

# THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

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## REPORT OF THE VISIT TO GREAT BRITAIN

*TO THE DEAR ONES IN OUR HOMELAND:*

AS we were taking our departure from America about two months ago, we were assured by many of the friends of their very deep interest in the visit we were about to make to the brethren across the sea, of Great Britain and Ireland. We were assured that earnest prayers would be offered daily to the end that wisdom and grace might be given by the Lord whereby we would be enabled to honor His name. Now the tour abroad is in the past, and a kind providence has brought us safely to our homes again. Believing the brethren in America will be interested in a report of the London Convention and of our pilgrimage generally through Great Britain, we are now presenting a review of our experiences.

The responsibility of going forth on this mission we felt deeply, and we were keenly sensible to our own weakness. We were sure that only as it would be undertaken in the strength and power of the Lord could any good be accomplished. The prayers of the brethren for the success of our mission we feel were most fully answered; yes, beyond our expectation. The help of God and the blessing of His spirit were realized in great measure, so that not only were our own hearts full to overflowing, but we believe a rich blessing has come to many of the Lord's people whom we met in the way. To Him belongs all the praise! It will be impossible for us to relate our experiences so as to convey to any one a full appreciation of the facts as to what we witnessed. Only by being present could one really appreciate the results.

### THE DEPARTURE FROM NEW YORK

By way of briefly reminding the brethren of the occasion of our going to England, we would explain that the BIBLE STUDENTS COMMITTEE of London had called a General Convention of the friends to assemble in that city August 5-8, and an invitation had been extended to Our INSTITUTE, as well, as to brethren of other foreign countries, to be represented at the Convention. As there are a considerable number of HERALD readers in Great Britain and Ireland, and as our INSTITUTE is in communication personally with many of these, it seemed most appropriate that a visit to the British Isles be made at this time by representatives from America.

The privilege of again going to Great Britain on such a mission was one that we valued most highly. We thank God for this great privilege, and take the opportunity of expressing our appreciation of the honor conferred upon us by our brethren at home in inviting us to undertake this ministry amongst the friends across the sea. Indeed, as this opportunity came to us again, our minds turned backward to two years ago, when we made our first visit. Little did we think at that time that we were to have this great privilege again. The joys and blessings that were

then ours were still fresh in our memory, and we looked forward with gladness indeed to a repetition of those experiences and to the pleasure of greeting many of the same dear ones again.

Near 10 o'clock on July 22nd we sailed from New York on the Steamship "*Homeric*" of the White Star Line. A group of about fifteen friends gathered at the pier to bid us Godspeed. As we were being parted from loved ones, we commended them to the grace of God, feeling that we were also at the same time being earnestly remembered at the Throne of Grace. We have pleasure in reporting in this connection that Brother and Sister P. L. Read, known to many of the friends in America, joined us in the voyage, their home having formerly been in England, but for the past ten years, in America. The company of these dear friends added much to the enjoyment and pleasure of the trip. The passage across the ocean was generally quiet and peaceful, and no illness was experienced by any of our party.

We believe it will be of interest to relate that on the second day of the voyage, Sunday, the chief steward of the dining saloon sent a special message to us asking if we would take charge of the religious service to be held in the dining room that evening. We gladly responded to this request. An address of about a half hour was delivered to a gathering which listened attentively to the story of heavenly love. We thanked the Lord for this expression of His providence, as the privilege came to us without any act or solicitation on our part. In addition to this, throughout the voyage we found other opportunities of individual character of bearing testimony to the Truth, in all of which we also rejoiced, and trust that some were helped and blessed.

### **THE ARRIVAL IN SOUTHAMPTON**

After a voyage of about eight days our ship reached the port of Southampton, England, and we took the first train for London, arriving in that city about 8 P. M. Sunday, July 30th. Some of the brethren met us at the station, and we were at once conducted to the home of Brother and Sister Shearn at Mill Hill, a suburb of London. Brother and Sister Read went to other parts of the city amongst relatives. We returned thanks to God for His kind providence that had brought us safely across the great deep and had now so comfortably sheltered us among loved ones of another land.

During the week that followed, in fact, for nearly two weeks, we shared the kind hospitality of Brother and Sister Shearn. During much of the second week Brother Streeter accepted the invitation of Brother and Sister Guard to share the blessings of their home. In both of these families we saw much evidence of the Lord's spirit, the spirit of love, which contributed largely to our joy. The five days following our arrival in London, which just preceded the Convention, were spent in visiting a few Classes in and about London; also, during these days and in the week following, we visited several points of special interest about the city. Amongst these was that of the world-famed British Museum. Our chief interest here, was in those departments that related to the Biblical antiquities, such as ancient manuscripts and records that had been unearthed in the ruins of ancient cities and which corroborated so much of Bible history. We were shown records engraved on stone tablets proving the truthfulness of the Book of Daniel. Indeed, these records we found to be in perfect harmony with the date of the beginning of Nebuchadnezzar's reign as published in the recent HERALD articles on the chronology of the beginning of Gentile Times. Some objects and records we saw, dating back to the time of the bondage of the Israelites in Egypt, and even back to the days of Abraham. An account of the flood engraved on a stone tablet was indicated to be 2000 B.C.

Besides the visit to the Museum we were shown the places where eminent Christian martyrs, such as Tyndale, Ridley, Latimer, met their death, and the places where they were buried. We were permitted to visit the Tower of London, the scene of so many notable events of history. We looked into and entered some of the dungeons where eminent men of long centuries past were incarcerated. We visited the tombs of John Bunyan and John Wesley; and were also taken into the home of the latter and shown his study, his place of prayer, the chapel in which he held meetings, etc.

### **THE CONFERENCE IN LONDON**

The Convention held in London we feel was in every way a splendid success, particularly from the standpoint of rich fellowship in spiritual things, and in encouragement of heart and mind in the things that pertain to our eternal inheritance. Our hearts were made glad at the warm welcome accorded us, and it was with much pleasure that we conveyed to the Convention the messages of loving greetings and hearty good wishes from our brethren in America.

The first gathering was on Saturday at 3 P. M., probably 150 friends in attendance. Local brethren addressed the assembly both afternoon and evening, much to the spiritual profit and enjoyment of the listeners. The spirit of peace, love, and joy was indeed much in evidence. The sessions on Sunday morning and afternoon were addressed by American brethren, while the evening session was addressed by Brother R. E. B. Nicholson of Australia. All of these meetings were also much enjoyed, the themes treated in the discourses being of a character to turn the thoughts of the listeners steadfastly to the great issues and holy things that pertain to eternal life. The attendance on this day was larger than on any other day of the Convention, about 250 to 300.

Provision had been made on the program for a special meeting in the nature of a general Conference to be held Monday morning. It was thought that such a session would be very profitable and would offer opportunity for brethren coming from various countries to freely discuss matters of mutual interest and to take counsel together concerning any feature of the Truth and the ministry that might be desired. There were present at this Conference on Monday morning representative brethren from Finland, Holland, France, Australia, America, besides those of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales. A representative from Germany had expected to be present, but circumstances did not permit his coming just at the time of the Convention. It was indeed an impressive and inspiring occasion thus to observe brethren of various tongues and climes of one heart and mind, meeting together in the spirit and name of the one great Head of the Church, for the purpose of mutual comfort and assistance.

### **THE AWAKENING IN FRANCE**

No special outline of proceeding had been prepared for this Conference. The brethren were left free to present any matter that was thought wise for consideration. Various representative brethren, therefore, took the opportunity to present before the Conference a review of conditions existing in their home countries. The brethren from Finland, Holland and France, especially the latter, were heard from at length.

The Brother from France told of the recent awakening in that land; of how a few brethren together with himself had only of late come to a realization of the facts, circumstances and developments since PASTOR RUSSELL'S death. The result was that they had already commenced a movement, which had as its object the enlightenment of others of the brethren in France concerning the real state of affairs amongst the "Truth people." The Brother explained that he and his associates had prepared a general statement embodying the principal points of information, and that they had planned to publish the same in the form of a circular in the near future and mail to as many of the brethren as possible. He also stated that he believed that the French brethren would very much appreciate a regular publication in their own tongue, and that his associates and himself were considering seriously the advisability of arranging such a publication--their thought being to make selection of matter from the HERALD and translate into French. The Brother earnestly asked advice of the Conference as to its opinion of their proceeding in France as to whether they might expect some encouragement and cooperation from brethren in other lands. A number of remarks were made in response, the sum of which was that all rejoiced to learn of developments amongst the French brethren; and their representative was instructed to take back to his brethren a message of encouragement in their good work, with the assurance that they would be remembered in prayer and that as the Lord's providence indicated, the brethren of other lands would be glad to render assistance and cooperation.

### **HOLLAND AND FINLAND HEARD FROM**

*Following this discussion of the French situation the brethren from Holland were heard from. They reported that the awakening and enlightenment of the brethren in that land had been progressing for about three years, with the result that now there was a good representation of brethren in several places in Holland who had a clear vision of matters. They explained that their brethren had been active in doing what they could to reach the public with the Message. They had translated into the Dutch language some of the essential truths concerning the Divine Plan of the Ages, and this had been arranged and published in the form of a leaflet and was being distributed according to circumstances and opportunity.*

The Finnish brethren also reported interestingly of conditions in their land; the awakening amongst the friends in Finland having grown to far greater proportion than in any other quarter of Europe. A regular publication in the Finnish language had been going forth for some time, articles from the HERALD being translated. The subscription list of their paper had risen to something like 1500, and regular meetings were being held in several parts of the country for the edification and building up of the brethren in the most holy faith.

All of these reports were most encouraging, and the brethren in the countries above mentioned were highly commended for their energy and zeal in the Master's cause, especially as they are laboring against unfavorable circumstances and lacking in advantages as compared with the brethren of Great Britain and America. For instance, the representatives from Holland and France reported that they do not have even the First Volume of Scripture Studies translated in acceptable form for circulation in their respective languages; while the brethren of the British Isles and America have the entire six Volumes at their disposal, in addition to the First Volume recently published by the PASTORAL BIBLE INSTITUTE in special form for use amongst the public. The brethren of France and Holland were hoping for a better translation of Volume I than what is now available, if the providence of the Lord permits.

As the brethren in Christ, of different tongues and nationalities, thus assembled to take counsel together concern-ing things that were near to their hearts, we could not but realize afresh the meaning of the Savior's promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age."

*The indication of the Master's supervision, of His watchcare over His sheep in every land, was most evident. Here were brethren of various tongues; some could not speak any English; some spoke English only in much broken form; and while we could not understand all they were saying, we could easily gather from their gestures and the light of their countenances that they were well acquainted with the Lord Jesus Christ; that they were filled with His spirit; that they had most clearly caught the inspiration of the great foundation principles of our faith respecting Christian liberty and the necessity of holding Christ as their only Head, and the maintaining of the liberty by which they had been made free. Thus in this assurance of the Savior's dwelling amongst His faithful people in the earth today, we felt that we could see the sure fulfilment of the Divine Word that God is gathering a people out of every nation, language and tongue, to be united with His dear Son in the heavenly Kingdom, and to live and reign with Christ a thousand years.*

### **THE CONVENTION'S REPLY TO MESSAGES OF GREETINGS**

A number of messages of loving greetings were read from brethren of various parts of the world, and the Convention authorized the following letter of grateful response to be sent:

**"At the London Convention it was, unanimously resolved that a message of love be sent to all of like precious faith throughout the world, and that the representatives from America, Australia, Canada, Finland, Holland, France, etc., be requested to convey the same to the friends in their respective countries, and that our message embody:**

**"1. Our sense of gratitude to those friends who have spared their loved ones to come into our midst, and have also assisted to make the visit possible.**

**"2. Our appreciation of the prayers, and sympathies, of the dear ones in other lands who have had experiences similar to our own: also thanks for the loving messages received, and the encouraging passages from God's Word which have been called to our attention to our profit, we trust. We assure our brethren that we remember them at this time, and that our prayers for Zion's prosperity co-mingle with their own.**

**"3. We would like to tell our brethren that (in our estimation at any rate) the conditions now prevailing in the world, and the peculiar trials befalling God's people at this time, appear to indicate that the gathering of the Lord's 'Little Flock' is drawing appreciably nearer, which thought rejoices our hearts, seeing that it means the consummation of all our hopes, and the sum of all our expectations.**

### **THEREFORE**

**""To the people of God and the believing brethren who are in Christ. May grace and peace be granted to you from God our Father. We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . because we have heard of your**

**faith in Christ Jesus and of the love which you cherish towards all God's people, on account of the hope treasured up for you in Heaven. Of this Hope you have already heard in the message of the Truth of the Good News.'**

**"We entreat that you may be filled with a clear knowledge of His will, accompanied by thorough wisdom and discernment in spiritual things: so that your lives may be worthy of the Lord and perfectly pleasing to Him, while you exhibit the results of right action of every sort and grow into a fuller knowledge of God. 'Since His power is so glorious, may you be strengthened with strength of every kind, and be prepared for cheerfully enduring all things with patience and long-suffering: and give thanks to the Father who has made us fit to receive our share of the inheritance of God's people in Light.'**

**"'As therefore, you have received Christ, even Jesus our Lord, live and act in vital union with Him; having the roots of your being firmly planted in Him, and always being increasingly confirmed in the faith as you were taught it, and abounding in it with thanksgiving. Take care lest there be some one who leads you away as prisoners by means of his philosophy and idle fancies, following human traditions and the world's crude notions instead of following Christ.'--Col. 1:2-5, 9-12; 2:6-8. *Weymouth.***

**"What joy it will be to meet each other face to face in the presence of the Lord, where all barriers of nationality, of tongue, and every other kind, will be gone for ever. We express the hope that we may meet all our Brethren there.**

**"The grace of our Lord, and the love of God be with you all even to the end!**

**"From fellow-saints met in Convention at London, England, August 5-8, 1922."**

## **THE ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING**

Monday afternoon, August 7th, was the time appointed for the Annual Business Meeting of the BIBLE STUDENTS COMMITTEE. The object of this meeting was to hear the Committee's report, which was read by the Secretary, H. J. Shearn. This report in a general way reviewed the activities and ministry of the brethren during the past year. Amongst the principal features reported was that two representatives from Great Britain had in response to an invitation visited Finland early in the year, which resulted in much encouragement.\* Considerable assistance had been rendered brethren in Holland in the publication of their booklet mentioned above. Some marked increase was indicated in the Pilgrim work, and the report was generally regarded as encouraging.

Following the reading of the report a number of items were discussed bearing upon the outlook for the ensuing year. An election then took place of a new Committee, composed largely of the same personnel as the one whose term had just expired; and thus was concluded the business session. In the evening a discourse was delivered on the theme as taught by Jesus in the words: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another as I have loved you."

Tuesday, August 8th, was the last day of the Convention. The Conference of the previous day was continued during the morning, and matters pertaining to the interests of the Truth in other lands were given further consideration. The afternoon was devoted to brief discourses by the representative brethren of Holland, Finland

and France. The closing feature of the Convention was a discourse, in which the subject of *Love* was again chosen by the speaker, using as the basis of his remarks the 13th chapter of First Corinthians. This which St. Paul designates the greatest of the three abiding qualities was carefully reviewed in all its ramifications, and the speaker most earnestly emphasized the great importance to all the brethren of coming more fully under the influence and control of this most essential force and power of the Love of God. The usual Love Feast concluded the London Convention, and the brethren, with lighted faces and earnest solicitation for one another's welfare, bade each other Godspeed in their pilgrim journey.

## **THE PILGRIMAGE**

Soon after the Convention we started on our journey to various points that had been outlined by the brethren in London. Our itinerary took us through various parts of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales, and we rejoiced to find that we were to visit some of the same Classes with which we met two years ago. For a time we took separate routes, one going to the south and west, then northward, the other to the east and north, till we met at Sheffield, England, August 25th, from which time forward we traveled and visited the same points together to the conclusion of our pilgrimage.

The following are the cities and towns that were visited in England: London, N. E. London, Holborn, Waltham Cross, Mill Hill, Ealing, Bishop's Stortford, Letchworth, Bedford, Ipswich, Norwich, Grimsby, Bromley, Bristol, Highbridge, Tiverton, Wallasey, Liverpool, Manchester, Mansfield, Sheffield, Worcester, Wombourne; in Wales, Swansea; in Ireland, Belfast and Portadown; in Scotland, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Arbroath, Dundee.

Our companion on the British tour, Brother P. L. Read

I also had a share in not only serving as one of the speakers of the Convention, but also in very efficiently filling a number of appointments, substituting for Brother Nicholson, who because of illness was unable to complete his itinerary.

In these places above mentioned, from one to seven meetings were held with attendance ranging all the way from 7 to 450. We will not attempt to go into the of the brethren who visited Finland was published in issue of the HERALD, details of each visit, as there was, of course, a similarity of procedure and fellowship at each appointment. Such places as London, Bristol, Manchester, Swansea, Belfast, Edinburgh and Glasgow, showed the largest attendance, and in these places the larger number of meetings were held.

