

The Herald of Christ's Kingdom

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THOUGHTS FOR THE NEW YEAR

HE dawn of another new year is properly a time for solemn reflections, both retrospective and prospective. In the retrospect how abundant is the cause for thanksgiving! Those who have been blessed with the richest favors of Divine grace in that knowledge of Divine truth which reveals the high privilege of becoming sons and heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for the called and chosen and faithful according to His purpose, have a never failing cause for deepest gratitude. Great indeed was the favor which revealed the hope of everlasting life as justified, human sons of God--of full restitution to the Divine favor and likeness, as was at first possessed by our father Adam. And great was our joy when first, by faith, we appropriated this precious promise and realized that legally, through merit of the precious blood -of Christ shed for our redemption, we had passed from death unto life, and that in God's appointed time the everlasting treasure with all its attendant glory and blessing would be ours. But beyond even this are the "exceeding great and precious promises" to those of this justified class who have been called according to God's purpose, to become the Bride and Joint-heir of His dear Son.

Then, in addition to all these blessings of hope and promise, was the blessed realization. during all the year, and with some of us for many years past, that though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, as the Psalmist aptly represents, the present life, our blessed Shepherd's rod and staff have been our comfort and our safeguard. How often has the friendly crook of the Shepherd's rod and staff stayed us from wandering off into by-paths and kept us in the Narrow Way; how His chastening rod has from time to time aroused us from dreamy lethargy and urged us on our way. And at such times we have recalled the comforting words: "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him; for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons." -Heb. 12:5-8.

"THOU SPRADEST MY TABLE IN THE MIDST OF ENEMIES"

Spiritually, we have feasted on the bounties of Divine favor; while in things temporal, under whatsoever circumstances we have been placed, having the assurance that all things work together for good to them that love God, we have realized that godliness with contentment is great gain, having promise of the life that now is [so long as God wills to have us remain here], and also of that which is to come. Wherefore, we can and do most heartily "offer unto God thanksgiving." And shall we not render unto Him, not only the praise of our lips, but also the incense of truly consecrated lives,, throughout the year upon which we,

are just entering? Dearly beloved, consecrate yourselves anew to the Lord today -- not in the sense of invalidating the consecration made once for all, possibly many years ago, but rather in the sense of re-affirming and emphasizing that covenant. Tell the dear Lord that you -consider yourselves entirely His, 'and, that it is still your purpose to keep your all upon the altar of sacrifice during this new year and until it is wholly consumed in His service. Then let us proceed with studious care from day to day to pay these our vows of full consecration, unto the Most High.

As we look back and with sorrow view the imperfections of even our best efforts, and then forward and see the lion-like difficulties that seem to Obstruct our onward -course, we will need greatly to reinforce our waning courage with the special promises of Divine grace to help in every time of need. We have the blessed ,assurance that "the Lord will give strength unto His people." "Call upon Me in the day of trouble,," He says, "and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me." As soldiers under our great Captain, we have enlisted in no uncertain struggle, except our own faint-heartedness or unfaithfulness should make it so. We are fully sup plied with the whole armor of God, and will he amply protected against all the fiery darts of the Adversary if we accept it and carefully buckle it on; we are fore warned of all the snares and dangers that beset our on ward way, so that we may avoid and overcome them; we are fully informed as to, the policy and course of the Captain under whose banner we have enlisted, and of the part we are to take under His leading. We have His constant presence with us, even to the end of our course. His inspiring voice may always be heard above the clash and din of battle-Fear not, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom! Be of good cheer; I have overcome! Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid! Greater is He that is for you then all they that be against you. If we are weak and incline to faint-heartedness we have only to remember the blessed promise, "The Lord will give. strength unto His people;" and by our faithfulness in the service we shall glorify God and He will deliver us gloriously from all our foes both seen and unseen.

HOW SHALL WE PAY OUR VOWS?

This is an important question with all the truly consecrated, and one Surely of paramount importance. Let us consider, then, that when we consecrated ourselves fully to the Lord, we thereby signified that we would hold nothing back for self. That consecration included all our possessions, our time, our physical energies and our mental attainments. And it- implied the sacrifice of all our, former earthly ambitions, hopes, and aims, so that we should no longer pursue them to any extent. This, and nothing less, is what our vow of full consecration signifies. But it signifies, further, that these possessions or personal qualifications, which the Lord terms talents, are not only to be released from the service of the, worldly ambitions, etc., but they are to be so released, not for aimless inactivity, but for the purpose of being utilized in an opposite direction in the service of God, of His plan and of His children.

In the parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30) the Lord illustrated very clearly how we are expected to pay our vows of consecration to the Most High. He says: "It is like a man who, intending to travel, called his own servants and delivered unto them his goods. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another

one; to each according to his respective capacity; and straightway took his journey."

TO EACH ACCORDING TO ABILITY

This master had important and valuable interests to leave in charge of his servants; and as these servants had all engaged to serve him, he had a right to expect of them a sincere and faithful interest in the work. Yet he did not expect more of them--than they were severally able to accomplish. He rightly expected larger returns from the one who had five talents than from those who had one or two talents, And in the reckoning, it will be observed that the servant who had doubled his two talents was just as highly commended as the one who had doubled his five. The reply to each was the same--"Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." And had the servant with the one talent been similarly faithful, he would have received the very same commendation. Notice also that the parable does not represent the obligations of the world of mankind in the use of their talents,, but merely of "*his own servants*"-- the consecrated believers only. And notice also that no servant was left without some talent of use fullness and responsibility. Each servant had at least one talent; and for the right use of that one talent he was just as accountable to his master as were those who had more.

But the professed servant with the one talent was unfaithful to his master, and yet he evidently wanted to be considered a servant still, and probably thought he was worthy of commendation and reward for not perverting his Lord's money to other uses. He had taken good care of the talent; he had not turned it in opposition to the Lord, but he had simply buried it -- failed to use it. At the reckoning time, he who had received the one talent said, "Lord, I knew thee, that thou art an exacting man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not scattered. And I was' afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth; lo, there thou hast thine own."

"His Lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not scattered; thou oughtest. therefore to have put my money to the exchangers; and then at my coming, I should have received mine own, with interest." It will be observed that this servant was not what men would generally call wicked. He was simply an idler, willing, if he could, to draw a servant's approval and compensation, but lacking any real active. interest in his. master's business. He had no ill will toward his master; he was probably very glad that the other servants kept the business from going to wreck and ruin; he did nothing to hinder them from using their talents, but he did not feel the responsibility he had assumed in becoming a "servant," nor did he take a proper interest in his master's affairs. Yet, as a faithless slothful servant, he was really' a covenant breaker, and therefore "wicked" and certainly unfit to be trusted with still greater responsibilities on the master's return.

But let us remember that this was not a real case; it was simply a parable used to illustrate real cases. And if the illustration fits your individual case, let it not lose its effect upon you. The very object of the parable is to arouse such to a sense of

their short-comings, and to recover them from the lethargy into which they have relaxed, by reminding them of their responsibilities. Activity in the Lord's service to the full extent of our ability or talents is what the Lord has a right to expect of all who profess to be His servants; and it is what He does expect. Therefore, if you have but one talent, do not bury it, but cultivate and use it; do what you can and all you can, in the great work to which we have already consecrated our lives.

MUCH GIVEN, MUCH REQUIRED

And those who have several 'talents, let them see to it that they too are faithful to the extent of their abilities, not being content to do merely what the one-talented man can do or ought to do. Such a one would not be a good and faithful, servant, and could not expect the Master's approving "Well done!" His approval will be given to those only who are faithful to the extent Of their opportunity.

Our talents for use. in the Lord's service consist of all those things and opportunities which are over and above what we need for the necessary and reasonable maintenance of ourselves or our families, if we have families, and the reasonable provision against distress in case -of a sudden calamity or approaching old age, etc. Aside from these, all we have should be in active service, be they many talents or few. If we have five talents and are using only one or two, how can we expect the Master's "Well done, good and faithful servant"? Did we not covenant to give and to use *all* for Him ? -- all our money, all our time, all our influence, all our mental activity, all our physical ability? How faithful have we been during the past year? How do we stand at the bar of our own judgment? And how faithful will we be during the coming year? After providing things decent and honest for ourselves and those dependent upon us, let us judiciously appropriate our talents, to what we profess to consider the chief business of life. Here are the testing points of true loyalty and devotion. Let us ponder them well and not lightly set them aside

WHO IS HE THAT CONDEMNETH?

"No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of Me, saith the Lord."--Isa. 54:17.

[Reprint from Pastor Russell]

WHAT a heritage! What would one not give, sacrifice, to have this assurance which pertains not only to the life which now is, but goes far beyond, lays hold upon and blesses the eternal interests of all who attain this heritage. It is not applicable to one individual alone, but as declared, it belongs to all the servants of the Lord--every true spiritual Israelite may claim it, rest upon it, and rejoice in it.

Our text may to some extent be applicable to regathered and re-favored Israel after the flesh, in the near future when the Lord will fulfil to them all His good promises; but without question it belongs to spiritual Israel--new creatures in Christ Jesus, joint-heirs with Him of the Abrahamic promises as the seed of Abraham.--Gal. 3: 29.

Spiritual Israel may sometimes feel as our Lord Himself expressed the matter, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" and may not always realize the object and necessity for some of the experiences through which the Lord permits Zion as a whole, and each individual Christian as her members or children, to pass; they may see that at times the Lord has apparently permitted the great Adversary or his deluded servants to forge against them grievous weapons of destruction, and to assail them in health or in their social peace or financially; sometimes these weapons of the Adversary have seemed to do terrible execution against them, and many may wonder how the Lord's good promise of our text is being fulfilled: "No weapon that is formed against her shall prosper."

Many tongues have arisen against the Lord's Zion as a whole and against each member, individually -- tongues laden with the "poison of asps," tongues bitter with envy, malice, hatred, and strife -- tongues which hesitate not to slander and misrepresent, to say all manner of evil falsely. And to a large extent these weapons and tongues have succeeded, have wrought havoc with the sheep, as also with the Shepherd and God permitted it -- He neither stopped the weapon nor stilled the tongue; and yet He assures us apparently to the contrary of this in our text. What is the true explanation of this situation ?

The explanation is that "Ye are. not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the spirit of God dwell in you" -ye are "new creatures" in Christ Jesus, "old things are passed away, behold all things have become new." (Rom. 8:9; 2 Cor. 5:17.) The weapons and tongues attempt to assail us as new creatures, but fail of this and merely do injury to the old creature -- to the flesh, which we have already consecrated to death anyway. By helping to kill or to mortify the flesh, our adversaries are really helping us as "new creatures" instead of hindering us as designed. God thus turns what seems to harm us into everlasting joy and blessing.

The context bears out this thought, declaring, "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the 'peace of thy children.'" (V.13.) Ah yes, these spiritual sons of God need the instructions -of the Lord's Word in order to understand His dealings in order to enable them to have the great peace here predicted. God's children in the school of Christ learn not their lessons all at once, but gradually, "Line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, and there a little," by degrees they come to comprehend the exceeding great and precious promises of the Father's

Word which unite in declaring that under His supervision "All things shall work together for good to them that love God--to the called ones according to His purpose"; this is a sufficiency for the beginning of faith and, therefore, a sufficiency for the beginning of the peace. As our instruction progresses we learn the philosophy of our experiences -- that by the trials and vicissitudes of this present life, by our warfare with the world, the flesh, and the devil, by our strivings in this battle, we are forming characters in accord with righteousness; and, additionally, we learn that God seeketh such characters, and is thus developing us because He has for the world in general a great and wonderful Plan of salvation not yet fully made known in which He desires that the "elect" Church of this Gospel Age shall be co-workers, joint-heirs with their Lord and Redeemer, as the Royal, Priesthood under Him, their Head-the great Prophet, Priest, and King so long promised, whose work shall be to overthrow the powers of evil, to bind the Adversary, to lift

up and enlighten the world of mankind, and to grant to every redeemed child of Adam a full, gracious opportunity of return to the Father's favor through obedience and restitution.

CHANGING US FROM GLORY TO GLORY

When once the eyes of our understanding are opened to appreciate the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of our Father's Plan, we see that the world of mankind are not in torture and hopeless misery, but are. in the great prison house of death; we see that our Lord Jesus has by the grace of God tasted death for every man; and we see that it is on the strength of this redemption for the whole World by the one sacrifice of sin that the promise has gone forth that all, shall be brought to a knowledge of the truth that they may be saved. From this standpoint everything becomes new; old fears and perplexities pass away, and the light of the knowledge of the goodness of God shining into our hearts, becomes more and more a transforming power therein -- changing us from glory to glory. And if we continue in this way, it will eventually fit us for participation with our Redeemer in all this glorious Millennial work. We see that it is because of God's desires to have us thus members of His "elect" Church that He has favored us in advance of the world with the knowledge of His goodness and redeeming love, and that He has anointed us with His Spirit and called us to this high Heavenly Calling. Praise His name!

As the teaching of the Lord to the Church belongs to the present time, so does the peace of those who are taught apply in the, present time, and is in proportion to our readiness to receive instruction and come. to. a knowledge -of God. "Those who, instructed by the Divine Word, have-reached a large degree of knowledge of the Divine character through the Divine Plan, may, should, must have the peace of God which passeth all understanding, ruling in their hearts. If they have not the peace, they cannot have the joy of the Lord; and if they have not this, even under the, present trying circumstances and conditions, it is- because they have not been sufficiently taught of the Lord,; and if they have been long in the school of Christ without this attainment, it is an evidence that they have not been giving the proper earnest heed to the Word--it is an evidence that they have been, following the traditions, of men rather than inquiring for the old paths, the way of the Lord. Let us all take heed lest we let slip, those things which we have heard, remembering that the earthen vessels in which we have the treasure of the new mind are leaky, and that this necessitates our keeping near to the fountain spring--near to the Lord, near to His Word and, hence, near to all others who are close to the Lord and to His Word.

The context further declares respecting this class under consideration, "In righteousness shalt thou [the godly] be established; thou shalt be far from oppression, for thou shalt not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near thee." (V. 14.) This also applies to the present life and not to the life of -glory. Those who are not established in righteousness now will not be accounted worthy to be sharers in the First Resurrection, respecting which it is written, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the First Resurrection." Righteousness, justice must be the foundation of every character acceptable to God: as justice is the foundation of the Lord's throne, so it is the foundation of all with which He has to -do; and if we are His it must be the substratum of our Christian character. We must learn to

be just before we are generous; we must learn that while love may call for sacrifices, duty, obligation calls for justice first. In the blindness and darkness which came to us from the Dark Ages, before the anointing of our eyes with the eye-salve of truth from the words of the Lord and His Apostles--when in our blindness we conceived of God. as unjust and unloving because of misrepresentation of His, Plan, we had so low an ideal before our minds that we found it easy to excuse injustice or cruelty or selfishness, since, according to our false standard and misconceptions of God, He was the exemplar of all this. The Lord undoubtedly had mercy upon us on account of our ignorance and blindness; but now since He has opened the eyes of our understanding, has shown us His own justice and His own boundless love, and since. we are seeking to copy these, there is no longer room for us to excuse unrighteousness or injustice in our hearts. It may require time to bring every word and act and thought into harmony with the new mind instructed from the Word; we may never succeed to our own satisfaction in this matter in our present life, because of the weaknesses of the flesh through which our wills must operate; but we can at least make strong effort, and by the Lord's assisting grace accomplish great things in righteousness, not only of intention, but in righteousness of thought, of judgment, of conduct.

FEAR TO DISPLEASE GOD

This righteousness in which the Lord's children are to be established, -is further explained by the statement, "Thou shalt be far from oppression, for thou shalt not fear." As we look back into the Dark Ages, we see that it was full of oppression practiced in the name of the Lord and in the name of righteousness and in many cases, undoubtedly, practiced conscientiously. In, all good conscience men oppressed one another because of their fears, their false theories declaring that the Lord was about to torture to all eternity all who did not accept a certain theory of belief, and it seemed to them the veriest kindness to inflict torture by thumbscrew, rack, and stake for the correction of heretics with a view to saving them possibly from -an eternity of misleading others to such an awful eternity. This oppression, this cruelty, was the result of fear, and the fear was the result of misunderstanding of God's character because they were taught of men and not taught of the Lord, as the Prophet declares, "Their fear toward Me is taught by the precept of -men."-Isa. 29:13.

As the light of the truth comes into our hearts giving us a true knowledge of the Lord, instructing us as His children, perfect love casts out fear, and proportionately it casts out superstition and intolerance and oppression as the Prophet here declares. The Lord's people are to love religious liberty for themselves and are correspondingly to grant the same to all others. "Thou shalt be far from oppression, for thou shalt not fear." This class will be anxious to set men free, not anxious to enslave them. On the other hand the declaration is, "Thou shalt be far from terror, for it shall not come near thee"; the Lord's people ought to be the most fearless people in the world as respects earthly disasters land calamities; taught of the Lord they have learned that there is only one being who needs to be feared the One who has the power to destroy the soul. They do indeed fear to displease or offend Him; and yet, having learned of His goodness, mercy, and love, they do not fear Him in the ordinary sense of the word, but rejoice in Him, confide in Him, trust in Him as a child trusts a father, and this confidence

grows in proportion as they are taught of the Lord--in proportion as they learn to trust, both from the Word of the Lord and from His providences, His dealings with them.

