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SEMI-MONTHLY
VOL. XXV. MAY 1, 1904 No. 9.
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LETTERS FOR THE EDITOR SHOULD BE SENT TO ALLEGHENY, PA., U.S.A.
BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS AND REMITTANCES

--ADDRESS TO--

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

--OR TO--

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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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GENERAL CONVENTION, LOS ANGELES, CAL., MAY 7,8,9.

All sessions of the Convention will be held in Elks Hall, 231 S. Spring St. Visiting friends who desire accommodations secured for them should write in advance their intention to attend, stating the number in each party, the name, color and sex of each individual, and the price of accommodations desired. On account of long distance from Allegheny, applicants for accommodations should address the chairman of Committee direct., viz., Brother F. P. Sherman, 211 N. Spring St., Los Angeles, Cal.

Accommodations can be secured at 50c each for three or four persons in a room and \$1.00 each for rooms for single persons or couples.

Reduced rates are available over the railroads on account of "M.E. General Conference." From points within the State of California the rate is one fare and a third for the round trip. Very Low Rates are granted from outside the State. Travellers should enquire for "General Conference Excursion Ticket." Friends arriving over the Santa Fe Railroad can reach hall by Washington St. car; and those arriving by Southern Pacific, should board yellow car marked "Arcade Depot."

Going and returning the Editor will hold several

ONE-DAY CONVENTIONS, AS FOLLOWS:

DALLAS, TEX., MAY 1.--A morning rally at 10 o'clock will be held in the Woodmen's Hall, 349 Main St. The public afternoon meeting will be held at 3 o'clock in Carnegie Hall, Public Library. Subject: "To Hell and Back! Who are there? Hope for the return of many." An evening meeting specially for the interested will take place at 7.30 in the Maccabees' Hall, 373 Main St.

AUSTIN, TEX., May 2.--Meeting for the interested at 1401 E Ave., at 7.30 p.m.

HOUSTON, TEX., MAY 3.--All meetings will be held in the Auditorium; at 10 a.m., a rally, and at 2.30 p.m. a meeting for the interested. A public meeting will be held at 7.30 p.m. Subject, "The Oath-bound Covenant."

SAN ANTONIO, TEX., MAY 4.--Morning rally, at 10 o'clock, and afternoon meeting, specially for the interested at 3 o'clock, will be held at Red Men's Hall, 219 St. Mary's St. Public meeting at 7.30 p.m. at Beethoven Hall, 418 S. Alamo St. Subject, "To Hell and Back."

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL., May 12.--Meetings will be held in Alcazar Building, O'Farrel St., between Stockton and Powell. At 2.30 a meeting specially for the interested; at 7.30 a public service--subject, "The Oath-bound Covenant."

PORTLAND, ORE., MAY 15.--All meetings in Elks Hall, Marquam Building, Sixth and Morrison Sts. Morning rally at 10 o'clock. Meeting for the interested at 2.30;

and for the public at 7.30--subject, "The Oath-bound Covenant."

ST. PAUL, MINN., May 19.--Meeting place, Central Hall. At 3 p.m. for interested friends, and 7 p.m. for the public. Subject, "The Oath-bound Covenant."

MILWAUKEE, WIS., May 20.--Meeting for the interested at 2.30 p.m. at Christ Chapel, 465 Superior St.

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VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER.

COLLEGE EDUCATION IS ANTI-CHRISTIAN.

WHAT we have already pointed out,--that the whole trend of college training is along the lines of skepticism as respects the revealed religion of Bible, along the lines of "higher criticism"--is well sustained by the following statement of the matter by Doctor J. A. Leavitt, President of Ewing College, Ills. Among other things he says in the March Homiletic Review:--

"Every observant person has known of numerous instances of believers who have had their faith unsettled by their scientific studies....Can studies so pursued as to atrophy one's spiritual nature be said to tend toward Christ? Can an education be truly Christian that does not increase one's powers to apprehend God and to make him known?

"It will hardly be supposed by any one that the study of the ancient classics tends toward Christ. Few thoughtful parents will entertain for a moment the idea of having their children study for years modern authors, however beautifully written, which are based upon the amours of characters like Paris and Helen, and such corrupt beings as pagan gods and goddesses. It is known that the rites and practices in the worship of some of them were prohibited by the heathen themselves. White, in his 'Mythology,' says: 'There can be no doubt that the stories concerning them had an unfavorable influence on the pagan world, and they contributed to weaken whatever respect remained for public or private virtue.' Is it reasonable to suppose that the imagination of our youth can dwell for years upon the vices of the pagans and their gods and remain untainted?

"Students should be grounded in the fundamentals of morals. Christian evidences should have a larger place. Psychology should be Biblical and emphasized on the spiritual side....

"The ancient classics should be greatly curtailed. In its place we should have much of the oldest and

purest history, the most exalted poetry, and the profoundest thought found in the Bible; the most productive of originality, the most fertile in ideas, the most disciplinary of any work given to man. It is a misnomer to call any college Christian which studies pagan authors six or eight years and gives the Bible only a nominal recognition....

"The sciences should have a large place. God has given us three books, each one revealing himself. The first is external nature, the second is the nature of man, and the third is the Word of God. It is absurd to suppose that these three works by the same omniscient Author are not in perfect accord. Wherever a lack of harmony appears, there is a lack of the truly scientific. ...Our education should be Christocentric. In so far as any education is not Christocentric, it is partial, inadequate and unscientific."

THE SEARCH FOR GOD.

We extract the following from the public press. The more we perceive the blind, unsuccessful groping of the worldly-wise after truth, the more do we value it; and the more do we appreciate the Scriptural declaration that "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him"--the humble.

"The era in which we live has often been called an age of religious doubt. Perhaps it could more correctly be described as one of religious hesitation and helplessness. The bewildering changes of recent years have created for us a new world, but we have not discovered a heaven to match it. The old conception of God has become impossible, and we have not found another to take its place. So has come about what a recent writer regards as "one of the most wonderful phenomena in the history of religion,"--the withdrawal of multitudes of good men from affiliation with the Church. They have turned their backs upon Christianity, not at all because they are out of sympathy with the religious impulse, but because they are intellectually unconvinced. They have lost faith in God.

"Such is the train of thought suggested by a perusal of the Rev. S. D. McConnell's new book, entitled "Christ"; and the significance of the "phenomenon" disclosed is best indicated in his own words:

"This is the situation of modern men by the thousands. 'Where is now my God?' they ask in every mood,

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from flippant contempt to moral despair. Nothing less than the rediscovery of God will serve the occasion. Most of the medicaments offered to the spiritual malady of the times must avail little or nothing because

the diagnosis has not been sufficiently searching. It is no mere phase of superficial skepticism through which we are passing. Half the men we meet are 'agnostics,' and this whether they call themselves that or call themselves Christians. As Professor Flint truly says: "As regards knowledge of God, religious and irreligious men take up the same attitude. Both endeavor to persuade men that there is and can be no such knowledge, that the best attainable is to be content with unreasoned and unenlightened belief."

"But that sort of belief is becoming more unsatisfying every day. Belief in a God about whom the believer avowedly knows not anything may be sustained for a time as a sort of religious obligation, or as a surviving habit, but sooner or later must be given up. One cannot stand on tiptoe forever stretching up his hands to the inane. He gets tired, settles down upon his feet, and goes about his every-day business. This is what men are doing. Numbers of them have given up all idea of ever getting hold of anything coherent in the realm of religion, and disturb themselves but little about the matter. Still larger numbers yet join with the worshipers and listen to the preachers, hoping that they may yet, somehow, be converted and enlightened."

"If we would understand the religious restlessness of our age, we must remember," says Dr. McConnell, that 'the idea of God, as it floats in the mind of the average man, is compounded of three or four inherited conceptions, each of which has to a large extent ceased to fit in with the other portions of his mental furniture, and all of which have grown to be impossible.' There is, first of all, the conception of the 'Kingly God,' called into being by a Hebrew people who believed implicitly in absolute monarchy, and who regarded the earth as the center of the universe. There is, secondly, the conception of a God of Justice--a Roman God, worshiped by Calvin and Augustine and Tertullian. Thirdly, we have to deal with the idea of God considered purely as the Creator--an 'infinitely skilful Architect and Engineer,' who may awaken awe, dread, wonder, or curiosity, but who 'has no commerce with the conscience or the heart.' Fourthly must be mentioned the quasipanthestic conception of a 'God Immanent,' which appeals to the mystic sense, but is 'too incoherent and evasive to serve the every-day uses of the average man.' Dr. McConnell continues:

"At this point speaks the philosophy which controls the thought of our time. Its word is, "God is Unknowable." This is not the judgment of evil or shallow men. It is the deliberate conclusion of the earnest-minded and best men. Nor is it an excuse offered by intellectual laziness or moral indifference for declining a painful and difficult task. It is the sober judgment of those who have tried by "searching to find out God," and have failed. It is the conclusion of Christian and

non-Christian philosophy alike. When Mr. Herbert Spencer had arrived at this conviction for himself, he preferred to state his conclusion in the words of Dr. Mansel, a dignitary of the Church of England. Spencer, the master in philosophy, formulates the dictum; Mansel, the master in theology, phrases it; Huxley, the master in science, gives it its name--Agnosticism; Balfour, a Christian prime minister, indorses and extends it. "Who by searching can find out God?" To the challenge of Job comes the reply of today, No one.'

"But Agnosticism, in spite of all the forces ranged on its side, is not, according to Dr. McConnell's view, the final word. It has failed to reckon with the strongest argument of all, the argument of Christ. It has overlooked the words of one who said: 'Ye have not known him, but I know him....I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.'"

THE WORLD BY WISDOM KNOWS NOT GOD

The discovery of the new element which has been named Radium, is remarkable, not only as pointing to the existence of hitherto unsuspected forces in creation, but also as exposing the folly of the dogmatism of scientists. How frequently have we been told that much of Bible statement has collapsed before the tests of science, and that some finite theory of the universe has superseded the inspired narrative. Yet here we have the unexpected discovery of an element possessing the quality of developing illimitable heat and light without combustion, and which throws off "spontaneously" minute particles traveling at the rate of 186,000 miles per second. It is said the discovery "will be of vital interest to the future of humanity." Meanwhile, it would not be without value if it inspired some of our scientists with a little more humility in the presence of the handiwork of God, "when he appointed the foundations of the earth." (Prov. 8:29.)--The Christian.

CALLS SCRIPTURES INTOLERANT LIES.

London, April 9.--Canon Hensley Henson of Westminster, one of the most distinguished of Anglican militant divines, has aroused a terrific storm by his outspoken declarations on the future of the Bible. He says:--

"The very fact that so many of our people are prepared to acquiesce in what they hear from the lectures, and even believe that, in some way or other, what they hear is divinely true, makes the present indiscriminate reading of the Bible in public an extremely perilous

proceeding.

"Educated men have at their disposal a means of escape from the perplexities stirred in their minds by the incredible, the puerile, or the demoralizing narratives which the Old Testament contains. But the transition is prompt and obvious in untutored minds from a sacred volume--too sacred for discussion--to a pack of lies too gross for tolerance.

"What will be the place of the Bible in the future? It cannot be questioned that many causes have conduced to work something like a revolution among educated Christians throughout the world with respect to the sacred writings of Christianity. In time there will be a great revolution in current teaching with respect to the New Testament. Three broad considerations justify in the future the paramount place which the Bible has traditionally held in the life of Christian society:

"(1) The Bible remains the best manual of fundamental morality which experience has any knowledge.

"(2) It is the best corrective of ecclesiastical corruption.

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"(3) It is, perhaps, the most effectual check on the materialistic tendencies of modern life."

The Bishop of Norwich, the Rev. Dr. Sheepshanks, commenting on these remarks, says:

"There is not at the present time that bright, hopeful feeling among churchmen which prevailed until within the last few years. Religion is by no means gaining ground throughout the country. Definite belief in the Bible is on the wane, and the forces of indifference and irreligion are gaining strength."

"Sir Oliver Lodge asks, 'Now that religion is becoming so much more real, whether the formal statement of some of the doctrines we have inherited from medieval and still earlier times cannot wisely and inoffensively be modified?' He shocks many of his coreligionists by declaring that he regards the 'doctrine of atonement in its concrete form as a survival from barbarous times,' repudiating the belief in 'an angry God appeased by the violent death of Christ,' and maintaining that human nature now is 'rising to the conviction that we are part of nature and so part of God. In this sense the union of divinity is what science some day will tell us is the inner meaning of the redemption of men.'

"These outspoken utterances have caused public and private appeals to be made to the Archbishop of Canterbury, but so far no action has been taken."

* * *

The duplicity of the leading ministers respecting current doctrines of Christianity, the inspiration of the

Bible, etc., is giving way. Increasing numbers of them dislike the dishonesty they have long been practising, and are publicly expressing the unbelief that for so long has possessed them--engendered by "Higher Criticism" and "Evolution." The above are samples. As the clergymen find that the public in general will stand it, they will in larger numbers and in more explicit terms avow themselves.

We are glad of it. The more outspoken the error the more clear and the more precious the Truth will appear to those who have it and love it. Those who are appealing to the Archbishop to have such utterances squelched little realize that the Archbishop and nearly all prominent ecclesiastics really sympathize with the views, and merely think such men as Canon Henson, Lodge and others too outspoken for public appreciation--yet.

It will soon be evident that only the few know or care much for such matters--that the vast majority merely draw near to the Lord on Sunday in a formal manner with their lips, while their hearts are immersed in other things.

Ere long the prediction will be fulfilled, "A thousand shall fall at thy side"--a thousand shall thus fall into unbelief to one who will stand firm for the Lord and his Word. "Who shall be able to stand?" Those who have on the whole armor of God, St. Paul explains. (Eph. 6:13.) Our Lord says that those who will stand will be the "very elect."--Matt. 24:24.

A MINISTER'S INDICTMENT OF HIS PROFESSION.

