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VOL. XX. MAY 1, 1899. No. 9.

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Those of the interested who, by reason of old age, or other infirmity or
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 send a Postal Card each December, stating their case and requesting the
 paper. We are not only willing, but anxious, that all such be on our list
 continually.

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VOLUNTEERS IN ALL DIRECTIONS.

We rejoice in the hearty responses to the article in our last
 issue under the caption "Volunteers Wanted." The friends in
 some of the cities have completed arrangements and began the
 work on April 30th. Others notify us that they are preparing
 and will send full report shortly. The evidences are that "Volunteers"
 are likely to get as much blessing as those whom they
 will serve with the bread of life--"present truth."

Meantime we are preparing to increase the edition of "Bible

vs. Evolution" to 500,000 copies.

In responding to this call please write on separate sheet of paper, heading it Volunteers. State number of volunteers and number of Protestant Churches, etc.

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WHAT SAY THE SCRIPTURES ABOUT HELL?

This is the title of a pamphlet in which every text of Scripture containing the word hell is cited and examined in the light of Scripture and reason, together with other Scriptures and parables supposed to teach eternal torment. Price 10 cents, postpaid; 50 cents per doz.; \$4.00 per hundred.

WHAT SAY THE SCRIPTURES ABOUT SPIRITISM?

--ALSO--

WHO ARE THE SPIRITS IN PRISON? AND WHY ARE THEY THERE?

This booklet is now ready and will be supplied at 10 cents each: wholesale rates 50 cents per dozen are open to all TOWER readers who may desire to circulate these among their friends. In leatherette binding, 25 cents. Prices include postage.

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VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER.

"IN THE LAST DAYS PERILOUS TIMES."

"This know, also, that in the last days perilous times shall come, for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."--2 Tim. 3:1-5.

CLAIMING, as we do, that we are now living in the closing days of the Gospel age, it is quite proper that we should look about us to see whether or not present conditions correspond to the Apostle's inspired description of what must be expected in the last days of this age. We are not to understand this description to relate to the barbarous or half-civilized

peoples of the end of the age, but to be a description of the condition of "Christendom." The Apostle explicitly states that he refers to those who have a form of godliness--professedly Christians,--for, since the Jewish age ended, the only godly form that the Scriptures could recognize is Christianity. We see, then, that the foregoing delineation represents "Christendom" in the close of this age.

The Apostle does not say that this description will apply to the saints in the end of this age: quite to the contrary, the implication is that the saints should "turn away" or separate themselves from all who thus have merely the form of piety. (Vs. 5.) Nor are we to expect that the world, possessed of this spirit, will recognize its own likeness in the Apostle's words. Upon this, as upon other subjects, we are rather to expect that, as the Prophet declares, "None of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand." (Dan. 12:10.) The merely formalistic Christian, whose highest ideal of duty is to abstain from secular employment on one day of the week, and to go to church, is not to be expected to recognize his own likeness, and to note its deformities and inconsistencies: to do these things would imply such a reformation of sentiment as would transfer him from the lists of churchianity to the smaller list of true Christianity.

We should not be understood as saying, or even implying, that the world is growing worse in every respect day by day. We recognize as a fact that the world in many respects is in better condition than it has ever been before. The civilized nations to-day are better equipped with hospitals, orphanages, asylums, etc., than ever before. All these are very directly traceable to the influence of Christianity, and are neither to be despised nor ignored. We confess with great appreciation and admiration that the spirit of our Master has, during the past eighteen hundred years, so impressed itself upon the world of mankind that the barbarities of olden time would no longer be endured, the sensibilities of civilized man having reached a degree of development which insists upon provision being made for the indigent and helpless; and we are very glad of all these things.

At the same time, it should not be forgotten that mixed with all of these benevolences is a considerable measure of selfishness--they are not all monuments of pure disinterested benevolence. True, benevolence has had to do with the founding of many of them, but as a rule those recently instituted, and much of the support for all of them, is drawn from the tax-payer through political channels, and the party-spoils system has much to do with their maintenance--all feeding at such public cribs being expected to render more or less of party service. However, whether or not these institutions supported at public expense be considered as

partially the outgrowth of selfishness, the fact must be conceded that public sentiment favors them, and hence it must be conceded that the principles laid down by the great Teacher eighteen centuries ago have made a favorable impression upon civilized peoples.

But the question before us is not on this point-- whether or not Christianity has made any impression upon the world: the question is, What is the real status of those professing to be Christians, now, in the end of this age? We answer that, while benevolences inculcated in the gospel of Christ have appealed to the better sentiments of mankind, and have resulted in a general uplift of social conditions throughout so-called Christendom, yet this uplift of the world of mankind has reacted in some respects against Christianity; for in making Christianity popular it has induced multitudes to nominally adopt Christianity and a form of godliness without appreciating the genuine article or experiencing a true conversion of heart. Hence the necessity of separating the "wheat" from the "tares," the suitable fish from the unsuitable ones in the Gospel net, now that the Gospel age is closing.-- Matt. 13:24-30,36-43,47-50.

If we ask ourselves the question, What is the peculiar characteristic of our day? almost every intelligent person could answer, Selfishness. And this is the very item which the Apostle puts first in his descriptive list: "Men shall be lovers of their own selves." We do not mean to say that people are more miserly than heretofore; on the contrary, there is probably less of this evil; the tendency is rather to extravagance: but it is an extravagance born of "love of their own selves," love of dress, love of show, love of honor and position. All who come in contact with present-day business, realize that more than ever before it is a battle; not so much a battle for bread as a battle for wealth and luxuries. True, business to-day is in some respects done along more honorable lines and on a more honest basis than every before, yet these are not so much signs of a greater honesty on the part of merchants, for they are almost compulsory; because business competition has materially cut down profits, and the enlarging of business much beyond the personal oversight of the proprietors has almost compelled one-price arrangements. But all persons associated with commercial business and manufacturing can attest that the growth of business intelligence, the formation of trusts and combinations, etc., have given selfishness great power to injure and even to destroy financially whatever may resist it.

Covetousness is another of the charges. It is a mistake to think of this quality as applicable only to the wealthy. It is just as possible for the man with one dollar to be covetous as for the millionaire. Covetousness

is an inordinate desire, whether for wealth or luxuries or what-not. Elsewhere the Apostle designates covetousness as idolatry, which gives us the thought of false worship. (Col. 3:5.) It is not wrong for us to seek, in a reasonable, moderate way, for the necessities and the comforts of life for ourselves and those depending upon us; nor would it be wrong to avail ourselves of the opportunities of securing wealth, if the same came to us in a reasonable and honorable manner, not in conflict with our consecration to the Lord. But wherever the love of money or honor or luxuries becomes the ruling passion in those who are professedly God's people it has usurped God's place,-- such are idolaters. In other words, the covetous person is a mammon-worshiper, and as such should realize that he has abandoned the proper worship of God; and our Lord declared, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." --Matt. 6:24.

Boasting is the third charge which the Apostle brings against nominal Christianity of "the last days." Is it not true? Was there ever a time when people were so boastful as to-day? Boastfulness is the opposite of meekness and humility; boasting accompanies pride, which the Lord declares he resists, showing his favors to the humble.--James 4:6.

Pride is the fourth charge, and, thinking of our fellow-creatures as generously as possible, we cannot deny that the pride of our day is very great, and continually increasing. In some it is the pride of wealth, in others a sectarian pride, in others a family pride, in still others a personal pride. Looking into the future, as revealed in the Lord's Word, and seeing the time of trouble toward which Christendom is hastening, we are reminded of the statement, "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."--Prov. 16:18.

Blasphemy is the fifth charge: but this does not necessarily imply that the professed Christians of the present day would be profane swearers more than others of times past. The word "blasphemy" here we understand to be used in its broad sense of slander, and the slandering or blasphemy may either be against God, or against fellow-creatures. As a matter of fact, we find both abounding to-day amongst Christian people. God's character is blasphemed by attributing to him evil deeds, evil motives and evil purposes toward the masses of mankind. Never, more than at present, have nominal Christians been inclined to charge the Almighty with the authorship of the evils that are in the world and which cause the groaning of creation. In times past they were willing to acknowledge that these evils had come in the line of justice because of sin; now many self-complacently claim that God's dealings are wholly unjust, and that the unfavorable

conditions of the present time are all chargeable to him, and are injustices toward man. Moreover, the theories which prevail throughout Christendom respecting God's provision for the future (that it will be an eternity of torment--in literal flames, or, say some, "torments of conscience which will be worse") are blasphemies, slanders upon God's character and government. These are worse slanders than were held during the Dark Ages, when it was claimed, as Romanists still claim, that the vast majority went for a time only to "Purgatory," from which discipline and suffering they would ultimately be released.

Ours is also a day of slander or blasphemy one against another, on the part of those who have merely the form of godliness. Many who outwardly claim to be governed by the law of the New Covenant, Love, seem to have a morbid craving to speak evil one of another. This the Apostle elsewhere denominates the spirit of murder. (1 John 3:15.) This murderous, slanderous, or blasphemous tendency is manifest everywhere, in the home, in church-gatherings, and in private; those who take no pleasure in speaking words of kindness, approval and love, hunger and thirst for opportunities to speak evil. Nor are they satisfied merely to give out their own evil surmisings, based upon their own perverted view of their fellows; they love such slandering and blasphemy so much that they are willing even to accept it at second-hand, and to retail it out repeatedly.

Disobedience to parents is the sixth charge. How very marked is this trait to-day! Not merely in the younger members of the family, who have not come to years of discretion, but also in those who have even made an outward profession of religion. False views of "liberty" and "rights" seem to disturb the minds even of children, and the divinely arranged family order seems to be entirely lost sight of with the vast majority.

Unthankfulness is the seventh charge. Thankfulness would seem to be one of the least costly of the graces: it implies the reception of favors, and is merely a proper acknowledgment of them. No one can be a true Christian and be unthankful. With the Apostle he will soliloquize, "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" (1 Cor. 4:7), and the first response of his heart must be gratitude, thankfulness. It is this thankfulness which leads on to service, and to sacrifice in the Lord's cause as a manifestation of gratitude. But with the merely nominal Christian thankfulness to God seems scarcely to be thought of. If he be prosperous, it is his ability or his "luck;" if not prosperous, it is the fault of some one else or his "bad luck." Divine providence scarcely enters his mind in connection with his affairs. This same unthankfulness extends manward, and not infrequently it will be found that

one's worst enemies, perhaps indeed his only enemies, are those whom he has endeavored to serve--those in whose interest he has made sacrifices. They do not feel thankful; they do not wish to feel under any obligation of any kind; they fancy that the one who has done them a kindness will consider them under some obligation, and gradually they come to have enmitous and bitter feelings, instead of gratitude, thankfulness.

Unholiness is the eighth charge. The ordinary Christian professor will freely admit that he is unholy, not holy--not fully consecrated to the Lord. Many will admit that their only reason for maintaining even an outward semblance of Christianity is fear--fear of an eternity of torture; and some go so far as to admit that if it were not for fear of eternal torment they would indulge themselves in all manner of evil.

Without natural affection is the ninth charge. It is not the province of true Christianity to destroy the natural affections, but rather to deepen them and to lift them to a higher plane. It is therefore to be greatly regretted that there are to-day, apparently, evidences of the loss of family affection. In the days of the Apostle it was considered proper to exhort Christians to "love the brethren," but to-day this exhortation has comparatively little weight, because of the general loss of natural affection. Verily, "A man's foes shall be they of his own household."

Truce-breaking is the tenth charge. The Greek word here used signifies not merely a breaker of a truce or agreement, but more especially an unwillingness to make a truce or to live in harmony, and to abandon hostilities. Combativeness seems to be considerably on the increase, and not only are people willing to have a fracas for slight cause, but controlled by this implacable disposition, they are less ready than of yore to drop the matter--to forgive and be forgiven. Their hearts not having the spirit of love, but the spirit of selfishness, are not peace-loving but contention-loving. Hence, instead of being "easy to be entreated," they are the reverse, implacable.

False accusers is the eleventh charge. This corresponds closely to the charge of blasphemy, but seems to signify a still more extreme step--a willingness to accuse falsely, knowing that the charges or accusations are false. This surely indicates a very evil condition of heart, and yet we are compelled to admit that it is a very prevalent condition to-day. Let a person of strong will, whose heart is not under control of grace, become your enemy, and following the custom of our time he will probably not only misrepresent you in the matters of which he has knowledge or hearsay, but not infrequently he will deliberately concoct falsehoods. Such a course would not seem so strange on the part of the

professedly worldly. It has always been so; the natural heart has always been full of evil, and ready to vilify when it considered itself provoked. The point of the Apostle's argument is that these conditions, so foreign to the spirit of Christ, the spirit of love, will prevail in the end of this age amongst those who profess his name and have a form of godliness.

Incontinency is the twelfth charge. This signifies, without self-control, led of passion, rash, impulsive. The Apostle's exhortation to the Church, as its proper condition, is expressed in the words, "Let your moderation be known unto all men"--your self-control. (Phil. 4:5.) Keep yourselves well in hand, subject and obedient to the will of God, as expressed in his Word. But to-day, and especially with the rising generation, self-control is little practiced. Some of this is chargeable to the spirit of the times in which we live, with its false conceptions of liberties and rights, and some of it is doubtless attributable to lax training under conditions of comparative worldly prosperity.

Fierceness is the thirteenth charge. This came forcibly to our attention a few days ago, as we noticed a headline of a dispatch from Manila, saying, "The Tenth Pennsylvania Regiment made a fierce charge upon the Filipinos, uttering their terrible yell. The enemy fled, terrified, in all directions." It used to be that the savages pounced upon the civilized, with fierce blood-curdling yells, but now it appears that the rising generation, representatives of Christendom from one of the most civilized states of the world can give so fierce a yell, and in every way manifest so much ferocity, as to strike terror to the uncivilized. Undoubtedly this fierceness explains much of the success of civilized men over the uncivilized in recent wars. Civilization, the handmaid of religion, has given intelligence and courage; but in those not having the power of godliness it inspires ferocity instead of love, kindness, gentleness.

Despisers of those that are good is the fourteenth charge. We are to distinguish between goodness from the standpoint of the Apostle and the Lord's word in general, and goodness from the world's standpoint. The world wants a man good enough to be honest, temperate, trustworthy, and faithful as a servant or contractor; but the world despises the higher forms of goodness to which the Apostle refers. The nominal Christian despises the "saint," and tries to believe that his professions of full consecration to the Lord, and his desire to please the Lord in thought and word and deed, are simply hypocrisies,--because his own heart is not in sympathy with such a condition of consecration, with such ideals of goodness, and he does not desire to be in the presence of so high a standard. As our Lord described the matter, "Everyone that doeth evil hateth the light."--John 3:20.

