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## A Thanksgiving Catechism

*"O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good; for **His** mercy endureth forever." - Psalm 136:1.*

WILLIAM Shakespeare, that understanding and eloquent spokesman for fallen man, has this to say of mercy:

"The quality of mercy is not strained;  
It droppeth, as the gentle rain from heaven  
Upon the place beneath, it is twice blessed;  
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes:  
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes  
The throned monarch better than his crown;  
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,  
The attribute to awe and majesty,  
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;  
But mercy is above this sceptred sway;  
It is enthroned in the heart of kings,  
It is an attribute to God Himself;  
And earthly power doth then show likest God's  
When mercy seasons justice."

Psalm 136 is a hymn of thanksgiving for mercy. The refrain of every one of the twenty-six verses is in the words of our text: "O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good; for His mercy endureth forever."

In the Revised Version "mercy" is rendered "loving-kindness," a more awkward but perhaps a more definitive word. Yet it must be admitted that the mercy which mitigates the punishment of the guilty, or pardons the weak but repentant sinner, is the highest manifestation of kindness.

Every right thinking member of the race of Adam is conscious of his own imperfection and guilt before his Creator, and of his consequent need of mercy.

### **"'Tis Mightiest in the Mightiest"**

"Mercy, is the attribute of heaven." The greatest single act of God's mercy was the provision of a propitiation, a corresponding price, "for the sins of the whole world." "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable Gift."

But mercy does not end with this supreme manifestation. Even those of whom it is written "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified"-even those who have accepted Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, and have covenanted to walk in His footsteps -- these still require mercy of their judge.

To be sure their case has been transferred to Christ; the Father has quashed the indictment against them, the "corruption of blood" consequent upon the "attainder" of their father Adam for high treason against his Lord; He **"will not impute iniquity"** to them. They now "stand before the judgment seat of Christ."

### **"It is Required in Stewards that They be Found Faithful"**

Upon what basis are they now judged? As **stewards** and **ambassadors** of Christ. As His representatives before the angels, the brethren, and the world. They are judged as candidates for joint heirship with Jesus Christ in the Kingdom -- this word means the Royalty-not on the basis of their sins of commission which are of the flesh that is "disowned and reckoned dead," and are all covered by the Blood-the red robe of their Sponsor's righteousness. They are judged for their fitness for future office on the basis of their sins of omission -- the things they should do and do not; even as it is written: "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

Equipped for their high ambassadorial office with power of the Holy Spirit; with angel guardians and friends; with constant guidance of a living Word, "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works"; it would indeed appear that each one of this favored company should be able to "keep the faith," to "fight a good fight," to "finish the course" with the joy of accomplishment and success. But how many can plead before their Judge, that they have done these things, as did Paul by inspiration, speaking not his own judgment but his Judge's -- to assure the humble minded of the possibility of such a verdict.

Can any appear before that Bar of Justice and plead: "I have this day faithfully and wholly presented Thee to all observers. I have not been guilty in any degree of unfaithfulness. There has been no variance, no weakness, no hesitancy in my course this, day. The motions of sin in my flesh have been put to death. And as I have received mercy, so have I shown mercy to all who have trespassed against me." Can any so plead? Verily, Nay! "Where is boasting then? **It is excluded.**"

### **The Boasters**

Only "the workers of iniquity **boast themselves.**" Only such will have the effrontery to plead before Him: "Have we not prophesied in Thy name? And in Thy name cast out devils? And in Thy name done many wonderful works?" The verdict against these boasters is already entered: "I

never knew you; depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." "I never knew you" in the intimate sense, as My prospective Bride-certainly He did not mean "I never knew about you." The boasters' statements are not contradicted. They had "worked," and many, including themselves, had honestly thought their works "Christian" and "wonderful." But "All the workers of iniquity boast themselves"!

On the contrary, the daily and final justification (constituting righteous) of the 144,000 is and will be in response to their throwing themselves upon the mercy of the Court. Their plea will ever be "O righteous judge, Thy merit and Thy mercy must still make up my imperfection. I am unworthy."

## Will All be justified?

Will this plea always avail? Will all who offer it be approved as members of the Bride of Christ - the 144,000 of the Little Flock upon whom it is the Father's great **pleasure** to bestow the Royalty?

If we accept as accurate the oft-repeated refrain of Psalm 136 "His mercy endureth forever"-it would appear that the answer should be yes. But there is no word in the Hebrew that has the precise significance of the English word "forever." The Hebrew word so rendered here is "olam," literally meaning an invisible and indefinite end. The end is far off, but it is there. "Behold the goodness and the severity of God." "He will not always [to the end] chide [mercifully contend, rebuke, plead, chasten - Heb. 12:5-11] neither will He keep [guard, restrain, reserve - Jer. 3:5] His anger forever [olam]." -- Psalm 103:9.

There is a limit to His long patience and mercy. With many, the final plea for mercy will result in commutation of sentence-the deserved extreme penalty of death-to loss of Kingdom honors, as it is written: "He shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved."

## What is Our Own Status?

"Examine yourselves," urges the Apostle, "whether ye be in the faith." He is referring to this very issue, for he continues: "Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates [literally, rejected] " - unless you have passed the limit and have been disapproved for the Body - the Royalty.

Upon what lines shall we proceed with this most important self examination? Shall it be as to doctrinal conformity? Or as to "great and wonderful works"? Or for emotional exaltation? No, we will not be so foolish! We have a law Book to guide us, wherein we find written: "This is the will of God, even your sanctification"--that is, **setting apart** for a holy purpose. "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son."

What, then, is the nature of the evidence that must be brought: out, to show that we are not rejected? The cross-examination to which we subject ourselves should be upon these lines, our answers "Yes" or "No"; remembering that "the thoughts and intents of our hearts" are being judged, and that they are "naked and open before Him with whom we have to do." And so we ask ourselves:

Am I still "seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness"?

Do I still clearly see and embrace the opportunity of **sacrificing** with my Lord?

Am I really **suffering** with Him?

Do I love **all** the brethren?

Do I perceive and act upon the beauty and privilege of "laying down my life" for the brethren -- particularly the often discredited ones who need me most?

Can I claim mercy because I am consistently merciful?

Am I "diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord"?

Am I an "overcomer," to some extent at least, in my own rebellious domain, my fleshly body?

Am I "bringing it into subjection"?

### **Relevant and Proper Questions**

This may seem a drastic examination; but does not the evidence toward which these questions are directed vitally concern the "reasonable service" incumbent upon a consecrated Christian, covenanted to follow in the footsteps of his Lord?

If I can answer "Yes" to these questions -- even with some hesitancy and uncertainty and tears -- is it not evidence that my Head is still dealing with me as a prospective member of His Body and is not this conclusion the greatest reason for thanksgiving, that I could possibly have-not alone on an appointed day, but every day?

Shall I not then read the Psalms of Thanksgiving and find every refrain therein has an echo from the depths of my being:

Give thanks unto the Lord, O my soul; for He it good; for His mercy still endureth toward **me**; and will endure until the end He has appointed. Then, whatever His Verdict, **it shall be well with** my soul.