The New York Independent publishes anonymously an article from a clergyman under the title: "Why

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I Gave Up the Ministry--a Soul's Tragedy." The writer claims that "every man in the ministry today" is "in much the same condition" as himself. He declares in this article, that of thirty men who were graduated with him from a theological seminary six years ago, ten have already abandoned the ministry. He says:

"I am thirty-two years old--at that point where I should be most active in that profession for which I have spent my life thus far in fitting myself, and just now ought to be most happy in it. Instead, I am deliberately resigning it and leaving all behind me. My purpose here is to set forth a statement of my motives, to analyze a situation, and to search for reasons why other men along with myself are doing this....

"The church has sent its clergy out, or at least has allowed them to go out, to do many things in the

name of religion which have nothing whatever to do with it. The clergy today are busy? Yes. But busy doing what? Not things they ever were ordained to do. They are busy as managers of institutions, as members of committees, as representatives on boards, as trustees of asylums, orphanages, schools, and hospitals, dispensaries and colleges, and builders for themselves of parish-houses, where they organize and execute affairs of clubs and guilds, societies and institutes. They were not 'ordained' to do these things, nor did they need years of professional training to become able to do them. Thus it would seem that those men who are busiest in the ministry today are busy only doing things which lie wholly outside of that especial sphere, so far as there ever was a special sphere for work in which they were specially trained, in so far as they ever were specially trained. For my own part I must either find for myself some work in the Church which is sufficiently unique to justify my continuing in the unique position of a 'calling,' or I must abandon the latter here to find the former somewhere else."

ADVANCING TOWARD CHURCH FEDERATION.

The Christian Observer (Presbyterian) says:--

"In Britain, all the non-conformist churches have formed a 'free church union' in the interest of their common cause over against the established Episcopal Church. In Scotland, the United Presbyterian Church and the Free Church came together after years of negotiation to form the United Free Church of Scotland. In Canada, a good many years ago, the Methodists and Presbyterians, both of whom had several branches in the Dominion, united, so that there is only one Presbyterian and one Methodist Church in the wide domain north of us. In Australia the Presbyterians have gotten together, and now the Congregationalists and Presbyterians are talking of some sort of federal union. For some time there has been talk of union between the United Presbyterian and the Associate Reformed Presbyterian bodies in this country. And most of our readers are aware that union between our Church and the Reformed [Dutch] Church has been mooted more than once."

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FRANCE FREEING HERSELF FROM ROMANISM.

The work of breaking the shackles of Priestcraft in France continues. Priests and nuns are no longer permitted to teach in the public schools; no private schools

taught by them or others are licensed where government inspection is not permitted; the court houses are being stripped of crucifixes and other religious emblems; the army and navy are being freed from bondage to Romanism. The new conditions are roundly denounced by Catholics as high-handed, infidel and anti-christian; but thus has Papacy ever fought Protestantism and liberty until they got free from her power; then she was propitious toward them, and, as in this country, would pose as a leader in the crusade for Liberty and Truth.

HIGHER CRITICS AND THE BIBLE.

If the press report is correct, another College president has spoken--Dr. Samuel Plantz of Lawrence University. He said: "The fact is that men have overlooked the great truth that the Bible is literature, and put hard mechanical interpretations on what is to be regarded, and what was conceived and executed in the free and flowing spirit of imagination." It cannot be that a university president believes, if he believes anything, that men have not noticed that the Bible is literature. It must mean merely literature uninspired, like other "literature [fiction] conceived and executed in the free and flowing spirit of the imagination." He adds: "We must not feel that the Bible is worthless because Job is not a historical character; is Hamlet worthless because there never was a real Hamlet?"

If the Bible be "free and flowing imagination" is Christ historical or only an imaginary character? Would the Gospel be worthless with its Hamlet left out? What an "imagination" the imaginary Christ had! We need not now hesitate to term much higher critical literature as "conceived and executed in the free and flowing spirit of imagination."

WHEN DID THE STONE STRIKE THE IMAGE?

We quote with approval the following clipping forwarded to us by one of our friends:--

"The image is the symbol of the world power in its whole future development and of its final destruction.

"The transfer of political power from Judah, now a captive of the nations, to the Gentiles, is also indicated by it.

"The image measures the duration of the times of the Gentiles--Luke 21:24.

"The Stone is symbolic of a supernatural power, 'not made with hands,' heavenly, divine; the mountain is the Messianic Kingdom; all is symbolic of Messiah

and his Kingdom.--Gen. 49:24, Isa. 2:1-4; Matt. 21:44; Luke 20:17,18.

"The toes of the image correspond to the ten horns of the Beast of chapter seven, i.e., the horns are kingdoms, the toes are kingdoms.

"Now, when did the Stone strike?

"I. The Stone struck when there were feet and toes to be struck.

"There were no feet in the Babylonian day, none in the Medo-Persian, none in the Graeco-Macedonian, and none in the Roman, when the iron legs of a Western and Eastern Empire did not yet exist in a divided form; in other words, toes and feet of iron and clay must be looked for at a time later than the twelve Caesars, and nearer to a time when the iron of imperialism and the clay of democracy in vain try to cleave together [We should say--the iron of civil power and the clay of ecclesiastical power]; and not until then does the Stone strike.

"It is evident, therefore, the Stone cannot have struck at the birth of Christ, nor at Pentecost, nor at the destruction of Jerusalem, nor at the edict of Constantine, for there were no feet or toes of ten kingdoms to strike.

"II. The Stone struck when the whole image went to pieces 'together;' i.e., suddenly and simultaneously.

"It did not strike repeatedly, but once, and so shattered all together. The image did not decrease gradually, but 'together;' all became like chaff and was swept away that no place was found for them.

"Such total and final ruin of all the kingdoms that once composed the Roman Empire or succeeded it did not overtake them when Christianity began to be preached, or since; the world power of the Gentiles is still a reality, and will be until the Stone falls and grinds it to powder.

"It is therefore evident that such a crushing, annihilating blow is utterly unlike the peaceful power of the Gospel.

"III. The Stone struck before it began to grow and not while it was growing into a great mountain.

"It would seem incredible that such a notion could ever have been drawn from this prophetic vision, but it is the popular idea that the Stone is growing while the kingdoms are shattering.

"In a certain volume of 'Messianic Prophecy' by a 'Higher Critic,' it reads: 'The living stone rolling down from the mountain, growing as it descends in strength and power, is a simple but appropriate symbol of the Kingdom of God.'

"This is even worse, for here the Stone is said to be growing in strength and power before it strikes.

"Daniel says the Stone grew after it struck, and then covered the place once possessed by the kingdoms.

"There is not the least hint that as the Stone increased the image decreased. The two are not seen

side by side, one gradually encroaching upon the other's ground; but with mighty blow on its brittle feet, the colossal form crushes into shapeless ruin, and is swept away like the chaff of the summer threshing floor, and for it no more place was found.

"It is therefore evident that if the world-power disappears in one simultaneous and sudden ruin, the Stone Kingdom has not yet begun to grow and the mighty Stone is yet to fall.

"In other prophetic language 'the times of the Gentiles' are not yet fulfilled; Jerusalem is still trodden under foot of the Gentiles; their God-defying and man-defying governmental power is to meet its crisis and

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catastrophe in a day still future; the nations are yet to become angry against Jehovah and his Christ; the winepress of the wrath of God is yet to be trodden, and not till then will the Son of man set up his Kingdom, of whom it is written: 'And there was given him dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.'--Daniel 7:14."
--W. J. Erdman.

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"BRING FORTH THE BEST ROBE AND PUT IT ON HIM."

--LUKE 15:11-24.--MAY 15.--

Golden Text: "Come and let us return unto the Lord."--Hosea 6:1.

OUR Lord gave three parables illustrative of God's grace: (1) The parable of the hundred sheep, of which one was lost and carefully sought. (2) The parable of the ten pieces of silver, of which one was lost and carefully sought. (3) The parable of the two sons, the lost one of whom was so eagerly welcomed back on his return.

The Pharisees "trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others." They had forms of righteousness, ceremonies, outward obedience to God and his laws, and reverence, piety and sanctity in outward appearance. We may assume that with some these matters were genuine--of the heart and not merely of formality; but the evidences are strong that there were few of this professed "holiness people" who were really at heart holy, as judged by the Lord's standard. The harvesting of the Jewish age surely found all of the true wheat, all the truly holy; and, so far as we have knowledge on

the subject, comparatively few of these were found amongst those who outwardly made the profession of special sanctity --the Pharisees.

PUBLICANS AND SINNERS.

There was a measure of truth in the assertion of the Pharisees that the majority of people were living in sin, neglecting the divine Law, and thus living much after the manner of the Gentiles, who were without God and had no hope in the world. But our Lord wished them to see that they took a wrong attitude in the matter. Instead of holding aloof from their fellow Jews, their brethren, they should have been deeply interested in them and ready to do anything in their power to help them back to harmony with God and fellowship with themselves. Instead, the Pharisaical class rather delighted to proclaim that they were the heirs of God's favor and that the others were estranged from God. These estranged ones were called publicans and sinners. The sinners were the more or less immoral, who made no professions of keeping the Mosaic Law, observances of the more sacred rites and ceremonies, holy days, etc. True, they took part in some of the festivals, but largely from the standpoint of the merchant and trader and sightseer rather than from the standpoint of worship offerer. The publicans were Jews who had become somewhat estranged to their laws and to the patriotic sentiments of the nation, and who accepted service under the Romans as tax-gatherers. They were looked down upon by those who held that the seed of Abraham, heirs of the great Oath bound Covenant, should never, in any sense of the word, become the servants of a foreign master, and particularly should not serve the foreign master in collecting taxes from his brothers; for they held that it was not proper that they should pay taxes to Caesar's government.

Our Lord, though attentive to all of the duties of the Jew under the Law, was out of touch with such Pharisaism, and instead of holding himself aloof from the publicans and sinners, "the common people," he preached his message to everyone who had ears to hear, making no distinction as between scribe and Pharisee, publican and sinner. For this the Pharisees scorned him, considering that thus he acknowledged himself and his teachings to be on a lower plane--more closely allied with the common people, the sinner class. The three parables already referred to were spoken particularly as a reproof to the Pharisees--to show them the impropriety of their attitude toward the masses, "the common people."

Our Lord did not deny that the publicans and sinners were in the wrong, were in some respects further estranged from God than the Pharisees; but he wished the latter to see that their hearts were not in accord with the mind of the Lord, else they would not feel so indifferent toward their brethren. The three parables were lessons drawn from the common affairs of life--which man of you having

an hundred sheep, if he lose one would not go after it? or which woman of you having a bracelet with ten pieces of silver ornaments, prized as a marriage memento, would not search diligently if one of these pieces were lost? and if so, why should they not consider a brother of much more value than the sheep or a coin, and why not seek for the brother and endeavor to bring him back again? As capping the climax came the parable of the prodigal son, which constitutes our present lesson. It represents our heavenly Father and his attitude toward the two classes. The elder son represented the Pharisees; the younger man, the prodigal, represented the publicans and sinners; the father represented God. The parable showed God's willingness to receive back again the penitent one, and forcefully represented the impropriety, the inconsistency, of the Pharisees in objecting to the recovery of their brothers from the ways of sin and their return to the family of God.

THE YOUNGER SON OF THE PARABLE.

The wrong course of the publicans and sinners is graphically illustrated: they had been in God's favor under the Mosaic Covenant, but feeling released from the restraints of home, the restraints of the Law of Moses,

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

Satan may be said to be master of this far country-- afar from God and his love and protection and care. He it was who degraded them to the level of swine, and in his service they starve for any satisfying portion. The swine in the parable represented the worldly, those engrossed in the things of the present time and wholly indifferent to spiritual matters, and this prodigal is represented as having nothing more for his sustenance than have the worldly; yet there was a difference between him and the swine, for while the swine could fill their bellies and grow fat on the bean pods of the locust or carob tree,

the prodigal found it hard to subsist on that diet. He realized his degradation. "He came to himself," he realized that he had been insane, stupid, dreaming, when he left so gracious a father's house and so great blessings as he had once enjoyed and come down to this degraded position, where his whole being hungered and thirsted for the blessings of the home he had left. The first thing he did was to resolve to will, and then he proceeded to do. The willing would have amounted to nothing had it not been followed by the doing, but the doing could not have preceded the willing.

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

SCRIBES AND PHARISEES THE ELDER SON.

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

While the parable is thus seen to be, strictly speaking, a Jewish parable which in none of its features includes the Gentiles, we may nevertheless draw from it an illustrative application to our day. As we have frequently noted, fleshly Israel was a type or foreshadowing of spiritual Israel, and the harvest of the Jewish age

a pattern of foreview of the harvest of this Gospel age. In a broad sense of the word the whole world may be viewed in the light of this parable. Those who have sought to remain in harmony with the heavenly Father--those who have striven to walk in holiness of life and in obedience to the divine will--may be considered the elder brother; while the younger brother represents those described

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by the Apostle in Romans, first chapter, "Who when they knew God glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God," etc. "Wherefore God gave them up to uncleanness, to the lusts of their own hearts," etc. "For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections ...and even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient, being filled with all unrighteousness," etc.

From this standpoint nearly the whole world of mankind is still in a far country, in the land of the enemy, under the blinding influences of the god of this world. And now by the grace of God we learn in advance that ultimately an opportunity is to be given to all of these everywhere to come to themselves, to realize what they have lost, and come to realize the Father's willingness to receive them back again--an opportunity for reformation during the Millennial age under the ministry of him who loved us and bought us with his precious blood. To those

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who are in the right attitude of heart this message gives joy and rejoicing, while to another class today the very thought of the estranged world being granted an opportunity for returning to the heavenly Father and to have the robe of Christ's righteousness placed upon them, and to be accepted to sonship to God again, is a repulsive thought, just as the thought of the favor of God going to the publicans and sinners was repulsive to most of the Pharisees of our Lord's time.

