs. Our infinite God has ordained that He shall judge the world in righteousness. (Acts 17:31.) "When He shall sit on the throne of His glory," then before Him, during those thousand years, shall be gathered all the nations, and the great work of separating the "sheep" from the "goats," shall progress until the end of the thousand years when the work will be finished and the "sheep" class rewarded, and the "goat" class punished. Engaged with Him in this work will be the overcomers, the sharers with Him of His own, the First, Chief Resurrection.. This work is that of ruling or shepherdizing the nations with a rod of iron-the following up of the victory of the "great day of God Almighty"--enforcing the rule of righteousness and justice in place of the iniquitous rule of the "Dragon," etc. Not only will the survivors of the awful time that introduces the Millennial Day be dealt with, but the residue of men 'who lived and died during past generations will be awakened -from the sleep of death, become enlightened concerning God's purpose for them, and be dealt with in justice and mercy; and we have the Divine statement to the effect that "when the judgments of the Lord are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.)

SATAN ONCE MORE APPEARS ON SCENE

Coming now to the consideration of verse 7 regarding the loosing of Satan,, one of the things that doubtless will have been noted in connection with the vision of the thousand-year reign of Christ and His saints (Rev. 20: 4-6), is that there is not in the vision the slightest reference to the earthly character of that reign, except that contained in the expression that Satan was bound. that he should no longer deceive the nations until the thousand years were ended. This, of course, would imply that **this** reign was over the nations. of the earth. The reason why, the

various characteristics and details of this reign are not portrayed in the vision would seem to be that the book of Revelation being the closing book of prophecy, the Christian student was supposed to be familiar with the peculiar characteristics of the earthly phase of this reign which had already been portrayed in the writings of the Prophets of Israel, as well as frequently referred to by Christ and His Apostles. In the Old Testament prophecies the heavenly character of this reign is implied in the, wonderful changes that are described to take place in the earth and its peoples as contrasted with present conditions. As an illustration of this, let the reader note the wonderful prophetic picture: "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Isa. 11:9.) it will be seen in this quotation that the heavenly aspect of this remarkable period is veiled in strong figurative language; the "mountain" referred to being a symbol of the Kingdom of God. Another illustration of this will be found in another utterance of the Prophet which reads: "And in this mountain [heavenly phase of the Kingdom] shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a -feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wine on the lees well refined. And He will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering-cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from A all faces," etc. (Isa. 25:6-8.) We quote one more prophecy to illustrate and establish this point--a Scripture that describes this Millennial reign as being the great Judgment Day: "O sing unto the Lord a new song; for He hath done marvelous things; His right hand, and His holy arm, hath gotten Him the victory. The Lord hath made known His salvation: His righteousness hath He openly shewed in the sight of the heathen [nations]. . . . Let the floods clap their hands; let the hills be joyful together before the Lord; for He cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall He judge the world, and the people with His truth."--Psa. 98:1, 2, 8, 9.

HUMANITY'S LAST TEMPTATION

We, therefore, observe in considering this vision of the release of Satan, that the earthly features of the reign of Christ and His saints will need to be kept in mind In other. words, that the thousand-year reign of Christ and His saints is nothing more or less than the great individual judgment or trial day of the world. With these thoughts before us, it seems most apparent (to express it briefly in a general way) that the loosing of Satan and the permission of a second attempt to defile the earth is for the express purpose of testing the myriads of humanity -- all mankind who will have been living on the earth and enjoying the blessed privileges of this judgment Day -- the testing being for the purpose of deciding which of humanity. have not used these privileges to develop a character of heart loyalty and obedience to God. Three classes are brought to our attention as closely related to and living during these thousand years: First, there will be the immortal ones, Christ and His glorified joint-heirs, the heavenly Kings, Priests and Judges, who will be invisible to earth's dwellers; second, the Old Testament saints, who will have been resurrected to perfect human conditions, in. the beginning of the thousand years, and will constitute the visible intermediaries acting under the heavenly Kings, etc.;. and third, the world of mankind, who will be on trial or probation for life or death everlasting. Seen from this standpoint, this vision of the release of Satan and his permitted temporary activity amongst humanity in

opposition to God is, like all the visions of chapters 20, 21 and 22, designed simply to portray one aspect or picture of the final testing, and results of this Millennial reign of Christ and His saints.

Consulting the writings of the commentators who have endeavored to explain this vision of the restraint and release of Satan, we find that nearly all, if not quite all, of them with the one exception of PASTOR RUSSELL interpret it from the standpoint that the peoples living in the world in this Millennial period comprise only those who happen to live through the judgment scenes that mark the overthrow of the present order. It was not until the ushering in of the period of Christ's personal presence at the end of the 1335 years (Dan. 12), that clear light began to shine on that feature of the Divine Plan that related to this Millennial reign. It is not only interesting but profitable to read, as confirming the truthfulness of progressive interpretation, some of the comments on this vision. One of these writers has thus referred to this period:

"Now we have never known and consequently cannot conceive a world free from Satanic deceptions; but who does not feel at once that it would be a marvelously different world? . . . When Satan is exiled from the earth for a time it is evident that man will have a probation of a character different from any that he has as yet experienced; it will be a probation of man free from the Tempter, and though Scripture does not lead us to expect that sin will be altogether absent from among the Gentile nations of the earth' during the course of this probation, it does undoubtedly intimate that its existence will be reduced to a minimum. The Lord Jesus Christ began to overthrow the power of the Devil when He resisted his temptation in the wilderness; He obtained a further and magnificent victory when He broke open, the prison house of death, and leading captivity captive, ascended up on high. This binding of Satan is a further stage of His triumph over the great foe, and the final one comes at the close of the Millennium when the Devil is cast into the lake of fire."--H. G. GUINNESS.

DAVID N. LORD, while regarding Satan as a real person, believed that his restraint and release again were intended to portray very much wider effects than would be represented in his personal influence and operations. On these points he has said that Satan, in this vision of his binding, includes the whole body of the fallen - angels; and his emergence from prison denotes their release universally, and return to the seductions of men on the earth. Another has said:

"It seems a great pity after the world has rested for a thousand years that this arch-enemy of its peace should again be let loose upon it. But there seems to be some sort of a necessity for it. The statement to St. John was that 'he must be loosed a little while.' (V. 3.) Some interest of righteousness and moral government renders it proper that he should be allowed this last limited freedom."

Referring to the particular matter of deception practiced by Satan, this same writer goes on to say that "Satan succeeds in rendering them [the ones deceived] dissatisfied with the holy rule of God's glorified saints and induces them to believe that they can successfully throw it off and crush it out. . . . How he does this we are not told; but under him they come forth in swarming myriads, enter the same holy land [as others (Ezek. 38, 39) did a thousand years before], and compass about the citadel of the saints and the beloved city in the vain hope of wresting the dominion from its immortal possessors. The insane war, however, is

quickly terminated. One brief sentence tells the ,tearful story: 'There came down fire out of heaven and devoured them.' When Israel was encamped in the wilderness, a guard of Levites was set about the tabernacle and the command to them was, 'The stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.' (Num. 1:51.) So a guard of immortal king-priests keeps the ways to the Throne and Temple of Jehovah in that- day, and the presumptuous dupes of Satan's last deception who dare to approach with hostile intent are instantly hurled to fiery destruction. Not, a man of them escapes."

THE LAST REBELLION

Concerning who are represented by these who seek to wrest the earthly rulership from those who are divinely appointed, none of the commentators have a clear conception. In, the increased light of the days of the presence Of the Son of Man, this matter as well as others bearing on the same is better understood. Of all expositors, PASTOR RUSSELL, who was the one that first gave a clear Scriptural, logical unfolding of the Divine Plan which, previous to his call into the Divine service, was to a large extent hidden from view, has given a clear unfolding of this vision of the loosing of Satan.. Concerning the Divine purpose to be accomplished in this release of Satan, we have the following from his pen:

"At the close of the 'Millennium, when men shall have been made perfect, the world of mankind will be subjected to a final test, not as to their perfection of human nature, but as to their loyalty to God. The test upon. Mother Eve was of this character. She was not deceived in the sense of not knowing the meaning of loyalty to God or what constituted disobedience. God had forewarned her. She knew what was right. But she was deceived so far as the consequences were concerned; so with Satan. 'He was deceived as to the outcome of his course, in thinking he would be able to carry out his plans despite the Lord.

"So, we believe, it will be at the end of the Millennial Age. Some of mankind will be deceived as to the result of the course they will take. All who are entirely loyal to the Divine Law will perceive the error of the wicked. During the Millennial Age Christ, as the Mediator, will stand between mankind and the full requirements of justice; and mankind will be, as it were, in a household of protection. When. all evil influences are restrained mankind will have a very favorable opportunity for coming to a full knowledge of the Divine requirements. After they shall have enjoyed the blessings of restitution to the full, then it will be appropriate that a test shall come to see whether their adherence to righteousness is merely a matter of policy or whether they have reached such a condition of heart-loyalty to God and righteousness as not to be moved from righteousness by any influence.

-"At the end of the Millennial Age, then, after they shall have been turned over to the Father, He will thus test mankind to see whether or not they have learned full obedience. Evil influence will be let loose for a season. If they have not learned thoroughly the lesson of obedience they will be unworthy of everlasting life and will demonstrate that theirs has been merely a policy service. It will be because they have not come into fullness of heart-harmony with God that they will be peculiarly susceptible in this trial respecting their loyalty.

"Satan was tested as to his loyalty to God. Adam and Eve were tested. as to their loyalty to God. In the time of Noah the angels were similarly tested -- not as to whether they preferred right to wrong, but as to their entire loyalty. Jesus Himself was tested as to His loyalty to the Father. So mankind, at the end of the Millennial Age, will be tested as respects their heart harmony with God."--Z '11-360, 361.

SEDITION AGAINST THE HOLY CITY

Concerning what is represented in this Post-Millennial vision by the "beloved city" and the "camp of the saints," it is interesting for students of the Revelation to compare the expositions of some of these commentators with that of PASTOR RUSSELL. DAVID N. LORD has thus commented on these matters, saying: "The beloved city is the New Jerusalem, which -is the symbol, as will be shown in the exposition of the next chapter of the glorified saints in their relations to unglorified men, of priests and kings, as great Babylon is the symbol of the priests and rulers [governmental powers] of the apostate hierarchies' "

Concerning who or what is represented by the "camp of the saints," this same writer has said: "They probably represent the subordinate, unglorified rulers of the obedient nations." PASTOR RUSSELL'S interpretation is very much the same as this writer. His comment is that "the 'beloved city' is the New Jerusalem, the Church in glory, not the Church in the flesh."

Concerning what is to be understood as the "camp of the saints," his thought is somewhat similar to MR. LORD'S, only more clear and definite, because of his clearer apprehension of that feature of the Divine Plan concerning the earthly phase of the Millennial Kingdom or judgment Day. Concerning this he has said:

"By that time [the close of the thousand years] having reached perfection of organism and powers, the people will assert themselves in thus going up to encompass the camp of the saints. That the Church cannot be meant is evident from the fact that human beings could not attack an unseen force of spirit beings, as the Church will then be."--Z '13-53.

"We do not expect that the communication between the spiritual rulers (the glorified Church) and their earthly subjects will be after this manner [as in Old, Testament times] during the Millennium; for we find that God has made provision that a certain class of humanity, already tried (during the period before the Gospel Age) and found worthy of perfection and everlasting life, shall throughout the Millennial Age serve as the intermediaries between the spiritual Kingdom, the saints, and their subjects, mankind.

"These intermediaries, while not the Kingdom in the proper sense of the word, will be so fully the representatives of it amongst men, that they will be recognized as the Kingdom by men; they will represent the Kingdom before men and be the only visible representatives of it. Hence we have termed these 'the earthly phase of the Kingdom.' visible among men.-Luke, 13:28.

"These, 'Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the Prophets' and Ancient Worthies referred to by our Lord and by the Apostles (Matt. 8:11; Heb. 11:4-40), having passed their trial, will be awakened from death perfect -- fully restored to human perfection; and will not require a 'resurrection by judgment' a thousand years long, as will the residue of mankind."--STUDIES, VOL. IV-619.

"The rebellion incited by Satan will be not only against the earthly princes, but also against the Christ."--Z '13-53.

In regard to Satan's operations to deceive the nations, Gog and Magog, MR. LORD's interpretation is very much the same as that of PASTOR RUSSELL. His view is that "Satan's enticing Gog and Magog to gather together to battle, denotes . . . his enticing them to resist and endeavor to subvert the rule, both of the glorified and unglorified saints and to elevate themselves into their place. That it is by his influence that they are to be incited to war, indicates that they had before been universally [outwardly] obedient.

"This prophecy, then, foreshows that after the risen saints have reigned with Christ, the three hundred and sixty-five thousand years [?] Satan and his legions are to be allowed again to return to earth and tempt men ; that seduced by them, remote nations are to revolt from the sway of the saints which Christ has established over them, and attempt to exalt themselves to supreme authority; and that they are to be destroyed by a direct interposition of the eternal Word, and the tempting angels thereafter to be consigned to perpetual imprisonment in hell ?) [Gehenna]."

LOYALTY TO GOD THE LAST TEST

PASTOR RUSSELL enlarging and defining more particularly the nature or character of the test to be applied to mankind at the end of the thousand years has thus written:

"Possibly the temptation that will come to mankind at that time will be the desire to take possession of the government of earth before it is fully turned over to them. If this be true, since they will know that it is God's, intention to turn the earth over to mankind when the end of the. thousand years shall come, they will be anticipating the immediate transfer of everything from the Ancient worthies, who shall have been ruling as 'princes in all the earth.' (Psa. 45:16.) When the time shall be fully come, they will be disappointed. 'And they went up on the breadth of the earth and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city.'--Rev. 20:9.

"This shows the condition of many of the world at that time. Many of them will become restless. They will say, 'These Ancient Worthies are holding back the government from us. We do not need to have anything to stand between us and the government of the world.' This attitude will be disloyalty to God. Knowing that all things are of Divine arrangement, they should say: 'The Thousand years, seemingly, are over. We thought this Government would be turned over to us. But We will leave matters entirely in God's hands. If He sees best to give us the Government, well and good. But if He sees best to hold it back, after the time is up, we shall be satisfied.' Such would be the attitude of loyalty."--Z '11-361.

Another very interesting and instructive comment on this vision, showing that it occurs after the work of the glorified, immortal saints and the princely intermediaries, the Ancient Worthies is completed, is as follows:

"The Great Mediator will indeed 'destroy from amongst the people' all who will not obey Him, throughout the Millennial Age; so that at the transfer of His Kingdom and the vacating of His Mediatorship, the world of mankind will be

perfect. The Mediator will step from between God and man, and Divine tests will be applied, to prove, to demonstrate, the heaft-faithful, The sentence upon the disloyal is: 'There will come fire from God out of Heaven and destroy them.' This indicates a testing and punishing by Divine justice. This would not be possible so long as the Mediatorial Kingdom held sway. However, we understand that our Lord will be the Father's Representative in *connection* with that exhibition of Divine justice which will follow His Mediatorship, just as He was the Father's Representative and Agent before He came into the world to be our Redeemer.

"The trial will follow the thousand years of Christ's reign, at the conclusion of which He will deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father. Hence the loosing of Satan and the testing of the perfected race will be the result of their being turned over into the hands of absolute justice, and in contra-distinction to their having been in the hands of Mercy through the Mediator for a thousand years. That judgment or test, therefore, will be of the Father, of Justice--a similar test to that which originally came upon Father Adam.

"However, it is written that all things are of the Father and by the Son. We are to understand that the glorious Son of God will be the Father's active Agent in respect to that judgment as well as in all matters. 'But it will be the Father's judgment, or the judgment of justice, for the Son's Mediatorial Kingdom will have ended.'"--Z '13-173.

"We cannot doubt then that in the close of the Millennial Age God will again for a 'little season' permit evil to triumph, in order thereby to test His creatures (who will by that time have become thoroughly acquainted with both good and evil, and the consequences of each, and will have had His justice and love fully demonstrated to them), that those who finally prefer and choose evil may be cut off -- destroyed. Thus God will for all eternity remove all who do not love righteousness and hate iniquity.