The text further shows that there 'will be not only individual oppositions to be encountered, but that Zion as a whole will be assailed by foes; as we read, "Behold, they shall -surely gather together, but not by Me; whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake." (V. 15.) Wonderful words of consolation! We cannot at present judge to what extent this may have a fulfillment not many years hence, when there shall be a general gathering together of opponents to the truth and its servants. Already there have been various combinations instigated by the Adversary, and they have all come to naught. They have really harmed none because it is impossible to injure the very elect. They have indeed caused the stumbling of some, and heartaches to many, yet, nevertheless, under the Lords providence they have worked out deeper and richer experience in all who were in the proper attitude of 'heart to be thus taught.

"Nearer my God to thee,
E'en though it be a cross that raiseth me."

The assurance *here given is nothing but what we might reasonably know when we consider the Lord's own declaration, "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but shall accomplish that which I please, and shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." (Isa. 55:11.) So surely as our Heavenly Father has purposed the blessing of all the families of the earth through the seed of Abraham, just so surely it will be accomplished. And as the power of the Adversary raised against our Lord Jesus and the weapons formed against Him, which smote Him down in death, prevailed for a time, yet were merely so much of the outworking of the foreknown Divine Plan, so all of the machinations of the Adversary and the oppositions of the world and the flesh as well, cannot hinder the development of the various members of the Body of Christ who, as the Heavenly Father has predicted, are to be joint-heirs

The Word of the Lord declares that even those who crucified the Master, and who, in their conscientious conviction that they were doing right, said, "His blood be upon us and upon -our children"--these are all Yet to be the subjects of Divine mercy in due time; because as the Apostle Peter declares that they did it "through ignorance." (Acts 3:17.) The Lord fore tells the time that they shall look upon Him whom they have pierced, and shall all mourn because of Him; and He foretells, too, that at that time so far from crush ing them or torturing them, He will favor them by pouring upon them the spirit of prayer and supplication.-- Zech.12:10.

It is a different matter, however, when those who "have been enlightened and have tasted of the good Word of God and of the powers of the Age to come and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit," shall become accusers of the brethren, adversaries, persecutors. No blessings are promised to these, but the declaration is that "It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea," Judas was an ensample of this class in his day; of him the Master said in love and in sorrow-not in anger--"It were better for that man had he never been born"--his life has been more than wasted. It is not our thought that the Lord will have torments for these in the future, but rather that

they die the Second Death, and that in some manner they receive retribution in the present life as did Judas.

But he that is one of the Lord's people, possessed by His spirit, could not be a persecutor or opponent of the brethren--none surely except those who become poisoned with the Adversary's covetous disposition, with the desire for self-exaltation. No wonder that the Lord cautioned us against this sin of covetousness under which, Satan originally fell, by which Mother Eve was seduced. from loyalty to the Lord, and by which Judas and various' other enemies of the Lord have been misled., Let us be more and more on guard against it. Let others do what they will--whatever the Lord may permit--as for us, let us say with the Apostle, ".we can -do nothing against the truth, but for the truth"--all of our energies and powers must be enlisted on the side of the Lord and on the side of all those who are His. Not a finger dare we move, not a whisper dare we utter injurious to the members of the Body of Christ, of whom the Lord declares, "No weapon formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment, shalt thou condemn."

WHO IS HE THAT CONDEMNETH?

The closing words of our text remind us of the language of the Apostle (Rom. 8:31-39), "If God be for us, who can be against us?" -- who can prosper against us, who can accomplish anything against us? That God is for us is already manifested in that He spared not His only Son, but redeemed us with His precious blood; and in that He has called us in Christ Jesus to be His "elect" Church, His Bride. "Who shall lay anything. to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." In harmony with this, our text declares of these servants of the Lord, "Their righteousness is of Me, saith the Lord." Some may endeavor to condemn them and may indeed, succeed in! finding fault with them for having imperfect judgments, and being sometimes imperfect in their conductor words; but what will it matter that such should condemn those whom the Lord approves? The Lord informs us that He knows our imperfections better than any, could know them; but that of His own grace He has provided a covering for our unintentional blemishes through the merit of the sacrifice of His Son. Who then shall succeed in condemning these whom God approves, whom God justifies, whom God declares to be right and acceptable to Him through Jesus. Christ? Others may claim that they are actually as nearly perfect as some of the faithful "elect," but the difference is that whereas God must reject all to any degree blemished, these have the covering of His grace in Christ and are accepted according to their intentions and endeavors; and, therefore, they shall stand, for He is able to, make them stand in their testing or judgment.-Rom. 14:4.

Let us as members of the house of, sons, accepted in the Beloved, take from our Father's Word in? this text the -strong consolation which He intends it should give us. Let our faith triumphantly sing, and our joy and rejoicing in the Lord know no bounds. According unto our faith it will be unto us. But while it will be on account -of 'our faith that the Lord will approve of us; accept us, and bless us, He has, nevertheless, assured us in advance that where the tree of faith exists and grows, the character development, the fruitage of-the faith will surely also abound, and that thus by our works (.imperfect though they be) we shall give evidence of the faith that is in us. Such a living faith may well cause rejoicing in

the. house of our pilgrimage, with this assurance that even the machinations of our enemies shall work out for us blessings under our Heavenly Father's supervising care, wisdom, love, and power.

UNTO HIM BELONGETH ALL

"Just why I suffer loss I can not know;
I only know my Father
Wills it so.
He leads in paths I, can not understand;
But all the way I know is wisely planned.

"My life is only mine
That I may use
The gifts He lendeth me
As He may choose;
And if in love some boon He doth recall,
I know that unto Him belongeth all.

"I am His. child, and I
Can safely trust;
He loves me, and I know
That He is just;
Within His love I can securely rest,
Assured that what, He does for me is best"

IS THE APOCALYPSE A JEWISH OR CHRISTIAN PROPHECY?

PART V

HISTORY OF APOCALYPTIC INTERPRETATION-Continued.

WE come now to the period beginning with the Reformation of the sixteenth century. Historians inform-us that just before this time the terrible persecutions of Rome against the confessors of primitive, evangelical Christianity, had caused an entire cessation of public testimony against the abominations of the great anti-Christian apostasy. While it would not be correct to say that the application of the prophetic visions of the Apocalypse was the, sole agency in bringing about the great Reformation, yet it is undoubtedly true that these interpretations played a very important part in doing this. "The doctrinal and practical truths of Scripture guided the action of the Reformers as well as the prophetic. They opposed the Church of Rome, condemned alike by the doctrines, the precepts, and the prophecies of the Word of God. It might be difficult to say which of the three weighed with them the most. On each they were clear and emphatic. These three elements cannot be separated in estimating the springs of the Reformation. From the first, and throughout, that movement was energized and guided by the

prophetic Word. Luther never felt strong and free to war against I the Papal apostasy till he recognized the pope as Anti-Christ."

All the Reformers, with one consent, agreed that Rome was the "Babylon" of the Apocalypse, and the Papal pontiff the "man of sin." The Apocalyptic command, "Come out of her my people," was used by the Reformers to urge all true Christians in that system to separate themselves from it. To them, separation from Rome meant separation from Antichrist. In the year 1520, Luther wrote to Spalatinus these words: "I am extremely distressed in my mind. I have, not much doubt but the pope is the real Antichrist." In the fall of the same year in a treatise entitled the "Babylonish Captivity of the Church," Luther called the Papacy, "The kingdom of Babylon." On receiving the Papal bull of excommunication he again wrote to Spalatinus these words, "At last the Roman bull is come, and Eckins is the bearer of it. I treat it with contempt. You see that the expressed doctrines of Christ Himself are here condemned. I feel myself now more at liberty, being assured that the popedom is anti-Christian and the seat of Satan." In December he published two tracts in reply to the Papal bull, one of which was called, "Martin Luther against the Execrable Bull of Antichrist." It was in this way that the Reformation was begun. In a "Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians," he gives utterance to the following (having reference to St. Paul's words in 2 Thessalonians 2:4): "Is not this to sit in the temple of God, to profess himself to be ruler in the whole Church? What is the temple of God? Is it stones and wood? Did not., Paul say, 'The temple of God is holy, which temple ye are'? To sit-what is it but to reign, to teach and to judge? Who from the beginning of the Church has dared to call himself master of the whole Church but the pope. In another of his writings he says that when Daniel "saw the terrible wild beast which had ten horns which by the consent of all is the Roman empire, he also beheld another 'Small horn come up in. the middle of them. This is the Papal power, which rose up in the middle of the Roman empire."

MARTYRS OF JESUS SAW ANTICHRIST IN APOCALYPSE

The Helvetic Confession, drawn up by the Reformers of Switzerland in 1536, contains an article condemning the Papacy as Antichrist. -The same is true of the Smalkald Confession, adopted by Luther's followers in 1537.

John Calvin, in a letter to the emperor, Charles V, says, "I deny that See to be apostolical, wherein nought is seen but a shocking apostasy. I deny him to be the vicar of Christ who in furiously persecuting the Gospel demonstrates by his conduct that he is Antichrist,"

.All the English reformers-Tyndale, Bradford, Ridley, Latimer, Cramner, Jewel and others-men who suffered martyrdom for testifying to the truth as it is in Christ, believed the pope to be the predicted Antichrist of the Apocalyse. John Knox, the great Scottish Reformer, wrote a history of the Reformation, on the title page of which, a summary of its contents is thus given: "The manner, and by what persons, the light of Christ's Gospel has been manifested into this realm, after that horrible and universal defection from the truth which has come by the means of that Roman Antichrist." In his history he gives a list of the articles of faith, supposed to be those of' the Lollards of. Kyle.. The thirty-second article reads thus: "That the pope is the head of the Kirk of Antichrist." Knox was in his early

years attached to the Romish Church. He is supposed to have had his faith shaken in that Church about 1535 chiefly by, the study of the "fathers." It was not, however, until about 1543 that he openly professed Protestantism. An incident is related of -him that occur red in 1547. Becoming wearied of persecution he came to the castle of St Andrew's, intending to leave Scotland for Germany. While at St. Andrew's he is said to have taken the part of a godly Protestant preacher, against Dean Annan, a Romanist. The Roman Catholic prelate -was defeated in the discussion, and was compelled to take shelter under the protection and authority of his Church. He said that this authority "damned all Lutherans and heretics and therefore he needed no further disputation." John Knox's reply I to this was: "Before we hold ourselves, or that ye can prove us sufficiently convinced we must define the Church by the right notes given to us in God's Scriptures of the true Church; we must discern the immaculate spouse of Jesus Christ, from the mother of confusion, spiritual Babylon, lest that impudently we embrace a harlot, instead of the chaste spouse; yea, to speak in plain words, lest we submit ourselves to Satan, thinking that we submit ourselves to Jesus. Christ. For, as for your Roman Church, as it is now corrupted, ... I no more doubt that it is the synagogue of Satan, and the head thereof, called the pope, to be the man of sin of whom the Apostle speaketh, than that I doubt that Jesus Christ suffered by the procurement of the visible Church -of Jerusalem."

THE RESULTS IF FUTURISM BE TRUE

One from. whose writings we have quoted so freely in this series -has most' truthfully said:

"To resist the use to which Scripture prophecy was put by the reformers is no light or unimportant matter. The system of prophetic interpretation known as Futurism does resist this use. It condemns the interpretation of the reformers. It condemns the views of all these men, and of all the martyrs, and of all the confessors and faithful witnesses of Christ for long centuries. It condemns, the Albigenses, the Waldenses, the Wickliffites, the Hussites, the Lollards, the Lutherans and the Calvinists [that is, the followers of these men, Luther and Calvin in' their day] ; it condemns them all, and upon a point upon which they are all agreed, an interpretation of Scripture, which they embodied in their solemn confessions and sealed with their blood. It condemns the spring of their action, the foundation of the structure they erected. How daring is this act, and how destitute of justification! What an opposition to the pillars of a work most manifestly Divine! for it is no less than this, for Futurism asserts that Luther and all the Reformers. were wrong in this fundamental point. And whose interpretation of prophecy does it justify and approve? That of the Romanists. Let this be clearly seen. Rome felt the force of these prophecies and sought to evade it. It had no way but to deny their applicability. It could not deny their existence in Scripture. They were there plainly enough. But it denied that these prophecies referred to the Romish Church and its head. It pushed them aside. It shifted them from the entire field of medieval and modern history. As to Babylon the Great, it asserted that it meant Rome Pagan, not Rome Papal. Rome Pagan shed all the blood referred to in Rev. 17 and 18. Rome Christian had shed none of it., Prophecy was eloquent about the deeds of the Caesars, but silent as to those of the popes; and this, though the persecutions perpetrated by the popes, had exceeded those of the Caesars.

Prophecy expended its strength in warning the Church of the perils from heathenism which it perfectly understood, and was speechless as to the far greater perils arising from the Christian apostasy on which it needed the fullest warning and instruction. It was eagle-eyed as to dangers from without, but blind to dangers from within. It guided and guarded the Church of the three first centuries, but left, the Church of the next thousand years and, more without a lamp to light its foot-steps.

DOES THIS SEEM REASONABLE?

"As to the prophecies -of the man of sin or Antichrist, these had nothing to do with the Middle Ages, or with the Roman popes, or the long central centuries of the Church's sorest conflicts; they only referred to a diminutive interval in the far off future, at the end of the world. The man of sin was only an ephemeral persecutor. His whole power was to continue but three and a half years. He was to be a cunning Jew of the tribe of Dan; a clever infidel, who was to call himself God, and set himself up in a Jewish temple at Jerusalem. Christians had nothing to do with him as such. A Jew was to do all the mischief. The whole evil was but a Jewish spasm in' the very last hour of history. [This was the interpretation of the Jesuit Ribera.] ... They only applied to paganism and infidelity; a past and bygone paganism and a future short-lived infidelity. Which think you were right in their interpretations of Scripture? - Those proud popes, those cruel inquisitors, those inhuman monsters who mangled the -bodies of holy men and women in their torture chambers, those sanctimonious murderers who stirred, up all the might of Christendom-, from century to century, against the Gospel and against the faithful witnesses of Jesus; or those pure and persecuted saints, those faithful Waldenses and Wickliffites, those earnest Hussites and Lollards, those self -sacrificing Lutherans and Huguenots, those noble confessors and reformers, and martyrs ? With one mind and mouth all these Protestants agree in the substance of, their protest. To them Rome was Babylon and its proud head the Antichrist. Were they all mistaken, deluded, and their cruel, tyrannical oppressors and persecutors correct? What think you? ... This is a question of Rome's judgment concerning herself, and the bearing of prophecy on her own history and character. It is here in this judgment that the Futurist claims that Rome was right, and the Reformers all wrong. And the consequences are most serious, for we-are living in an age of revived Papal activity. Not only is the Papacy exerting an .enormous influence in the outside world, not only has it formulated and decreed its own infallibility, not only is it attacking Protestantism in its strongholds with every weapon in its reach, political, civil, religious, but the principles and practices of the system it guides and governs have, been introduced into the bosom of the Protestant Church, and planted securely within its walls, and are working most disastrously for its corruption and overthrow. Never was there -a time in the Church's history when she more needed the barriers which prophecy has erected for her protection. And now when" they are so sorely needed, they are not to be found. Futurism has crept into the Protestant Church and broke down their sacred walls. Romanists, Ritualists, and Protestant Futurists are all agreed as to the non-application of Scripture prophecies to the Church of Rome and the Papacy. . . .

"Is this the position you adopt? Is this the conclusion you defend? Are these the views you advocate? You, a Protestant, and this after all that has been written on

the subject, and all the blaze of light which history and experience have poured upon it? If it is, look to it that you be not found fighting against the truth, warring against the Word of God, resisting the testimony of the prophetic Spirit, hindering the work of the Reformation, promoting the progress of the apostasy, opposing Christ and helping Antichrist.