The first returning prodigal under the new dispensation will be the poor Jew--for thus it is written, "There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant with them when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the Gospel they are enemies for your sake; but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." (Rom. 11:25-30.) The Prophet describes the experiences of the Jew as a prodigal returning to the Father's house, saying, that the Lord will pour upon them the spirit of prayer and of supplication,

and they shall look upon him whom they have pierced and shall mourn because of him. Neither will they be the only ones upon whom the Father will pour his Spirit, as it is written, "After those days [after the Gospel age, the time of dealing with the servants and handmaidens only] the Lord shall pour out his Spirit upon all flesh."--Joel 2:28,29.

MANKIND IN GENERAL PRODIGALS.

The same thought is brought to our attention in Nebuchadnezzar, who in a general way represents the madness upon the world. At the end of the days--at the end of his period of bestial degradation--he came to himself, and we read, "At the end of the days, I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and my understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High and I praised and honored him that liveth forever...my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, my honor and brightness returned unto me." (Dan. 4:33.) So at the end of the Gentile times, after 1915, reason will begin to come back to the prodigal ones, and the light of the Lord Jesus will begin to shine in every quarter, and a blessing will come to the whole human family released from the blinding influences of the Adversary. The Prophet again describes this coming blessing to the whole world saying, "At that time many nations shall go and say, Come, let us go to the mountain of the Lord's house; he shall teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for then the law shall go forth from Mount Zion [the spiritual Kingdom, the glorified Christ] and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem [earthly representatives of the Millennial Kingdom and glory]."

"THE SAME YESTERDAY, TODAY AND FOREVER."

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

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

come back to try again."

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

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

NONE BUT REPENTANT PRODIGALS RECEIVED.

In the parable there was joy at the return of the

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prodigal from the fields of sin and disloyalty, and this was explained by the Lord to mean that there is joy in heaven over the return of every one who, after being a child of God, has wandered from the Father's house. The same principle now holds true in this Gospel age, and any who, having been accepted in Christ, shall wander away and return again in true humility, as represented in the parable, may again experience God's favor and have their past forgiven, and the robe of Christ's righteousness

shall cover their blemishes. They shall have the evidences of divine favor and mercy again. We can see that God's heart is large enough to have made a provision for the world of mankind through the same Redeemer and through the same precious atonement sacrifice; and not only do we rejoice to see this unfolding of the larger features of the divine plan, but we are sure that the angels in heaven likewise rejoice to see the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the love of God as exhibited toward his fallen creatures.

Nothing in the above is meant to intimate in any sense of the word that any will be received of God at any time on any other terms than are represented in this parable, in the case of the prodigal. The prodigal must will to return, the prodigal must strive to return, but the Father will meet him on the way to encourage him, to receive him, to bless him, to bring him into all the glorious things which he has in reservation for those who love him and his righteousness. There is a part, however, in all such reformation which belongs in some measure to divine providence--it is that represented by the words, "When he came to himself." Sin and degradation have brought unreason, unbalanced judgment, and have made the good to appear bad, the light to appear darkness, the true to appear false, and contrariwise. It is of divine providence that the eyes of our understanding open to see just where we are, and to realize our need and our loss. And so, as we have shown above, divine promises reach out for the world of mankind and attest to us that in due time God will cause reason to come to mankind that they may appreciate their lessons and desire to return to the Father's house. The will and the effort, however, they must exercise, else the results will not be attained. All through the Millennial age mankind will be brought to a discernment of their needs, and as they respond they will have the Father's provision in Christ for meeting them on the way and helping them back through the provisions of restitution to a condition that will be full of peace and blessing in accord with the Almighty.

The eye of some prodigal may rest upon this article, and he may feel a longing for the Father's house,

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the family association and the gracious blessings and spiritual fellowship which belong there and which he in the past enjoyed and has left. If so, we remind him that this thought is the beginning of the return to reason--he is coming to himself. Let him arise immediately and go unto the Father through the appointed way, the Lord Jesus; let him be assured of the Father's willingness to receive him; but let him not return in any self-righteous or self-excusing attitude of mind, which would be sure to frustrate the blessing hoped for. He must go back as did the prodigal, with contrition of

heart, with full confession of his error, and with a willingness to take the very lowest place in the Father's family as a servant. It is to such that the Father is pleased to give a full restoration of the privileges of sonship.

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ONLY THE HUMBLE SHALL BE EXALTED.

--MARK 10:35-45.--MAY 22.--

Golden Text: "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister."

SEVERAL weeks intervened between the incidents of the last lesson and the present one. In that time the Lord had crossed over Jordan in answer to the request of Mary and Martha that he should come and heal their brother Lazarus, who was sick. Jesus arrived intentionally too late for this, but awakened Lazarus from sleep, and thereby aroused a great storm of opposition, especially amongst the scribes and Pharisees, who sought to put him to death. Knowing that his time was not yet come, he retired into a mountain of northern Judea, but at the time of this lesson he with his twelve apostles was en route for Jerusalem. He had just explained to them more particularly the ignominy, shame and death which he would experience, and repeated his assurance of his resurrection. The rich young ruler had just visited him, and gone away sorrowful upon learning the terms of discipleship. Jesus had just said, How hardly shall they who have riches enter into the Kingdom; the apostles had inquired what they should have since they had left all, and Jesus assured them that they should have a hundred fold more in this present time, with persecution, and in the world to come everlasting life.

The context says that Jesus was walking in advance of the twelve, who were discussing matters amongst themselves, overawed by the stupendous things which the Lord had declared to be imminent. The courage of our Lord in the narrow way fills us with admiration. What a strong character was his! He had no thought of turning back; he was intent upon accomplishing his Father's will--upon sacrificing himself in the interest of others. A noble pattern the apostles saw before them--greatness in humility, victory through service.

A GOODLY HERITAGE DESIRED.

It was at this time that James and John approached the Lord in a private manner. Matthew tells us that their mother Salome was with them and really made the request

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for them in their names. Salome is supposed to have been the sister of Mary, the aunt of Jesus, in which event James and John were his full cousins. Realizing that matters were drawing to a crisis they sought of the Lord an assurance that they two might be very close to him in the Kingdom, one on his right hand and one on his left, the two positions of chiefest favor.

Our Lord did not reprove them, for doubtless he read in their hearts a great love and loyalty toward himself; and the desire for the positions indicated not merely the desire for the honors and authority implied, but specially because this would bring them closer to himself. Had the Lord seen in their hearts an evil form of ambition, undoubtedly he would have reproved it on the spot. His answer, however, was so framed as to impress these brothers and all of his followers since with what is implied in joint-heirship with the Lord in the Kingdom. Very forceful is the expression, "Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I drink of, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"

The cup signifies experiences--as, for instance, when our Lord said, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (John 18:11.) Our Lord wished his disciples to see clearly that the Father had poured for him a special cup of experiences, and had required of him special baptism into death, as conditions precedent to his glory and Kingdom; and that whoever would become his associates in the Kingdom must become also his associates in the sufferings of this present time--in the ignominy and whatever experiences the Father might see best to permit as tests of faith and devotion and character. Our Lord did not refer to the Memorial Supper cup, but to the experiences which it symbolized, even as he did not refer to water baptism, but to the baptism into death which is symbolized by the water immersion.

How heart-searching was this question! It meant, Are ye willing? because it would be impossible for the disciples to have known their own ability except in the sense of having confidence in God that he would give the ability to those who had their wills thoroughly subjected to his. This is illustrated in the symbolical baptism, in which one no more buries himself than he raises himself. We merely surrender our wills, our all, to the Lord, and he by his Word and grace works in us to will and ultimately to do his good pleasure--expecting from us only the possibilities, and assisting us to these with grace sufficient for us, for every time of need.

"MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR YOU."

That these two noble apostles were not inspired by selfish ambitions in this request is evidenced by their prompt reply to the Lord's searching question and later on evidenced by their faithfulness even unto death. They said, "We are able"--that is, "We are willing. God

helping us, we will sacrifice everything to follow in your footsteps; we will count nothing dear unto us; we will lay aside every weight and every sinful besetment; we will run with patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith." This we may assume to be a larger statement of their devotion.

Our Lord's love and sympathy went out to them afresh as he answered them, guaranteeing that with such willingness of heart they should indeed have the experiences necessary to fit them for a place in the Kingdom. What a comfort this is to even the weakest of the Lord's followers who are sincere.

The Lord looketh at the heart, and if he sees there full devotion to himself, he is pleased to grant to such his blessing, his aid, saying, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." "My grace is sufficient for thee--my strength is made perfect in weakness." We, too, are desirous of sharing the Kingdom with our Lord, yet not from love of exaltation above others, but from a desire to have this evidence that we please our Father and our Lord Jesus--to have this closeness of relationship to him, and to have the privilege of participation with our dear Redeemer in the great work of blessing all the families of the earth in due time. It is well that we should have the Lord's answer clearly before our minds, and know that unless we partake of his cup and are immersed into his death, we can have no share in his Kingdom of glory. Let us then count all things else as loss and as dross to obtain this necessary experience. As it comes to us let us not be fearful, nor think strange of the fiery trials that shall try us, as though some strange thing had happened unto us. On the contrary, even hereunto were we called, that we might now suffer with the Lord and by and by be glorified together with him.

As for the particular place to be occupied in the Kingdom by the sons of Zebedee or by us, our Lord pointed out that the assigning of such positions was in the Father's hands--the choicest positions shall be given to those for whom they have been prepared by the Father. Not that we are to understand that the Father prepared the places in advance by any arbitrary divisions, but rather that the Father's pre-arranged plan is that each of the followers of Jesus shall have positions of honor in the Kingdom proportionate to the zeal of their faithfulness in the present time--for none shall have any part in the Kingdom who do not now prove faithful.

THE MEEKEST AND MOST ZEALOUS.

It is not for us to decide the zeal and faithfulness of the apostles--to say which two would better fill these positions of chiefest honor. The Father will make no mistake. It will not surprise us, however, should we find the Apostle Paul in one of these two positions. His faithful, loving zeal and loyalty seem to shine out conspicuously even amongst those who were also faithful and loyal. It

is not for us to have any ambitious feelings respecting this matter, except that we desire always to serve the Lord and be pleasing to him, and eventually to be as close to him as possible. When we remember that the closer we come to him in the present trials and experiences and

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suffering with faithfulness the closer we will be to him in the future, it explains to us the meaning of the Apostle's words when speaking of his severe trials: he called them light afflictions but for a moment, working out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.--2 Cor. 4:17.

We recall that there had been, a little while before, some rivalry amongst the apostles as to which should be greatest in the Kingdom. At that time Jesus took a little child as an exemplification of candor and guilelessness, and assured them that unless they became as little children--simple-hearted, honest, candid, they could in no wise have any part in his Kingdom. Now, when the

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ten other disciples learned the special mission of Salome and the request made by and for James and John, they were indignant at them. Possibly some of them, Judas included, were very anxious for the authority and power and dignity of the throne, but without the very special love and longing to be near the Master himself which seem to have influenced James and John in their request. But Jesus set matters straight with them all, and turned their displeasure into an opportunity for another good lesson, by the assurance that the chief positions in the Kingdom would be given along the lines of meritorious service, and that thus each one of them would have his opportunity to strive for the chief position by striving to render service to the others.

Amongst the Gentiles the rulers are lords, who do no serving but are served, but among the followers of Jesus the rule is to be reversed; he who would serve most was to be esteemed most highly. What a beauty there is in the divine order of things! how thoroughly all who are right minded can sympathize with the principles here laid down! How reasonable they are and how contrary to the spirit of the world. Truly, the Lord's followers will in this sense of the word be a peculiar people in their zeal for good works--for serving one another and for doing good unto all men as they have opportunity. The Apostle Peter emphasizes this point (I Pet. 5:6), "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted, and he that exalteth himself shall be abased."--Luke 14:11.

OUR LORD SERVANT OF ALL.

The Lord did not have one standard for his followers and another standard for himself. Consequently, when they heard him say, Whosoever of you will be chief shall be servant of all, they could promptly recognize that this was the course that he had pursued--that he had been servant to them all; and it was on account of the services that he was continually rendering them that they delighted to serve him, to acknowledge him their Master and to walk in his steps. Indeed they had seen only a small fragment of the Lord's sacrificing and of its far-reaching influence as a service to others. We can see this as we recognize the fact that our Lord was about to die, not merely for his disciples, not merely for the Jews, but to be a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, that the whole world eventually might have a blessing--a blessed opportunity for coming to life eternal through the merit of his service. Our Lord called this to their attention, saying, "For verily the Son of man came not to be ministered unto [served] but to minister [serve], and to give his life a ransom for many." This is one of the very explicit statements of Scripture respecting the object of our Lord's death--that it was not for his own sins that he died, that on the contrary it was for ours, and that in thus dying he gave himself a ransom price--a corresponding price for the sins of the whole world.

No other lesson requires to be so carefully learned by the Lord's people as this lesson of humility. It has to do with the very humblest of the flock, as well as with those who are teachers and elders and pilgrims, etc.; but the degree of force that seems to come with the besetment or temptation seems to multiply in proportion to the position and attainments of the individual. Pride and ambition may be in those who have no official position in the Church, often asserted in fault-finding and criticism which, to the hearers, is intended to imply superior wisdom or ability on the part of the critic--that his wisdom and ability only wait for opportunity to manifest his greatness above his fellows. We are not objecting to a kindly brotherly word of criticism given privately and with a view to helpfulness, but merely to the kind which vaunteth itself and seeks to do injury to the reputation of another occupying a preferred position.

"BE NOT MANY OF YOU TEACHERS."