Treachery is the fifteenth charge. Because the mainspring of the world's efforts in every direction is

selfishness, therefore treachery is its inevitable adjunct. Love desires to be just; love may frequently approve of self-sacrifice in the interests of others; but selfishness disapproves of benevolences except where some self-interest attaches. Hence, the one who might be willing to make a contract to-day, and who selfishly might be willing to keep that contract so long as he believed that it would be to his own advantage to do so, would often be willing to break that contract so soon as selfishness indicated that it would be to his advantage to break it. Persons controlled by the selfish spirit here described can never be trusted. Could we think of God as being controlled by selfish motives we could not trust him, except so long as it would be to his interest to fulfill his promises. Only those controlled by the reverse spirit of love can be relied upon in times of extreme trial. This is set forth as one of the special features of the great time of trouble just before us: selfishness and distrust will become general and the motto will be, "Every man for himself." The prophetic declaration shows the loss of confidence, general treachery, saying, There shall be no peace to him that goeth out nor to him that cometh in; for I have set every man's hand against his neighbor.--Zech. 8:10.

Headiness is the sixteenth charge. How forceful this word, as expressing self-will, impetuosity. Do

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we not see this quality everywhere amongst those who have the form of godliness, but who lack its power? And we believe that it, as well as these other evils, is steadily on the increase. The true Christian is not "heady;" on the contrary, his consecration to the Lord figuratively decapitated him; he lost his head, renounced his own will and self-rule, and submitted himself, as a member of the body of Christ, to the absolute control of Jesus, the Head of the Church. (Eph. 1:22,23.) Such, so long as they abide as members of the true body of Christ, cannot be heady, cannot be self-willed. It is this very self-will that first of all they reckoned dead, in order that they might have the mind or will of Christ. To revive the self-will would be to lose the mind of Christ. The true Christian therefore, in every affair of life,--in respect to its pleasures as well as in respect to its burdens and trials,--appeals to his Head for direction, to know how and what to do or say--yea, to have even the very thoughts of his mind in full conformity to the will of God in Christ.

The "heady" class are continually endeavoring to carry out their own wills, and do not submit themselves to the will of God. Their headiness continually brings them into difficulties, and yet, sometimes, with pride and boasting and love of their own selves and fierceness and false accusations, they endeavor to have their own

heady way, and perhaps even claim, with forms of godliness, that such a course is under divine leading. How sadly such are deceived! "If any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his." Wherever headiness prevails it is an evidence that such are "not holding the head" (Christ). If they have not already fallen utterly, their fall is certainly near unless they reform.--Col. 2:19; Rom. 8:9.

High-mindedness is the seventeenth charge. Self-conceit is naturally a virtue in the eyes of the class which the Apostle describes: and how naturally this quality of a large opinion of one's self and one's own talents, or of one's favor with God, or what-not, is linked with pride, boastfulness and self-love. There is no more dangerous form of high-mindedness or self-conceit than that which attacks the Christian, and seeks to make him think of himself more highly than he ought to think. Very many of the Lord's people have been ensnared along such lines, and stumbled into all the other evils of this category by first of all getting the impression that for some reason, or for no reason, the Lord had specially taken a fancy to them, and was giving them private lessons and information not vouchsafed to others of his consecrated ones. How appropriate the Apostle's caution along this line, "I say, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." (Rom. 12:3.) Not only is this quality of self-conceit one of the most dangerous to Christians, but also it is one of the most dangerous to the world, for probably more than one-half of the hopelessly insane have lost their reason along this line of self-conceit. All true Christians should be specially on their guard against this snare of the Adversary.

Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God is the eighteenth charge. It is natural for every human being to prefer to be pleased, to be happy, to have pleasure. It is not a sin to love things which minister to our pleasure in proper ways. To be a Christian does not mean to have no pleasure: but the Christian puts God higher than himself, loves God more than he loves himself, consecrates himself to God, and consequently desires to please God rather than to please himself. By such, any pleasure, no matter what, must be sacrificed if it come in conflict with his still higher pleasure and duty and covenant of service to the Lord. It is this that leads the true saints of God to sacrifice: the world being out of harmony with God and his will is out of harmony also with those who are in harmony with God. Hence, as our Lord says, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I

have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."--John 15:18,19.

The contest, then, comes between serving God and doing those things which would bring his approval, and serving self after the manner of the world, and doing those things which would bring its approval. The true Christian must invariably decide for the Lord, and thus he often crosses the will, the preferences, the prejudices or the superstitions of those with whom he comes in closest contact in the flesh, and it is in this that he is to be an "overcomer" of the world and its spirit; and by so doing he is to gain ultimately the approval, "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter into the joys of thy Lord." "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne."--Matt. 25:21; Rev. 3:21.

The class described by the Apostle, the mass of Christendom, in the present time are not fully consecrated to the Lord, but are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. In this sense of the word they are idolaters, rendering love and service to self above God, --covetous of the world's pleasures and honors and emoluments of various kinds. Is it difficult for us to see this very condition of things all about us, amongst those who have merely a form of godliness? No, it is not difficult; it is the confessed condition of the vast majority. Love of God above love of self is proved by our willingness to sacrifice self-loves in order to do those things which would meet the Lord's approval.

Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof is the nineteenth charge. It does not follow that this class, in so many words, denies that there is any power to godliness. Rather, we are to understand that their course in life denies or repudiates the power of God. Outwardly they have a religious form; they know that churchianity is popular; they wish to be known as identified with some denomination for decency's sake, and as an entree to good social and financial standing for themselves and their families. But that is about all the use they have for Christianity. Their life as a whole denies the power of the gospel of Christ to control the heart and regulate, direct and guide the conduct.

"From such turn away." True Christians are to reprove the false Christians by turning away from them, and from their course or walk in life. Whoever has the spirit of Christ, the spirit of Love, and is seeking to cultivate its grace, and to walk according to its rule, will more and more find his path turning away from the path of churchianity and general worldliness. As they are guided by different spirits or dispositions, so they tend to different directions or effort, different loves, different sympathies, different experiences. The true sheep are to walk in the narrow way, led by the true

Shepherd, who has gone before, and who calls us to follow him. This means that in this harvest-time in a most natural way a separation will be made between the "wheat" class and the "tare" class, just as our Lord's parable illustrated. Whoever walks in the Lord's way will receive the light that is due in this harvest-time, and be enlightened thereby and led in the footsteps of Jesus. Whoever walks in the evil way, described by the Apostle as the prevalent way in the end of this age, is following Satan's example. The separation of these classes must eventually be thorough and complete. Thus the Lord is by present truth and its spirit or influence calling to his people to separate themselves, to turn away from others who are not really his people, who have merely the form of godliness but not its power, saying, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."--Rev. 18:4.

OUTSIDE CORROBORATIONS OF THE FOREGOING.

It would be difficult to imagine a more striking corroboration of these facts than is furnished by the recent proclamation of a Fast day by the Governor of the State of New Hampshire. We quote the paper entire, as set forth in the columns of The Boston Herald, without endorsing all of its provisions or recommendations, as follows:--

GOVERNOR ROLLINS' PROCLAMATION.

"Concord, N.H., April 6th, 1899.

"I hereby appoint Thursday, the 13th day of April, as Fast day.

"This custom was inaugurated at a time when all the people of our state placed their trust in the hands of a Supreme Being, and believed firmly in the efficacy of prayer. A goodly number of our people still hold this belief, I am happy to say, and will assemble, as their ancestors have for generations, to invoke the Deity. The decline of the Christian religion, particularly in our rural communities, is a marked feature of the times, and steps should be taken to remedy it.

"No matter what our belief may be in religious matters, every good citizen knows that when the restraining influences of religion are withdrawn from a community, its decay, moral, mental and financial, is swift and sure. To me this is one of the strongest evidences of the fundamental truth of Christianity.

"I suggest that, as far as possible, on Fast day union meetings be held, made up of all shades of belief,

including all who are interested in the welfare of our state, and that in your prayers and other devotions, and in your mutual counsels, you remember and consider the problem of the condition of religion in the rural communities.

"There are towns where no church bell sends forth its solemn call from January to January; there are villages where children grow to manhood unchristened; there are communities where the dead are laid away without the benison of the name of Christ, and where

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marriages are solemnized only by justices of the peace.

"This is a matter worthy of your thoughtful consideration, citizens of New Hampshire. It does not augur well for the future. You can afford to devote one day in the year to your fellow-men--to work and thought and prayer for your children and your children's children."

* * *

That the Governor of New Hampshire is not greatly overstating the situation is evidenced by the following clipping from the Boston Traveler of March 8th:--

"As surely as two and two are four the Boston police are incompetent to cope with the rogues, footpads and other outlaws infesting this city, and citizens fear to walk the streets after nightfall in consequence of the prevailing lawlessness. Crime has reached that stage that a citizen is not safe on the street or in his own home after the shadow of evening has taken possession of mother earth."

A very similar statement was recently made respecting lawlessness in St. Louis by one of its leading newspapers.

If we were in the midst of financial depression, and if thousands of "out-of-works" were tramping the country as a few years ago, such statements would excite much less surprise and be much less significant of a moral decline such as the Apostle prophetically indicates must now be expected. But on the contrary, we are in the very midst of "good times"--far better than can be reasonably expected to continue long. And with the spirit of selfishness described by the Apostle constantly increasing, we must expect that each succeeding financial depression will manifest increasing lawlessness until the final catastrophe of anarchy shall crumble present institutions and prepare the way for the reign of Immanuel.

OTHERS SEE IT.--JUDGE BURKE'S VIEW.

The Governor is not the only person whose eyes are open and who feels it his duty to "cry aloud and spare not." The Rev. Dr. Buckley, editor of the New York Christian Advocate, the leading Methodist paper of the world, recently felt called upon to point out the decadence of Methodism. And still more recently at the session of the Rock River Methodist board of examinations the same subject came up and was discussed very boldly by Prof. Small and subsequently by Judge E. W. Burke, the published report of whose speech follows:--

"SEES DARK SKIES.

"JUDGE BURKE'S PESSIMISTIC TALK BEFORE
--METHODISTS.--
"SOCIAL DISTURBANCE AHEAD.
"THE JURIST CONTINUES IN THE STRAIN ADOPTED BY
HIS PREDECESSORS AND GAINS CONGRATULATIONS.

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"The keynote of the midyear session of the Rock River Methodist board of examination, now in session at the Englewood First Church, continues to be social and religious pessimism. Many of the papers read are directly on this subject, and the discussion of the rest generally works around to the same point.

"Tuesday Prof. Small led off in this direction, and yesterday Judge E. W. Burke, in a paper on 'The Church of the Twentieth Century, From a Layman's Standpoint,' went just as far. These sentiments are received by the large congregation of ministers and others who hear them, not only without protest, but with approval. Judge Burke could hardly leave the platform for the handshaking and congratulations that beset him.

"Judge Burke dwelt on the tyranny of capital, the terrible impending conflict between concentrated capital and labor, the decadence of the Methodist Church, as depicted by Rev. Dr. Buckley in the New York Christian Advocate, and the rumor that the wealthy laymen of the church were threatening to withhold their contributions unless they were granted equal representation in the general conference.

"Judge Burke spoke in part as follows:--

"The whole creation and all the manifestations of the spiritual, intellectual and even the physical forces are now in a transitional period as never before. Even trade and methods of business that have been pursuing their customary ways for centuries are paralyzing individual effort and puzzling the lawmakers of the earth. Storm centers of labor and capital are gathering over against each other, threatening the very

integrity of the industrial firmament of man. The late appearances of the hitherto unsuspected intellectual and physical forces but add Titans of unknown strength to the conflict toward which all the world is consciously or unconsciously rushing. He who observes and reflects on matters of church and state feels this condition in the very pulsing ether, the like of which history does not disclose.

[We do not know that Judge Burke has read the WATCH TOWER publications bearing on this subject, but thousands of thinking people are now awakening to the truth respecting the great "Day of Vengeance" which for twenty years we have been pointing out and seeking to bring to the attention of the Lord's people. The difficulty with many is, that, seeing these approaching troubles from the outside, they are losing confidence in divine providence, and their hearts are failing them for fear, as they look forward to those things coming upon the earth. (Matt. 24; Luke 21:26.) On the contrary, all who learned of the coming troubles from the Lord's Word, before there were outward evidences of them, are strengthened in their faith by every fresh development--for they by the same Word know the object of the troubles and the grand results they are outworking.]

"No human wisdom can say what mean the great and increasing aggregations of capital, now sufficient to buy kingdoms. If these shall be arrayed against the empty hands of labor, then shall mass collide with mass, and who can predict the end thereof? I see no commanding spirit of compromise in these approaching and threatening avalanches, which seem destined to involve the whole social system in universal ruin before the young men of this audience become three-score and ten years of age. So that the church, as it passes into the twentieth century, meets a perfect whirlwind of world forces which overwhelm the statesman, the philosopher and the historian, and drive them back into the cave of Sinai, while the storms pass the bounds of known law and rush on to a fate that makes the thoughtful tremble.

[As heretofore pointed out,* these giant trusts of our day which threaten the liberties and the very existence of the individual laborer, correspond exactly to the giant men of renown of Noah's day, on whose account the flood came. And as those never arose from their watery graves to again harass mankind, so the Lord promises that these giants of the present day, falling in the great time of trouble impending, will never rise again.--Isa. 43:17.]

"DIFFICULTIES MUST COME.

"Now, my friends, after much reflection, I do not

believe it is the specific mission of the church to adjust men to the new conditions of life and action, or, in a temporal sense, to safety them against the Atlantic storms of capital and labor. These storms will be terrific, but they must come. They are brewed in the selfishness of the human heart, and each succeeding one shall prove more destructive than its predecessor, until the prince of darkness is chained. I believe the new conditions which shall whirl us into the twentieth century, uncorrected by the gospel, shall forge unbreakable chains for the spirits, minds and bodies of men. I know there is a charm in the power of union and in the exhibition of strength, but, unless it is a union of strength uncemented with selfishness, it will crumble by whatsoever law it may have been formed.

"It may be true that the task-master in these modern days attempts to compel men to make brick without straw, not to punish men, but to save straw. Formerly it was oppression to gratify the passion for cruelty, while now it is oppression to gratify the passion for gold. Formerly the task-master was a human being with whip in hand, but now he stands with the inexorable forces of nature in his fist, against which no individual in his unaided strength seems able to stand. But this modern task-master is destined to fall, and the David who shall slay this modern Goliath is the church of the twentieth century, not by matching force with force, but by using the weapons with which Christ has armed his followers.

[How true this statement, and yet how untrue as the Judge meant it! It will not be "Babylon," "Christendom," that will smite these giants and all sin and selfishness and deliver the world. No; the same Scriptures declare that "Babylon," mother and daughters, the entire family or system of Churchianity will go

*MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. IV., page 359.

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down in the general collapse. Yet it will be the Church --the true Church,--the Church glorified, that will smite, and deliver the groaning creation. Ah, how true! "There standeth one among you whom you know not!" The King of kings has come! We are even now in the parousia of the Son of Man! Soon the last members of his "elect" body, the Church, will be gathered to him--glorified and invisible to men,--and then he will begin the rule of the iron rod which shall break the world's vaunted institutions as potters' vessels. (Rev. 2:27.) He declares, I will "gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy. And

then will I turn unto the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent." (Zeph. 3:8,9.) This symbolic burning and breaking will be the new missionary

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method, by which the Church glorified will, in the early part of the twentieth century, under and with her glorious Head, "bring in everlasting righteousness." "When the judgments of the Lord are abroad in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." (Isa. 26:9.) Thus, "The glory [majesty] of the Lord will be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together."--Isa. 40:5.]