*The results of our pilgrimage show that the same general conditions that prevail in America exist in the places visited. We could not but be specially impressed with the similarity of the tests and trials through which the Lord's people have been passing in these recent years. Time after time the brethren advised us that they had been brought face to face with the important issue of who was to be considered their Master, Teacher and Head, and just as frequently we were assured by the brethren that under the Lord's guidance they had been specially helped of the Lord to discern His leading and recognize the voice of the Good Shepherd, to hear the Savior saying: "One is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren." Our own hearts were greatly refreshed as we were repeatedly assured that the Bible teaching on the subject of Christian liberty and the right of personal judgment and decision was more clearly appreciated than ever before.*

## **THE PRICE OF LOYALTY TO GOD**

It was also comforting that the brethren with whom we mingled in the various places were happy in the privilege of suffering their names to be cast out as evil and of being misunderstood as a result of their fidelity to the great principles of the Bible and as a result of their refusal to recognize any established power or authority in the Church except Christ alone. In thus standing courageously in defense of the liberty wherewith they were made free in Christ, they were but emulating the glorious examples of the past; for as we read the history of England and Scotland, we find that Christianity has had some of its greatest struggles in those countries; that from the Reformation period onward, noble defenders of the faith who have trodden upon that ground, have had the courage of their convictions, have recognized their personal right to read and study their Bibles, and in so doing, have found themselves set in opposition to the established authority and power in the Church; consequently the spirit of intolerance, persecution, the historian tells us, has worked havoc Amongst professed Christians; that many of those thus consecrated to God and not to human systems and organizations, have been shown what great things they should suffer for His name, because they loved not their lives unto death.

*We saw in Scotland, as well as in England, many historical points that relate to terrible persecutions of, the past. In the city of Edinburgh there is a certain cemetery which contains monuments erected in honor of the memory of many of these Christian martyrs. For instance, one monument alone records that on that spot as many as 18,000 of the Covenanters had met their death because they held firmly to their convictions and would not give heed to nor recognize the decrees of those who claimed to be the power and authority in the Church. We thanked the Lord once more for such illustrious examples of faith in and devotion to God, and we thanked Him, too, that there still live upon that soil others who we believe are just as true and loyal to the principles and teachings of the Christian faith as those who have gone before, and who are willing in these days to show the courage of their convictions and resist all abridgment of their Christian rights and liberties, and who would just as earnestly repudiate and refuse to recognize the power that any man or number of men might try to exercise in lording it over God's heritage; for the instruction of the Apostle still holds good to all individuals in the Church, "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good," which means that the first and only authority in the Church is represented in Christ and His twelve Apostles, His mouthpieces, and that these alone are to be taken as our infallibly inspired guides and teachers.*

## **OUR MESSAGE TO THE BRETHREN**

Thus, notwithstanding sore trials and heartaches, we found the friends of the British Isles full of confidence, and rejoicing in the Divine favor, and fully assured that He who had begun the good work in them and had led them thus far in their pilgrimage would continue His guidance through the mists and the shadows until they reached the end of the way.

We were greatly encouraged also to find that some leading brethren who were very much opposed to our coming into their midst two years ago, received our visit with open arms and rendered every assistance in their power to make the visit an occasion of profit and uplift to themselves and others. We were reminded again of the great Apostle Paul, who persecuted the Church of God, in obedience to his conscience, thinking that he was



doing God service. Because of his honesty of heart the Lord specially dealt with him and caused him to see the true light of the better way. So we find the providence of the Lord operating in these days.

Again we assured the friends as we came into their midst that we were not proclaiming any new message, but the same old story that had gladdened and sanctified the hearts of Christians for centuries. We assured the friends that we could not wish to improve upon the Divine Plan as God's Word unfolds it; but while believing that there is no new light, in the sense of any new scheme or plan of salvation, to be proclaimed, yet attention was called to the watchword of the Scriptures, which is that we press forward in the path of light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day; that there are certain details, features of the Truth, that are becoming more and more clarified as the Church journeys onward toward the goal. In our messages to the brethren we endeavored to call attention to those lines of Scriptural truth that have a bearing upon the peculiar circumstances and trials of the Lord's people at the present time--certain lines of Bible teaching that are specially applicable to present conditions in the Church; as, for instance, we sought to review what the Scriptures teach to be the mission and work of the Church at the present hour; that instead of undertaking to launch some great movement to startle and overawe men, the work of the Church remains unchanged from that which it was commissioned to do by our Lord and the Apostles in the beginning of the Age. That work, as all consecrated believers know, was one that had to do primarily with the Church itself--her development in Christian character, her preparation to meet the Lord; in other words, that the Bride of Christ is to make herself ready for union with the Bridegroom. Incidentally, indeed, all the consecrated are enjoined to bear testimony to the Truth, to proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom to all who have ears to hear, even unto the end of the Age. This message that we now bear to men is exactly the same as that which Jesus and the Apostles proclaimed. As we are still living in the old dispensation, under the reign of Sin and Death, we can make no promises to men as to when death will cease and as to when they shall cease going into the tomb; but we may say to them with great assurance that the time is approaching; that it is unchangeably fixed in the Divine Plan; that in due time the hour is coming when all in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God and come forth.

### **THE HERALD MUCH APPRECIATED**

Additionally, as we mingled with the friends on this recent tour, we felt impressed to direct our ministry very specially along practical lines, such as that of consecration to God; what constitutes Christian faith and Christian love--the love of God, love for God, love for the brethren, love for the world; the portrait of love in its passive, positive and negative characteristics, as portrayed in 1 Corinthians 13. The Scriptural teaching respecting the Holy Spirit was reviewed as illustrated in the life of our Lord Jesus, our perfect Pattern; the last words of St. Paul as illustrating the testing at the mark; the prayer life of the consecrated; the value of trials and sufferings to the Christian in the attainment of the mark of perfect love, etc.

The brethren very heartily assured us of their warm appreciation of THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM. They told of what comfort it had been to them as they were passing through special trial. Much appreciation was expressed for the series of articles on the Book of Revelation, and the wish was repeatedly expressed that the entire series would be arranged in book form and be available for use in the near future. In fact, we would here mention that at the Convention in London, question was put before the friends asking if they favored the thought of publishing the HERALD Revelation articles in book form, and the Convention expressed itself unanimously in favor of the project and gave every reasonable encouragement to the brethren of the INSTITUTE to proceed with the work.

We were told, too, by not a few of the friends of special blessings experienced as a result of the presentations along chronological lines. Nearly all of one Class of about twenty that had come into existence within the past year or so, had gotten their first impulse, and had come to a proper appreciation of present conditions and the will of the Lord, as a result of a study of what the HERALD had published during the past year on "times and seasons," etc.

### **THE VISIT TO BELFAST**

*We feel impressed to mention some details respecting two or three visits near the end of our pilgrimage. One of these was the city of Belfast, Ireland. Here we found an excellent class of about fifty friends who had come apart to enjoy greater freedom in Christ and greater Christian liberty during the past year. We remained with these friends three days and held six meetings. During these services the attendance was considerably increased, the largest meeting on Sunday having been attended by about eighty, all professing to be of "Present Truth." Our own spirits were much refreshed during the fellowship with the friends in Belfast, as we were assured by them that they had been greatly encouraged and helped by the ministry.*

A very sad condition prevails in Ireland at the present time, due to the instability of the government and the turbulent state of the people for several years past. Indeed, this may be truthfully said of all Europe, which at the present time is reeling and staggering on the verge of utter collapse because of the impoverishment of blood and treasure resulting from the shock of the world war. How our hearts were made to long for and to pray the more earnestly, "Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth even as it is done in heaven."

### **THE VISIT TO EDINBURGH**

Our visit to Edinburgh, Scotland, we shall not soon forget. This is indeed a beautiful and attractive city. In addition to its importance from the historical point of view, it is the seat of eminent educational institutions of art, science and philosophy. We were most acceptably entertained in the home of one who beautifully exemplified the spirit of the Master. We thank God that in these days there are those who like Mary appreciate the privilege of bringing forth and breaking open the alabaster box of precious ointment and of anointing the members of Christ. The Master assures us that whatever ministry is rendered to the least of His members is received by Him as though done unto Himself. 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.*

Some fifty friends gathered to the meetings in Edinburgh. We felt the presence of the Lord and His blessing was there in rich measure. Again we were encouraged to find the brethren here loyal to the Bible and the great principles of the Christian faith.

### **THE VISIT TO GLASGOW--THE CONVENTION**

We come now to report our last visit--that at Glasgow, Scotland. A General Convention had been arranged for the three days of our appointment there, September 1, 2 and 3, and we were advised by some of the brethren in advance that a glorious season of fellowship was anticipated. Brethren met us at the station when we arrived, near Friday noon, and we were escorted to homes where loving hands and hearts did everything possible for our comfort.

We were informed that up to about two months prior to our visit there had been no division in the original Class of "Truth brethren" at Glasgow, composed of about 700. Then unusual circumstances developed because of some most extraordinary proceedings in the Class. Tests were applied that shook the Church to its foundation, and which resulted in a sharp division taking place. The test was one that involved the forfeiting of the right of individual judgment and the liberty wherewith Christ makes free. We marveled indeed as we learned the result of the division that followed. Some 300 brethren had indicated their clear vision of the situation and were refusing to be brought into human bondage. A good number in addition to these were more or less of the same attitude and were feeling their way out of the state of confusion.

The first session of the Convention was held on Friday evening. About 250 friends listened attentively to an interesting discourse by Brother Read on the subject of faith. Saturday afternoon approximately 300 were present and gave earnest attention to a discourse on the subject of the trial of the Christian's faith. The history of the Church was reviewed; the causes of her trial, suffering and persecution were considered down to the present day. Saturday evening, about the same number were present and listened most attentively to a discourse on the Holy Spirit and its method of operation in God's people, bringing about their transformation into the image of His dear Son.

Sunday morning about 300 were again present, the discourse being upon the great commandment of Jesus. The speaker reviewed the example of our Lord and the Apostles--the lessons of love that were inculcated in their teachings. It was pointed out that much of the suffering, trial and testing of the Christian Church was due to a lack of love, and the failure of professing Christians to observe faithfully the command to love one another, given by the great Head of the Church.

Sunday afternoon and evening the attendance arose to probably 425. During the latter session, the closing service of the Convention, the speaker selected for his topic the subject of love as expounded by the great Apostle Paul in the 13th chapter of First Corinthians. Again the speaker reviewed the significance of love--what its fruitage is in the hearts of those who possess it; how essential it is for all who hope to share in the glory of the Heavenly Kingdom; that it is the great abiding quality that will be permanently in operation throughout all ages.

## **"AND THE LORD HEARKENED AND HEARD"**

The Love Feast concluded the Convention at Glasgow. There was every evidence that the hearts of all were filled to overflowing with peace and joy. The faces of the brethren seemed radiant with a new sense of Divine favor, and with a consciousness that they were hearing the voice of the Good Shepherd and were being directed in the right way. In fact, in every crisis, those who are made to know that they are choosing the right way and that it is the will of God, are sure to possess His peace that passeth human understanding, so that they will be able to rejoice in the midst of suffering and trial. We could scarcely have imagined any more remarkable manifestation of the spirit of the Lord than that which was in evidence upon the occasion of the Convention there.

It was not to be wondered at that as we first appeared amongst the friends in Glasgow there was a measure of uncertainty in the minds of some as to our mission, and some indecision *in* others as to what course should be pursued--as to how they should decide certain issues. We assured these dear friends, however, that we had no personal designs to work out; that we professed merely to be Christians, followers of the Lamb; that we loved all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth; that we desired to be only of service to fellow members of the Body of Christ; that we ourselves did not belong to any church organization, nor did we wish to urge anything of this kind upon others; our sole object being to speak a message of comfort. And as we came to the hour of parting with our brethren in Glasgow, we were happy indeed to feel that the Divine blessing had attended our weak efforts. We were sad, however, at the thought of parting with many brethren whom we had learned in so short a time to love very clearly, but we reminded one another of the glorious gathering of the faithful in the near future by the power of the First Resurrection, when the darkness shall be changed to perfect day and when we shall meet to part no more. Many of the friends accompanied us to the train, where we again bade each other Godspeed. We shall long remember our visit to the brethren in Glasgow. As our plans were to sail from Southampton for America on September 6th, we went direct from Glasgow to London, September 4th.

Reflecting upon the entire experience of our pilgrimage, it seemed to us that it was one of continual sitting together with the brethren in heavenly places--yes, at the feet of the Master. We had talked together freely of the things that lay near to our hearts, and the Lord had blessed our feeble efforts as we had sought to counsel the brethren from the Word of the Lord concerning matters that pertained to their success in the Christian life and their final entrance into the Heavenly Kingdom; and for all His manifold blessings we felt devoutly thankful.

## **OUR JOURNEY'S END AND FAREWELL**

On the evening of the next day, Tuesday, we attended a farewell meeting which had been arranged by the friends in London. This was another inspiring occasion. Earnest prayers were offered, and songs of praise and thanksgiving were sung. Responding to the program we delivered brief addresses, and in this feature Brother Read also shared. Once more we sought to review together the great things that belong to our inheritance; our present work and service; the glorious hopes and promises; the necessity of perseverance in well-doing, and faithfulness unto death in doing the Divine will, if we would secure the crown of glory. Again we brought before our minds the great joy which will be the portion of the faithful when all the Church of the First-borns will be assembled in the heavenly Kingdom, when such occasions as these of saying fare well and bidding each other Godspeed shall be no more. We sought also to express our gratitude to the friends for their loving, thoughtfulness and consideration in attending to our needs and in every way adding to our comfort as far as possible. Following the discourses the chairman presented us with two large, beautiful mottos in frames, bearing the following texts of Scripture:

"BE YE KIND ONE TO ANOTHER, TENDERHEARTED,  
FORGIVING ONE ANOTHER .--Eph. 4:32.

"LET US NOT BE WEARY IN WELL DOING: FOR IN DUE  
SEASON WE SHALL REAP, IF WE FAINT NOT."--Gal. 6:9.

At the conclusion of this service we were given opportunity to clasp the hands of the friends and bid a last farewell, exhorting that should we not be permitted to see each other's faces again on earth, we might at last be found amongst the faithful.

Next morning, the day of our sailing, there was at the station in London a company of friends to see us on our train for Southampton, our dear Brother H. J. Shearn accompanying us and seeing us safely upon the great Steamship "*Majestic*," which sailed at midday. As Brother Nicholson had planned to return to Australia by way of America, he joined us on this steamer; also, we again had the company of Brother Read, Sister Read, remaining in London on account of the serious illness of her mother.

Six days brought us to our journey's end, as the vessel on which we were returning made much better time than the "*Homeric*" going over. Our passage home was uneventful, peaceful and quiet. While we had no opportunities of a public character of addressing the people on the vessel, we found occasion to bear testimony to the Truth to several individuals, some of whom expressed deep interest and promised to read and investigate further.

On arriving at the home on the evening of September 12th we found between forty and fifty friends gathered to welcome us and hear a report of our experiences. All listened with deep interest as we briefly reviewed our travels and ministry amongst the brethren in other lands. All rejoiced with us in the Divine blessing that had accompanied us on our way and in the knowledge of the fact that there are other loyal, consecrated, hearts that are being guided of the Lord, inspired by the same exceeding great and precious promises, and looking to the same glorious Master, trusting in the fulfilment of His promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age."

"Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever."

Your brethren in the Anointed One,

R. E. STREETER,

I. F. HOSKINS.

**THE MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST**

**--OCTOBER 15--LUKE 3:7-17--**

*Golden Text.--"Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."--Matt. 3:2*

OF John it is written that he was filled with the Holy Spirit from his birth. But we must not misunderstand this to mean that he was begotten of the Holy Spirit, in the sense that Christians are begotten of it, for he lived before the time of spirit-begetting in the Jewish Age, not in the Gospel or Christian Age. Thus our Lord said of him that, although there had not arisen a greater Prophet than John, nevertheless, the least in the Kingdom of God is greater than he--the least one in the house of sons is on a higher plane than the greatest one in the house of servants. (Matt. 11:11; Heb. 3:5, 6.) The Apostle again explains that "the Holy Spirit was *not yet given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified."--John 7:39.

In harmony with this we must understand that John was filled with the Holy Spirit, holy power or influence from God from his birth, after the same manner that the other Prophets throughout the Jewish Age had been under that Holy Spirit. The expression would lead us to understand that, although John was not born immaculate, as was Jesus, he nevertheless was well born, under holy influences, which tended to develop in him natural characteristics suitable to the mission he was intended of God to fulfill. This does not involve the thought of Divine interference with the free will of the individual, for Paul tells us that he also was chosen of God from his birth to be a special servant to do a special work. (Gal. 1:15.) Nevertheless, the Lord did not interfere with his exercising his own free will, even permitting him to go so far into blind error as to become the persecutor of the Church. And even when the Lord rebuked him in the way to Damascus, that was not an interference with his will or nature, but merely a removal of his blindness, his ignorance, permitting his true will to come into exercise. And so no doubt others of the Lord's people from time to time have been from earliest childhood special subjects of Divine providence which has guided and shaped their experiences without interfering with their wills, so as to make of them *special instruments* for the accomplishment of Divine purposes.