As the Apostle intimates, however, this besetment bears chiefly upon those who have some talent, some ability, and whom their fellows have to some extent honored as teachers. Little men, like little ships with broad sails, are in great danger of being capsized if too strong a wind of popularity play upon them. Not only so, but we believe that even the most humble, the most faithful, the most zealous to be servants of the cause, have continual need to be on their guard lest their good intentions should be used of the Adversary as a trap for their ensnarement. Let us remember the Apostle's words, "Be not many of

you teachers, my brethren, knowing that a man [who is a teacher] shall receive greater condemnation"--he is exposed to greater trials and temptations as a result. This must not hinder any who have talents from using them, but it should make each one very careful that he does not think more highly of himself than he ought to think, but to think soberly. If the judgment of the majority of the congregation does not recognize his adaptation to the service of a teacher, he should humbly accept its conclusion as correct, no matter how highly he had thought of himself previously. And even if the majority should conclude that he is worthy of a position as a teacher in Zion, he should tread very softly before the Lord, very humbly, realizing that those who in any degree attempt to impart instruction in spiritual things to others are to that extent

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acting as representatives and mouthpieces of the Lord himself, the Head of the body; and all should keep in mind the Lord's words in this Golden Text and his own exemplification of the matter--that he who serves most and not he who lords it most should have the chief respect of the Lord's people.

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THE LAST SUPPER

--MATT. 26:17-30.--MAY 29.--

JESUS and the apostles came to Bethany, near Jerusalem, that they might eat the Passover Supper in the holy city, and that our Lord might suffer at the hands of his enemies, as he had foretold his disciples--that thus he might accomplish an atonement for the sins of the people. His arrival was just a week before his crucifixion. The following day at the supper Mary anointed him. On the next day he rode on the ass into Jerusalem, was not received, wept over the city, and said, "Your house is left unto you desolate." On the following day he visited the temple, driving out the money changers with the scourge of cords. The next day he gave his last public teaching in the temple, declaring himself to be the light of the world. Every night he seems to have returned to Bethany to the house of Lazarus and Martha and Mary, which was also the home of himself and the apostles whenever they were in that vicinity. The next day, Wednesday, the Lord remained in Bethany in retirement, and on Thursday sent two of his disciples to make ready the Passover, which was eaten by himself and the twelve that night--"the same night in which he was betrayed."

The feast of Passover lasted a week, and was one of the most important celebrated under the Jewish arrangement. During that week, leaven, as a type of sin, was carefully put away from all the food and destroyed in every house, in intimation of the holiness and purity, the unleavenness, of the Lord's people--spiritual Israel --typically represented by natural Israel. The whole week was a festival of rejoicing because of God's deliverance of Israel from the bondage of Egypt. The feast-week began on the 15th day of the first month, Jewish reckoning, but it was preceded on the 14th by the killing of the lamb, and the sprinkling of its blood upon the doorposts of the houses, as a memorial of what took place in Egypt on the night in which the Lord spared the first-born of Israel under the blood and slew the first-born of the Egyptians, and thus made the latter willing to let his people go free. It was for the eating of this memorial lamb on the night previous to the beginning of the Passover feast-week that our Lord sent his disciples to make ready, as explained in our lesson.

Luke tells us that it was Peter and John who were sent on this mission, and Mark tells us that they were to know the man at whose house the feast would be held by his carrying a pitcher of water. It has been surmised by some that the house was that of Mark's mother, Mary, and that the upper room thus used was the same one in which the apostles subsequently met and where the pentecostal blessing was poured out upon them. We do know that it was at the house of this Mary that many gathered to pray for the release of Peter from prison. It was a "large upper room" and was already prepared with a suitable dining couch of proper dimensions. It has been surmised that Jesus took this indirect way of indicating the place that Judas might not be informed until the time for the gathering, so that there might be no interruption of the feast and our Lord's subsequent discourses, recorded in John 14:17, on the part of those who were seeking his apprehension. Peter and John made ready the Passover in the sense of furnishing and preparing the lamb, the unleavened bread, bitter herbs and the fruit of the vine, and in the evening at the appropriate time the entire company gathered for the celebration.

A LESSON IN HUMILITY.

Luke only records (22:24-30) that there was strife amongst the apostles on this occasion, though John (13) also implies this. We are not to suppose that the apostles were actuated wholly by ambition and selfishness. We may well suppose that the strife was for position of nearness to the Master because of their love

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for him. The Lord improved the opportunity to give

them a most wonderful discourse, which doubtless lasted them through the remainder of their lives. They had arrived late in the afternoon, over dusty roads, and, not being of the wealthy class, no servants were there to receive them and to wash their feet; and instead of thinking to do this one for another, to their mutual comfort, they had been striving with one another for favored positions at the table, John evidently gaining the most desired position next to the Master--possibly accorded him because he was not only a relative, and one whom Jesus specially loved, but also because he was the youngest of their number.

The customs of olden times differ from those of the present in many respects. In eating they reclined on a couch surrounding a table. They leaned on their left elbow and used the right hand for conveying food to the mouth; thus their heads were brought comparatively close together, while their feet extended out behind over the couch. Apparently permitting the dispute to run its course and the supper to begin, Jesus arose, and going behind them began to wash the feet of one after another of them. Such a service rendered to

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them by the Master was of course a severe reproof. They should have thought of washing his feet and each other's and now probably wished that they had done so, but at the time each was apparently intent upon establishing the fact that he was in no degree inferior to the others. They had forgotten so soon the lesson of a short time before--that he who would be greatest amongst them should be servant of all. Our Lord here had the opportunity of illustrating this very matter: he was willing to serve them all, was continually serving them all in the spiritual things, and hence they regarded him truly and properly as their Master; but now he showed them his humility to the extent that he was willing to serve them in the most menial capacity also. Valuable lesson! May it never lose its import amongst the Lord's true followers. Some, however, have erred in supposing that this became an institution or ordinance similar to the Lord's Supper and baptism: to our understanding the lesson to be conveyed by this symbol, and its application to each of us at any time and at any place, would be that we should seek to render some useful service to the brethren regardless of how menial it might be, and that so doing to them it would be reckoned of the Lord as though done unto him.

"BETTER THAT HE HAD NOT BEEN BORN."

It was while they were at supper that Jesus, appearing very sorrowful, gave as an explanation that it would be one of his own chosen twelve that would betray him and thus become accessory to his death--one

of those who dipped with him in the dish, partaking of the same supper, the same bread, the same roasted lamb. Then he pointed out that although this was all written, and thus no alteration would be found in respect to the divine plan, nevertheless it signified a very gross breach of friendship--one sad to contemplate. It really made no difference to the Lord, so far as his intention and consecration were concerned, whether he were apprehended by the rulers without any betrayal or whether the betrayal were by a comparative stranger or by a disciple: the fact would make no change in the divine arrangement; but it was a cause for great sorrow that it should be one who had been a bosom friend and disciple.

"It had been good for that man if he had not been born," implies to us that, from the Lord's standpoint, Judas had already experienced so large a measure of knowledge and opportunity for better things that his responsibility for his act was complete, and that there would be no hope for him at any time in the future. We will certainly have no objection to it if the Lord should find some excuse for granting Judas a further opportunity for correcting his character, but we see no Scriptural reason for thinking there will be such further opportunity. From our standpoint it appears as though he sinned against great light, experience and knowledge--contact with the Lord and under the power of the holy Spirit--one of those commissioned to heal diseases and cast out devils in the name of the Lord, and as his representative, and using his power. His end was a sad one: every suicide by his act confesses his wish that he had never been born.

"LORD, IS IT I?"

Another account tells us that each of the disciples inquired of the Lord. "Is it I?" and last of all Judas. The others felt sure that they had nothing to do with it and wished the Lord to confirm their innocency, and the eleven having asked and no response from the Lord indicating their culpability, the implication would be that Judas was the one; yet such was his spirit of bravado that he also asked the Master, "Is it I?" Jesus answered him, "Thou hast said," or "It is you." How noble was the Lord's reproof; he could have scarcely said less--not a threat, not an imprecation, not a manifestation of bitterness, but merely an expression of sorrow and of pity. What a lesson for us! Our enemies are to be pitied, not hated; to be blessed as far as we are able, but never to be cursed. It is well for all of Jesus' disciples to watch and pray against any Judas-like disposition to sell the Lord or his Truth or his brethren for money or other selfish considerations. Knowing that there will be others of the Judas class, let us guard our hearts and ask, "Lord, is it I?"

While they were eating the Passover Supper prescribed

by the Jewish Law, or rather while they were still at the table after they had finished the supper proper, Jesus took some of the remaining bread--which in shape at least more particularly resembled what we today would call crackers--he blessed it, broke it and gave it to his disciples saying, "Take, eat, this is my body." Another evangelist adds, "broken for you." Romanists and some Protestants claim that in consequence of the form of this statement, "this is my body," and the next statement, "this is my blood," we should understand that whenever the memorial bread and fruit of the vine have been consecrated they are changed from being bread and wine and become the actual body of Christ and his actual blood. We dissent from this as being most unreasonable and most untrue; the bread and the wine merely symbolized or represented the body and blood of our Lord. In absolute proof of this note the fact that our Lord at the time he used these words had not yet been broken and his blood had not yet been shed. Hence to have used these expressions in any other way than the way we do use them, namely, as meaning that the bread and the wine represented his body and his blood, would have meant to misrepresent the truth--to have falsified; and we cannot perceive that this was done or would have been proper to have been done by the Lord or any of his followers.

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The bread, as our Lord explained, represented the bread from heaven--his flesh which he sacrificed for the sins of the world. He invites all of his followers to eat of it, and we partake of his flesh when we appropriate to ourselves the blessings, the mercy, the grace secured by the breaking of his body. We thus appropriate to ourselves the benefits of the sacrifice which secures to us the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with the Father.

"THE BLOOD OF THE NEW COVENANT."

He took the cup and gave thanks and gave it to the apostles, saying, "Drink ye all of it, for this is my blood of the New Covenant which is shed for many for the remission of sins." This represents my blood--it will continue to represent my blood with you and with all my dear followers at all times, and will be to you on such occasions a reminder of my death and of the covenant which was thus sealed between God and sinners by myself as the great Mediator between God and man.

The New Covenant or New Testament sealed by the blood of Christ is the one that is mentioned throughout the Old Testament and referred to by the Apostle in his letter to the Hebrews (8:6-13; 10:29; 12:20). It

supersedes the Law Covenant. The latter, mediated through Moses, provided that whosoever would do the commandments of the Law should have everlasting life; but the New Covenant provides for mercy, and, recognizing the fact that in our fallen condition we cannot do the things we would, the Mediator of the New Covenant, by his death on behalf of the people, is able to keep Justice whole and yet deal with us according to our intentions instead of according to our actual accomplishments, and meanwhile to lift mankind up, up, up, out of degradation to that plane or condition of being where they will be able to do perfectly all the good desires of true and honest hearts.

The Apostle Paul shows us that this bread and cup had a still further and broader signification. He it was who had so clear an understanding of the "mystery"--Christ in you--that we are members of the mystical body of Christ, participators now in his sufferings, and, if faithful, to be members of his glorious body and participators also in his glory. From this standpoint, as the Apostle explains, the broken loaf represents not only the breaking of the Lord Jesus personally, but the breaking of all his mystical members throughout this Gospel age; and the drinking of the cup was not only his own participation in death that he might thus seal the New Covenant on behalf of mankind, but that his invitation to us to join with him in partaking of the cup, "Drink ye all of it," implied that we could have participation with him in the sufferings and death in the present time--participation with him in the inauguration of the New Covenant conditions during the Millennial reign. How grand is the thought, how deep, how broad! What a wonderful privilege that we should be permitted to fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ and to look forward to a participation in his glories in the future. From this standpoint we see fresh force in his word to the apostles noted in a previous lesson, namely, "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and be baptized with the

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baptism that I am baptized with?" As not every one is worthy to be invited to such participation, so also not every one who is invited will so appreciate the privilege as to participate in this matter joyfully and gratefully. Let us each resolve and say to the Lord, as did James and John, "Lord, we are able"--we are willing. By thine aid we will come off conquerors and more than conquerors.

THE NEW WINE--THE JOYS OF THE KINGDOM.

Our Lord declared that he would no more participate in the fruit of the vine until he would drink it new in the Kingdom. The thought is not that he would

drink new or unfermented wine in the Kingdom with them, but that until in the Kingdom the new or antitypical thing represented in the wine would not be fulfilled. When the Kingdom shall come all the sufferings and trials of the present time will be past, the treading of the winepress, the wine making, will all be over, and instead the wine shall be that of joy and exhilaration, representing the joys and the blessings beyond imagination or expression that will be the portion of all those who truly have fellowship with our Redeemer in the sufferings of this present time and also in the glories that shall follow. The Kingdom time is very close at hand now--certainly 1800 years and more nearer than it was when our Lord spoke these words--and the evidences of its steady inauguration are multiplying on every hand. Our hearts should be proportionately rejoicing in anticipation and we should proportionately be faithful in the present time in the drinking of the cup of sorrow, suffering, shame and contumely, and thus testifying of our love and our loyalty.

Following this was the discourse which has blessed so many of the Lord's people down through intervening centuries recorded by John (chapters 15, 16, 17). Then they sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives--to the Garden of Gethsemane and to fresh trials upon all of the disciples. So it has seemed to us that with every recurrence of the Memorial season, and every fresh symbolization of our pledge to the Lord, come fresh trials, fresh testings, fresh siftings upon the Lord's people. Who shall be able to stand? Let us hold fast the confidence of our rejoicing firm unto the end, hold fast the faithful Word, hold fast the exceeding great and precious promises, hold fast to our Passover Lamb, our Deliverer!

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VOL. XXV. MAY 15, 1904. No. 10.

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LETTERS FOR THE EDITOR SHOULD BE SENT TO ALLEGHENY, PA., U.S.A.
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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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ONE-DAY LOCAL CONVENTIONS ADDRESSED BY THE
EDITOR OF THIS JOURNAL AS FOLLOWS:

PORTLAND, ORE., MAY 15.--All meetings in Elks Hall,
Marquam Building, Sixth and Morrison Sts. Morning
rally at 10 o'clock. Meeting for the interested at 2.30;
and for the public at 7.30--subject, "The Oath-bound
Covenant."