"I deplore every worldly success of the church, whether it be the raising of \$20,000,000 with which to curse the twentieth century church, or the building of many church edifices every time the earth revolves, if this success shall in the least lead men to forget the springs of true power in the church. We seem to be on times when the church may have money enough to convert the world: forbid that it be enough to convert the church to the world. The church should not want one dollar or money except it first be sanctified.

"MUST NOT BARGAIN WITH THE RICH.

"Why, recently I have noticed the threat from high sources that, unless the rich laymen of the Methodist Church are admitted in equal representation as delegates to the next general conference, they will withhold the \$20,000,000 which the ambition of the church seeks for the first years of the coming century. Now, much as I favor equal representation in that august lawmaking body, may it never be realized, and perish the money of the rich, in the language of Peter, if it be given, even impliedly, as the consideration price of place and power in the church, and not as the free-will offering of grateful hearts purchased by the blood of Christ. The church, for many reasons, cannot pay court to mere wealth or personal prestige. The poor do not understand the mission of the church when they demand that it feed them and bitterly rail because it does not. But they are half right when the church recognizes men in the least degree because they possess wealth. The great masses of the people stand yonder alienated from our churches because the wedge of gold is hidden with us. It does the church no good; it empties our pews; it frosts our air.

"One of the closest observers of church life in our land, and one who weighs his words, has written this month for his widely read editorial column that the moral tone of the church is unsatisfactory, and that many societies would be reduced to a few pious women, aged persons and unsophisticated youth if the

discipline enforced in the primitive church, or in the earlier days of English and American Methodism, were applied; that many official members never participate actively in the aggressive spiritual work of the church; that this religious and moral condition bodes no good; that in eighty-seven cities in the United States Methodism is scarcely holding its own, regardless of the increase of population and of the fact that so many accessions are received by letter from country churches. He further states that diverse superficial explanations are offered for this humiliating condition, but that whatever influence they may have, it is absolutely certain that, if the laity and clergy were living according to the teachings of the New Testament, it could not be so.

"When such an alarm as this is sounded with the hammer of facts, beware, not of the rocks or the sea, but of the dangers on board. But in this very alarm lies the hope of safety. It shows that thoughtful Christian men are looking deeply into the causes of the present condition and that they will be removed. This alarm is all the Lord wants, and in answer to prayer He will open the windows of heaven and pour unnumbered blessings on the church of the twentieth century."

It would appear, then, that the Judge after all sees that the church nominal of to-day is sadly unprepared for the great work he declares is absolutely necessary. He is prepared even to admit that, so far as Methodism is concerned, it is less prepared (so far as personal piety is concerned) than at the opening of the nineteenth century. The Judge hopes great things, if everybody can be awakened, and if all "tares" or nominal Christians (300,000,000) will but act as tho they were "wheat" or real Christians. We rejoice with the Judge in his own sincerity as witnessed by his words (and for aught we know by his acts also) and we commend to him a further study of the Word of God's grace which is able to make him wise respecting the divine plan for vanquishing all the foes of the groaning creation and delivering them also from the bondage of corruption. But let him lay off sectarian spectacles which magnify everything which glorifies sectarianism and minimize the grace of our God and the power of his might.

We will submit another testimony, from a high source, going to show that Methodism is far from prepared for the twentieth century work the Judge points out is imperative,--if the world would be rescued from the calamity of having its civilization blotted out. Nor are Methodists proportionately in poorer spiritual condition than other sects, so far as we may be able to judge. It just happens that the witnesses at hand are

all of that persuasion. There are undoubtedly many true, noble, warm hearts in this quarter of Babylon who feel pressed in spirit to overcome their sectarian pride and in the interest of vital godliness, to "Cry aloud and spare not."

This witness is The Epworth Herald, the leading journal among the Methodist "Young People;" it says:

"A CRISIS.

"Methodism is in a crucial place. A crisis has been reached. We need to run up the danger signal. There never has been a time in our eventful history when there was so great need for self-examination.

"Last year the whole denomination was startled by the smallness of our numerical increase. This year [1898] promises to show no better results. Revivals are less frequent and less fruitful. The doctrines which emphasize the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the certainty of an eternal hell, the necessity of repentance, the need of regeneration, and the far-reaching importance of a definite spiritual experience are not preached in many of our pulpits as faithfully as our fathers preached them. The demand for a less heroic gospel is widespread. Sinners can sit in our churches without feeling much discomfort. Formalism increases. The spirit of aggressiveness which so dominated our church for a hundred years begins to wane.

"Multitudes of our people have lost the marks which once distinguished us. They have adopted the social customs of the world. They patronize the theater. They have become familiar with the card-table. The sound of dancing echoes through their homes. Wealth is worshiped. Social position is accounted the principal thing. No wonder that the children of some of our most influential families are lost to Methodism. With their thoughtless and back-slidden parents they are drawn into the whirlpool of social pleasure, and either drift out into a line of infidelity or attach themselves to some church where worldliness is no bar.

"Moreover, beneficence does not keep pace with our increasing wealth. The fact that it required two long years, filled with pitiful pleading, for our great church to raise a paltry missionary debt of \$186,000 is one of the saddest experiences of our denomination.

"This is not pessimism. It is fact. And the sooner we wake up to the peril of the situation the better for Methodism to-day and to-morrow. A CRISIS IS HERE. A crisis does not necessarily mean disaster. It will not if we will only see the danger and escape."

"AWAKE, O ZION,"

cries the Prophet. (Isa. 52:1.) He who sleeps now, not only neglects his duty to the "brethren," but puts himself in jeopardy--marks himself as deficient in the very spirit of love which the Lord declares all-essential in his estimation. We remind our readers again of the Call for Volunteers in our last issue. Many responses are already at hand, but our hope is that many more may share the privilege and blessing of this service.

INTROSPECTION NEXT IN ORDER.

Having satisfied ourselves respecting the fulfilment of the Apostle's charges against "Christendom" and having found his predictions fully corroborated by facts well witnessed to, the question arises, Can the Lord's truly consecrated people learn any further valuable lessons and what are they?

We have already noted that all such are to "turn away" from those who have merely the form of godliness. And we have seen that it is both our duty and privilege to aid any true "brethren" yet in Babylon to attain the light and liberty wherewith Christ makes free his true followers. But let us not forget personal introspection--to look within our own hearts carefully and frequently to make doubly sure that the world's spirit of selfishness does not poison us as it poisonously manifests itself in others.

We are to remember always that we have the treasure of the new mind, the new spirit, in earthen vessels (2 Cor. 4:7), and that these earthen vessels are continually surrounded by selfish tendencies and examples; and that consequently they must be kept well filled with the Spirit of the Lord, the spirit of love, that the evil spirit of selfishness does not in any of its many forms gain access.

If in our introspections we find traces of self-love, of covetous ambition, of a disposition to boast even of good things, or even a little pride--perhaps "spiritual pride," as some erroneously describe it, or even a slight

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tendency to slander (blaspheme), or the least tendency to disrespect parents, or any measure of ingratitude toward God or men (unthankfulness), or the slightest sympathy with false accusations, or any lack of moderation (incontinence), or any sympathy with fierce speeches or manners, or anything else than fervent love for all who are "good," or the slightest suggestion to betray a trust or a confidence, or the least tendency to self-will and self-consciousness, or any disposition to weigh our own wills or pleasure against the Lord's will, or the least tendency to mere formalism in worship,

or the slightest evidence that the power of the truth is not in full control of our hearts and lives, it should arouse us to energetically seek help from on high and to put away the unclean thing which taints our sacrifices.

Nevertheless let no one feel discouraged even though he should find traces of all these evils in his flesh: for as the Apostle declares, so we must all find, "In my flesh dwells no perfection." (Rom. 7:18.) We are however to expect no trace of these evils in our hearts --no sympathy, no cooperation with any of these evils. As enemies of the Lord, and our enemies because we are the Lord's in spirit and in truth, these evils are to be hunted and shunned to the best of our ability from every nook and corner of our beings. "Be ye holy that bear the vessels of the Lord's house." As he who has called you is holy, so be ye holy in all things.

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FORSAKEN--BUT NOT FOREVER.

"For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment: but with a lasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer."--Isa. 54:7,8.

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken?
Hear our first parents despairingly cry:
Had not the tempter their constancy shaken,
Would they have wandered in exile to die?
Why, since life's stream was defiled at its fountain,
Was it not dried, ere the flood ran so deep?
Why, lest iniquity grow to a mountain,
Should the first infant be cradled to weep?

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken?
Groaneth the slave as he curses his chain:
Stung by the lash, and his last loved one taken,
Doomed to a life of enslavement and pain.
Long has the despot his tyranny wielded,
Long robbed his fellow of freedom and home;
Long have the humble their hard earnings yielded,
Starving themselves to build turret or dome.

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken?
Hear the fond mother in agony moan;
Babe on her bosom will presently waken,
Waken to find that dear guardian flown.
Merciful God! Who will care for the mourner?
Who'll guard the orphan from hunger and cold?
Who'll guide the feet of the youthful sojourner
Past haunts of vice to the Savior's pure fold?

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken?
Questions my spirit in sorrow's lone hour;
Terrors and anguish my doubtings awaken,
Doubts of our Father's compassion and power.
Louder the thunder-peals answer my wailing,
Darker the stormcloud casts o'er me its pall;
Friends cannot comfort, and demons are railing,
Heaven seems deaf to my piteous call.

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken?
Echoes from Calvary scatter my gloom;
Veils have been rent, and death's prison-house shaken,
Answer I find at the dismantled tomb.
Know thou, O friend, saith the angel that lingers,
Jesus hath risen a lost world to save;
Holdeth the issues of life in his fingers,
Beareth the keys of a powerless grave.

God unto all men assurance has given,
Sworn by himself all his creatures to bless;
Soon will the bonds of corruption be riven,
Soon comes his Kingdom of righteousness.
After earth's night dawns a morning of gladness,
Rainbows of glory shall cover our tears;
Truth will deliver from error and madness,
Blessings will crown earth's Millennial years.

"For as all in Adam die, even so all in Christ shall be restored to life."
"Because creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of
corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children
of God."--1 Cor. 15:22; Rom. 8:21; Acts 3:23.
--G. M. BILLS.

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"I AM THE VINE--YE ARE THE BRANCHES."

--MAY 7.--JOHN 15:1-11,15.--

THE Apostle gives this as one of our Lord's discourses following the Memorial Supper on the last night of his earthly life. It was probably suggested by the drinking of the "cup," representing the blood of the New Covenant, and may have been uttered after Judas had gone out, and before the Lord and the eleven went to Gethsemane. Or it may have been suggested by the vineyards which they passed on their way to Gethsemane. Or possibly it may have been suggested by the great golden vine over the door of the golden gate of the temple (the "Beautiful Gate"), which Josephus says was very large and "had clusters as long as a man." Another writer says, "Leaves and buds were wrought of gleaming reddish gold, but its clusters of yellow gold, and its grape-stones of precious

stones." The moon being at its full would display this vine to good effect. The statement of Chap. 18:1, "When Jesus had spoken these words he went forth with his disciples," seems to favor the first supposition. This view would imply a considerable tarrying in the upper room after the Supper was ended, probably to near midnight--after our Lord said, "Arise, let us go hence."--John 14:31.

"I am the true vine," institutes a comparison, and suggests to the mind a counterfeit or false vine; and this reminds us of the fact that our Lord, through this same writer, subsequently explained that there would be two harvests--a gathering of the fruit of the true Vine, and subsequently a gathering of the clusters of the "vine of the earth." (Rev. 14:18-20.) If, as we shall see, the true Vine represents the true Church, then the vine of the earth represents a false Church, an untrue, ungentle one.

The heavenly Father is the husbandman who planted, who owns, who cares for the true Vine, and to him it yields its fruit. The word "husbandman" here does not signify merely caretaker, but rather the vineyard-owner. This is in accordance with all the presentations of Scripture: God is therein set forth as the author of man's hope, his Savior, through whom alone comes the deliverance from sin and death. The fact that God accomplishes this through an honored agent and representative, his beloved Son, and the further fact that he proposes to use an elect Church as a Royal Priesthood, under his Son, the appointed Chief Priest, does not alter the fact that he himself is the fountain

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from which proceeds every good and every perfect gift.--1 Cor. 8:6; Jas. 1:17.

"Every branch in me," should not be understood to signify every nominal Christian, every professor, nor even those who render a nominal assent to the facts of Christianity, and who are in sympathy therewith. The "justified" believer is just ready to become a branch in the Vine, but his faith, and justification by that faith, do not make him a branch. The branches are those only who have first taken the step of justification through faith, and who subsequently have presented themselves to God as living sacrifices, and thus by consecration

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have been "immersed into Christ: by being "immersed into his death."

This procedure, by which we are inducted into membership in Christ (as branches of the Vine), is clearly expressed by the Apostle in Rom. 6:3-5. Be it noted that we, no more than the Apostle, are here making an immersion in water the condition of entry into the body

of Christ (as our Baptist brethren mistakenly do); but we are insisting, as the Apostle insists, that none enter the body of Christ except by the immersion of their wills into the will of Christ--their consecration to be dead with him--a self-surrender as justified human beings to death and to be henceforth new creatures in Christ Jesus, under and controlled by him, as their Head or Guide in all things.

Amongst those who thus, according to divine arrangement, now become branches of the true Vine, there are two classes--fruit-bearing branches and non-fruit-bearing branches known as "suckers." But both of these conditions are developments: every branch begins as a very small shoot; every branch develops leaves; every branch has the same opportunities for nourishment, sap from the main stem, Christ, and from the same root of divine purpose and promise. All the branches of the Vine have a tendency to spend their strength upon themselves--in branch-making rather than in fruit-producing, and yet there is a difference. Vine-dressers tell us that they can very early discern the fruit-buds on the proper branches, and that the suckers lack these fruit-buds.

Just so it is with the Lord's consecrated people; he does not expect of them much and fine fruit immediately, but he does look for the buds or evidences of effort in the direction of fruit-bearing; and these fruit-buds will manifest themselves early in those who are proper branches of the true Vine. And those who do not manifest a desire to bring forth fruitage to the Lord's glory, by serving him and his cause, but who on the contrary make use of the knowledge and blessings derived through union with Christ simply to advance themselves before men, and make a fair show in the flesh, are counted unworthy of retention, and are cut off, taken away--cease to be recognized in any sense of the word as branches. They may retain their freshness, green leaves, etc., for quite a little time after being rejected of the Lord, but it is only a question of time until they lose every evidence of fidelity--they wither away. Nor does the fact that they were branches avail anything after they cease to be branches, for the wood of the vine is of no practical value. They are burned, destroyed.

But as even the best branches in the vine, which give evidence of fruit-bearing, require pruning, so even the most honest and earnest of the Lord's people require the Lord's discipline and providential care--otherwise they might soon run to woodmaking also, and fail to bring forth much fruit. The husbandman's skill recognizes how much of the branch and sprout and leaf are necessary to the bringing forth and proper maturing of the fruit which he seeks, and so our heavenly Father knows perfectly the conditions, etc., most favorable to us that we may bring forth much good fruit. He sees the sprouts of our ambitions in various directions, and

knows, as we do not, whereunto these might lead us; and by his providence nips in the bud many of our propositions, deeming it better that the strength and energy which we thus intend to put forth should be expended rather in other directions--in bringing to maturity our good fruits already started and in progress.