REMARKABLE STATEMENTS BY LEADING PAPISTS

"Even the Romanists themselves shame you in their clear sighted comprehension of the issues of this question. Cardinal Manning says, 'The Catholic Church is either the masterpiece of Satan, or the kingdom of the Son of God.' Cardinal Newman says, 'A sacerdotal order is historically the essence of the Church of Rome; if not Divinely appointed it is doctrinally the essence of Antichrist.' In both these statements, the issue is clear, and it is the same. Rome herself admits, openly admits, that if she is not the very kingdom of Christ, she is that of Antichrist. Rome declares she is one or the other. She, herself propounds and urges this solemn alternative. You shrink from it, do you? I accept it. Conscience constrains me. History compels me. *The past, the awful past rises before me. I see the GREAT APOSTASY.* I see the desolation of Christendom, I see the smoking ruins. I see the reign of monsters; I see these vice-gods, that Gregory VII, that Innocent III, that Baniface VIII, that Alexander VI, that Gregory XIII; I see their long Succession, I hear their insufferable blasphemies, I see their abominable lives; I see them worshiped by blinded generations, bestowing hollow benedictions, bartering lying indulgences, creating a paganized Christianity; I see their liveried slaves, their shaven priests, their celibate confessors; I see the infamous confessional. ... I hear the lying absolutions; the dying groans; I hear the cries of the victims; I hear the anathemas, the curses, the thunders of interdicts; I see the racks, the dungeons, the stakes; I see that inhuman Inquisition, those fires of Smithfield, those butcheries of St. Bartholomew, that Spanish Armada, those unspeakable dragonades, that endless train of wars, that, dreadful multitude of massacres. I see it all, and in the name of ruin it has wrought in the Church and in the world, in the name of the truth it has denied, the temple it has defiled, the God it has blasphemed, the souls it has destroyed; in the name of the millions it has deluded, the millions it has slaughtered, the millions it has damned; with holy confessors, -with noble reformers, with innumerable martyrs, with the saints of ages, I denounce it as the masterpiece of Satan, as the body and soul and essence of Antichrist."

ROMANISTS ALSO FUTURISTS

Having given the testimony of the Reformers against Antichrist, in other words, how they interpreted the visions of the Apocalypse, we now come to consider the reply of Rome to this I world-wide testimony. It would be most natural to suppose that not only would she reply, but that in her reply there would be included an answer to the Historical interpretations of the Apocalypse by the Reformers. And so we find it. It was at this time that the Futurist interpretation of the Apocalypse was born. Rome had her theologians, learned men; among them were Ribera and Bellarmine. "Ribera was a Jesuit priest of Salamanca. In 1585 he published a commentary on the Apocalypse, denying the application of the prophecies concerning Antichrist to the existing Church of Rome. He was followed by

Cardinal Bellarmine, a nephew of Pope Marcellus II, who was born in Tuscany in 1542, and died in 1621. Bellarmine was not only a man of great learning, but the most powerful controversialist in defense of Popery that the Roman Church ever produced. Clement VIII used these remarkable words on his nomination: 'We choose him, because the Church of God does not possess his equal in learning.' Bellarmine advocated the Futurist interpretation of prophecy. He taught that Antichrist would be one particular man, that he would be a Jew, that he would be preceded by the reappearance of the literal Enoch and Elias, that he would rebuild the Jewish temple at Jerusalem, compel circumcision, abolish the Christian sacraments, abolish every other form of religion, would manifestly and avowedly deny Christ, would assume to be Christ, and would be received by the Jews -as their Messiah, would pretend to be God, would make a literal image speak, would feign himself dead, and rise again, and would conquer the whole world Christian, Mohammedan, and heathen; and all this in the space of three and a half years. He insisted that the prophecies of Daniel, Paul, and John, with reference to Antichrist, had no application whatever to the, Papal power."

FUTURIST INTERPRETATION HAD ITS ORIGIN IN ROME

The earliest of what may be termed Protestant writers who adopted the system of Futurist interpretation are Todd and Maitland, the latter living from 1792 to 1866. There have been many since their day who have adopted, with some minor -changes, their views. These views are very little different from those of the two Roman Catholic theologians above mentioned. It cannot be successfully disputed that the Futurist interpretation of the Apocalypse had its origin in Rome at the end of the sixteenth century and was designed to relieve the Papacy from the terrible stigma cast upon it by the Protestant interpretation. 'Antichrist was future,' so Ribera, Bossuet, and Bellarmine taught. An individual man was intended to represent the Antichrist. The length of his power would not be for twelve and a half centuries but for only the brief the future took the place of study of the past and present, and careful comparison of the facts of history, with the predictions of the past. This related, so it was asserted, not to the main course of the history of the Church, but only to the few closing years of her history. The Papal head of the Church of Rome was not the power delineated, by Daniel and St. John. Accurately as it answered the description, it 'was not the criminal indicated. It must be allowed to go free, and the detective must look out for another man, who was sure to turn up by and by. The Historic interpretation was, of course, rejected with intense and bitter scorn by the Church it denounced as Babylon, and the power it branded as Antichrist, and it is still opposed by all who in any way uphold her. ... The Futurist school denies the application of these important, practical prophecies to the conflicts of the Church during the last eighteen centuries. it robs the Church of their practical guidance all through that period. This is the position taken by the Church of Rome, this is the position taken by the popes, cardinals, bishops and other great teachers of that apostate Church. This is the prophetic interpretation they have embodied in a thousand forms and insisted upon with dogmatic authority. This has been the interpretation of proud Papal usurpers, of cruel persecutors, of merciless tyrants, of the Romanist enemies of the Gospel and of the saints and servants of God."

SOLIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION

The Historical interpretation given by the Reformers and the long line of martyr's and Christian confessors prior to the Reformation, was taken up by reverent, -and able men of. God after their predecessors had, laid down the lamp of prophecy. Protestant interpreters have built upon the foundations erected by these saints of old the true historic interpretation of the wonderful Apocalypse of Jesus Christ. "They have built up a solid and symmetrical system, a system, which has developed slowly, which has progressed constantly, which has been born out of diligent investigations only, but of profound experience; a system whose truth has been scaled and demonstrated by its ever-growing correspondence with the actual course of events." Let us mention the names of some of 'these men who have unquestionably been used of God since the Reformation, to further unravel the mysteries of the Apocalypse. We notice first Joseph Mede, who lived in the first half of the seventeenth century, that is, from 1586 to 1638. It is said of him that he was distinguished for meekness, modesty, and liberality, devoting the tenth of his small income to charitable and pious purposes. His learning is spoken of as profound and extraordinary. His chief work was an exposition of the Apocalypse. it was translated into English in 1640. This godly and learned man prefaced his work with the prayer, "Thou who sittest upon the throne, and Thou, O Lamb, Root of David, who only wast worthy to take and open this book open the eyes of Thy servant, and direct his hand and mind, that in these Thy mysteries, he may discern and, produce something which may tend to the glory of Thy name, and profit the Church." It will not be our purpose to note his particular interpretations save to say that he followed the well-beaten track of the, Historic interpretation; that his work on the Apocalypse was endorsed by the Puritan Church leaders, and that in the Westminster confession, we have these words recorded in the twenty-fifth chapter of their solemn confession: "There is no other head of the Church but the Lord Jesus Christ, nor can the Pope of Rome in any sense be head thereof ; but is that Antichrist, that man of sin and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the Church against Christ and all that is called God. This confession of faith adopted just after Mede's death was subsequently accepted by the national Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

THOSE STEADFAST STARS OF PROPHECY

Sir Isaac Newton, who lived in the latter part of the seventeenth century, further advanced the system of the Historic interpretation of the Apocalypse. Contemporaneous with Sir Isaac Newton there lived several -other interpreters of the Apocalypse. Among these were Jurieu and Daubuz, who were both exiled Huguenots, and "belonged to the five hundred thousand Protestants who' were compelled to leave France by the' persecuting edict of Louis XIV, in revoking the edict of Nantes. Their sufferings under the Papal power, turned their attention to the prophetic Word and in it they found consolation. Jurieu, for example, begins his prophetic work with the sentence: "The afflicted Church seeks for consolation. Where can she find it but in the promises of God?" His work is entitled, "The Approaching Deliverance of the Church," "proving that the Papacy is the Anti-Christian kingdom, and that that kingdom is not far from its ruin; that -the present persecution may end in three years and a half, after which the destruction of Antichrist shall begin, which shall be finished in the beginning of the next Age and then the kingdom of Christ shall come upon the earth.", This was published in 1637. Apocalyptic Historic interpretation continued to increase through. the

seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, "and the sacred light of these prophecies is still guiding the, Church of God across the wide ocean of her dangerous way. Those steadfast stars of prophecy, which lighted the persecuted Waldenses through the darkness of the Middle Ages, which lighted the progress of the Lollards and the Bohemians before the Reformation, which lighted the noble Reformers through the gloom and tempest three hundred years ago, and which have lighted watchful saints through troubled centuries, are shining still, in that high and holy firmament, whence no mortal hand can pluck them down; and they shall shine on -those glittering stars of prophecy till they have fulfilled their glorious mission, till they have guided the Church in safety to her celestial haven, and their long-enduring radiance melts at last in the rising splendors of eternal day."

THE PRODIGAL SON

--JANUARY 21-LUKE 15:11-24--

Golden Text.--" There is joy in the presence of the, angels. of God over one sinner that repenteth."--Luke 15:10.

OUR Lord, though attentive to all of the duties of the Jew under the Law, was out of touch with Pharisaism, and instead of holding Himself aloof from 'the publicans and sinners, "the common people," He preached His message to every one who had ears to hear, making no distinction as between, scribe and Pharisee, publican and sinner. For this the Pharisees scorned Him, considering that thus He acknowledged Himself and His teachings to be on a lower plane-more closely allied with the common people, the sinner class.

Our Lord gave three -parables illustrative of God's grace: first, the parable -of the hundred sheep, of which one was lost and carefully sought; second, the parable of the ten Pieces of silver, of which one was lost and carefully sought; and third, the parable of the two sons, the lost one of -whom was so eagerly welcomed back on his return. The three parables were spoken particularly as a reproof to the Phaisees--to show them the impropriety of their attitude toward the masses, "the common people."

Our Lord did not deny that the publicans and sinners were in the 'wrong, were in some respects further estranged from God than! the Pharisees; but He wished the latter to see that their hearts were I not in accord with the mind -of the Lord, else they would not feel so indifferent toward their brethren. The three parables were lessons drawn from the common affairs of life which man of you having a hundred sheep, if he lose one would not go after it? or which woman of you having a bracelet with ten pieces of silver ornaments, prized as a marriage memento, would not search diligently if one of these pieces were lost? and, if so, why should they not consider a brother of much more value, than the sheep or a coin, and why not seek for the brother and endeavor to bring him back again? As capping the climax came the parable of the prodigal son, which constitutes our present lesson. It represents our Heavenly Father and His attitude toward the two classes.. The elder son represented the Pharisees; the younger man, the prodigal, represented the publicans and sinners; the father represented God. The parable

showed God's willingness to receive back again the penitent -one, and forcefully represented the impropriety, the inconsistency of the Pharisees in- objecting to the recovery of their brothers from the ways of sin and .their return to the family of God.

THE YOUNGER SON OF THE PARABLE

The wrong course of the publicans and sinners is graphically illustrated: they had been in God's favor under the Mosaic Covenant, but feeling released from the restraints of home, the restraints of the Law of Moses, they had wandered from God into the ways of sin and suffering, looking for pleasures and prosperity in the wrong direction. They should, have been glad to remain under Divine protection - and care and to have enjoyed the Father's house and all of its blessings. They should have realized the blessed -privilege they enjoyed of being separated by the Lord from the world in general; but they did not appreciate this, and had gone off into sin, and, though really Israelites, had been living after the manner of the Gentiles, and worse than some of them. They had been serving Satan and many of their sicknesses were the result, as 'Well as, much of their destitution and especially their moral degradation. God's covenant with them as Jews was that, if obedient to His arrangements, they should have temporal prosperity. In this particular their position was the reverse of ours, to whom the Lord promises temporal adversity and spiritual prosperity under the Gospel dispensation.

Satan may be said to be master of this far country -- afar from God and His love and protection and care. He it was who degraded them to the level of swine, and in his service they starve for any -satisfying portion. The swine in the parable represented the worldly, those engrossed in the things of the present time and wholly indifferent to spiritual matters, and this prodigal is represented as having nothing more for his sustenance than have the worldly; yet there was a difference between him and the swine, for while the swine could fill their bellies and grow fat on the bean pods of the locust or carob tree, the prodigal found it hard to subsist on that -diet. He realized his degradation. "He came to himself," he realized that he had been insane, stupid, dreaming, when he left so gracious a father's house and so, great blessings as he had once enjoyed and come down to this degraded position, where his whole being hungered and thirsted for the blessings of the home he had left. The first thing he did was to resolve to will, and then he proceeded to do. The willing would have amounted to nothing had it not been followed by the doing, but the doing could not have preceded the willing.

The picture drawn by the Lord of the beggared and tattered prodigal, with a look of shame and fearful, forebodings of what reception he might have from his father and from his brother, is graphically set forth in the Lord's parable. His elder brother, represented by the Pharisees, was not on the lookout for him; but the father, representing God, saw him a long way off -- was looking for him, and was compassionate toward him, and, lest he should be discouraged in his fearfulness, the father ran to meet him, to welcome him. His reception was as though he had never sinned: the best robe, the shoes, the ring, all were his, and the feast proclaimed the father's joy to the entire household. This is given by our Lord to show Pharisees how God viewed the returning of these publicans and sinners who were hearing the Gospel Message and coming back to lives of righteousness and harmony with, God.

SCRIBES AND PHARISEES THE ELDER SON,

The majority of our Lord's followers were of this class, and the Pharisees, instead of hating the Lord and hating the message which was attracting these former wanderers back to love and service and hope of fellow ship with God, should have been glad. Then, picturing the Pharisees and their attitude in the matter, the Lord showed them that I they were angry with the Father be cause of His goodness, and were refusing to go into the feast to which they were made welcome by the Father, and which they should have enjoyed with these returning prodigals. The loss would be theirs, the gain would be that of the more humble minded. The Father, who was pleased to give them His blessings in every way and pleased to continue with them, would not force them to have His favors, even though by nature they were His chosen ones. If they would not come in to share the Father's hospitalities with the returned prodigal, they could not share them at all. The Gospel feast is but one feast, and all who participate in it must come in under the Father's terms and arrangements.

While the parable is thus seen to be, strictly speaking, a Jewish parable which in none of its features includes. the Gentiles, we may, nevertheless draw from it an illustrative application to our day. As we have frequently noted, fleshly Israel was a type or foreshadowing of spiritual Israel, and the Harvest of the Jewish Age a pattern or foreview of the Harvest of this Gospel Age. In abroad sense of the word the whole world may be viewed in the light of this parable. Those who have sought to remain in harmony with the Heavenly Father-those who have striven to walk in holiness of life and in obedience to the Divine will-may be considered the elder brother; while the younger brother represents those described by the Apostle in Romans, first chapter, "Who, when they knew God, glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God," etc. "Wherefore God gave them up to uncleanness, to the lusts of their own hearts," etc. "For this cause God -gave them up unto vile affections ... and even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient, being filled with all unrighteousness," etc.

From this standpoint nearly the whole world of mankind is still in a far country, in the land of the enemy, under the blinding influences of the god of this world. And now by the grace of God we learn in advance that ultimately an opportunity is to be given to all of these everywhere to come to themselves, to realize what they have lost, and come to realize the Father's willingness to receive them back again-an opportunity for reformation during the Millennial Age under the ministry of Him who loved us and bought us with His precious blood. To those who are in the right attitude of heart this Message gives joy and rejoicing, while to another class today the very thought of the estranged world being granted an opportunity for returning to the Heavenly Father and of having the, robe of Christ's righteousness placed upon them, and being accepted to sonship to God again, is a repulsive thought, just as the thought of the favor of God going to the publicans and sinners was repulsive to most of the Pharisees of our Lord's time.

The first returning prodigal under the new dispensation will be the poor Jew-for thus it is written, "There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away

ungodliness from Jacob: for this is, my covenant with them when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the Gospel, they are enemies for your sake; but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." (Rom. 11:25-30.) The Prophet describes the experiences of the Jew as a prodigal returning to the Father's house, I saying, that the Lord will pour upon them the spirit of prayer and of supplication, and they shall look upon Him whom they have pierced. and shall mourn because of Him. Neither will they be the only ones upon whom the Father will pour His spirit, as it is written, "After those days [after the Gospel Age, the time of dealing with the servants and handmaidens only] the -Lord shall pour out His Spirit upon all flesh."--Joel 2:28,29.

MANKIND IN GENERAL PRODIGALS

The same thought is brought to our attention in Nebuchadnezzar who in a general way represents the madness upon the world. At the end of the days at the end of his period of bestial degradation--he came to himself, and we read, "At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and my understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High and I praised and honored Him that liveth forever ... my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my Kingdom, my honor and brightness returned unto me." (Dan. 4:33.) So at the end of the-Gentile Times, reason will begin to come back to the prodigal ones, and the light of the Lord Jesus will begin to shine in every quarter, and a blessing' will come to, the whole human family released from the blinding influences of the Adversary. The Prophet again describes this coming blessing to the. whole world saying, "At that time many nations shall go and say, Come, let us go to the mountain of the Lord's house; He shall teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths; for -then the law shall go forth from Mount Zion [the spiritual Kingdom, the glorified Christ] and the word of the Lord 'from Jerusalem [earthly representatives of the Millennial Kingdom and glory]."