ST. PAUL, MINN., May 19.--Meeting place, Central
Hall. At 3 p.m. for interested friends, and 7 p.m. for the
public. Subject, "The Oath-bound Covenant."

MILWAUKEE, WIS., May 20.--Meeting for the interested
at 2.30 p.m. at Lincoln Hall, Sixth St., off Grand Ave.

ALLEGHENY, PA., MAY 22.
INDIANAPOLIS, IND., MAY 29.
HAMILTON, ONT., JUNE 12.

OUR MOTTO STOCK EXHAUSTED.

We are unable to supply more mottoes until our stock is replenished. We are ordering a new lot from Great Britain, which will be in place about November. Hold your orders until further announcement.

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VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER.

POSSIBILITIES OF A EUROPEAN WAR.

NEWSPAPERS and magazines are discussing the possibility of the Russo-Japan war eventuating in a world-wide war. It is generally conceded that it would be the part of wisdom for Russia to back down and sue for peace proposals, but equally certain that the pride of that great nation will hinder such a course. If, therefore, the land fighting should go against Russia it is surmised by many that her diplomacy would manage to bring on a general war, in which her own defeat by little Japan would be measurably lost sight of in the glare of still more momentous conflicts. Matters have this appearance, though they may not reach such a culmination very soon.

Meantime the great nations are preparing for emergencies--especially Great Britain, France and Germany. Naval warfare is steadily undergoing a radical change: the prospect is that the great battleships will soon be of little value under the new conditions. The new models of fighting craft are the auto-boats and the submergible-boats. The latter can be sunk completely under water--100 feet if desired--in six seconds, and can thus travel toward their opponents unobserved, and can discharge torpedoes at close range and be gone. England has about twenty of these boats nearly completed and a large number ordered. France has more, and by the close of this year she will have at least thirty. These boats carry gasoline for fuel--enough for a 400-mile journey, and require but small crews. They would, of course, operate near a harbor or in conjunction with larger vessels. The auto-boat can be operated by one intrepid man, can travel 20 miles an hour and in the dark could creep close to a great ship and attack her with a torpedo. A large, swift ocean liner could carry twenty or thirty of these little auto-boats and make great havoc--in the night or in a fog.

Experts are speculating on the possibilities of these two new craft and conclude that no port would

be secure against them--that four million dollar battle ships with hundreds of men aboard could be sunk almost instantly and without a sight of their enemy. Others still believe that air-motors will soon come into prominence and be used in dropping explosives upon ships and cities and armies.

We are to expect great things--shortly. The passions as well as the ingenuity of men will ere long wreck present civilization according to the Scriptures. We recall our Lord's prophecy of the days now near at hand, "Except those days were shortened there should no flesh be saved." But, for the elect's sake, they shall be shortened;--the "elect," Head and body, will assume the Kingdom control at the right time to stay the awful anarchy which will follow the great war.

The prospects for the immediate future are conceded on all sides to be more favorable for peace, because of the recent amicable settlement by Great Britain and France of differences between them which have long been a source of friction. The large navies of these two nations far outweigh all the combined navy power of the world.

THE ESSENTIAL UNITY OF ALL RELIGIONS.

Rev. R. Heber Newton, D.D., of New York City (Episcopalian), in a recent article in The North American Review, proves to his own satisfaction, and doubtless to the satisfaction of many of his readers, that all the religions of the world are really one;--that they differ merely in proportion to their degrees of evolution. This is the view of "higher critics" and

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Evolutionists the world over. It ignores and laughs to scorn the Bible teaching of Adam, Eve and the fall (Rom. 5:12 and 1:21-28). It has no place for Jesus except as a great teacher like unto Confucius, Moses, Darwin, Spencer, and others. His work as Redeemer--as the sacrifice for man's sins, by which alone reconciliation to God was possible--it entirely discredits, but ignores because a few "good people" still so believe.

Doctor Newton likens the religion of the world to a great tree with many branches and sub-branches. Buddhism is a branch, Brahminism is another, Confucianism is another, Mohammedanism is another, Christianity is another--its various shoots and smaller branches representing the various sects and denominations of Catholicism and Protestantism.

As usual, the wisdom of this world misses the mark it thinks it hits. It is Devildom that the Doctor

sees as a tree with these many branches. In every branch it has a "form of godliness" to deceive men--to satisfy the craving originally a part of man's nature when he was in the image of God--a craving which since persists notwithstanding the fall, though now through the blinding influences of Satan deteriorated into superstition and formality. Let us ask the Apostle Paul's inspired judgment on the subject. He tells us respecting these heathen worshipers that they worship devils and not God. See his testimony in I Cor. 10:20,21; I Tim. 4:1.

When the Apostle would use a tree to illustrate the Church, he pictured a very different tree and very different branches. This inspired account is found in Rom. 11. There his olive-tree represents not all nations, but the one nation of Israel, each Jew a branch, drawing strength and vitality from the root, namely the oath-bound covenant made with Abraham and his seed. The Apostle shows plainly that no other tree is recognized in the divine plan, and tells us that when the Jews rejected Jesus all the rejectors were broken off from the relationship the tree represented, and that only believers in Jesus were privileged to be engrafted to take the places of the broken-off branches, as members of the spiritual seed of Abraham. --Gal. 3:29.

Our position as Gentiles he distinctly pictures as "children of wrath even as others"--strangers and aliens and foreigners--without God and having no hope in the world. (Eph. 2:3,19,12.) How different the view of this modern Divinity Doctor from that of the great Apostle to the Gentiles! Mark the agreement of the Apostle John's testimony. He says of the Christian believers and all the world outside,-- "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the Wicked One." (I John 5:19.) This reminds us of our Lord's words to some of the nominal Israelites: "Ye are of your Father the devil." (John 8:44.) Doctor Newton says:--

"Religion develops the same great institutions in different lands and ages which the varying religions of man vary indefinitely.

"The Church, spelled with a capital C, was an institution of Chaldea, India and Egypt, millenniums ago, as it is of Italy and England and America today. The Buddhist felt toward his 'order' much as the Romanist feels toward his church. A sacred ministry, a class of men set apart for the divine offices of religion, would have been found of old in Babylon and Thebes, as it is found now in Rome and London. The pagan temple was the Christian basilica and cathedral, baptized with another name. The altar

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stood in the sacred spot of the heathen temple, as it

stands in the holy place of the Christian minister. Monasticism developed in the East long before it arose in the West. Monks and nuns and hermits would have been found along the Nile valley ages before Christendom poured its host of sad souled ascetics up the sacred river, peopling the hills for thousands of miles. Good Father Huc was utterly astonished to find in the Far East tonsured priests bowing before splendid altars, while acolytes swung the fragrant censers by their side. His naive explanation was, that the devil had counterfeited in advance the mysteries of true religion, in order that the elect might be deceived into perdition. A less heroic solution of the problem finds in these resemblances hints of the oneness of religion, generating the same sacred institutions among different religions."

"Good Father Huc," in recognizing the similarity between the Catholic and the heathen ceremonies, was not astray in attributing the heathen ceremonies to Satan's instigation. He should have gone farther and have realized that he and his associates had likewise fallen into the "snares" and "wiles" of the adversary.

Doctor Newton proceeds to prove that all religions are shown to be from one source because related in worship. We agree that all world-religions are of one spirit--the spirit of "the prince of this world." But the true Church, "whose names are written in heaven," is in all but a "little flock,"--not of the world, but separate from it. "I have chosen you out of the world." Of the world's worships the Doctor says:

"The sacred symbolisms through which art ministers to worship meet us in the temples of paganism as in the churches of Christendom. The circle, the triangle, and the trefoil were graven by pagan chisels on the walls of the sacred buildings reared by religions which thought of themselves only as aliens and foes one to the other, for the unity of God, signed by the circle, and the triunity, the oneness in variety, of God, signed by the triangle and the trefoil, were truths known to no one religion alone, shared by all great religions in the same stage of evolution."

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The beliefs of men, though seemingly wide apart, Dr. Newton finds to be substantially one:

"All great religions pass through one general course of evolution. In the same stages of development, all alike will bring forth, as the same institutions and worships, so also the same beliefs. Arrange these different religions synchronously, in respect to their evolution, and the same ideas will be found in all, more or less modified. As they grow, they grow together; over all differences of environment and

heredity, the forces of the common life of man asserting the oneness which exists under black skins and yellow, red skins and white. In their higher reaches they strain toward each other. The flowering of all beliefs is in one faith--all religions seeding down one religion. So, beneath the variant and discordant beliefs of the present the germs of the future universal religion can even now be traced.

Coming to the contrast of the Christian's life with the life of the heathen, Doctor Newton says: "Goodness knows no native soil. Virtue is at home in every land. The Ten Commandments form the law of Egypt and of Persia as of Christendom. The Golden Rule proves the rule of Hindu and Chinaman, as the Christian. It waited not for Jesus to reveal it. The spirit of the Christ had already revealed it through Jewish Hillel and Chinese Confucius, and great spirits of well nigh every land. The Beatitudes exigently call upon the Buddhist as upon the Christian, 'Sursum corda.' Saints are of blood kin the world over. There is nothing alien to the truly devout Christian in the devoutness of the Hindu Guru, or of the yellow-robed saint of Japan or of the mystic worshiper among the Iranian Mountains. When the soul of man fronts the infinite and eternal Spirit, beneath the bo-tree of India or amid the rugged fastnesses of Tibet or in the cloisters of the Christian abbey, it is one and the same God who is seen. Wherever we overhear the communings of a soul with God, we hear in our own tongue. In the presence of the man of the spirit, be his name what it may, we know that he is of our family and household of God."

Could evidence be more clear than the foregoing to prove that the Doctor does not know what constitutes a Christian--that he does not know that, according to Christianity as taught in the Bible, acceptance of God rests not upon perfection of life, for "there is none righteous, no not one"? (Rom. 3:10.) Its teaching is not, either, that none are justified by doing the best they can, but that none are justified except by faith in the Son of God--"faith in his blood"--our ransom-sacrifice. If these, justified by their faith, do the best they can, such obediences and efforts are acceptable to God as though they were perfect.--Phil. 3:9; Rom. 4:7,8; 8:4.

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VOLUNTEER WORK, 1904.

THE Free Volunteer Tract Distribution reached larger proportions last year than ever before: more friends than ever engaged in the service and the quantity circulated was greater. This year

bids fair to see the work carried forward with the same zeal and possibly to a still greater extent-- though at some points seemingly no more would be possible. For instance, in Allegheny, Pittsburg and suburbs 112,000 tracts were placed in as many houses --practically every house was reached.

We urge cooperation,--that each little church unitedly take charge of its own district, elect a Captain for supervision and Lieutenants for sub-districts, and that all who can shall volunteer and serve under such beneficial regulations. A few of the Captains sent us reports at the close of last year's campaign, in November, showing the number of tracts distributed and giving the names of all participating. We request that all Captains follow this course this year.

As for the method this year: We urge that the careful house-distribution be continued, except in neighborhoods where there are many foreigners or Catholics, where it would best be done near (but not at) the churches, as their congregations are dismissed. The house-to-house circulation has reached some who do not attend public worship. Many good, moral people are becoming so confused on religious subjects that they attend no services.

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"CHOOSE YE THIS DAY."

--MARK 15:1-15.--JUNE 5.--

Golden Text:--"Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man."--Luke 23:4.

HOW MUCH depends upon our proper decision of the questions of life as they come before us day by day is well illustrated in this lesson. When our Lord and the eleven apostles left the upper room for the garden of Gethsemane, Judas--who earlier in the evening had reached a decision--had left their company to conspire with the chief priests, etc., and to guide their followers and servants to where Jesus could be apprehended quietly in the night, without the knowledge of the multitude in the city at that time for the Passover occasion. For the friends of Jesus, it was anticipated, might arouse a commotion amongst the throng of people, which might make the religious rulers of the Jews appear to be seditious, the Romans always being very much alert at such times for the suppression of any indications of revolt against the Roman authority. Judas doubtless had already conferred with the chief priests, and was probably present at the Passover Supper,

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partly for the purpose of learning the direction which Jesus and the others would take after the Supper. Our Lord's words to him, "What thou doest do quickly," seemed to imply that the matter was already arranged, and that Jesus by supernatural power was aware of it. That was the moment of final decision for Judas. He was a money lover, and decided to sell his Lord for money. Perhaps indeed he surmised that Jesus could deliver himself, and possibly he thought to gain the money without our Lord being injured; but in any event it shows a baseness of character and willingness to do evil for selfish reasons that remind us very much of the Prophet Balaam, who so greatly desired Balaam's rewards of iniquity.

BARTERING THE TRUTH FOR POTTAGE.

This matter of selling the Lord for money cannot be practised today in the same manner in which Judas practised it, yet we believe there is somewhat of the same ignoble spirit manifested by some in our day. It perhaps does not go to the same extent, but it is of the same kind, and who knows but that under favorable conditions it might be willing to go to the same length? We refer to some who are willing to sell the Truth for financial profit, for social advantage, for money; and others willing to sell the members of the Lord's body as Judas sold the Head, for earthly advantage, to deliver one another up to evil, to assist in bringing evil, tribulation, adversity, reproaches, etc., upon the members of the body of Christ. Yet with each of these, as with Judas, there was a time when they were perfectly innocent

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of such base ingratitude and wicked designs; there was a time when neither self-love, nor money love, nor any other consideration would have moved them to do injury to members of the anointed body. Let us beware of the little things which, like a switch upon a railway, turn a train into an entirely different track, and may let us off far from the goal we at first desired to reach. We cannot be too careful in the way we meet the trials and testings of character which come to us daily, and whose determination means so much to us respecting the present and the future life.