"The grand outcome of that trial will be a clean universe. As the Revelator expresses it, 'Every creature which is in heaven and on the earth . . . heard I saying, Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb forever! But this result will be accomplished, in harmony with all God's dealings past and present, which have always recognized man's freedom of will to choose good or evil, life or death.'"--H '19-186.

REVELATOR READS SECOND DEATH SENTENCE OF SATAN

"And, That Enemy who' deceived them was cast into the Lake of Fire and Sulphur, where both the Beast and False-Prophet [were cast] and they will be tormented Day and Night for the Ages of the Ages."--V. 10.

By comparing this verse with verse 3 a difference will be noted between the symbols employed to denote Satan's imprisonment and his final punishment--the one is that of the "Abyss," the other is the "Lake of Fire." The Lake of Fire is a symbol with which we met once before in the Revelation' visions. It will be recalled, and indeed it is referred to in this text, that the Beast and the False Prophet, representing systems or organizations, were cast into a Lake of Fire at the beginning of the thousand years. There, the-symbol very evidently denotes destruction, i.e., the destruction of the systems and not necessarily that of the individuals. In a succeeding vision to the one under consideration, we have the

statement that death and *hades* were cast into a Lake of Fire, which very evidently denotes destruction, i.e., that Adamic death and the state of death will cease. In the same way we understand it is used in the verse we are considering.

If it were not for the last clause of this verse, we might consider this a sufficient explanation, and here rest the matter. In the passage under consideration, however, it is declared that the Devil is not only cast into the Lake of Fire (destruction), but is to be tormented forever. One has said:

"In the interpretation of the Scriptures we can afford to throw nothing out, simply because it may conflict with any former views advanced. Scriptures, seemingly 'contradictory' must be 'harmonized,' not cast aside. Still it stands as a matter of reason and logical common sense that in order to interpret any particular passage, the general harmony found in the testimony of other passages must not be destroyed, neither should one passage be arrayed against another in seeming conflict with it; nor should one conclude that a 'majority of texts' favor a certain construction, and array them against a minority, seemingly out of harmony.,

"In our humble opinion there can be no question but that the 'general tenor' of the Word opposes the teaching of a 'life in torment,' as the end of a career. So far as the 'Beast and the False Prophet' are concerned, being purely symbolic, they could not as systems be tormented in any case. But we believe the 'Devil' to be a being, a personality, an entity whom it might be possible to 'torment forever and ever,' were such condition the decree of the Almighty.

"However, we do not believe the Almighty has any such intention. We read, 'But all the wicked shall He destroy! (Psa. 145:20.) . . . Speaking of our Lord [in Heb. 2:14], we read, 'that through, death (through the death penalty), He (Christ) might destroy him that had the power of death that is the Devil.' This declares that Satan shall be destroyed by 'death,' and it would be impossible to inflict conscious torment upon that which is 'destroyed.' "--*Thoughts on Revelation*.

THE LAKE OF FIRE AND BRIMSTONE

It is certainly most reasonable to suppose that as Satan is to be finally destroyed, the 'torment' referred to in this text will end in death. Therefore, the whole matter rests upon the meaning of the words, "forever and ever." In this connection we note that the phrase forever and ever does not always convey the thought of never ceasing. It will be admitted, however, that in many cases in the Scripture it has that meaning. The phrase "to a completion" is very often its meaning. PASTOR RUSSELL has thus explained this in connection with utterances of the same character found in the context:

"Rev. 20:9 tells of the destruction of those individuals who join with Satan in the last rebellion; and verse 15 tells of that same destruction in other- words, using the symbol, Lake of Fire! They are devoured, or consumed in fire. This being the case, the torment of verse 10 cannot refer to these human beings, who are consumed, destroyed. Hence, the question narrows down to this, Will Satan and a False Prophet and a Beast be tortured forever? and does this verse so teach?

"We answer in God's own words, 'All the wicked will be destroyed,' Concerning Satan, the arch-enemy of God and man, God expressly advises us that he will be destroyed, and not preserved in any sense or condition.--Heb. 2:14.

"The Beast and False Prophet systems, which during the Gospel Age have deceived and led astray, will be cast into a great, consuming trouble in the close of this Gospel Age. The torment of those systems will be *aionian*, i. e., lasting. It will continue as long as they last, until they are utterly consumed. So also the system of error, which will suddenly manifest itself at the end of the Millennial Age and lead the 'goats' to destruction, will be consumed. (Rev. 20:7-10.) That deceiving 'system (not specified as to kind, but merely called Satan (Adversary] after its instigator), will be cast into the same sort of trouble and destruction, in the end of the Millennial Age, as the Beast and False Prophet systems are now being cast into it, in the end of this Gospel Age."--H '19-187.

THE WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS

--FEBRUARY 20--MATT. 25:1-13--

Golden Text.--"Watch therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour."--Matt. 25:13.

PROBABLY on the last Sunday of His earthly ministry our Lord foretold the destruction at Jerusalem, the scattering of His followers, a long period of wars, rumors of wars, etc., and finally His second coming, as recorded in Matthew, 25th chapter. This information was most appropriate -to the Apostles at this very time, for their expectation had run in a different direction -they had been expecting the exaltation of the Lord as the Messiah, and that Jerusalem would be the seat of His empire. They had asked, When shall these things be? and, What shall be the sign of thy presence? and Jesus, in His great prophecy of Matthew 24, had explained these matters, indicating to them that His Second Coming would be in strenuous times, when, if it were possible, the very elect would be received-in which, as it was in the days of Noah, so it would then be in the days of the Son of Man, that the multitude of the world would be eating and drinking, planting and building, marrying and giving in marriage, and be unaware of the storm impending and the consummation of the Age preparatory to the beginning of the new Age, of His Kingdom.

To impress the matter upon their minds, He gave the parable of the ten virgins-five wise and five foolish. The scene of the parable is laid near to the close of the Gospel Age, as is indicated by its opening statement, "*Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be likened unto ten virgins, who took their lamps and went forth to meet the Bridegroom.*" The parable has not been applicable all the way down through the Gospel- Age, but to our understanding is applicable now, because we are living in the end of the Age, at the time when the Bridegroom will be present--at the time when the wise virgins will go in to the wedding and the foolish will be excluded. The understanding of this parable at the present time, therefore, should be meat in due season to all who are the Lord's true followers.

Throughout the Scriptures the Church is represented as a Bride in preparation for her marriage. The Bridegroom uniformly is the Lord Jesus, to whom belongs the entire inheritance, and the opportunity granted to the Lord's followers in the present time is that of becoming His Bride and joint-heirs. They have no status or relationship to the King eternal except-as they obtain it by union with the King's

Son. The type of this in the Old Testament is a very beautiful one: Abraham typified the Heavenly Father, very rich; Isaac typified our Lord Jesus, the Seed of Promise, the heir of all; Abraham's servant, sent to call a wife for Isaac, beautifully typified the Holy Spirit, which, during this Gospel Age, has been selecting the Church, of which the Apostle says, I have espoused you as a chaste virgin unto one husband, which is Christ. -2 Cor. 11:2.

Throughout the Gospel Age this Church, under the guidance and protection of the Holy Spirit, has, been approaching the Father's house, of many mansions, the Heavenly kingdom, the glorious conditions 'Promised in joint-heirship with the Bridegroom. If we rightly understand the matter, We are now at the end of the journey, and the Bride class, typified by Rebecca, is putting on the veil and alighting from the camel 'and being received by the Heavenly Bridegroom. As the entire matter has occupied a long period of nearly nineteen centuries, so the coming features are occupying several years for their accomplishment. Soon the Bride will be with the Bridegroom and in the Sarah tent--joint-heirs with Him in the Abrahamic Covenant. It is in harmony with this that the Apostle assures us that "if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." -Gal. 3:29.

Several of the Lord's parables related to this Marriage of the King's Son, and His last message to the Church tells us of how ultimately the Bride, the Lamb's wife, shall shine forth resplendent in the Kingdom, and she is symbolized by the New Jerusalem. The announcement is there made, too, of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb after the Bride, the Lamb's wife, shall have made herself ready. (Rev. 19:7-9.) John the Baptist as a prophet referred to this relationship between Christ and the Church, saying, "He that hath the Bride is the Bridegroom, but the friend of the Bridegroom when he heareth His voice rejoiceth greatly. This my joy is fulfilled." John realized that he was neither a member of the Bride class nor was he the Bridegroom. He recognized Jesus as the Bridegroom, and was glad to be honored of God as the servant of the Bridegroom and Bride to give the introduction. The high position John will occupy in the future, as one of the faithful Prophets of whom our Lord said there was none greater, is assured; but we have the Lord's assurance that the least one, the humblest one in the Bride class of this Gospel Age, the least one in this Kingdom class, will be greater than John the Baptist, because these are to be, joint-heirs in the Kingdom, partakers of the glory, honor, immortality, while John and the faithful of the past will be upon the earthly plane as representatives and princes of the Kingdom amongst men.-Matt. 11:11; Heb. 11:39, 40; Psa. 45:16.

TWO CLASSES OF VIRGINS

Having the parable then located before our minds as belonging somewhere about the present time, we note the fact that it refers only to virgins-pure ones, The parable does not refer to the world at all, nor even to nominal Church people. Both of its classes represent Christians, the Kingdom of heaven class, believers, consecrated believers, believers who have heard the Gospel of the Kingdom, who are expecting the King at His Second Advent and who have lamps, and who get from their lamps light, information and instruction. These two classes of pure ones, separate from the world, informed respecting the Bridegroom's coming and Kingdom and waiting for them, represent the two classes of the consecrated-the

"Little Flock" and the "Great Company;" the "more than conquerors" and the conquerors "through great tribulation." (Rom. 8:37; Rev. 7:14.) These are the same two- classes that are represented in the Tabernacle type by the two goats, one of which became the Lord's goat for sacrifice and the other the scapegoat, only that in the Tabernacle type the goats represented the two classes all the way down through the Gospel Age as well as particularly at its close, while the two classes in the parable under consideration represent the Church only in the present time in the end of this Age'

Evidently the Lord's object in giving the parable was two-fold: first, to give a 'salutary lesson to the Apostles and the entire Church of this Gospel Age on the necessity for alertness, watching and praying, anticipating and preparing for the coming King and His Kingdom that they might be constantly ready for a share therein. Second, the parable was specially intended for us living in this time, to let us see, that it would not be sufficient to be hoping and praying for the Kingdom and in a general way expecting the Bridegroom, but that we must be so alert and so full of enthusiasm for the event that it would lead us to make the wisest possible preparation for it, that we might not be disappointed at the final moment.

SECOND ADVENTISTS IN THE PARABLE

True to the picture of the parable, a movement took place amongst the Lord's people. of all denominations in the last century, which culminated in what was known as the Second Advent movement. The virgins, the pure ones amongst Christians all over the world, were aroused with the thought that the coming of the Bridegroom was near, and a general lamp trimming, a general investigation of the Bible especially on that subject resulted. True to the parable, the expectation of those dear people was disappointed--"the Bridegroom tarried," and while he tarried "they all slumbered and slept." The lamps were measurably neglected and a general stupor fell upon this class. Indeed we may properly enough agree that many of the virgins not only slept but dreamed most peculiar, fantastic and unreasonable things. But by and by came "the midnight announcement," Behold the Bridegroom.

This cry has been going forth in these the "latter days" and in response to it the virgin class everywhere are awakening and a fresh examination of the Divine Word is in progress, the lamps are being trimmed. Amongst those who hear the announcement are some who insist that it is a false cry: they have become so drowsy, so overcharged with the cares of this life, so comfortably nestled, that although they love the Bridegroom and desire above all things to be ready to receive Him, they are unprepared- refuse to investigate, and merely murmur to themselves, "Yes, we love the Bridegroom, we will surely be ready to receive Him, we have long been waiting for Him, but not yet, not yet. Soul, take thine ease; no one knows anything about the matter; those who are announcing the Bridegroom are surely in error."

As days. and weeks and years roll by more and more of the virgins awaken, and as they do so the investigation begins, the trimming of the lamps. Then it is discovered that some, who thought they were ready to enter into the joys of their Lord, find that they are deficient in the allimportant oil, which represents the Holy Spirit, and from which alone comes their enlightenment. The delay of the Bridegroom thus serves as a test to the virgins invited to go in with Him to' the

marriage-the delay serves to prove who are the wise and who are the foolish. A certain amount of oil, a certain amount of consecration, a certain amount of the Holy Spirit, was necessary to -be counted in with the virgins at any stage; but a larger measure is necessary now in the time of the actual presence of the Bridegroom, in the time of actual joining in the procession--more truth, more light, are now due, and must be possessed by those who would go in to the wedding.

The virgins merely represent the Lord's people in general at this time, so that many are now amongst them who had nothing to do with the Adventist movement of 1844. However, the general spirit must be the same, love for the Bridegroom, expectancy of His presence in the Kingdom and a desire above all things to be prepared to enter in with Him before the door is shut. The question now then is, Who has a sufficiency of oil, of light, of the Holy Spirit, from which this illumination proceeds, to be able to stand in the procession of the virgins *who* will enter in with the Bridegroom before the door closes? It is an important question, and one which appeals to every one who has- his lamp burning. How necessary that we see to it that we have a good supply of the spirit of the Lord-the spirit of meekness, patience, gentleness, long suffering, brotherly kindness, love. We may be sure that unless we have a good supply of these our lamps will go out,

"GIVE US OF YOUR OIL"

To illustrate this Holy Spirit, this spirit of consecration which all of the wise, virgins must have in full measure in order to maintain their light and their place in the Bridegroom's favor and to gain an entrance to the Marriage, the Lord in the parable represents the foolish virgins as asking the wise for some of their oil, and then shows the impossibility of its being thus obtained from one another. The fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit cannot be had for the asking; they must be bought in the market of experience-they are of gradual growth and cost painstaking care of words and thoughts and doings. It is because these fruits of the spirit are so difficult of attainment and cost such a price of self-sacrifice and sacrifice of worldly interests that they are valuable in the Lord's sight.

None can get too much of this Holy Spirit, none can secure an over supply for his own use so that he could supply others from his abundance. The Bridegroom has made in advance abundant provision by which all those who are invited to go in with Him to the marriage may be properly equipped, not only with robes and lamps, but also with the oil; and if any are careless in the procurement of the oil, they thus indicate their unfitness to' be of the class who are to enter with the Bridegroom before the door is shut. This is the essence of the Lord's instruction by this parable-that those who hope to enter into the Kingdom and share its glories with Him must expect to make preparation in advance. If they wait until the moment for the door to close, however willing they may be, however anxious, they will not be prepared--the preparation requires time, patience, care.

We meet continually those who give evidence of being true Christians, "virgins," pure of heart, of intention, who are considerably interested in the Heavenly Bridegroom, in the gathering for the Marriage supper, but who have little light upon these interesting subjects. They sometimes say to us, "Give us of your light, tell us how you know these things, why you feel so sure about them while others

are asleep. We are awake enough, but our lamps give no light." We answer that it is impossible to give them faith in these things by proxy; that there is only one way to obtain the light, and that is through a patient, persevering study of the Divine Word under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We inform them that patient perseverance in well doing, in Scriptural study, in cultivating the fruits and graces of the Spirit, are necessary in: order to have this oil and its light. They express regret, for they are so overcharged with the cares of this life, or the deceitfulness of riches, or family pride, or what, not, that they have not the time to give to their spiritual development and the study of the, Word. We are sorry and disappointed at such; 'We'-would that they could enjoy with us the blessings of a good supply of oil and the clear light of our lamps as they are now shining. We can do no more than tell them how and where the *oil*, the light, must be obtained. We must go on in our personal. preparation and in our hastening to hold up our lights in our salutation of the Bridegroom,, and expression of joy in connection with His presence and the anticipated entrance with Him to the Marriage.