The true child of God whose will has been entirely immersed into the will of the Lord is neither offended nor discouraged by these prunings. He has learned something at least of his own unwisdom, and has confidence in the wisdom of the great Husbandman; hence when divine providence estops his efforts in some directions he takes the thwarting of his plans joyfully, assured that the Lord's will and the Lord's way are the best, and intended to work out a blessing.

As the Father's representative, Jesus had been keeping the first branches of the Vine. He had purged or pruned by his reproofs or counsels, so that now, at the close of his three and a half years' ministry, he could say, "Now ye are clean through the word [teaching] which I have spoken unto you." As he again said, in his prayer to the Father, "Those that thou gavest me I have kept [as branches, disciples, members], and none of them is lost save the son of perdition." But henceforth, as the same prayer expressed the matter, the pruning and care of the branches would not be done by our Lord Jesus in the same manner, but through the operation of the holy Spirit--the Spirit of the Father and of the Son.

But it is not sufficient that we be first justified, and then sanctified through a consecration to the Lord; nor is it sufficient that we get into the body of Christ and become branches of the Vine. It is good to be a little shoot, it is good to have buds of promise, it is good to grow as a branch and put forth tendrils, but however large or small the branch may be, however old or young, we must remember that the sap which produces the fruit can only be obtained by continued union with the Vine and its root of promise. If ever separated, all hopes must wither. Only as we are in Christ, and through him heirs of God, have we part or lot in this matter; and only so can we bring forth the fruits which the great Husbandman seeks. It would be folly for the branch to say, I needed at first to be united with Christ the Vine, but now I can stand alone. Whoever

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stands alone, whoever is separated from the Vine and from the other branches, will speedily wither away; and whoever abides in the Vine must surely continue to have fidelity to the Vine, must be at one with all the other true branches of the same Vine. And here we see the importance of being in the true Vine and at-one with the true branches.

The wrong thought on this subject of the Vine and

the branches is frequently expressed by our friends of various denominations, who claim that the branches of the Vine are the various denominations of Christians. This inculcates a serious error, namely, that it is the duty of every individual Christian to get into membership in one of these branches--as for instance, the Presbyterian branch, or the Methodist branch, or the Lutheran branch, or the Roman Catholic branch, or the Greek Catholic branch. The correct thought, on the contrary, is that each individual Christian in consecrating himself to the Lord becomes an individual branch in the true Vine: and his labors thenceforth should be not to bring forth denominational and sectarian fruits, but to bring forth the fruits or graces of the spirit of God in his own character and life.

One writer, in pursuing this wrong thought respecting the branches, says, "God does not desire to have fruitless churches large and prosperous; he lets them wither away. The churches that keep nearest to Christ will grow the fastest." It should not be difficult for any to discern the fallacy of such reasoning. If this were the correct view it would imply that the church organizations which are the largest in numbers and most prosperous in wealth and honor amongst men are those which have the most truth and which most directly receive the sap of the holy Spirit from the Lord. But let us see: amongst Christians this would constitute Roman Catholicism the holiest and best and nearest to the Lord; Greek Catholicism would claim to be second; Methodism third, and so on. Intelligent people scarcely need to have the fallacies of such an interpretation pointed out.

But what is incongruous when applied to denominations as branches, is thoroughly logical and in harmony with the facts when applied to the individual Christian and his spiritual life. Those who abide in Christ in faith and trust and consecration to his service--to the bringing forth of the fruits which are pleasing in the sight of the great Husbandman--find themselves in a narrow way indeed, often hedged up by providence, and their efforts in various directions changed, or rather, their intentions thwarted; but they find, as a result of all this experience, rightly received, that they are growing in grace--in the knowledge and in the love of God, the fruits of the spirit.--Rom. 8:28.

The close union between the Vine and the branches is brought to our attention by our Lord's words, "He that abideth in me and I in him:" the Vine and its branches have such a oneness that wherever we touch a branch we touch the Vine itself. It is one Vine composed of branches, and so is the body of Christ one body, composed of many members. Wherever a member or branch of the body of Christ is found, all the various characteristics of Christ himself are found--in spirit, in intention, as "new creatures." This oneness in Christ is the secret of the power and of the fruit-bearing

and of the acceptableness of the branches with the Father, the Husbandman.

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"Without me ye can do nothing," is a statement well worthy of being deeply engraved in the heart of every truly consecrated member of the body of Christ. But to abide in Christ means to be subject to all the will of the great Husbandman, and gladly and meekly submit to all the prunings which his wisdom sees best to permit. Respecting this necessity for pruning and discipline, Trench, the celebrated theologian, has well said:

"It fares exactly so with God and some of his elect servants. Men seeing their graces, which so far exceed the graces of common men, wonder sometimes why they should suffer still, why they seem to be ever falling from one trial to another. But he sees in them-- what no other eye can see--the grace which is capable of becoming more gracious still; and in his far-looking love for his own, who shall praise him, not for a day, but for an eternity, he will not suffer them to stop short of the best whereof they are capable. They are fruitbearing branches, and just because they are such, he prunes them that they may bring forth more fruit."

Remarking upon the fact that sometimes a vine or tree may attempt more fruit than it is capable of bringing to perfection, and likening this to Christian experience and efforts, another writer (H. L. Hastings) suggests:--

"The best way is to shake the tree, and free it of extra fruit. Prune, clip, cut, pluck, and reduce the fruit, until it becomes manageable, and until the tree can support its burden, and then let every branch be loaded with fruit that comes to perfection, but not overloaded with fruit which never will reach its full development."

This is a very correct thought, as relates to the fruitage of efforts put forth in the Lord's service on behalf of others; for many waste their efforts because they do not concentrate them sufficiently.

The talented Apostle Paul gives his testimony as to the wisdom of shaking off some of our plans and arrangements and efforts for which we have little talent, and concentrating our efforts upon those which we can best bring to perfection, ripeness, saying, "This one thing I do." (Phil. 3:13.) The Apostle's one business in life was to be, so far as he was able, acceptable to the Lord personally, and to do with his might what

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he could to assist others into the same condition. But the fruitbearing of works for others we do not understand to be the principal thought in this lesson. The

first thought is that we should have the fruits of the Lord's spirit in our own hearts, the graces of the spirit well developed. This, however, implies activity and self-sacrifice in the Lord's service, for only so by the Lord's arrangement can our personal fruits and graces be brought to maturity.

Our Lord gives us an intimation that the growing of much fruit is not wholly dependent upon ourselves, and that even while we abide in him as fruit-bearing branches the quality and quantity of the fruit is to be improved by our having proper ideals before our minds, and earnestly seeking their realization. Thus he says, "If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." The intimation is that the desire and the asking of the Father at the throne of the heavenly grace is a means by which we may more and more receive of the sap of the Vine, the holy Spirit, and be enabled to develop the fruits of the Spirit. It will be noticed that nothing here implies the seeking or finding of earthly good things. These are to be left wholly to the Lord's wisdom and providence, and his people, the true branches of the Vine, are to desire and to seek for the holy spirit, which the Father is more willing to give to them than earthly parents are to give good gifts to their children. --Luke 11:13.

Incidentally the Lord here points out the value of the Scriptures to his true branches or disciples, when he says, "If my words abide in you." It is not only necessary and proper that we seek divine grace, but it is equally proper that we avail ourselves of the divine revelation respecting what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God our Father, the Husbandman of the true Vine. Hence it will be found that those who bear much fruit and good fruit not only have been justified through faith, and sanctified through consecration, and thus accepted into membership in the true Vine, but that additionally they are seeking to be fruit-bearers,--seeking to abide in the Vine, and to have all the characteristics of the Vine, seeking grace to help in every time of need, and availing themselves not only of the sap which flows through the roots, but also of the light of truth and grace which shines upon them through the Word of the Lord. And only by following these conditions can we be fruit-bearers, and only by being bearers of fruit can we be the Lord's disciples --to the end; for we are to remember that the Church of the present time is merely the probationary Church, a company of those who have professed loyalty, love and obedience. The Lord will bring testing to prove the sincerity of their professions, and only those who thus prove the sincerity of their professions will be accepted as members of the Church glorified, symbolized by the golden vine of the Beautiful Gate of the Temple.

Our Lord would have all the true branches realize

his love, his interest, his care for them, his desire that they might make their calling and their election sure by compliance with the conditions of membership in the Vine: hence he assures them of his love in the strongest possible language. He tells them that his love for them is of the same kind as the Father's love for him. Even with all the various evidences of the truthfulness of this statement, corroborated by the "exceeding great and precious promises" of the Lord's Word, it is far too wonderful for us to fully comprehend. We can readily see how and why our Lord Jesus was greatly beloved of the Father, and called his well-beloved Son, but it astounds us to know that this same love is exercised by our Lord in turn toward us. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God;" for our Lord Jesus expressed and fully manifested the Father's love.--1 John 3:1; John 14:7.

But then comes a limitation, namely, that this intense love is only for the "little flock." True, "God so loved the world," and our Lord Jesus loved the world also, in the sense of sympathetic love, and a desire to do them good. But the love which the Lord is here declaring is a different one. It is only for those who have made a full consecration to him--indeed, that consecration is the secret of his special love. The Father loved the only begotten Son because he was full of faith and trust and obedience--"unto death, even the death of the cross." And likewise this same love extends to those justified ones who, filled with the Master's spirit, desire to walk in his footsteps, to take up their cross and follow him. God's love, of the same kind that went out toward our dear Redeemer, goes out to all such; and the Redeemer's love goes out to them; and the good message comes to them, "All things are yours, for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth....It is Christ that died."--1 Cor. 3:22,23; Rom. 8:33,34.

But as this special love is in view of the consecration and obedience of this class, so it depends upon the continuation of that spirit of consecration and obedience. If their loving devotion grow cold, and they become filled with self-love and the spirit of the world, to that extent they grieve the holy Spirit,--they turn from them this special love of the Lord: and hence the injunction of our Lord, "Continue ye in my love." These words show that it is possible for us to forfeit the Lord's love and to become castaways--to fail to make sure our calling and election to the exceeding great things which God hath in reservation for them that love him with this supreme love.--2 Pet. 1:4-11; 1 Cor. 9:27.

It is important that we keep in mind that true love on our part will manifest itself in obedience, and hence that disobedience is an evidence of the loss of love as

viewed from the Lord's standpoint; and we must all agree that this is a reasonable standpoint of judgment. Some may say, How would it be if we disobeyed through ignorance? We answer that the Lord has made provision against our ignorance: first, he has given us the Word of truth, "that the man of God may be perfect [perfectly informed], thoroughly furnished unto every good work;" and secondly, he has promised to supply such helps in the spirit of holiness, and the understanding of his Word as will enable us to do those things which are pleasing in his sight. (2 Tim. 3:17; John 16:13.) Thus, carelessness respecting the Word of the Lord is one evidence of the lack of love. Our Lord points out that his continuance in the Father's love, as the well-beloved Son, with all that this implies, was because of his obedience to the Father's will, and that following the same line he must require that we shall be obedient to him if we would abide in his love, share his throne and glory.

"These things have I spoken unto you that my

joy might be in you, and that your joy might be filled-full."

Our Lord's instructions and commandments are not intended to terrify us, nor to deprive us of happiness. On the contrary, as the most fruitful branches well know, obedience to the Lord's words, and the privilege thus obtained of abiding in him and his love, is the greatest joy--a joy which wholly outweighs all the trifling pleasures which the world has to offer. It is the joy and peace that passeth all understanding, which rules in the heart, and which brings with it the promise, the assurance, not only of the life which now is, but also of that which is to come.

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INTERESTING LETTERS.

MY DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--I desire to make humble confession, to as many of the household of faith as I may, that I have long been as a sheep going astray in that I have laid such stress upon the example of our Lord Jesus Christ as to lose sight of, and even to disallow, the essentially vital redemptive work

in his sacrifice unto death. But I have now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness. That I have not sinned wilfully, in the sense of Heb. 10:26, I am conscious of very strong two-fold evidence. First, my desire has been earnest and continuous to know the truth, to have my will conformed to God's will, and--latterly at least--I have again sincerely desired this at any cost whatsoever to the flesh. Second, in my just concluded reexamination of "the whole counsel of God," as contained in the Old and New Testaments, and in the light of your publications, I have with docile mind and joyous heart found myself giving ready and glad assent to the one way from death unto life, and from the life human (of the called and accepted and faithful few) unto life divine--Immortality.

Some months ago I had an earnest desire to re-read "Tabernacle Shadows." I had loaned my copy long ago; so long in fact that I had little expectation of recovering it, and I thought it might possibly be out of print. When I wrote your Society recently for a set of the MILLENNIAL DAWN series for the local library, I was strongly impelled to inquire about the earlier work. But not being in a position to purchase it, I refrained. I had not noticed your announcement regarding March TOWER, so that when, a few days later, I received the very book above all others that I wanted, it seemed to me most striking evidence that God had put the desire in my heart, and another blessed proof (added to almost countless proofs he has given me) of his steadfast faithfulness to him who trusteth in Him. Nor was this impression lessened, but rather increased, when I discovered that every TOWER reader was to have a copy. Verily, it is "meat in due season," a most rich and timely banquet for the "Royal Priesthood." If all who received it read and studied it with the same eagerness with which I did, and concluded their study of its pages and its Scripture references with a like thrill of joyous confidence that they "are all parts of one sacrifice," our blessed Redeemer's heart, in this day of his parousia, must have rejoiced as it can scarcely have done since Pentecost.

After this study came a careful perusal of the four volumes of MILLENNIAL DAWN, drawn in their order from the library. The reading consumed many days, because of frequent silent meditations and constantly recurring references to the Law and to the Testimony. I could write much of this experience. But suffice it to say that I believe that these volumes present the only interpretation of the Holy Scriptures extant, that discovers the teachings of those sacred books to be at once harmonious and logical, symmetrical and complete, scientific and rational, satisfying alike the exactions of the intellect and the yearnings

of the heart, and likewise offering the persistent disciple achievement of such exalted glory as to infinitely transcend the highest conceivable aspiration of the spirit--the new creature.

This testimony is deliberately, freely and gladly given after having been instructed in the strictest school of the Pharisees, and after having made diligent study for many years of the multitude of systems of religion, philosophy and science, ancient and modern, oriental and occidental, which essay to solve, or prove insoluble, the mysteries of man's origin, nature and destiny, life and death.

Christ, and Christ only--my Lord, my Savior, Head, High Priest and King--"hath brought Life and Immortality to light," and that only "through the Gospel," and "the Scriptures testify of Him." He hath indeed left us an example that we (the royal priesthood) should follow his steps, but as surely the one entrance to that pathway of joint-sacrifice is through acceptance by faith of Jesus' obedience unto death, in order to render our sacrifices acceptable and efficient.