Our Lord, as he went with his disciples from the upper room and crossed the brook Cedron to the Mount of Olives, to the garden of Gethsemane, was likewise entering--a trial. His trial was from the opposite standpoint to that of Judas; his hour was fully determined, his consecration was completed, he wavered not in respect to the work he had come into the world to accomplish, he had no thought of anything else than dying for our sins. But as he stood upon the brink of

death and realized that in a few hours the whole matter of his consecration, his "baptism into death," would be "finished," two matters presented themselves forcefully to his attention. One was that he perceived clearly that his arraignment would take place before the Roman tribunal--that his death would be according to the Roman form, by crucifixion--that, in order to secure his condemnation by the Roman government, the chief priests and scribes, his enemies, would misrepresent his character and teachings, and that his record before the world would stand as that of a blasphemer against God and an evil worker amongst men.

We have no doubt that there are characters in the world who would measurably gloat over an opportunity to suffer as outlaws and desperadoes; they would feel themselves more or less heroes, and would be regarded more or less as heroes amongst their own class, similarly depraved in mind. But for those of more refined temperament--for the upright and honorable and pure in design--to pass through the same experiences would be a terrible ordeal. We may well imagine that our dear Redeemer, perfect, and with sentiments not in the slightest degree degraded, would feel the shame and ignominy of his position in such circumstances more than any of us could do. It was this shame, this reproach of being executed as a blasphemer against God and an injurious person amongst men, that we believe our Lord referred to as the cup which he prayed might, if possible, pass from him, saying at the same time, "Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done."

"OF THE PEOPLE THERE WAS NONE WITH HIM."

That sad hour in Gethsemane's garden, his disciples asleep, unable to appreciate the situation as he did, was the most trying hour of our dear Redeemer's experience. Added to the cup of grief and shame and ignominy came the thought that it is written in the Law, "Cursed is every one who hangeth on a tree," and thus he would be held up and marked amongst all the people of God as being accursed. A further thought was: "Is it possible that I have failed to meet the entire demand of the Law perfectly? Is it possible that I have failed in some little particular, and that thus the curse of the Law of God is to rest upon me, and that I shall lose life entirely after having striven to do the will of the Father and the fulfilment of perfect manhood under the divine Law?"

The strain upon the nervous system became so intense as to produce a bloody sweat, a form of illness very rare indeed and yet not unknown to medical men. This was the greatest agony of all. If he had failed in the slightest degree he had no future, but all of his bright prospects of returning to the Father's love and favor and heavenly conditions by a resurrection would all be vitiated. The Apostle refers to this saying, how

in the days of his flesh he offered up strong cryings and prayers unto him who was able to save him from [out of] death, and who was heard in that he feared. (Heb. 5:7.) He was heard in respect to that he feared: he was delivered from death by a resurrection. More than that, he was delivered from the fear of death, from all doubt

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as respected his faithfulness to the Father's will and his acceptance of the Father down to that very moment. An angel, a heavenly messenger, appeared and strengthened him, comforting him and assuring him of the Father's love and care, and that he was well pleasing in his sight. Such an assurance to the loyal heart of Jesus was all that was necessary. He could go through any experience courageously while confident that the Father was well pleased with his course, and that the result would be his reattainment of the glories he had left when he came into the world to be our Redeemer, and the attainment also of all the other joys set before him in the Father's promises. Here was a trial upon a great heart that resulted in great blessing to himself as well as to others. The result of his trial was the peace, joy and confidence which, during that night and the next day, kept him the most calm of all, even to his dying moment, and which, as the Apostle declares, led to his glorification in the resurrection, and which eventually shall bring blessings to every member of the human family in the lifting of the curse, the right to lift which was secured by his faithfulness even unto death.

BETRAYED BY A PROFESSED FRIEND.

Presently Judas arrived on the scene with a company of the high priest's servants--not followers in the ordinary sense of the term, but court followers, resembling more the police of the present time. Some of them carried swords and some carried clubs, as our Lord's language to them indicates. Peter and another of the apostles had swords with them--a not unusual matter in those times, though unusual for the apostles, as the context shows. They doubtless had the swords with them to demonstrate that our Lord was not taken contrary to his own will. He had with him eleven able-bodied men, willing to lay down their lives at his command in his defence. One of these, Peter, drew his sword and smote off the ear of the high priest's servant, and doubtless the defence would have been carried on vigorously if our Lord had said the word, or rather had he not interfered by intimating to Peter that what he had done was enough. He bade him put up his sword --he was not to battle for his Lord with carnal weapons --and meantime healed the wounded ear. Our Lord, in surrendering himself, stipulated that his apostles were not included in the arrest.

Thus awakened, surprised, dismissed by the Lord, his disciples saw him taken from them, and were bewildered and confounded, notwithstanding our Lord's words to them on several occasions previously, intimating that some such calamity might be expected. It was a trial to them at the time, as the Master had already intimated, saying, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." They had not sufficiently appreciated his words, had slept while the trial hour was coming on, and were, therefore, the less prepared for it.

Our Lord, his hands bound, was led away to Annas and Caiaphas. Although it was night time, about one o'clock, some of the chief officers of the Jews and the Sanhedrin had gathered, being informed that the arrest would take place that night, that one of his disciples would pilot the officers to take him, and the matter was urgent, so that his death could take place as quickly as possible on the next day, before the people in general learned about the matter and before the Passover week would begin. It was not lawful to try a man for any capital offence between sundown and sunrise, and hence this trial was in one sense an informal one--it would be required to be ratified by the Sanhedrin after sunrise. They were willing, however, to come as near as possible to breaking the Law that thus they might accomplish their purposes.

THE VILE CHARGE OF BLASPHEMY.

As he stood before the high priest, and as his enemies brought witnesses and the trial progressed, our Lord may be said to have made no defence; it would have been useless anyway, as they were intent on finding a charge of some kind--they had murder in their hearts. The charge they sought to establish was blasphemy, one of the few charges the penalty of which under the Law was death, and it was his death they wanted. The blasphemy against God was declared to be proven in that he claimed to be the son of God, and blasphemy against the Temple was claimed to be proven in that some had heard him say that if the Temple were destroyed he could rear it again in three days. A decision was reached, but nothing could be done until day light. Meantime the petty officers of the court spat upon the Lord, blindfolded him, and struck him, saying, "Prophesy, now, who is he that smote thee?" and thus the weary hours passed till daybreak. The Jews thought it a trial of the Lord, but his trial was all in the past. It was the trial of their high priests, of the court officers and of the members of the Sanhedrin and of the Jewish nation. It was a trial of whether they loved truth or a falsehood, righteousness or unrighteousness. They decided for unrighteousness.

Meantime the Apostle Peter was having a great trial, too. He had gained access to the outer room of the court and could probably hear or see something

from where he stood and warmed himself at the fire. The first instinct of nature, self-preservation, overpowered him. It flashed upon him that if he were recognized as one of Jesus' subordinates he might be treated in the same manner as the Master, and in his desire to avoid the troubles that had come upon Jesus he denied that he knew him, and on a second occasion of the same kind he even swore that he did not know him. Poor Peter! It was a time of severe trial, and, alas he failed. How he might have gloried afterwards if he had suffered something for Christ's sake and for his

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acknowledgment of being his follower! But had he done so, all of the Lord's followers since would have lost a very valuable lesson conveyed to us in Peter's experiences.

Peter's weakness on this occasion, afterwards so bitterly lamented and acknowledged and forgiven, has in some respects been a great blessing to all of the

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Lord's followers as they found that they, too, had weaknesses, and that sometimes they were overtaken in a fault as was Peter. They have learned from Peter to weep bitterly for these shortcomings, and have not been utterly cast down when they have found that Peter was received again by the Lord and heartily forgiven, and that the lesson thus learned made a deep impression on his life and resulted evidently in his favor. It is related of Peter that ever after this he arose every morning at cock crowing, made a fresh remembrance before the Lord of his weakness on that occasion, and accepted divine forgiveness. It was a testing time to Peter, and so similarly testing times come to all of us. Let us see to it that under no circumstances shall we ever deny our Lord. More than this, let us remember that the Lord places himself and his Word and his brethren on a par, and assures us that those who deny his Truth deny him, and those who deny his Word of prophecy are thus denying him.

TREASON AGAINST ROME.

With sunrise the Sanhedrin met officially, and, accepting the testimony of the high priest, that he had examined witnesses and that it had been proven that Jesus had blasphemed God and the Temple, the verdict was reached that he should die. Then, as related in our lesson, they held a private consultation respecting how they should present the matter before Pilate, the Roman governor. They well knew that he would pay no attention whatever to their charges of blasphemy and would tell them that was not a crime under the Roman law.

They determined that the charge against our Lord before Pilate should be treason against the Roman government. In support of this charge of treason they said that he declared there was another king besides Caesar, namely, himself, the Messiah; and to seemingly corroborate this they declared falsely that he had forbidden to pay taxes to Caesar's government, whereas when they tried to catch him on this very subject two days before he had answered to the contrary, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." Moreover, he had paid taxes himself, Peter being sent for the fish to pay the tax for them both. But this false allegation would seemingly prove the truth of the original charge of treason.

Now Pilate's time had come for trial. He stood as judge, and the principles of right and wrong, truth and untruth, righteousness and unrighteousness, in this case were for him to determine. What a wonderful chance he had! Suppose he had refused to connive at the malice of the high priest when he recognized that it was "for envy they had delivered him." Suppose that Pilate had dismissed the high priest and Sanhedrin and the multitude and had set Jesus free, and had cautioned them that if any of them did him injury they would be answerable with their lives! What a noble picture it would have been before the eyes of history! But, instead, his course and reputation have been anything but commendable and admirable. Nevertheless, while recognizing that he thus had a test and that he failed to take the noble part, we are far from sharing with the majority in their very ignominious view of this governor.

We are to remember that Pilate was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but a heathen man--without God and having no hope in the world. We are to remember that he did not believe in the Jews' religion, whatever he may have believed. He did not believe in Jesus, nor had he any respect for the Messianic promises. He was filling the office of governor as the representative of Caesar's government at Rome. He had his own pleasures and self-gratifications distinct from the Jews and their festivals, etc., for which he cared nothing. He was amenable not to our God, for he knew him not, but merely to Caesar, and Caesar expected nothing of him except that he would preserve the peace and quiet of the city and maintain the dignity and authority of Rome. Rome cared not if one or ten or hundreds of innocent persons were put to death, if only the peace of the country were maintained. It was, therefore, Pilate's first duty as Roman governor to keep the peace in Jerusalem.

ART THOU THE KING OF THE JEWS?

From this standpoint we can say that Pilate's course was noble and just--though not the noble and just one which we would have preferred for him. Pilate did not readily accept the charges of the Pharisees: he

knew them to be hypocritical, and really we may here say that the worst wickedness in the world at any time, at every time, in its history has been that form of wickedness which parades under the cloak of religion, which does evil in the name of that which is right, true, good. Pilate asked for specifications respecting the treason, and this seems to have surprised the chief priests, who presumed that their word would be taken on that subject without proof. If they thought a Jew had been worthy of death for treason then Pilate should certainly so suspect and so believe, for they were not supposed to wish the destruction of any fellow-Jew on such a charge. Pilate looked at Jesus and saw in him no criminal appearance, saw that he did not look at all like one who would become a leader of sedition; that, instead, meekness, gentleness, patience, long suffering, love, were marks of his features. Pilate inquired of Jesus respecting this charge, "Art thou the king of the Jews?" Our Lord's answer was not quite equivalent to yes, and yet it intimated

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that he did not wish to dispute the charge. To have attempted to explain the Kingdom of God under such circumstances would have been improper, for none there were prepared to hear and appreciate or understand; to have done so would have been in conflict with our Lord's own instruction on the subject, not to cast pearls before swine. Those present were not prepared to understand that the Kingdom would come a spirit Kingdom, that it would have earthly representatives, etc.

Meantime the chief priests accused him fiercely, Jesus saying nothing--"He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearer is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." He was not there to defend himself, nor to protest against his execution. On the contrary, he was there to sacrifice his life, to lay it down, to permit it to be taken from him without resistance. Pilate himself marveled that anyone could be so indifferent to the results of his trial. All this, however, proved the more conclusively that there was nothing dangerous to the interests of Rome in connection with our Lord's life or teachings: it all disproved what the chief priests were charging, and demonstrated that they had some ulterior malevolent spirit of opposition to Jesus.

PREFERRING BARABBAS TO JESUS.

There had been a real sedition, a genuine movement against the authority of Rome, at a previous time, and Barabbas and others had been made prisoners on account of it. Some one in the crowd started a call on the governor to do as was his custom every year at this time--to release some prisoner as a matter of

clemency and favor. Soon the whole mob took it up, and Pilate inquired, "Shall I then release unto you the king of the Jews?"--Jesus. His thought evidently was to arouse in them to some extent an enthusiasm in favor of his liberation of Jesus, for we read that he perceived that it was the chief priests and not the multitudes that were against Jesus. He hoped to turn the rabble to the side of Jesus and to release him on their request. But the chief priests, who had accused Jesus, stirred up the multitude to request the release of Barabbas, the seditionist, the rioter. One wonders that they were not ashamed in the presence of even a heathen governor to manifest their perfidy in this manner --to accuse Jesus of being a traitor to Rome and asking to have him crucified and in the same breath to urge the release of one about whose rioting there was no question.

Pilate evidently heard something said about Jesus' work being largely done in Galilee, and thought to be rid of the matter by turning the case over to Herod, the ruler of Galilee, who was present in Jerusalem at the time. He therefore sent Jesus bound to Herod, with the explanation that, as he was a Galilean, Pilate was pleased to acknowledge Herod and to submit the case to his adjudication. Really he was glad to be rid of the case, for he preferred not to put to death an innocent man, yet he perceived that the chief priests could make very violent charges against him if he refused to put to death one whom they charged with treason against the Roman government. At Rome such conduct would have the appearance of favoring rebellion; and if Pilate should reply that there was no danger of rebellion, that the man was merely a quiet, innocent man, they would have probably responded that he was entirely too particular anyway, that he should be prompt in the execution of anybody and everybody charged with the slightest degree with rebellion in word or act against the Roman power. Thus, no doubt, he would have lost his position and would have been degraded for the remainder of life. Pilate was in a very trying position.