- H. E. Hollister

## Things Coming to Pass

*"When ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the Kingdom of God is nigh at hand." - Luke 21:31.*

AS THESE words are being written, the greatest battle in history's greatest campaign roars along a deep and shifting front over Russia's western plains. The climactic *blow* has apparently been launched by Adolph Hitler in 'his program for the conquest of Europe. Two great waves of struggling, bleeding, dying men are meeting in shuddering collision. And all the world awaits in fascinated horror for the outcome of this battle of giants. A struggle which began two years ago and in ever-increasing force has now reached a stage that has stunned the world by the casualties reported, counted not in thousands, but in millions. The mind sickens in the comprehension of the immense suffering which all this means, and unites with the groaning creation in the plea of God's martyrs, "How long, O Lord?" How long before the Infinite will hear and speak the blessed word that shall end earth's nightmare?

"Careless seems the great Avenger.  
History's pages but record  
One death grapple in the darkness  
'Twixt old systems and the Word:  
Truth for ever on the scaffold;  
Wrong for ever on the throne --  
But that scaffold sways the future,  
And, beyond the dim unknown,  
Standeth God, within the shadows,  
Keeping watch above His own."

"Upon the wicked," says the Psalmist, God "shall rain snares, fire and brimstone [symbols of trouble and destruction], and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup; for the righteous Lord loveth righteousness." - Psa. 11:3-7.

But the time is not yet, for though the Kingdom of God is nigh, yes, "even at the doors," the ultimate purposes of the Almighty in the present distress of nations is not yet accomplished. For "He hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken, may remain." - Heb. 12:26, 27.

## The Twentieth Century

That ours is the most remarkable period in human history is now recognized by all thinking men. In the interpretation of present events, however, the Christian towers above his fellows, for he alone possesses the light of divine wisdom, which truly interprets the present day. The very events which cause him to "lift up his head," in the joyful realization that the long promised reign of Christ is at hand, serve but to fill the hearts of all others with "fear" and with "perplexity." (Luke 21:28, 25.) The radio and the press pour forth the confusion of voices as men endeavor to find some solution for the terrible problems of humanity. We quote some recent utterances. From the *Chicago Daily News*:

"Consider the 20th Century. It is our century. It is ours not *only* in the sense that we happen to live in it but ours also because it is America's first century as a dominant power in the world. So far, this century of ours has been a profound and tragic disappointment. No other century has been, *so* big with promise for human progress and happiness. And in no one century have so many men and women and children suffered such pain and anguish and bitter death.

"It is a baffling and difficult and paradoxical century. No doubt all centuries were paradoxical to those who had to cope with them. But, like everything else, our paradoxes today are bigger and better than ever. Yes, better as well as bigger--inherently better. We have poverty and starvation - but only in the midst of plenty. We have the biggest wars in the midst *of* the most widespread, the deepest and the most articulated hatred of war in all history. We have tyrannies and dictatorships -when democratic idealism, once regarded as the dubious eccentricity of a colonial nation, is the faith of a majority of the people of the world.

"This 20th Century is baffling, difficult, paradoxical, revolutionary. But by now, at the cost of much pain and many hopes, deferred, we know a good deal about it. And we ought to accommodate our outlook to this knowledge so dearly bought. *For* example, any true conception of our world of the 20th Century must surely include a vivid awareness of at least these four propositions.

"First: our world of 2,000,000,000 human beings is for the first time in history one world, fundamentally indivisible. [Compare with Zeph. 3:8, 9 and Isa. 66:18.] Second: modern man hates war and feels intuitively that, in its present scale and frequency, it may even be fatal to his species. [Compare with Matt. 24:21, 22.] Third: our world, again, for the first time in human history is capable of producing all the material needs of the entire human family. Fourth: the world of the 20th Century, if it is to come to life in any nobility of health and vigor, must be to a significant degree an *American Century*."

The article continues with the general theme that the solution of the world's problems must be accomplished by a union of the English speaking peoples.

In much the same vein, we quote some thoughts from the *New York Times*:

"Amid the violent apocalyptic storm that is sweeping over the earth, and whose end is not yet, it is a bold undertaking to speak about an order of things to come in precise spiritual, political and economic terms. But we must be bold. We must look ahead, envisioning broad beamed objectives with realism and courage. We should be aware that at no time in the modern age have masses of suffering people been more ready, more anxious, more hungry for broad beamed objectives than today.

"At no time has the almost religious nostalgia for a better and saner world been stronger in the hearts of millions of men and women than it *is* today in all countries menaced or torn by war. Hardly ever have men faced graver alternatives, greater opportunities, and more awesome perils. Again, as-so often in the past, we draw near a decisive juncture--perhaps the last one on the journey of our civilization from where some roads seem to lead to more destructive *wars*, to chaos and bolshevization, and other roads lead onward to the preservation of our democratic-Christian cultural heritage, to social recovery and to new life."

## **Ecclesiastical Voices**

At the recent convention of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, Archbishop Glennon said "that in the face of the uncertainty of the future, our mission today is to make America another holy land.

"America is great, is powerful, is opulent, but God is greater and what America has of power and resources comes from Him. Out of these troubled times of ours, filled with fury and bloodshed, it appears as certain that the new order of life is in its creating. What the new order will be, whether it will be a real order or *how* it affects the individual, it is difficult to tell. For the cities, man-made, rise, grow, and perish; the country that God made is, and will remain, the natural habitat of those who live there satisfied with their lot."

At the same convention, Bishop Ryan said:

"We face an unknown future. We know we are moving toward an unknown world. We must get ready for it. About the future one thing seems certain, namely, the old pattern of economics must go and will go. This old pattern with all its defects cannot be retained in the world that lies ahead of us."

Bishop William T. Manning in a recent sermon took a somewhat lesser-ranged viewpoint. He "declared in opening his sermon that he did not agree with other representatives of the church who felt that the church should be silent or neutral in this world crisis. Hitlerism is an assault upon all 'we believe as Americans and as Christians,' he said, holding that no Christian and no American can be neutral. . . .

"We see now that this is not just another conflict between rival nations or empires but that it is a life and death struggle against the domination of this world by the brutal power of Hitlerism. .

"Our whole nation must now stand united in spirit, in aim, and in action. . . . Our united aim now must be the complete, decisive defeat of Hitlerism for our own self-defense, for the shortening of the war, for the ending of the frightful cruelty, misery and suffering, for the restoration of enslaved peoples to their freedom and their rights.

"Our need now as a nation is to put -on the armor of God. The world crisis calls every American, man and woman, young and old, to his place in the service of our country, and in the ranks of the church or congregation to which he belongs."

From the same issue of the *New York Times* we quote a sermon by the Rev. Joseph F. Flannelly, who, in a somewhat different vein, declared that most people are praying for "the wrong victory.