I rejoice with joy unspeakable in the confidence that my crown is still attainable, and in firmness of purpose to be faithful unto death that I may receive that crown of life.--Phil. 3:7-14.

Yours in the hope of this calling,
SAMUEL I. HICKEY,--New Jersey.

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SUBSCRIPTIONS AND BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS
--ADDRESS TO--

WATCH TOWER BIBLE & TRACT SOCIETY,
"BIBLE HOUSE," 610, 612, 614 ARCH ST., ALLEGHENY, PA., U.S.A.

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE, \$1.00 A YEAR IN ADVANCE.
MONEY MAY BE SENT BY EXPRESS, N.Y. DRAFT, MONEY ORDER, OR REGISTERED.
FROM FOREIGN COUNTRIES BY FOREIGN MONEY ORDERS, ONLY. SPECIAL
TERMS TO THE LORD'S POOR, AS FOLLOWS:--

Those of the interested who, by reason of old age, or other infirmity or
adversity, are unable to pay for the TOWER will be supplied FREE, if they
send a Postal Card each December, stating their case and requesting the
paper. We are not only willing, but anxious, that all such be on our list
continually.

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CONVENTIONS THE COMING SEASON.

It is urged that we have a Convention of WATCH TOWER friends
this year in Indianapolis, Ind., during the session of the Epworth
League in that city in the latter part of July; and another
in St. Louis, Mo., in October, during the time of the St. Louis
Exposition.

It is proposed that these conventions shall last for about three
days each, and be rather local than general. At the dates chosen
there will be specially low railroad fares to these cities.

This is merely a preliminary notice. Particulars later.

WORK FOR THE UNEMPLOYED.

Brother C. A. Owen desires that any of the friends out of employment
be directed to write to him at No. 623 West Michigan
Ave., Indianapolis, Ind. All such should remember the colporteur
work also.

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A "PILGRIM" IN THE WEST.

Friends in Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska and Iowa who desire
a visit from one of the "Pilgrims" will please report to us at
once that we may make up the route accordingly.

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ALLEGHENY CHURCH MEETINGS.

Preaching and divine worship every Sunday afternoon in
Bible House chapel, No. 610 Arch street, at 3 P.M.

Cottage meetings for prayer and testimony on Wednesday evenings; and Dawn Circles for Bible Study on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings--various localities, Pittsburg and vicinity--inquire at WATCH TOWER office.

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THE LORD BETRAYED.

MAY 14.--JOHN 18:1-14.

"He is despised and rejected of men."--Isa. 53:3.

AFTER the Last Supper, and after his discourse to the disciples respecting the Vine and the branches, came our Lord's beautiful prayer recorded in John's 17th chapter. Then, probably about midnight, Jesus, with the eleven, passed outside the gate of Jerusalem, crossed the little brook called Cedron, and on the farther hill above it entered the olive orchard known as the Garden of Gethsemane: perhaps it was a public garden, or possibly the property of some one friendly to our Lord. What purports to be its site is now maintained as a garden, and has been for centuries. It is in charge of monks who take pleasure in receiving visitors to view it. There are about six or eight very large and evidently very old olive trees in this garden at the present--they give evidence of being at least one thousand years old, but possibly are much older.

While talking with his disciples and praying for them our Lord seemingly was full of good courage: while exhorting them that their hearts be not troubled evidently his own heart was not cast down. But as the little company wended its way to Gethsemane we may well suppose that a great weight fell upon our dear Redeemer's sensibilities. We can imagine him saying, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." (Matt. 26:38.) The present visit to Gethsemane, therefore, was evidently very different from previous visits. Some appreciation of the momentous occasion was no doubt inspired in the hearts of the Apostles by the Master's dejection, and yet they probably but slightly comprehended what was about to come to pass.

Arrived at the Garden, we glean from other Evangelists that our Lord left eight of the Apostles near the gate, taking Peter, James and John, his closest companions, a little farther with him, and cautioning them all to watch and pray, because it was an hour of special trial. Going a little farther by himself, he communed with the Father in secret. His feelings were not and could not be shared even by his beloved disciples; they could not appreciate the trial through which he was passing; they had not yet been begotten of the spirit.

Thus in his most trying hour Jesus was alone--"Of the people there was none with me."--Isa. 63:3.

It is difficult for the majority, even of Christian people, to appreciate the true character of our dear Lord's trial, which in this instance so wrought upon his nervous system as to produce a bloody sweat. Many compare our Lord's course with that of some of his martyr followers who have gone forth into death with remarkable courage, and in contrasting matters they are inclined to wonder why our Lord, who was perfect, should have endured so much more a passion of suffering than his imperfect followers. To grasp the true situation it is necessary that several things be borne in mind:--

(1) For our Lord, who had a perfect right to life, to lay it down in death, was a very different matter from the laying down of a forfeited and impaired life on the part of those who could not hope to keep it long anyway. (2) Our race, already nine-tenths dead, has but a feeble appreciation of the great value of life--all of its experience having been in connection with dying, it has come to regard death with equanimity. But not so our Lord, the "prince of life," who had been with the Father from the beginning, and by whom all things were made--he realized life as a very precious boon, privilege, enjoyment. To him, therefore, death must have been much more terrible than to us who are already nine-tenths dead, and correspondingly blunted in all of our sensibilities. True he had the Father's

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assurance that if faithful unto death he should have a resurrection, and unquestionably he believed the Father's promise--all of his course in life gives abundant evidence of his implicit faith in the Father. And yet in his case this must have been a crucial trial to faith, much more so than with us. As we have only a shred of a forfeited life to lay down, so we have on the other hand, not only the Father's promise of a future life through Christ, but we have the example of the Father's power in the resurrection of our dear Redeemer: but our Lord Jesus had no such evidence of the divine power; he himself, according to the divine promise, was to be the "first-born from the dead," a first-fruit unto God of his creatures.--Col. 1:18; 1 Cor. 15:20.

But all this had already been counted, weighed and accepted from the very beginning of his ministry. He had already informed the disciples that it was necessary that he should lay down his life for the sheep, and that he was about to do so. (John 10:15.) We are not to assume, therefore, when our dear Redeemer prayed, "Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me," that he meant if it were possible he might escape dying. He well knew, and had already explained to the Apostles, that the drawing of the world could not

take place except he were lifted up as the sin-offering --that it was absolutely necessary that he should die for our sins and enter into his glory.--John 3:14; 12:32.

The cup which he prayed might pass from him, if possible, we must therefore suppose to have been the shame and ignominy of arrest as a law-breaker, a public trial and conviction, and subsequent crucifixion as a malefactor. It was one thing to die for our sins, as men generally die, without special shame or contumely; it was another thing that he should die with such extreme shame, dishonor and contempt. Quite probably in the Father's wisdom this last feature was kept more or less hidden from our dear Redeemer until just about the time of its accomplishment. And apparently our Lord Jesus did not see any absolute necessity for his suffering more than the sinner suffered, in order to pay man's ransom price. Hence his prayer for a time was, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." The Apostle also notes this distinction, saying, he "became obedient unto death," and then adds "even the death of the cross."--Phil. 2:8.

The death of the cross, with its attendant dishonor, reproach, etc., so far as we may be able to judge, was not necessary as our ransom price, because the penalty did not read, In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die with public reprobation and dishonor by crucifixion. Since the penalty was death (Gen. 2:17), we may suppose that our Lord's death by any means would have fully paid man's ransom price. However, the additional features were deemed necessary by the Father, and the "cup" did not pass. The Father required this extreme of obedience as a test, a proof not only to himself but before all his intelligent creatures of the absolute loyalty of heart of his "well beloved Son," upon whom he designed shortly thereafter to confer the great blessing and high exaltation of his own divine nature and joint-heirship in his Kingdom. And the loyalty of our dear Redeemer was fully attested, as the Apostle declares; he "despised the shame," that is to say, the shame was as nothing in his sight in comparison with the accomplishment of the Father's purposes, the pleasing of the Father. (Heb. 12:2.) So long as he thought there was a possibility of the elimination of the shame feature, he was nervously anxious to have it so, if possible; but as soon as he realized that this was not the Father's will his heart instantly responded, "Not my will but thine be done." Decision respecting the Father's will immediately brought strength; he was now prepared for any experience, "strong in the Lord and in the power of his might."

Meanwhile Judas, who some days before had engaged with the high-priest to betray Jesus, and who left the upper room immediately after the Supper to carry out his nefarious plan, had received of the chief priests and Pharisees a band of men, with a person in

charge as an officer, whose mission it was to arrest Jesus in the night and to secure his execution before the Passover. We must wholly disagree with the common thought that this "band" consisted of an army of three to six hundred Roman soldiers. They certainly acted very differently from soldiers ordinarily under such circumstances. Besides, the record by all of the Evangelists is that this band was sent, not by Pilate nor by Herod, the Roman representatives, but by the chief priests and Pharisees, who we know had no command whatever of the Roman garrison. To our understanding this band which apprehended Jesus was very similar to the one mentioned in John 7:32-46.

It would appear that the Jewish Sanhedrin exercised a certain amount of authority in respect to religious matters, and were permitted to make arrests, but not to execute criminals without the consent of the Roman governor. We remember that the apostles were arrested on several occasions by such officers of the Jews.--See Acts 5:17,18,22,25-40.

Both Matthew and Mark speak of this aggregation, under officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, as a "multitude," and our Lord's words indicate that they were armed with sticks and swords such as were common to the people in general, and he does not mention spears, which would probably have been a part of the armament of a band of Roman soldiers. This

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thought is further emphasized by the fact that it was

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the high priest's servant who evidently made the first assault upon Jesus, and received a blow from Peter's sword. If Roman soldiers had the matter in charge the high priest's servant no doubt would have been less officious.

It is presumed, and apparently on good grounds, that this company seeking Jesus, under the guidance of Judas, went first to the upper room which our Lord and the Apostles had left probably less than an hour before. Finding that Jesus and the eleven were gone, Judas knew that he would be most likely to find them in the Garden of Gethsemane, for "Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples." John's account omits the particulars of the betrayal given by the other Evangelists: possibly the loving disciple felt so much ashamed of the facts that he preferred not to mention them. Certainly very few acts of treachery ever paralleled this one, and all mankind, even in their perverted condition of mind, seem to realize that the position of traitor is amongst the most despicable on the calendar, and such treachery as that of Judas, against such kindness

and love and goodness as that of his Master, we may be thankful is not so very common. And yet there are correspondencies in the experiences of the Lord's people, "in perils amongst false brethren." It behooves us each to look to it that we permit nothing akin to the spirit of Judas to rankle in our hearts. Our Lord puts the "members of his body" in such matters on a plane with himself, and assures us that whoever shall injure one of the least of these his brethren, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.--Matt. 18:6.

Of course there will always be a motive, good or bad, back of every deed done to the under-members of his body as well as to the Head. To find strong motives is not to find valid excuses for treacheries. So far as our experience and judgment go, the lesson is that such treachery from "false brethren" usually has its spring in covetousness, lust for influence, power or position, and the desire to glorify such unholy ambitions cannot fail to corrupt any heart which entertains them.

As one has said:--

"Sow a thought, you reap an act;
Sow an act, you reap a habit;
Sow a habit, you reap a character;
Sow a character, you reap a destiny."

Judas had been doing some of this sowing of evil thoughts for a considerable time before his thoughts took outward shape in evil acts. He was covetous of wealth and of influence; he became the treasurer of the little group of disciples, and the intimation of the Scriptures is that he purloined to his own private uses a portion of the contributions. As usual, his love for money increased the more he exercised it, until he was willing to betray his Master for thirty pieces of silver --equivalent to about twenty dollars of our money, tho representing in value of labor a much larger sum. It would seem, too, that Judas was looking forward to the promised Kingdom, and probably anticipated a high position as royal treasurer of that Kingdom.

It is quite possible, indeed probable, we think, that Judas was seriously disappointed in respect to the result of his betrayal. Apparently he expected that our Lord would deliver himself by miraculous power from the hands of his enemies. This is the most charitable view we would know how to take of his treacherous conduct: it relieves the blackness of the act only a very little, however, for he who would be willing to spitefully use his best friend, even temporarily, for a money consideration, gives evidence of having prostituted every good and noble sentiment of his being to his love of money. Indeed, the love of honor may have had considerable to do with the matter, for he may have hoped by bringing about this crisis that our Lord would be compelled to set up the long-promised Kingdom, or else to own that all his claims and promises

were fraudulent.

Judas surely did succeed in expediting matters, and in bringing about the installation of the embryo Kingdom of God; but not in the manner he expected, nor in any degree to his own honor or advantage. Thus it must be with those who receive the truth and who profess discipleship under it--not in the love of the truth, but in the love of honors hoped for, either present or future. Let us all who have named the name of Christ take heed and watch and pray lest there should be in any of us any of the elements of this vile character. And let us remember that there are various secret ways, as well as the more outward ones, in which we may betray the Lord and the "brethren."

The evangelist declares that Jesus knew in advance all things that would come upon him. We are elsewhere told that while he prayed, "There appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him." (Luke 22:43.) This ministry may have consisted in informing him of the Father's will in respect to what things he should suffer, and how they were to be expected, and this knowledge that the matter was settled, and the assurance that the Father would overrule it all, strengthened his heart and gave him the great calmness which we observe in all his subsequent course.

The "band" sent to apprehend him evidently expected that they might be obliged to seek for him in the shadows of the trees, etc., and hence they were provided with torches and lanterns. Unquestionably

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they were greatly surprised that our Lord, instead of fleeing from them, advanced to them, and inquired whom they sought. Quite possibly some of those in the "band" had previous knowledge of the Lord--of his miracles, power over devils, etc., and this may have been the reason for their manifestation of weakness in retreat and falling to the ground. Or it is possible that our Lord exercised over them a superior mental power which produced this effect, for the purpose of showing that he had full power to resist them if he had chosen to use it.

The same lesson, we believe, is taught by Peter's use of the sword upon the high priest's servant. We are to remember that one of the Evangelists records that our Lord instructed the apostles to take swords with them, and that when two were found he said, "It is enough." (Luke 22:36,38.) Our Lord had no thought of having his disciples war a carnal warfare on his behalf, as he subsequently stated, "If my kingdom were of this world then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews." (John 18:36.) The two swords were sufficient to show

that our Lord's apprehension was not because there were no means of defence, nor because of cowardice on the part of his disciples, but merely because of his submission--knowing that his hour was come, and that thus it behooved him to suffer for our sins and to enter into his glory.--Luke 24:46.

After this one manifestation of power, as indicating his full ability to cope with that multitude, and indeed his power to have more than twelve legions of angels to defend him, had he so desired (Matt. 26:53), we find our Lord fully submitting himself to capture, merely making condition that the disciples might go their way. How grand the character which at such a moment, under such trying conditions, could so fully forget self and feel interested merely in the welfare of others! How like what we should expect of Him!

"That the saying might be fulfilled which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me I have lost none." We understand the writer to mean that here again in the Master's course we find an exemplification of his care for his disciples, as enunciated in his prayer just before leaving the upper room. While the thought of his prayer was chiefly in respect to their spiritual interests, that none of them should be lost, we do well to notice this as a corroborative illustration of our Lord's care of the physical interests of all who become his disciples. Not a hair of their heads shall fall; nothing shall be permitted to injure them--every event and affair of life will be overruled for their highest good.--Matt. 6:32,33.