HEROD'S OPPORTUNITY AND FAILURE.

The coming of Jesus to Herod meant a trial for Herod. How would he receive Jesus? What would be his conduct toward righteousness and truth and justice and purity and goodness? This is the same Herod who about a year and a half before had beheaded John the Baptist, and who, hearing of Jesus, had suggested that he might be a reincarnation of John. Herod, we are told, was glad to see Jesus and hoped to see him perform some miracle of which he had heard so much; but the Lord was absolutely silent before him, not a word had he to say before such a man. Such a course was probably the most striking rebuke he could have administered to Herod, and was entirely in line with the whole

conduct of our Lord--his determination to do nothing that would hinder the accomplishment of that which he knew to be the divine purpose--his death that very day.

Finding that Jesus would not even reply for him, nor perform any miracles for his entertainment, Herod

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suggested to his men of war that they robe him as a king and have some sport with him, as it seems was a custom of that time in respect to criminals--the soldiers were granted opportunity to give them mock homage and then to buffet them, etc., before they were executed. This done to Jesus he was returned to Pilate, Herod in turn expressing his appreciation of Pilate's course, but declining to interfere in Pilate's territory. From that time Pilate and Herod were friends, though previously they had been adversaries.

"DO NOTHING AGAINST THIS JUST MAN."

The case returning to Pilate, and the chief priests evidently fearing some slip of their plans, were very persistent in demanding the death of Jesus and in inciting the multitude to clamor for it. Some six times in all Pilate declared the innocence of Jesus, yet under the circumstances already narrated he hesitated to absolutely refuse the demand of the Jewish priests and multitude:

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especially did he feel the point of the argument made by the priests, "If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend," which meant, You are an enemy to Caesar and to the government of Rome. Pilate realized that such a course would not be understood by his superiors, and hence he tried every method to get the Jews satisfied in the matter. One step in this proceeding was to order that Jesus should be scourged. He hoped that the scourging would satisfy his adversaries' thirst for blood. Meantime Pilate's wife sent a message to him urging that he do nothing against this man, for that she had had a dream in the night to this effect. Under the circumstances Pilate evidently did everything that could be expected of a worldly man in the times and under the conditions in which he lived. The only exception to such a procedure that we could expect would be on the part of a Christian, or of some one who under Christian influence had gained a much more than ordinary love for justice, and willingness to sacrifice every interest in its behalf.

It was in connection with his endeavor to free Jesus from those who sought his life that Pilate stood Jesus forth so that they might see him, exclaiming, "Behold the man!" The impression we get is that

Pilate himself was struck with the quiet dignity of our Lord in his facial expression, in his composure under trying conditions. His words seem to mean, Look at the man you are talking about crucifying! Why, Jews, you have not such a man in all your land. I doubt if there is any man his equal anywhere! But it was all of no avail; the multitude had become excited and were clamoring for our Lord's blood. In the expressive symbolic language of the time, Pilate, before delivering Jesus for crucifixion, indicated that he was averse to the sentence they were compelling him to pronounce, and that wherever the responsibility lay he was not the guilty party. He did this by washing his hands with water in the presence of the people, exclaiming, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person."--Matt. 27:24.

THE RESULT OF THESE TRIALS--RETRIBUTION.

What a number of trials, testings and provings we have found in this lesson--and now let us briefly glance at the results. Judas, as a result of failure in his trial, died soon by his own hand. Pilate, the unwilling instrument of the condemnation and not one hundredth part as guilty as the Jews, shortly afterwards lost his commission as governor and in despondency committed suicide. Annas, the high priest, was subsequently dragged through the streets, scourged and murdered. The multitude who cried out, "Crucify him!" and who in answer to Pilate's declaration that he was innocent of the blood of Jesus, declared, "His blood be upon us and upon our children," experienced a baptism of blood not many years after when the entire city of Jerusalem was a scene of most horrible atrocities, which culminated in the utter destruction of their city with great loss of life, in the overflow of the entire Jewish polity in Palestine, and the scattering of the survivors amongst all nations and peoples. The curse they thus brought upon themselves still remains to some extent; his blood is still upon them, and from that day until the present time the Jews have suffered greatly; and although the divine disfavor has been passing from them as a nation since 1878, it will continue in some measure until nearly or quite 1914. The curse will be remitted because of its being forgiven through the grace of God in Christ.

On the other hand, note the blessings which came to those whose testings were received in the proper manner, demonstrating their loyalty to the Lord. Our Lord Jesus was highly exalted, far above angels, principalities and powers and every name that is named--because faithful unto death, even the death of the cross. Peter the Apostle, although partially overtaken in a fault, nevertheless through repentance and bitter tears was accepted back again to the Lord's favor, profited by his sad experience, and became one of the noblest of the apostles, one of the most honored, and is yet to be honored in the Kingdom as joint-heir with his

Redeemer.

THINK NOT STRANGE YOUR FIERY TRIALS.

We are not to expect similar trials, in all respects like those of our lesson, but we are to expect fiery trials, and we are to note that the results will be in accord with the manner in which we meet them. The lesson to us is that we should follow in the footsteps of Jesus and resolve to be faithful to our heavenly Father, to do his will at any cost, at any sacrifice of earthly interests --not grudgingly, but, as expressed prophetically of our Lord, "I delight to do thy will, O my God; thy Law is written in my heart." Another lesson is that if temporarily we should stumble in following the Master we must not be discouraged, but turn the failure and stumbling into a blessing by permitting it to bring us into closer relationship to the Lord and to make us more and more careful and more faithful in our walk with the Lord henceforth.

Some one has said: "This scene has often been alleged as a self-condemnation of democracy. Vox populi, vox Dei (The voice of the people is the voice of God), its flatterers have said; but look yonder. When the multitude has to choose between Jesus and Barabbas, it chooses Barabbas. If this be so, the scene is equally decisive against aristocracy. Did the priests, scribes and nobles behave any better than the mob? It was by their advice that the mob chose Barabbas." This is a very wise and a very truthful suggestion. The voice of the people can be relied upon in some matters, and, on the whole, the republican form of government is probably the best of any in the world for civilized peoples under present conditions; but as respects religious

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things the voice of the people is far from being the voice of God. On the contrary, the Apostle declared, "The world by wisdom knows not God." It must not, therefore, prejudice our judgments to find the popular voice against us. What we seek for and listen for is the voice of the Lord through his Word. With this let us be satisfied as was our Redeemer, content whatever lot we see since it is our God who leadeth us. It is possible that the closing scenes of the Church's experience may in some respects resemble that of our dear Redeemer; it is possible that some of the Lord's people may be branded as blasphemers and hailed before governments on the charges of preaching Christ as another King. Should it ever come to such a pass, we should have no doubt whatever respecting our position. It should be that of full confidence in the Lord, and through faithfulness to him, to his Word, and to all the brethren. Let us leave the outcome of these trials and testings in the hands of the Lord, assured

by his Word that he will make these afflictions to work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

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HOW AND WHY CHRIST WAS CRUCIFIED.

--MARK 15:22-39.--JUNE 12.--

Golden Text:--"Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures."--I Cor. 15:3.

VICTOR HUGO wrote, "Waterloo is the change of form of the universe." Another amends the statement thus, "Calvary is the change of form of the universe." The story of our Lord's crucifixion is related with a pathos which stirs our souls with sympathy, and begets in us a responsive love from the moment we truly recognize the purport of our Golden Text. Others have died just as cruelly, and a few have gone to death voluntarily and composedly. The Lord's death, however, was the first one in which the victim was entirely innocent, entirely unworthy of the death sentence,--the only one, therefore, in whose case the matter of dying was wholly voluntary, the only one who needed not to die had he not so willed.

CROSS-BEARING EXEMPLIFIED.

The evangelists relate the incidents of the crucifixion with very slight variations, and the whole matter is before us when we group together the various statements, each of which is true. From Pilate's Judgment Hall, after the governor had consented to Jesus' death because unable to stem the tide of Jewish prejudice and vociferous demands, the centurion, with three Roman soldiers, took Jesus to Calvary to crucify him. As was the custom, the culprit--in this case the victim--bore his own cross, which must necessarily have been a terrible task. Our Lord apparently was overcome by the weight of the cross, when a countryman named Simon coming along was forced to assist him. The statement of Luke 23:26 implies that Simon did not carry the cross entirely, but merely assisted Jesus, carrying the hinder part of it, which usually dragged.

We have often wondered, Where were Peter and John and James that they did not see the Master's burden

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and run to proffer assistance? If disposed to envy Simon his privilege of assisting the Master in the bearing of the cross, let us reflect that many of the Lord's

brethren are daily bearing symbolic crosses, and that it is our privilege to assist them, and that the Lord agrees to reckon any service done to his faithful followers as though it were rendered to his own person. Yet if no brother sees the privilege of giving a helping hand let not the burdened ones lose heart. The Lord knoweth the need and will send the aid necessary, even though it be impressed, and that because of the sympathy of the worldly--as in Jesus' case, when the soldiers provided the aid. As the wooden cross was not our Lord's heaviest burden, so, too, his followers have crosses which the world sees not, but which the "brethren" should understand. "Bear ye one another's burdens and thus fulfil the law of Christ."

Sympathetic Jewish women walked near, weeping. Quite probably these included Mary, our Lord's mother, Martha and Mary of Bethany, and Mary Magdalene. The particulars are not given us, but the sympathy of woman is markedly testified to. Our Lord was full of composure, though weak and fainting, not only because of the expenditure of his vitality previously in the healing of the sick, etc., but additionally because he had been under a most terrible nervous strain throughout the entire night, without sleep or food. It was now nine o'clock of the day of his crucifixion, and he had wearily borne a share of the weight of his cross for about three-quarters of a mile, from Pilate's Judgment Hall to Calvary. Golgotha, the name usually given to this place by the people of the vicinity, signified "the place of a skull," because that particular slope of the hill very closely resembled a skull in shape and in color, dark crevices in the face of the rock corresponding to the eye sockets, nose cavity, etc.

The offering of wine mingled with bitter myrrh, otherwise styled gall, was not an indignity as is usually supposed, but an act of kindness. A Women's Society for the Relief of the Suffering furnished sour wine with bitter narcotics with a view to deadening the sensibility to pain, and it was customary to provide this draught for all the poor unfortunates to reduce their terrible sufferings to a minimum. Our Lord tasted the wine, Matthew informs us, doing so probably to assure himself

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of what it was, or as a token of his appreciation of the kindness expressed by it. But he refused to drink of it, evidently preferring to experience the full measure of the pain and suffering which the Father's wisdom and love and justice had prepared for him--had permitted to come upon him as a test of the full measure of his loyalty and obedience.

The crucifixion must have been a terrible ordeal. The cross was laid upon the ground and the victim stretched upon it, while the nails were driven through the feet and hands; and if possible a still more trying

moment came when the cross, lifted by sturdy men, was allowed to drop into the socket prepared for it in the rock. Very properly the evangelist did not stop to detail or comment upon the extreme suffering experienced by the Lord, and very properly we may similarly leave the matter. Nevertheless, our hearts can but ache still when we think of what this part of the redemption price paid for our sins cost the One who bought us with his precious blood. He who grasps the situation clearly will be the more willing to suffer something for the Lord's sake and for his cause' sake--thus to testify in return his love and his appreciation of the great things done for him by the Son of God. Indeed we should esteem it a deprivation if not permitted to "suffer with him," for otherwise we could not hope to "reign with him."

TWO PROPHECIES FULFILLED.

It was the custom to count the personal property of an executed person the perquisites of the soldiers performing the execution, and in Jesus' case we read that, having divided his garments amongst them, his outer robe, his head dress, sandals and girdle--enough to give one piece to each--they assigned by lot "what each man should take." One piece remained, namely, his tunic or under garment, reaching from the neck to the feet, "woven throughout and seamless." This they could not divide advantageously, and hence "for his vesture they did cast lots."--Psa. 22:18; John 19:23,24.

The crucifixion took place at the third hour, Jewish reckoning, or nine o'clock, our reckoning. Over his head was his accusation written in three languages--the Latin, the official or governmental language of Rome; in Greek, the classical language of that period; in Hebrew, the language of the Jews. The charge was that upon which the chief priests had laid special stress in their arraignment of Jesus, that he claimed to be the king of the Jews. Elsewhere we are informed that the prominent Jews objected to Pilate's inscription and endeavored to have it altered, but he refused, saying, "What I have written, I have written." The Jews would have written, "This is an impostor claiming to be the king of the Jews," but in the Lord's providences the true title was put above his head, "Jesus, the King of the Jews." Those of us who are not Jews have reason to rejoice that he is more than this--that by God's providence he is heir of the world and is surely to be the King of the world, and is already King of saints.

How it happened that two robbers were awaiting execution at the same time is not stated in the account. We may presume, however, that they had been in custody for some time under sentence, and that the chief priests may have suggested their execution at the same time. Their thought may have been to detract from the

injustice of their own course and to throw a measure of justice into the proceedings as a whole, or their object may have been to demean Jesus in making him a companion of outlaws. But whatever the circumstances the matter was foreseen by the Lord and foretold by the Prophet--"He was numbered with the transgressors." --Isa. 53:12.

"WE DID ESTEEM HIM STRICKEN, SMITTEN OF GOD."