"THE SAME YESTERDAY, TODAY, AND FOREVER!"

It is remarkable how. some people can see a little, yet are unable to grasp the glorious vision of Divine wisdom and power. For instance,. Reverend Alexander McKenzie, writing along the lines of Divine compassion and the open door for those who will return to the Father's house, couches his thought in the following words:

"It would not be amiss to say that the Gospel of Christ is the Gospel of the second chance. Men have, curiously wondered if there was a second chance in another world. There is -something much better than that, a second chance in this world. 'Now,' cries the great Archer, 'now is the accepted time to try again! Now is the day to hit the mark.' Repentance is a new opportunity. So the prodigal came back to his father, saying, 'Father, before heaven and in thy sight. I have missed the mark. Let me be as one of thy servants to make bows and arrows for better men.' But his father understood the confession. 'Bring out the new bow and give it to him.' The brother said, 'But, father, he has had his bow and missed, the mark.' 'Bring out the best bow and give it to him. My boy has come back to try again.'"

We are glad that our Heavenly Father gives us and our brothers and sisters and children opportunities to recover ourselves after we, have wandered into sin --

opportunities to profit by the lessons of life and the sad experience of being strangers, aliens from God. It is well for us that we can see this. Fortunate it is that so few have gotten the thought that one failure, one mistake, would seal their destiny. Glad we are that so many are able to realize the Divine compassion and forgiveness manifested through Jesus, which makes allowances not only for our original estrangement but for various missteps subsequently'. -But shall we limit the grace -of this God when He Himself has expressed no limits ? Shall we say that it is only those who have heard His voice and come into His family in the present time that His- grace shall be extended at all? Why is it that so many find it difficult to realize that the same God who has had compassion on their weaknesses and failures and has accepted them back as prodigals, without any violation of justice, may not be equally generous toward those who as yet have not even had an ear to hear or the eyes to see His grace and goodness in Christ?

It is passing strange that now, in the dawning of the new dispensation, as the Lord brings to our attention the glorious features of His Plan,, which shall surely make for the uplift of the world of mankind and their complete restitution, if they' are willing, back to all that was lost in Eden--purchased for them by the Father through the gift of His Son at Calvary- these blessings should arouse the opposition and anger of any who have ever named the name of Christ, or have ever been made in any measure partakers of the .Father's spirit. How is it that such close their ears to the message respecting our dear Redeemer--"This is the true light that lighteneth every man that com eth into the world"? How is it that they refuse to give credence to the message which the Lord sent by the angel choir on the plains of Bethlehem--"Behold, we bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people" ?

NONE BUT REPENTANT PRODIGALS RECEIVED

In the parable there was joy at the return of the prodigal from the fields of sin and disloyalty, and this was explained by the Lord to mean that there is joy, in heaven over the return of every one who, after being a child of God, has wandered from the Father's house. The same principle now holds true. in this Gospel Age, and any who, having been accepted in Christ, shall wander away and return again in true humility, as represented in the parable, may again experience God's favor and have their past forgiven, and the robe of Christ's righteousness shall cover their blemishes. They shall have the evidences of Divine favor and mercy again. We can see that God's heart is large enough to have made a provision for the world of mankind through the same Redeemer and through the same precious Atonement Sacrifice;, and not only do we rejoice to see this unfolding of the larger features of the Divine Plan, but we are sure that the angels in heaven likewise rejoice to see the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the love of God as exhibited toward His fallen creatures.

Nothing in the above is meant to intimate in any sense of the word that any. will be received of, God at any time on any other terms than are -represented in this parable, in the case of the prodigal. The prodigal must will to return, the prodigal must strive to return, but the Father, will meet him on the way to encourage him, to receive him, to bless him, to bring him into all the glorious things which He has in reservation for those who love Him and His righteousness. There is a part, however, in all such reformation which belongs in some measure to Divine

providence--it is that represented by the words, "When he came to him self." Sin and degradation have brought unreason, unbalanced the judgment, and have made the good to I appear bad, the light to appear darkness: the true to appear false, and contrariwise. It is of Divine providence that the eyes of our understanding open to see just where we are', and to realize our need and our loss. And so, as we have shown above, Divine promises reach out for the world of mankind and attest to us that in due time God will cause reason to come to man kind that they may appreciate their lessons and desire to return to the Father's house. The will and effort, however, they must exercise, else the results will not be attained. All through the Millennial Age mankind will be brought to a discernment Of their needs, and as they respond, they will have the Father's provision in Christ for meeting them on the way and helping them back through the provisions of restitution to a condition that, will be full of peace and blessing in accord., with the Almighty.

The eye of some prodigal may rest upon this article, and he may feel a longing for the Father's home, the family association, and the gracious blessings and spiritual fellowship which belong there and which he in the past enjoyed and has left. If so, we remind him that this thought is the beginning of the return to reason he is coming to himself. Let him arise immediately and go unto the Father through the appointed way, the Lord Jesus; let him be assured of the Father's willingness to receive him; but let him not return in any self-righteous or self-excusing attitude of mind, which would be sure to frustrate the blessing hoped for. He must go back as did the prodigal, with contrition of heart, with full confession of his error, and with a willingness to take the very lowest place in the Father's family as a servant. It is to such that the Father is pleased to give full restoration of the privileges of sonship.

BEREAN STUDIES IN THE REVELATION

STUDY CLXI--JANUARY 28

CONTRAST BETWEEN BABYLON AND THE NEW JERUSALEM -- Rev. 21:9, 10

(856) What do we learn from the symbolical picture recorded in verses 9-11 ? and how is the relationship between Christ and the Church further portrayed? H'21-87.

(857) With what other. vision of a great City, recorded by the Revelator, does this one stand out in marked contrast, and what are the striking similarities? H '21-87.

(858) Are the two great Cities or governments portrayed in the two visions seen-to be reigning contemporaneously upon the earth, and what are the results in each case? H '21-87.

(859) What is the thought suggested in the fact that in the vision of symbolic Babylon the Apostle is carried away in spirit into the Wilderness, while in the vision of the New Jerusalem he is carried away into a great and high Mountain? H'21-87.

(860) What suggestions do we draw in this connection from our Lord's experience when He was tempted of the Adversary in being taken up into a great and high mountain and shown all the kingdoms of the world? H '21-87.

STUDY CLXII--FEBRUARY 4

LESSONS SUGGESTED BY THE NEW JERUSALEM--Rev. 21:10, 11

(861) What two general lessons or truths are impressively brought to our attention in the symbolical view of the New Jerusalem? H '21-87.

(862) Are we to understand that the abode of the saints is here intended to be shown? If not, why not? H '21-87.

(863) Whom does St. John represent in this picture? and what is the import of the language, "Come and I will show thee the Bride, the Lamb's Wife"? H '21-88.

(864) What is taught in :the detailed description of the various qualities and characteristics of the Holy City? H '21-88.

(865) What is the lesson set forth in the "light" of the City--"her light was like unto a stone most precious," etc.? H 191 RR

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

--JANUARY 28-LUKE 16:19-31--

Golden Text--"Charge them that are rich in this present world, that they be not high-minded, nor have their hopes set on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy."--1 Tim. 6:17.

DID our Lord mean that all rich men and all rich women are to spend eternity in misery because of faring, sumptuously every day, in and wearing purple and fine linen? Can it be true that in order to get to Heaven we must be poor beggars, covered with sores, and have them licked by dogs, and must eat crumbs from a rich man's table? Has character nothing to do with future rewards and punishments? Again, will it be so that for all eternity the rich, tormented in fire, will see the poor in bliss, and the honored poor see the rich in eternal misery? Can this be the arrangement of an, all-wise, all-loving Creator-one who knew the end from the beginning?

For many years this parable has caused distress of mind to the more saintly of God's people; both heart and head have rebelled. We remembered that Abraham was very rich, likewise Isaac, Jacob, King David, King Solomon, etc. We remembered that God Himself is very rich. Then we looked up the subject in the Hebrew and the Greek, and found that Abraham did not go to Gehenna, the hopeless condition, the Second Death, but to Sheol, Hades, the tomb, the grave, the state of death, where there is no fire.

Our greater knowledge increased the mystery; for the Scriptures -declare that Sheol, Hades, the tomb, is to be destroyed, that all are to be brought forth from it in the, resurrection. No other Scripture seemed to ,agree with this parable. It stands in a class by. itself, ,except as we might use for its support one text in Revelation which speaks of a symbolic beast and a symbolic false prophet in

torment. Thus have the thinking people of the Church been stumbled and perplexed by the story of this lesson.

NOW ALL IS CLEAR, PLAIN

Now we see that our lesson is a parable. It is not to be taken literally, any more than the other parables and dark sayings of our Savior; such as, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you"; or again, "If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out . . . ; if thine hand offend thee, cut it off." Indeed, we find that Jesus spoke -to the people only with parables. (Matthew 13: 34.) None were ready for the depth of His teaching until after the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. began to give qualification.

How simple it all seems now! how beautiful! Many of God's people are rejoicing that in the light of the present understanding of the Bible the Divine character is shining forth, beautiful in its justice, Wisdom, Love, and Power.

It is not difficult for us to understand that our lesson is a parable. To take it literally, as we have seen, would involve the absurdity of supposing that all beggars go to Heaven, and that all wealthy go to Hell, for the parable says nothing about character--either that the poor man was good or that the rich man was bad. Viewed as a parable, we see that the thing said is not the thing meant. Thus in other parables wheat and sheep represent children of God; tares and goats represent those dominated by the Adversary, the god of this world.

THE RICH MAN OF THE PARABLE

In the parable under consideration, the rich man represents a class, and the poor man, Lazarus, another class, Let us see: The rich man was the Jewish nation, which had been in God's favor for more than sixteen centuries. To the Jew had been given the promises-the Prophets, the blessings and privileges of the Law Covenant. These symbolically were their purple, fine linen, and sumptuous table. The fine linen symbolized their typical justification through the typical sacrifices. Their purple raiment symbolized royalty; for they were the typical Kingdom. Their sumptuous fare represented the Divine promises, as St. Paul's words imply.-- Romans 11:9.

In Jesus' day Jewish favor began to wane. They were completely cut off in A. D. 70, as all Jews will admit. During the interim of forty years the rich man, the Jewish nation, sickened, died, and was buried. Nationally, they went to Hades, to the tomb; and their resurrection has not yet been accomplished, although Zionism is the beginning of it.

But although nationally dead and buried, the Jews individually have been very much alive during the last nineteen centuries. They have had anguish of soul, as they have received persecutions-sometimes, alas! from those who profess the name of Jesus, but who deny Him in their practices. For all these centuries the Jews have cried out to God, who. in the parable is represented as Abraham, the Father of the Faithful. The only answer that they have had is that there is a gulf of separation between them and God. Thank God, this cannot much longer be the case! The New Dispensation dawns, in which the rich man will return from Hades. Israel will be nationally rehabilitated, and God's favor will again come to those of them who shall learn needed lessons.

THE POOR MAN OF THE PARABLE

The poor man of the parable represents an outcast class. It included publicans and sinners, who had alienated themselves from God's favor. It also included Gentiles, to whom Divine favor had never been extended -- "aliens and strangers from the commonwealth of Israel." (Eph. 2:12.) These had no fine linen of typical justification, and no purple, representing a share in God's favor as part of His Kingdom. None of the promises belonged to them. All that they could have would be merely such crumbs as would fall from the rich man's table.

The Scriptures illustrate two such crumbs given to this class by Jesus. When He healed the Roman centurion's servant, it was a concession at the request of the Jews, who declared that this man was a friend and had done them good, by building a synagogue, etc. - The healing of this servant was a crumb. Similarly, the Syro-Phoenician woman got a crumb when she came to Jesus entreating the recovery of her daughter, who was possessed of a demon. The Master answered, "It is not proper to take the children's bread and give it unto dogs." He here used the customary Jewish phraseology respecting Gentiles -- Gentile, dogs. The Syro-Phoenician woman was not a Jewess and had no claim on God's favor, but she replied: "Yea, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from the children's table." Jesus noted her faith and gave her the crumb which she desired.

As the Jews died to their favor, so the outcast publicans, sinners, and Gentiles, died to their disfavor; such of them as desired the favors of God, hungering and thirsting for His Word of promise, were received by Him. The early Church was made up of this Lazarus class, rejected-by the Pharisees as publicans, sinners, and Gentiles. Instead of being any longer alienated from God, these became the children of God and heirs of His promises. In the parable they are represented as children of Abraham-in his arms. In the type, Isaac was the beloved son of promise to the literal Abraham. In the antitype, Jesus and His followers are the spiritual Seed of Abraham, received to God's bosom and favor. Thus St. Paul writes, "If - ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's Seed, and heirs according to the Promise"--made to Abraham.--Gal. 3:29.

"A GREAT GULF FIXED"

The great gulf between Judaism and Christianity has been fixed for more than eighteen centuries. During all this period no Jew has been permitted to come near to God, and no Gentile permitted to take the former position of the Jew, or in any manner to claim favor aside from Christ. In the Divine Plan the gulf was fixed unalterably. "There is none other name given under Heaven amongst men whereby we must be saved --whereby we may come into heart relationship with God. This- gulf dates -from the time that Christ came and offered Himself to Israel, and was rejected and crucified.

Thank God, His Word points us to another change of dispensation at the Second Coming of Christ! Then the Lazarus class, now children of God by faith, will be made actually and gloriously His children beyond the veil. In association with Jesus their Lord, they will take control of the world; for they will be His Bride and Joint-heir in the Kingdom. What will happen to the rich man then? Oh, he is to have a resurrection from Hades!

While God's Kingdom will be represented on the spiritual plane by the Lazarus class, it will be represented on the earthly plane by another class, which will be Jewish. The Jews who crucified Jesus will not be made princes in the earth in association with Messiah's spiritual empire, but some of their brethren will be--a class whom they have been accustomed to call fathers will be made Princes. These Scripturally are known as "Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the Prophets," and all who during the Jewish Epoch proved themselves loyal to God and faithful, described by St. Paul in Hebrews 11 - 32-40.

St. Paul refers to this, recovery of the Jews to Divine- favor in Romans 11 :25-33. He there points out that as we who are now the people of God were not always so, but were received to Divine favor when Israel was broken off from God's favor, so in due time those Israelites cut off from the favor of God will receive favor through our favor. That is to say, when the Church shall have attained the prize of glory, honor, and immortality, as spiritual Israel, then the gulf separating natural Israel from God's favor will have been passed. Then favor will return to natural Israel. Coming to them through the glorified spiritual Israel, it will extend through them to all nations, peoples, kindreds, and tongues of humanity, during the Millennial

This is the Divine promise, "In thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." The spiritual Seed of Abraham, the Church, gets the first share in this promise, and the natural seed of Abraham gets the second part; but both together will be used by the. Lord in rolling away the curse and pouring, out, instead, favors and blessings upon humanity, upon whomsoever will accept them.

DIVES' FIVE BRETHREN

The parable represents Dives as praying for a drop ,of water to cool his parched tongue. Symbolically, parabolically, this represents the Jewish people in great distress, asking God to allow Christians to give them some help from their troubles. Have the Jews ever appealed to God for: help? Have they prayed for relief from the persecutions which have come to them in the past and which to some extent still continue in Russia? Surely they have! Moreover, they have appealed to representatives of the Lazarus class -- representatives of Christianity -- desiring that their release and relief should come through them.

An illustration of this prayer for relief in our own day was afforded in the appeal of the Jews to President Roosevelt that he would use his influence with the government of Russia for the amelioration of Jewish persecutions. Did they get this drop of water? Nay! Mr. Roosevelt replied that the comity of nations would not permit such a communication from a friendly nation.

The parable goes further and develops the fact that the rich man had five brethren in danger of joining him in the trouble that was upon him. Who were his five brethren? We reply that the Jews of Palestine in Jesus' day represented chiefly the tribes of Benjamin and Judah, while the majority of the other ten tribes were scattered abroad in various lands. The question raised is, Did this trying experience affect merely the Jew's of Palestine, who had enjoyed most of God's favors, or did it include also the Jews scattered abroad? The answer is. given in the parable, "They, have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them," This proves that Jews only were referred to; for no Gentile had Moses and the Prophets. The

number five is in full. accord, also. Whereas two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, were represented by the one rich man, so proportionately the other ten tribes would be represented by five brethren.

And. so it was. The Message of the Gospel, which began with the Jews in Palestine, was extended to every land; and the Apostle Paul, in going to any cities amongst, the Gentiles', preached first to the Jews, saying It is expedient that the Gospel should be preached first, to you; but seeing you reject the grace of God, Jo, we turn to the Gentiles. (Acts 13:46, 47.), In other words, the test upon all Israelites was the same.

Thus, we are finding a depth of wisdom in Jesus' teachings beyond anything we could ever have dreamed. We are finding, too, that the horrible nightmare doctrines of the Dark Ages poisoned our judgments, crossed our spiritual eyesight, 'and hindered us from seeing the beauty of the Lord's Word. Thank God for the New Day and the light that it is, shedding upon the Bible!