"They seek the spurious one, that one that begins with hate and expediency and accomplishes the annihilation or at least the subjugation of the opposing nations, whichever they may be. Will any one dare to say that such a victory is born of God? Then why delude ourselves into hoping that it will overcome the evils of the world and bring peace? At best it can bring only a truce. But mankind wants peace, not a truce. Mankind wants the real victory, founded on Christian charity and divine truth. To obtain that, mankind must return to the one true faith; mankind must embrace the faith born of God, not of man or woman. That faith in Jesus, the Son of God, is the victory that overcomes the world.' "



## The Voices of Science

The world of Science offers little in the way of solution of the present appalling problems. A world free of war and tyranny, with scientists taking a more active part in political economy to prevent wars and to enable the mass of people to satisfy their physical wants, was pictured at the recent International Conference on Science and the World Order held in London. - A distinguished representation of the scientific thought of the world there had opportunity for free expression:

"Ambassador John G. Winant said that at present it has become apparent that 'Nazism has stolen and run amok with the great inventions of free and inquiring minds and is using them not to save life but to destroy life, not to liberate men but to enslave men.

"In our great effort to re-establish political rights, which is necessary if we are to have scientific progress and a free mind, we must keep constantly in our mind the obligation of science to satisfy the primary needs of man, so that the essentials of life are recognized equally as a part of the rights of man. This is necessary if we are to have security. We must abolish both hunger and the sword as a means of forcing labor.'

"Professor Hill said that international cooperation was essential to scientists and 'we know perfectly well that race, political opinion, and religion have no bearing on a man's work,' adding that 'the only thing that matters is that he should be intelligent and honest.'

"He then suggested that scientists in America begin forming international scientific groups now, rather than wait until the war was over. Americans, he said, were the only ones who could do this work because they were democratic and because, 'as you know, we are rather busy.'

"Mr. Kaempffert asked Professor Hill if he did not think scientists should have some influence at peace conferences.

"The voice of science,' he pointed out, 'wasn't heard the last time very strongly.'

"I should very much hope it would be,' replied Professor Hill, 'because it is coming to have some influence on the war, before this war is finished, that they might just as well have something to say of the peace.'

"Professors Urey and Blackett discussed the need for keeping science free and yet in harmony with the social needs of the people. Dr. Urey pointed out that scientists were now devoting a great deal of their time to their governments and 'we are dictated to a great deal by them.'

"If this is to continue during peacetimes I think many people will be made unhappy. Many of us have worked for years with the highest of ideals in scientific work, with the hope that everything we do will be as useful to man in a peaceful way, and most of us have deplored the great use of science in war. These things have come about because of bad organization. In some way or other, scientists themselves must pay more attention to implementing science, getting it organized with our big business concerns in such a way that it produces the result we all hope for in peace.'

"Professor Boas said that one of the chief tasks of scientists in the future must be 'to see to it that those who control education are permeated by the conviction that it is one of their prime duties to set free the minds of the youth of our generation so that the young may learn to recognize bias

and prejudice, that they will become learners of truth for the sake of truth,' adding that 'the people so educated will be free in the full sense of the term.'

### **Lift up Your Heads**

Except in the case of the Rev. Joseph F. Flannelly, these voices, which are fair samples of others which could be cited, fail to perceive the underlying cause of the present distressing state of affairs on earth. His expression, in our judgment, more truly points the way. "Mankind must return to the one true faith." The victory for which we should pray is one "founded on Christian charity and divine truth." With these sentiments we are in very hearty agreement. Furthermore, from our study of Gods Word we understand that the time is very near when. not a truce, but peace will be established by the Prince of Peace. Let us who are children of light, the children of the Kingdom, rejoice in the proximity of the reign of righteousness. For long years have we watched the signs which betokened its approach, and our faith has not been in vain. True, we erred in some matters, in our eager anticipation of the "desire of all nations." But in the words of Brother Russell, written twenty-five years ago:

"We could not, of course, know in 1889, whether the date 1914, so clearly marked in the Bible as the end of the Gentile lease of power or permission to rule the world, would mean that they would be fully out of power at that time, or whether, their lease expiring, their eviction would begin. The latter we perceive to be the Lord's program; and promptly in August, 1914, the Gentile kingdoms referred to in the prophecy began the present great struggle, which, according to the Bible, will culminate in the complete overthrow of all human government, opening the way for the full establishment of the Kingdom of God's dear Son.

"We are not able to see behind the veil; we are not able to know the things progressing under the direction of our glorious Lord and the members of His Church already glorified. Our thought is that somehow the Lord is taking a hand in the affairs of the world now as He did not do in times past. We do know that the great time of trouble, which has begun, very closely corresponds to the divine declaration respecting the time and conditions of the establishment of Messiah's Kingdom. The Lord Himself informs us that, at the time He shall take to Himself His great power and reign, the nations will be angry and the divine wrath will come. A little later on the time will come for the judging of the dead, and the giving of the reward to God's servants, small and great, leading on finally to the destruction of the incorrigible, who would exercise a corrupt influence upon the earth." - Rev. 21:8.

Again elsewhere he said, "Let us remember that the very design of the great time of trouble, now nearing a culmination, is to break the stony hearts of the whole world, to bow down into the dust the proud, and break up the fallow ground with deep furrows of pain, trouble, sorrow, thus to make the world ready for the great blessings of the Millennial Kingdom. And it will serve its intended purpose: as the Prophet declares, 'When Thy judgments [Lord] are [abroad] in the earth the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.' (Isa. 26:9.) By that time all will have learned that selfish schemes and all schemes that can be devised and carried out by fallen men are defective, and lead only to various degrees of trouble and confusion. And all will by that time be longing for, but despairing of, a reign of righteousness; little realizing how near at hand it is."

"All things are onward moving! Let earth's Jubilee begin!

The Old is swiftly passing, and the New is coming in! It is coming! Oh 'tis coming! My raptured eyes behold! The light is on the hill-tops, the Shepherd with His Fold." - W. J. Siekman

## The Wedding Feast

**Matthew 22:1-4**

*"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the Prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings, and ye would not!" - Luke 13:34.*

THE PARABLE of the king who prepared a marriage feast for his son shows that the promises of God and His providences toward Israel under the Law Covenant were all designed to fit and prepare the Israelites to be God's holy nation, and especially to provide at the coming of Christ a sufficient number to constitute the elect Church, Messiah's joint-heirs in the Kingdom -- His Bride. The parable shows that only a few were "Israelites indeed," in whom was no guile-not enough to constitute the Kingdom class; hence the call of this Gospel Age, selecting from the Gentiles a sufficient number of saintly characters to be joint-heirs with the Jewish remnant in the Messianic Kingdom.

The Kingdom of Heaven, otherwise styled the Kingdom of God, is not to be an earthly Kingdom, but a heavenly one, whose Ruler, the glorified Christ, will not be an earthly king, but a heavenly being of the highest rank-of the divine nature. This Kingdom, representing God and the heavenly rule, or dominion, is to be established amongst men for the eradication of sin. Its first work will be the binding of Satan, the "Prince of this world." Afterward all the works of darkness will be overthrown. The overthrow will at first cause a great time of trouble, following which, as the reign of righteousness progresses, the curse in its every form will give way before the blessings of Messiah's Kingdom -- until there shall be no more curse, no more sighing, no more crying, no more dying.