Near the cross stood the Apostle John and Jesus' mother and others who loved him, and whose hearts were breaking with sympathy as they beheld his ignominy and suffering and were unable to fully appreciate the necessity for this, as we shall shortly see it. Some few idlers were standing by probably, while travelers were coming and going, because Golgotha was on a frequented route. Apparently many of these, who had heard much about Jesus and his miracles, were now satisfied that his claims were false, and that probably his miracles were deceptions wrought, as the Pharisees said, by the power of Beelzebub, the prince of devils. These reasoned from analogy that if the Lord had done the works ascribed to him by the power of God, as he claimed, he would not need to be at the mercy of his enemies, for it never occurred to them that any one would voluntarily lay down his life for his friend--neither did they have the slightest conception of the necessity or object of the Lord's death.

A similar mistake is made by the world in respect to the Lord's followers. Those who have sorrows and trials and persecutions and poverty they esteem to be under divine disfavor. Thus it was prophesied of our Lord, but is true of his Church, his body as a whole--"We did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted," and we were ashamed of him. The world cannot discern, as we do, that God's favor toward the elect is manifested in letting them have those experiences necessary to their preparation for Kingdom honors.

"NONE OF THE WICKED SHALL UNDERSTAND."

Our Lord's statement of a few days before was remembered by some, but either misunderstood or deliberately falsified in their raillery. He had not spoken of destroying their Temple, but had said that if they destroyed the Temple it would be reared again within three days (antitypical). The Temple construction had

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required about forty years, and our Lord's declaration they considered bombastic, and said, It will be much easier for him to show his power by coming down from the cross. The fact that he did not do so was esteemed

an evidence of the falsity of all that he had previously said and done. To a sensitive mind, like that of our Lord, we can readily suppose that such a charge of falsification and misrepresentation would be a severe burden upon his heart; yet he bore it patiently. O, we are so glad that Jesus did not come down from the cross, and thus leave us in our sins--the whole world unredeemed!

The chief priests and scribes pursued their victim to the cross--neglecting, doubtless, important matters in their eagerness to make sure that he did not escape them. They were more blameworthy than the common people, yet they sought to justify their course in the same manner. Strangely enough, they admitted that "he saved others;" and the fact that he did not save himself out of their grasp seems to have been to them conclusive evidence of the falsity of all of his claims as respected relationship to Jehovah God. They were satisfied that his blood should be upon them and upon their children. Poor men! they thought themselves wise, yet, as the Apostle Peter pointed out a few days subsequently, the whole matter was done in ignorance. Peter's words are, "I wot, brethren, that ye did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers." It is fortunate for these--yea, for the great majority of mankind--that the Lord our God is not the resentful One he is represented to be; that on the contrary he is "long suffering and of plenteous mercy." In full accord with this is the glorious prophecy that eventually those who crucified the Lord shall look upon him whom they pierced and mourn because of him, and that "the Lord will pour upon them the spirit of prayer and supplication and they shall mourn for him."

WHEN REVILED HE REVILED NOT IN RETURN.

The Apostle points out our Lord's patience under this reviling as an example to us. When he was reviled he reviled not in return. How many cutting things our Lord might truthfully have thrown back at his persecutors. The secret of his patience was expressed in his

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words to Pilate: "Thou couldst have no power over me at all except it were given thee of my Father." The same thought is expressed in the words: "The cup that my Father hath poured for me, shall I not drink it?" Likewise our ability to take reviling and persecution patiently and unresentfully will be in proportion as our consecration to the Lord is full and complete, and in proportion as we realize that "All the steps of the righteous are ordered of the Lord."

One of those crucified with Jesus reviled him also--perhaps both, but probably only one--the other for a time keeping silent, but afterward speaking in defence of Jesus, as is related in another Gospel. The morning,

which had opened very bright, became very cloudy, and the darkness from the sixth hour (12 o'clock noon) until the ninth hour (3 o'clock), when Jesus died, was quite noticeable.

It was at the close of his experiences, at 3 P.M., that Jesus cried aloud with a strong voice, indicating considerable vitality still. His cry was, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Throughout the entire experience of the night and the morning, from the time he had the assurance, in the Garden of Gethsemane, that he was pleasing to the Father, our Lord was most cool and tranquil of mind. Why was it, then, that at the very close of his experiences he should have so dark a cloud, a shadow, between his heart and the Father? Why should the Father permit any cloud to come between on an occasion when his dear Son, well beloved, so much needed more than any other time the comfort and strength and sustenance of a clear appreciation of his love and favor? This we must answer later, when considering why our Lord was crucified.

It was at this time that our Lord had said, "I thirst," and that a sponge fastened to a hyssop stock and saturated with sour wine (Jno. 19:29) was lifted to his lips. From it he sucked some refreshing moisture, for by this time under such conditions his wounds must have developed a raging fever in his blood. Then Jesus cried aloud again. What he said is not recorded in Mark's account, but Luke gives it as, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit"--my life. This indicated that his faith in the Lord was absolute and that the thing he chiefly thought of was life. He was laying down his life most loyally, most nobly, in accord with the Father's arrangement. The Father had promised him as a reward to raise him up from the dead: he trusted in this promise, and now in his dying breath he expressed his faith.

"IT IS FINISHED."

Various things are recorded as taking place at the moment of our Lord's death--an earthquake shook the ground in the neighborhood of the cross, and in the Temple at Jerusalem the great vail which separated between the Holy and Most Holy was torn, not from the bottom toward the top, as would be the expectation if it were the result of wear, but from the top to the bottom, as indicating that it was a manifestation of divine power. The vail or curtain is described as being sixty feet long and thirty feet wide, and its thickness about four inches. Josephus describes it as "of Babylonish texture, a wonderful stretch of white, scarlet and purple." The rending of this curtain represented symbolically the opening of the way between heaven itself and the heavenly condition of those in the world. Christ has opened to us a new and living way through the vail--that is to say, through the sacrifice of his

flesh. True believers are represented as being now

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associated with Jesus as priests in the Holy, or outer apartment of the two. Here we have fellowship with God through the light of the golden candlestick, through the bread of the golden table, and through the incense that we are permitted to offer on the golden altar, and from this standpoint we can now by faith see beyond the veil--catch glimpses at least of the heavenly estate which God hath in reservation for them who love him, for the called ones according to his purpose, for the Christ, Head and body.

WHY JESUS WAS CRUCIFIED.

One of the most puzzling matters connected with Christianity in all minds, including the hypercritical of the Lord's professed followers, is why the sufferings and death of our Lord at Calvary were necessary. We answer that they were necessary because God made them necessary--because he so arranged his plan that they would be indispensable. That he could have devised another plan of salvation is beyond question, for the whole matter was in his hands, but that he did choose the best plan is equally indisputable. Whoever attempts to solve this question in his own mind or with the human philosophies of the natural mind will be sure to err. The only safe, proper course is to give heed to the wisdom that cometh from above respecting this matter.

Harkening to the voice of the Lord, we perceive that he knew the end from the beginning, and that his plan is designed to be a lesson respecting his attributes of justice, wisdom, love and power, not only to men but to angels, not only to the unholy, but to the holy. When the divine plan shall have been fully accomplished, all shall see the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of wisdom and love and justice and power exemplified in the divine arrangement. At the present time, however, only a few may see: "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; he has covenanted to show it unto them."--Psalm 25:14.

With full knowledge that he could not retract his own sentence, God pronounced death to be the penalty for sin--knowing at the time that Adam would sin and that he and his entire family would come under the death sentence. To Adam and to all who understood the matter the case must have appeared hopeless, since, first, God could not revoke his sentence; and, second, the sentence deprived man of everything in depriving him of his life. It would not occur to man that God might have in his purpose a substitute: and even if it had occurred to him, looking about amongst his fellow men he could have found no one capable of serving as

a substitute for Adam, because all were sinners through their inherited share in the results of the fall. It surely never would have occurred to man that God, looking down upon the fallen race of Adam, would have such pity for the transgressors of the law as to provide for them a way of escape from the penalty at such cost as was entailed. For God to provide a substitute for Adam meant the creation of another man, his equal in every particular, or the transfer of some holy being to a condition in nature similar to that of Adam before he fell. It would not have been supposable to man that Almighty God would be so considerate of the interests of his human creatures. Furthermore, they might have reasoned that for God to have created a man similar to Adam would have been merely to have duplicated the transgression; while for him to have transferred some glorious spirit being to human conditions would have appeared but a violation of justice--a punishment of a holy and obedient creature in the interest of unholy and sinful ones.

But behold the wisdom of God, as well as his love and justice, manifested in the course arranged for. He would provide a ransom for Adam and thus for his race; he would provide a perfect man to be the Redeemer of the fallen one and those who lost life in him, yet he would do no injustice to any. Rather he would so arrange the plan that the one who should become man's redemption would himself be greatly advantaged by the sufferings and deprivations incidental to the work. No doubt had God offered the proposition in a general way to all of the heavenly hosts there would have been many ready and willing to render joyful obedience and to trust for whatever reward and blessing the Father might think best to give them; but he did not make the offer general--it was made to but one.

"LO, I COME--TO DO THY WILL, O MY GOD."

Amongst the heavenly hosts was the only begotten of the Father, he who in the beginning was called the Word and who was with the Father, and who himself was a God or a Mighty One, and who had been used of the Father as his instrument in the creation of all the angelic and human beings. To this one, highest of all, the Father would first make the proposition of the great sacrifice, the great test of faith in the Father's love and the Father's power--that he would restore him again when the work was finished, and that with added glory. True, the Only Begotten might have declined, and, so far as we know, without prejudice, in which event the offer or opportunity would have been given probably to the one next in honor and glory and power amongst the angels. But the Only Begotten did not decline, but joyfully accepted the offer of being a co-laborer with the Father on behalf of mankind. He carried out the project; he left the heavenly courts,

laid aside the heavenly conditions, spirit body, etc., was transferred to the womb of Mary, and in due time was born a man amongst men, "the man Christ Jesus."

At thirty years, the proper period under the Law, he made his full consecration unto death and symbolized it in baptism. For three and a half years the

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death was being accomplished by him, until at Calvary he cried, "It is finished." Thus his first great humbling of himself in becoming a man was a preparatory step, while his giving of himself as a sacrifice, as a substitute for Adam, covered a period of three and a half years, ending in his death on the cross. He finished there the work which the Father had given him to do so far as redeeming the world was concerned. His life was the ransom price for Adam's; and since the world had lost life through Adam, because inheriting his weaknesses, his imperfections, therefore justly, legally, actually, Christ's death not only redeemed Adam, but redeemed the world of mankind. It was because Adam as a sinner was cut off from fellowship with God that our dear Redeemer, as his substitute, was obliged to have a similar experience for a little season before he died. It was his hardest moment and called forth the cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

In due time the Father's promise toward him was fulfilled in his resurrection from the dead, a spirit being;

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in due time he ascended up on high to appear in the presence of God on our behalf--to apply to each believer a share in the merit of his sacrifice. This work has progressed throughout this Gospel age, and every consecrated believer has been accepted in Christ; and, being accepted in him as a member of his body, these believers in turn have been privileged to present their bodies living sacrifices and thus to fill up the measure of Christ's sufferings. Soon the entire Atonement Day sacrificing will be finished, soon it will be accomplished, soon the promise will be fulfilled, "If we suffer with him we shall also reign with him: if we be dead with him we shall also live with him." From that time onward the redemptive work takes on a larger scope. As soon as the last members of the body of Christ shall have suffered with him he will apply the full payment to Justice on behalf of all the remainder of mankind not believers, and the penalty, the curse against the world, will thus be cancelled--not through faith, not merely for those who shall have exercised faith, but regardless of faith.

THE RESULTS--THE GRACIOUS EFFECTS.

Then will begin the work of uplifting the world-- those who have not yet gone into the tomb, and gradually those who already have gone down into the prison-house of death. The prison doors shall be opened, all the prisoners shall show themselves; as the Prophet declared, they will all come forth to trial. (Isa. 61:1.) Not to a new trial on account of the first offence by Adam, neither to a trial on account of things done while more or less affected by the penalty upon Adam, but to a new trial for life on their own responsibility. The responsibility of each shall be according to the measure of character and strength which he possesses,-- it will be a righteous judgment that will make full allowance for every inherited imperfection and weakness, and that will expect from the world only that which mankind will be able to render.

The result will be an uplift of the world of mankind, an opportunity for each to come back gradually to all that was lost in Eden by Father Adam's disobedience, --including Paradise restored. The obedient of heart shall then be accounted worthy of the blessing of the Lord, to continue with them eternally. They shall have everlasting life, all contrary minded being cut off in the Second Death.

Thus seen the death of our Lord Jesus was necessary for man's release from the death sentence. Christ died for our sins, as our Golden Text expresses it. He died in order that, by paying our penalty of death, God might be just and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus, and release him from the death sentence. Our Lord's death was necessary for another reason also, as the Apostle explains: it is expedient that he who shall judge the world during the Millennial age shall have full ability to sympathize with the world of mankind who will then be on trial--one able and willing to succor those beset by sin and weakness and to have compassion on them, having been tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. Thus not only the Lord Jesus, the great King and Judge of that time, but also the Church--his joint-heirs in the judgeship and in the Royal Priesthood--will be able to sympathize with those whom they will be judging and trying, sustaining, assisting and uplifting.

We perceive, then, that the plan which God adopted is in the broadest sense of the word the wisest and best imaginable, and that under this plan nothing else than death was possible in order to man's redemption from the sentence of death, and that nothing else than severe trials were appropriate for the one who would be intrusted with so high a dignity, honor, responsibility, as that which the Father had apportioned to the Christ. We see also that it behooved the Father, in bringing the Church to glory and subsequently testing the world, to prove the Captain of the salvation perfect through suffering; that he who was chief of the

universe next to the Father, and whom he purposed to make so much greater still as to give him a participation in the divine nature, glory and honor--he might reasonably be expected to demonstrate before every creature his absolute loyalty to the Father; and this he did in the days of his flesh when he suffered the just for the unjust that he might bring us to God. As a consequence "him hath God highly exalted and given him a name above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess to the glory of the Father"--during the Millennial age.

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