It was probably when Jesus began to be bound that Peter drew his sword in his defence; perhaps he remembered the Lord's words of a few hours previous, to the effect that his followers would all forsake him, and his own promise, "Although all shall be offended, yet will not I." (Mark 14:29.) Noble, zealous Peter! We love him for his noble expression of sentiment, and for his heroic defence of the Master with the sword against superior numbers. It is the custom of many to decry Peter's action, as another of his rash errors. We are to remember, however, that the Apostles had not yet received the holy Spirit and therefore could not clearly appreciate the fact that the Kingdom to which they were called is a spiritual Kingdom. Besides, as we have seen, he was merely following the Lord's counsel in taking the sword with him, and evidently also carrying out the divine purpose in using it. We see nothing to blame, everything to commend. It was a sign of larger import than Peter and the others there realized.

But having permitted the matter to go thus far, our Lord restrained Peter, saying, "Suffer yet thus far. Put up thy sword into the sheath; the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" And so saying he touched his wounded enemy and healed him. The disciples were to see, understand, be fully

assured, that our Lord, in delivering himself to his enemies, did it voluntarily, and hence the proceedings were so pantomimed as to enforce this lesson.

How the grace of humility shines out in all the little affairs of our dear Redeemer's ministry; even at this moment of his surrender to his enemies he does not boast that his course is a voluntary one, nor seek praise as a martyr! He declares the simple truth,

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that the Father required this of him as an evidence of his personal loyalty to him. He confesses himself a servant of God, a son who learned obedience by the things which he suffered. "The cup which the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" Indeed, this was the strength of his victory--his will was fully submitted to the Father's will, and his faith grasped the fact that the Father permitted no unnecessary evils to come upon him, but only such as he could and would overrule for good.

There is a valuable lesson here for all who are seeking to walk in the footsteps of the great High Priest,--for all the Royal Priesthood. We also are to remember that so long as we abide in Christ, and seek to walk in his footsteps, all the trying experiences of life are carefully measured for us by the Lord --that he does not pour into our cup of sorrow and trial any bitter experiences that are not needful to us, and that will not subsequently work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. (2 Cor. 4:17.) With these assurances, and with the evidences of the Father's faithfulness to our glorified

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Master and Forerunner, we indeed may have strong consolation who have fled for refuge to the hope set before us in the Gospel.--Heb. 6:18-20.

The healing of the smitten ear, our Lord's last miracle, was most beautifully illustrative of his character and teachings. It exemplified his words, "Love your enemies, do good to them that persecute you." It showed that he was filled with the divine love which his teachings inculcated, and that he had no bitterness toward those who despitefully used and persecuted him.

The binding of our Lord seems to have been entirely unnecessary, except as the "band" might desire to make an exhibition of their prowess to those who had sent them. Our Lord seems to have remonstrated in respect to this, as per the account given in Mark 14:48,49: "Are ye come out as against a thief, with swords and with staves, to take me? I was daily with you in the Temple, teaching, and ye took me not. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled." It was then that the eleven forsook him and fled. Judas continuing

with the band went to the house of Annas the priest, who doubtless had bargained with Judas, and no doubt it was at this time that the thirty pieces of silver were paid over, Judas having now shown a fulfilment of the contract. Poor wretched man! The Son of man indeed went to death, as it had been written of him, but this made none the less horrible the treachery, the covetousness and murderous spirit that delivered him up to his enemies. So with the members of the body of Christ: it must needs be that offences come--it is a part of the divine plan that the body of Christ should fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of the Head (Col. 1:24)--but this makes none the less sinful the conduct of those who have to do with such betrayals --especially if they be "false brethren" who have enjoyed some knowledge of the truth. In every instance, however, it will be observed that altho the trials worked out blessing for the Lord and will do so also for all the faithful who suffer with him, the rewards of unrighteousness sought by those who take Judas' course never yield them the honors and blessings they coveted, and for which they sold themselves to work evil.

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THE GREAT HIGH PRIEST ARRAIGNED.

--MAY 21.--JOHN 18:15-27.--

"He came unto his own, and his own received him not."--John 1:11.

ALTHO it is declared that all the disciples fled, John points out that Peter and himself followed at a distance. Their deep interest in the Master would not permit them to go to their homes; they must keep him in sight, and note how things would go with him to the very last. They were powerless to assist him against such great odds, and in the face of his own refusal to be assisted, but they were not powerless to love still. John, it seems, was somewhat acquainted at the high priest's palace, and readily gained entrance, not only for himself but for Peter.

But these favors and privileges became tests to Peter, and led to his denial of the Lord. And so it is with some of the Lord's followers of to-day. When they are by themselves, or with others of like precious faith, they are bold and courageous to confess the Lord and to serve him, but if perchance they get into palaces or amongst the servants and officers and high priests of nominal Christianity they are ashamed of the Master and fear to confess him, lest they should be cast out of the privileges enjoyed in the society of those who have not yet recognized the truth. Far better would it have

been for poor Peter had he openly declared, "Yes, I am one of his disciples, and since I presume that none such are wanted here I will go out." How much so honorable and proper a course would have reflected to his credit in the eyes of all just persons, and how much blessing it would have brought to him!

Peter's failure to take the proper course brought him later to a still more trying situation, when a kinsman of the man whose ear he had cut off asked him point-blank the question, "Did not I see thee in the garden with him?" Matters were getting pretty close for poor Peter. It was more now than a question of leaving the fire and the privileges and honor of the high priest's court: it was now a question of his identity as the one who had defended Jesus with a sword, and hence a question of his own arrest and trial at the same tribunal with the Master. One false step leads naturally to another; to have now declared for Jesus would have been a public testimony that he was a liar, in addition to leading to his apprehension, and so Peter concluded that in self-defence he must not only repeat the lie, and again deny the Master, but to make the matter more strong before his accusers he began to curse and to swear that he knew not Jesus.

Poor Peter! Truly, as our Lord told him, Satan had desired to have him, to sift him, and surely he was being severely sifted at this time. It seems almost a miracle that he recovered his balance and repented and found forgiveness for his sins. It would seem that our Lord's prayer on his behalf operated through his previous announcement to Peter of this denial, for after he had thus denied, and after he had noticed the cock crow, Peter remembered the Lord's words, "The cock shall not crow till thou hast denied me thrice." With feelings better imagined than they can be described, Peter hastily left the High Priest's apartments now of his own accord, going out into the shadows of early morning, that he might weep bitterly and entreat the Lord's forgiveness.

There is a lesson for us in the fact that Peter's failure was along the very line of his strength. He was naturally courageous, had boasted of it, and yet

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failed for lack of courage. "When I am weak then I am strong," implies that he who feels himself strong is really weak, as in Peter's case. Let us all learn to specially guard our supposedly strong points of character, remembering that we have a wily foe. We are to realize our weakness, our vulnerableness at any point, except as we keep watch at every point and rely upon the great Captain of our salvation to assist us.

John does not tell the whole of the story; he omits reference to Peter's cursing and swearing. His love for Brother Peter evidently influenced him to omit that

portion of the narrative not absolutely necessary to confirm the Lord's prediction. The account of the cursing and swearing is given by Mark, whose Gospel record is supposed to have been indited by Peter himself, Mark being in a large measure Peter's amanuensis.
--Mark 14:66-72.

Jesus was examined of the High Priest: that functionary, however evil and murderously disposed at heart, felt bound to at least preserve the forms of justice, altho from the records elsewhere we know that himself and his associates amongst the priests and Pharisees had already determined that Jesus must be put to death because his influence amongst the people was inimical to their own;--because his teachings cast theirs into the shade and exposed their hollowness, bigotry and hypocrisy. Our Lord answered his questions accordingly; refusing to make any specific explanations he merely referred to his teachings, appealing thus to his rights as a Jew. His answer was the perfectly proper and legal one; he had been arrested without just cause, and the judge was now seeking to find a cause. Our Lord merely pointed out that the cause for the arrest must be shown to have been something which preceded the arrest.

It is not necessary for us to suppose that the officer who struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, and reproved him for improper language toward the Chief Priest, was intentionally unjust in the matter. Rather we may suppose that, influenced by his desire to appear zealous in support of the High Priest's position and judgment, this accentuated his mental unbalance as a fallen man, and led him to imagine evil where there was none. This circumstance, however, gives us the opportunity for discerning just what our Lord meant by his expression in the sermon on the mount, "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek turn to him the other also." (Matt. 5:39.) Our Lord did not literally turn the other cheek to the man and ask him to smite that also, nor did he even receive the smiting

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in silence. He was not willing that his good conduct and proper language should be evil spoken of without at least a proper endeavor to correct the matter. Hence he asked his smiter to point out wherein he had spoken evil, and suggested to him that if he could not point out the evil he should acknowledge his wrong in having improperly smitten for an evil which could not be pointed out.

In the light of this illustration the Lord's people are to understand the command, to turn the other cheek, to mean simply that they are not to resist evil with evil; rather, they are to receive more evil than return it in kind. On the contrary, however, they are to resist evil with good; they are to expostulate with

evil-doers, as the Master did, endeavoring with kindness and gentleness to have them see the right and the wrong of the questions in dispute.

It would appear that our Lord's trial by the Jews was held before Caiaphas, the acting High Priest, the son-in-law of Annas, the proper High Priest according to the Jewish law; and the fourteenth verse identifies Caiaphas as the one who had previously declared, "'It is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.'" And this spake he not of himself, but being High Priest that year he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad."--John 11:50-53.

Here is an illustration of how a great truth may be seen from two opposite standpoints. The prophecy of Caiaphas was strictly true,--in strict accord with all the declarations of the Lord's Word, and was sent through one of the channels which the Lord had been in the habit of using (the High Priest's office) yet the person occupying that office, being out of heart-harmony with the Lord, was out of harmony also with the various features of the divine plan, and became an instigator and cooperator in an evil work, which nevertheless was working out in harmony with the divine foreknowledge and program.

There is a lesson in this also for all of the Lord's people in respect to every feature of divine truth. It is not sufficient that we see certain facts; it is necessary also that we be in heart-harmony with the Lord, else we might, like Caiaphas, aid in fulfilling the Lord's plan but nevertheless taking a wrong position may be bringing ourselves, with others, under a curse, while still cooperating in the fulfilment of the divine plan. Let all who are of the light, and who have received the truth, seek more and more to walk in the light and in the Master's footsteps, carefully avoiding the evils which we see illustrated in the cases of Judas, Peter and Caiaphas.

The trial before the Jews was of three parts:--

(1) The examination before Annas the legal High Priest which was wholly unofficial. He sent Jesus bound to Caiaphas the official High Priest of Roman

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appointment, and as such the President of the Sanhedrin, whose court room was probably in the same palace, across the corridor, where Peter stood warming himself.

(2) The preliminary trial before Caiaphas is supposed to have been held between two or three o'clock on Friday morning--the members of the Sanhedrin or Jewish Court having been summoned by messengers as soon as Jesus was apprehended. This hearing was preliminary in the sense that it examined Jesus and

formulated and decided upon the charges on which it would convict at the formal meeting at dawn, about five o'clock. For the Jewish law forbade a trial by night.--Luke 22:66-71.

(3) The formal trial before the Sanhedrin at dawn was merely a ceremony--a farce. The determination to kill Jesus having been reached long before his arrest, the matter of his condemnation was rushed through for two reasons. (a) The great Jews feared the common people would defend Jesus against their trumped up charges, which were the only ones even they could formulate. (b) The Passover was at hand and they wanted him killed before it. Ah! how little did they realize that they were being permitted of God to exercise the evil desires of their hearts and thus to fulfil types and prophecies to the very day.

A lesson on this for God's people is, that it is not sufficient that we go through a form or ceremony of justice; nor is it sufficient that we know in advance that we cannot circumvent the divine plan or hinder its fulfilment. Many will find in the day of reckoning and revealing, that they have served God's purposes without honor or profit--in a manner that brought upon them condemnation instead of approval. Even the great Adversary Satan will ultimately find (but not in any degree to his credit or blessing) that all his opposition to God, to Christ, and to "the brethren," has been overruled by divine wisdom and power for good, by him who "maketh the wrath of man to praise him."

It is all-important then, that we have more than forms of justice, of righteousness; we must have the spirit of righteousness, a love of righteousness,--a sincere desire to know and to do God's will, else like as the Jews condemned and killed the Just One we might with forms of justice condemn and injure his "brethren." And to have the desirable condition of love for God and for righteousness implies a full consecration of heart to the Lord. Thus every examination of the subject brings us back to the fact that full consecration to the Lord, full self-surrender to his will as revealed in his Word, is the only proper and only safe course for any to pursue if they would hope to hear the Master's words, "Well done good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joys of thy Lord."

It was during the interim between the 3 A.M. examination and the 5 A.M. formal conviction of our Lord by his influential enemies, that he was subjected for two hours to the mockery and insults described by three of the Evangelists. (Matt. 26:67,68; Mark 14:65; Luke 22:63-65.) These insults were committed by the "servants" and well illustrate the fact that low minds delight in the misfortunes of those whom they realize to be their superiors. These servants manifested the same spirit as their masters--the chief priests and Pharisees--their methods were ruder because they were more ignorant and coarse. The spirit of Christ,

the spirit of love, on the contrary, whether in the educated or in the ignorant, is a spirit of love, of gentleness, of sympathy, of kindness. By their fruits both spirits may be known. "If any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his."

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THE "GOOD CONFESSION" BEFORE PILATE.

--MAY 28.--JOHN 18:28-40; 1 TIM. 6:13.--

"I find no fault in him."--John 19:4.

PILATE, the Roman governor of Judea, had in his hands the power of life and death. The Jewish Sanhedrin was permitted to govern the country in a religious way, according to Jewish law and custom, but had no power to order public execution. Apparently they did have the power to stone to death for blasphemy (the charge on which they condemned Jesus) as in the case of Stephen (Acts 7:58); and hence we may suppose that they had such a power in respect to Jesus, but failed to exercise it lest the people should resent the injustice. Moreover, quite possibly they realized the wide influence already attained by his teachings, and desired to make his execution as public and as disgraceful as possible--to the intent that his followers might be chagrined and humiliated, as well as himself, because few would care to confess themselves disciples of one who had been publicly executed as a criminal,--condemned by both civil and ecclesiastical judges. Thus they hoped to nip in the bud the new system of religious teaching, which, if it continued, would evidently entirely subvert their own influence with the people. Thus unwittingly these evil-doers were carrying out the very arrangements foreordained of God--and doing so in the full exercise of their own evil volition.

As already noted, the formal condemnation of our Lord before the Jewish Sanhedrin occurred at dawn, five to six o'clock, and immediately they hurried him to Pilate's judgment hall, intent on getting him into the hands of the Roman soldiers for execution at the earliest possible moment, so that the multitudes might realize his case as beyond the power of their intervention. Nor had the Jewish rulers any particular reason to suspect that Pilate would hesitate at all to order an execution. Pilate seems to have had a reputation for cruelty. Philo speaks of "his corruption, his acts of insolence, his habit of insulting the people, his cruelty, his continual murders of people untried and uncondemned, and his never-ending and most grievous inhumanity at all times--a man of most ferocious passions,

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very merciless as well as very obstinate." Apparently the rulers of the Jews had frequent cause to appeal to Pilate to be merciful, and generally without effect; they seem to have taken for granted that if any prisoner were brought to him with a request for execution

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he would take pleasure in complying.