But before this heavenly Kingdom can be established, it is a part of the divine decree and arrangement that there shall be a Bride class selected from amongst men. These are begotten of the Holy Spirit and are God's workmanship, in whom He works by the exceeding great and precious promises of the Scriptures and by the providences of life. Thus they are being transformed in mind and made ready for the glorious birth-resurrection by which they will be "changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," from earthly nature to heavenly nature. Thus they will enter into the joys of their Lord by becoming His Bride class, His joint heirs in His Kingdom.

### **Application of the Parable**

For the development of this Kingdom class the world has now been waiting since the days of Jesus, when by His death He opened up a new way of life and became the Advocate before the Father for all those desirous of being His disciples, His joint-heirs, His Bride.

The parable takes up the Kingdom project at the time of our Lord's earthly ministry. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power [liberty or privilege] to become sons of God." - John 1:12.

Jehovah Himself is the King who made a marriage for His Son -- arranging before the foundation of the world that there should be certain joint heirs with Christ in His Kingdom. This marriage, of course, could not take place until the King's Son had come into the world and had made the way for His followers and for the Kingdom of which He is to be King.

At the appropriate time God sent His servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding; but they would not come. John the Baptist and his disciples did this work of calling to the attention of the Jewish people the fact that the King's Son was in their midst. He said, "There standeth One among you whom ye know not." (John 1:26.) Again he said, "He that hath the Bride is the Bridegroom; but the friend of the Bridegroom, who standeth and heareth Him, rejoiceth greatly because of the Bridegroom's voice; this my joy therefore is fulfilled." (John 3:29.) John rejoiced to hear the voice of the Bridegroom. Prophetically he foretold that the calling of the Bride class had come, although he himself could not be a member of it.

### **Made Light of the Message**

Again other servants were sent forth. Jesus sent His disciples to the Jews, saying, "Tell them that are bidden, Behold, I have prepared My dinner; My oxen and My fatlings are killed, and all things are ready; come unto the marriage" feast.

But was the message of Jesus and His disciples received? Nay! The people, under the guidance of the Scribes and the Pharisees, the theologians of that time, made light of the message and went their way—one to his farm, another to his merchandise, saying, We do not believe this message respecting the Kingdom. Some did even worse than this. They entreated these servants shamefully, spitefully, and slew them. Not only was Jesus slain by the unbelieving ones who had been invited to the feast, but His faithful disciples also were evilly treated and slain.

Then, as seen in another parable, Jehovah was wroth with that people Israel, and sent forth His armies, destroyed those murderers and burned up their city. The fact that it was the Roman army under Titus which destroyed Jerusalem in A. D. 70 did not make it any less the army of Jehovah, for He is able to make the wrath of man praise Him and able to use whom He may please as His messengers, or servants.

### **Gentiles Called to the Wedding**

Meantime God said to His servants, the Apostles, and to others through them, The wedding is provided, but the Jewish nation, which was especially invited, have not been found worthy of the honor. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage feast. So those servants went into the highways and gathered together as many as they found, and brought them in. Thus the wedding was provided with guests.

Highways represent public concourse, the world over. The Lord's ambassadors were no longer to restrict themselves to Jews, but were to make known to every people, kindred and tongue, the fact that God is now calling out of the world a little company, lovers of righteousness, to be followers of the Lamb and eventually to become joint heirs with the Redeemer in His Kingdom. Be it noted that these ambassadors were not to intercept all the people in the highways, but merely to urge upon all those whom they met in the concourse, the great privilege of the open door to the wedding feast.

These were not all saintly, good; some of them, on the contrary, were bad. The Apostles explain this, saying that not many great, not many rich, not many noble, but chiefly the poor, the mean things of this world, hath God chosen. The Apostles speak, along the lines of our lesson, of the class that God is selecting from the world. No matter how mean, no matter how degraded, no matter how ignoble by nature—all who are willing to receive the grace of God may be made suitable for the wedding by the covering of the wedding garment, the righteousness of Christ.

Indeed, however noble or worthy many are naturally, they are still not fit for the presence of the King. All who attend this wedding must have on the wedding garment -- must be covered with the merit of Christ's righteousness. The wedding is thus furnished with guests -- all that the King had intended -- every place filled. Thus and otherwise does the Lord indicate that the number of the Elect is a definitely fixed one; and that as soon as the Elect number has been found, the call will cease.

### **Inspecting the Guests**

The custom of the Jews, arranged by divine providence doubtless, was that at every wedding feast each guest was to put on a white garment, covering his own garments. Thus all at the wedding were on an equal footing as respects dignity, because they were the guests of the host. So all who come to God's, great feast provided through Christ must come, not through any worthiness of their own in the flesh, but acknowledging that they have an insufficiency of merit to be acceptable to God, and must accept the merit of Christ as making them worthy of the honor to which they aspire in responding to this invitation.

Each guest entering the house was supplied with the robe, and was expected to put it on immediately. For any one to appear without that wedding garment would be a mark of disrespect to the host who had provided it. Indeed, for any one to appear at the wedding without the robe would imply that he had taken it off; for no one was admitted without the robe. This is the picture given us in the parable. A guest was found there who had not on the wedding garment-one, therefore, who in disregard of his host had removed his wedding garment, the wearing of which was the condition of his admission.

The words, "When the king came in," signify an inspection just prior to the feast. Since the King of the parable is Jehovah Himself, this would seem to mean that God takes note through the exhibition of divine justice in some manner of any one professing loyalty, yet disregarding the merit of Christ's death. Or, Christ might properly be understood to be referred to as the King in this instance; for at His coming He is to be invested with kingly authority and power by the Heavenly Father, as our Lord Himself indicates in the parables of the Pounds and the Talents. At His Second Advent, therefore, He tells us, He will Himself inspect all those who pose as being His faithful servants -- all those who are desirous of enjoying the wedding festival.

The man found without a wedding garment in the presence of the king we should understand to represent a class, and not merely one individual. So we might find just such a class today, professing to be followers of Christ, professing to be waiting for the marriage of the Lamb, professing to hope to enter into the joys of their Lord, yet telling us that they are no longer trusting in the merit of Christ's Sacrifice for their standing with the Father. These have rejected Jesus as their Savior, their Redeemer, the Atoner for their sins. They merely retain Him as their Teacher, and then, apparently, accept only a part of His teachings.

These are manifestly unfit to be members-of the Bride of Christ. Only the loyal, only the faithful, are to be of that class. The parable shows that all those who reject the merit of Christ's Sacrifice will be rejected from the Kingdom class. They are unable to say how they came in without a "wedding garment"; for they did not come in without it. No one was ever admitted into the fellowship of the Spirit in the Church which is the Bride of Christ without first having on the wedding garment of Christ's merit, covering his imperfection. Those admitting thus that they have taken off the wedding garment are cast out summarily. The king said to the servants, "Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness.. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

## **The Outer Darkness**

When our minds were filled with hallucinations of the Dark Ages, we read into this and into other Scriptures what they do not contain. We assumed that the class represented by the man without the wedding garment would be cast into eternal torment, and there suffer to all eternity. But now, examining the Scriptures more carefully, we have perceived that as all of these guests at the wedding came into the light of the wedding chamber from the darkness of the outside world, so the casting of one of them out of the light into the outer darkness would merely mean the taking from such a one the knowledge and the joys represented by the wedding-chamber light.

