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LETTERS FOR THE EDITOR SHOULD BE SENT TO ALLEGHENY, PA., U.S.A.
BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS AND REMITTANCES

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All Bible Students who, by reason of old age, or other infirmity or adversity, are unable to pay for this Journal, will be supplied FREE if they send a Postal Card each June stating their case and requesting its continuance. We are not only willing, but anxious, that all such be on our list continually and in touch with the Studies, etc.

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1908--VOLUNTEER MATTER--1908

FOR TRACT DISTRIBUTION we always recommend the January issue of the "Old Theology Quarterly." Thus the same matter is being circulated everywhere. We still advise that the distribution be from house to house except where Catholics or Jews are predominant. The tracts are "nested" --four different kinds folded together--so that when they are unfolded in a home several persons may be served and exchange with each other; and one of the four tracts is pretty sure to interest some one. We have orders with the printers for over 4,000,000 of these quadruple tracts and some of them are already being shipped. Order all you can and will use wisely as free samples. We prepay freight charges. Remember to co-operate with other WATCH TOWER readers in regard to this work. Confer, lay out the territory and order together, stating population you can serve as well as quantity desired.

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DISCIPLES AND BAPTISTS

We desire the co-operation of such of the friends as live in cities and towns where "Baptists" and "Disciples" reside. If you are willing to assist address us so stating, and reporting how many of their churches are in your town and the attendance at each, as well as the number who would co-operate with you in the service. "He that reapeth receiveth wages."

FRIENDS NEAR POLISH CHURCHES

We have some Polish literature for those who desire to serve the Polish of their vicinity. Write us, saying how many of these churches you could serve and the attendance at each.

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VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER

FACED BY A SOCIAL CRISIS

REV. WASHINGTON GLADDEN, D.D. (Congregationalist),
expressed himself as follows a
little time ago:--

"It is idle, it is fatuous to hide from ourselves the fact
that we are facing here in the United States of America a
social crisis. The forces which are at work mean destruction.

"The swollen fortunes that many are gloating over are
symptoms of disease. They are not the reward of social service,
they are the fruit of plunder. We have made them possible
only by permitting the gate of opportunity to be made
narrower and the burden of toil more unrequiting for millions
of people. They exist only by our acts. A society which tolerates
such conditions cannot live.

"It is because we have begun to have some dim conception
of this truth that we are moving now toward the correction
by law of these great injustices. We must exterminate
them; that is the fight in which there must be no faltering.
If we would not be destroyed we must destroy the destroyer.
This is the truth which our brave President, by word and deed,
is always enforcing upon us, and he is entirely and everlastingly
right about it.

"What has the Christian Church been doing while the
powers of piracy and plunder have been gathering their forces
and spreading their net and heaping up their spoils? Where
was the Christian Church when the grafters were ravaging
the cities, and the rebaters and the frenzied financiers and the
insurance sharks were getting in their work? For the most
part she has been standing by and looking on, winking her
eyes and twiddling her thumbs, and wondering whether she
had any call to interfere. Indeed she has gathered into her
communion many of the most conspicuous of the perpetrators
of the injustices--they are nearly all church members--and
has made herself a pensioner upon their bounty, and has been
content with preaching to them the simple gospel that such
men always love to hear.

"The fact is plainly apparent that the Church has lost its
grip on the world, and she is not going to regain it until she
finds out what is her real business in the world. Let her address
herself to that with faith and courage and she will soon
find her resources returning."

DEMONISM ATTRIBUTED TO SUPERSTITION

We must not blame intelligent people for considering
witchcraft, spiritism, clairaudience and clairvoyance
to be merely products of superstition and imagination.
We, too, would have been so inclined but
for the Word of God on the subject and various corroborating
experiences. And herein lies a part of the
danger. When the unbelieving are suddenly made
aware that there is really an intelligent occult influence
at work, they are amazed that they have been favored
to have demonstrations of and to appreciate a truth of
which so few know. They delve into its mysteries

as they would not have done had they not previously considered it all a fake--especially if the proofs reach them along innocent, amusing or ludicrous lines. Note the testimony of our home city, which is doubtless paralleled in other cities. The extract is from The Pittsburg Post:

A WAVE OF SUPERSTITION

Superintendent Bell, of the Humane Society, made the startling statement that he is daily besieged with requests to arrest and punish supposed sorcerers who have cast "spells" about their victims and are driving them to the verge of lunacy.

It is to be expected that with such a great cosmopolitan population as Allegheny enjoys, superstitions transplanted from faraway lands would flourish among the foreign and negro elements. The negro and Latin races will probably always be inclined to superstition. Traces of the doctrines of the voodooes or witch-doctors of Africa, the legends and folklore of Europe and the fantastic superstitions of the Orient are to be found within the very shadows of our churches and in the midst of our civilization. Even educated Italians are to be found who believe profoundly in the influence of the "evil-eye," and almost every race has its pet superstition, but it is neither the negroes nor foreign classes who have alarmed the officials by appealing from the evils of superstition, as the many cases which have been brought to the attention of Superintendent Bell are almost without exception native-born white persons.