We are reminded of our Lord's words to the Pharisees, "Ye outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity," when we read that these very persons who murderously were scheming for the destruction of the Just One would not enter into Pilate's judgment hall, "lest they should be defiled," and thus be hindered from celebrating the Passover. How wretchedly inconsistent and hypocritical they were! They feared that Pilate's judgment hall, being under jurisdiction of the Gentiles, might have in it some leaven (a symbol of sin), and realized not that the real leaven of sin had permeated and thoroughly saturated their own hearts--anger, malice, hatred, envy, strife.

What a lesson the Lord's people have here: for we are to remember that these heart-corrupted conspirators were the professed holiness people of their day and church. While it is not in the power of any to-day to crucify the Lord and put him to an open shame, it is within our power to put to shame, to crucify, his "brethren" --the members of his body. And we fear that some to-day are doing this with as much self-deception as was exercised by these chief priests and Pharisees who secured our Lord's crucifixion. True, the Pharisees knew not what they did, as Peter says, "I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." (Acts 3:17.) And so likewise to-day any who put to shame the members of "the body of Christ" probably are ignorant of what they do. Nevertheless they put themselves under the Lord's sentence, "It were better that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea." (Luke 17:2.) Let us each therefore beware, and keep the heart, out of which are the issues of life.

Had the hearts of those Pharisees been in proper condition, full of love of righteousness and truth, and appreciative of whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, they could not have made the mistake of rejecting and crucifying the Lamb of God. Similarly, those who have the spirit of love for the brethren will be hindered from becoming in any manner their persecutors. Only such can properly

eat of the antitypical Passover.

The Roman governor, knowing of the peculiar custom of the Jews in respect to their Passover time, accommodated himself to their theory and had his chair of state brought outside the judgment hall to what was known as the Place of the Pavement, an elevated platform. Jesus was called up on this platform for examination, while the Jews standing outside of the unhallowed ground made known to Pilate their accusations. They evidently expected that the mere presentation of Jesus as a prisoner for crucifixion would be sufficient. Apparently they had not even expected to be required to make an accusation; hence their answer, "If he were not a malefactor [evil-doer] we would not have delivered him up unto thee." Some have suggested, in harmony with the character of Pilate and his probable disrespect for the Pharisees, that his question rather was, "What accusation do you bring against him?" as tho he would give the implication that Jesus rather had ground for making accusation against the Pharisees--which of course was the case. The hardened Roman no doubt had become an expert reader of human character, and could readily see that there were no criminal features in our Lord's countenance, and many in those of his accusers.

To the surprise of the priests and Pharisees, Pilate turned Jesus over again to them, saying in substance, This is some petty religious quarrel with which I care to have nothing to do; take the prisoner and do with him according to your own laws and customs--imprisoning him, or causing him to be beaten, or whatever you may think proper, according to your law. But, thirsting for our Lord's death, his persecutors revealed their real condition of heart, saying, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death."

Hard, cruel, unmerciful tho he was, Pilate realized the true situation--that the guilty were pursuing the innocent to death. That he might have the better opportunity for thinking quietly, and also for hearing what Jesus would say in self-defence, Pilate left the Jews and called Jesus unto him into the judgment hall, where they conversed. There must have been something very striking in our Lord's personal appearance to have caused Pilate to consider for a moment the rejection of the demands of the Jewish Court or Sanhedrin, for altho he had full power of life and death it was incumbent upon him, as his first duty, to preserve the peace and tranquility of his dominion; and this implied that in a general way at least he must keep on the popular side, especially when the popular side embraced the chief men of the province, and particularly when those chief men desired the execution of one whom they denounced as a disturber of the peace. Pilate's position was in many respects a delicate one: he must please the government at Rome, and he must avoid unnecessary disputes with the local authorities,

who in the present instance were evidently so determined that they would have created a general disturbance

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rather than that their evil scheme should come to naught. The fact is that six years later these people did send to the Roman Emperor such complaints against Pilate as secured his removal.

Alone with Jesus, Pilate's question was, "Art thou King of the Jews?" The Jews had not made such a charge against Jesus; indeed, they were far from wishing to acknowledge the Galilean as King of the Jews, or as being thus recognized by any number; they had thus far merely charged that Jesus was an evil-doer, an insurrectionist, whose death was necessary to the peace of the nation. It would seem therefore that Pilate had previously heard from some quarter about the riding of Jesus on the ass, and as being hailed by the people as the Son of David a few days previously. That this was not part of the accusation of the Jews seems evident from our Lord's reply to Pilate, "Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?" Are you an interested inquirer after the truth on this subject, or are you merely calling up a matter of which you have heard? Pilate's reply, "Am I a Jew?" was tantamount to saying, What do I know about your Jewish hopes and expectations? I am the Roman governor, and if you are a king it is your own nation and its chief representatives that have delivered you to me. What have you done, if you are their king, that makes your subjects thus disloyal to you? Apparently there is no great danger of your exercising any power against the Roman empire; you are meek, gentle, lowly, unresisting yourself, and your people are crying out against you. King of the Jews, explain this peculiar situation!

Then Jesus explained that his Kingdom is not of this order of things, otherwise he would have servants to fight and to defend him, and would not be as at present, at the mercy of his enemies; and that his kingdom had not yet commenced. Astonished, and perhaps with some degree of sympathy for a great ruler under such humiliating conditions, Pilate asks, Do you then claim that you are a king? Our Lord answers, "Thou sayest," that is, Your statement is correct; I am a King. "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I might bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice."

This was the good confession which our Lord witnessed before Pontius Pilate, to which the Apostle refers. (1 Tim. 6:13.) He confessed his kingship and its divine authority. We are not to wonder that Pilate was incredulous of our Lord's claims to kingship, and that he probably thought him a fanatic. We are rather to remember that remarkably few of those who have heard of Jesus have recognized the truth of this statement

that he is a King. How few, even amongst professed Christians, recognize the kingly office of our Lord! Many who realize that Jesus was indeed the Man of Sorrows, acquainted with grief, and some who realize that he died for our sins, have never yet seen that he purchased not only man but the empire originally given to the first Adam. Many can realize our Lord in the attitude of Priest who fail to realize that he is also to be a King, and that throughout the Millennial age he will be a Priest upon his throne, "after the order of Melchizedec," his Church and Bride being associated with him and sharing in both his priestly and his kingly offices.

The priestly office speaks mercy, forgiveness and grace to help; but the kingly office is no less essential to the world's salvation--men must be delivered from the bondage of sin and death--and must be ruled with the iron rod in order to develop them and fit them for life everlasting; and all of this work belongs to him who redeemed us with his own precious blood. It is well that we remember, too, that a very large proportion of our Lord's parables related to the Kingdom in its various stages--now embryotic, by and by to be set up with full power and authority to overthrow evil and to bring in everlasting righteousness.

This Kingdom is to be a Kingdom of truth, of righteousness and of love, working well for its subjects, and our Lord's mission at the first advent was to lay the foundation for that Kingdom by witnessing to the truth--the truth that God is both just and loving, and is willing to receive back into harmony with himself all who love truth and righteousness. It was our Lord's faithfulness to the truth that brought upon him the opposition of those who were blinded by the Adversary, hence his statement that he came to bear witness to the truth is a brief statement of his mission. It was his witness to the truth that cost him his life, and it was the giving

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of his life in defence of the truth that constituted the redemption price. Similarly all of the Lord's followers are to bear witness to the truth--the truth in respect to God's character and plan--the features of that plan accomplished at the first advent in the redemption of the world, and the features of that plan yet to be accomplished in the second advent, in the deliverance of the world from the bondage of sin and corruption. It is such witness to the truth that is to cost all the true followers of Jesus their lives in presenting themselves living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God through Christ Jesus. Let each one who hopes to be a joint-heir with the Prince of Life in the Kingdom witness to the truth--a good confession respecting the Kingdom, its foundation and ultimate superstructure in glory.

A very short discourse on such a text was quite

sufficient for Pilate. He had no desire to enter into a theological discussion, which could only reflect unfavorably upon his own past record. He broke off the conversation suddenly, saying, "What is truth?"--as

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tho he would say, Who is truthful? Where is absolute justice to be found, absolute truth, absolute probity? And without waiting for an answer he left Jesus in the judgment hall, went forth to the Place of the Pavement, and addressed the waiting Sanhedrin and their multitude of servants and hangers-on, brought with them to give evidence of popular clamor.

Pilate announced his decision, "I find in him no fault at all." Then the Jews, fearing that their prey was about to escape, began to bethink themselves of charges to be formulated. They did not mention the charge on which they themselves had convicted Jesus, falsely, namely, blasphemy; for this would have been no crime whatever in the eyes of the Roman governor. Instead, they made three charges, viz., (1) sedition--agitation of the people against the existing order of things; (2) that he interfered with the collection of taxes, teaching the people that it was improper to pay tribute-money to a foreign power; and (3) that he made claims of being a king.--Luke 23:2.

But now learning that Jesus' home and principal ministry was in Galilee, Pilate thought to relieve himself by referring the entire matter to Herod, who had charge of the province of Galilee, and who was then at Jerusalem, at a palace not far distant. This was the Herod who had caused the death of John the Baptist. Luke tells us (23:8) that Herod was very glad to see Jesus, for having heard much respecting him he hoped also to see some miracle performed by him. Herod questioned our Lord with many words, but received no response whatever, while the chief priests and scribes grew the more vehement in their accusations, seeing that Jesus denied nothing that they said, and that thus they were not called upon for proofs.

Herod no doubt was piqued as well as disappointed by our Lord's conduct, and unable to gain entertainment from him as expected, he and his guard took sport in mocking the Redeemer's claims of dignity and kingship.

But with a desire to return Pilate's compliment, and perhaps with some little touch of remorse of conscience in respect to the beheading of John the Baptist, Herod disposed of his responsibilities in the case by returning our Lord to Pilate. It was after our Lord's return to Pilate's judgment hall that the latter, apparently as a final effort to appease the Jews, to preserve the peace of the country, and yet to let go one whom he clearly discerned to be innocent, announced that in view of the clamor against Jesus he would cause him

to be scourged, altho he found no fault in him. He evidently hoped that by the infliction of the scourging (whipping) and incidental humiliation, that the spirit of malice on the part of the accusers would be satisfied, and that they would peaceably agree to his release. Apparently the scourging was done in some interior apartment by the Roman soldiers; and probably with the full consent of Pilate a cast-off royal robe and a crown of thorns were put upon our Lord. Evidently this proceeding would furnish amusement to the unsympathetic soldiery, and so much shame and contempt cast upon our Lord might at least satisfy his persecutors, if it did not awaken sympathy.

Acting in harmony with this thought, Pilate came again before the Jews, and caused our Lord to be led forth, weak, exhausted and miserable-looking, from the trying experiences of the night, supplemented by the painful and weakening influence of the scourging just received. With his crown of thorns and soiled purple robe he must have been a pitiable sight indeed, and yet the noble outlines of his perfect manhood must still have been striking, and no doubt suggested the words of Pilate which have echoed down the centuries since, "Behold the man!" (John 19:5.) Pilate evidently was impressed with our Lord's personality; never before had he seen so splendid a specimen of the human race. He was such an one as any people might have been glad to honor as their king. He evidently hoped that some impression would be made upon the clamoring throng which accused Jesus. But he was mistaken; they clamored so much the more, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Meantime Pilate's wife had heard of the trial and had sent Pilate word respecting her dream, and advice that he have no part in doing injury to this just person.--Matt. 27:19.

Pilate immediately said to the Jews, Take him and crucify him, if that is your law. But altho thus assured that the Roman governor would not interfere in the matter, the Pharisees hesitated about accepting the proposition; they much preferred that the crucifixion should be in the hands of the Roman governor and his soldiers, lest the friends of Jesus and the multitudes who had been healed and taught by him should come to his assistance and overpower them; hence they answered Pilate that according to their law Jesus should die, because he made himself the Son of God. They perverted the truth in their endeavor to uphold their course, for the Law did not prescribe death as a penalty for the claim of being the Son of God. Had our Lord claimed to be the Father he would have come under the terms of the death penalty for blasphemy, but there was no such penalty, nor was it blasphemy, to call himself, as he did, the Son of God.

When Pilate heard of this he was the more alarmed. The features of Jesus were impressive of themselves, but if one possessing such features made the claim of

relationship to God there certainly was some ground for fear. Pilate still withstood the Jewish clamor, and sought to release our Lord. Then the Jews, as a last

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resort, threatened Pilate by implication, crying out, "If thou let this man go thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar." They thus intimated that if Pilate frustrated their designs, and refused to crucify Jesus as they demanded, they would report him to Caesar as an enemy of his empire, a succorer of seditious persons, a fosterer of rival kings in the empire. Pilate could not stand against this argument, and washed his hands in the presence of the multitude, saying by this act, as well as in words, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person; see ye to it." And when the Jews cried out, "His blood be upon us and upon our children," Pilate delivered him to be crucified.--Matt. 27:24,25.

We are not of those who condemn Pilate; he was a servant of the empire, charged with doing everything reasonable to preserve peace in his dominions, and only a clearly enlightened and fully consecrated saint could have been expected to do more than Pilate did for the release of Jesus. Our Lord in no sense intimated guilt on the part of Pilate. The responsibility was assumed by the Jews, and surely its penalty has rested heavily upon them and upon their children for the past eighteen centuries, and even yet their cup of anguish is not filled to the full. "Jacob's trouble" will be no unimportant one in the great time of trouble that is just approaching; but we thank God on their behalf that deliverance is nigh for them, as well as for all others of the groaning creation. How blessed the thought that when they shall look upon him whom they pierced, and wail because of him, it will not be with tears of hopeless sorrow; for the Lord "shall pour upon them the spirit of grace and of supplication, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his first-born."--Zech. 12:10.

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"HE WAS NUMBERED WITH THE TRANSGRESSORS."

--JUNE 4.--JOHN 19:17-30.--

"The Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."--Gal. 2:20.

CRUCIFIXION was the horrible method of execution in olden times for the vilest of criminals --its severity being intended to intimidate and deter evil-doers, rather than as a gratification of cruel sentiments. Farrar says of it:--

"Death by crucifixion seems to include all that pain and death can have of the horrible and ghastly--dizziness, cramp, thirst, starvation, sleeplessness, publicity of shame, long continuance of torment, horror of anticipation, mortification of untended wounds--all intensified just up to the point at which they can be endured at all, but all stopping just short of the point which would give to the sufferer the relief of unconsciousness. Such was the death to which Christ was doomed."

As already noted, the envious and murderous chief priests and doctors of Judaism desired just such a public denunciation of the great Teacher who so fearlessly had exposed their hypocrisies and inconsistencies, and who was fast making an impression upon the common people. For them to have stoned him to death as a blasphemer they probably feared would leave him a martyr in the eyes of many, while to have him publicly executed as a criminal, sentenced by the Sanhedrin and executed by the highest civil power in the world, would, they hoped, brand Jesus, his teachings and his followers, forever with infamy. We may imagine, therefore, how their evil hearts exulted, when finally they had coerced Pilate into signing the warrant for the execution of Jesus.