As for the outside world, we know that the Apostle John declares that the whole world lieth in darkness, "in the Wicked One." We know also that as soon as the Bride class shall have been completed, a great time of trouble will prepare the world for the blessings of Messiah's Kingdom later on. During that trouble all those who are in the darkness will have weeping and gnashing of teeth -discontent, anguish, disappointment, etc., connected with the overthrow of many of their wrongly based human hopes and expectations.

Our Lord concluded the parable with the statement, "For many are called, but few are chosen." This does not mean, as we once supposed, that only an Elect few will get any favor from God in the future, and that all the remainder of mankind will be eternally tortured. We must read it in harmony with the context. The Jewish nation was called, or invited, to the wedding-and failed, except the few "Israelites indeed." For eighteen hundred years the Message has gone out into the highways, to one nation after another of the Gentiles, until many have more or less heard the call of the Gospel Age. Yet only a few have accepted and have therefore come into the elect condition. And of those who come into this elect condition there will still be a class not properly appreciative which will be cast away, or rejected.

Again the Master drew attention to the matter, saying, "Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." The Little Flock, composed of both Jews and Gentiles, will through their faithfulness become God's chosen people, His elect Church, the Bride of Christ. Then, later on, they with their Lord will be the Heavenly Father's Agency for blessing all the non-elect with the glorious opportunities of Restitution to all the earthly blessings and good things lost through Father Adam's disobedience and fall. "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's Seed and *heirs.*" - R5510, R5511.

## Our Moments Kept for Jesus

*"Kept by the power of God through faith." "Behold, **He** that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep." - 1 Pet. 1:5: Psa. 121:4.*

IT MAY be a little help to writer and reader if we consider some of the practical details of the life which we desire to have "kept for Jesus."

The first point that naturally comes up is that which is almost synonymous with life-our time. And this brings us at once face-to-face with one of our past difficulties, and its probable cause.

When we take a wide sweep, we are so apt to be vague. When we are aiming at generalities, we do not hit the practicalities. We forget that faithfulness to principle is proved only by faithfulness in detail. Has not this vagueness had something to do with the constant ineffectiveness of our feeble desire that our time should be devoted to God?

In things spiritual, the greater does not always include the less, but, paradoxically, the less more often includes the greater. So in this case, time is entrusted to us to be traded with for our Lord. But we cannot grasp it as a whole. We instinctively break it up ere we can deal with it for any purpose. So when a New Year comes round, we commit it with special earnestness to the Lord. But as we do so, are we not conscious of a feeling that even a year is too much for us to deal with? And does not this feeling, that we are dealing with a larger thing than we can grasp, take away from the sense of reality? Thus we are brought to a more manageable measure; and as the Sunday mornings or the Monday mornings come round, we thankfully commit the opening week to Him, and the sense of help and rest is renewed and strengthened.

"Keep my moments and my days; Let them flow in ceaseless praise."

But not even the six or seven days are close enough to our hand; even tomorrow exceeds our tiny grasp, and even tomorrow's grace is therefore not given to us. So we find the need of considering our lives as a matter of day by day, and that any more general committal and consecration of our time does not meet the case so truly. Here we have found much comfort and help, and if results have not been entirely satisfactory, they have, at least, been more so than before we reached this point of subdivision.

But if we have found help and blessing by going a certain distance in one direction, is it not probable we shall find more if we go farther in the same? And so, if we may commit the days to our Lord, why not the hours, and why not the moments? And may we not expect a fresh and special blessing in so doing?

We do not realize the importance of moments. Only let us consider those two sayings of God about them, "In a moment shall they die," and, "We shall all be changed in a moment," and we shall think less lightly of them. Eternal issues may hang upon any one of them, but it has come and gone before we can even think about it. Nothing seems less within the possibility of our own keeping, yet nothing is more inclusive of all other keeping. Therefore, let us ask Him to keep them for us.

Are they not the tiny joints in the harness through which the darts of temptation pierce us? Only give us time, we think, and we should not be overcome. Only give us time, and we could pray and resist, and the devil would flee from us! But he comes all in a moment; and in a moment -- an

unguarded, unkept one -- we utter the hasty or, exaggerated word, or think the un-Christlike thought, or feel the un-Christlike impatience or resentment.

But even if we have gone so far as to say, "Take my moments," have we gone the step farther, and really let Him take them-really entrusted them to Him? It is no good saying "take" when we do not let go. How can another keep that which we are keeping hold of? So let us, with full trust in His power, first commit these slippery moments to Him-put them right into His hand-and then we may trustfully and happily say, "Lord, keep them for me! Keep every one of the quick series as it arises. I cannot keep them for Thee; do Thou keep them for Thyself!"

But the sanctified and Christ-loving heart cannot be satisfied with only negative keeping. We do not want only to be kept from displeasing Him. but to be kept always pleasing Him. Every "kept from," should have its corresponding and still more blessed "kept for." We do not want our moments to be kept simply from Satan's use, but kept for **His** use; we want them to be kept not only from sin, but kept for His praise. Do you ask, "But what use can He make of mere moments?" We will not stay to prove or illustrate the obvious truth that, as are the moments so will be the hours and the days which they build. You understand that well enough. We will answer your question as it stands.

Look back through the history of the Church in all ages, and mark how often a great work and mighty influence grew out of a mere moment in the life of one of God's servants; a mere moment, but overshadowed and filled with the fruitful power of the spirit of God. The moment may have been spent in uttering; five words, but they have fed five thousand, or even five hundred thousand. Or it may have been lit by the flash of a thought that has shone into hearts and homes throughout the land, and kindled torches that have been borne into earth's darkest corners. The rapid speaker or the lonely thinker little guessed what use his Lord was making of that single moment. There was no room in it for even a thought of that. If that moment had not been, though perhaps unconsciously, "kept for Jesus," but had been otherwise occupied, what a harvest to His praise would have been missed!

The same thing is going on every day. It is generally a moment-either an opening or a culminating one -- that really does the work. It is not so often a whole sermon as a single short sentence in it, that wings God's arrow to a heart. It is seldom a whole conversation that is the means of bringing about the desired result, but some sudden turn of thought or word, which comes with the electric touch of God's power. Sometimes it is less than that; only a look (and what is more momentary?) has been used by Him for the pulling down of strongholds. Again, in our own quiet waiting upon God, as moment after moment glides past in the silence at His feet, the eye resting upon a page of His Word, or only looking up to Him through the darkness, have we not found that He can so irradiate one passing moment with His light that its rays never die away, but shine on and on through days and years? Are not such moments proved to have been kept for Him? And if some, why not all?