Of John's life from infancy to manhood we know nothing except the bare record, "The child grew and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts until the day of His showing unto Israel" (Luke 1:80)--not in the sandy deserts, but more properly in the wilds, the uncultivated regions, perhaps in the "hill country," where his parents resided at the time of his birth. Possibly a part of the Lord's providence in respect to John's training for his work, consisted in the ordering of the affairs of his parents, so that possibly they were forced by circumstances to reside in such a wilderness-home, where they would have comparatively little intercourse with others, and where John, probably as a forester, would have the experiences which the Lord saw would best fit him for the work intended. All Christians should learn to trust to the Heavenly Father's guidance, remembering His special promise, which is applicable to each one who is, in Christ, viz., that "all things shall work together for good to them that love God," and remembering this they should be content with the lot which providence seems to mark out for them--not indolent, but content, when they have done all that their hands find to do--not restless, peevish, dissatisfied, complainers against God and His providence. "Trust in the Lord and do good." It may be that the Lord is fitting and preparing us individually for some special service, and that the permitted experiences alone will prepare us for that service. Indeed, we know from the Word that God designs His "elect" for joint-heirship with our dear Redeemer in the glorious Millennial Kingdom; and we can well realize that because of our imperfection we need much moulding and fashioning, chiseling and polishing to make us "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." We are to remember also that we are incompetent to judge of our own imperfections, and hence incompetent to judge of the experiences which would be most helpful to us. It is difficult for us some times even to see ourselves as others see us; much more difficult, undoubtedly, it would be

to see ourselves from the Divine standpoint. Here faith in God comes to the front--"This is the victory which overcometh the world, even your faith."

The time of John's "showing" or presentation to Israel was undoubtedly the time when he reached the legally required thirty years of age; and then it was that the word of the Lord came unto him, causing him to begin his mission. We are not to think of this expression as having to John the same signification as it has to us who are of this Gospel Age. The word of God came to John as a prophet, for our Lord declared: "There hath not arisen a greater prophet than John the Baptist." The Lord made clear to John that the time had come for the beginning of his ministry, not merely by an impression or surmise, but with positiveness, as in the case of all the Prophets. In harmony with his commission he went to the thickly settled regions in the vicinity of the River Jordan, preaching repentance--that the people should reform--and baptizing in the Jordan those who professed a reformation, For this reason John sought the pools or deep places of the river; for instance, he went to Enon, near to Salem, "because there was much water there"--a pool sufficiently deep for the purposes of immersion.

### REPENTANCE AND BAPTISM

We are not to fall into the too common error of supposing from the record that John preached to the people that *repentance and baptism* would work for *them a remission of their sins*. To so interpret these words would put them in direct conflict with the entire testimony of the Scriptures, which is to the effect that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. The usual representation of this subject is therefore clearly in error. To the contrary, we are to understand this verse to mean that John preached a baptism signifying repentance *unto*, or *Preparation for*, a remission of sins. The time had not yet come for the blotting out of the sins, and John neither had nor could have obtained authority to declare sins remitted because of repentance and baptism. Had, it been possible for him to make such a proclamation, truthfully, it would have proved that there was no necessity for the coming of our Lord Jesus to *give Himself a ransom* for Israel and for all the families of the earth. If repentance and immersion in water would bring the forgiveness of sins, the "Savior and a great one" whom God had promised to Israel for so long would have been wholly unnecessary. But when we view John's work and preaching as merely a preliminary one, to make ready a repentant people, desiring to have their sins forgiven, desiring full at-one-ment with God, and expecting a Savior to accomplish all this--then all is harmony.

And this thought, that the remission of sins was a work future from John's day, a work to be accomplished by Christ, is fully borne out by the succeeding context, a quotation from Isaiah the Prophet, which has not even yet been fulfilled, but includes the entire work of the Millennial Age. That Age will be one for *remission of sins and blotting out of sins*, and the full reconciliation of so many as will accept God's grace in Christ under the New Covenant. (Compare Acts 3:19-21.) In that time, under those favorable conditions, and not before, will the statement be fulfilled, "All flesh shall see the salvation of God."

We are to bear in mind, that John's work as a messenger was exclusively to Israel, and had nothing whatever to do with any of the Gentiles. To Israel he acted as the Elijah or Forerunner of *Messiah in the flesh*, seeking to induce that nation, in *its* "harvest" time, to accept the formal offer of God's Kingdom by accepting Jesus as the King. But John's mission was not successful to his nation, and profited only a few of the people; those few who believed John's testimony, and received it into good and honest and repentant hearts, were prepared to *receive* Jesus and to appreciate and *receive* the remission of sins offered by God through Him. The remainder of that nation, rejecting John's teaching, and being in an unrepentant condition of heart, were not properly exercised,

were not ready for Jesus, and did not appreciate the offer of remission of sins through His blood as a consequence, and as a nation were rejected of God and wholly overthrown.

### **THE GREATER CHRIST TO BE REVEALED**

While John thus acted as the Elijah in introducing Jesus in the flesh to fleshly Israel, and gathered out a certain class who were ready to receive Jesus, and who were blessed by Him, so we see that in God's Plan there is a greater antitype of Elijah than was John, as there is a greater Christ than was our Lord Jesus. The greater Christ is the spiritual one, "The Lord from heaven"--"Now the Lord is that Spirit." And this glorified spirit Lord is the Head of "the Church which is His body," and this Body of many members will, in "the first resurrection," be made like Him, and share His glory, and with Him and under Him constitute the *great Messiah*, who shall take unto Himself His great power and reign, establishing God's Kingdom amongst men, and causing His will to be done "on earth as it is done in heaven." (Matt. 6:10.) The coming into power of this great Christ, the spiritual Christ (Head and Body) constitutes the Second Advent to mankind--"the manifestation of the sons of God" for the deliverance of the groaning creation. (Rom. 8:17-19.) Thus the Second Advent of Christ the Head (with the Church His Body) will be seen to be on a very much higher plane than was the First Advent of our Lord in the flesh, although the First Advent was all-important in that without it and its sacrifice for sins there could have been no Second Advent of Jesus, the Head, in the glory of Kingdom power, and there could have been no glorified members of His Body to be associated with Him.

After thus noting the relationship of the two events, it is proper for us to note also that as the blessings of the First Advent were offered to nominal fleshly Israel, so the presentation of the blessings of the Second Advent will be to nominal spiritual Israel ("Christendom"), and as a Forerunner or herald was appropriately sent to fleshly Israel, to prepare them for the First Advent, likewise it would be appropriate that a proportionately greater Forerunner should precede the Second Advent, and seek to make ready therefore all nominal spiritual Israelites. This greater Elijah, who heralds the spiritual Christ, is composed of many members; Jesus in the flesh was Himself the Head of this Elijah class, and all of His true followers, who will be when glorified with Him, members of the glorious Christ, will have previously been in their earthly lives members with Him of the Elijah class, whose mission it is to show forth the principles of righteousness and true holiness, and to exhort both by word and conduct all men to repentance and to preparation for the Second Advent--the glorious appearing, the setting up of the Messianic Kingdom, the actual blotting out of sins, the straightening of every crooked way, the leveling up of deep crevices of character, the leveling down of the hills of pride to the proper level of humility; and in every sense of the word *seeking to prepare all flesh* to see the salvation of God.

### **THE GLORY OF THE LORD SHALL BE REVEALED**

Nevertheless, we are to remember that the Scriptures distinctly indicate that the testimony of this greater Elijah will be equally unsuccessful with that of the lesser antitype of Elijah, John the Baptizer. The Church in the flesh has not succeeded in making straight the paths of the Lord for a triumphal entry to His Kingdom upon the earth. A few have heard, but the Message has utterly failed as respects the vast majority, and even amongst those who profess respect for and to be waiting for the Kingdom. Nevertheless, all God's good purposes will be ultimately accomplished, though necessarily introduced by troubles, calamities, distress upon "Christendom," in the end of this Age or Harvest time, similar to those troubles which came upon fleshly Israelites who were unready for the Savior, and "knew not the time of their visitation," at His First Advent. All this unreadiness, however, shall not



hinder the work of the Messiah. As at His First Advent He gathered all Israelites indeed to the new dispensation, so now He will gather His elect "Little Flock" to Himself; His Kingdom will be established; it will rule, over all; it will accomplish the straightening of every crooked path; it will level up the path of righteousness and holiness, and make of it "a highway" freed from stumbling blocks of error and from Satan's deception. (Isa. 35:8, 9.) All mankind then brought to a knowledge of the *Truth* will have the privilege of progressing through the times of restitution up this grand highway of obedience to the grand perfection lost for himself and his race by father Adam's transgression, but redeemed for Adam and his race by the precious blood of Christ. All flesh indeed shall see the salvation of our God, and so many as will may share therein, for this is the blessing which God has provided for all the families of the earth, through the true spiritual Seed of Abraham--Christ and His elect Church.--Gal. 3:16, 29.

It would seem that John's ministry at first was somewhat popular, notwithstanding his probably uncouth "backwoods" appearance and great plainness of speech; so that great multitudes came to him: amongst these were some who seemed to John to be so vile that he could not properly accept them until they had given some proofs of reform. These he denominates "children of vipers"--very harsh language, we would be inclined to say. We are not to understand that such language is proper to be copied by the Lord's people of today. We are rather to suppose that there were special conditions at that time which made this language appropriate, and that John, as a prophet, was Divinely guided into giving this sharp reproof. The Lord's people of the Gospel Age are instructed on the contrary to speak with meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, etc.--"in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves"--"reproving with all long-suffering." The Lord's people of today are under general instructions of God's Word as regards all their conduct, and are not to depart therefrom unless it would be under special Divine direction, as were the Prophets of old--such as is not given to any at the present time so far as we are aware.

### **FLEEING FROM WRATH TO COME**

When John speaks of his hearers "fleeing from the wrath to come," we are not to get the thought that he preached, or that the people believed in, the doctrine of eternal torment, and that the words referred to this. Quite to the contrary, there is no such teaching in the Scriptures. The "wrath to come" referred to by John prophetically was the trouble that was about to come upon that nation unless they would receive Messiah, who had not yet been offered to them, but who would shortly appear, and for whose appearance they were to make ready by true repentance and baptism. The "wrath to come" *did come* upon the nation because of its rejection of Messiah, as our Lord and the Apostle Paul specially testify. (See Luke 21:23; Rom. 9:22; 1 Thes. 2:16.) It burned fiercely against them in the great time of trouble which led to the collapse of their national polity in A. D. 60-70, and they have been under that wrath and unable to re-establish themselves as a nation from that day to the present time. We shall find confirmation of this interpretation of the "wrath to come" further on in this lesson.

In John's preaching he found one difficulty, and that was that his hearers were imbued with the thought that they were God's specially chosen, "elect" people, whose glorification had been foretold in the Prophets, and that since there were no better people in the world it was unreasonable to suppose that God would pass by the very best. They reasoned that He must take some, in order to fulfill His promises; and that they were not only the most obedient to His law outwardly, but also were the natural seed of Abraham, to whom the promises were made. Likewise the principal opposition to the teaching of holiness, entire consecration to the Lord, today throughout "Christendom," is the same error. A false theory has gotten into the minds of Christian people,

which leads them to reason that holiness cannot be essential to the Lord's favor. Their process of reasoning is this: out of the sixteen hundred millions of the world's population there are only about three hundred millions that make the slightest profession of Christianity, and this includes all the Greek Catholics, Roman Catholics, and what Bishop Foster (M. E.) designated the "ring-straked and speckled" of Protestantism--infants and all. Now, say they, God must certainly intend to have some, and if He takes all kinds of Christians He will have only comparatively few, and if merely an ambition to be ahead of the devil were to move Him, He could scarcely reject any who claim to be Christians, and who are even half-way decent. Consequently they reason that holiness to the Lord, sanctification of thought and word and deed, cannot be essential to Divine favor, and is therefore rather carrying matters to an extreme. The declaration that only "the pure in heart shall see God," and that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord," are, to them, extreme statements, and must be passed by, or else the word "holiness" must be considered as used in olden times in a very restricted sense, as meaning not openly or violently wicked.

### **THE ELECT NUMBER WILL BE FOUND**

Thus we see that the antitypical Elijah to the Jews encountered the same difficulties that are encountered now by the antitypical Elijah ministering to nominal spiritual Israel. But note John's answer; he laid down the conditions very strictly: Do not permit yourselves to be deceived into thinking that God is under compulsion to accept such as you, and that otherwise His word would become void; do not think that He could not get children of Abraham that would be purer than you, and therefore that He must take you; God is unlimited in power and unlimited in resource, and, if necessary, He could raise up children to Abraham out of these stones--out of some that you consider as far from the possibilities of being Abraham's children as though they were these stones at your feet. And similarly we answer "Christendom" today, that God utterly rejects hypocritical Christianity, as represented by the vast majority of its professors, still blinded by the god of this world, and ignorant of the true character of God and of Jesus Christ whom He has sent; because not pure in heart, not consecrated fully to the Lord. Would that we had a trumpet voice that we might tell the millions of nominal Christendom the true state of the case, and would that they had circumcised ears to hear and reform, and be prepared for the glorious events now due to be ushered in--without being obliged to pass through the great trouble time. All we can assure them is that God will find the full number of His elect, and that the full number is nearly complete now, and that in all it is but a "little flock" to whom it is the Father's good pleasure to give the Kingdom; and that soon these will all be glorified with their glorious Head and Lord, and that then the Kingdom established will be revealed to bless all the families of the earth. Nevertheless, we deeply sympathize with them in the fact that their condition, necessitates that the introduction of the Kingdom shall be with a time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation, and, thank God, shall never again be.--Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:21.

John, proceeding with his discourse, points out to his Jewish hearers that the time of *judgment* had come upon *their nation*. The axe was laid at the root of the trees; every Israelite who was not an Israelite indeed was to be overthrown, and to be cast into the "fire" of trouble with which that Age and national polity terminated. The three and a half years of our Lord's ministry to the Jewish nation, and their final rejection by Him, are represented by the barren fig tree parable, in harmony with the statement of John foregoing.--See Luke 13:6-9.

John evidently struck the chord of fear to some extent, but he struck it properly. There is a proper presentation of the truth, and a proper fear of God and His retribution, which may properly be kept before the mind of the transgressor; but this is wholly different from the terrorizing fear of eternal torment, which plays so important a part in all the theological teaching, directly and indirectly, today, and which has driven some to insanity, some

to skepticism and infidelity, and has hindered the great majority even of saints from appreciating the true character and Plan of our God. Let us present the wrath to come, truthfully, not misrepresenting the character of our God, for assuredly God will not hold them guiltless who blaspheme His holy name.

### **GOOD ADVICE TO ALL**

Under John's preaching the people began to inquire what course they should pursue, and summing the matter up John's instruction was that they should practice justice, mercy, love, generosity; they should avoid violence, extortion, etc.; and should seek to be content with such things as they had. This was excellent advice, and undoubtedly those who followed it would be in just the right condition of heart and mind to welcome the Lord Jesus, and His Good Tidings of *remission of sins through His blood* and thus to become reconciled with the Father. And similarly if any now inquire respecting the coming trouble, the wrath that is to come in the end of this Age upon "Christendom"--What must we do? We answer them, Practice righteousness, truth, godliness, kindness, benevolence, justice, trust, in the Lord, seek to walk in His ways. Or we may quote them the words of the Prophet, specially bearing upon this time, viz., "Seek meekness, seek righteousness; it may be that ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger." (Zeph. 2:3.) And, furthermore, we may rely upon it that those who thus seek righteousness, etc., will be the ones most ready to welcome our King, and His Kingdom, and we may be sure that when in this Harvest time some fail to make their calling and election sure, and prove themselves unworthy of the crowns apportioned to them, the Lord will be pleased to select from among such penitent seekers of righteous-ness some as substitutes to complete His elect Church.

So powerful was John's presentation of the truth, that the people began to wonder whether or not he might be the Coming One, the Messiah, but he set the thought at rest speedily assuring them that he was so inferior to the Messiah that he would be the honor of doing toward Him the most menial service of removing His sandals. Then, having given them a little glimpse of the character of Messiah, he proceeded to tell them respecting His work, that it would be higher than his own, and that those who received Him would receive a higher baptism also: "He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire"--some of them (the few) with the Holy Spirit, the remainder (the mass) with the fire-judgments, the great time of trouble which destroyed their national life and many individual lives.

### **THE WORK OF THE HARVEST**

He gave them an illustration of the matter showing them that they had reached the Harvest time of their Age, and that now a separating was to be expected--the separating of the true wheat from the chaff; and he represented our Lord's work with Israel as being that of a reaper winnowing the "wheat," freeing it from the "chaff" element. How forceful was the figure! How true the facts! Our Lord indeed gathered from that nation all the true "wheat": we may be sure that not a solitary grain was lost. All that wheat was gathered into His barn, into a place of safety, into a higher dispensation--they constitute the beginning or first members of the Gospel Church. It was upon this wheat class that the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, and it has abode with this true Church since. After the separating (winnowing) of the "wheat," and the gathering into the barn, and its baptism of the Holy Spirit, in due time, the "chaff" of that nation was burned up with *unquenchable fire*--a time of trouble which *nothing could stop* or hinder. It will be remembered that various steps were taken to hinder the destruction of the nation of Israel, but all failed: even the Roman Emperor was desirous of preserving the nation, and of establishing order there, and the Roman army went not to destroy them but to establish peace in

their midst; but the Lord had declared that the fire of trouble which He enkindled should not be quenched by any power, that it should do its work to the full; and it did.