"AND THE DOOR WAS SHUT"

It would appear that in these the "last times," the wise virgins have been and are still entering in--passing beyond the veil, changed in a moment, "in the twinkling of an eye." (I Cor. 15:52.) Soon the entire First Resurrection will be complete, the last member being changed. Then and there the door will be shut and no more will be permitted to enter., Thank God that -this does not signify so dreadful a condition as some of the Lord's dear people think It does not mean the close of the door of hope, and that all outside, the foolish virgins as well as the world, will go down to hopeless despair in the Second Death. It does mean, however, the close of the great and grand opportunity which will never open again. It signifies the completion of the Kingdom class, the Bride class, the close of the Narrow Way to glory, honor, immortality and joint-heirship with Christ.

The foolish virgins go and buy the precious oil and get their lamps trimmed and burning, but too late for the Marriage, too late to be of those who will be the Bride, the Lamb's Wife. And thus in the parable it is represented that when they knock the Bridegroom will say, "I do not recognize you as being members of the Bride class; you must not come in." Instead of entering into the joys of the Lord with the others they will be permitted for a time at. least to have their, portion in the great time of trouble which will then prevail throughout the world; weeping and gnashing of teeth, sorrow, disappointment, chagrin, will be the portion not only of the foolish virgins but of all the families of the earth in that time. We are glad to know that that great day of trouble will prepare the world of mankind for the glorious conditions of the Millennial Kingdom, which will then short ly be ushered in. The Sun of Righteousness will arise with healing in its beams, and many people shall go and say, "Come, let 'us go up to the mountain of the Lord's house; He will teach us of His ways and we will walk in His paths. For the law shall go forth from Mount Zion [the glorified Kingdom, the heavenly Kingdom], and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem [from the earthly representatives of the heavenly Kingdom]."--Mal. 4:2; Isa. 2:3.

"NEITHER THE DAY NOR THE HOUR"

Our Lord concludes the parable with the words, "Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour." The Revised Version omits from verse 13 the words, "wherein the Son of Man cometh," because these are not found in any of the old Greek MSS. The thought, however, is practically the same-Watch, because ye know neither the day nor the hour in which -this parable will be fulfilled. The watching, no doubt, has been beneficial to the Lord's people all through the Gospel Age, and is still more profitable to the wise virgin class of the present day, because it explains to these their circumstances, conditions, etc. All of the wise virgin class should be in the attitude commanded in this parable; they should have a knowledge of the fact that, the Bridegroom is coming; they should have lamps and a full supply of oil. Those living in this ready condition will be neither alarmed nor surprised at the message when they hear it as it is now going forth, "Behold the Bridegroom is. present." We are living in the *parousia* -- (presence) of the Son of Man -- the wise virgins are already falling into line in the procession and entering in to the Marriage; the full number will soon be found and the door will be shut. All in this watching attitude of heart, with the full measure of the spirit of the Lord in their hearts will be very quickly attracted by the first intimation that the Bridegroom is present. (These, trimming their lamps, examining the Scriptures, will quickly discern the truthfulness of the announcement, and speedily prepare and take their places with the wise virgins. The announcement, the truth upon this subject, is indeed a testing, proving which of the professed virgins of the Lord have the oil in their vessels, the right spirit of humility, patience, love, devotion, interest in the things of the Bridegroom. Such and such only are desired by the Bridegroom or will be permitted to enter.

In view of this it is evident that our work in the present time is not only to proclaim the Bridegroom's presence but to assist those who have the oil in their vessels to trim their lamps . If it is not already too late to go to buy the oil it soon will be, and hence our special care should be in respect to those who have the oil of the Lord's spirit but who are still asleep or drowsy and need to have an announcement of His presence brought kindly, patiently, perseveringly to their attention.

It is not the supposition of the parable that when the time comes that the Bridegroom's presence is announced the virgins will not know of it. How could they trim their lamps and go out to meet Him and go in with Him without assurance of His presence? The watching suggested therefore by our Lord refers to the time prior to the presence. Those virgins who realize that the Bridegroom has come, those who have trimmed their lamps, those who have joined His procession, are not watching for His coming, but know of His *presence*, because that day and hour, has come and has not found them unprepared, without sufficient oil.

Let us praise God for the blessings and mercies already ours, and go on faithfully rejoicing in the light of our lamps and in the anticipation of the glorious nuptial feast and the later glorious work, with the Bridegroom, of blessing all the families of the earth. He that hath this knowledge will by it be separated more and more from the world and its spirit, and be gradually more and more transformed from glory to glory in the likeness of the Bridegroom.

REWARDS OF FAITHFULNESS

--FEBRUARY 27--MATTHEW 25 :14-30--

Golden Text.--*"Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things."*--Matt. 25:23.

IT WAS on the way from Jericho toward Jerusalem that our Lord gave the parable of the Ten I Pounds, delivered one each to ten servants. (Luke 19:11, 12.) The parable of the 'talents which we are 'now considering is a different one in several particulars, though bearing close resemblance to the other. It was part of our Lord's teaching to His disciples during the few days preceding His crucifixion, probably the Tuesday preceding it,, on the evening journey from Jerusalem to Bethany. This parable illustrates to us the differing abilities of God's people in respect to His service, and how each is accountable according to his ability, and that the same results are neither required nor expected from all, but simply faithfulness by each in the use of that ability and opportunity which he possesses.

The Revised Version notes the fact that the -words, "the Kingdom of Heaven," in the opening verse, are not found in the ancient MSS., but this does not interfere with the thought that it is the Kingdom of Heaven in embryo (the Church) that is discussed, and that is likened to these servants who receive, the talents; for this parable, it is to be remembered, followed immediately the parable of the ten virgins, which is declared to be an illustration of the Kingdom. The parable of the talents, therefore, merely continues the thought respecting the Kingdom class, making these fresh observations respecting it.

Although a number of servants are implied, yet only .a sample illustration of three is given, leaving it to be inferred that the others were more or less distinctly represented in these three, without attempting to show or to teach which of the classes would predominate. In this respect also this parable corresponds to the parable of the pounds. This parable was evidently, like the other, to prepare the minds of the Apostles for our Lord's departure from the present life-to the "far country," heaven itself, there to appear in the presence of God to present on behalf of mankind the sacrifice for sins which He was about to accomplish at Calvary; and incidentally to be crowned, highly exalted and honored far above angels, principalities and powers, at the right hand of Divine favor, and there to remain till the appointed time for Him to take possession of His Kingdom under the whole heavens, to subdue it and to bring it into full accord with the Divine government, that God's will should be done on earth as it is done in heaven.

WHEN THE MASTER RETURNS FROM THE FAR COUNTRY

The expression "far country," would give the thought of a considerable time to elapse between the Master's leaving and His return to establish His Millennial Kingdom. Meantime the Apostles were to understand that they themselves were His servants to whom He entrusted His property and that He would expect them to be faithful in guarding all of His interests and affairs, and promoting the same according to their several abilities. But since the parable covers the long period of eighteen hundred years, and looks down to certain servants living at the time of

the Master's return, it is evident that it was intended to include, not the Apostles only, but, as our Lord's prayer expressed the matter, "All those who shall believe on me through their word." We are to notice distinctly that the parable does not concern the world; nor do the decisions mentioned as taking place at the Second Coming of our Lord in any sense of the word represent decisions respecting the world, but merely decisions respecting-the Church. Nor are we even to understand that the parable includes the general "household of faith"; but simply and only the specially consecrated servants of the Lord, to whom He has committed certain responsibilities; viz., those only who have been, begotten of the Holy Spirit.

In the early Church, following the Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit, every consecrated believer received a gift or talent, and some received many of these, as the Apostle says: "The manifestation of the spirit [a portion, at least one talent] is given to every man [in this consecrated Church] to profit withal." Each had a responsibility in proportion as he had talents or gifts of the spirit, and hence the Apostle Paul, having more than the others, had a greater responsibility because he had greater opportunities; and we judge that he measured up to these responsibilities in a manner most acceptable to the Master. (1 Cor. 14:18.) But those gifts must have ceased within a short time after the death of the Apostles, because we most clearly find that the gifts of the spirit were imparted to believers only through the laying on of hands of the Apostles-that they did not come supernaturally from God to every individual, and that those who possessed the gifts themselves, except the Apostles, could not communicate them to others.--Acts 8:12-20.

The object of those gifts, as we have already seen, was the establishment of the early Church, but with its establishment their necessity ceased, and hence the gifts ceased in that form, and have since continued with the Lord's people in a very different form; that is to say, since then the natural gifts or talents which each person possesses through birth, education and training are reckoned, when he is consecrated to the Lord and accepted by Him, as being owned or possessed by the man's new or Holy Spirit, and hence are reckoned as talents or abilities committed to his care, and for the use of which he will be held responsible in the outcome. If he remained one of the world he would have other responsibilities, but not such as are implied in this lesson, which represents only the responsibilities of the consecrated servants in the use of their Master's spiritual goods.

We may safely say that there are comparatively few five-talent servants amongst the Lord's people: the majority of the saints may safely be considered as being of the one- and two-talent classes. There are not many five-talent people in the world anyway, and it would appear that the world, the **flesh and the devil** bid so high for the services of these few that the number of them to become the Lord's servants, and to make consecration of their five talents fully and exclusively to His service, is comparatively small--"not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble."

The parable shows that five-talent people amongst the Lord's servants are not to measure themselves with others and to say, I have done enough; certainly more than A., who has one talent, but as much as B., who has two talents. Rather, each disciple is to seek to know truthfully just what talents of natural ability and opportunity the Master has committed to his care, and to seek to use everyone of

these as fully, as thoroughly and as constantly as possible, so that the results may be much fruit, much praise, much service, much honor to the Lord. And as this parable should be a check upon those servants who have five talents, to hinder them from taking a slothful view of the matter so it should also be an encouragement to those having fewer talents of ability and opportunity, showing them that the Lord will not expect as great things from them as He would expect from those having greater opportunities and greater natural talents. It teaches such that they should-do with their might what their hands find to do, and realize that this reasonable service is what the Lord expects and what He proposed to reward in each, The servant who had only one talent of ability and opportunity should have felt equally his responsibility, and might equally have had the Master's approval had he been faithful, in which event, no doubt, his one talent would have increased to two.

BURIED AND NEGLECTED TALENTS

Our Lord's arrangement of the parable, that the person who received the one talent was the one who digged in the earth and buried it, should not be understood to mean that the one-talented people are more likely than others of the Lord's servants with more talents to thus neglect and misuse them. So far as observation teaches, we might conclude that proportionately as many of the two-talented and five-talented dig in the earth and hide their talents, as of those who possess only one; and of course their so doing would be proportionately more blameworthy than that of the one-talented man. Why, then, is the one-talented man chosen as an illustration of these talent-, burials? We answer, that it is to show the responsibility of those who have least-that the Lord expects even the least of His consecrated people to know of, and to use the talents he has in his possession, and that he will not hold guiltless even those who have the smallest ability to serve Him and His brethren and His truth and who neglect to use it. As the responsibilities accompanying a larger number of talents would be greater, so the losses in their case would be greater, and thus the punishment more severe.

"After a long time the Lord of those servants cometh and reckoneth with them." By these words our Lord gave to the disciples as clear an intimation as was proper of the fact that they were not to expect Him to return and reckon with them in a very few days, a few months or a few years; but when they subsequently asked Him respecting the particular time, He refused them, saying that it was not for them to know the times and the seasons, which the Father had put in His own power. And so for eighteen hundred years the Lord's people have been left without clear information on this subject. This, however, does 'not militate against the thought that it is .the privilege of God's people now to know something of the times and seasons, because the due time lids come in which the Father wishes to communicate these-the time mentioned through the Prophet Daniel, when the [truly] 'Wise shall understand, as we saw in the preceding lesson.Dan. 12:10; 1 Thes. 5:4; John 16:13.

There is no intimation in the parable that the disciples would die and go to their Lord, and be reckoned with and rewarded then, as many believe to have been the case. e. The Scriptures are harmonious and consistent with them :elves in their teachings, and not only declare that "David is not ascended into the heavens," and that "no man hath ascended up to heaven" save Jesus, but they declare also that

our Lord will come a second time, to receive His people unto Himself and to then reward them. The Apostle Paul, who was one of these five-talented servants, declares respecting himself, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course; I have kept the faith. Hence forth there is laid up for me [in reservation, in waiting] a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me in that day, and not to me only, but also unto all them that love His appearing."--2 Tim. 4:7, 8; John 3:13; 14:3; Acts 2:34.

From this view of the parable that the Lord's people of today are represented in it, it is for each one of the consecrated (while yet it is called day-before the night cometh) to make a full and thorough inspection of himself : and to determine to what extent he has talents, abilities, privileges, opportunities, to serve the Lord, and to what extent he is using these; and to remember that his share in the reward depends upon his faithfulness in the use of his talents. There may be instances in which persons of five talents will use three of them faithfully in the Lord's service, and bury the other two in business and cares of this life--"in the earth," in earthly affairs. There may be instances in which those who have two talents use one for the Lord's service and bury the other one; but the fact that our Lord does not give such illustrations would lead us to question the probability of such' a course. Some might plan certain things respecting two talents for -heavenly things and three for earthly things; 'or of, one for earthly things and the other for heavenly things; but the result probably would be either that he would become thoroughly immersed in the earthly things, and bury all his talents there, or else that his heart would become so thoroughly infused with the Lord's spirit and the desire to serve His cause that all of his talents would be, thus employed. This tendency and result is implied by our Lord's statement on another occasion: "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." "No man can serve two masters."

Experience and observation corroborate this; and hence as a rule we find that people are either cold or hot in spiritual things; either it is the Kingdom of heaven first and far above all other considerations, demanding and receiving the very best we have of time, energy and influence; or else the Kingdom of heaven is neglected and forgotten, and time and influence are spent in money-getting or other selfish and earthly occupations of mind and body.

SOLEMN LESSONS FOR THE CONSECRATED

The lesson of this to every one of the Lord's consecrated people is plain: we are to "seek first [chiefly] the Kingdom of God." It is to be our chief concern and to receive from us all the time, attention, thought, energy, influence and means we have-the things needful for the present life being understood to be excepted; and our love and zeal will be manifested by the proportion of these even, which we are willing to sacrifice in the interest of heavenly things.

The reward given to the faithful servants was the same in each case-the entering into the joys of the Lord; and, we may reasonably understand that this will mean that the cup of joy to each will be full. In this, too, we have a great encouragement for all, and one which perhaps is specially needed by the majority of the Lord's servants, who possess only one or two talents of opportunity, etc. They have an equally good opportunity of entering into the joys of the Lord as though they had

five or ten talents; and the reward, "Well done, good and faithful servant," will be truly meant for, and as fully appreciated by the one as the other.

The reward to these servants is in full harmony with the foregoing application of the parable, and shows that during the Millennial Age the faithful servants, the "elect" of this Gospel Age, will be the rulers of the world, "joint-heirs with Jesus Christ their Lord" in His Kingdom, and upon His throne of rulership"; for the reward specifies, "Thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things." If the parable were intended to represent the world's judgment, such a conclusion would be inappropriate, because by the time the world's judgment will have ended there will no longer be necessity for rulership in this sense; for, as the Apostle declares, Christ shall reign [during the Millennium] until He shall have put down all authority, etc., and then He shall deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father. The rule, or reign of righteousness, the Mediatorial Kingdom, is to be established during the Millennial Age,--thus to overthrow the rule of unrighteousness now prevailing amongst men, and to lift mankind in general out of the present condition of sin and death-to deliver as many of them as will accept the deliverance from the power of Satan into the liberty of sons of God. And with the accomplishment of this Work the time for all such ruling -will be at an end; hence this parable is a strong lesson in support of the pre-millennial coming of our Lord and exaltation of His faithful, the elect Church.

LOSS TO THE UNFAITHFUL

The servant who hid his talent in the earth, and who failed to use it, endeavored to justify his course by blaming the Master with being too-hard and exacting. And so it is with many, who, having taken upon themselves the VOWS Of consecration to the Lord, subsequently fail to perform them. They are disposed to blame the Lord rather than to blame themselves; and this course indicates what their real lack is,--Love. They do not love the Lord fully, truly, sufficiently, and their course reveals this fact. Had they loved Him they would have delighted to do to their ability His will; and only such are blessed with rewards.