The Herald of Christ's Kingdom

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"BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART FOR THEY SHALL SEE GOD"

IN TWO PARTS -- PART I

WHAT characteristics are essential to our attainment of the most blessed conditions God has to bestow ? What must we be in order to inherit the Kingdom, be filled with righteousness, obtain Divine mercy and everlasting comfort, be called the sons of God, and be permitted to see His face, obtaining a great reward in heaven? What question, what topic, what Bible lesson, could be more interesting to us or a more profit able study than this one? The great Teacher made it the topic, the text, of one of His principal discourses at His First Advent, and caused the gist of His argument to be recorded for the admonition of His true followers throughout this Gospel Age. While the character of our Lord, which we as His followers are to copy, is one; and the attainment of that one character or disposition means the attainment of all the blessings God has to bestow; nevertheless, in order to present the matter the more distinctly to our minds the Lord divides this one character or disposition into different sections, giving us a view of each particular part; just as a photographer would take a front view, right-side view, left-side view, rear view and, angling, views of any interesting subject, so that all the details of construction might be clearly discernible.

THE FIRST ESSENTIAL

The first character-picture which our Lord presents, we may reasonably assume, was in I some respects at least most important: It is Humility. "Blessed are the humble-minded [poor in spirit] for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." We do not understand this to signify that humility is the only essential grace, and that whoever is humble will therefore attain the Kingdom; but rather that to the

attainment of the Kingdom, humility is a prerequisite of first importance. In other words, while all humble people will not attain the Kingdom, the Kingdom cannot be attained by any one who is not humble: the Kingdom is theirs, in the sense that it is possible for this class to accept the terms and attain to the honors and blessings, while, all of a different attitude of mind—the proud, the haughty, the self-conceited, are absolutely debarred from any possibility of attaining the Kingdom so long as these contrary conditions lie at the foundation of their characters.

O that all of the Lord's people might see this point clearly and distinctly, and realize once and forever that "The Lord resisteth the proud and showeth His favors to the humble" exclusively! How this thought should put a guard upon every one of the Lord's little ones who is seeking to be conformed to the image of God's dear Son. How jealously they would watch and foster the development of this spirit of humility in their own hearts, and how it would be more and more discernible to others in their daily course of life, and what a blessing and what an influence for good, especially upon the "brethren," would result!

Growing out of this first essential quality or characteristic, as a tree of many branches out of the root, come the other graces of the spirit, which the Lord has declared blessed-divinely approved. How different our Lord's teachings in this respect from all human teachings! Earthly wisdom would say, on the contrary: Hold up your head; think well of yourself, if you would have other people think well of you; be high spirited, instead of poor in spirit, a little haughty, rather than of humble demeanor; it will have a greater influence in many respects, for no one will think more highly of you than you think of yourself, nor give you credit for more than you claim; hence, think highly of yourself, and claim much, carrying a high head, and having a lofty and self-important look.

No doubt there is worldly wisdom in the worldly counsel; no doubt there is some truth in the worldly suggestion, so, far as success in earthly matters in the present time is concerned. But here as in other instances, the Lord shows us that His ways are not as man's ways, but higher, as the heavens are higher than the earth. He assures us that he that humbleth himself shall be exalted in due time, while he who exalts himself shall be brought low, in due time. (Matt. 23: 12) In the Scriptures He points us to our dear Redeemer as the illustration of the humble and obedient one, whom He has now exalted to the right hand of Divine power; and our attention is also called to the great Adversary, who, taking a reverse course sought to exalt himself, and has been abased, and is ultimately to be destroyed.—Phil. 2:9; Heb. 2:14.

A sharp distinction should be noted between being poor in spirit and being poor, in pocket, or in intellectual gifts and attainments. We have all seen people who were poor in these earthly senses, yet proud in spirit. The point to be noticed, is that whatever our financial or intellectual gifts and conditions, the thing acceptable, in the Divine sight is humility of spirit. Such a disposition is essential to those who would, receive the wisdom which cometh from above -- they must have a humble appreciation of their own deficiencies and lack of wisdom, else they cannot receive freely, heartily, the wisdom which God is pleased to grant in the present time, only to those who are in the attitude of heart to receive it. And it will be seen also that this humility of mind is essential as a basis for the spirit of a sound mind -- for who is in a proper condition to think justly, reasonably,

impartially, except first of all he have a humble disposition? Hence we must agree that humility is a primary element in the disposition or mind of Christ.

CONSOLATIONS THE REWARD OF SYMPATHY

The second beatitude or blessed condition mentioned by our Lord stands closely related to the first--"Blessed are they that mourn." Mourning of itself is not a grace, but it betokens an attitude of mind which is acceptable in the Lord's sight. Nor should we think of a mournful spirit, without consolation or joys, as being a Christian spirit. We cannot suppose that our Heavenly Father and the holy angels are continual mourners, as they would certainly be if mourning possessed any merit of itself. The thought rather is Blessed are ye that mourn now-to whom present earthly conditions are not entirely satisfactory and happifying--who are not blind to the difficulties and trials through which the human family as a whole is passing--sin and sickness, pain and trouble, dying and crying: blessed are those who have sympathy of heart under present conditions, and to whom they are not satisfactory; for the time is coming when, under God's providence, a better order of things shall be instituted, and their dissatisfaction with present conditions will but bring them into closer sympathy and fellowship with those better things for which the Divine Plan is preparing. When God's Kingdom shall come and His will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven, all cause for mourning and for sorrow and for tears will be done away: that will be a time for consolation, for satisfaction, to this class.

Indeed, a good measure of comfort comes to the Lord's people even in the present Age--through faith built upon the exceeding great and precious promises of the Divine Word. The fact that they are able to discern the wrongs, the inequities, the distresses of the present time, creates, in this class that very condition of heart to which Divine promises appeal, whereas others not so touched at heart with sympathy for the groaning creation, are unable to so thoroughly appreciate the hopes set before us. in the Gospel. Hence it is by a natural law that such are drawn to the Lord's Word, and are enabled to draw therefrom consolation which speaks peace to their hearts, and gives them an inner joy which the less sympathetic cannot .know under present conditions. Blessed are the sympathetic,

As we can cultivate the first of these graces, humility of mind, and by cultivation develop more and more of this first and essential characteristic, so we can cultivate also the second grace, the sympathetic spirit. To do this we should frequently think of others--their interests, their trials, their difficulties, and should seek to enter into these as though they were all our own, and should seek to lend a helping hand and to "do good, unto all men as we have opportunity, especially to the household of faith. "--Gal. 6: 10.

HOW THE GENTLE INHERIT

The third of these graces which the Lord declares blessed is Meekness, or, as we should say, Gentleness. Webster's Dictionary defines meekness to be, "Submission to the Divine will; patience and gentleness from moral and religious motives." It will be perceived that there is quite a difference between this patient, gentle submission to the Divine will, and the ordinary gentleness and patience which may frequently be exercised simply for the gratification of selfish desires. Patient submission to the Divine Will is impossible to those who have not the first grace in the list, a humble mind: the proud and self-willed find it impossible to be submissive to Divine conditions; self rises up, I perverts, their judgments, and misleads their consciences to. such an extent that they cannot have full confidence in Divine providence, but feel that they must put forth their hand and steady the ark.

Moreover, patient submission can be developed only in those who mourn, in the sense of having large sympathies, and who have been comforted by the blessed promises of God, through which the Holy Spirit comforteth His people. Realizing the evils of our time, and that they are permitted of God for the present for a wise purpose, these not only sympathize with the groaning creation,- but this sympathy and the comfort received as its reward tend to make them patient, submissive to the Divine will. Remembering that all things are working together for good to them that love God, they are prepared to recognize Divine providence in whatever may befall them, and prepared also to look for the lessons of those providences, as blessings which will be helpful to them and to others in preparing for the future and eternal joys.

This third grace -- patient submission to the Divine will-which can be noted by those with whom we come in contact, might be said to be the outer manifestation of the second grace, which is inward, of the heart, and which might not be outwardly discerned by our fellow-creatures. The grace of sympathy manifests itself in our patient submissiveness in all the affairs of life, realizing that to those who are in Christ all matters are under Divine supervision, and this patience in respect to God's providences in our own circumstances and affairs leads also naturally and properly to patience with others in their weaknesses and failures and ignorance, and leads properly to helpfulness toward them as we have opportunity.

These "meek," patiently submissive to the Divine will, shall inherit the earth. The Lord did not mean, nor is it true, that the patient and submissive to the Divine will shall inherit the earth at the present time: quite to the contrary, the arrogant, the impatient, the aggressive the selfish, succeed in grasping the chief things of power, of influence, and of wealth now; and the patiently submissive have comparatively a poor chance. The reward of this grace, therefore, like the other's is future: following on under the Divine leading, these shall-be heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ; and the earth is a part of that great inheritance, which in turn, by Divine arrangement, they shall bestow at the close of the Millennial Age, upon the world of mankind who then survive-those proved 'worthy of eternal life by the Millennial tests.

Nevertheless, as there is a sense in which the Lord's people are comforted now, so there is also a sense in which they now inherit the earth--a figurative sense, by

faith. The Apostle speaks of this when he says, "All things are yours-things present or things to come." (1 Cor. 3:21-23.) Those who have the proper humble attitude of 'Mind and are patiently submissive to the Divine will, get more of blessing out of the things of the present time than do their actual owners, because their hearts are in the attitude in which it is possible to receive blessing. The world, full of selfish craving, is never satisfied, never contented; the child of God, patiently submissive to the Divine will, is always satisfied

"Content, whatever lot I see,
Since 'tis God's hand that leadeth me."

FILLED WITH RIGHTEOUSNESS

The fourth blessing is that of Hunger and Thirst after Righteousness. No one can have this hunger and thirst unless he previously have to a considerable extent the previous characteristics. If he have not humility of mind he will be satisfied with his attainments of righteousness, being unable to see beyond his own low plane, unable to discern the heights and grandeurs of the Divine perfection. He cannot hunger and thirst after that which he does not in some measure comprehend. Unless he have the spirit of sympathy, which discerns the wrongs, the inequities of our present time (which in great measure mankind is unable to counteract and overcome-by which some of the human family, very deficient in the virtues, have an overplus of wealth and influence and authority, while some possessing superior virtues have scarcely the necessities of life) he cannot yearn for the better conditions of things which the Scriptures declare can only be introduced by the establishment of Messiah's Millennial Kingdom. It is a blessed indication then, if we find in our hearts a hungering and a thirsting for justice, for, righteousness, for truth-an antipathy to untruth in every form, and to all injustice, inequity--an antipathy, nevertheless, modified, influenced, controlled, by the third grace of this list, viz., by patient submission to the Divine will. The control of this last quality is what the Apostle refers to when he says, "Let your moderation be known unto all men." It is this quality which stepping in hinders our hunger and thirst after righteousness, and our zeal for it, (both as respects truth and practice) for making us anarchistic or extremists in any sense of the word. This quality of hunger and thirst after righteousness, uncontrolled by the other of these graces of the spirit, has led many worldly people, as reformers, into wild excesses: whereas the child of God although having this same hunger and thirst in a larger degree than others, yet, under the control of the spirit of a sound mind, instructed from the Lord's Word, rests in His promises and waits for their fulfillment, patiently submissive, and assured of the victory of righteousness in God's due time which he adopts as his time also.

Those who have and cultivate this blessed hunger and thirst shall be satisfied, abundantly satisfied, by and by, when God's Kingdom shall be established, and when as a result of its reign all evil and all sin, all inequities (iniquities) shall be suppressed, and God's holy will shall "be done on earth even as it is done in heaven." Our hunger and thirst after righteousness is not to be destroyed, but, as our Lord promised, it is to be satisfied. The appetite for truth and righteousness will still be there, but the prevalence of truth and righteousness shall be its satisfaction.

In this grace, as in the others, there is a sense in which by faith we already attain some measure of the fulfillment to come-although it is but a foretaste. Those who have the hunger and thirst for righteousness, in line with the other graces of the spirit, find in the gracious promises of the Lord that comfort and consolation which already, even in this present life, can be assimilated by faith, and which proves to be "meat in due season for the household of faith," sustaining, strengthening, resting, and at least partially satisfying the hunger and the thirst, as they realize the Divine provision for everlasting righteousness is exceeding and abundant, more than all that they could have thought or have requested.

HOW TO OBTAIN MERCY

The fifth blessed condition, is that of Mercifulness. Mercy is the outward expression that man can discern, resulting from an appreciation of righteousness and a hunger and thirst for it in the renewed heart. After we have taken the preceding steps, and have learned to appreciate the inequities of the present time, and our own imperfections (unrighteousness) and those of other men; and after we -have learned that God alone is able to right these matters in the full and complete sense, and that He has made provision for the righting of every wrong, and for the restoration to His favor of all who will accept His grace in Christ, to be made known to all in due time-it is then we begin to feel merciful, benevolent, kind, toward others, to an extent and degree that we could not feel these sentiments previously.

The Lord lays great stress upon this quality of mercy, declaring that whatever else may be our attainments of knowledge or of grace, if we have not this one we can never be acceptable, to Him-if we do not have mercy upon others neither will our Heavenly Father have mercy upon us. 'And to insure that we do not consider this mercy to be merely an outward form, and expression of forgiveness and benevolence, our Lord expounds the matter , saying, "If ye do not from the heart forgive one another, neither will your Heavenly Father forgive You." It must be a genuine mercy, and not a feigned one; it must cover from sight, and so far as possible blot from memory, the failings and weaknesses of others, else it cannot hope for forgiveness and blotting out of its own shortcomings which its hunger and thirst for righteousness has clearly revealed to it. Only the merciful shall obtain mercy: and if we have not mercy at the hands of the Lord all is lost for by nature we were children of wrath, even as others, and under just condemnation.

The exercise of mercy, benevolence, forgiveness,. is a blessing, not merely because it is essential to our own -forgiveness, and hence to our salvation, but also be cause this condition of heart which sympathizes With others in their failures and imperfections helps to rid our hearts of certain of the works of the flesh and of the devil, which incline to cling to the Lord's people long after they have been justified by faith, and even after they have made full consecration of themselves' to the Lord and are seeking to "walk, not after the flesh, but after the spirit."

While justice may not be blind in the Lord's people, while they may discern the faults of others most clearly, and while they may seek to let justice rule in respect to all of their own words, and thoughts, and actions, nevertheless they are to let mercy triumph in their hearts over justice as respects those who trespass against them, and they are not to hold resentment against those who have done them

injury, nor to seek to avenge I themselves and to inflict justice upon their opponents. Rather they are to say, It is for God to be just; it is' for me who am- a transgressor also against perfect justice, through the weaknesses which I have inherited, to have compassion upon my fellow-creature, who has inherited similar yet different weaknesses: it is for me to exercise accordingly the Divine command, the blessed characteristic of mercy, compassion, forgiveness. And those who do so not only get rid of the evil works and sentiments of the world, the flesh and the devil, but increasingly become filled more and more with the spirit of love and gentleness and patient submission to the Divine will, and thus the merciful are blessed even in the present time.

THE GRACE OF GRATITUDE

"Enter, into His Gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise: give thanks unto Him, and bless His name."--Psalm 100: 4.

LEPROSY 'is a very prevalent disease in in eastern lands, and amongst the Jews lepers were especially proscribed--separated from others-not allowed to have intercourse with their own families nor to come near anybody, but obliged to keep at a distance, and on the approach of a stranger to cry out, "Unclean! unclean!" From the standpoint of the Law it is evident that leprosy was meant to represent sin and its loathsome, contagious, and consuming character.

A traveler in the Orient writes: "As out traveling party passed out the western gate of Nablus, the site of ancient Schem, a group of repulsive lepers greeted us with calls for help. They showed various forms of that terrible disease: the nose or the lips or a hand or a foot eaten away; the limb distorted, and one case at least was a leper 'white as snow.' When we were fairly in our tents beyond the city westward, those lepers came, fifteen in all, and seated themselves afar off, in a semi-circle, facing our tents, with one of their number a little in advance of the others, holding out a dish for alms, and, as with one voice, they cried aloud to us to have pity oil them and give them aid." An-, other writer describes leprous conditions thus: "The hair falls from the head and eyebrows; the nails loosen, decay and drop off; joint after joint of the fingers and toes shrink up. and slowly fall away; the gums are absorbed and the teeth disappear; the nose, the eyes, the tongue, and the palate are slowly consumed."