Likewise it will be with the great "fire" of trouble with which this Gospel Age shall end, and into which the "tare" class of Christendom will be cast; it will not be an utter destruction of life (although many lives will perish in the great trouble of this Day of Wrath), but it will completely consume earthly governments and Churchianity in a fire of anarchy. Nothing shall quench that fire, or hinder that utter destruction of present systems. But praise God that when this fire shall have consumed the stubble and the falsities and deceptions of present institutions, it will have but prepared the way for the great blessing which He has designed and provided for in His coming Kingdom. This "fire," and the blessing to follow it, are particularly referred to in Zeph. 3:8, 9.

## **JESUS TEMPTED - PART I**

**--OCTOBER 22--LUKE 4:1-30--**

*Golden Text.--"In that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted."--Heb. 2:18*

WITH sin came selfishness--indeed "original sin" sprang from selfishness, which has marked its development at every step for now six thousand years. Selfishness is the mainspring of a battle not only against benevolence and righteousness but against everything that stands in its ambitious way. It has led to all the conflicts of the world, both personal and national. While it is evil and only evil in itself, it may, under God's providences, serve a useful purpose in the development of character. As God stands for every principle of goodness, righteousness, mercy and truth, Satan stands for or represents all the adverse principles of sin, covetousness, injustice, untruthfulness, unprinciple, selfishness in its every form. Sooner or later each individual esteemed worthy of Divine favor and life must be tested along this line of principle-faithfulness to God and the principles of righteousness against lack of principle, selfishness.

The Apostles record the temptation of Jesus along the line of selfishness, after His anointing with the Holy Spirit. Doubtless as a child and as a young man He had temptations along this line such as are common to others, and doubtless His perfection of being made this as nothing, so inwrought must love have been in the very constitution of a perfect being such as He was. It may surprise some that His temptation could be as great, yea, much greater, after the anointing of the Spirit. This, however, was the case. Moreover, it is well to remember that our Golden Text does not refer to the ordinary temptations experienced by our Lord in common with others before His anointing. It was our Lord's trials, temptations and victories as a New Creature that constituted Him the Captain of our Salvation and our pattern--"Tempted in all points like as we [New Creatures] are."

### **LED BY THE SPIRIT INTO TEMPTATION**

We should never voluntarily go into temptation. Reverence, humility and caution should deter us. We should have such a realization of our own imperfection that we would seek to avoid temptation and pass by on the other side. Nevertheless, when temptations do come to us we should be of good courage, remembering that

greater is He who is for us than all they that be against us, that He has promised never to leave or forsake us, and that His strength shall be perfected in our weakness if we will by faith accept of His aid.

We must not expect to escape temptations, trials, difficulties, perplexities, because only through these can we be developed, perfected in character. Only the tried ones could ever be declared overcomers. Sin, error, is all about us, and presented to us not only by the world and Satan but also by the attitudes of our own flesh. If we be without trials, without temptations, without difficulties, we may be sure that we will never be overcomers and never receive the crown of glory and joint-heirship with our Lord, the Head, the Captain, the Leader of the overcomers. We are not forgetting the request of the model prayer, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." But for the foregoing reasons we incline to prefer the rendering of this verse as given in the Emphatic Diaglott, "Abandon us not in temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." As our Lord declared, "It must needs be that offences [trials] come."

Our Lord was led by His own spirit, His own mind, to go into the wilderness and thus indirectly into trials and difficulties there experienced. He sought for retirement, to be alone with God. So it is with the Lord's followers. It is through their holy minds or dispositions, the result of their full consecration to the Lord and their reception of the begetting of His Spirit, that they, too, are led into temptations, trials, difficulties similar to those which our Lord experienced.

### **TEMPTED FORTY DAYS**

The account in Matthew speaks of our Lord's temptation as occurring at the close of His forty days in the wilderness, but Mark and Luke in referring to the same forty days imply that our Lord was tempted for the entire period. Both thoughts are evidently correct: He was tempted during the forty days, tested, tried as respects His own mind, His own disposition to do the Father's will, while the temptation narrated in Matthew (4:1-11), which occurred at the close of the forty days, was a special conflict with Satan--Diabolus.

And we here remark that this name *Diabolus* is always in the Greek used in the singular number, evidently referring to Satan, the prince of demons. The matter is confused before the mind of the English reader by the fact that our common version Bible uses the word devils, in the plural, whereas the Greek in such places is a totally different word, signifying demons.

Errors entertained by many hinder them from properly appreciating the matter of our Lord's temptation. Some, with the theory that He was a spirit being who merely assumed a human body and pretended for a time to be a man, can have no proper appreciation of this account until they drop their misconception and accept the Scriptural declaration that "He who was rich, for our sakes became poor"--that "He was made flesh"--that He was actually the "man Christ Jesus" and no longer the spirit being; but humbly, voluntarily, stripped of His glory, honor and privileges as a spirit being, became subject to all the limitations of a perfect man, corresponding to father Adam and his perfection before he sinned and came under the Divine sentence of death.

Some things our Lord knew most distinctly, other things had not yet been revealed to Him by the Father. Even as the boy of twelve we find that He knew that He had proceeded forth and came from God, that He had come into the world on a special mission, and that He must be about His Father's business. Learning that He could not enter upon the Father's business, "the work Thou gavest Me to do," until He was thirty years of age, He patiently awaited the time and hid His identity and contented Himself with being a faithful son in the humble

sphere in which Divine providence had placed Him. But just as soon as He had reached the appointed age He hastened to make His covenant with God, symbolized by His baptism--namely, a full consecration of His every talent and power to do the Father's will even unto death. At the time noted by our lesson, He had done this and had received the anointing and filling of the Holy Spirit. He now stood at the threshold of His great work, and realizing its importance and that now it was due time for Him to understand the Divine Plan which He was to execute, that He might do it thoroughly and in full accord with the Divine will He sought the wilderness, that in solitude He might know thoroughly the proper course for Him to take in announcing Himself as Messiah to Israel and the world.

### **WORTHY THE LAMB SLAIN**

Symbolically our Lord shows that it was not possible for Him to know the completeness of the Divine Plan until after He had demonstrated His worthiness to be the heir of all things, and until that worthiness was proved by His obedience unto death, even the death of the cross. In the symbols of Revelation He points this out to us, showing how the Divine Plan had long been in the Father's hand a sealed scroll, and how that no one in heaven or earth had been found worthy to open that book or scroll or to understand the particulars of the Divine program until He, as the antitypical Lamb of God, had been slain, and by His sacrifice had demonstrated His worthiness to receive wisdom, honor, dominion and might. Then to Him was the scroll or book of the Divine Plan entrusted in its every detail, that in due time all the wonderful provisions of the Divine Plan might be fully executed in the glorification of the Church and the blessing of all the families of the earth.--See Rev. 5.

Those forty days, we may safely assume, were spent in meditation and prayer, our Lord being led to this course by His spirit of devotion to the Father, His anxiety to do the Father's will in the Father's way. He had neither Bible nor concordances nor other assistance in the study of the Divine predictions, but He had instead the perfect memory, and the eighteen years of hearing the reading of the Law in the Synagogue. We may safely say that He knew the entire Word of God by heart. He had known it for some time, and not only had exercised His own thought upon it but had also inquired of the most learned their views. He evidently realized that it was not due time for Him to have a clear and full understanding of the prophecies until He had received the Holy Spirit--that the Divine revelations were only intended to be understood by those enlightened by the Holy Spirit. He therefore now expected and doubtless realized newer and clearer views of the subjects He had been studying from child hood respecting His personal mission and the manner in which it was to be executed, as foretold in the shadows of the Law and in the veiled testimonies of the Prophets.

### **"TEACH ME THY WILL, O GOD"**

In fancy we may see our Lord meditating upon how He was to be the Mediator of a new covenant, the antitype of Moses, who mediated the Law Covenant. In our minds we may with Him watch the procedure of the going up into the mountain, the receiving of the commission and the preaching of it to the people under a veil, and how this transaction not only represented a first advent but a second advent in glory. We may presume that He studied carefully the type of the Sin Offerings, the Day of Atonement sacrifices, by which propitiation for the sins of the world was to be accomplished.

We may in our mind's eye see Him unraveling the symbol of the typical jubilee year and noting the blessings of the Millennial Age which shall ultimately come to all who should become the Lord's people through Him.

We see Him studying the type of the Israelites bitten by the serpents in the wilderness of Sin, and how their looking with faith upon the brazen serpent was the cure.

We may see Him endeavoring to apply this to Himself as the antitype who should be made sin, treated as the sinner in the interest of the sin-smitten ones.

We may see Him wrestling with the prophetic statements of Isaiah, respecting the one who would be led as a lamb to the slaughter; how he should be a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and that the people of Israel would be ashamed of him and hide as it were their faces from him, giving him no support, no assistance or cooperation in the work he had come to do; how the Lord would lay on him the iniquity of us all, that by his stripes we might be healed.

We see Him wrestling with the statements made by the Prophet Daniel, some of which were in process of fulfilment and therefore to be understood; others sealed by God and impossible to be understood by any waiting times and seasons which the Father had put in His own power, of which neither the Son nor the angels of heaven, any more than others, were informed.

We see Him studying the symbolical representations of the establishment of the Kingdom of heaven at the close of a certain period of the world's history, and how it would be with power and great glory; how previously Messiah would be cut off, not for His own sins but for the sins of the people, and how He would seal up the testimony, anoint the most holy, etc., etc.

### **OUR LORD'S EARNESTNESS**

These studies--interspersed, we may be sure, with prayer--seemingly occupied our Lord's attention so completely, so fully, so thoroughly for those forty days that He had no thought for anything else. We may infer that He neither ate nor slept, for the record is that at the close of the forty days He *afterward* hungered. So intent was His perfect mind upon the great subject with which He wrestled that it absorbed all of His vitality, energy, in this effort to know the Father's will in order that He might do it. We can very readily suppose, too, that He experienced various temptations during these forty days of study; that although He was separate from sinners and all sinful thoughts or ambitions, nevertheless it would be quite a test to His loyalty of purpose to so interpret the Scriptures as to see in them the great sufferings, trials and disappointments which He afterward experienced. Continually there would be the opportunity of taking a different view of the matter--the opportunity of construing the course outlined for Him another way than that which would mean so much of degradation and dishonor to the One despised and rejected of men even unto death, even the death of the cross.

There is a great lesson in all of this for all of the Lord's followers. If it was the wise and proper course for the Master to go aside for the study of the Divine Plan before beginning His public ministry, how much more should His followers feel it incumbent upon them as fallen beings with imperfect judgments to seek counsel of

the Lord's Word and Spirit to ascertain what work the Lord would have them do in His vineyard before beginning any work. If this course were more generally followed there would be far less ranting done in the name of the Lord, fewer would feel that it was their privilege to rush in and work for the Lord without first studying carefully the Divine will or program respecting that work--lest they should be hinderers of the Lord's Plan which they desire to serve.

Let us more and more apply each to himself the Apostle's words to Timothy, "Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth." Until we do study we will have every reason to doubt our preparation or usefulness in the Lord's service. First comes consecration, wholly, unreservedly; and secondly, as the first step in the fulfilling of that vow, comes the study of the Divine will, the Divine Word, the Divine Plan; and following that comes labor in the Lord's vineyard.

### **THE TEMPTER CAME TO HIM**

At the close of the forty days of personal, earnest study, and when our Lord had reached a conclusion respecting the Divine program as outlined through the Law and the Prophets, and when in doing so He was exhausted in mind and in body, then the tempter came, the representative of all subtlety, a liar from the beginning. As the Lord's followers we can from experience say that this is the Adversary's general course--to intrude himself and his temptations at the opportune moment of our greatest weakness. While busily engaged in searching for the Father's will our Lord was not molested by the tempter, but as soon as He had digested the subject and reached a conclusion, and while His perfect but overtaxed human powers needed and sought refreshment, recuperation, that was the moment of the tempter's assault. Let us remember that it is the same with us who are His footstep followers, for He was tempted in all points like as we are.

We have found some of the Lord's faithful people surprised at first because they had so few trials, and we have always admonished such to use such a period of rest for study, for putting on the whole armor of God, that they may be able to stand when the assault shall surely come later on. Apparently the Lord's providences safeguard us at the very beginning of our experiences until we have sufficient opportunity for reaching a firm and definite conclusion in our own minds respecting His will, as presented to us in His Word. Whoever fails to use this period faithfully, earnestly, will find himself so much the weaker, so much the more liable to defeat, when the testings from the Adversary come a little later. It is also to be noted that these peculiar trials and temptations which come to us as the Lord's followers do not reach us until after we have attained the point of full consecration to the Lord. Neither do we have the privilege of coming to a clearer appreciation of the teaching of the Word until after such a consecration.

### **"AS AN ANGEL OF LIGHT"**

The account does not say and we therefore cannot know whether Satan appeared to our Lord personally or not. The fact that He was tempted in all points like as we (His brethren) are seems to imply that Satan did not appear to Him personally, because he does not so appear to us in connection with our temptations. We may be sure, however, if there were any personal appearance it would be that of an angel of light, and not at all as Satan is vulgarly pictured, with hoofs, horns, etc. If Satan were to present himself in any vulgar form to any in harmony



with the Lord, the effect would be to at once disarm the temptation. We may be sure, therefore, that Satan would adopt no such course at any time.

The Apostle puts us on our guard, that rather we are to expect the Adversary's temptations along the line of an angel of light--a minister of the Truth. He always affects to be a helper and not a hinderer of the Lord's people. He would show them how to get along in the world much more smoothly and more happily; he would bless them; he would turn their narrow, rugged path into a path of roses; he would be their friend, their counselor, their guide. Only after they had followed him a while would they find, when well under his power, that he is a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the Truth. As illustrations of some of his misrepresentations in our day note the claims of Theosophists, Spiritualists, and Christian Scientists. These all affect to lift mankind to higher planes, to free them from pains and trials, and to give them a higher wisdom, guidance and, instruction than that which they might receive from the Divine Word and the light which shines therein from the cross of Christ.

Not like as the world was our Lord tempted, not like as we are tempted as natural men and women, but like as we are tempted who have become New Creatures in Christ through a full consecration of our hearts, based upon our justification through His blood. Our Lord's temptations correspond to the temptations of this class only.

Our temptations are from three different quarters, well represented in the three tests put to our Lord by *Diabolus*: First, the flesh, second, the world, third, the Adversary himself. All of our Lord's trials as a New Creature were from these three quarters, and all of the trials of His followers as New Creatures are from the same. Let us, while following our Lord's experience, apply the same to ourselves.

### **TEMPTATION FIRST--THE FLESH**

Self-gratification is to some extent proper, but there are limitations. Those who are consecrated to the Lord may not seek to gratify themselves, their appetites, in any manner contrary to the Divine arrangement--to do so would be sin. This rule applied to our Lord as well as to all His followers. After His forty days' fast He was very hungry, and the tempter's suggestion to Him was that of a friend. Jesus was reminded that He was the Son of God, that He had every right to all the favors of God, that His hunger was a legitimate craving of nature, that there was nothing sinful in being hungry, and that He had therefore, the right, the privilege, to reasonably gratify His appetite. All this was true. The next suggestion was, You have the power--You have just received the anointing of the Holy Spirit--You may therefore at Your pleasure command these stones and they would turn to bread; power to do this is vested in You by God. Use that power now for the supply of Your needs. Why should You hunger? Take counsel of a friend, appreciate my interest in You; if I were an enemy I would prefer to see You starve to death or at least prefer to see You suffer.

How insidious was this temptation! It had in it many elements of truth, and apparently was kindly and well meant. There was just the one flaw which our Lord's keen mind at once discerned, and His loyal heart at once repudiated the advice. He reasoned, This Holy Spirit, this power I have received by My anointing, was not intended to be used for self-gratification; it was My begetting of the Spirit as a New Creature, to the intent that as a great High Priest I might lay down My life, might sacrifice Myself as a human being. If now I should use this holy power, which was given Me for the purpose of sacrificing, in an opposite direction, to heal, restore, to

strengthen the mortal body which I have just delivered to death, it would be wrong--it would be using the power of God in an opposite direction from the Divine intention. However hungry I feel I cannot do this. My life is in My Father's hands. I have been here these forty days under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, seeking to know and to do the Father's will, I have not forfeited My life by disobedience, I may therefore conclude that while I am thus about My Father's business naught shall harm My Father's child. Hence I conclude that My hunger will not prove really injurious to Me. My answer to this temptation of the Adversary will not impugn his motives in mentioning it, for that would be unkind and needless. My reply is: Bread is not the only thing by which man, shall live every word of God is a word of life. I have been feeding upon this heavenly food, I am strong in My spirit, in My determination to do My Father's will. I will not use improper means for My refreshment of body. The Father will be able to make up to Me whatever disadvantage may accrue through My faithfulness to Him. His will be done in Me.

### **SPIRITUAL PRIVILEGES NOT FOR SELFISH USES**

How are the Lord's followers tempted as He was in this respect? We have no power to turn stones into bread. No! But having received the Holy Spirit, it is within the range of our opportunities to use the same contrary to our consecration, to use it for our physical benefit--for instance, to make merchandise of the Gospel, to preach that which would be pleasing to the natural man and bring us worldly applause and approval and wealth and social caste, etc. This would be selling our birthright for the mess of pottage. Those who see the matter in its true light, those who are in the right attitude of heart to appreciate the matter, will not do this but will say, Natural food alone will not sustain us. We cannot live except as we have the smile, the favor, the approval of the Lord our God. To live without that would not be living for us.