This view of moments seems to make it clearer that it is impossible to serve two masters, for it is evident that the service of a moment cannot be divided. If it is occupied in the service of self, or any other master, it is not at the Lord's disposal; He cannot make use of what is already occupied.

Oh, how much we have missed by not placing them at His disposal! What might He not have done with the moments freighted with self or loaded with emptiness, which we have carelessly let drift by! Oh, what might have been if they had all been kept for Jesus! How He might have filled them with His light and life, enriching our own lives that have been impoverished by the waste, and using them in far-spreading blessing and power!



While we have been undervaluing these fractions of eternity, what has our gracious God been doing in them? How strangely touching are the words, "What is man, that Thou shouldest set Thine heart upon him, and that Thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him **every moment?**" Terribly solemn and awful would be the thought that He has been trying us every moment, were it not for the yearning gentleness and love of the Father revealed in that wonderful expression of wonder, "What is man, that Thou shouldest set Thine heart upon him?" Think of the ceaseless setting of His heart upon us, careless and forgetful children as we have been! And then think of those other words, none the less literally true because given under a figure: "I, the Lord, do keep it; I will water it **every moment.**"

We see something of God's infinite greatness and wisdom when we try to fix our dazzled gaze on infinite space. But when we turn to the marvels of the microscope, we gain a clearer view and more definite grasp of these attributes by gazing on the perfection of His infinitesimal handiworks. Just so, while we cannot realize the infinite love which fills eternity, and the infinite vistas of the great future are "dark with excess of light" even to the strongest telescopes of faith, we see that love magnified in the microscope of the moments, brought very close to us, and revealing its unspeakable perfection of detail to our wondering sight.

But we do not see this as long as the moments are kept in our own hands. We are like little children closing our fingers over diamonds. How can they receive and reflect the rays of light, analyzing them into all the splendor of their prismatic beauty, while they are kept shut tight in the dirty little hands? Give them up; let our Father hold them for us, and throw His own great light upon them, and then we shall see them full of fair colors of His manifold loving-kindnesses; and let Him always keep them for us, and then we shall always see His light and His love reflected in them.

And then surely they shall be filled with praise. Not that we are to be always singing hymns, and using the expressions of other people's praise, any more than the saints in glory will always literally be singing a new song. But praise will be the tone, the color atmosphere in which they flow; none of them away from it or out of it.

Is it a little too much for them all to "flow in ceaseless praise"? Well, where will you stop? What proportion of your moments do you think enough for Jesus? How many for the spirit of praise, and how many for the spirit of heaviness? Be explicit about it, and come to an understanding. If He is not to have all, then **how much?** Calculate, balance, and apportion. You will not be able to do this in heaven--you know it will be all praise there; but you are free to halve your service of praise here, or make the proportion what you will.

Yet-He made you for His glory.

Yet-He chose you that you should be to the praise of His glory..

Yet-He loves you every moment, waters you every moment, watches you unslumberingly, cares for you unceasingly.

Yet-He died for you !

Dear friends, one can hardly write it without tears. Shall you or I remember all this love, and hesitate to give all our moments up to Him? Let us entrust Him with them, and ask Him to keep them all, every single one, for His own beloved self, and fill them all with His praise, and let them **all be** to His *praise! - Selected.*

## The Letter to the Colossians

### Col. 1:19-22

*"For it was the good pleasure of the Father that in Him should all the fulness dwell; and through Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross." -Col. 1:19, 20, R. V.*

THE RELATIONSHIP of Christ to God, the universe, and the Church having been considered (Col. 1:15-18), Paul turns to a discussion of Jesus' work of reconciliation in its relation to these three -- to God, to the universe, and to the Church. Elsewhere he informs us that "the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God." (Rom. 8:20, 21, R. V.) Here in verse 19 (Col. 1:19) he tells us that it was the good pleasure of this same One who subjected all creation in the hope of an ultimate deliverance, that "all fulness" should dwell in Christ. By this we understand that it was God's pleasure that Christ should possess the fulness of His character, and that as His agent Christ should execute every feature of His Plan, even to the reconciling of sinners and the reclaiming of a corrupted creation. We note that this reconciling work was to include "all things"- "things in earth, and things in heaven." It was the divine pleasure that this "fulness of God" should be found in Christ not for a time merely, but that it should "dwell" there, that is take up its permanent abode in Christ.

There can be no doubt but that His life of faithfulness, one feature of this "fulness of God" dwelling in Him, taught many a fallen angel the folly of giving allegiance to Satan; but even though the message of that life had been made clear to every angel and to every man, "a spectacle to men and to angels," that would never have constituted the fulness of God dwelling in Him, so far as the work of reconciliation is concerned. The righteousness of His life, another feature of this fulness of God, could and did convict of sin. It may have induced conversion on the part of some of the less fallen of the angelic host; it might have meant a restoration to God's favor for some at the end of the period of their condemnation (theirs was not an eternal sentence), but not one of Adam's race could have been rescued by that process. They were all under the sentence of eternal death, and unless an exact substitute who would die for man should be found, the human family must go into death to dwell there eternally. The Jewish nation was under the additional curse of the Law, and for their rescue, the further ignominy of dying "on a tree" was required.\*

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\* For a full consideration of this, see "The Atonement Between God and Man," pp. 383 to 487.

### Two Features of Reconciliation

Various translations give the thought that in the passage we are considering, all that is referred to is the fact that for man's release the providing of such a substitute was a legal necessity. But remembering that though the death of some of the angelic hosts has been prophesied, yet death was not the curse or punishment pronounced upon them for disobedience, but rather that they should be hound in "chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day," we can see that not even the death of a perfect angel, much less the death of a man, though it be the most ignominious of deaths, could redeem one of them from the sentence upon them. While the ransom sacrifice of Jesus, the perfect man, is the basis of the "peace" established for the human family, which was tinder the sentence of death, it is clear from the Apostle's words here, that the providing of the ransom is but one part of the reconciling work. It lays a foundation for the reconciling work to be accomplished, but the two are different features -- the reconciling

following as a result of the ransom. "**Having made** peace by the blood," He proceeds to the reconciling.

Bearing in mind this distinction, and remembering the penalty imposed on the fallen angels, will do much toward clearing up the difficulties of this passage. Without carefully examining it and its context, and without considering related Scriptures it might be used to substantiate a theory that eventually every creature will attain perfection and the blessing of life eternal.

The Greek word translated "reconcile" in this twentieth verse is used in only one other passage in the New Testament -- Ephesians 2:16; and therefore were it not for other literature or an ancient dictionary we could surmise almost nothing as to its meaning. Definitions of words of the ancient languages are arrived at only by the study of hundreds of instances of their use, or by referring to the works of those who have so studied them. Consulting Thayer's Lexicon we find this verb, as used with the phrase "to himself," as meaning, "to draw to himself by reconciliation, or so to reconcile that they should be devoted to himself." Were it not for the following statements we would be forced to decide on the former of these as the only meaning in this passage; for while it is undoubtedly true, the magnetic power of the love that went even to the cross for the purpose of establishing "peace" was far reaching enough to touch the bounds of creation, it is not true, in the light of other Scriptures, that every individual will by this drawing power of the cross be led to be devoted to the Redeemer. That point will be substantiated and still stronger proof found that this passage cannot be used justly to teach a universal reclamation, when considering the twenty-third verse. The point referred to there is that Paul uses the vehement form of "if" instead of the mild one, though even that one would have said that "all" will be made followers "if," indicating failure for some.