The horrors and loathsomeness of leprosy and its contaminating qualities, both by heredity and infection, well, illustrate the disease of sin, *which has taken hold of the entire human family, and which separates and alienates from God and all that are pure and in harmony with Him. The isolation of lepers was distinctly' enjoined in the Law, but no cure or remedy was prescribed. The disease was treated from a religious standpoint, and-in every case was made amenable to the judgment of the priests: they decided whether or not a case of leprosy had developed, they banished the leper, and in the event of anything occurring to cure him, the priests must; pass upon his cleansing before he would be readmitted to, society. So, in the great malady of sin, God commits to the hands of the antitypical Priesthood--Christ and the faithful under-priests now being selected from the world-the work of pronouncing and making manifest what is sin, as distinct and separate from what is righteousness, and thus to separate between the clean and

the unclean, between those who are in harmony with God, and those who are out of harmony with Him. And in the coming Age, when the Royal Priesthood shall be glorified and in official power to bless the world with the knowledge of God and the knowledge of how to become free from sin and, through the merit of the precious blood, to attain to full restitution -- to purity and perfection of mind and heart and body-it will be this Royal Priesthood that will have the deciding of when the purification has been complete -- when sin has ceased to exist in the condemned, and they have, been brought back into full harmony with God and righteousness.

Travelers tell us that in the locality mentioned in our lesson-the borders of Samaria and Galilee--leprosy still abounds rather more than elsewhere; and that groups somewhat like the one described in our lesson, are frequently to be seen. This group stood afar off, as they were compelled by law to do yet recognizing Jesus as the great Teacher, of whose miracles they had heard something, they conceived the hope that He might have compassion. upon them and heal them of their loathsome disease. Therefore they lifted up their voices together, crying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." There is no doubt as to the meaning of their cry; although they usually begged for money, they evidently now were seeking for healing from the Great Physician.

ONLY ONE RETURNED TO GIVE THANKS

Hearing their voices Jesus turned compassionately toward them, and we can better imagine than describe the sympathy which He felt for them in their pitiable condition, and no doubt also His mind at the same time took in the thought of the great malady of sin, from which the whole 'world was suffering, and whose sufferings He had come to relieve, whose bonds He had come to break, by giving His own life a ransom price for theirs. Our Lord merely said to them, "Go show yourselves to the priests." This implied that the leprosy had ceased its ravages, and that they might expect to be pronounced free from contagion and permitted to return to their homes and families, even though the maiming and marring occasioned by the ravages of the disease would still be with them. Thankful for such a release from their sufferings, the entire ten obediently hastened to comply with the injunction, but in the way they discovered that the blessing they had received from the Lord was not merely a staying of the disease, but a restoration to normal conditions. Their faith had brought them far more than they had expected.

One of them turned back and prostrating himself before the Lord rendered homage and thanks to his deliverer. The other nine passed on to comply with our Lord's words, and to show themselves to the priests,, not having a sufficiency of love, appreciation and thankfulness to return in their cleansed condition to, first of all, acknowledge the Giver of the blessing they had received. Our Lord remarked this, and called attention also to the fact that the one who did return was a Samaritan, and not one of the Jewish household of* faith; saying, "Were there none found that returned to give glory to God save this stranger?" And He said unto him, "Arise, and go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole."

Nothing is said in the record respecting any spiritual blessing or favor which came to the Samaritan whose thankfulness of heart led him to Jesus' feet in

acknowledgment. We are not told that Jesus invited him to become one of His followers, nor that he received any spiritual blessing; indeed, we know that it was not possible that he could receive any spiritual blessing, because, being a "stranger," like all Gentiles, he was debarred from any share in Divine favor until the full measure of favor was granted to the Israelites -- Cornelius, three and a half years after our Lord's crucifixion, being the first Gentile to be received into favor, and that time being the earliest at which the favor might go to the Gentiles-the end of the "seventy weeks of favor promised to Israel.

GOD'S FAVORS FOR THE THANKFUL

Neither are we told that the nine who received the favor of God without being moved at heart to return and tender' thanks were, because of, their unthankfulness, in any degree deprived of the blessing already received. We can readily imagine, however, that their condition of heart would not be favorable to them in connection with a hearty acceptance of the Lord and the Kingdom privileges He was offering. We may reasonably suppose that if they were unmoved by so great a manifestation of Divine love toward them, experienced in their own persons, they would be equally unmoved by the preaching of the Gospel which they might hear at any future time, either, from the lips of Jesus or the Apostles. We may even surmise that those nine never came into the Church of Christ. On the contrary, we would have good reason to hope for the Samaritan, whose gratitude manifested itself, that his condition of heart was nearer to the Kingdom requirement, and that when subsequently the Gospel of Christ was preached to Gentiles and Samaritans, this one would be a ready hearer and have a ready heart to receive the good message and to be healed from the moral leprosy of sin, and to come into harmony with God by presenting himself before the great High Priest of our profession, who died for our sins and who accepts as clean all who come unto the Father through Him. Though we have no record of it, we believe that the Samaritan was of the kind the Lord is now drawing and calling to sacrifice with Christ, and that receiving that Message of the Kingdom he would be ready to lay down his life and become dead with Christ -presenting his body a living sacrifice unto God.--1 John 3:16; Rom. 5:1, 2.

Viewed from this standpoint, thankfulness of heart is a very sure sign of the character God is seeking, especially in matters pertaining to our great salvation. And we find parallels to this illustration all about us. We find those who have suffered from the leprosy of sin, and who have appealed to Jesus for mercy and help, and who have been measurably justified by faith -- tentatively cleansed from their iniquities, and promised the covering of the righteousness of Christ; and yet amongst all these who have experienced such blessings and favors at our Lord's hands how few, comparatively, there are who return to Him and prostrate themselves before Him, to offer thanks for release from the bondage of sin and condemnation, and lay themselves at His feet, living sacrifices -- making a full consecration of themselves to the Lord, their reasonable service. -- Rom. 12: 1.

Only the truly thankful are constrained thus to do -- only the truly appreciative. As the Apostle declares of himself and all such, it is true that "The love of Christ constraineth [draweth, impelleth] us; for we thus judge that if one died for all then were all dead [yea, worse than dead in trespasses and sins and condemnation],

and that we who live [justified to life through faith in His blood] should not henceforth live unto ourselves but unto Him who died for us."--2 Cor. 5:14.

Unthankfulness is unholiness, lack of that proper appreciation which would lead to a full consecration of life and every interest and affair to the Lord--regardless of what reward He may bestow. The "exceeding great and precious promises" of God's Word are not given to inspire thankfulness and consecration, for they are given only to the thankful and consecrated who already have presented themselves living sacrifices to God. "To you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom," "God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit," which is granted only to the consecrated. These promises are to strengthen and nerve us and to enable us to "overcome," in fulfillment of our covenant of consecration.--2 Pet. 1:4; Matt. 13:11 ; 1 Cor. 2:9, 10.

Let us each and all seek and cultivate more and more the spirit of thankfulness, the "reasonable" spirit or disposition. Thankfulness will make every trial, and sacrifice on our part seem small, and proportionately easy to be offered, and it will make all of God's mercies and favors toward us proportionately grand and great and inspiring.

THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."--Psalm 51:12

The Scriptures present the lesson on Prayer from various standpoints. Every disciple of Christ needs to learn certain lessons respecting prayer, and Jesus gave valuable instruction through two interesting parables. One important lesson is respecting persistency: that the Christian should continue to pray and not faint, not grow disheartened and discouraged because of the delay in the answer. He has been assured of the real character of our God, of His willingness to hear the petitions of His faithful children, and to give them all necessary good things in the proper manner and at the proper time. The delay of the answer was to work out for them a blessing of increasing faith and trust.

THE UNJUST JUDGE

The parable illustrating this represents a judge in an oriental country, void of reverence for either God or man -- ready to defy Divine commands and to violate public opinion in the attainment of his selfish ends. Judges in Christian lands we believe to be honorable and trustworthy: we recognize this as the rule and anything else as the exception; but in oriental lands it is often regarded as a matter of course that officials will indulge in graft of every kind, and that whoever is in office is there for personal benefit and profit. In olden times, indeed until within the last century, judges were to a large degree lawmakers as well as executives. Today in civilized lands these functions are separate, the lawmaking or legislative department of the government being entirely separate from the judicial and executive department departments much to the advantage of the public and to the forwarding of the ends of justice.

Before the unrighteous judge of the parable came a widow who was suffering from certain indignities and injustices from which she desired to be relieved by the judge. Since she was not wealthy and could not bribe him, since she had little influence, her demands for redress and justice were ignored. However, she was persistent until finally the judge, admitting to himself that it was not love of justice on his part but merely selfish desire to avoid further trouble, took up her case and granted her the necessary assistance and justice.

GOD NOT UNJUST THOUGH HE DELAY

The parable does not compare this unjust judge with our Heavenly Father, and thus imply that the latter is an unjust judge. On the contrary it contrasts the two and gives us the thought, the lesson, that if an unjust judge would finally grant relief simply from selfish motives, surely our Heavenly Father, who is neither unjust nor unloving, nor careless of the interests of His people, will heed their prayers. If, therefore, a matter be one that in our judgment is very important, demanding our earnest prayers, and if the answer to those prayers be not quickly forthcoming, we can neither conclude that God is an unjust judge who cares not for us because we cannot bribe Him nor otherwise advantage Him, nor are we to think of Him as selfishly careless of our interests except as we would bother Him; but we are to think of Him as our loving heavenly parent, whose arm is not shortened that He cannot assist us, whose love for us is not deficient but strong, who loveth us as a father pitieth his children, and, on the strength of our knowledge of God's character and trust in His faithfulness, we are to have patience, and to trust the fulfillment of our petitions to His wisdom, love, and power, knowing that all things shall be made to work together for good to them that love God, to the called ones according to His purpose.

Our Lord in applying the parable says, "And shall not. God avenge His elect which cry to Him day and night?" though He manifest no special haste in the matter. The lesson is that we are to have confidence in God and in His promise that eventually the right shall triumph. This confidence is to amount to an absolute faith which will grasp the promises, never doubting but merely waiting. Those who thus come to God in faith and trust. may come repeatedly and be refreshed at every coming, because they come not with a hope of changing the Almighty, altering any of His plans and arrangements, which they recognize as righteous altogether : but on the contrary, they come because they believe His promises, and because they desire to rest and comfort their hearts 'by communion with Him, by assuring their hearts In prayer that the Father Himself loveth us and that He has a due time for the deliverance of those who are His from the bondage of the Adversary, and of sin and death. The time may seem long, but if the proper faith be exercised, a blessing will come with every step of the delay that will more than compensate.

Our Lord concludes this parable by saying, "I tell you that he will avenge them speedily." This may mean that when the Lord's time shall come for the delivering of His people He will make a short work with the great Adversary and all the machinery of unrighteousness which, under the Prince of this world, has come to occupy so prominent a place in the affairs of life-in opposing truth, righteousness, etc. Or on the other hand it might be understood to mean that the Lord will really not long delay in bringing in His Kingdom of righteousness. From the human

standpoint the more than eighteen centuries from the time our Lord redeemed the world until now, the time for the setting up of His Kingdom, seems a long time: How could it be spoken of as "speedily"? We reply that "a day with the Lord is as a thousand years": hence from this standpoint the whole period would be less than two days. What we need today is to take the Lord's standpoint in viewing matters. Both views are Scriptural, and therefore we need not dispute as to which one the Lord intended. Possibly He meant that we should take both.

SHALL HE FIND THE FAITH?

Separate and distinct from the parable the Lord interjects the statement, "Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh shall He find faith on the earth?" The intimation is that at the Second Coming of the Lord for the establishment of His Kingdom the true faith would be seriously lacking, almost extinct-just as at the First Advent we read, "He came unto His own [people] and His own received Him not." So, in the end of this Age, our Lord's Second Presence for the establishment of His Kingdom will similarly try and test nominal spiritual Israel. Again He will come unto His own and His own will receive Him not-He will not find the necessary faith in the earth. However, as respects the First Advent we read, "But to as many as received Him to them gave He liberty," etc. So at the Second Advent, to as many as have faith and receive Him, to these also similarly He will grant a special blessing.

Associating these words with the parable foregoing, the implication is that the Church, the very Elect, the Little Flock, throughout the Gospel Age will be expected to look to the Lord continually for help and deliverance, but that they will not actually be helped or delivered until the First Resurrection, at the Master's Second Advent, at the time He will set up His Kingdom. It is in line with this that the Apostle exhorts us saying, "Brethren avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." (Rom. 12:19.) Hence we find the Scriptures throughout indicating clearly that the Second Advent of our Lord will be a time of tribulation to the world in general, a day of vengeance, a day of rectifying the wrongs of the people. Thus through the Prophet the Lord declares, "The day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year [time] of my Redeemed is come"; and again, "It is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompense for the controversy of Zion."--Isa. 63:4; 34:8.

Taken as a whole, the lesson to the Lord's people through this parable is that we are to have patience, not attempt to -render vengeance upon our opposers, but to love our enemies and to do good to them that spitefully use us, and to look to the Lord for such relief as He sees proper to send; and though we find the full measure of relief long deferred, we are to have rest and refreshment through faith that the time is coming when all the gracious promises will be abundantly fulfilled, "According to thy faith be it unto thee."

Those who believe little of the Lord's promises, who trust Him little, will pray to Him little, will exercise little faith, and Will have little joy and blessing in consequence. Those, on the contrary, Who have faith, and who go continually to the Throne of Grace and appreciate the Lord and trust in the glorious outcome of their prayers and labors, will have joy now and fullness of joy by and by.

PRAYERS OF THE SELF-RIGHTEOUS NOT ACCEPTABLE

The Pharisees were a very moral class amongst the Jews, devout, at least outwardly, very exact, though inwardly, the Lord tells us, they were far from right. He alone was competent to make the terrible arraignment that they were like sepulchres, beautifully whitened on the outside but inwardly full of corruption. There is a similar class in Christendom today, who are outwardly moral, very particular, exact, scrupulous, and yet not pleasing to the Lord. They are proud of their righteousness, and seem to fail to realize that if they are naturally less depraved than some others they have nothing therein to boast of, because they are still far from being actually perfect. This parable is intended to show that God would look with more sympathy, more compassion, upon the more depraved man if he were the more honest and more humble rather than on the morally better but less humble.

The parable pictures two men going up to the Temple according to the Jewish custom to pray: the one was a self-righteous Pharisee, a moral man, in many respects a good man, but very conscious of all his righteous deeds and perfunctory observances of Divine rules; the other man was a lower-class and cast, who had more weaknesses and blemishes and who realized his condition. The Pharisee, we are told stood and prayed with himself : apparently his prayers did not ascend to the Lord, and it would be strictly true, therefore, to say that he prayed with himself, heard himself pray, congratulated himself in the prayer, and rejoiced in his own self-consciousness generally. His prayer was not the kind which the Father invites, for He seeketh such to worship Him as worship Him in spirit and in truth; and it seems impossible, for any one to come before the Lord in a proper manner who does not appreciate his own weaknesses, imperfections, blemishes, and acknowledges these and seeks the divinely arranged means for covering them.

The Pharisee said, "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican." It is quite true that such a prayer uttered truthfully would imply a compassion of heart for which we might well give thanks to God., All Christians, by virtue of their relation to God, the covering of their sins, the begetting of the Spirit, the transforming work progressing in their hearts, have every reason to give thanks to the Lord that they differ from the majority of their fellow-creatures. But they have nothing, whereof to boast, for, as the Apostle remarks, What have we that we have not received from the Lord? Who hath made us to differ? (1 Cor. 4:7.) If, therefore, the difference between ourselves and others be recognized as of the Lord and His work of grace in us and not of ourselves, this is the proper attitude of heart, and all who have this realization may properly enough give thanks to the Lord that in this respect they are different from others because He hath made us to differ, because by His grace we are what we are.

The difficulty with the Pharisee of the parable was that he prayed with himself, congratulated himself, and merely pretended to give thanks to the Lord for these differences. He did not thank the Lord that He had made him to differ, but thanked the Lord that he had made himself to differ-he was trusting in his own works of the flesh, which could never be acceptable to the Lord, and was, therefore, as a Pharisee, rejecting the imputed righteousness of the Atonement Day sacrifices. The condition would be similar today to us if we boasted in

ourselves in any sense or degree. Such a man offering such a prayer should know that it does not go to God, that it was merely self-adulation and' that he profiteth nothing by it. We are in the right attitude when we realize that our sufficiency is of God, who has made us to differ, and who keeps us by His own power, covers us with the robe of Christ's righteousness, and is preparing us for the glory, honor, and immortality which He has promised us if we are faithful in obedience to His lessons and guidance.

All of the Lord's people should be able to- assure themselves at the Throne of Grace that they are not extortioners, not unjust, not adulterers, nor like other men. This is all in harmony with our Lord's declaration, "If ye were of the world the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." We are to be glad if we find these evidences of our separateness from the world, but we are not to boast of them, nor consider that they are of our own institution, nor attempt to take credit for them. As already shown, we are' what we are by the Lord's grace.