The punishment of those who failed to perform their covenant as servants, who failed to use the talents provided for them under this covenant, is shown to be great loss. The servant who fails to use present privileges of .consecration and service and sacrifice will find the opportunity taken from him. He will have it no more; neither 'will he have any share in the reward given to the overcomers -- he will suffer this great loss. He is represented as going into "outer darkness," implying that he has already been in the light of Divine favor, blessing, privilege, knowledge of Divine things-that he would lose this enlightenment, and that his understanding would become darkened as respects spiritual things. It is "outer darkness," because it is the darkness common to and resting upon the whole world of mankind; only the consecrated, accepted of the Lord, being permitted to come fully into the clear light of the knowledge of the Lord and of His plan now shining. Any others than these, upon whom this light may temporarily fall, have it only in a secondary sense, at very most, and see not the glorious things themselves, but merely, so to speak, their reflections.

BEREAN STUDIES IN THE REVELATION

STUDY LI--FEBRUARY 20

THE GREAT EARTHQUAKE

(351) What is the significance of the symbol of the great Earthquake, and of the words, "in that Hour," as recorded in verse 13? H'19-320.

(352) State the reasons as set forth in PASTOR RUSSELL'S expositions and that of other noted expositors for believing that the great Earthquake was symbolical of the, French Revolution. H'19-320, 321.

(353) How have some expositors applied the statement "and the Tenth of the City fell," and what would seem to be the correct interpretation of those words ? H'19-322.

(354) How. was verse 13 fulfilled: "And in That Hour there was a great Earthquake, and the Tenth of the City fell, and by the Earthquake were destroyed seven Thousand Names of Men; and the Rest became afraid, and they gave Glory to the God of Heaven"? H'19-322.

(355) Considering the account of the historians in what sense did the rest become afraid and give Glory to the God of Heaven? H'19-322.

STUDY LII--FEBRUARY 27

THE SOUNDING OF THE SEVENTH TRUMPET

(356) Explain in what sense the fifth, sixth and seventh are Woe Trumpets, and what, is the significance of the statement, "The. Second Woe is past"? H'19-332.

(357) Give a brief review of the fulfillment of the First and Second Woes, and indicate at about What point in history the Second Woe Trumpet or period came to an end, H'19-332.

(358) How are we to view the Third Woe or Seventh Trumpet, and what clear, logical statement does PASTOR RUSSELL make elucidating the matter of this Trumpet? H'19-332, 333.

(359) In connection with what great and important event does the Seventh Trumpet begin to sound? and what bearing does the Second Coming of Christ have upon the fulfillment of the Seventh Trumpet symbol? H'19-333.

(360) What are the signs and evidences of the, Master's knock (Rev. 3:20), and of the fact that the Seventh Trumpet symbol has already begun fulfillment? and what is the principal object in this connection of the time feature? H'19-333, 334.

WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

"HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD"

Dear Brethren in Christ:

We must apologize for being so late in forwarding our subscriptions' for another year. We just lost the last mail owing to illness, so you will receive this a month behind time, much to our regret. Please send the HERALD to the following, for which please find enclosed bank draft.

We have had an experience in Sydney since the Memorial Supper this year-that of "splitting things fine." The Class that formerly met at Enmore and which under the Lord's guidance joined up with the Sydney Class of members of the Bible Students -Union in 1918 are now meeting again as formerly and having a most blessed season of refreshment from the presence of the Lord and communion one with the other. (I John 1:7.) The keynote of every meeting is "holiness unto the Lord" -and we have indeed a soul-satisfying portion. . . . Each heart is overflowing with love, joy, peace, for which, with one heart and soul, we praise our dear Heavenly Father from whom cometh every good and perfect gift.

We much appreciate the HERALD with its timely exhortations and warnings, with reprints from our beloved Pastor and messages of love. The account of the British Convention caused our eyes to fill with sympathetic tears of joy while we felt it must have been good to be there. We daily pray for you, dear brethren, and we rejoice greatly at the remembrance of your faithfulness. May you be strong and very courageous right to the very end of the way. I will close with Christian love and greetings from Brother and Sister B. and myself.

Your sister by His grace,

E. M. B.-Aus.

THOU CROWNEST THE YEAR WITH THY GOODNESS

Dear Brethren:

Many thanks for your kind letter of December 31st. Am glad you see no significance in the new stairway in the Grand Gallery of the Pyramid. I was sure you would not and, feel sorry for others who are making the mistake of doing so. It really seems as though they were letting go of God's promises (ramp stones), and putting their dependence upon the works of man.

At prayer meeting last Wednesday evening when the text, "Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness," was considered, how true it seemed in the history of our little Class. After a year of turbulence, perplexity, indecision, at eventide it became light. At the close of the year, we found once more the liberty we had lost; and were rejoicing in the love, harmony and fellowship which, still draws together those who truly love the Lord and His service. . . . So truly the Father has crowned the year 1920 with His goodness and shown us that great and marvelous are His ways of leading His children.

I am sending a check for \$... for the following **HERALDS**: . . . I think this will just equip our little Class with enough copies of the Revelation Series which we are now studying with much pleasure and profit.

With Christian love and praying the Father's blessing upon you, I am,

Your sister in Christ,

MRS. N. H. B.-La.

The Herald of Christ's Kingdom

VOL. IV FEBRUARY 15, 1921 No. 4

THE MANY COLD--THE FEW FAITHFUL

"Because iniquity shall be multiplied the love of many shall wax cold."--Matt. 24:12. R. V.

IT IS evident that our Lord is not here speaking of the world, for the world does not have this love. It is the Church of whom Jesus is speaking; it is only the Church with whom God is now dealing. As new creatures, God's children have seen a great Light, Christ Jesus. Through this Light we have ourselves become illuminated, and we seek to let our light shine before men. We are not lighted candles to shed light upon others until we have become the Lord's, until we have received of His light.

Having been called with this heavenly calling, we can readily understand that God would not have us in this class unless we have the right spirit. The selection is not according to a whim of Divine preference. On the contrary, God chooses according to character, according to natural qualifications of honesty and the desire to be just, to be right, whatever may be -- the fleshly weaknesses. Justice is the very basis of God's Throne, the foundation of His government.

We are continually surrounded by the spirit of the world-hatred, envy, malice, strife. So we must keep very close to the Lord to counteract this spirit. The world and the things of the fallen nature are so close to us that we can with difficulty avoid being contaminated by them. One can hardly pass through a vile neighborhood without carrying away vile odors. But the Lord has furnished us with a most effective disinfectant in His Word. All the cleansing we need is derived from the Message which God has given us, with its explicit instructions. This wireless message from Him tells of His love for us, speaks peace through Jesus Christ our Lord, makes known to us our privilege of becoming heirs of God and joint-heirs with our Lord Jesus.

WORLDLINESS AMONG PROFESSED CHRISTIANS

Our Lord Jesus declared that at a certain time in the Gospel Age, and apparently pointing down to our day, "because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." The Revised Version given here is stronger than, our Common Version rendering. It is not only many who will grow cold, but *the* many, the majority, of professed followers of Christ. How truly the Master's words have been fulfilled! Iniquity is inequity, injustice, unrighteousness. Our text might properly read, "Because unrighteousness shall abound, the love of many shall grow cold." Today we are in the time against which the Lord sought to especially guard us. How few comparatively have heeded the warning!

The Church of Christ, the watching ones, are now in a particular time of waiting. Among many of the people of God love has waxed cold, because unrighteousness is abounding everywhere. Many today profess to believe things that they do not believe. Empty forms of godliness prevail. Love of pleasure is rampant. As a

result many professing to be brethren are lukewarm or Cold. Thus many are taking a very wavering course.

A Brother has just written to us as follows:

"It seems to be the thought of the friends that there is no further need to witness to the public; all that is needful is to come together and be edified which is all right in its place,--we must be built up in the 'most holy faith,' or we would not be fit for the Kingdom. But what I wish to know is, Has all opportunity for service ceased in a public witness? If it has, then what use is it to have high-priced halls to meet in when a brother or sister's home would answer the same purpose? If the work has stopped then we should have a reasonable proof of it, and if there is work to be done, then our minds should be disabused of the thought that we sit in our little canoe and drift with the tide. One Class which I have in mind has decreased in one year over 25 per cent in attendance, a very sleepy attitude to be in. It is hard for the few who are with them that are zealous, to keep from getting into the same spirit."

In reply to the above, it is not of course for us to say what others shall or shall not do. The matter of bearing testimony to the Truth, of declaring the Glad Tidings of the coming Kingdom is set forth in the Lord's Word as a privilege, and not as a command--in the language of the Master: "If any man will come after me." We know of nothing in the Scriptures or in the signs about us to lead us to conclude that the Master would have us relax our zeal in the service of the Truth or that we should cease heralding the Message of the approaching Kingdom of Heaven. Those who have been carefully reading the pages of this journal well know that we have constantly held forth that the commission to witness to the Truth is one that applies to the entire Church in the flesh. There is every evidence that there are those of this class still, in the days of their trial and sacrifice, and the privilege of all such is to continue to preach the Word. In fact, we believe that a healthy condition spiritually is dependent upon the maintaining of loving zeal toward the Lord and the Truth that would prompt one to make use of all opportunities in proclaiming the Divine Message. If St. Paul could say in the beginning of the Age "Woe is me if I preach not this Gospel," surely we who now live in such close proximity to the establishment of the Kingdom should realize equally the impetus to declare to all who have hearing ears the grandest of all messages, as saith the Prophet: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!"

Finally the One whom we are to please, the One with whom we have to do, the One whom we love above every human tie, is our Lord. We desire to do His will. As for the brethren, let us do the best we know how for them. Let heavenly wisdom be our guide. Let us faithfully follow Jesus in the Narrow Way, whatever others about us may do; and soon we shall hear His sweet "Well done!"

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

SERIES XLVII

THE JUDGMENT OF THE GREAT WHITE THRONE

"And I saw a great white Throne, and one Sitting on it, from - Whose Face the Earth and the Heaven fled away, and no Place was found. for them."--Rev. 20:11.

THAT the vision here recorded portrays the world's great judgment Day has never been questioned by any expositor of the Revelation. In the various interpretations that have been offered however, the fact has been generally lost sight of that it is a symbolic vision of the judgment Day and will of necessity, no matter how it may be interpreted, cover a considerable period of time. The general and incorrect thought concerning it is that the momentous transactions described in the vision will occupy only a brief period, some holding that they will all be over in one literal twenty-four hour day. This conception of the matter we cannot regard as either reasonable or Scriptural.

"The view generally entertained [respecting the judgment Day] is that Christ will come to earth, seated upon a great white throne, and that He will summon saint and sinner in rank and file before Him to be judged, amidst great convulsions of nature-earthquakes, opening graves, rending rocks and falling mountains; that the trembling sinners will be brought from the depths of everlasting woe to hear their sins rehearsed, only to be again returned to an. eternal and merciless doom; and that the saints will be brought from heaven to witness the misery and despair of the condemned, to hear again the decision in their own cases, and to return. According to the prevailing theory, all receive their sentence and reward at death; and this, which by way of distinction is commonly called the general judgment, is merely a repetition of that first judgment, but for no conceivable purpose, since they claim that a decision which is final and unalterable is rendered at death.

"The entire time supposed to be assigned to this stupendous work of judging billions is a twenty-four hour day, This is a very crude conception, and is entirely out of harmony with the inspired Word."--STUDIES, VOL. 1-137-138.

The failure to properly understand this vision of the judgment Day, we believe, comes from a misunderstanding of what the Scriptures teach on this subject, namely, that all mankind have been under the condemnation to death ever since the beginning of the execution of the sentence, "dying thou shalt die," on the occasion of the fall and the banishment of our first parents from the life-sustaining trees of Eden. (Gen. 3.) That sentence was not only to die, but to continue dead forever, unless the great Creator would make some arrangement to lift the penalty, and at some time exercise His Almighty power and release from death, awaken and restore man to life again. **The Scriptures** plainly teach that He has made such an arrangement. It was in connection with the carrying out of such a purpose or plan of release, of salvation, that the Son of God took upon Himself the form of a servant and was made flesh, a human being, and gave Himself, His flesh, His humanity, for the life of the world. This is all very briefly, yet pointedly stated in the words of St. Paul, "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels [a perfect human being, like Adam] for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor [of perfect manhood] ;that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man."--Heb. 2:9.

THE OBJECT OF THE JUDGMENT DAY

The only ones up to the present time released from that sentence are the Church class who have heard, understood, and exercised faith in the Son of God as both their Savior [Deliverer] and Lord. These have in the present life their trial, probation, judgment day, and will not enter into judgment with the world. (John 5:24, R. V.). The successful overcomers of this class will be associated with Christ in His divinely appointed work of judging the world. Concerning this class, the joint-heirs. with Him, Christ thus speaks: "And this is the will of Him that sent me that every one which seeth the Son and believeth on Him may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the [beginning of the] last day [the Millennial Day of Judgment]." This will be the First Resurrection. (Rev. 20:6.) The Savior continues in the same discourse to further inform His hearers that during that period, the rest of mankind will be raised: "Marvel not at this for the hour [season] is coming when all who are in the grave [death condition] shall hear His voice and come forth . . . they that have done evil to the resurrection of [by] judgment." (John 5:29. R. V.) This passage which contains "a precious promise for the world of a coming *judgment-trial* for life everlasting is, by a mistranslation, turned into a fearful imprecation. According to the Greek, they that have done evil-that have failed of .Divine approval-will come forth unto resurrection [raising up to perfection] by judgments, 'stripes,' disciplines. -- See the Revised Version."--STUDIES, VOL. 1-147.

Not seeing the nature of this "great white Throne" judgment Day, most all expositors have located it at the end of the thousand years. It is evidently the teaching of the Scriptures, however, that this vision is to meet its fulfillment during the thousand years in connection with the reign of Christ and His saints over the world. This is seen in the fact that the very first events that are described as occurring in connection with the placing of the great white Throne, is the passing away of the present symbolic heavens and earth. Bearing in mind that the "heaven and earth," mentioned in the vision as passing away, etc., are not the literal but the symbolical earth and heavens, enables us to locate the vision as beginning its fulfillment at the commencement of the thousand years.

THE PRESENT HEAVENS AND EARTH TO PASS AWAY -

Practically all of the Pre-Millennial expositors are agreed in regard to the "heaven and earth" being symbolical. One of these has thus expressed himself on this matter:

"*Aeons* [ages] end, times change, the fashion of the world passeth away, but there is no instance in all the Book of God which- assigns an absolute termination of the existence of the earth as one 'of the planets or any other of the great sisterhood of material orbs.

"So in those passages which speak of the passing away of the earth and heavens (see Matt. 5:18, 24, 34, 35; Mark 13: 30, 31; Luke 16:17, 21, 33; 2 Pet. 3:10; Rev. 21:1), the original word is never one which signifies termination of existence but a word, which is a verb of very wide and general meaning, such as to go or come to a person, place, or point; to pass as a man through a bath, or a ship through the sea; to pass from one place or condition to another, to arrive at, to go through . . . That it implies great changes when applied to the earth and heavens is very evident; but that it ever means annihilation or the passing_ of things out of being,

there is no clear instance in the Scriptures or in classic Greek to prove. The main idea is transition not extinction.

"Some texts, particularly as they appear in our English Bible, express this change very strongly, as where the earth and heavens are spoken of as perishing, being dissolved, flying away (Isa. 34:4; 54:10; Rev. 6:14; 20:11); but the connections show that the meaning is not cessation of being, but simply the termination or dissolution of the present condition of them, to give place to a new condition. At least one such perishing of the earth has already occurred. Peter, speaking of the earth and heavens in Noah's time, says: 'The world that then was being overflowed with water *perished*. (2 Pet. 3:5, 6.) But what was it that perished? Not the earth as a planet, certainly, but simply the mass of the people, and the condition of things which then existed, whilst the earth and race continued, and have continued until now.