Another temptation coming to some of the Lord's consecrated ones along this line would seem to be in the teaching that to some extent prevails, that they should go to God with every ailment and pain and thus use their privileges as anointed members of the Body of Christ for the healing Of their mortal bodies, which they have already in consecration surrendered to death. Would this be right? Would it not be along the same lines as our Lord's temptation to use the privileges and opportunities and powers that were His as the anointed one to comfort, strengthen and upbuild His mortal body? We believe that the cases are analogous, and that it is highly improper for any of the Lord's people who have received of His Spirit, who have made a consecration of their lives, to ask for any special intervention of the Lord's power on their behalf, to attempt in any manner to use their privileges as members of the Royal Priesthood to minister to their flesh.

On the contrary, so far as their fallen flesh is concerned, they have all the rights and privileges of the whole world to food and raiment and anything that in the Lord's providence may come to their attention as being healthful, strengthening, call this food or call it medicine as we please. It is our Holy Spirit privileges as Royal Priests that cannot be invoked for earthly advantage, because this relationship to our Lord was not granted us for such a purpose, but rather that under this Holy Spirit relationship we might the more efficiently lay down our lives for the brethren. It is in vain that some reason that they merely desire physical health that they may better perform their sacrifices to the Lord. The Scriptures declare that obedience is better than sacrifice.

Let us accept such temporal, physical blessings and mercies as Divine providence grants us with gratitude, with thankfulness, and let our holy spirits, our holy minds, intentions, so use our mortal bodies as to make the best use possible of our talents, opportunities, and conditions for the service of the Lord, not asking for resuscitation

or special strength as our Lord did not, 'but accepting such favors as the Father might grant to us unsolicited--"Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him." "After all these things [food, raiment, health, etc.] do the Gentiles seek."--Matt. 6:8, 32.

*(Continued in next issue)*

## **THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM**

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### **CHRISTIAN LIFE AND EXPERIENCE**

THOSE who have truly repented of sin, and have advanced to a state of a grateful yielding of the will to God, to Christ, invariably become conscious of inner tendencies and longings to be Godlike, Christlike, pure and holy. By repenting of sin, we mean that a person has been moved to sorrow and contrition through a realization that sin is displeasing to God (Against Thee . . . have I sinned") and has turned away from it and experienced the blessed consciousness, through faith in Christ as a Savior, of sins forgiven. It is also invariably the case that such an one realizes to more or less an extent these longings after holiness satisfied; and this is the Divine intention. (Matt. 5:6.) "Even as a bright intelligent schoolboy, conscious of the importance of education, in order to life's success, feels the necessity and possibility, and therefore the motive to use his utmost endeavor to attain it." To have such desires, longings, aspirations, are indeed evidences of regeneration, of entire consecration. To lose these, in any measure, would be evidences of spiritual decline.

The first impulses after the beginning of the new life, are always toward a loving obedience to the Divine will, a hunger and thirst after righteousness, a reverential fear to displease God, a sorrow and regret at the discovery of any evil inclinations and tendencies in the life, a quick sensibility to God's voice speaking through His Word, a measure of delight in prayer, and a love for the society of God's people--those who possess like aspirations, desires, longings, and who are seeking diligently to have them realized more and more. It may, indeed, be truthfully said that no person was ever truly converted and had yielded his will to God, in whom all these things were not to a greater or less extent existing.

It is just at this point that two errors, indeed two dangers, are encountered. One is that of thinking that an absolute perfection is attainable in the present state; the other is a failure to see that there is an attainment, a state of grace that is not only possible to reach, but must be reached in order to be at last accepted to joint-heirship in the Kingdom. As is generally true in matters of this kind, the truth is found in the safe middle course.

The first error is in the failure to see how far-reaching are the effects of the "fall" which brought man, not only under condemnation, but separated him from his God. One of the Scriptures describing this condition informs us that the creature was made subject to vanity, i.e., weakness, frailty. This weakness is manifest in every part of man's nature, physical, mental and moral; not that the fall has imparted a new, sinful nature, and made man

totally depraved, but rather it has corrupted and perverted the original human perfection. The will is weak, the heart is measurably depraved.

### **"BE YE HOLY FOR I AM HOLY"**

This error is manifested in a failure to keep in mind the fact that the Divine character of holiness must ever and always be the standard of character to be patterned after. Not the least of the evil effects of the "fall," is man's ignorance of the Divine character and perfection. This character of holiness and standard of perfection was exhibited in the Lord Jesus as He lived and dwelt amongst men. He definitely made known in a few words what this pattern of character is--"Be ye also perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." He, of all the human family, possessed and maintained this standard of perfection.

It is very necessary, in this connection, to observe carefully the Scriptural definition of sin. "Sin is the transgression of the Law." (1 John 3:5.) This includes not only the outward act of sin, but also the desire and purpose. "He that hateth his brother is a murderer." "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." (Matt. 5:27, 28.) "All unrighteousness is sin." (1 John 5:7.) "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." (Jas. 4:17.) "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." (Rom. 14:23.) As we examine the Scriptures on this subject we discover that there are sins of commission and omission, sins of the heart and sins of ignorance. The Scriptures also speak of "weights"--"Laying aside every weight," etc. As we come to realize that a certain thing, not in itself sinful, becomes a hindrance to our progress in the Narrow Way, it should be striven against.

Those who keep before the mind the Divine standard of holiness, perfection, as exhibited in the Holy One, Christ, will ever realize in the present life a coming short. This will cause the Christian, in whatever stage or state of Divine grace, to feel deeply a sense of unworthiness, and to appreciate and trust in the Divine arrangement, by which we are made acceptable in His sight through a living faith in the merit of the precious blood. This is the way the Apostle expresses it: "Having in love previously marked us out for sonship through Christ Jesus for Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, . . . by whom, *through His blood*, we possess the redemption--the forgiveness of offences--according to the opulence of His favor." (Eph. 1:5-7.) To make the mistake of supposing that there is an absolute perfection to be attained in the present life is productive of evil consequences. It causes those who profess it to lower the Divine standard, to excuse or ignore the Scriptural definitions of sin, and leads, if the error is not discovered and abandoned, to that most heinous of all sins, hypoc-risy.

### **TRANSFORMATION THROUGH THE TRUTH**

On the other hand, there is great danger of going to the other extreme--of falling into the error of belittling the Divine power to keep us from the commission of those things that we know are sinful and displeasing to God; in other words, of imbibing the error that because of our imperfection it is impossible to live any other kind of a life than one of continual defeat, of failure to overcome and have victory over our natural besetments. There is a disposition on the part of those who hold to this error to excuse themselves and to say that God overlooks these defections; and failing to seek forgiveness at the "mercy seat," to suppose that these failures are covered by the

merit of the precious blood. The Scriptures are very plain in their teaching that every time we are conscious of doing wrong, we must seek God's forgiveness. If another has been injured by us, forgiveness must be sought of the one injured, and until this is sought or the determination is fixed to do this, God's forgiveness is withheld. Furthermore, it is required of us that we not only seek and obtain forgiveness, but Divine grace, Divine power, in order that such a sin may not be repeated. There is a certain measure of Divine power realized by a belief of the Truth, and it is possessed by all true believers. A simple belief in the true Gospel exerts such an influence on the life and actions that it acts as a restraining power over the life and conduct. However, this is only one phase of the Divine power that works unto godliness. The consecrated believer is represented as having placed himself in a condition where he needs to trust momentarily for Divine grace to help him, to enable him to overcome the various besetments daily. This Divine power is given in special times of need.

It is realized by faith, by trusting God to give it when needed. Its possession when specially needed is dependent on our meeting the Divinely required conditions. While this power comes from God, the measure we may possess is made dependent upon us. Those who have come to realize the most fully their own utter weakness are the ones who are the best prepared to receive this Divine power when needed. The condition of the mind, the attitude required to receive this grace in time of need, is very simple, and yet despite its simplicity, few learn how to preserve that condition and attitude just in proportion as the believer heeds the injunction of the Savior to "watch and pray," just in that proportion is the Divine power received, and the overcoming of evil is realized.

### **THE OVERCOMING LIFE**

The impression that seems to prevail among many of the Lord's professed followers, that the Christian should expect to be continually failing and to be overcome, to be continually stumbling, is not based on the Scriptures. Some have settled down to this erroneous conclusion, and certain Scriptures are cited to excuse them--to support this error. We believe this to be an error almost as serious as the one already referred to--that it is possible to attain a life of absolute perfection. Among the Scriptures quoted to support this error are the words of St. Paul recorded in Romans 7:19, "For the good that I would [do], I do not: but the evil which I would not [do], that I do." This Scripture is not only quoted to sustain this error, but it is quoted also thoughtlessly, by force of habit, by some who believe in the overcoming life in Christ. It does not seem to require a very careful examination of these words in the light of the context, to show that they were not designed to describe Christian experience. While it may, and doubtless does describe the experience that many Christians have, because of a failure to realize their privileges in Christ--one of which is to have Divine help and power to overcome the daily besetments--it certainly does not describe true Christian experience, the experience of the sons of God. It surely was not intended by St. Paul to describe his experience after he was brought out from under the bondage of the Law Covenant into the light and liberty of the Covenant of Grace. This will be seen from his words in describing the miserableness of this experience. These words are found in verse 24, as he sums up and enforces the matter he is discussing: "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"--margin "this body of death." Surely such words do not describe Christian experience; Christian experience is not (as Moffatt translates it) to feel like a "miserable wretch."

St. Paul is describing in this chapter (and he knew well how to describe it) the experience of one who is seeking to obtain God's favor, God's approval, by the works of the Law. He well knew what this experience was, as he in one period of his life lived under the Law. It did not give him assurance of God's favor, that he pleased God, because he was always failing in some particular point. It did not give him peace (that which Christ gives), for the same reason. His own early instruction and environment taught him that the Law was just and good. He

recognized that to obtain God's approval, he would be required to keep it. He tried to the best of his ability to keep it, but found that he was unable to do so. He was, therefore, all the time experiencing condemnation, a certain dread of coming judgment. There was no blessedness in this kind of a life. Indeed, to the more sincere person--to the one who was the most desirous of pleasing God--it could be described only as a miserable, a wretched experience.

### **DELIVERANCE FROM THE LAWS CONDEMNATION**

The only way that a deliverance from conscious condemnation could be realized by one under those conditions and circumstances would be by ignoring God's perfect Law, and by substituting for the same the traditions of the elders, as many Jews did in Christ's day. The object St. Paul had in writing these words was his desire to magnify the power of the Gospel of Christ. In the beginning of his theological discussion in chapter 1, we hear him saying: "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." In the 7th chapter, after showing that the Law of God brought the knowledge of sin, and the breaking of the Law brought only death--brought an experience that was well illustrated and described as like that of a criminal condemned and sentenced to the punishment of having a dead body fastened upon his back, and being compelled to carry it around--having reached the climax by relating this as an illustration of the experience of one who is endeavoring, to secure God's favor by keeping perfectly the Law, he continues to enforce the truth contained in the illustration by crying out for deliverance--"Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" Then follows the answer, which was designed to magnify the power of the great Deliverer, Christ. "I thank God, he says, "through Jesus Christ my Lord." "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."\*--Rom. 7:24, 25; 8:1.

\* The words that follow immediately, are placed by some translations a part of verse 25, which "seems the only logical position before the climax of verse 24."

The experience of the trustful, intelligent Christian is next described by St. Paul. He is represented as having the spirit of sonship, as distinguished from the spirit of bondage; i.e., he has not only come into favor, into fellowship with God, but he has become a son. Instead of the spirit of bondage that the Law gave, he has received the spirit of sonship. He is represented as having become possessed of a *new* spirit, a new mind--he has become spiritually minded, the characteristics of which are "life and peace," not attained through keeping perfectly the Law, but rather through coming into Christ, who kept the Law, and voluntarily for us, met the penalty, the righteousness of the Law being reckonedly fulfilled in us who walk after the spirit.

St. Paul again describes the Christian life in contrast with the life under the Law: "For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God;" and as another translator renders the words which follow: "Since you have not received a slavish spirit to fear again; but you have received a filial spirit in which we say Abba, Father."

After describing the blessedness of such a realization of sonship, and the witness of the spirit thereunto--that we have been called to joint-heirship with Christ--the Apostle goes on to show that we are being dealt with as sons, by a kind, loving, all-wise Father, whose great design in calling us into this realization of sonship is that we might be conformed in our character into the likeness of the One who delivered us from the bondage of fear-

-the bondage of sin and death. And in order to this end, He is overruling in our affairs so as to cause all things, all the trials, difficulties --everything--to work together for the accomplishment of this purpose.

### **SECURITY IN THE GREAT REFUGE**

After portraying the wonderful character of this sonship that has superseded the bondage of sin and death, He then describes the safety, the security, enjoyed by those who have become God's sons. "What shall we then say to these things," or, as another translator renders it, "What then shall we say about these?" "If God be for us who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, of peril, or sword?" St. Paul closes this description of the sons of God and their blessed state and privileges in the words: "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. 8:28-39). Who can believe that the child of God who has come to a realization of what he is and what his future destiny is to be, and of God's protecting care and oversight over him, as here described by God's inspired messenger could reasonably have such sentiments as would cause him to cry out, "O miserable wretch that I am."

It will therefore be seen that one of the greatest indeed, the most important matter for God's children to keep in mind in their earthly pilgrimage, in order to be overcomers in the various trials, temptations, and sore besetments, which of necessity they are Divinely ordained to encounter, is to guard well, to preserve this spirit of sonship, this spirit of filial relationship to God, to ever realize that our overcoming the world is by faith, not, only in God's power to enable us to overcome, but faith in the precious blood to make us acceptable continually. It is written of some of Christ's suffering, tried ones of old, that they "overcame by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony." Let us therefore hold fast to these Divine provisions given to us in order to preserve the spirit of sonship.

### **HOW BLESSED THE TRUE REST**

St. Paul in another epistle warns some whom he addresses, some who had received the spirit of sonship, who had entered upon the new life that is "hid with Christ in God," who had been delivered from the bondage of sin and death, and who had come out into the light and liberty which is in Christ, of the danger of getting back under the Law and, of course, the Law's experiences, and yet continuing to profess faith in Christ. Addressing some in the Galatian Church who were at least in danger of doing this, by giving heed to false teachers, he said: "Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the spirit, are you now made perfect in the flesh? Received ye the spirit [of sonship] by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of faith?" (Gal. 3:1-3.) The Apostle is not here saying that the Christian should ignore the moral law, the law of commandments. The ones addressed were making the moral law and its ceremonial observances a necessary addition to Christ's sacrifice to be the ground of their acceptance with God. Doing this could have but the effect of bringing them into bondage and condemnation again; and thus losing the spirit of sonship they would lose that power which alone would enable them to keep the Law in its spirit, the law of love toward God, toward the brethren and toward their neighbors, How blessed is the state of those who fully enter into their privileges in Christ. Such are no longer servants but sons, not even

infants under laws. (John 15:15; Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:1-6.) How blessed is the true rest, the deep peace that comes to God's sons through faith in the finished work of Christ, which rest and peace neither the world nor the Law could give, and which, from those free in Christ, cannot be taken away. The power that comes with the spirit of sonship to overcome the world and sin cannot be too strongly emphasized. It is the failure to realize this, a failure to have the continued consciousness of sonship, that is the cause of much of the failure in the Christian life.

### **"WALK IN THE SPIRIT"**

Another utterance of St. Paul that is frequently quoted, or rather misquoted, to excuse disobedience to the will of God is found in Galatians 5:17. It reads in our Common Version: "For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." The last sentence is generally quoted, "we cannot do the things that we would like to do." This is very evidently true. Even with our best endeavors we come short of that absolute perfection that was seen alone in Christ, our only pattern.

However, it is misquoted to teach that it is utterly impossible to live a life of obedience to the known will of God; in other words, that the power of the fleshly mind is stronger than that of the new mind, the spirit. If the context is carefully examined, it will be found that this is not the thought intended to be conveyed by the Apostle, as will be seen from the preceding verse, which reads, "Walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." He informs us in verses 19-21 what the works of the flesh are. "Now the works of the flesh are manifestly these--fornication, impurity, debauchery, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, quarrels, jealousies, resentments, altercations, factions, sects, envyings, inebrieties, revellings, and things similar to these, respecting which I tell you before, even as I previously told you, that those who practice such things shall not inherit God's Kingdom."

It is not conceivable even to a worldly man that it is necessary for a Christian to fall to overcome these sins. The Apostle's words, "Walk in the spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh," evidently refer to these gross sins. It will therefore be seen that the thought intended to be conveyed by the Apostle's words, "so that ye cannot do the things that ye would," is not that there is not sufficient power communicated to us by the receiving of the spirit of sonship to enable us to keep from the commission of such gross sins, but rather that the spirit enables us to gain a mastery and to rise above these things in thought, word, and deed. The thought then is that on account of the infirmity of our earthen vessels we cannot do *perfectly* the things that we would, but the warfare is to go on, and we are to continue to make progress in subduing the fleshly mind and bringing it into subjection to the new mind.