The Pharisee, as a part of his boast, claimed that he fasted twice in the week, as well as gave tithes of everything that he acquired. In this fasting he was going beyond anything that the Law required, and doubtless felt that he was to be especially commended therefor. But not so from the Lord's standpoint -- works can never justify us. If we were to fast, starve ourselves to death, it would not be meritorious; no, works can be of value except as based upon proper recognition of our own imperfections and proper acceptances of Divine justification, which is granted to us now through faith in Jesus, and which in that day was typically imputed to all the members of the Jewish nation through the typical sacrifices of their Day of Atonement. As for fasting, the Lord's people today will find plenty of things from which they may well fast. Fasting simply signifies self-denial, and self-denials of food are not the greatest nor the most estimable in God's sight, we may be sure. There are other desires of the flesh which all who are the Lord's true followers are to strive to control and diminish and starve out, that they might proportionately flourish and be nourished spiritually and made strong.

BOASTING OF GIVING TITHES

The tithe-giving was proper. God had enjoined, as a mark of respect for Him, that one-tenth (or tithe) of all increase of herd or flock or field should be set apart peculiarly to His service: and obedience to this arrangement was nothing to boast of, particularly when it is remembered that the Lord is the bountiful giver of all good. Where then was the room for pride and boasting in connection with such tithe-giving? It showed a self-satisfied condition of heart, unready to. make the still greater consecration required of all who would be accepted as members of the house of sons, the followers of Jesus, who are expected to consecrate their all to the Lord, and thenceforth to act as stewards who will be prepared to give an account of the use of every dollar, every talent, every opportunity. Are the saints inclined to boast of their self-denials or services? Let them reckon the matter carefully and see how little the most energetic is able to accomplish, and then doubtless with shame many will confess how little of all they desired to accomplish they have been able to render unto the Lord.

"GOD BE MERCIFUL TO ME A SINNER"

The publican was a sample of those who made no profession of great piety. Humble-minded people, they realized that they did not live up to the grand requirements of God's perfect Law, and discouraged by the assertions of the Pharisees that they could obey and live up to those requirements, these more humble-minded ones were often in a discouraged attitude, and sometimes in consequence lapsed into carelessness and sinful ways. In the parable the publican stands afar off; he did not approach close to the holy precincts of the Temple; he stood at a goodly distance. He recognized the great difference between God's perfection and 'his own personal unworthiness, imperfection and sinfulness. He smote upon his breast, upon his heart, as though indicating that he accepted the Divine sentence of death as well deserved, merited, yet he appealed for mercy -- Lord have mercy upon me, I am a sinner! Although outwardly not as moral nor as good a man as the other, judged by any human standards, inwardly, from God's standpoint, his was the better heart of the two, the more hopeful. He was not trusting in himself, and was in a better condition, therefore to receive the grace of God upon the only terms upon which it could be obtained, humble faith. Our Lord indicates that of the two, this one-outwardly less noble, less moral-was inwardly more acceptable to the Father, justified rather than I the Pharisee. And then, as a lesson based upon this, comes the word,

**"EVERYONE THAT EXALTETH HIMSELF SHALL BE ABASED;
AND HE THAT HUMBLETH HIMSELF SHALL BE EXALTED"**

Is it not remarkable that so frequently throughout the Scriptures -the Lord calls attention to the great necessity for humility, assuring us that without it, whatever may be our conditions, our qualifications, we could by no means enter the Kingdom. In the parable just considered this quality of humility is illustrated in the publican, the lack of it is illustrated in the Pharisee. To reason the matter out we can see that only the humble minded could possibly be prepared to confess themselves sinners and unworthy of Divine favor and love, needing justification, forgiveness, provided for us in Christ. Not only so, but even after exercising such humility and coming to the Lord and being accepted of Him, if -the humility be lost, our gracious standing in Christ is forfeited. Pride signifies self-satisfaction, and the corresponding ignoring of the all-sufficiency of our glorious Head, who said to us, "Without me ye can do nothing."--John 15:5.

Alas, that so many of those who have some knowledge of God and of His Plan of salvation are hindered from laying hold in a proper manner by a lack of humility and readiness to see their own faults, confess them and to accept Divine mercy and grace. Alas, also,- that so many, after having exercised faith and been washed from their old sins, are through lack of humility led to haughtiness, high-mindedness, which in one way or another is sure to work injury to us as New Creatures-- to blast the prospect for a share in the Kingdom in which only those who humble themselves shall be exalted.

IS THE APOCALYPSE A JEWISH OR A CHRISTIAN PROPHECY?

PART VI

THE KEY TO THE APOCALYPSE

MANY have given loose reign to their imagination, and there has been much speculation concerning what constitutes the "key" to Apocalyptic interpretation held by Futurists is a that the key is found in the Divine title--"The Revelation of Jesus Christ." Some who hold this view say that the expression, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ," has reference to the person of the Savior; that it means not a revelation in the sense of a communication of truth, but rather a manifestation of Christ's person at His, Second Advent. A noted Futurist expositor has thus expressed this view: "The Apocalypse, or Revelation of Jesus Christ, means Jesus Christ revealed and 'uncovered to mortal view, and not merely Jesus Christ revealing, and making known hidden things to be recorded for our learning . . .

The book is not the Apocalypse of the Apocalypse, but the Apocalypse of Jesus Christ." This, he says, "is the key to the whole book." (Dr. Seiss.) This view is readily seen to be erroneous, for the reason that the title reads, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto Him to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass." It is not, then, the Revelation of Christ's person, but rather a revelation in the sense of a communication given to Him by God, His Father. It can not refer to a revelation of Him in person, for the reason that the revelation which was given to Him. was, "a revelation of things which must shortly 'come to Pass." It is true that in the book, the person, Jesus Christ, is frequently portrayed in the visions. However, these visions, in which He is seen in person, are designed to show His relation to the Church in the various operations of His office. For instance, His performing certain duties of His office as a priest is represented in His walking among the candlesticks (Rev. 1:13); His receiving the revelation of future events from the Father is portrayed in His receiving the sealed Scroll (Rev. 5:7) ; His intercession in Heaven in behalf of His Church on earth is seen in the vision where He is represented as presenting the incense and prayers which go up to the Father from the saints on earth. There are other instances in which He appears in visions, performing the duties of His office to His Church in her suffering, witnessing state on earth, as also those which show His authority as King and judge, etc., which we need not mention.

Another view concerning the "key" is that it is contained in the expression of St. John, "I was in the spirit on the Lord's, day." This view, held by some as constituting the key to the Apocalypse, is that the expression, "the Lord's day," has reference to the time after the Second Advent and the glorification of the Church when all the visions of the book will meet their fulfillment. This view has already been given consideration in the foregoing articles of this series.

There are others who believe- that the "key" to unlock the meaning of the visions has not yet been given, but that it will be given to some specially chosen one sometime in the future, and then an exposition of all the visions of the, Revelator will be given which will be so plain that there will be no need of study to understand it, and that no one at that time can possibly mistake its meaning. It will not be necessary to occupy any time in refuting this view, as it should be well known by students of the Bible that this is contrary to all God's methods in making known His Word. We are told to "search the Scriptures," to study to show ourselves approved unto God, rightly dividing the Word of truth. Not only so, but we find that the order for this, entire Age has been to permit the truth to be so

beclouded with error that it has been with great difficulty that followers of Christ have held fast to it and walked in the light of it. And this is in accordance with what Jesus, addressing His disciples, said, "To you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven."

KEY DISCOVERED IN THE PROPHECY OF DANIEL

Is it asked then, Who can understand the meaning of the Revelation visions? Who is able to translate its symbols into literal language? Our reply to these questions is, No one would be able to do this-no one could be able to translate its symbols if they were not divinely translated. However, the Lord Himself has furnished the key that unlocks its mysteries.' It was placed in the hands of the Church over eighteen hundred years ago. The Church has not only been in possession of this "key" since the visions were first given to St. John, but as shown in a previous article, the Church has made good use of this key, and with increasing success as history has unveiled its meaning. This does not mean that all its visions were divinely explained. It does mean, however, that enough has been explained, and explained so clearly, as to settle once for all that the Apocalyptic visions refer to the history of Christianity, false and true, and cover the whole period of the Gospel Age.

One has well said that "no interpretation of the Apocalypse can be secure and stable, but that which is based on divinely given explanations of its symbols and visions. In seeking to understand the prophecy, our first question should be, What saith the Scriptures? The diligent use of the divinely given helps for the interpretation of the symbolic prophecy is the true and only way to its comprehension. . . . Abandoning speculation and dogmatism, those who seek to understand symbolic prophecy, and especially the mysterious prophecies of the Apocalypse, should turn to the real helps which God has given to the comprehension of these portions of His Word. The primary key to Scripture is Scripture itself. The gate of entrance to the meaning of symbolic prophecy, is Divine interpretation. The first duty of the student of prophecy is to listen to that, which the revealing Spirit has said as to the meaning of its own mysterious utterances.

"He who would enter the temple of truth must be content to do so by the divinely given door. The Old Testament is certainly the entrance to the New, and in a special manner the Book of Daniel in the Old Testament is the porch or passage leading to the Apocalypse."

Sir Isaac Newton, who is generally recognized as the most thorough mathematician, and natural philosopher of his own or perhaps of any other age (born 1642), was a most devout believer in the Christian religion, and wrote a book called, "Observations upon the Prophecies of Daniel." In this remarkable work he says: "Among the old prophecies, Daniel is most distinct in order of time, and easiest to be understood, and therefore in those things that relate to the last times [which Newton interpreted to mean the Gospel Age] he must be made the key to the rest." Concerning the connection of the prophecies of the Apocalypse to those of Daniel, he says, "The Apocalypse of John is written in the same style and language with the Prophecies of Daniel, and hath the same relation

to that of all of them which they have to one another, so that all of them [those of St. John and Daniel] together make one complete prophecy."

SIGNIFICANCE OF FOURTH BEAST OF DANIEL'S VISION

As is well known the Book of Daniel contains several outlines of the history of the world's great empires, the history beginning in Daniel's own day, and reaching without a single gap to the establishment of the Kingdom of God over the world. One of these prophecies is that of the Image, Stone, and Mountain of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. (Dan. 2.) Another is that of the vision given to Daniel himself, of the four beasts, the latter vision giving a more detailed account, in symbol, of the same course of events, and ending with the establishment of the Kingdom of God, as did the first one. There is scarcely a dissenting voice among prophetic expositors that the great empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia and Grecia, are represented respectively in the two visions, by the gold, silver and brass of the Image, and by the first three beasts of Daniel 7, and that these all passed into history less than a half century before Christ was born. There is the same general agreement that the great Roman empire is symbolized by the iron legs of the image, and the fourth beast of Daniel's vision. (Dan. 7.) Indeed the Scriptures themselves mention the above kingdoms as the ones represented in these visions. It was this fourth or Roman Empire in its Pagan form that was ruling the world when -St. John was given the visions of the Apocalypse. It was this Roman government, under the Emperor Domitian, that banished St. John to the little rocky isle of Patmos. Now mark the "key" that opens the door to the portal of the Apocalypse. It is seen in that this fourth, or Roman Empire is one of the chief subjects of the Apocalyptic visions. Three whole chapters are devoted to it, the twelfth, thirteenth, and seventeenth, besides its being incidentally referred to in at least ten chapters. The obvious conclusion then is that all the events foretold in the Apocalypse belong to that, order of things and course of history predicted of the fourth or Roman Empire of Daniel. It will thus be seen that the Apocalypse contains visions that take up the history foretold by Daniel, as well as fill in many important details of that history, the details being, as is divinely implied in statements in the opening and, closing chapters of the Apocalypse, the history of God's servants in their, relation to the world government of Rome, in its undivided, but more especially in its divided state -- the latter symbolized by the ten horns on the fourth beast's head, of Daniel 7, and on the beast of the Apocalypse 12, 13 and 17.

How then, we ask, can it be successfully that all the visions of the Apocalypse belong to this outline, as given in Daniel? and how can they be properly understood until they are fitted into this general outline, as part of a great symbolic revelation concerning the course and succession of events of this Gospel Age? We have already shown that earnest Christians who lived contemporaneous with St. John, as well as others who succeeded him in the early centuries, interpreted the "ten-horns" on the fourth beast as having reference to the governments into which the Western Roman Empire was divided in connection with the overthrow of the imperial power, ruling in the seven-hilled city; and furthermore, that the "little horn," of Daniel 7, that came up among the "ten," represented the political aspect of Antichrist; and still further, that they

understood that the beast of Rev. 13 and 17, under one of its heads, was identical with the same "little horn" of Daniel 7, and "man of sin" of 2 Thess. 2.

EVIDENCE ADDUCED FROM VISION OF CHRIST DWELLING AMONG THE CANDLESTICKS

This very apparent connection between the visions of the Roman Empire in Daniel and in the Apocalypse furnishes evidence of the correctness of the Historical interpretation, and the incorrectness of the Futurist. We have, however, that which is more important and convincing than even this. We have Divine explanation of two of the chief visions of the Apocalypse that makes it absolutely necessary that we apply these visions to events which began long centuries ago, and which cover the whole course of history from St. John's day to the complete end of this Gospel Age. The first of these is the explanation by Christ, Himself, of the vision of the one like a son of man walking amidst the Candlesticks; and certain statements made in the messages sent by Him to the seven Churches contain the same thought. The second of these is the explanation of 'the revealing angel in chapter 17, involving five distinct matters that inseparably link the vision of the ten-horned, seven-headed Beast and the Harlot Woman seated thereon, with five of the most prominent features of the past history of the Church. We will examine these in the order mentioned above.

The interpreter of this vision -of chapter one is evidently our Lord Jesus Himself. He says: "The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden Candlesticks, The seven, stars are the angels of the seven Churches: and the seven Candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven Churches." We have already noticed in this series that this divinely given interpretation binds its application to the Christian -Church, and that the seven messages recorded also do the same. And that which is even more convincing is the fact that some matters presented in these messages are so intimately and profoundly connected with the prophetic visions seen subsequently by St. John recorded in chapters six to twelve, that this of itself imparts a Christian character to those visions also, and conclusively proves that the Apocalyptic visions relate to the history and destiny of the Church of Christ. "This intimate connection is seen in the fact that the promises in the letters to the seven Churches relate-to experiences and privileges-and rewards set forth in the predictions which occur in the prophetic portion of the book." As an illustration, note the promise made to the overcomers in Smyrna--"He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the Second Death." The Church at Smyrna, or that of the Pagan Roman persecuting period represented by it, that is, the true Christians of those times, underwent terrible persecution and suffering, and were noted for their experiencing and enduring afflictions and poverty. Note how closely the promise to the suffering Christians of those times is connected with the prophetic vision that describes its realization"Blessed is he that, hath part in the First Resurrection: on such the Second Death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." As one has said: "The Christian character which certainly attaches to the promise, must therefore also attach to the prophecy, for the thing promised and the thing prophesied are the same."

WHO BUT THE CHURCH IS PROMISED SHARE IN CHRIST'S THRONE

For a further illustration of this very marked connection between the promises to the Churches and the prophecies, we, call attention to the promise to Sardis: "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life." Note the connection in chapter nineteen where we have a picture of the "Bride" arrayed in fine linen, white and clean, which is said to be the righteousness of the saints. In chapter twenty-one the names of those symbolized by the New Jerusalem are represented as having their names "written in the Lamb's book of Life." Here we have again the rewards promised in the earlier part of the Apocalypse, identified with the prophetic fulfillment at its close.

We note next the special promise to the believers of Philadelphia: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out : and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God; and I will write upon him My new name." Who can doubt that this is a Christian promise. The fulfillment of this promise is recorded in two prophecies of this book-chapter fourteen, in the vision of the Lamb standing on Mt. Zion and with Him a hundred and forty and four thousand, having Christ's name and the name of His father written in their foreheads; and chapter twenty-one, in the vision of the New Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God, in the foundations of which were the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb; and we have the vision further explained, that the New Jerusalem is a symbol of the Lamb's Bride. (Verses 9, 10.) Again we ask the -reader to note how the promises to the overcomers in the messages to the Churches, are perfectly linked together with the fulfillment of the promises as given in the prophetic visions.

We next note the promise contained in the message to the Church of Laodicea, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me on My throne." The fulfillment of this promise is recorded in chapter 20, where we have the overcoming saints described as sitting on thrones, and living and reigning with Christ. The reward promised to Christian victors -- the reigning with Christ -- is identical 'With the reward of the victors over the Wild-beast power described in another part of the Apocalypse. How clear it is that the promises, and prophecies have reference to the same Christian experiences and rewards. In view of all this, how can it be questioned that the Apocalypse is a Christian prophecy, and that it relates to the Church of Christ in its present experience of suffering and trial, and also its future, experience of triumph?

WHO IS "BABYLON, THE GREAT"?

We. now come to consider the one and only Divine explanation of the prophecy that occupies, as we have already noted, so large a proportion of the Apocalypse. This is that of the Harlot Woman, "Babylon the Great," and the seven-headed, ten-horned Beast that carried her. Concerning this vision (different aspects of which are seen in at least ten chapters of the book), we have the revealing -angel saying to St. John, "Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of

the Woman, and of the Beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns." -- Rev. 17: 7, 8.