"The dissolving of which Peter is made to speak, is really a deliverance rather than a destruction. The word he uses is the same which the Savior employs where He says of the colt, 'Loose him'; and of Lazarus when he came forth with his death-wrappings, 'Loose him, let him go'; and of the four angels bound at Euphrates, 'loose them'; and of the Devil, 'He must be loosed a little season.' It is the same word that John the Baptist used when he spoke of his unworthiness to unloose the Savior's shoestrings, and which Paul used when he spoke of being 'loosed from a wife.' It is simply absurd to attempt to build a doctrine of annihilation on, a word which admits of such applications. The teaching of the Scriptures is that the creation is at present in a state of captivity, tied down, bound, 'not willingly, but by reason of him who subjected the -same in hope'; and the dissolving of all these things, of which Peter speaks, is not the destruction of them, but the breaking of their bonds, the loosing of them, the setting of them free again, to become what they were originally meant to be, their deliverance. '(Compare Rom. 8:19-23.) And as to the flying or passing away, of which John [in the text under consideration] speaks, a total disappearance of all the material worlds from the universe is not at all the idea; for he tells us that he afterwards saw 'the sea giving up its dead, the New Jerusalem coming down 'out of the heaven,' the Tabernacle of God established among men, and ,nations' still living and being healed by the leaves of the Tree of Life.'--SEISS.

We submit other comments on this text that we consider clear and forceful so far as the significance of the heavens and earth are concerned:

"The fleeing away of heaven and earth described in Rev. 20: is described in Peter as their consumption by [symbolic] fire. Both descriptions include the passing away of the present corruptible state, and change to a state glorious and incorruptible." -ALFORD.

"That this is the case is clear from a careful study of the passage in the second epistle of Peter. The Apostle speaks here of three worlds. First: 'The heavens were made of old by the Word of God, and the earth also, which standeth out of the water and in the water; which things being so, the world that then was being overflowed with water was destroyed! What was destroyed? Not the globe or the sidereal heavens, but the world that then was the wicked anti-deluvian. society; the then existing state of things passed away, but the globe, the Solar system, and the sidereal heavens remained of course as they were. Secondly, to the world that

then was, he compares the heavens and earth that are now, or as Alford renders it, the new heavens and earth; that is the post-deluvian visible world; and of these he says that at the appearing [apocalypse] of the day of God, the thousand years of the Millennium, which is as one day with God, it is destined to be similarly purified, not with water, but with [symbolic] fire; and he adds thirdly, that we according to God's promise (alluding evidently to Isa. 65-17) look for a new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness."--H. G. GUINNESS.

Neither of these writers it seems to us, however, have explained fully or clearly the outcome of the passing away of the present heavens and earth and the ushering in of the new. DR. SEISS locates this great change as beginning at the close of the thousand years, instead of at their beginning. MR. GUINNESS, however, makes the new heavens and the new earth state to refer to both the one-thousand-year period and the eternal state which follows, but erroneously, we believe, applies the vision of Rev. 21:1 to begin after their close.

"WE LOOK FOR NEW HEAVENS AND EARTH"

PASTOR RUSSELL'S explanation, as we would suppose because of his having a clearer understanding of the Divine Plan of the Ages, and particularly of the nature and character of the great judgment Day, and of the symbolic language employed to describe the ushering in of the same, is clear and harmonious with all Scriptures. On no subject has he written more extensively. We will select a few of his utterances. Concerning the symbolical use of "earth," "heaven mountains," "11 seas," and "fire," all of which are used in the vision, he has said:

"Throughout the Scriptures, earth when used symbolically represents society; mountains represent kingdoms; heavens, the powers of spiritual control; seas, the restless, turbulent, dissatisfied masses of the world. Fire represents the destruction of whatever is burnedtares, dross, earth (social organization), or whatever it may be. And when brimstone is added to fire in the symbol, it intensifies the thought of destruction; for nothing is more deadly to all forms of life than the fumes of sulphur.

"With this thought in mind, if we turn to Peter's symbolic prophecy of the Day of Wrath, we find it in perfect accord with the testimony of the Prophets. He says: 'The world that was, being overflowed with water, perished. [Not the literal earth and literal heavens ceased' there, but that dispensation or arrangement of things, existing before the flood, passed away.] But the heavens and the earth which are now [the present dispensation] by the same word [of Divine authority] are kept in store, reserved unto fire! The fact that the water was literal leads some to believe that the fire also must be literal, but this by no means follows. The temple of God once was of literal stones, but that does not set aside the fact that the Church, which is the true temple, is built up a spiritual building, a holy temple, not of earthly material. Noah's ark was literal, too, but it typified Christ and the power in Him which will replenish and reorganize society.

"The Day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night [unobservedly], in the which the heavens [present powers of the air, of which Satan is the chief or prince] shall pass away with a great [hissing] noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth [social organization] also, and the works that are therein [pride, rank, aristocracy, royalty], shall be burned up. The heavens being

on fire shall be dissolved and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens [the new spiritual power-Christ's Kingdom] and a new earth' [earthly society organized on a new basis-on the basis of love and justice, rather than of might and oppression] --2 Pet. 3:6 7, 10-13."--STUDIES, VOL. 1-318, 319.

In referring to the vision under consideration in a special way, we have this explanation:

"Call to mind the definitions of the symbols, earth, heaven, and sea . . . ; you will find them of service here: heaven-spiritual control; earth- organized society; sea--the turbulent masses without religious restraint. From before, or at the presence of, this enthroned Christ, all forms of evil, oppression and injustice must flee-no place is found for them, indicating that they will be driven from one place after another, but can remain nowhere.

"Earth--society--as at present organized is a series of layers or strata, or classes, each holding its position by oppressing those below it. (This class oppression is less in degree, in this land than in any other; yet even here, social caste is easily discernible.) The lower classes' and 'upper crust' are recognizable in the entire social fabric; both in the nominal Church,- and in the world. The upper classes are usually proud and haughty -the meek are oftenest found in the under strata, among the oppressed. The present system of society will pass away--not be permitted anywhere, when the Throne of justice is established in the earth; and a new earth (system of society) will take its place: viz.: the recognition of merit, not of pride and power. Then, love to God and mankind will be the ruling principle. This change of (earthly) society begins immediately on the commencement of the dominion of Christ's Kingdom [over the world]. . . .

"But, not only does the present ('earth') society pass away, but also the present 'heavens' or spiritual powers of control. Satan is declared to be 'the prince of the power of the air' (heavens) who 'now worketh [operates or rules] in the children of disobedience! (Eph. 2:2.) This one called at present 'the prince of this world' (John 14:30), we have seen is to be bound; consequently his control, or spiritual power, now exercised in favor of evil doing, etc., will cease, or pass away.

The fact that the present 'earth' and 'heaven' are to be succeeded by, or give place to, a new 'earth' (society), and a 'new heaven' (new spiritual power of control, also unseen, good and not evil-of Christ and not of Satan), is not mentioned here, but is afterward." See Rev. 21: 1.--Z March '82-7, 8.

"THE THRONE OF HIS GLORY"

Concerning the "Throne" and its occupant, MR. BARNES has said: "The throne here is the same which is referred to in Matt. 25:37, and called there the 'Throne of His Glory.'" The occupant of the Throne he understands is the Lord Jesus Christ, "the final judge of mankind." Some commentators hold that it is God, the Father. PASTOR RUSSELL has thus expressed himself on this matter: "The one who sat in the Throne represents The Christ, primarily Jesus, the Head, but also the overcomers who sit with Him or share His glory and power (Rev. 3:21)--yet all one." "The Throne or Kingdom of Christ will be a pure--a righteous one, here symbolized by *white*, the symbol of peace and purity."--Z March '82-7, S.

Not a few Old Testament prophecies describe in strong symbolic language this passing away of the present arrangement or order, social, political and religious. In Isa. 24:1-3 we read, "Behold the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof,"--and that this does not refer to the literal earth will be seen from the words that follow: "And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him. The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the Lord hath spoken this word."

This symbolic statement of the Prophet is in full harmony with this one of St. John; the turning of the earth upside down evidently referring to the fact that a great revolution in the present order will take place, in which the proud and haughty, the "upper crust," will be debased, and the meek and humble will be lifted up. Another prophecy to the same effect is found in Isa. 40:4, in which is stated that "every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: the crooked [perverse] shall be made straight, and the rough places plain." This strong figurative language is only another way of describing the fact that society (earth) is to undergo a great change, be reconstructed on a basis in which equality of classes shall exist, and in which "individual merit will be recognized, blended with humility and benevolence."

In Isa. 24:17-20 we read of this same great revolution of the present order. The language is strongly figurative, and reads: "Fear, and the pit, and the snare, are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth. And it shall come to pass, that he who fleeth from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare: for the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake . . . The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again."

The earth in this prophecy means the present old social structure or order. It shall be removed as one would move a building to make way for the new building of God, the new earth, wherein righteousness and justice shall be the order. The 46th Psalm is another prophecy describing the same fleeing away of the present, old corrupt order. The new order will be the reign of Christ, the appointed judge of mankind, who shall judge the world in righteousness and the people with His truth. The vision of St. John presents a brief symbolical description of the various

features of that judgment Day, the most stupendous one of all being that of the awakening of all who have gone down into death under the sentence imposed upon father Adam.

"I SAW THE DEAD STAND BEFORE THE THRONE"

St. John's next words are: "And I saw the Dead, the Great and the Little, stand before the Throne; and Books were opened; and Another Book was opened, which is the book of Life; and the Dead were judged from the Things which had been Written in the Books, according to their Works. And the Sea gave up Those Dead which were in it; and Death and Hades gave up the Dead which were in them; and they were judged each one according to their Works."--Rev. 20:12, 13.

As introductory to an examination of these words, we would again remind the reader that in order to a full comprehension of their significance we must appreciate what may be properly termed one of the great fundamental truths of the Bible, viz.: that all mankind have all down the stream of time had resting upon them the sentence imposed upon our first parents, "dying thou shalt die" (the only exception being that since the Advent of Christ, consecrated believers have that condemnation lifted from them and are justified freely from all things) ; in other words, that in Adam, the human race originally had a representative trial for life and have been already judged as unworthy to live, and as previously stated, if they had been left in this condition, there would never have been an awakening from death. However, when we consider the plain and convincing statements of Scripture that teach that the ransom sacrifice of Christ is to fully offset the effects that the disobedience of Adam brought upon all men, this vision of the judgment or trial day of the world is seen to be a most wonderful blessing instead of a curse a blessing purchased for all by that sacrifice. "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living."--Rom. 14:9.

Let us note a few of the many Scriptures that have reference to what the sacrifice of Christ secured for every man, as well as assure us that a time has been appointed in the Divine Plan when all will be permitted to benefit by that sacrifice: "As through one man [Adam] sin entered into the world [in whom all sinned], and through sin, death; so also, death passed upon all men." (Rom. 5:12.) This Scripture teaches very plainly that the cause of sin in the world was Adam's disobedience, and that this one sin of Adam brought the sentence of death to all men.

Another Scripture that teaches the same, but in addition shows God's grace or favor to all through the Man, Christ Jesus, reads:

"But not as the fall, so is the gracious gift. For if by the fall of the one, the many died, much more the favor of God, even that gracious gift by the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to the many. And not as through one having sinned, is the free gift. For indeed the sentence was from one to condemnation; but the gracious gift is from many offences to righteousness. . . . Therefore, indeed, as through one offence, sentence came on all men to condemnation; so also, through one righteous act, sentence came on all men to justification of life. For as through the disobedience of one man, the many were constituted sinners, so even through the obedience of the one, the many will be constituted righteous."--Rom. 5:15-19.

THE RANSOM SACRIFICE BASIS OF WORLD'S HOPE

These Scriptures very clearly teach that the ransom sacrifice of the Man Jesus, fully offsets what the disobedience of Adam brought upon all men. The elect Church, the called out ones, receive the full benefit of that sacrifice in the present life, as by faith they receive Christ as their Savior and yield their wills to follow in His footsteps unto death. That all mankind are at some time to receive the benefit of that sacrifice is taught in some Scriptures; and in full agreement with the entire testimony of the Bible. St. Paul declared, "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels ["made flesh," a man] for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor [of perfect manhood] ; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man." (Heb. 2:9.) And again we read, that "He gave Himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time." (1 Tim. 2:6.) If we would inquire, When is the due time for all who have not in the present life had this testimony? we answer in the language of the Apostle Paul: "For God hath appointed a day [1000 years in length], in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance to all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead."--Acts 17:31.

In the light therefore of the united testimony of the Scriptures all the various features mentioned in this great white Throne judgment are readily comprehended. In other words, a knowledge and an understanding of God's dealing in the Ages that precede the reign of Christ becomes the means by which we are permitted to unlock the secrets of the Divine Plan respecting this thousand years, and makes the words of St. Peter shine out in clearness, that "one day, with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. (2 Pet, 3:8.) To such as have grasped this knowledge of the far reaching effects of the ransom sacrifice of the Man Christ Jesus, the expositions of this vision offered by many of the commentators are entirely unreasonable and inadequate, and come far short of the Scriptural ideal. These explanations ignore entirely the plain Scripture statements that Christ's sacrifice secured for all a release from Adamic condemnation. The great masses of mankind who have never even heard of Christ, have according to these expositors no part or benefit in His sacrifice. One of these commentators has thus explained the vision:

"The earth and heaven are here said to flee from the face of the judge, the locality, therefore, appears to be some point in space apart from our globe . . . All subjects of this judgment are raised from the dead for this purpose . . . The sea, death, *hades*, deliver up their dead, thus defining the fact of the body, though mortal and corrupt, having in it the seed of the resurrection body, and the spirit, though separate for a time, re-united to the body of shame and death."

Referring to the "books" that were opened, this writer says:

"A special carefulness is manifest in this scrutiny, the most solemn and awful ever witnessed in the universe . . . Such painstaking accuracy can never be questioned throughout eternity. Never will there be found a mistake in the books of God. The sentence marks this as a distinct and final judgment. There is no arraignment and no pleading. It is in fact an execution of the sentence before declared [at death] but now made public in presence of the whole universe. The confessions of the guilty by their speechlessness when confronted with all their misdeeds-not one

forgotten--will be the most eloquent though silent vindication of the purity and holiness and eternal justice of God."

The punishment administered is stated to be to suffer the vengeance of eternal fire, which the writer explains to be eternal torment. He further goes on to say that the reason for this is because they were not among those who were foreordained to be saved from before the foundation of the world. His words to this effect are: "The book of life containing the names of all given in covenant before the foundation of the world, and therefore called the 'Lamb's book of life,' is searched for the name of every one condemned by his works to see if by any possibility that account can be found."

He adds that none were found. What a vast difference between this expositor's view and the Scriptural hope held out for all the dead, whose redemption has been arranged for in the death of the Son of God. Yet the interpretation presented foregoing is a sample of nearly all who have attempted to expound this vision. It is a most remarkable illustration of the effects that Satan's lie, "Thou shalt not surely die," has had upon the reasoning faculties of the human mind! A search through all the writings of commentators for twelve centuries will discover none that is wholly reasonable and Scriptural. Some of these that we have quoted from in these series of articles evidently have seen the unreasonableness of their conclusions and, not seeing clearly the Plan of the Ages, have been compelled to remain silent making no attempt at an interpretation.

THE HOPE OF THE DEAD

In great contrast with others is the exposition of this vision, so clearly, logically, as well as Scripturally, presented by PASTOR RUSSELL. One of his most luminous statements is found in his early writings and is in perfect harmony with all written by him since. The quotation we now submit deals with the question as to who are meant by the "dead" referred to as standing before the "Throne":

"'The dead' includes all of the Adamic race who during this Gospel Age do not escape from the condemnation that is on the world--death--by becoming partakers of spiritual life through Jesus. 'By the offense of one [Adam] judgment came upon all men to condemnation,' but there is 'now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus'; for the law of life in Christ made such free from the condemnation of death. -- Rom. 5: 18; 8:1, 2.

"As during this Age a little fragment of humanity escapes condemnation (death), by obtaining spiritual life offered on certain conditions, so we understand the world are to be privileged to escape from the death condemnation, by obedience to certain laws of natural life. Their right to this privilege of running [having a trial] for life comes as a consequence of Jesus having ransomed them." ["He gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." I Tim. 2:6.]--Z March '82-8.