The spirit's indwelling is sure to produce in one, cleanness, teachableness, and holiness. It is therefore of great importance that we notice the trend of our lives, the character of our motives, and the degree of our consecration. If we find these are in the direction of more love to God, a more perfect faith, humility, and a desire and determined purpose to be holy in our words and actions, we may be sure that we are in the right way. If we find ourselves settling down to the average condition of professed Christians, we are not in the right place. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to seal us unto the day of redemption. "This earnest or seal of sonship is the Spirit of love which is at-one with the Father and all His holy arrangements, crying out, Abba, Father; I delight



to do Thy will, O my God. He who has this seal or mark of sonship is he who not only seeks to do the will of the Father, but doing it finds it 'not grievous,' but delightful.--1 John 5 -3.11\*

### **THAT YE PUT ON THE NEW MAN**

The spirit or mind of Christ possessed by all the sons of God is sometimes called a New Creation. (2 Cor. 5:17.) The receiving of the mind of Christ is only the beginning, the starting of this New Creature.

\*Studies, Vol. V, p. 247.

How important it is then that we understand the process whereby it is developed. The New Creature is not a giving of new organs to think with, but rather new things for the old organs to think about; not new organs to love with, but new things to love; not new things to hate with, but the old organs caused to hate what once was loved; not new organs to rejoice with, but new things for the old organs to rejoice in; not new organs to delight in new pleasures, but new pleasures for the old organs to delight in. It is, therefore, as the Scriptures teach, a *renewing* so far as the organs are concerned, but entirely new things as far as the objects for the old organs to operate upon is concerned. This is what the Apostle means when he says: "That ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; *and be renewed in the spirit of your mind*; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Of the Christian he says: "Lie not one to another, seeing that *ye have put off* the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him."--Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:9-10.

The question then is one proper to be asked, If absolute perfection or holiness is unattainable in the present life, what then is attainable; nay, what must be attained? In the language of another, we reply: "We must get to the place where we will be free from all intentional sin or imperfection; where our hearts, our new minds, will be opposed to sin in every sense and degree; where we will be walking not after the flesh, but after the spirit, as close to the spirit of God's law as possible. If then we examine ourselves and find we have done any less than we are able to do to maintain a righteous standard of life; less than we are able to do to preserve our fellowship and relationship to the Lord and His people; less than we are able to do in upholding the standard of righteousness before the world, we should seek forgiveness."

Another question is also proper: To what extent will the New Creature, when at the mark, be able to control and govern the flesh? "The degrees of control will vary much, according to the degree of imperfection with which the mortal body is afflicted. Our blemishes of the flesh sometimes momentarily stumble us into an unloving word or act, which if repented of, will not be reckoned against us and put us away from the mark and the loving acceptableness of our Lord which the mark represents. The only standard we can set forth is, that the new nature would be very regretful, very sorrowful in respect to any lacks or errors of its mortal body. The Lord would know of the New Creature's endeavors to control the mortal body by the degrees of its grief in connection with every error, and its continual renewed effort to bring every power of the body and even every thought into complete subjection to the will of Christ. Any sympathy with sin is an evidence that the New Creature is not at the mark."

Temptations to slackness of service, to withhold parts of our sacrifice, to deal unkindly, uncharitably with our brethren, unkindly with our neighbors, or ungenerously with our enemies, are among the things that constitute testings at the mark. St. Paul was at the mark years before his death. May it be so with all of us.

## A GRAND CONVENTION

THE Convention held at Providence, September 22-24, did not fall any whatever behind the gatherings in that city in previous years the Lord was with us by His Holy Spirit, which was manifested in the faces, the words, the conduct of the brethren. It was good to be there. As usual there were those who claimed this to be the best Convention they had ever attended. No doubt, personal growth in grace and knowledge and in the spirit of the Lord has much to do with this greater appreciation of our opportunities as they are coming to us year by year and day by day. To the impure nothing is pure, to the discontented nothing is happifying; to those who have come into personal relationship with the Lord and who are resting in His promises, there is a blessing, a refreshment, a strength, an encouragement, every time the precious things are touched, handled, mentioned. We thanked God as we noticed the various manifestations of growth in grace amongst His people. What manner of persons ought we to be in view of our glorious relationship, our grand hopes, our precious fellowship with the Lord and with the brethren!

The gathering at Providence was indeed a family reunion. The simplicity and freedom from organizational machinery carried us back to the days of primitive Christianity--the Apostolic period of the Church's history, when believers were drawn together, not by any human scheme or human bondage, but simply by the power of the love of God and His Holy Spirit. As Christians then came together to comfort one another and to build one another up in the most holy faith, so indeed it seemed at Providence. The spirit of service seemed to pervade all the dear friends in attendance. Each seemed on the lookout to see in what manner he or she could serve others and make them more happy or more comfortable. As a result all were happy. A sweet spirit of peace and order prevailed, which reminded us so much of the Great Convention which we are all hoping soon to attend.

The brethren in their testimonies told of a work of grace going on in their lives; that the great Heavenly Shepherd was leading them--sometimes, indeed, through the vale of shadows--trials and reverses--but even in such experiences His great love and higher wisdom was discerned, as the Wise Husbandman pruneth the vine, that it may bring forth more fruit.

All the services and discourses were impressive. As the Prophet predicted, "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another" of the things, of the truths, of the lines of thought concerning which we have full assurance in the Word of God. The friends were again reminded of their present mission among men that of so conducting themselves as to have the Christ character perfected in them. This was seen to be the "great work" in which the early Church was engaged. This work of developing the fruits and graces of the spirit has never been appreciated by the world, nor is it now; nevertheless we are not to resort to methods to please men. The present mission of the Church is not to specially effect a change in the affairs of men, neither a work of converting the world, nor smiting them or present institutions; but rather that of quietly letting our light shine through the simple testimony such as was given by the early Church concerning Jesus and the resurrection.

There are still those who have hearing ears. This was manifest at Providence in the Sunday afternoon service, which was intended principally for the public.

The excellent attention given to the Message of Heavenly Love, and the expressions of interest following the meeting, gave evidence indeed that there are those who still hunger and thirst after righteousness. It appears that there are still those who are being added to the membership of the sacrificial Christ, and who desire to walk the Narrow Way in fulfilment of the Heavenly Calling.

Though the matter of large numbers is not by any means the first consideration, the good number in attendance at Providence was indeed pleasing--the largest being about 230 during the Sunday afternoon service. The Convention seemed altogether too short as the closing sessions were reached; and as usual the friends were loath to part. As they did so, however, they bade one another to be of good courage and to hold fast to the great things of which they had laid hold, that thus they might make sure of participation in the glorious assembly of the Church of the Firstborn in glory by and by.

## **BEREAN STUDIES IN THE REVELATION**

### STUDY CXLIV--OCTOBER 1

#### **THE FIRST RESURRECTION--Rev. 20:5, 6**

(771) What are the reasons for considering the first clause of verse 5 unauthentic? How may the text be understood to be in harmony with the general teaching of the Scriptures that the world of mankind will be raised from the dead before the close of the thousand years? H '21-38.

(772) What is the thought in the expression "Blessed and holy," of verse 6? H '21-38.

(773) What is implied in the words, "First Resurrection"? H '21-38, 39.

(774) Show from other Scriptures what class is referred to by the expression "over these the Second Death hath no power."

(775) What is signified by the titles "Kings" and "Priests"? Explain how the thought of this text harmonizes with other Scriptures which describe the work of this class. H '21-39.

### STUDY CXLV--OCTOBER 8

#### **THE LITTLE SEASON--Rev. 20:7**

(776) What is implied in the statement that Satan would be bound that he might deceive the nations no more till the thousand years have expired? H '21-39.

(777) What would seem to be the reason why the earthly character and the details of the thousand-year reign are not portrayed in this vision.? Where do we find these described at length? Cite passages. H '21-39.

(778) What classes do we find closely associated with the thousand-year reign? What is the purpose in the loosing of Satan at the close of this reign? H '21-39.

(779) What seems to be the particular design or purpose in the visions recorded in this chapter and the two succeeding ones? H '21-40.

(780) What is the thought among expositors in general as to those who will be living on the earth during the Millennium? At what time was further light on this feature of the Lord's Plan revealed? H '21-40.

## **JESUS TEMPTED - PART II**

**--OCTOBER 22--LUKE 4:1-30--**

*Golden Text.--"In that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted."--Heb. 2:18.*

### **TEMPTATION THE SECOND--THE WORLD**

SATAN did not stop to argue the question; he saw that it would be useless as soon as he perceived that the Lord's stand had been firmly taken. And so we also have the promise, "Resist the tempter and he will flee from you."--Jas. 4:7

But although Satan fled, desisted from the first temptation, he speedily brought another, still in a friendly manner. Paraphrased, his proposition was this: "I carry you in mind to the roof of the southern wing of the Temple, which overlooks the Valley of Hinnom (Gehenna). A leap from that altitude would attract the attention of all the people, especially the most religious class, if done at the hour of the day when large crowds gather in the Temple. It would be a wonderful way of announcing your mission and showing at the same time the Divine power which is in you. And there is a Scripture which implies that this was to be the way you would make an announcement of your Messiahship. It reads, 'He shall give His angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up lest thou dash thy If foot against a stone.' (Psa. 91:11, 12.) This Scripture would undoubtedly be fulfilled by the leap I am suggesting, and the people, realizing its fulfilment, would apply the Scripture directly to you and would all give attention to you as Messiah. They would all as a whole become your followers, and your mission would be thoroughly launched in one day." Longfellow practically pictures the scene:

"Unto the holy Temple on Moriah,  
With its resplendent domes and manifold  
Bright pinnacles of gold.  
Where they wait thy coming, O Messiah!  
Lo, I have brought thee!  
Let thy glory here  
*Be manifest and clear.*  
*"Reveal thyself by royal act and gesture*  
*Descending with the bright triumphant host*  
*Of all the highermost*  
*Archangels, and about thee as a vesture*  
*The shining clouds and all thy splendors show*  
*Unto the world below."*

*Again the suggestion had the appearance of being a friendly one. Could it be that Satan was really interested in the Lord's mission? Could it be that whereas he had been the tempter at first he was now sincerely desirous of undoing his work and becoming a co-laborer with and a helper of the Lord Jesus in His mission? Would it not be a great item in itself to gain first of all the great tempter who had misled so many, and, by converting him, to begin the work with his cooperation? And were not his words wise? Would it not provoke a general comment all through Palestine, and awaken the people to a realization of the power of God in their midst in the person of Jesus?*

### **THOU SHALT NOT TEMPT GOD**

All of these thoughts and many more doubtless came to our Lord in connection with the tempter's suggestion. But His study of the Divine Plan during those forty days, and the conclusions He there reached, quickly settled our Lord's decision that He could not take such a course, that it would not be consistent with the Divine Plan which He saw outlined in the Law and the Prophets, and that anyway such a procedure would not be according to proper lines, reasonable conduct; that in thus leaping from the Temple parapet He would in a measure be tempting God by going contrary to the established law of gravitation. He could readily see that if in the performance of some obligation, some duty He should miss His footing and fall from the Temple, that the Lord would be able to protect Him, that He would receive no injury; but it would be quite another matter for Him to adopt a plan for serving God that was contrary to what He recognized to be a law of nature. Not by merely curious wonder-working was He to be known to the people but by the working of the works of Him who sent Him; by giving illustrations, in the healing of the sick and the blind and the lame, of the great work of God in restitution which would be accomplished through Him later, during the Millennial Age. The Adversary had no more to say, it would have been useless; he left Him so far as that temptation was concerned.

Have the followers of Jesus temptations along this line? Yes, we answer. The world continually looks to those who confess their relationship to the Lord as sons and who profess to have received the spirit of adoption, and urges them to show or attempt to show some marvel in His favor, if they would prove that they are specially the Lord's children.

## **MISAPPLICATION OF SCRIPTURES**

Note in connection with this temptation of our Lord that the Adversary quoted Scripture in support of his position, and that our Lord met the temptation not only upon reasonable, logical grounds, but with the Scriptures also. The lesson in this is that we not only need to have the Bible in our possession and be able to read it, but we also need the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the spirit of a sound mind, in our application of the Word to the affairs of life. Our Lord did not dispute that the Father could give the angels a charge over Him to bear up His feet to preserve Him from injury, but He did reason correctly and in harmony with the Word that it would be wrong for Him to tempt the Lord, to try the Lord, to test the Lord's ability. Instead of proving the Lord and having Him cooperate with a wonder-working spirit, we should the more carefully investigate the teachings of the Divine Plan, to ascertain and follow the course marked out for us in the Lord's providences, our reasonable service, even to the extent of the using up of our mortal bodies in reasonable methods, in the promulgation of the Truth.

In the light of the unfolding of God's Plan we see that the living members of the Church constitute the feet of the Body of Christ--the last members. We see further that in the prophecy which Satan quoted reference is had to the serious difficulties and trials of our day which would precede the feet members, "The hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."--Rev. 3:10.

We see that in our day there is a stumbling-stone permitted for the testing of our faith and patience and loyalty; that whoever is of the proper character will be aided of the Lord to victory, so that the stumbling stone to such will be a stepping-stone to higher riches of grace and blessing. We hear the Apostle speaking of our day and saying, "Who shall be able to stand?" (Rev. 6:17) And the answer is that all the faithful in Christ, all the true members of the elect Body, will stand in this day of testing, because the Lord will give His messengers a charge, a message in their interest, that they may bear them up in their hands by their power, lest they should be stumbled in this time. Nothing shall be able to stumble, to deceive, the very elect.--Matt. 24:24.

## **TEMPTATION THIRD--THE DEVIL**

All of these temptations were of the devil, but from different standpoints. The third one was Satan's own temptation in a special sense or degree, in that it was along the subtle lines which he himself has seemed to follow in all his work as an adversary of God and of righteousness.

In this temptation the Lord is taken, not physically but in the spirit of His mind, up into a high mountain--a very exalted kingdom. Physically He was all this time in the desert near Jerusalem, and as a matter of fact there is neither in that desert nor anywhere in the world a mountain from which all the kingdoms of the world could be viewed, except with the mind's eye. The very high mountain or high kingdom superior to all earthly kingdoms was Satan's own dominion of the world. For a long time by usurpation he has been the prince of this world, who now worketh in the hearts of the children of disobedience, and who blinds the minds of those who believe not the Gospel. (2 Cor. 4:4.) Not that Satan is known to be the ruler and is recognized as such, nor that God has given him this dominion, but by deceiving mankind he has usurped the control of their minds. He is the great

deceiver of whom we read that in the Millennial Age our Lord Jesus shall bind that he shall deceive the peoples no more.--Rev. 20:3.

In this temptation Satan seems to have entered sympathetically with our Lord in His work, as though he had said to Him, "I see that you are bent upon doing a thorough work and that to some extent you realize the difficulties which are before you--the impossibility of bringing order out of present confusion. You see the world of mankind steeped in sin and ignorance and superstition, taking pleasure in war, licentiousness and falsehood. You long to recover them, to establish a dominion of righteousness in which all the people shall be blessed and brought to see the advantage of obedience to God, of lives of peace, sobriety and happiness. I am with you in this matter. I also deplore the wretched condition of the world; I have been a witness to its degradation for four thousand years, and am now ready to join with you or rather to have you join with me in the work of lifting the world out of its deplorable condition, if you will but recognize me in connection with the dominion of earth. This is the short road to all that you desire to accomplish for man, and it is the only road, for you may well judge that if you do not take up with my proposition I will oppose you at every step and you see what my influence is amongst men. Not only will you yourself have most rugged experiences, but all who will attempt to cooperate with you I would oppose, so that there would practically be no opportunity for doing the good you have come into the world to accomplish except as you have my assistance and cooperation."

### **"HIM ONLY SHALT THOU SERVE"**

Our Lord's answer came promptly; we might paraphrase it thus: "O, Lucifer, it is true that you have great power, that you could cooperate, that you could also on the contrary oppose the work in which I am engaged and to which I have just consecrated My life. You rightly judge that My flesh shrinks from such a terrible conflict as I realize is before Me, and that if the work could be accomplished in an easy, peaceable manner it would be My joy to have it so. But I remind you that My life is not consecrated to the work but to the Father, My God, and from this standpoint you are not only God's opponent, adversary, but also My adversary, in that you are endeavoring to alienate My affections and loyalty from Him. Get thee behind Me, I will not recognize you, I must follow the right course, well expressed in the Scriptures, which say, 'Thou shalt reverence the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve.' There can be no compromise. You are on one side of the matter and God is on the other side. You may oppose Me in My work in every way within your power to the extent that the Almighty will permit you. No more can you do, and if this in the Lord's providence shall bring Me trials, disappointments, pain, suffering, death, I have already pledged Myself to God to the full extent of all this."

The temptation was ended, our Lord's firmness and uncompromising loyalty to the Father and to His Plan were fully vindicated; He was prepared now for the ministry of three and a half years, and knew to expect that from start to finish He would have the opposition of the Adversary in every sense of the word--even unto death, even the death of the cross.