According to Mark's account (15:25) the death-warrant was signed by Pilate about nine o'clock in the morning--the trial of Jesus, and Pilate's various attempts to secure his release from his enemies, having occupied three hours. At once they started, the two robbers bearing their crosses, and Jesus bearing his cross, taking the place of Barrabas, who was to have been executed, but who was released. It was the custom in olden times to compel the convicts to bear the instruments of their own torture. Nor were the crosses so large and heavy as they are generally illustrated in modern paintings. On the contrary, the evidence is that the feet of the crucified were usually only twelve to eighteen inches from the ground. Altho small, these crosses constituted a good burden for a reasonably strong man; but our Lord, after passing through his Gethsemane experiences and the night of buffeting and scourging, and his further scourging by Pilate's orders, was sick, exhausted, weak, sore. Apparently even the hardened soldiers took pity upon him, and meeting Simon the Cyrenian on the way, they compelled him to relieve Jesus.

We know nothing respecting Simon, except that Mark relates that he was the father of Alexander and Rufus, which gives the suggestion that these, his two sons, may subsequently have become the followers of Jesus and well known amongst the disciples. In any event Simon himself enjoyed a great privilege which thousands since have almost envied. How the apostles, Peter, James and John and others, must have regretted the fearfulness of heart which kept them all at

a distance, and hindered them from proffering their aid to the Master in his trying hour! John, we know, was not far off; probably the others were near also; but what an opportunity they missed!

And very similar opportunities are still with us all--opportunities to serve the Christ--opportunities for serving the members of the body of Christ. As everyone who follows the Master's footsteps must needs have some Gethsemane experiences, so also each must have a taste at least of all the Master's experiences. Let us not forget, then, to look about us for opportunities for serving the "brethren," the "little ones," the

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members of the body of Christ. Let each be careful not to add to the reproaches that must fall upon all the followers of the Lamb, but on the contrary to offer words of sympathy, and to help bear each other's crosses, difficulties and trials by the way. Thus can we best show to our Lord and Head how we would have appreciated the opportunity of helping him bear his cross on the way to Calvary.

The place of crucifixion was called Golgotha, the Hebrew word signifying a skull, the Latin name for a skull being Calvary. This name was given to the locality probably because the general contour of the hill, which was just outside of Jerusalem, closely resembles a skull when viewed at a distance. It was on the way to this place, Golgotha, Calvary, that some of the charitable women of Jerusalem, according to their general custom, offered the condemned ones sour wine mixed with bitter myrrh--a draught which had a tendency to stupefy the nerves, thus rendering the execution the less agonizing. The two robbers quite probably drank of the potion, but Mark (15:23) declares that our Lord refused it--having learned that his experiences were the Father's will, he would do nothing whatever to hinder himself from receiving them to the full.

Probably Mary, the mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the Less and of James, the mother of James and John, and Salome, the wife of Cleophas (Matt. 27:56; Mark 15:40) and others of the friends of Jesus, by this time gained courage and mingled with the women who offered the wine and myrrh, so that Luke says, "There followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children." --Luke 23:27,28.

Thus, and with other words recorded, our Lord foreshadowed the great time of trouble coming upon the Jewish nation. By the expression, "If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" he implies that, altho the nation of Israel had been

given up only five days previously, when he exclaimed, "Your house is left unto you desolate," if their rulers could sanction such injustice and lawlessness while their greenness, freshness and religious vitality remained, what might be expected in the future, after the religious vitality had dried out and the nation as a whole had become ready for the great "burning" of their day of trouble, which was designed to, and had been prophesied should, utterly consume their polity. And how literally our Lord's prophecy was fulfilled: Josephus, without a thought of corroborating this testimony, tells us with explicitness of detail of the terrible sufferings which came upon the women and children during the great time of trouble which ended with the destruction of Jerusalem, A.D. 70.

When we reflect upon the prophecy, "He was numbered with the transgressors" (Isa. 53:12), and then consider the terrible persistency with which the leading Jews pursued the dear Redeemer to secure his execution, it furnishes us fresh evidence of divine foreknowledge which, without interfering with the free moral agency of any man, is nevertheless working all things according to the counsel of God's will. We see afresh how God causes the wrath of man to praise him, and to testify to his wisdom and foreknowledge.

It was customary to have four soldiers attend each prisoner to execution; foremost went one who bore a white board on which was written the crime for which the prisoner was to be executed, and which was fastened above his head on the cross; then followed three soldiers with the hammer and nails, etc., and these all were under the command of a captain or centurion. The board placed above Jesus, on the cross, declared him to be the King of the Jews, and was written in three languages--in Hebrew, the language of the country, in Greek, because it was the language of the visitors and of the educated from all quarters, and in Latin, because it was the language of the empire and of the soldiers. There is a slight difference in the statements of the different Evangelists respecting the words used on this tablet, which may be accounted for by supposing that the words differed slightly in the different languages, and that the Evangelists quoted from the different originals.

Little did Pilate comprehend the great truth which he set before the world in the words, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Few yet realize the truth of this statement that Jesus is a King; comparatively few have yet rendered him allegiance, bowing the knee of their hearts in sincerity and truth: and yet so surely as the Lord has spoken it, the time is coming when every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess him Lord, Master, King, to the glory of God the Father. And to this end it shall come to pass that after full knowledge of the matter has been given to all, he that will not obey this Prophet shall be cut off from among

the people in the Second Death. (Acts 3:23.) He was indeed rejected of the Jews, but nevertheless the full elect number for the twelve tribes of Israelites indeed shall yet be found, who, as the Seed of Abraham, shall accept Messiah as King and, faithfully serving him in the present life, and laying down their lives in his service and for the brethren, shall be accepted of him as joint-heirs in his Kingdom. Since there were not enough of the natural Israelites to complete these twelve tribes of Israelites indeed, God is completing the number by adoptions from amongst the Gentiles during the past

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eighteen centuries. Ultimately the entire number shall be completed.--Rev. 7:4-8.

The Jewish Doctors of Divinity were willing enough to have Jesus condemned as the King of the Jews, but were quite unwilling to have this sentence publicly recorded, and thus to imply that they had so feared his claim and influence as to seek his death. Pilate's refusal

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to amend the charge was a just one; if there was no merit in the claim, why should they have feared him, and why should he have been crucified? If there was enough merit in the claim to lead to his crucifixion, the matter should be plainly stated.

The division of the spoil was customary at every crucifixion, and gave evidence of the indifference and hard-heartedness of the soldiers in the presence of suffering. The raiment divided consisted of headdress, outer robe, girdle and sandals; the garment here called a "coat" and "vesture" was an undergarment which reached from the neck to the feet. It was evidently of fine quality and texture, as indicated by the fact that it was woven throughout, seamless. The casting of lots for this robe marked the fulfilment of a prophecy to which John calls attention. (Psa. 22:18.) The seamless robe appears to symbolize the righteousness of Christ, which can be appropriated only as a whole; it is of one piece, and may not be marred. Whoever may get it, gets a most valuable robe, and whoever may fail to get it, fails to obtain the righteousness which is of God in Christ. But not by lot or accident or chance does this robe come to the Lord's people. As the scriptures clearly point out, it is obtained only through the exercise of faith, and held only by the obedience of faith. We might perhaps consider it a symbol of the wedding-garment which falls to the lot of one class only, a little flock, who through faith and perseverance shall inherit the Kingdom as members of the body of Christ, covered by his seamless and spotless robe of righteousness.

The Apostle John had grown bolder as the day advanced,

and while our Lord was crucified he drew near and was within speaking distance--quite possibly encouraged by seeing "the wife of Cleophas," who is supposed to have been a relative. It was a sorrowful gathering for these whose hearts went out with sympathy for the Master whom they loved but were powerless to comfort or relieve. They were weeping and sorrowing while others jeered and taunted, saying, "If thou be Messiah, come down from the cross"--thinking doubtless that our Lord's crucifixion by his enemies was the best possible proof that his claim to Messiahship was a fraudulent one,--proving that he was an impostor.

With the members of the body of Christ it has been true at times also that the Father has permitted experiences to come to them in such manner as might imply that they did not have his favor, and were really impostors. But as the true disciples had a heart-union with the Lord, which outward circumstances and misfortunes could not break, a love which adversity could not chill, so with all his "brethren," those who are in heart-harmony, in oneness of spirit, will be found faithful under the most trying circumstances and adversities, because they have one spirit, a spirit of love for the brethren, by which they are enabled to identify one another as members of the one body.

How it gives us an insight into our Lord's sympathetic nature, to find him thinking in the interest of others at the very time when he himself is overwhelmed in trouble! His own agony did not hinder him from thinking of his mother, and making provision for her comfort, commending her to the care of the loving disciple John. We thus see exemplified in the Master the teaching of the Scriptures that each should seek to make provision for his own dependent ones and, as the Apostle says, "If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." (1 Tim. 5:8.) "The faith" includes thoughts of love, sympathy, interest and care for others, especially for them of the household of faith. We note the choice of John: it was doubtless because, first of all, of his loving tender disposition; secondly, his zeal for the Lord and the truth, and thirdly, his courage in pressing near to be with his dying Master in his closing hours, at the risk of his own life. Let us note these characteristics, as being those which the Lord approves, that noting them we may cultivate them in ourselves, and be granted special opportunities for service by this same Master.

It was about the close of our Lord's agony that he said, "I thirst," and this gave opportunity for the fulfilment of the prophecy which declared, "They gave me vinegar to drink." (Psa. 69:21.) This was not the ordinary vinegar, but more properly sour wine, the common, cheap drink of the soldiers. The sponge filled with the sour wine, and reached up to our Lord's mouth on a hyssop branch, served to moisten his lips

and tongue, and was evidently intended as an act of kindness, mercy.

The different accounts give altogether what are known as "The seven words on the cross."

The first word from the cross: "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34.) While these words undoubtedly represent truly our Lord's sentiments as respected his enemies, nevertheless it is proper here to remark that the oldest Greek MSS. do not contain these words.

The second word from the cross: Our Lord's message to the robber, "Verily I say to thee to-day,--Thou shalt be with me in Paradise."--Luke 23:43.

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The third word from the cross: "Woman, behold thy son!...Behold thy mother!"

The fourth word from the cross: "My God! my God! Why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34.) Of this expression a noted theologian has said, "In the entire Bible there is no other sentence so difficult to explain." Yet the meaning of this, and the reason for it, are very easily seen when once we have the correct view of the ransom. From this standpoint we see that the Logos became a man, "was made flesh," in order that he by the grace of God might taste death for every man. (Heb. 2:9.) We see also that the death penalty upon father Adam was the one which Jesus must experience in order to the satisfaction of Justice and the release of Adam and those who came under condemnation in and through Adam. As the penalty against Adam was death in the fullest and most complete sense, so Christ died for our sins, suffering the Just for the unjust, that he might release us from the death penalty and make possible a resurrection of the dead. As the penalty against Adam included his isolation from the Father as a condemned rebel, so it was necessary that our Lord Jesus, in taking Adam's place, should experience (if only for a short time) the full meaning of a sinner's separation from God.

Very mercifully, the Father did not permit this feature of Adam's penalty to rest upon our Redeemer throughout the entire period of his sacrificial ministry, but only at its very close. It was the fact of his communion with the Father that permitted Jesus to pass through all the trying experiences of that day and the preceding night with such great courage, but now, when the Father's sustaining grace and fellowship and communion of spirit with him were withdrawn, and our Redeemer, with all his fine sensibilities, was utterly bereft of solace from his dearest friend, it led his breaking heart to cry out these words of anguish. Evidently it had been hidden from him up to this time that he must suffer this phase of the punishment of Adam's transgression.

The fifth word from the cross: "I thirst," we have already considered.

The sixth word from the cross: "It is finished," suggests to us that our Lord's earthly mission had been accomplished. He came to die, to redeem the death-condemned race of Adam, to purchase it with his own precious blood, his life. He had consecrated himself to this work in harmony with the Father's plan, and with his dying breath, expiring, he could say that he had finished the work which the Father had given him to do. How it rejoices us to know that our dear Redeemer did complete the work, that he did not resent the taunts of those who said, "If thou be Messiah, come down from the cross;" "Save thyself!" We rejoice to think that since the great sacrifice has been finished (and especially in view of the fact that the Heavenly Father subsequently declared that it was finished acceptably), we may realize that there is now, therefore, no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.--Rom. 8:1.

But altho the sin-offering was finished eighteen hundred years ago by the sacrifice of our Lord, the Lamb of God, there is another part that is not yet finished; but in harmony with the divine plan our Lord is waiting for the Church, which is his body, to "fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ." (Col. 1:24.) And looking all about us, in the light of the Lord's Word, we may say that this work is almost finished too. Very soon the last member of the body of Christ will have suffered with the Head for righteousness' sake: then the entire work of sacrifice apportioned for this Gospel age, or Day of Atonement, will be ended, and the Millennial age of glory and blessing, ruling and uplifting, will begin; ushering in for the world of mankind the great blessing, the purchase-price of which was finished at Calvary. Let each dear follower in the Master's footsteps keep patiently and perseveringly on in the way of self-denial until his course shall be finished--until the Master shall say, It is enough; "Well done, good and faithful servant. Thou has been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." --Matt. 25:21.

The seventh word from the cross: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." (Luke 23:46.) These our Lord's last words were a quotation from the Scriptures. (Psa. 31:5.) In other words, it had already been declared of him that thus he would commend himself to the Father's grace and truth. Our Lord was finishing laying down his human life a ransom

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for many sinners, but the Father had promised him a new life on a higher plane, as a reward for his faith, obedience and sacrifice. This new life, or life as a "new

creature" was reckoned as begun at the time of our Lord's baptism when he received the holy Spirit; this new life was reckoned as continuing and growing during the years of his ministry while he was daily dying according to the flesh; the outward man was perishing, but the inward new creature was being renewed day by day. Now the outward man was about to cease entirely --fully surrendered, the sacrifice finished.

Our Lord's interest in and hope for a future life looked forward, in harmony with the Father's promise, to the new or resurrection life; the new mind or spirit reckoned as begun at the moment of his baptism and consecration, having the divine promise of being perfected in a resurrection, in a spirit-body suitable for and in harmony with the new mind, the new will. But this change could not take place instantly: the divine law had arranged that not until the third day could he be quickened as the new creature of spiritual body. He must take this by faith; no one had ever passed this way before: yet with full confidence our dear Redeemer looked up to the Father, and full of faith declared that he committed all of life and all of these blessed hopes for the future to the Father's love and to the Father's power,--to be provided in harmony with the Father's plan and Word. And so must we, as followers in our Master's footsteps, look forward with faith, and in our dying hour commit all our interests to the keeping of him who has manifested his love for us, not only in the gift of his Son as our Redeemer, but all our journey through,--in his providential care, as well as in the exceeding great and precious promises which go before us and surround us and give us strength, comfort and assurance.

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