We next inquire, Where will these awakened dead ones be standing? The answer is, there will be no literal standing in empty space before a literal throne as would have to be if the literal earth and heaven had fled away. The Scriptural answer as given by PASTOR RUSSELL is "That this will not be a marshaling of mankind in ranks, and rows, before a literal judgment bench. . . . We believe that the world of mankind, during their day (age) for trial of worthiness or unworthiness of perfect human life, will be tried in a similar way to that in which certain ones are now

being tried and tested in this day (Gospel Age) to prove whether worthy or unworthy of the perfection of the Divine nature."--Z March '82-8.

The enlightened ones, the Church class are now having their judgment-trial. They do not stand before a literal, visible throne of judgment. It is a real judgment-trial, notwithstanding; and thus will it be with the world in its judgment Day. Concerning the world's judgment Day, the ancient Prophet informs us that during its progress "they shall build houses and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat," etc.--Isa. 65:21, 22.

"AND THE BOOKS WERE OPENED"

The books referred to in the vision are not literal books containing a literal record of every evil or good thought, word or deed of each individual of the human race, nor that such books will be carefully inspected that each person may be judged according to the standard of perfection. If such were the program for judging the world then of course none would possibly be found perfect, all would be consigned to eternal punishment which as most commentators have taught means endless torment in a vast torture-chamber. Surely such an interpretation of St. John's vision misrepresents both God's character and plan. What a dreadful punishment would, if this were true, come to these who thus misrepresent Him! We are glad to know that this is not true, for their sakes, as well as for the sake of the whole of Adam's condemned race. What then do we understand is represented by the "books"? How shall we know? We reply that Christ gives a hint at least concerning what is meant by the books: "The words that I speak unto you, the same shall judge him at the last [thousand-year] day." These books then are God's Word, and all contained in it necessary for the world to know of God's great Plan will be opened to the understanding of all who will be there. Indeed a perfectly clear understanding of the 'great Plan of human salvation will then for the first time be given to all mankind. A sufficient knowledge of the matters contained in the different books of the Bible is now, and has been throughout this Gospel Age, in possession of the Church class to enable them to finish successfully their trial for a heavenly inheritance. This class includes all that have been on trial in this Age. *PASTOR RUSSELL* has thus spoken concerning what is represented by these books:

"The books opened, according to the rulings of which they [the world] will be tried, we understand to be the books of the Bible. The Church, now on trial, is being judged according to these same books-and none now are on trial, to whom those books are not to some degree opened (understood). This too, accords with Jesus' words: 'My words shall judge you in the last day' (period)--the Millennial Day.-John 12:48

"The words of Jesus will no longer be hidden under parables and dark sayings, that hearing the people might hear and not understand; but the secret things will be uncovered. 'The mystery of God'--the Church -being finished, the books will be opened, and the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth. For God 'will have all men to be saved [redeemed], and [then] to come unto the knowledge of the Truth.'--1 Tim. 2:4."--Z March '82-8.

"AND THE SEA GAVE UP THE DEAD"

The words of the vision show that the dead of every generation, of every clime and country, no matter how or when they met their death will be awakened before that thousand-year day is over. The Scriptures in referring to this awakening imply that they will come forth, not all at the same time, but in companies or bands.

On the statement, "And the Sea gave up Those Dead which were in it," PASTOR RUSSELL very truly says: "The succeeding verse is in harmony, and says that 'the sea [masses of mankind not under religious restraint] delivered up the dead which were in it;' i. e., mankind will be taken out of that condition, and brought under the restraints of the great white Throne. Consequently, when all are restrained there will be 'no more sea' see Jude 13; Jas. 1:6.--'And death and the tomb delivered up the dead which were in them, and they were judged every man according to their works.' (During that Age or Day.)"--Z March '82-8.

Concerning some of the features of the judgment assize, we have these words:

"The Greek word here rendered judged has the significance of tried or tested. Paul's use of the same word will prove this. We here give a quotation in which he uses the same word (*krino*) three times: We italicize the words translated from this Greek word. 'Dare any of you, having a matter against another, (1) go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do ye not know that the saints (2) shall judge the world? and if the world (3) shall *be judged* by you, are ye un worthy to judge the smallest matters?'--1 Cor. 6: 1, 2.

"Here Paul refers to the coming trial of the world when the overcomers of the present trial, shall be their judges-judges, who like their Head, Jesus, will not only be able to assist the world as the kings, but also to sympathize with them-having been themselves tempted in all points. . . .

"This trial includes all the world (but [of course] not the saints-John 5:24), and is indeed the grand prospect held out before them. By means of that trial, the entire groaning creation, may be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty (freedom from death) of the sons of God."--Z March '82-8.

WHATSOEVER A MAN SOWETH THAT SHALL HE ALSO REAP

Concerning how the present conduct, deeds, etc., evil or good, will effect the world in that trial day, the Scriptures are clear. The principles that will be in operation at that time are embodied in the words of Christ, to those who dwelt in the cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum: "Then He began to censure the cities in which most of His miracles had been performed, because they did not reform. Woe to thee Chorazin! woe to thee, Bethsaida! For if those miracles which are being performed in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would long since have reformed in sackcloth and ashes. Therefore, I say to you, it will be more endurable for Tyre and Sidon, in a Day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, thou which art being exalted to heaven [in privilege] wilt be brought down to hades; for if those miracles which are being performed in thee, had been done in Sodom, it had remained till this day. But I say to you, that it will be more endurable for the land [people] of Sodom, in a. Day of judgment, than for thee." -- Matt. 11:20-24.

We learn from these words of our Savior that those who have opportunities now and neglect them will need and receive the severer chastenings in that thousand-year trial day. We can see that in that day the punishments will be in proportion to past guilt, but will be for correction. The following we believe is well stated:

"Every sin indulged in now, every evil propensity cultivated, hardens the heart, and will make the way back to purity and virtue at that time more difficult. On this account sins willfully indulged in now will require punishment in that trial day of the world; and the more deeply a person is dyed in willful sin now, the more severe will be the measures required on the part of the great judge to correct them.

"These punishments, however, will be corrective and will be designed for their discipline, even as the chastenings of God to those now on trial to be His sons, are for their correction and, development in holiness.

"God's punishments at that time will always be administered in justice, tempered with mercy and they will be relieved by His approval and reward to those who are exercised aright by them. And it will only be when punishments, instructions and encouragements fail; in short when God's mercy and love have done all that His wisdom will approve (and who could ask more than this) that any in that great day will meet the final capital punishment that his case demands-the Second Death.

"The character of the judge [Christ] who will superintend the judgment or trial of the world assures us of a just and righteous judgment."

A THRONE OF GRACE AND JUSTICE

Two of God's great attributes (mercy and justice) as related to His dealing with mankind, operated when he originally formed the Plan of redemption and will continue to be exercised unto its completion. God's mercy is infinitely greater than men's conception of it, at his very best. Mercy is defined as that benevolence, mildness or tenderness of heart which disposes a person to overlook injuries or to treat an offender better than he deserves. It is the disposition that tempers justice, and induces an injured person to forgive trespasses and injuries, and to forbear punishment or to inflict less than the law or justice will warrant. Mercy is a distinguishing attribute of the Supreme Being.

Judgment is defined as "the final trial of the human race, when God will decide the fate of every individual, and award sentence according to justice." It is impossible to have a clear conception of God's mercy without viewing it in its association with His justice or judgments in connection with His great Plan. A clear recognition of these two attributes-justice and mercy -is of very great importance in all attempts to delineate the Divine character as revealed in the Divine Purpose. The Scribes and Pharisees, the religious teachers of our Lord's day, were very deficient in this respect, and received the rebuke of Christ , for their perversion and neglect of these in their teachings. -- See Matt. 23:23.

When considering any unfolding of the Divine Plan of salvation we may detect its perverseness or defectiveness by its neglect or distortion of God's attributes. How clearly can it be seen from this standpoint that the human family (with but few exceptions) have not been dealt with by God with the object in view of their learning righteousness, or the completion or establishment of character at death!

God's mercy is shown in the sentence upon Adam in permitting that sentence to be executed gradually. God's past judgments, where they have resulted in the destruction of human life, have been simply the execution of the one original sentence passed upon all in Eden. Where His judgments have been otherwise, they have had for their object the correction of man for His good; and these have had to do especially with His own people, as illustrated in the captivities in the days of the Judges of ancient Babylon and in the present dispersion of Israel. God's mercy, as well as judgment, is seen in its deepest sense in providing a ransom price to release all from the death penalty for the purpose of carrying out that feature of the Divine Plan of giving every creature of Adam's race a full, fair trial to obtain everlasting life; or in other words, His arrangement for a judgment Day. This judgment Day will afford an opportunity for human beings of every class, clime and condition, even those who have been given up as hopeless cases by present reformers and reform institutions, to become righteous and obtain life everlasting. All these will be especially dealt with by God and His infinite wisdom and discernment will enable Him, through Christ, to administer judgment and mercy for the development of righteous characters.

"ANOTHER BOOK OF LIFE"

What is the book of life? Concerning the book of life which is said to be opened we have this most reasonable explanation:

"Another book of life, was opened. This suggests to us that as there is a book (record) of life, in which the names of all in the Gospel Age overcomers are recorded who are worthy of Divine life, so there will be a book or record kept in the next Age of those worthy of perfect human life. The book of life now about finished will not be opened-the 'results or record will not be known until the full end of this Age; then we will see those deemed worthy to be of the Bride, the Lamb's Wife; so too, the records of the next Age will not be opened until the end of that Age, when those worthy of receiving back the dominion of earth, lost by Adam, will receive it.

"Another feature of difference between the world's judgment of that Age and ours of this, is that though they will be required to have faith, yet their trial will be based on works -- 'judged according to their works.' We, on the contrary, live in an Age when perfect works are impossible, and our judgment depends largely on faith: According to thy faith be it unto thee, and works only according to ability.

"In the end of that Age of trial, death and the tomb, and all not found written in their book of life, will be cast into the lake of fire-already described as representing wrath and destruction. That the lake of fire is symbolic, is readily seen, because death and the tomb are represented as going into the same-the tomb will be -no more, and the Adamic death will be no more. (Isa. 25:7, 8.) All men who are then judged unworthy of life, die; but it is the Second Death, and is attributable to willful sin on their own part, for the Adamic death and all its results will have been destroyed."--Z March '82-8.

"O hail, happy day!" Is it any wonder that the Psalmist by inspiration calls upon all animate and inanimate nature to rejoice before the Lord, "for He cometh to judge the earth; for He will judge the world in righteousness and the people with His Truth." -- Psalm 98.

JESUS AMONG HIS FRIENDS

--MARCH 6--MATTHEW 26:1-13--

Golden Text.--"She hath done what she could."--Mark 14:8.

HIS study turns us back from the discourse of the Tuesday preceding our Lord's death -- the close of the Jewish Sabbath day. In harmony with the prevailing custom, Jesus and His disciples and others were invited to a feast that evening. They had just arrived the previous evening from Jericho as intent upon keeping the feast of Passover at Jerusalem--the feast of which our Lord Jesus said, "With desire have I desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer." -Luke 22:15.

Our lesson opens with the words, "When Jesus had finished all these words"-, His last teachings in Jerusalem and the Temple included in Matthew 21-25. Although Jesus had been telling the Apostles that He was going to Jerusalem and would there be crucified, they seemed not to realize the matter, probably because He had spoken so many things to them in dark sayings, as, for instance, when He told them that He was the bread that came down from heaven, etc., and that they must eat His flesh and drink His blood. Perhaps the crucifixion suggested was also hyperbolic language; at least they could not realize that it would be so, even though Peter had been reprov'd for his disbelief in the matter.

The feast was in the house of Simon the leper. Simon was a common name in those parts at that time, and this Simon was distinguished by the fact that he had been a leper--quite possibly he had been healed by the Lord, and this may have been the beginning of the intimate acquaintance between Jesus and the family of which Lazarus, Martha and Mary were prominent members. One of the Evangelists tells us that Lazarus was one of those who sat at the feast, that Martha was one of those who served, and the lesson before us tells especially of the work of Mary, who, while the Lord was reclining, approached and broke the seal of an alabaster box of precious perfume (not ointment, in the present use of the word). One of the accounts says that it was very precious, another that it was worth 300 pence, which in our money would be about fifty dollars.

Such anointings were very rare, usually for kings or princes or nobles; and the disciples, under the lead of Judas, who seems to have been the spokesman (see John's account), were all filled with indignation at the waste. John tells us that Judas was a thief, who carried the bag, the treasurer of the company, and that his solicitous remarks respecting the use of the money for the poor were hypocritical. In any event we may sympathize with the other Apostles for falling in line with his arguments, for they were all poor men, unused to such luxury and extravagance, and in this respect probably represented the majority of the Lord's people to-day, who likewise would consider a perfume bill of fifty dollars a very extravagant waste of money. We are all the more interested to know how Jesus Himself regarded the matter. We realize that our conceptions of matters of this kind are more or less biased by our own selfishness or poverty and necessity for economy.

"WHY TROUBLE YE THE WOMAN?"

Our Lord discerned at once the criticizing, fault-finding spirit amongst His disciples and promptly took the part of Mary, saying, "Why trouble ye the woman? For she hath wrought a good work upon me." Woman's intuition had guided Mary in the doing of the proper thing at the proper time. She realized that she owed the Master a debt that she never could pay, and that this costly offering of the perfume would be but a small -tribute,. a small expression of her gratitude. She had found in the Lord an object worthy of her heart devotion; she was not a woman's rights advocate; she found no fault with the Lord that He had not chosen her and Martha to be members of the company of Apostles and to go abroad preaching His name and fame. Doubtless she would have gladly undertaken this work had she been so directed, but her womanly instincts did not lead her in this direction nor cause her to take offense at the Lord's showing a difference between the male and the female as respects the promulgation of His Message.

Although debarred from the honorable service of a public ministry of the Truth, our Lord declared, "She hath done what she could." She did what pleased the Lord; she illustrated the noblest and truest qualities of the feminine heart, love, devotion, fidelity; she spoke by actions rather than by words, and the perfume of her acts of love and kindness and adoration of her Lord have come down through the ages, filling the entire Church of Christ with the sweet odor of the perfume she poured upon His head and subsequently upon His feet. This is in accord with what our Lord propheticly declared respecting the act, "Verily I say unto you, wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there also this that this woman hath done shall be told for a memorial of her."

What a sweet memorial of Mary! The bright episode of Mary's gift of love is set in a dark framework of hatred and falseness. What a contrast between Mary's beautiful sacrifice and the plotting of the Jewish rulers, the treachery of the trusted disciple! How we all love and reverence her true womanhood, and appreciate the fact that her intuitions in respect to this anointing of the Lord were superior to the reasonings of the twelve Apostles on the subject- they were too cold and calculating, too business like. She made up for this deficiency in the warmth of her loving devotion. Undoubtedly woman has filled profitably just such a niche as this in the Church's history during all the centuries from then until now. Without her part undoubtedly the religion of Jesus would have been much more cold and business like and formal than it is; but the broad, deep sympathy of true womanhood has helped to interpret the heart of Christ, the love of Christ, and has proven a blessing to all of the followers of the Lamb.

"THE POOR YE HAVE ALWAYS"

It is a miscalculation to suppose that the moments spent in communion with the Lord, in the study of His Plan, and the dollars and hours spent in His service, in the promulgation of His Truth, are wasted, and that thus the poor have less. On the contrary, in proportion as any one has true, loving devotion to the Lord, He will have devotion to His service and to the poor. No one can love the Lord in sincerity without being the more sympathetic and the more generous proportionately to the poor and to all within the reach of His benevolence. As the Scriptures admonish us, "There is that scattereth, And yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty--to want-to poverty of soul as well as poverty of purse. (Prov. 11:24.) The Lord's followers are to be

prudent, economical but not parsimonious, not miserly, not stingy, not hoarders of wealth. They are to cast their bread upon the waters; they are to do good and trust to the Lord for the results; they are to use freely the riches of the Lord as entrusted to them, both 'temporally and spiritually, and are to receive their blessing from the exercise or increment of these.