It "pleased" the Father, because of His love for His Son and for the world, that this magnetic power should proceed from Christ as one of the features of "all fulness" permanently abiding in Him-"through Him, I say, [to exert this drawing power on all things] whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever **believeth into Him** should not be destroyed but obtain everlasting life." (John 3:16, see Diaglott.) Such love could do no less in the way of offering restoration to the fallen, than give the opportunity eventually to be accepted by "whosoever will."

### **"Things" to be Reconciled**

Literally, the Apostle has said that it is "all material things" "in heaven and in earth" that are to be reconciled. This literal rendering, taken together with the fact that the next statement unmistakably refers to a portion of mankind as if they were not included in the previous statement, has led at least one commentator to the conclusion that only "things" are meant, holding to a view which is the opposite extreme to that of those who have concluded that a complete restoration to favor with God for every creature in the universe is meant. The one overlooks the thought of "drawing" that is in "reconcile," and the "if" of verse twenty-three; the other overlooks the use of exactly the same phrase in describing Jesus' work of creation (ver. 16), where he undoubtedly uses the neuter form in order that both material things and living creatures may be included. Now, using the same expression he tells us that the Love that planned it all entrusted the work of creation to One who could be counted upon to send forth the magnetic power of love into every quarter of the universe that all the courses of nature, animate and inanimate, that had been thrown out of their order by the entrance of sin, might be restored to the perfection with which they had come from His creative fingers, if they would but respond to love's drawing power.

The offer of restoration is for all. Since the inanimate portion of creation has no will and there

fore will not resist His drawing, a complete restoration of it is certain. This is the "hope" under which the "whole creation was made subject to frailty." (Rom. 8:20, Diaglott.) It is a hope for not merely the lakes and the rivers that run red with blood, but for every delicate tracery and every living creature that came from the all-powerful creative Hand. The blight of sin has fallen on all, proclaiming the hideousness of sin. Nothing has escaped. "Fading is stamped on all below." But sun, moon, and stars move on undisturbed in their course. The literal heavens have not been touched by sin's pollution. It is the metaphorical "heavens and earth that now [because contaminated and unworthy of continuance] are reserved unto fire against the day of judgment" (2 Pet. 3:7), not a literal fire, but "the fire of His jealousy" (Zeph. 1:18), which will utterly destroy the "heavens," the present evil religious and spirit rulership, as well as all earthly rulership. - 2 Pet. 3:10; Matt. 5:18; 24:35; Hag. 2:6, 7; Isa. 51:6; 65:17.

### **The Glories of Restitution**

The language of the foregoing Scriptures and that of many others that portray this coming "time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation" (note that though individuals will suffer, it is a trouble on nations\*) would fill us with unspeakable dread were it not for the more than compensating inspiration of the passages which briefly but unmistakably prophecy "times of restitution of all things," times too beautiful, too wonderful, for our fallen imaginations, with their commercial bias, their depraved tendencies, to fully comprehend. The fallen human mind thinks that life consists of the "abundance of things which one possesseth." In that Age material blessing, though without defect, and lavishly supplied for every need, will take second place to the privilege of knowing God and being in His likeness. Nothing short of these three things—possessing material blessings, knowing God, and being in His likeness—would be "restitution." - Acts 3:19-21.

No portion of the Bible is richer in pictures of the subduing and restoring of the earth than Isaiah. See especially the 11th, 35th, and 65th chapters, also Genesis 1:28. We cannot hope that all will have the faith to even reservedly accept these promises until their natural eyes have seen the wolf and the lamb dwelling together -- a spectacle emblematic of the joys and peace of that time to be shared by "all that are now in their graves." (John 5:28.) By the false teachings he disseminated during the Dark Ages regarding the state of the dead \* \* \* and the nature of the work to be done during the Judgment Day, \* \* \* (1 Chron. 16:31-34; Psa. 96:11-13; 98:7-9) Satan has, for almost all, effectively blocked the way to an acceptance of the numberless Scriptures telling of the time when the glory of the Lord shall fill the earth. Our so called enlightened era still prefers his false teachings to the sanctifying truths of the divinely inspired Word. When at last the instigator of the many misrepresentations of our glorious God, the God of Love, has been destroyed and the last stain of sin erased from the universe, then "every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, will be heard saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him, that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever." - Rev. 5:13.

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\* See discussion of this in "Herald" of August, 1940, and also the free tract, "Has Judgment Day Begun?"

\* \* See our special issue of the "Herald," "Food for Thinking Christians," for a full discussion of this subject—five cents per copy; fifty cents per dozen; free to those unable to pay.

\* For the consideration of many additional Scriptures, see "The Divine Plan of the Ages," Chap. VIII.

## **No Flesh to Glory in His Presence**

As we have indicated, the neuter "all things" seems to have been used in an all-comprehensive sense, including in its blessing all creation, animate and inanimate. The following verse (Col. 1:21), then opens with a repetition (which is not a Pauline practice) unless we substitute for the first word, "and," the word, "even," a translation that is often given the Greek word, "kai." The Diaglott so gives it in the word-for-word translation.

Bearing in mind the depths of the darkness into which these Colossian Christians seem to have fallen before their deliverance (Col. 1:13; 2:13; 3:5-9), who can doubt but that the force of this passage to them would be that the God who, in order that "no flesh should glory in His presence" had "called not many great, not many wise," had indeed called **"even"** them. Is it any less true, however, of any one whom the Lord has called? Can we not all say from the depths of our hearts, "Even me? Ah, the blood-red cords that some day will bind the universe in one, have drawn even me, yes, even me; and the great purpose of such condescension on His part is in order that, for all eternity, no creature should glory in His presence."

Regarding the Colossians Paul writes: "Even you [has He drawn by reconciliation, you] who were alienated, estranged from God and hostile [this is hatred in action] in your mind." This is a description of those who instead of opposing the evil tendencies of a fallen body actually found pleasure in "anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communications, lies" (Col. 3:8, 9), and also the sins listed in chapter- three, verse five, that even the heathen world recognized as unbecoming in any man, and therefore to be at least kept hidden. But were they of those who while secretly rejoicing in these base iniquities, for decency's sake restrained them? No, they had imposed little check on the evil propensities, and this was publicly manifested "by wicked works." "Yet [even you] now hath He reconciled [drawn by the power of the cross]."

## **Redemption-the Supreme Drawing Power Making the Universe One**

Doubtless the angelic hosts were impressed by such love for mankind, and by Jesus' devotion to God. The "delights [of the Chief of the angelic host] were in the children of men," in spite of these disgraceful facts, as also His "delight" was to do God's will. Thus the Logos was led to leave the perfections of the heavenly courts to spend thirty-three years in the midst of a "crooked and perverse generation," there to be "despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. Such humility, such devotion, must have greatly impressed every angel in whom was left any degree of appreciation for righteousness, and it should greatly impress all of us.