### **SIMILAR TEMPTATIONS BEFORE HIS BRETHREN**

In what respect are we tempted as was our Lord in this final temptation? We reply that similarly the Adversary comes to us with suggestions respecting a compromise of the Truth. As the eyes of our understanding open to see to what extent evil has a dominating influence in the world, and that fidelity to the Truth will cost us all we

have, in that same proportion usually comes the suggestion to compromise, to try to accomplish the good by more or less fellowship and partisanship with the evils that are in the world. It is along this line that many in the nominal churches justify themselves in respect to the worldly forms and customs introduced, Fairs, private theatricals, games, etc., are all compromises intended to attract the worldly by having the Church approach as nearly as possible to the world's conception and ideals and standards, etc., and yet with a view not to degradation but to uplift the world. This was exactly the course which Satan proposed to our Lord and which He rejected. All who would follow in the footsteps of Jesus must also reject every compromise with the world--"Ye are not of the world even as I am not of the world, therefore the world hateth you."--John 17:16.

Let us remember the words of our Lord, that those who would be His disciples should sit down first and count the cost before they enter upon discipleship, before they make the consecration of their lives, before they take upon them the holy name, "members of the body of Christ," the Church. And having taken their stand with the full knowledge that the way in which they are going is a narrow one, full of trials and difficulties, and that its further end is death, they will, with this view before their minds and with such a consecration, be less likely to be sidetracked by the deceiving oppositions of the Adversary. Rightly instructed by the Word of the Lord they know that no real blessing could have come to the world except through His death, and to whatever extent He might have yielded to the Adversary's proposition for an easy way would have been a hindrance to that consummation.

Likewise they know that all the Church, the elect of God, called to walk in His footsteps now, are to take up His cross and follow Him and be faithful even unto death if they would have the crown of life. They see that in the Divine order the blessing of the world can come only through the sacrifice of the Christ, Head and Body. The more they come to understand the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of God's great Plan, the more they see the wisdom of the Divine arrangement and the impossibility of the success of any other. The sacrificing priesthood of the present time is to constitute the glorious Royal Priesthood of the future, through which all the families of the earth are to be blessed. All who would constitute themselves members of this Royal Priesthood must learn at the very beginning of their experience to say, Not my will nor my way, but Thy will and Thy way, O Lord, be done.

Let each of us as followers of the Master be prompt in giving our response to the Adversary's proposition of compromise. He who dallies with temptation increases its power every moment; hence the propriety, yea, the necessity, of an absolute consecration of the heart, the will, at the beginning: on that foundation the daily conflicts with the world, the flesh, and the Adversary become much more simple and lose much of their power. Meantime let us pray as our Lord directed, "Abandon us not in temptation, but deliver us from the evil one," realizing that of ourselves we are no match for the Adversary, that our help is in the Lord, and that greater is He who is on our part than all they that be against us.

## **FORECAST OF THE WORLD'S REDEMPTION**

**--OCTOBER 29 - ISAIAH 61:1-9--**

*Golden Text.--"Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people."--Prov. 14:34.*

THE opening verses of the 61st chapter of Isaiah do indeed set forth the blessed Gospel in prophecy, and it is not to be wondered at that our Lord Jesus began His ministry at His First Advent by choosing this prophecy as a



basis of the announcement of His mission to men. He brought home the meaning of the prophecy to His hearers, saying: "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your hearing." It had been written centuries before and read hundreds of times, but now, in the Harvest of their Age, for the first time it could be said that it was fulfilled. The

Holy Spirit had come upon the Lord Jesus about a year before, after His consecration at Jordan. It constituted His anointing, The Jews were accustomed to this thought of anointing: their high-priests were anointed, as representing the Lord's power or spirit upon the priest, to authorize him to perform the sacrifices and to mediate between God and the people. Their kings were anointed, representing that Divine power and guidance was upon them, and that they were specially authorized to represent the Lord in the government of the people.

The promise was that the Lord's anointed, the Messiah, should by and by come and establish a reign of righteousness in the earth, and now our Lord announced Himself as the anointed of the Father. He did not do this in any coarse or rude manner, saying, "I am the Messiah. I am the anointed of Jehovah, with authority as priest and king;" but He did it in a quiet, unassuming manner, by calling attention to the prophecy and declaring that its fulfilment had now taken place. The announcement was not that the Lord had anointed Him to rule, but that the first part of His mission was to preach, to declare, to be the mouthpiece of God to humanity. He had a great message, which would ultimately be unto all people, but which at that time was only for so many as had ears to hear.

It would undoubtedly be disappointing to many to have the royalty feature passed by, and to find that Messiah's work as herein delineated by the Prophet and announced by the Lord, was one of preaching a good message rather than of raising a great army--of preaching to the meek and poor, rather than of rallying round Himself the rich and wise and proud. They would be disappointed, too, at the part of the message which says that He was to bind up the broken-hearted. They had expected, perhaps, that, like the great warriors and leaders amongst the other nations, their deliverer would be the one who would cause the loss of many lives and the breaking of many hearts with sorrow and with trouble. Even those whose hearts were somewhat broken were probably disappointed because of their wrong expectations.

The proclaiming of liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison doors to them that are bound, our Lord's hearers probably did not understand. Their thoughts may have gone out to John the Baptist, who at this time was in prison, and they may have wondered whether Jesus would take any steps for his release. They probably had little conception of the real meaning of this Scripture--that it signified the liberation of Satan's captives from the bondage of sin, and ultimately the release from death and its bondage of the millions who have gone down into that great prison-house, the tomb. Even the Lord's disciples, who had ears to hear His message and hearts to respond thereto and become His followers at any cost, could not at this time have appreciated the greatness of the Lord's work. Little by little He needed to make known unto them the meaning of the prophecies and He explained that the hour is coming in which all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man and shall come forth.

### **THE ACCEPTABLE TIME**

"The acceptable year [time, period] of the Lord" mentioned by the Prophet was not understood either. Blessed are our eyes that we now see that this acceptable year or acceptable time or acceptable period is the entire Gospel Age, during which God is willing to accept all that come unto Him through Christ--willing to accept

them as joint-sacrificers with Jesus, as members of the great Royal Priest. True, by and by, at the close of the Millennial Age, the Lord will be willing to accept so many of the world of mankind as the great Redeemer shall have brought into heart-harmony with Him, and by restitution processes, back to the image of God. But that acceptance of the world, after restoration by Christ, is a very different one from the acceptance of the Church in this present time.

Our acceptance now means indeed a great change, our begetting to the new nature, the spiritual; and the terms, or conditions of this acceptance are, as expressed by the Apostle, that having been first justified freely by God's grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, we should, secondly, "present our bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God and our reasonable service." This acceptable day, then, means the day in which our Heavenly Father is willing to accept the sacrifices of the anointed. He had only accepted Jesus' initiatory sacrifice of consecration, which later our Lord fulfilled and finished at the cross. It was the ground upon which the Heavenly Father gave Him the exceeding great reward of the First Resurrection blessing--to glory, honor, and immortality. So with all the members of the Body following in the footsteps of the Savior, justified by His blood--their sacrifices are counted in as acceptable to the Father during this antitypical Day of Atonement; and by its close all of these "better sacrifices"--then the typical bullock and goat sacrifices will have been offered and will have been accepted, and thereafter no sacrifices will be either needed or accepted.

This wonderful prophecy which our Lord declared was being fulfilled in His own person is still in process of fulfilment in the persons of His truly consecrated followers--the members of His Body. This was shown, in the type. The holy anointing oil was poured upon the head of Aaron, but ran down even unto the skirts of his garments, thus anointing in the figure each member of his body. So it is with us. We are members of the Anointed One, and that which was true of our Head is true in a measure also of each one of us. We are all anointed to preach, all authorized of the Lord to declare the Good Tidings of the coming Kingdom to all the meek and broken-hearted. It is a mistake to suppose that our commission and the Gospel Message given us is intended of the Lord to break men's hearts. It is a mistake to suppose that we are commissioned to go especially to the froward. Our message, while given out broadcast, must not be expected to attract any except the meek and broken-hearted. True, the light shining in the darkness will reprove the darkness and convince of sin, of righteousness, and of coming judgment, or discrimination between the righteous and the unrighteous; but this is an incidental feature. The real mission of the Gospel is to the meek and to the brokenhearted.

### **TO COMFORT ALL WHO MOURN**

Our lesson is surely good tidings in a very broad and a very deep sense. Its message is one of "comfort," not only to Zion, the consecrated Church, but to all who mourn; and as mentally we cast our eyes over the world we are deeply impressed with the thought that the vast majority of mankind are in mourning: as the Apostle expresses it, "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together." There are undoubtedly a few who are full, satisfied, and who mourn for nothing, and who, therefore, under these conditions, are excluded from any share in this promised blessing; but they are exceptions to the rule. Some of them are wealthy in this world's goods, and feel that they have need of nothing, and are kept busy with their efforts to enjoy themselves. There are others of the same full class who, though not wealthy, have a very self-satisfied feeling as respects their moral status: they do not realize themselves as sinners; they do not realize their daily imperfections nor their need of a Savior; and are not mourning for anything, and not therefore in the way to be comforted with any of the comforting assurances and promises and provisions which the Lord has made for those who mourn.

So far as the world is concerned, our Lord's ministry of comfort to them is chiefly a future work. We rejoice, however, that the time, is sure to come when all that mourn, all the "groaning creation," shall be brought under the blessed influences and provisions of the Millennial Kingdom, and shall there come to know the consolations which God has provided in Christ the balm for every trouble, every wound; the cure for every blight, every sin and every imperfection; and their privilege of profiting by these to the fullest measure by giving themselves unreservedly into the care of the Good Physician. But the poor world, blinded and deceived by the god of this world as respects the character and Plan of Jehovah, can neither see, hear, nor appreciate now the wonderful provisions made for them, and hence they cannot receive the blessing, the consolation, the "comfort" now, but must wait for it until the establishment of the Lord's Kingdom, the binding of Satan, and the opening of their understanding with the eye-salve of the Truth.

But as respects Zion, the consecrated Church, this comfort is now her privilege, and all children of Zion need to be comforted. First of all, they need the comforting knowledge that their sins are forgiven, and that they are no longer strangers and aliens and foreigners, but children of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ their Lord, if so be that they suffer with Him. They need to be comforted, too, with the assurances of the Lord's Word that our God is very sympathetic, "It very pitiful," and that if any one be overtaken in a fault he may be restored, and "not be utterly cast down." If the children of Zion had no such consolations as these they surely would be utterly discouraged, disheartened, and faint by the way; hence the Lord has provided these comforting assurances, pointing out to them that having begun a good work in them He is desirous of completing it, if they will permit Him to do so, and that to this end they must abide in Christ by faith, coupled with obedience to the extent of their ability. What Christian is there who has not shared these consolations, these comforts; and what Christian has not needed them, and realized that without them he would long since have been undone?

### **THE BASIS OF OUR CONSOLATION**

The Scriptures point out to us that our comfort comes through fellowship with the heavenly Father and with our Lord Jesus: we are comforted, not by believing that they are ignorant of our weaknesses and shortcomings, nor that they have a low standard of righteousness and a sinful basis of fellowship, but quite to the contrary of all this, they comfort us with the assurance that although our every imperfection is known to the Lord He is yet very sympathetic, very merciful; and that having provided, in the great sacrifice of Calvary, a full propitiation (satisfaction) for all sins, the Lord is very pleased to apply on behalf of each of His adopted children, in full measure, the riches of grace necessary to the covering and offsetting of every unintentional, unapproved error and failure. What comfort is here! What consolation! What privileges of fellowship with the Father and with the Son!

And this comfort, the Scriptures assure us, comes to us through the Holy Spirit--it is the channel, and hence indeed, called the Comforter. (John 14:26.) Those who have the Holy Spirit may have the comfort; those who do not have the Holy Spirit may not have this comfort, this consolation. It is only as we receive of the spirit of the Lord, the mind of the Lord, His disposition, that we are able to understand and appreciate the lengths and breadths, the heights and depths of His love and compassion and provision for us, and to be comforted thereby.

Nevertheless, this comfort of the Holy Spirit (the channel of Divine favor) reaches us through the Scriptures, for the Scriptures are the medium or sub-channel through which the knowledge of God's grace and the comfort of

all. knowledge reach us; in the Apostle's language, "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and *comfort of the Scriptures* might have hope."--Rom. 15:4.

Yet while this comfort is of the Father, through the Son, by the Holy Spirit, communicated through the Scriptures, we are informed that in great measure it is communicated by the members of the Body of Christ one to another, as the Apostle, for instance, after relating certain features of the Divine Plan respecting the deliverance of the Church, says, "Wherefore, *comfort one another* with these words." (1 Thes. 4:18.) Similarly, the Apostle declares that he sent Timothy to the Church at Ephesus, and again to the Church at Colosse, that *he might comfort* their hearts. This, of course, signifies that he was to draw their attention to the exceeding great and precious promises of the Lord's Word, and that thus they might drink in the holy *spirit* of all the promises, and that thus they might be comforted, not only with respect to the things promised, but with respect to the loving compassion and sympathy of Him who promises them.

### **TO BIND UP THE BROKEN-HEARTED**

Writing to the Thessalonians, the Apostle says that he sent Timothy--"to establish you and to *comfort you* concerning your faith, that no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto: for verily, when we were with you we told you we should suffer tribulation, even as it came to pass and ye know. For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you." (1 Thes. 3:2-5.) Here again it is evident that the comforting signifies and implies establishment in the faith one delivered to the saints, that all the terms and conditions of our covenant should be clearly held in mind, and that the promises of reward at the end of the journey might serve to comfort, strengthen and establish the children of Zion in their endurance of the tribulations as good soldiers. This comfort, again, was of the Lord, through the Holy Spirit, through the agency of Paul and Timothy. Again, the same Apostle, speaking in the same strain, says, "Wherefore, *comfort yourselves* together and edify one another, even as also ye do."--1 Thes. 5:11.

All of the Lord's people need to remember that in proportion as they are ambassadors of the Lord, and His representatives, it will be their privilege not only by and by in the Kingdom to "comfort all that mourn," and to be the trees of righteousness whose leaves will be for the healing of the nations (Rev. 22:2), but they should remember that in the present life they have a ministry of comfort to perform also, toward all who mourn in Zion--toward all of the Lord's people who are in any tribulation, physical or mental disquiet, disease; and they should remember, too, that just in proportion as they are filled with this spirit now, it is their privilege to bind up the broken-hearted, and comfort the mourning ones. No one can have this spirit of helpfulness, this disposition to comfort and to strengthen, and to edify, and to upbuild the household of faith, except he have in considerable measure the spirit of the Truth, the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of love; and in proportion as each seeks to cultivate this privilege of brotherly helpfulness, in comforting and upbuilding and strengthening, in that same proportion he will find the spirit of love developing and abounding in his own heart, and that his likeness to the Lord Jesus, the Head of the Body, is becoming more pronounced from day to day and from year to year.

Finally, in view of what we have seen respecting the Lord's goodness toward His people, and the methods by which He comforts them through the Holy Spirit, the Scriptures and the brethren, let us note one of the Apostle's expressions respecting the great comfort and consolation which God has provided for His consecrated, faithful people, saying:

"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, the God of all comfort, who *comforteth us* in all our tribulation, that we may be *able to comfort* them which are in any trouble, by *the comfort* wherewith we ourselves are *comforted of God.*"--2 Cor. 1:3, 4.

*So then, all of our lessons and experiences in life in connection with trials and difficulties and tribulations, if we are rightly exercised by them, should bring us larger experiences in the Lord's comfort, through the gracious promises of His Word and the spirit of the same; and should make us the more capable and efficient agents and representatives of the Lord, His Word, and His Spirit, in communicating comfort to others about us in their trials and difficulties.*

## **JESUS THE GREAT PHYSICIAN**

**--NOVEMBER 5--LUKE 4:31--5:39--**

Golden Text.--"*Himself took our infirmities, and bare our diseases.*"--Matt. 8:17

**JESUS made Capernaum His home and the center of His work in Galilee for a considerable time. The city of Capernaum rose under the gentle declivities of hills that encircled an earthly Paradise. There were no such trees, and no such gardens, anywhere in Palestine as in the land of Gennesaret. The very name means "garden of abundance," and numberless flowers blossom over the little plain. Some of the natural features still remain. The lake still lies unchanged in the bosom of the hills, reflecting every varying gleam of the atmosphere; the waters are still as beautiful in their clearness as when the boat of Peter lay rocking on their ripples, and Jesus gazed into their crystal depths; the cup-like basin still seems to overflow with its flood of sunlight; the air is still balmy with natural perfumes; the turtle-dove still murmurs in the valleys. The sad and solemn woe that was uttered upon that bright and flourishing city has been fulfilled: "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shall be thrust down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it had remained unto this day."**

It will be remembered that it was here that the Roman centurion, whose servant Jesus healed, lived, of whom the Jews testified that he was a friend of their nation, and had built them a synagogue or house of worship and Bible study. (Luke 7:5.) Some ruins in that vicinity have recently been exhumed, which are supposed by scholars to be the remains of this synagogue, because they seem to be on the site of Capernaum, and represent the most substantial synagogue structure in all that region, the walls being ten feet thick, seventy-four feet nine inches long, and fifty-six feet nine inches wide, with a roof supported by four rows of columns.