This very act on the part of the devoted Mary and our Lord's commendation of it have doubtless been helpful to the Lord's people along these very lines throughout this Gospel Age. Similarly some have been inclined to consider the gatherings and conventions of the Lord's people and the putting out of free literature to be entirely too expensive, to represent a waste of money that might have been used otherwise; but our experience is that there is a blessing in the using of the money talent-that whoever fails to do some investing, some sacrificing in the interest of the Truth, will surely fail to get the large returns of spiritual blessing. Whoever on the contrary seeks to use his means in serving the Truth to others and in nourishing his own heart receives proportionately the greater blessing. We are even inclined to think that the Lord makes up to them in temporal matters also; but should this not be the case-should they be the poorer in temporal matters as a result of their spiritual feasting-we know that spiritual nourishment, fatness of soul, prosperity as New Creatures in Christ, is by far the most important matter with which we have to do. It is the very object of our present membership in the school of Christ, association with the fellow-members, that we may grow in this very grace, as well as in knowledge and love, in the Master's likeness.

ANOINTED FOR HIS BURIAL

Our Lord declared that Mary's action was a preparation for His burial. We remember that several of the honorable women of the Lord's company came to the tomb early on the first day of the week with spices and ointment, perfume, for His anointing, after the custom of the time, and because they failed to remember and recognize His prophecy of His resurrection from the dead on the third day. Their motive in thus going was undoubtedly a proper one, and yet Mary's conduct in anointing our Lord before His burial was very much more to the point, very much more appreciated by Him. And so it is with us: with our dear friends, the brethren and others. It behooves us to anoint them with kindly words, loving sympathies, tender expressions, while they are still in the valley of conflict, before they have reached the end of the journey. We know not how much even the very strongest of the Lord's followers may need a word of sympathy and encouragement at times, and we do our own hearts good when we tender such sympathy.

We do not mean that fulsome flattery should be poured upon one another; but there is a wide difference between flattery and encouraging, sympathetic words; and who is there of sympathetic heart, possessing a heart filled with the love Divine, that is not himself an alabaster box of perfume, which should be opened and poured upon the spiritual brotherhood and all of our earthly friends and relatives as we might come in contact with them, and in proportion as the blessing of the Lord would be appropriately theirs. Let us not forget this; let us use these opportunities which are ours day by day of scattering flowers in life's pathway for others, and perhaps as we do this the Lord will allow some one to scatter some flowers also for us. On the principle that he who watereth others shall himself be

watered, he who helps others should never go hungry, he who comforts others should never lack comfort.

Doubtless the Lord will see to it that in proportion as we have and exercise the proper spirit of benevolence and generosity toward others, we will have our share of rich blessings in return when most needed.

"OF THE PEOPLE THERE WERE NONE WITH HIM" -- ABLE TO SYMPATHIZE FULLY

Very evidently at the close of His ministry our Lord was feeling more or less of disappointment that a larger number of the Jews had not received His gracious Message, had not believed on Him. Especially would this thought come to Him as He read in the mind of Judas that he already was planning to be His betrayer. Moreover, He saw something of the same spirit of fear in the other eleven of His Apostles, for He already knew who should betray Him, and knew also that the others would forsake Him and flee in fear in the hour of His distress. If His Message, if His Love, if His Spirit communicated to these men would still leave them so weak in many respects, it argued that He had accomplished comparatively little in His ministry, and that the other five hundred brethren might not be more devoted than the twelve.

What a comfort it must have been to the Lord in the midst of these thoughts to find that there was one loving soul which did appreciate Him and brought the alabaster box and anointed Him before His burial. Mary's act of deep devotion to the Master upon this, occasion has been beautifully called "a lyric prelude to the tragedy of Calvary." The joy, the comfort, the blessing that came to the heart of our dear Master, and that strengthened Him for the experiences of coming days, was worth far more than the 300 pence. Not only was He willing that the matter should be told for a memorial of Mary, but we may safely conclude that in the everlasting future Mary will be ranked very high amongst the faithful followers of the Lord. She may not be one with the Apostles upon the twelve thrones of Israel, but we may be sure that she will have some grand, some honorable place near to the one she loved and for whom she showed her devotion.

An unknown writer says, "Do not keep the alabaster boxes of your love and tenderness sealed up until your friends are dead. Fill their lives with sweetness. Speak approving, cheering words while their ears can hear them and while their hearts can be thrilled and made happier by them; the kind things you mean to say when they are gone, say before they go. The flowers you mean to send for their coffins, send to brighten and sweeten their homes before they leave them. If my friends have alabaster boxes laid away, full of fragrant perfumes of sympathy and affection, which they intend to break over my dead body, I would rather they would bring them out in my weary and troubled hours and open them, that I may be refreshed and cheered by them while I need them. I would rather have a plain coffin without a flower, a funeral without a eulogy, than a life without the sweetness of love and' .sympathy. Let us learn to anoint our friends beforehand for their burial. Post-mortem kindness does not cheer the burdened spirit. Flowers on the coffin cast no fragrance backward over the weary way."

SELFISHNESS VERSUS GENEROSITY

Our lesson concludes with the account of how Judas soon afterwards went to the chief priests and bargained with them that for thirty pieces of silver he would seek an opportunity and betray Jesus into their hands. What a sharp contrast is here drawn between the love and generosity of Mary and the mean selfishness of Judas! The one was so full of love that she could not do enough for the great Teacher at whose feet she loved, to sit, from whose lips she had received so many blessings, such joy of heart, and by whose power her brother had been recalled from the tomb and probably previously her father healed of a loathsome disease. We also should remember how much we owe this same Teacher, that His are the wonderful words of life which have brought unto our hearts joy, peace and blessing. By His words we ourselves have been called from the dead condition, for, as the Apostle declares, we were once dead in trespasses and sins, but now are quickened, energized by the spirit of the Lord, by the spirit of love.

We ourselves also had the leprosy of sin, condemnation, were children of wrath even as others, but our sins have been graciously covered by the Redeemer, the leprosy has been cleansed, and we have been made whiter than snow in the sight of our Lord through faith in the precious blood. We, too, have learned to sit at the Master's feet and to enjoy His teachings, and have been transformed thereby by the renewing of our minds. Is it not appropriate that we should feel that no offering we could bring Him could in any sense or degree express the gratitude of our hearts? Can we not also find alabaster boxes of precious perfume for the Master? True, the Head has been glorified, and the members of the Body, too, will soon have passed beyond the veil; but His "feet" are still with us; the last members of the Body of Christ are here. Let us hasten to do all in our power, both temporally and spiritually, for the feet of Christ; let us do all in our power to cleanse them from earth defilement, even though it cost us tears; let us anoint them with the precious spikenard perfume. The more costly the affection and love that we bestow upon the members of the Body of Christ, the very lowest and humblest of them, the better; all should be but an expression of the warmth of love which is in our hearts for Him and His. The time is passing rapidly-soon the last members will have crossed and be beyond the veil, beyond our anointing and beyond the blessed word, "She hath done what she could." Let us earn that expression from the dear lips of our Lord by faithfulness to those who now represent Him in the world-to the household of faith, to the members of the Body of Christ.

The following lines do. indeed breathe a wholesome admonition:

"Be kingly prodigal of time, for use
In God's sweet service. 'Tis a jealous cruse
That holds thy life from love's anointing wide.
Shatter it grandly. See! an eager tide
Of fragrant and of healing ministries
Wrought on the Lord if on 'the least of these'?
And see! the ragged edge, the flakes fallen down,
Form, at His word, thine alabaster crown!"

FOR THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER

Selfishness seems to lie at the very foundation of all the mean, ignoble deeds of our fallen nature. It was selfish ambition that led mother Eve to grasp the forbidden fruit, and it is safe to say that selfishness ever since has prompted to all the mean and ignoble things of the six thousand years' reign of sin and death. The spirit of a sound mind is what we should each and all strive for. This would mean, on the one hand, that we should not be too extravagant, and, on the other hand, that we should not be too parsimonious. But if we should err on either side would it not be safest and best that we should err on the side of too great generosity rather than on the reverse? Well did the Apostle write that the love of wealth is the root of all evil. - This might include not only money but wealth of honor, name, influence or power. The Apostle adds, "which some coveting after have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."--1 Tim. 6: 10.

As an illustration of this class take the case of Judas in our lesson, selling His Master for thirty pieces of silver! No matter if he did reason that Jesus had said that he was about to die, and said that this perfume was associated with his burial. No matter if Judas was sure that all these things would happen to the Lord anyway, and thought that he might just as well have the thirty pieces of silver. It did not condone the offense. Selfishness and meanness had so far been encouraged in his heart that, notwithstanding his intimate association with the Master, his knowledge of His precious words and mighty acts, neither love nor reverence stood in the way of selfishness.

Judas "went to his own place," the Second Death, and that with a realization that it would have been better for him had he never been born. Whoever will allow selfish ambitions of any kind to have control in his heart, whoever will not allow the Lord's grace and truth to come into his heart and enlarge it and fill it with love, will likewise go to his own place, the Second Death. The Divine provisions are only for those who Will eventually be filled with love, the spirit of God, the spirit of generosity. Let us all then more and more avoid the Judas spirit, the heart of selfishness, money love, self love and ambition, and let us more and more have the loving heart of Mary and her humility, which not only made her willing to spend her means to serve the truth, but made her willing also to humble herself even to the extent of tears and the use of woman's highest ornament, her hair, in the service of her Master, her Lord, and that upon His humblest members, the feet of Him.

TOLD FOR A MEMORIAL OF HER

"It was her best, and yet how poor
That cruse of spikenard sweet and rare!
She entered in at Simon's door
With trembling, though familiar there.

"What could she give to Him whose call
Had brought her brother back from death

It was her best, yet poor and small
For Him, the Lord of pulse and breath!

"He took the fragrant gift: a wreath
Of praise He twined about her name.
It lit for Him the cave of death:
'Against my burial she came!'"

-George Thomas Coster.

THE LORD'S SUPPER

--MARCH 13--MATT. 26:14-30--

Golden Text.--"As often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till He come."--1 Cor. 11:26.

THE subject of the Passover Supper has been chosen for March 13 by the committee who prepares the International Sunday School Lessons, although this date is by no means the anniversary of the Lord's Supper this year. However, as the anniversary of our Lord's death is not far beyond March 13, we will present in this lesson the regular review of this all-important event.

Having on previous occasions* gone into the details as to how the 'Passover anniversary date is ascertained, we will not in this discussion enter particularly into that phase of the subject except to briefly remark that the month Nisan, on the 14th of which the Passover Supper is observed, commences with the first new moon following the Spring Equinox. This year, April 8, marks Nisan 1, and 14 days subsequent brings us to April 22 as the 14th of Nisan, which, according to Jewish reckoning, would begin on the evening of April 21 after sundown. Accordingly, this year the evening of April 21, marks the anniversary of the time when Jesus with His disciples gathered in the upper room to partake of the Passover Supper, after which He passed the emblems to His followers and said: "This do in remembrance of me."

*See '19 67 72 -1 '20 83 86 See also Vol VI – 457-484

While holding, in common with the great majority, that the Memorial Supper was instituted by our Lord on Thursday night in connection with His last celebration of the Passover, and that He was crucified on the next day, Friday, we have no contention with those who suppose that these events took place on other days of the week. We lay great stress on the fact there accomplished and its significance as the antitype of the Passover instituted by Moses, and as the finishing of our Lord's great sacrifice for sins—the sins of the whole world. For these vital principles we are willing to contend earnestly, as they are part of "the faith once delivered to the saints-," but as respects the particular days of the week we will not contend, as in our estimation they are trifling matters, of no value, no consequence, and should therefore in no sense of the word disturb the minds or heart-fellowship of the Lord's people.

Our lesson opens with our Lord's instructions to His disciples as to where they should prepare for Him and themselves, as a special and peculiar Jewish family, a place in which to celebrate the requirements of the Law in the type which pointed to our Lord Jesus as the Lamb of God. Respecting this supper our Lord Himself said, "With desire have I desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer." He did not refer to the principal- feast, which lasted a week from the 15th day of Nisan. He was referring to the roast-lamb supper, eaten with bitter herbs, which preceded the general feast, and which reminded them of their deliverance from Egypt, and became the basis of their subsequent rejoicing as a liberated people. The upper room was provided for this supper. Things were made ready, and at even, at sundown, after six o'clock, our Lord and the twelve assembled. One of the accounts tells us that there was a dispute amongst the disciples respecting the more honorable positions at the supper, and that Jesus rebuked this ambition!; spirit in them by washing their feet, thus illustrating His own humility of heart, His readiness to serve each and all of them. Thus He set them an example that He, whom they esteemed greatest amongst them, should be their principal servant, willing and ready to serve any and all.

"ONE OF YOU SHALL BETRAY ME"

While they were eating, Jesus remarked that one of them would betray Him, and at once a spirit of sadness, spread over the company, and each one-feeling it incumbent upon him to prove his innocence of such a charge asked, "Lord, is it I?" With the rest, Judas also put this question, realizing that if he did not also ask, it would imply his acknowledgment that he was the one, and in response to his inquiry Jesus replied, "Thou hast said"-- that is to say, "Yes, I refer to you." Another account. tells us that Jesus answered the query by saying that the one for whom He would dip a sup would be the betrayer., and having dipped the sop -- a piece of the lamb and a piece of the unleavened bread they were eating -- Jesus gave it to Judas, thus indicating him without directly naming him. It would appear, too, that the other disciples up to this time had not learned to know Judas - - that it was subsequently they ascertained that he was a thief, etc.

Amongst the Jews and Arabs deceit and betrayal were not so very uncommon, but there was a code of honor recognized according to which no one would eat the food of the person he would in any wise injure. As food was seasoned with salt, it was probably this custom that was known as the "covenant of salt"--the covenant of faith fulness. To succeed in having an enemy eat at your table or take of your food seasoned with salt was at that time amongst those people the equivalent of a pledge of his lasting friendship-that he would never do you injury. Apparently Judas was so lacking of a proper spirit that he did not even acknowledge and obey this custom of the 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." |

Nevertheless Jesus testified that His death was not a victory on the part of His betrayer and His enemies, but in harmony with what had been written of Him before by the Prophets. Nor are we to consider that Judas in this matter was merely fulfilling a prophecy irrespective of his own responsibility, his own willfulness 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." These words leave no question, we think, that Judas had already enjoyed his full share in the great atonement work through the intimate opportunities he had of coming to a clear knowledge of the Truth, and the corresponding responsibilities. 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 subsequent despair and suicide.

"TAKE, EAT; THIS IS MY BODY"

It was after the Passover Supper, after the eating of the lamb with the herbs and unleavened bread, etc., that Jesus instituted the Memorial Supper which, with all of His followers, by His direction takes the place of the Passover Supper of the Jews. This was a new matter, and the Apostles listened with interest to His words as He blessed some of the thin cakes of unleavened bread and then brake them and handed portions to each of His disciples, saying,, "Take, eat;, this is my body." What could He mean? During their three years in His company they had learned that He spake in parables and dark sayings. On another occasion He had declared in their hearing that He Himself was the bread which came down from heaven, of which if a man partook he would live forever. Now He was handing them some unleavened bread and said it was His body. They evidently understood Him to mean that this bread to them would represent or symbolize His body, for He told them on this occasion that *thenceforth* they should do this in remembrance of Him-thenceforth they should remember Him as the slain lamb and use unleavened bread to, represent His flesh, and partake of this instead of eating as previously of a literal lamb,

He could not have meant, as Roman Catholics and some Protestants believe, that the bread was by His blessing -turned into His actual flesh, for He still had His fleshHe was not killed for about fifteen hours later. Hence all the arguments to this effect are foolishness and sophistry. When He said, "This is my flesh," it was as much a figure of speech as when He said a little later, "I am the vine," "I am the door," "I am the Good Shepherd," "I am the way, the truth and the life," etc. The right, sane view of the Master's words is apparent: He was represented in all these different ways. In the case under consideration the bread would represent Him, His flesh, to His Apostles and to all His followers throughout the Gospel Age.