But this was not the power of redemption, and therefore not the great drawing power that was to reach throughout the universe to finally make it one, all creation turning as one about the one center, God-a true universe: uni, one; verse, turning. That redemption, that supreme drawing power, was "through death," the death of "the body of His flesh" (Col. 1:22), the perfect flesh of the One whose will and whose performance as well was perfect. Of Him alone it could be said "Thou art worthy . . . for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth." - Rev. 5:9, 10.

## "One Is Your Master"

"The very best convention yet' has just been concluded in Chicago-the first one to be held by the 'Free Bible Students' of 1016 N. Dearborn Street. The attendance was much larger than had been anticipated -- friends coming from nearby and from distant Classes. These included many earnest, consecrated young friends.

"The name 'Free Bible Students' is not a misnomer, for the key-note of the Convention was the motto-text hanging conspicuously above the platform: 'One is your Master, even Christ: and all ye are brethren.' That standard was frequently owned by the friends in their discourses and in their testimonies. The thread of thought through all the talks was loyalty to the Harvest Message, while standing free from every yoke of manmade bondage. The speakers declared that the liberty they claimed and enjoyed for themselves was accorded to all others. The spirit of love and harmony was felt by those attending, like the actual presence of the Lord speaking, 'Peace be unto you.' That peace remained unbroken through the whole convention.

"Certain testimonies were especially heart-stirring, for a number, troubled and burdened in spirit, had come against great odds, and from long distances, not knowing what to expect. They said they were *glad* they had come, because they found the very balm and strength and comfort they needed and which only the Lord's spirit can give. Their hearts overflowed with praise and thanksgiving to God for this special manifestation of His loving care over them.

"The hearty welcome extended by the Chairman opening the Convention was much appreciated, as well as his reminder of the blessings in store for all who had gathered there 'in the name of the Lord,' for such was His promise; and that although the best of food might be prepared and served, yet as with the natural, so with the spiritual, 'good food may become poisonous when the system is not in the proper condition to receive it either through organic trouble or through infection, etc. The heart seems to be the organ that causes the most trouble, both in natural and spiritual life. Therefore we are told to "keep the heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." When we as Christians properly digest our food, the admonitions, teachings, and promises of the Word work out in us the fruit of the Spirit. If this is not the result, then there is something wrong. Perhaps as John suggests we have shut up our "bowels of compassion," or as Paul says, our "(bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering." We are glad to believe that all who have come to this Convention (have come in the right spirit and are prepared both to give and to receive a blessing.'

"One delightful and inspiring feature of the program was a symposium of four young brothers. Their part of the service gave testimony to a personal conviction of the spiritual truths they derived from their texts, which was worthy of their elder brothers.

"The Glory of God's Work' was the subject of one of the discourses, much to our upbuilding. It was seen that though all God's creative works declare His glory, none so much as the 'New Creation,' the Church, the members of which were all foreknown of God, 'written in His book when as yet there was none of them.' (Psalm 139.) Many Scriptures were given to show that we are 'God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works,' although we are permitted to cooperate with Him in this work. We were exhorted to 'sing songs unto Him,' and to 'talk of all His wondrous works.'

"The Just Shall Live by Faith' was another theme discussed in which we were referred to several passages of Scripture where these words occur: First, Hab. 2:4, where the context indicates that this life of faith will mean waiting patiently on the Lord for every step of knowledge and especially for the fulfillment of His promises; second, Gal. 3:11, where the Apostle tells of the loss of faith in the flesh and its works; third, Rom. 1:17, where added to the text is that of putting away of the desires (wrongly translated 'lusts') of the flesh; and fourth, Heb. 10:38, where it is indicated that the one living by faith

will still wait on the Lord, still patiently wait for the manifestation of His Son- from heaven, rejoicing that a crown of righteousness will be the portion of every one that loves His appearing.

"Lessons from Thomas for Our Day' were also brought to our attention. While we have all perhaps thought of Thomas as being a doubter above others of his day, it **was** shown that he was not more so than the two Mary's who took embalming spices to the sepulcher on the 'third day,' or than the two disciples who journeyed to Emmaus the **same** day, nor apparently than the others who, after they had seen the Lord 'for joy believed not'; and that he was much less to be blamed than the spirit-begotten ones since his day who have murmured and complained-a proof of our doubting the 'promise of Romans 8:28. Nor was he any worse in boasting that he would not be convinced on such slight evidences as the others, than we are today to demand evidences in addition to those Jesus said would be given of His 'parousia.' 'Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.' But Thomas will not lose his crown because of that one weakness. There is a crown of righteousness awaiting all those who 'love His appearing,' and we cannot rob (him or any one else of it -by our philosophizings. How tenderly Jesus cured Thomas of his pride! A loving look and an offer of the very proofs Thomas said 'he must have, and all that pride and a desire for better proofs than were given the others, vanished. We may hope for as tender and as efficient treatment of the faults that still remain in ourselves. Thomas could absent himself from the brethren for seven days, but on the eighth he was with them to receive his blessing from the Lord. He still had a love for the brethren and their fellowship.

"Another discourse stressed the importance of 'attaining more of the Master's spirit in our relationship one with another,' emphasizing that true religion 'consists of more than the accumulation of religious facts' and calling attention to the Master's statement in John 16:2, 3, 'that one could possess knowledge of the true God sufficiently to be moved with zeal to commit terrible crimes against one's fellow man, and yet lack the true knowledge to see the dreadfulness of such action. Scriptures have been used in the past to justify practically all the sins of the faller. flesh, but the lack of understanding is to be deplored which would (permit a deluded conscience to perpetuate crimes for the ostensible purpose of glorifying God.. It was only after drinking deeply of Jesus' cup that John, who in his earlier experience thrice revealed a lack of understanding his Master's spirit (Luke 9:54, 55; Mark 9:38; 10:35-37), was able to write the Epistle of love which bears his name. True Christians must endeavor to reveal the same kind, gentle, tenderhearted spirit which moved the Master -- bearing with one another during difficulties of intellectual belief, remembering that knowledge of God's Plan *alone* would never provide for us the 'abundant entrance' if the knowledge be not outworked in the daily life of transformation into Christ's likeness. God's glory is reflected in the 'face' (character) of the Master (2 Cor. 4:6), and it is our bounden duty to meditate on the words and conduct of Jesus that we may imbibe the same sweet disposition and spirit.'

"Each discourse left helpful -and timely thoughts to be recalled and pondered over for many days to come, building us up in our most precious faith. A very sweet service was rendered by several of the friends in a variety of spiritual songs. Quite a few strangers attended the public service, overflowing the meeting hall into the hall outside.

"All were heartily in accord with the closing remarks of the Chairman that we had enjoyed a glorious season of fellowship, and that 'the Lord had done great things for us; 'whereof we are glad.' We pray for the newly formed Class that they may continue in their present fervent love for one another, and hold high their banner of truth and righteousness, in that liberty with which Christ makes free."