The days of delightful seclusion in the happy valley of Nazareth were past; a life of incessant toil, of deep anxiety, of trouble, and wandering, and opposition, of preaching, healing, and doing good, was now to begin. As indicating our Lord's strict attention to the Father's business we have the statement that "straightway," at once, on arriving at Capernaum from Nazareth, our Lord went into the synagogue (probably the one built by the centurion), and began His teaching. This reads peculiarly at the present day, when custom has completely barricaded every opportunity for free expression of opinion in almost all places devoted to worship. The Jewish arrangement was certainly a liberal one, and every way favorable to the truth, because whatever errors might creep in, the truth always had an opportunity for challenging them and exposing their weaknesses and referring

to the Divinely inspired oracles. Who can doubt that if we had just such simplicity of arrangements today, by which truth could challenge the various errors which have crept into all sectarian teaching, the result would be favorable--not favorable to sectarian systems, it is true, but favorable to the establishment of each individual in the truth as presented in the Divine oracles.

The people who heard our Lord's discourse were astonished: (1) at the things which He taught, and (2) at the manner in which He presented them. He taught with authority; that is to say, our Lord had a clear understanding of the subjects He handled, and His presentations were not vague suppositions and imaginations, and foundationless hopes and speculations; but were clear-cut and distinct, and well proved by the testimonies of the Law and the Prophets, so that they were conclusive in the minds of His hearers, who hitherto had been used to hearing the Scribes guess, wonder, suppose, etc. Since the Lord has not seen fit to provide us with even a condensed statement of His discourse, it implies that a full knowledge of it would not be specially advantageous to us. However, a hint or inference respecting a portion of the sermon is furnished in the statement that during its progress a man present, possessed by an unclean spirit, cried out--evidently opposing something Jesus had said, saying, "Let us alone; what have we to do with Thee, Thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art Thou come to destroy us?"

### **REPROVING UNFRUITFUL WORKS OF DARKNESS**

The clear inference is that Jesus had been speaking against sin, and the power which it exercised over humanity, involving all in the death penalty, with its sickness and pain and trouble; and incidentally no doubt He had mentioned demoniacal possession, so common at that time--and more common today than most people suppose. It is our guess that the Gospel preached at Capernaum must have followed somewhat similar lines to the Gospel preached at Nazareth, declaring the time at hand in which God would be pleased to receive back into harmony with Himself those who had been alienated through sin, and who had thus been brought under the bondage of corruption. He no doubt declared Himself to be the great Life-giver, the Good Physician, sent to heal earth's woes and to reveal to mankind the heavenly Father, and to become to as many as would avail themselves of it, "the Way, the Truth, and the Life," by which they might return to Divine favor in fullest measure. The language of the evil spirit, speaking through the man as its mouthpiece, clearly implies that these fallen spirits had at least a general understanding of the time when their evil course would be run, and that they knew that the just wages of their sinful course is destruction--not eternal torment. They recognized Jesus and His mission and His holiness, and that He was the representative of the Heavenly Father, but they had no hope for themselves--no expectation other than that when the time should come they would be utterly destroyed, annihilated. From various Scriptures, however, we learn that these fallen angels, demons, wicked spirits, will not be destroyed without first being given an opportunity for repentance and reconciliation with God.

Our Lord did not deign to hold conversation with these spirit beings, who had fallen under the ban of Divine condemnation, and with whom the Heavenly Father could no longer have intercourse. He did not, therefore, explain to them that His First Advent was merely to pay the ransom price, and to start the Gospel Message which would select the "Little Flock" to be members of His "Body" and joint-heirs with Him in the Kingdom, that when complete and glorified should bless and judge the world and judge the fallen angels also. (1 Cor. 6:3.) And our Lord's course in having nothing whatever to do with these fallen spirits, but on the contrary commanding them to hold their peace, should be a lesson to every one of His followers, who should seek in this and in every other matter to walk in His steps. We have known some to get themselves into serious difficulties through curiosity--which led them either to spiritualistic seances or to privately have communication with these

fallen ones. Their cunning and deceitfulness is far too deep for humanity, and he who seeks communion with them in any manner or degree does so in violation, not only of the Scriptural command (Lev. 20:6; Isa. 8:19), but in violation also of Jesus' example; and such run great risk of thus being entrapped and falling from their own steadfastness. The Apostle gives us to understand that even unwillingly and unwittingly we frequently wrestle, not with flesh and blood, but with these evil spirits, who inspire and use fallen fellow-creatures.--Eph. 6:2.

### **HIMSELF BARE OUR INFIRMITIES**

Leaving the synagogue, our Lord, accompanied by James and John, went with Simon Peter and Andrew, his brother, to their home, where Peter's mother-in-law lay sick of a fever. Jesus visited her, and "rebuked the fever," took her by the hand and helped her up (Luke 4:39), and immediately the fever was gone, and even the usually accompanying prostration of strength did not remain, but on the contrary, she was able to entertain and serve her company.

The fame of Jesus spread rapidly, and at sundown, in the cool of the day, many sick were brought to Him to be healed, and many possessed of devils, to have the evil spirits cast out. The concourse was a great one, from all parts of the city, and again our Lord manifested His mercy in healing ailments, and casting out demons; again, however, refusing to converse with the demons and even refusing and forbidding their giving testimony respecting Him. Praise and commendation from an evil source are never to be desired.

The fame of that marvelous day rang through all Galilee and Peraea, and even to the farthest parts of Syria, and we might well have imagined that the wearied Savior would have needed a long repose. But to Him the dearest and best repose was solitude and silence, where He might be alone and undisturbed with His Heavenly Father. The little plain of Gennesaret was still covered with the deep darkness which precedes the dawn (Mark 1:35), when, unobserved by all, Jesus rose and went away to a desert place, and there refreshed His spirit with quiet prayer. Although the work which He was sent to do obliged Him often to spend His days amid thronging and excited multitudes, He did not love the tumult. But He was not suffered thus to remain, even for a brief period, in rest and seclusion. The multitude sought Him persistently. They even wished to detain Him among them by gentle force. But He quietly resisted their importunity. It was not His object to become the center of an admiring populace, or to spend His whole time in working miracles, which, though they were deeds of mercy, were mainly intended to open their hearts to His higher teaching. His blessings were not to be confined to Capernaum. Dalamanutha, Magdala, Bethsaida, Chorazin were all near at hand. "Let us go," He said, "to the adjoining country towns to preach the Kingdom of God there also; for therefore am I sent."

*Following these miracles and probably others not recorded in this connection, our Lord apparently made another preaching tour; after returning to His home city of Capernaum, the incidents of this lesson transpired. Evidently our Lord, with His mother and brethren, had been making Capernaum His home for some time, and it is entirely probable that the house mentioned in this lesson was our Lord's own home. Dr. Schoff suggests that according to the Greek text this might read "at home," instead of "in the house." As we have seen, however, Capernaum was the home also of Peter and Andrew, and the incident of this lesson might possibly have occurred there, though this is less probable.*

The return of the young and wonderful Teacher to His own city and home was soon widely known--"noised;" the result was a considerable concourse of people, not only filling the house and the courtyard, but even the door or gateway. Amongst these callers were Pharisees and Doctors of the Law (rabbis, scribes), who came out of the various towns of Galilee and Judea to hear Jesus, and to note His miracles.--See Luke 5:17, 18.

### **FORESHADOWING TIMES OF RESTITUTION**

Our Lord's mission was the preaching of the Gospel, and, as already pointed out, the healings, miracles, etc., were incidentals and not by any means His chief work or object--the "times of restitution" (Acts 3:21) not having come, the miracles of our Lord were merely attestations to and corroborative of His teachings respecting the Kingdom and the Kingdom class which He had come to call and gather--out of Israel and from amongst the Gentiles. Undoubtedly He preached the same message delivered in Nazareth respecting the Lord's spirit being upon Him, anointing Him to preach the Good Tidings to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted and to declare a coming deliverance to the captives of sin and death, and the restoration of sight to those blinded by Satan, and the setting at liberty of all the captives subject to the bondage of corruption, but probably this one message was presented from various standpoints at various times, and various texts used, as also various parables introduced in illustration of it. This, however, was the "Word," the message, which our Lord was commissioned to deliver, and we may be sure He did it faithfully.

While our Lord, was in the midst of His discourse a paralytic, evidently full of faith, borne on a stretcher of some kind by four friends, sought opportunity to reach Him, with full faith in His power and willingness to heal. Finding no opportunity of making their way through the crowd, the bearers took their burden onto the roof by the outside stairway, customary in that country--the buildings being usually but one story in height. It is not at all probable that the building and roof were of the ordinary kind that would have obliged the lifting of stones and cement and dirt, and the breaking of the plaster beneath, for this would involve an absurdity, and the falling of the stones and debris and dust upon our Lord and the congregation would have been insufferable as well as dangerous. "The more reasonable supposition is that the house was one of the less common kind, enclosing a courtyard capable of accommodating quite a large audience, the living rooms being built around the wall of the courtyard at one end, and a veranda or porch-roof over a part of the open court, covered with tiles, which could be removed without much difficulty. The thought would be that our Lord stood under this veranda, preaching: that some of His audience were likewise under it and others standing out, exposed to the sunshine in the court. Dr. Thompson makes the following comment:

"The whole affair was the extemporaneous device of plain peasants accustomed to opening their roofs and letting down grain, straw and other articles, as they still do in this [Eastern] country. I have often seen it done, and have done it myself, to houses in Lebanon. I have the impression, however, that the covering, at least of the lewan (court) was not made of earth, but of coarse matting, or boards, or stone slabs, that could be quickly removed."--Compare Luke 5:19.

Our Lord was not offended by this intrusion; He doubtless remembered that all things work together for good to the Lord's people who will accept them thus. So far from feeling offended at the intrusion and persistency, He entirely overlooked these when balancing them with the quality which He so much admires--faith. All of the Lord's people can well take note of this lesson, and learn more and more to accept the affairs of life as they come as being all subject to Divine providence and all guaranteed in advance to be profitable, to workout some



good result, if we will but so permit, by receiving them in faith. Let us learn also to overlook and forget rudeness, especially where they give evidence of sincerity of heart, faith, good intentions.

In various ways we learn that under the head of "paralysis" in olden times, in Oriental countries, various diseases were included, which are now specified under different names. For instance, tetanus (lockjaw) would at that time and in that country be described as paralysis--indeed, any disease which would render the individual helpless, powerless--whether merely a deadness or accompanied by violent cramps. The incidents connected with this miracle would seem to indicate that it was a serious case, and had in it something of the element of urgency--necessity for seeing the Lord quickly and obtaining His help promptly. Otherwise propriety would have dictated a different course.

### **"THY SINS ARE FORGIVEN THEE"**

It might be questioned whether the faith was that of the palsied man or that of his friends, but we think the circumstances warrant the belief that the sick man himself exercised the faith and prompted his friends to take the steps they did in obedience to his request. This is implied in the fact that our Lord does not speak of the faith of the bearers, but does speak directly to the paralytic respecting his personal faith. Our Lord must have seen a very proper condition in the young man's heart, else He never would have said to him, unsolicited, "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee." Nor was this expression unpremeditated; our Lord evidently wished that the miracle He was about to perform should not detract from the preaching which it interrupted, but, on the contrary, should impress it as well as illustrate it. He foreknew also that such an unusual statement would awaken in His hearers questionings respecting His authority, and thus the miracle subsequently performed would emphasize the fact that He was the Messiah, and that the redemption of sinners and the forgiveness of sins had been committed to Him by the Father.

The question of the scribes (that is, the Rabbis, the Doctors of the Law--Is not such a statement blasphemy? was a very proper one, and they are not to be blamed for making the inquiry. Our Lord did not deny its propriety, but answered it by saying, It would, of course, be easy for anybody to make the claim of forgiving sins, and it might be impossible to dispute his claim, but in My case I will substantiate My claim to be able to forgive sins by My power to heal this man physically; when, therefore, you shall perceive his miraculous cure of a physical ailment, it will be a lesson respecting the truthfulness of My statement in regard to his sins--that you may know that as the Son of Man I have power, authority, to forgive sins. (Compare Luke 5:24.) Then came the healing of the paralytic, which, put in this form, became a proof, not only of our Lord's healing power, but also of His power to forgive sins. And when the sick man, in obedience of our Lord's command, took up his couch or stretcher and went forth in the presence of all, no wonder they were amazed and praised God.

Apparently all were fully satisfied with the demonstration, Luke saying that they were all filled with fear--reverence--in view of so mighty a demonstration of Divine power in their midst. It was not a lesson of fear toward God in the sense of a dread of an unthinkable everlasting future torment, but a fear in the sense of respect for the God whose love and sympathy and compassion had been so wonderfully manifested--a God who not only was willing to forgive sins, but also willing to help and to relieve His creatures from the difficulties which sin had brought upon them. Say what we will about the depravity and crookedness of human reasoning, there is, after all, a power of common sense in humanity which, if properly actuated, is the strongest possible

lever in moving them in the right direction far more influential with reasoning people than all the false and unreasonable theories which could be concocted.

One lesson for us, found in this incident, is that we, like our Lord, should seek to turn every earthly matter to some good account as respects our real mission in the world--the declaration of the Good Tidings, and the selection of the Kingdom class to, be joint-heirs with our Lord in His Millennial glory. Another thought is that in every instance the healing of the soul from the sickness and condemnation of sin should be placed first, as the highest and most important thing, far outranking physical conditions and blessings.

### **FORGIVENESS OF SIN BASED ON SIN-OFFERING**

Although our Lord proved to His bearers that His pronouncement of forgiveness was evidently backed by power and authority, as evidenced by the miracle, nevertheless He did not explain to them the how and the why of His conduct, and hence, while giving them proof, He left the questions of their minds unanswered. His hearers belonged to the house of servants, and not to the house of sons--the Holy Spirit of begetting and adoption not having yet been given because Jesus was not yet glorified. (John 7:39.) To the house of sons, however, this matter is explained in the Scriptures, in the light of the Holy Spirit, so that we may understand the how and the why as well as the fact, thus:

There was a provision under the Jewish law for the forgiveness or covering of the sins of the people, through the offering of special sin-offerings by the priests, but our Lord Jesus was not a priest of the Aaronic order, and the palsied man before Him had not brought a sin offering, under the terms of the Jewish Law. However, we see the situation in a new light when we realize that the paralytic evidently brought to the Lord the sacrifice appropriate to the new dispensation, "a broken and a contrite heart," full of faith, and remember also that our Lord at His baptism assumed the office of the antitypical High Priest the moment He was anointed with the Holy Spirit, and that His sacrifice of Himself was counted as given by Him and as accepted by the Father, from the moment of His consecration to death, symbolized in His water baptism. Hence we see that our Lord's authority to pronounce the forgiveness of sins was in virtue of His having sacrificed His humanity (which was in process of being consumed upon the altar) while He, as a New Creature, was a priest of the new order, the "Royal Priesthood," fully empowered to forgive sins.

Furthermore, this willingness of our Lord to forgive and to heal gives us a suggestion of His willingness and ability to do these same things (forgive the sins and heal the body) when the times of general refreshment shall come from the presence of Jehovah--"the times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began."--Acts 3:19-21.

### **THE MIRACLE VIEWED AS A PARABLE**

The various difficulties under which humanity labors, called diseases, illustrate sin in various respects; for instance, palsy or paralysis represents a condition of sin in which the individual loses his power--sometimes merely becoming impotent, in the sense of helpless; at other times, in combination with this may come an insensibility of conscience, a deadness to all principles of righteousness, such as the Apostle describes as "past

feeling," In this condition are quite a good many at the present time; they are not only helpless as respects all ability to go to the great Physician, but additionally they are devoid of any desire, any appreciation of their need; they have no feeling on the subject. These must be left for the present, but we may rejoice that the time is coming, according to the promise of the Lord's Word when all shall come to a realization, a sensibility of sin, and to a knowledge of the way of escape from its condemnation and its penalties. In the present time, however, some, like this paralytic, are not past feeling, and yet are so helpless as to need the assistance of friends in bringing them to the Lord.

Every true Christian should be such a friend to every fellow-creature who has a desire for the Lord's blessing, and healing from sin-sickness; and such should be not only sympathetic but helpful in bringing their friends to the good Physician of the soul. Nor should they be readily stopped by impediments, obstacles, but like those in the illustration, they should be ready and willing to take advantage of every proper circumstance and condition to place, their friend near to the Lord and His power, that the blessing might result. And will not the Lord be pleased with our faith as well as theirs, if we persistently do all in our power in their aid?

"True faith, like truest love, invents;

Denied the door, it circumvents."

Another thought here is that the first and most important thing for all, is the forgiveness of sins. It is in vain that any would endeavor to avoid this first essential step toward acceptable Christianity. Some are inclined to put doctrine instead of faith and repentance, but this will not do. There is no use whatever in endeavoring to grow a crop of wheat on soil whose sod has not been broken. The fallow ground must first be broken up ere the seed can find proper root and bring forth fruit. So only those whose hearts have been plowed and brought into the condition of meekness and contriteness, and a desire for fellowship with the Lord--these alone are proper subjects to be brought to the Lord. True, it is not within our power to break the stony hearts, nor to plow the fallow ground; all that we can do is to note those in whose lives experiences have produced such results, and to sow the good seed of the Kingdom in such hearts. This being the case, we must not be surprised that not many are ready for Present Truth; but toward those who give such evidence we are not to make the mistake of leading them to suppose that repentance and forgiveness are nonessential, but rather we are to point them to these as primary conditions upon which alone they can properly make progress, both in knowledge and in grace, so as to attain ultimately to the gracious things which God has promised to them that love Him.