It can hardly be questioned that the interpretation of this vision by the heavenly revealer was divinely intended to constitute a key to the unlocking of the remaining visions of the Apocalypse. Before considering the Divine explanation, it will be necessary first to get the vision itself well in our mind. The vision is described by St. John in the words: "And I saw a Woman sit upon a scarlet colored Beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the Woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication; and upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the Great, The Mother of Harlots And Abominations of the Earth. And I saw the Woman drunken with the blood of the Saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered, with great admiration [amazement]." (Rev. 17:3-6.) It will be seen that the one great important feature of the that of the "Woman" seated on the scarlet colored Beast, and the effects produced upon the inhabitants of the earth by drinking of a golden cup which the Woman holds in her hand. Preceding this description, one of the seven angels which had the seven vials of wrath addressed St. John in the words, "Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the, great whore that sitteth upon many waters; with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication." (Verses 1, 2.) It will be observed from these words that what was to be specially explained to St. John was the judgment of the great Harlot and the Beast which carried her. This judgment would of course necessarily require an explanation of who the great Harlot represented, as also the same of the Beast which carried her. These things, the revealing angel does explain. Observe specially the revealing angel's words, "I will tell thee the mystery of the Woman, and of the Beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns," Note carefully the five expressions that mark the angelic explanation.

1. "The beast that thou sawest." (V. 8.)
2. "The ten horns which thou sawest." (V. 12.)
3. "The waters which thou sawest." (v. 15.)
4. "The woman which thou sawest." (V. 18.)
5. "The seven heads [which thou sawest]." (V. 9.)

THE TRUE CHURCH TO BE BRIDE

The angel's explanation of these five matters is the key to the Apocalypse. The Beast, the Horns, the Heads, the Waters, the Woman, are all interpreted, and their interpretation involves, or carries in it the interpretation of the Apocalypse. It is very apparent that the Harlot Woman constitutes the great and prominent feature of the vision. There is no need that any special interpretation be given to show that this Harlot Woman symbolizes a false Church system of worldwide influence and power. The only explanation needed is concerning what Church system is represented. However, while we have no direct statement given that this Harlot Woman represents a false Church system, we do have an indirect evidence that is

just as convincing. This is, in the fact that she is exhibited in contrast with another woman" which we know represents the true Church. Both women are mentioned under two striking and contrasting symbols. The one is designated as both a harlot woman and an unholy city (17:5) ; the other is represented as a pure, chaste woman and a holy city. (21:9, 10.) The one is called Babylon the Great; the other is called the New Jerusalem. The one is associated with the "Beast"; the other with, the "Lamb." The one is represented as in illicit union with the kings of the earth; the other is represented as the chaste Bride of the Lamb. The one is clothed in "purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls" -- the other -- is arrayed in "fine linen, clean and white." The one is "drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus"; the other is made up of the saints and includes the martyrs. The one is punished with both temporal and eternal judgments; the other is rewarded with everlasting honor and felicity. The interpretation of either one of these suggests the interpretation of the other. For instance, we have the chaste woman, the holy city interpreted to be the Lamb's Bride, the one must be the opposite, the false Church, the counterfeit Bride. To the true follower of the Lamb, there would seem to be no need of a Divine interpretation concerning what particular Church is described by the Babylonian Harlot. However, evidently in view of the fact that it is prophesied that all nations would be deceived into thinking that the Church system represented was the true Church, the revealing angel gives the information concerning what Church is referred to in the words; "*The Woman which thou sawest is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth.*" The angel's words clearly point to but one city, and that is Rome, for Rome was the only city that reigned over the kings of the earth in St. John's day. It is the only Church that has taken the name of a city. It is the only city that has had a Church. hierarchy, that has exercised such a far-reaching dominion over nations and peoples and tongues. Furthermore, the Roman city is designated in the further explanation of the angel. "The seven heads are seven mountains [hills] on which the woman sitteth.* Who is not aware that this is a ,well known feature of the city of Rome. "All the Latin poets for five hundred years speak of Rome as the seven-hilled city. Rome is depicted on her imperial coins as sitting on seven hills. Among the early Fathers, Tertullian 'and Jerome may be cited as referring to this feature. 'I appeal,' says Tertullian, 'to the citizens of Rome, the populace that dwells on the seven hills.' Jerome, when urging Marcella to quit Rome for Bethlehem, writes: 'Read what is said of Rome in the Apocalypse of the seven hills.'" The names of the seven hills of Rome are) the Palatine Quirinal, Aventine, Coelian, Viminal, Esquiline and Janiculan. Another explanation given by the angel is concerning the many "waters": "The waters which thou sawest where the whore sitteth are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." Such was certainly the position of Rome, and the Church system ruled. from Rome. The peoples and nations and tongues were for long centuries subject to her sway; and while her temporal authority over the kings is gone, she still claims it, and exerts a worldwide influence over very many peoples and tongues, and in the present time is increasing her influence and power.

* This, however, does not complete the explanation of the seven heads.

ANCIENT ROME DIVIDED INTO TEN KINGDOMS

A still further explanation of the revealing angel is that of the "ten-horns" on the Beast. The ten horns are explained as symbolizing ten kingdoms, which, at the time that St. John was given the visions, were still explained to him as the ten-fold division of the Roman future. Indeed, these ten horns are the same as those seen by Daniel on the fourth beast, which were divinely Empire. The explanation as given by the revealing angel to St. John is contained in the words: "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings [kingdoms], which have received no kingdom as yet .[that is, at the time St. John had the vision] ; but receive power as kings one hour ['at one and the same time,' as rendered by noted translators] with the beast." As the ten horns, according to Irenaeus, a disciple of a disciple of St. John, are "the same as mentioned by Daniel," and came into existence on the division of the- Roman Empire in the fifth century, the vision of the "Harlot Woman" seated on the Beast could not possibly begin to meet its fulfillment, until the Roman Empire was thus divided. In the explanation' of the angel, these horns or kingdoms are represented as first giving a voluntary submission to the Harlot Woman or city (government). They are subsequently represented by, the revealing angel as rising against her, "and making her desolate and naked, and eating her flesh and burning her with fire." Now this explanation by the angel is a faithful portrayal of outward Christian history for long centuries. It is universally agreed that in less than four centuries after St. John's day, the Western Roman Empire fell and its territory was divided into ten kingdoms, and that after a brief period these kingdoms all gave their support to the Roman bishop who sat at first as a religious ruler and next as a, temporal ruler. Gibbon, the great historian, who was an unbeliever, has thus described this momentous event of history: "About the close of the sixth century Rome had reached the lowest period of her depression. By the removal of the seat of Empire [to Constantinople], and the successive loss of the provinces, the sources of public and private opulence' were exhausted; the lofty tree under whose shade the nations of the earth had reposed, was deprived of its leaves and branches, and the sapless trunk was left to wither on* the ground ... Like Thebes or Babylon or Carthage, the name of Rome might have been erased from the earth, if the city had not been animated by a vital principle which again restored her to honor and dominion, Under the sacerdotal monarchy of St. Peter., the nations of the earth began to resume the practice of seeking on the banks of the Tiber, their kings, their laws and "the oracles of their 'fate." Referring to the Papacy which contained the "'vital principle which again restored her to honor and dominion," Hallam, in his History of the Middle Ages, says: "Rome inspired all the terror of her ancient name; she was once more the mistress of the world, and kings were her vassals."

Cardinal Manning, in his book entitled "The Temporal Power of the Popes," (published in 1860, ten years before the fall of the temporal power of Papacy), thus refers to this remarkable event connected with the rise of the Roman Catholic system: "Now the abandonment of Rome was the liberation of the Pontiffs . . . The providence of God permitted a succession of eruptions, Goths, Lombards, and Hungarians, to desolate Italy, and to efface from it every vestige of the Empire. The Pontiffs found themselves alone, the sole fountains of order, peace,

law, and safety. And, from the hour of this providential liberation, when by a Divine intervention the chains fell off from the hands of the successors of St. Peter, as once before from his own, no sovereign has ever reigned in Rome except the Vicar of Jesus Christ."

It is also a well known fact of history that beginning in the sixteenth century one after another of these kingdoms withdrew their support, and began to confiscate her landed estates in these kingdoms, and to gradually take away her power and influence, until in 1870 she ceased altogether to be represented in the councils of these kingdoms. How remarkable is the fulfillment of the prediction that the kings would eat her flesh, etc.

THE INEVITABLE CONCLUSION

As our sole object in this series of articles is to prove the correctness of the Historical as distinguished from the Futurist interpretation of the Apocalypse, and not to expound its various visions, we refer the reader to the fuller revised expositions of the HERALD, which may be published later on in book form., It is our conviction that this Divine interpretation of itself proves the Christian character of the Apocalypse, and confines its fulfillment to the events of past history; and that all 'that remains to be fulfilled of its, visions are those that relate to the destruction of the false religious systems, symbolized by the Woman, Babylon and her Harlot offspring; the destruction of the governments of earth, symbolized by the Beast in its last form; and the - establishment of the Kingdom of God, on the ruins of earth's empires.

We conclude this article in the eloquent words of another, who, let it be carefully noted, sums up briefly all the different items of the prophecy: "The Holy Spirit foreseeing, no doubt, that the Church of Rome would adulterate the truth by many gross and grievous abominations, -that she would anathematise all who would not communicate with her, and denounce them as cut off from the Body of Christ, and the hope of everlasting salvation; foreseeing also that Rome would exercise a wide and dominant sway for many generations, by boldly iterated assertions of unity, antiquity, sanctity, and universality; foreseeing also that these pretensions would be supported by the civil sword of many secular governments, among which the Roman Empire would be divided at its dissolution, and that Rome would thus be enabled to display herself to the world in an august attitude of imperial power and with dazzling splendor of temporal felicity; foreseeing also that the Church of Rome would captivate the -imagination of men by the fascinations of art allied with religion, and would ravish their senses and rivet their admiration by gaudy colors and stately pomp and prodigal magnificence; foreseeing also that she would beguile their credulity by miracles and mysteries, apparitions and dreams, trances and ecstasies and would appeal to such evidences in support of her strange doctrines; foreseeing likewise that -she would enslave men and (much more) women by practicing on their affections and by accommodating herself with dangerous pliancy to their weakness, relieving them from the burden of thought and from the perplexity of doubt by proffering them the aid of infallibility, soothing the sorrows of the mourner by dispensing pardon and promising peace to the departed, removing the load of guilt from the oppressed conscience by the ministries of the confessional and by nicely poised compensations for sins, and that she would flourish for many centuries in proud

and prosperous impunity before her sins would reach to heaven and come in remembrance before God; foreseeing also that many generations of men would thus be tempted to fall 'from the faith and to become victims of deadly error, and that they who, clung to the truth would be exposed to cozening flatteries and fierce assaults and savage tortures from her -- the Holy Spirit, we say, foreseeing all these things, in His divine knowledge, and being the ever-blessed teacher, guide and comforter of the Church was graciously pleased to provide a heavenly antidote for all these dangerous, widespread, and long-enduring evils, by dictating the Apocalypse. In this Divine book the Spirit of God has portrayed the Church of Rome such as none but He could have foreseen that she' would become, and such as, wonderful and lamentable to say, she has become. He has thus broken her spells; He has taken the wand of enchantment from her hand; He has lifted the mask from her face; and with His Divine hand He has written her true character in large letters, and has planted her title on her forehead to be seen and read of all: 'Mystery, Babylon the Great, The Mother of Harlots And Abominations of The Earth.'"

"He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches."

* * * * *

At the conclusion of this series of articles under the title "Is THE APOCALYPSE A JEWISH OR A CHRISTIAN PROPHECY?" we desire to, add that the various quotations made throughout the series where references to the name of the author has been omitted, are from the writings of the well-known able expositor, H. G. GUINNESS, principally from his work known as "*Romanism and the Reformation.*"

LETTERS OF ENCOURAGEMENT AND CHEER

Dear Brethren in the Lord:

Greetings from the C----- Ecclesia in the Name of Him -who bought us by His precious blood.

Rejoicing in the blessed hope of one day being made like Him, enables us to bear with fortitude the trials and difficulties He is pleased to have us undergo from time to time, and as we have access to the Mercy Seat we are strengthened in the inner man continually.

As a recent speaker said in this city, "Something happens with the Bible that doesn't with any other literature-the page becomes opaque in the hour of my disobedience." So to derive the fullest blessings from God's Word we must live very close to Him. I can assure you of our continued interest in the HERALD and we regard it as a very welcome visitor to our home. We have every copy from the first issue, December, 1918.

We would be very glad to have the Revelation series published in book form, as being more convenient both for Class study as well as the home. Speaking for myself I may say that the series of studies in the Apocalypse published in the HERALD have enabled me to take a greater interest in that wonderful book.

Previously it was very much a sealed book to me, but now I delight in its study, although there are some things very hard to understand even yet.

We would also like you to send us a number of copies of the tract, "The Silver Lining."

Thanking you for the admirable articles which appear from time to time in our publication, and commending you to our Heavenly Father's care and guidance, I am, dear brethren,

Your brother in Christ,

J. R.--Can.

Dear Brethren:

Since writing you some little time back with respect to the publishing of the Revelation articles in book form, my husband and I have come to the conclusion that we would like very much to assist financially, in addition to the order for six sets of the volumes which we sent along last time. It may be that such a publication would be the most effective way to combat some of the wild ideas being put out by others. If so, the Lord can easily provide the money, and if it proves not to be His will, we would like you to keep the amount we are sending, and use it in some way which will make for the upbuilding of the truly consecrated. You are in a position to know how this can best be done at this time. We would leave it to your judgment.

It is somewhat difficult to know how to use in a thoroughly conscientious manner such little means as the Lord has entrusted with us. So much has gone to upbuild sects in the past that we feel He expects us to be wiser for those experiences, although maybe not holding us guilty for what was done through ignorance or lack of judgment,

I enclose a draft for \$_____ trusting you will find it possible to carry out your proposal.

With much appreciation of the HERALD's constant helpful influence, and Christian love to you all from Brother M. and myself, I remain

Yours in Christ,

H.M.--S. Aus.

Dear Brethren in Christ:

Greetings in His Name! Mercy unto you, and peace, and love be multiplied.

I am penning these few lines hoping thereby to convey in a small measure my deep and sincere appreciation of your labor of love in the Master's service. A few months ago the HERALD publication was brought to my notice by a brother who recently came through a fiery trial which resulted in his being made "free indeed." At first I hardly liked the thought of reading literature from "another channel." However, I overcame this feeling and decided to read same. ... I give thanks that after a careful reading, which I appreciated more and more as I proceeded, I

managed to get clear away from a certain sectarian idea concerning "one" channel.

I rejoice, dear brethren, that you are able and timely ministrations have, to me, been a veritable eye opener along certain lines. Again I give thanks for, the humble Christ-like attitude maintained by the Editorial Committee., To me it is abundantly proved that the Lord will and does use any body of persons who are sufficiently "broken" and "emptied" so as thereby to be fit for His service.

It was chronology which mainly induced me to read the HERALD, and, praise the Lord, the meat in this respect has been more than satisfying. No more trying to persuade oneself that certain things happened in a certain year, because that was the year "marked" for such a happening. No more blindly maintaining certain events did transpire at a certain time, when all around are evidences to the contrary. No, nothing like that, but rather, all things working out quietly and majestically, everything right on time, but, "His" due time.

Finally, dear brethren, let me assure you of my sincerest Christian love and wishes. Every fresh issue of the HERALD is eagerly awaited by me, every line of which I know sends forth the fragrance of the sweet and pure fruits of the Spirit, Ever remembering you all before the Throne of Heavenly Grace,

Your brother in the One Hope,

R. C. C.--S. Aus.

Dear Brethren:

Loving greetings. The December 1 HERALD has just come to hand, and I note your remarks regarding the publication of the Revelation articles In book form. On behalf of the Class. in Belfast I am directed to say that we shall require at least forty sets of two volumes. There is a keen desire here to. have the books as soon as possible.

Personally I again renew my promise to contribute toward the cost of publication.

It is a year since the Lord opened my eyes' through the chronology number of the HERALD to the true state of affairs in the Harvest work. It has been a happy year, and the ministry of the INSTITUTE has been very helpful to me. The HERALDS continue to bless me in pointing me to the great Head of the Church, and I remember those who are in the ministry daily

With warm Christian love.

Your brother by His grace,

D.A.B.--Ire.

Dear Brethren:

Loving greetings. I am just writing a few lines in response to the article in the last HERALD, re publishing the Revelation articles in book form. I think I have told you before how deeply I appreciate the reading of these articles, and what a great help they have been to me. Therefore I should be very glad to see them in book

form that- others may share ii-i these wonderful truths and receive the blessing that comes from a study of the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

If you decide to publish in two volumes, I take this opportunity of ordering five copies of each volume,. and will send on payment for same immediately upon hearing from you what the cost will be in British money.

With continued love in the Lord to you all, and praying His Divine guidance and blessing upon you in all your ways,

Your brother by His grace,

H.E--Eng.