As bread stands for and symbolizes all food (indeed wheat is said to contain every element of nutriment in its proper proportion), so the teaching of this symbol is that whoever would have the life which Christ has to give must accept it as the result of His sacrifice. He died that we might live. The rights and privileges which He surrendered voluntarily may be eaten, applied, appropriated by all who have faith in Him and who accept Him and His instructions-such are reckoned as having imputed to them the perfect human nature' with all its rights and privileges lost by Adam, redeemed by Christ. None can have eternal life except by the eating of this bread from heaven. This applies not only to believers of this present time, but also to those of the future Age. Their life-rights and privileges must all be recognized as coming to them through His sacrifice. In a word, the bread

representing our Lord's body teaches our justification through the acceptance of His sacrifice.

"DRINK YE ALL OF IT"

Next our Lord took a cup containing the fruit of the vine. We are not told that it was wine; therefore it is an open question whether it was fermented or unfermented, and in view of all the circumstances of our time and the requirements of the Lord's Word, we may feel sure that unfermented grape juice or raisin juice will fulfil the terms of His injunction. Since it is never called wine, but merely the cup, and the fruit of the vine, there is no room for disputation amongst the Lord's followers. Each may be free to follow His own conscience in the matter of what kind of a fruit of the vine he shall use: for our part we prefer the unfermented as being less liable to do injury or to awaken dormant passions for drink in the Lord's followers.

In connection with the, cup the Lord said,, "This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." While the two oldest Greek MSS. of the New Testament, the Sinaitic and Vatican, omit the word "New," yet the New Covenant is probably meant, as it must be sealed with the blood of the Christ before it can go into effect, and it is not to go into effect until the opening of the Millennial Age.

The cup is not ours, but the Lord's. The life or sacrifice symbolized by the blood is not ours, but the Redeemer's. We are merely given the privilege of drinking it, partaking of it. The blood of Jesus could have sealed the New Covenant between God and Israel, and on behalf of all mankind through Israel, by the New Covenant, without being offered to us at all. The offering to us of the privilege of participation in the cup of Christ's sufferings and death is therefore not to indicate that it was insufficient nor that we could add anything to it. It illustrates the grace of God-that He is willing to receive us and make us joint-heirs with our Lord and Savior, if we have His spirit. The spirit which actuated Jesus was a spirit of devotion to the doing of the Father's will to the smallest detail, and even unto death. Exactly this same spirit must be in all those whom the Father will now accept as members of His Bride, His Body, His Church in the heavenly glory. Hence the Redeemer emphasized the matter distinctly, saying that all who would sit with Him in His Throne must drink of His cup of self-denial, self-sacrifice, and must be immersed into His death.

There is a joy in drinking this cup also, as we gradually comprehend more and more fully the significance of this New Covenant or New Testament blood in which our Lord offers us an opportunity to participate. He imputes His merit and thus enables us to be dead with Him. He thus passes the blood of the New Covenant *through us*, His members. But it is offered only to such as pledge themselves to be dead with Christ. Even then it is not given, but merely imputed or loaned to us to make good or worthy our offerings when the great High Priest as our Advocate presents them and accepts them in the Father's name and grants us His spirit of adoption.

These earthly rights which belong to our Lord Jesus alone, which are at His disposal, are to go by the New Covenant to natural Israel. (Jer. 31:31.) "They shall obtain mercy through your mercy." (Rom. 11:31.) We may therefore rejoice in

sympathetic anticipation of the blessings about to come to natural Israel, in which all mankind will have an opportunity of sharing. If their casting away at the beginning of the Age was preparatory to our acceptance, how glad we may be that our acceptance will not mean their everlasting loss, but, on the contrary, that they will be profited through the blessing of spiritual Israel, members of the great High Priest and Mediator and fully "qualified servants of the New Covenant." (2 Cor. 3:6.) Thus to Israel eventually will be given the earthly blessings and promises which God originally set apart for them, and which were typified under the Law Covenant and its typical Mediator, Moses, who is like unto or a type of the great Mediator, the Christ of God, of which Jesus is the Head and the overcoming saints, His faithful followers, are accounted members.-Acts 3:22, 23.

While the eating of the bread and participation in the justification effected by 'our Lord's death and by the acceptance of the same, will be necessary to the whole world if they would have the restitution blessings purchased by our Lord's sacrifice, nevertheless the cup is not for the world but only for the Church, only for the consecrated of this Gospel Age. "Drink ye all of it" -- not only all of you drink of it, but all of you drink all of it -- leave none. There will be none of the sufferings of Christ left over for the coming Age, no more suffering for righteousness' sake will then be known to the world -- only evil doers will suffer thereafter. Now is the time when whosoever will live godly shall suffer persecution, and when all of the Lord's followers who would be loyal to Him and counted worthy to share in His Kingdom glories must expect to drink of His cup. Hence again the Lord unites the two thoughts, saying, "Except ye eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of man, ye have no life in you." Those who consecrate during the present time as the Lord's disciples, to walk in His steps, must not only share in justification through faith, but must also share through sacrifice the cup if they would gain the life eternal promised to the elect who now forsake all. to be His disciples.

NEW WINE IN THE KINGDOM

In declaring, "I will not drink henceforth of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom," our Lord implies a new wine under different conditions at some distant date. He thus confirmed in their minds what He had been teaching them for some weeks previously, namely, that He would not at this time set up His Kingdom, but that instead He would suffer, be crucified, and that they must expect also to suffer with Him; and that by and by, when the Kingdom should be established and Himself be in glory, His disciples should be with Him in His throne. These new thoughts in their minds were confirmed by the lesson now given.

The cup in the present time must speak to them of the crushing of the grapes, the blood of the grapes, their Master's blood, the life sacrificed, poured out, and their lives also sacrificed with Him in His service, in His cause. But the sufferings of this present time were linked with the glory that should follow by the thought that all who would drink of the present cup of suffering, ignominy and death, would also share in His cup of joy and blessing, glory and honor in the Kingdom.

This same thought should be before our minds, and like the Apostles of old it will help us more and more to look forward to the Kingdom as the time when

suffering for the name of Christ shall cease, and when the glories shall follow and result in the blessing of all the families of the earth. Our Lord here identifies His Kingdom with His Second Advent, and in no sense of the word intimates that they would drink of this new wine at Pentecost, nor at the destruction of Jerusalem, nor at any other time but in that mentioned in the prayer which He taught them, saying, "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven."

This should be the thought before our minds also: in waiting for the Kingdom we are waiting for the Second Coming of our Lord and His subsequent setting up of the Kingdom; that is, the resurrection change, the glorification of His faithful ones who must be with Him and share His glory. No wonder the Apostle declared that he who hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as He is pure. (1 John 3:3.) He that hath this hope of the new -wine in the Kingdom, the participation with his Master in those glories and honors and blessed opportunities for uplifting the world of mankind, will take lightly, yea, joyfully, 'suffering, trials, sacrifices of this present time-yea, he will be glad to suffer with the Master that they also may be glorified together.

"FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS"

So far as we are concerned, it is in vain that men teach that God forgives sins without exacting a penalty therefor from anybody. It is in vain that they claim that Christ was not the ransom price for the sinner; that it was not necessary that He should die, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us back to harmony with God-in order that God might be just and yet justify the sinner. It is in vain, too, that they claim that it was sufficient that Jesus was a great teacher, by whose words the world should be saved. Our reply is in harmony with the Master's statement here and elsewhere and the testimony of all the Apostles, that it was necessary that Christ should die for our sins; that our sins could never have been forgiven by Divine justice except through the Divine arrangement by which He paid our penalty. To us it is a most precious thought, therefore, that our Lord's blood was indeed shed for the remission of sins of the many. And it is also a precious thought to us that we are privileged to be so intimately associated with Him as members of His Body; that our little sacrifices covered by His merit are in God's sight esteemed -as part of the great sin sacrifice for the world; that as joint-sufferers with Christ we are permitted to drink of His cup and be immersed in His, baptism into death.

It is equally vain for Evolutionists and Higher Critics to tell us that, so far from man falling from God's likeness into sin and death, he has been on the contrary evolving upward step by step, from beastly conditions to where he now is. We believe them not. We hold fast the Divinely inspired testimony that there was a fall, and that this made necessary the redemptive work; that Christ was the honorable servant of God, privileged and authorized to make atonement for the sins of the whole world; that He began this atonement work in the sacrifice of Himself; that He has been carrying it on during this Gospel Age by the sacrificing of the members of His Body, and that He will soon complete it, when He, with all of His members glorified, shall during the Millennial Age distribute to the world the blessings of that redemptive work, causing all to come to a knowledge of the Truth, of the love of God; that its height and depth and length and breadth are

immeasurable, yea, all accomplished through Him who loved us and bought us with His precious blood.

"IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME"

The Apostle Paul, referring to this Memorial Supper quotes our Lord as saying, "This do in remembrance of me," and then adds, "As oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup ye do show the Lord's death till He come." (1 Cor. 11:24-26.) The thought is that we are to thus celebrate this great transaction until the time come for the Kingdom celebration of it with the new wine, the joy, the glory, the honors, which we are to share with Him who loved us and bought us. The Apostle evidently does not mean merely until the *parousia*, the presence of the Lord to gather His servants and reward them, but rather until all shall have been gathered and the Kingdom class shall all thus have been set up and glorified.

The same Apostle in the same epistle (1 Cor. 10:16, 17; 12:12) emphasizes the thought of the unity, the oneness of the Church, with each other and with the Lord. He declares, "The loaf which we break, is it not the communion [the fellowship] of the Body of Christ?" Are we not all as parts of one loaf broken with the Lord? "For we being many are one loaf and one Body: for we are all partakers of that one loaf"; and again He adds, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion [participation, fellowship] of the blood of Christ?" Assuredly this is the thought then, that from God's standpoint there is the one great Messiah, the elect Head and the elect members of His Body. These, as one loaf, constitute from God's standpoint the bread of everlasting life for the world, and in order to fill this picture each and all must be broken, each and all must partake of the cup of Christ's suffering and death before entering into His glory. And not until all these sufferings have been completed will the Lord's time come for the new dispensation, the new day, the day of blessing instead of cursing, the day of restitution instead of dying, the day of uplifting instead of falling, so far as the world is concerned.

WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

HOW HEART-SEARCHING IS THE TRUTH

Dear Brethren:

Christian Greetings to you all "in His Name"!

Praise God for all His goodness, for every privilege that we enjoy at this eventful period, and, oh, may we appreciate to the full the liberty which is so precious and so needful to make our calling and election sure.

I thank you, my brethren, for your kind and most helpful letter which I much appreciated, and for your kind thoughts on my behalf which I return in full in the spirit in which it is given. There is not too much of His spirit manifest at this time--just one here, one there. The sieve is very fine indeed and it is indeed few that will escape the deceptions -- truly the "very elect." Well did our Master say "strait is the gate, and narrow is the way and few there be that find it." Yes, how

sincere must-we be in our endeavors to gain the prize-how heart-searching is the Truth in its present brilliancy, as it searches out the hidden things of darkness . . .

How truly has He said through the Apostle, "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man what God hath in reservation for those who love Him:' No, it is impossible for us to be able to comprehend the glory of the future. We could not stand the sight without we were prepared to see it, and we shall be like Him is the promise, and shall see Him as He is. just now He shows us glimpses of His majesty and glory in some manifestation of Himself to our innermost souls when we contemplate His works and our hearts are in sweet communion with Him. And, oh, my brethren, how we need these moments to help us to know that His presence is with us, that He never leaves nor forsakes us, and if ever a cloud arises it is earth-born and He never hides His face. No, it is always something in us that causes the cloud, and as soon as we see what it is and overcome it, do we behold His face and feel His loving arms around us; and it is worth the pain to feel the bliss.

I hope, my brethren, that you will not misunderstand me. There are so few apparently who care to manifest love or feeling like as if they were ashamed or else they do not feel the love that glows in the heart, waiting to be expressed . . . I It seemed hard to me at first to meet this coldness', then I remembered His words, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one toward another," and that it would only be those of the same mind as His who would know and appreciate the wonderful effects of love and joy in the heart . . .

I have just received a bundle of HERALDS and enjoyed the reading of them very much, especially the Revelation series which are -SO manifestly of the Lord and the true spirit of that faithful and wise servant whom we honor because His Master honored him. The other articles are beautiful and helpful also. They agree with my own thoughts lately, proving that they who are His are of one mind. (1 Con 1:10.) May His blessing attend your labors of love to the enriching of His people with meat in due season that they faint not but may be strengthened for what is inevitable just ahead. The Lord bless and keep and guide you, and may your every motive be of the purest that whatever you say and do shall be to the furtherance of His honor and glory and to the help and comfort of His dear sheep to whom you may be privileged to minister. We remember you in our prayers with all of like precious faith everywhere, always remembering that whatever message He may send must be proved by us each individually before we accept it. (1 Thes. 5:21.) Only such as are truly His will search as for hid treasure and seek for the Truth in the love of the Truth. Such abide under the shadow of His wing and nothing shall hurt them.-Psa. 91.

I close with best love and wishes for your spiritual welfare and all of like precious faith everywhere, that they may enjoy the great blessings that belong to His people . . . I am privileged to be your fellow-servant and the honored servant of the dear Master.

Yours in the one hope,

W. F. G.-Aus.

WHO SHALL STAND THE TEST?

Dear Brethren:

Just a few lines to let you know that I am not working, and as soon as I see my way clear I will send you my subscription for this year. I thank you for sending it.

I find that the testing is on and who shall be able to stand? He that hath a pure heart and clean hands; and I feel that it will only be a "little flock" that can stand that test. I see the wicked spreading themselves like a green bay tree, and the man that departeth from his evil way makes himself a prey; I see the wicked upheld and the righteous cast out. But nevertheless the day is coming when they shall discern the righteous from the wicked, and him that serveth God from him that serveth Him not. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father.

Hoping this will find you all in the best of health, I remain,

Your brother in Christ,

W. A. Q.-Mass.

BEREAN STUDIES IN THE REVELATION

STUDY LIII--MARCH 6

LOUD VOICES IN HEAVEN

(361) What is the significance of the term Heaven as used in verse 15, and of the loud Voices uttering the proclamation? H Nov. 15, '19-334.

(362) Has this vision yet been fulfilled? if so, when and where? H Nov. 15, '19-335.

(363) What is the relationship between these loud Voices, and the general work and results of the Gospel Harvest period? H Nov. 15, '19-335 , 336,

(364) What is the lesson indicated in the actions and words of the four and twenty Elders as recorded in vs. 16-18? What do their statements imply? H Nov. 15, '19-336,337.

(365) What are we to gather from the statement that the Temple was opened in Heaven and that the Ark of the Testament was seen? and what is implied in the Lightnings, Voices, Thunderings, etc., mentioned in that connection? H Nov. 15, '19-337.

STUDY LIV--MARCH 13

THE SUN-CLAD WOMAN, THE DRAGON AND THE MAN-CHILD RULER

(366) How do the visions recorded in chapters 12 and 13 stand related to that of the seventh Trumpet visions found in chapter 11, and are we to look for the fulfillment of the visions of chapters 12 and 13 to follow in consecutive order? H Nov. 15, '19-337; Dec. 1, '19-333.

(367) In consideration of the symbolisms used throughout chapters 12 and 13--"the great red Dragon," and the "Beast," what would be the logical-

conclusion as to the time of the fulfillment and the unfolding of these visions in both secular and religious history? H Dec. 1, '19-333.

(368) In the vision recorded in chapter 12 what statement do we find that is of special assistance in locating the fulfillment in history, and how do the time features stand related to the symbolic periods mentioned in chap. 11:2, 3? H Dec. 1, '19-333.

(369) Name and describe the vision recorded by the Prophet Daniel that stands related to and appears to be synonymous with the one under consideration. H Dec. 1, '19-333, 334.

(370) What is symbolized by the great red Dragon having seven Heads and ten Horns? H Dec. 1, '19-334.