Mr. Bell said:

"It seems almost ridiculous to talk of persons being literally ruined by 'hoodoos' and evil 'spells' cast upon them by mysterious conjurers in these enlightened times, and if I had not the evidence of my own eyes I would doubt the truth of many of the cases which are to be found upon our records. Never before in my long experience in the Humane Society have I known evil superstition to be so prevalent and to have

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such alarming results. The epidemic is growing worse every day and it is time for some radical action to be taken.

"One of the first cases called to my attention seemed to me to be particularly distressing, as I had known the victim of the delusion before she came under the 'influence' of some alleged evil spirit. An attractive young woman and exceedingly capable stenographer who had been employed for years by a well-known alderman came to me and told me that she had been forced to give up her employment, as she could not work on account of a 'spell' having been cast upon her; she said that voices came to her while she was at work, calling upon her to 'come, come, come,' and whispering strange things in her ears, driving her to distraction.

"I laughed at the girl when she asked me to stop the people who were hounding her, but she came back again and again, and as she seemed to be a nervous and mental wreck from harping on the one subject and brooding over the ever-present spirit voices, I resolved to investigate the case and if possible arrest and make an example of the person who had so worked upon her mind as to wreck her life. She said that she had been to spiritualistic circles and a certain medium had cast the spell upon her. My investigation secured no evidence, as every person she mentioned professed entire ignorance of the matter.

PUZZLING CASES COME TO LIGHT

"The affair puzzled me, as I saw that the girl was really seriously affected by the delusions. She was unable to keep any position, not even where only the simplest housework was involved, and she is today sinking lower and lower in the social scale. Other cases which have been brought to my notice in great numbers during the past few months are just as puzzling. Although such investigations are really outside of my jurisdiction, I am willing to make every effort to have a test case of the prosecution of the persons responsible for this deplorable condition of affairs if I can secure the evidence. Positive proof must be secured, however, that some person is responsible for the wrecking of a life in this manner. An attempt to try a case with little evidence would only result in failure, as such a case is sure to seem ridiculous to the skeptical. In no one of the many cases has such evidence been produced, but still the victims come with their complaints, and they are increasing in number every day.

"Not only women, but men come to me, and one and all complain of being mesmerized, hypnotized or enchanted in some manner by persons who wish to persecute them.

"Just last week a nice little woman and her husband came to me and asked that I stop the people who had cast a spell over them and were hounding them to death by sending spirits constantly about with them wherever they went. The man was a big, husky fellow, and I inquired particularly if he drank. I thought it might be some other kind of spirits which was annoying him, but they stuck to their story and seemed to believe firmly in the delusion.

"Persons of all walks of life are among the complainants,

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but the majority of them have been attending spiritualistic circles and associating with mediums before the 'voices' begin to bother them. One man who was a solicitor was forced to give up his work, as a 'voice' constantly whispered to him, and it apparently was not the 'still, small voice' of his conscience.

"Probably the saddest of these cases which I have had called to my attention was that of a young girl whom I had aided years ago when she came under my jurisdiction. She was a healthy, strong girl then, but when she came to my

office the other day she was a physical wreck, nervous, shivering, with fear depicted in her every expression. I was told by the people whose home she was leaving that they did not care to have her there any longer, as she imagined that someone was talking to her all the time. In her tearful story she told me the 'voices' never leave her."

ARE NOT ANARCHISTS DEMENTED?

The most charitable view of the following news item from the public press is to suppose the writer and his friends demented. Of foreign birth, born under unfavorable conditions, their minds seem to be poisoned. And yet many Socialists feel aggrieved when we point out that the end of Socialism will be anarchy! Unsuccess, want and hopeless despair will eventually produce just such dementia in very many. The item reads:

Court action will probably follow the publication of a "call to arms" printed in LaQuestion Sociale, the leading organ of the anarchists in Paterson, N.J., and given wide circulation. The attention of Prosecutor Emly has been called to the article and he said today that he is looking up the law to see if legal steps can be taken against the editors because of the publication.

Among other things the article says:

"We invite everybody to get together and arm themselves. Seventy-five per cent. have only a knife in the house which will cut only onions. It will be a good thing for everybody to have a gun. When we are ready the first thing to do is to break into the armory and seize rifles and ammunition. The next thing is to get help of the police station and then the chief of police will ask for soldiers.

"Even at that the dynamite is easy to get. Twenty-five cents worth will blow a big iron door down. We don't want to forget that dynamite will help to win. Two or three of us can defy a regiment without war. We will start when no one is thinking anything about it. Then we can beat them man for man.

"At that time show no sympathy for soldiers. As soon as we get hold of the police-station it is our victory. The thing is to kill the entire force. If not, they will kill us."

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WAS IT NOT NECESSARY?

"And he said to them, O thoughtless and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Messiah to have suffered these things, and

to enter his glory? And beginning at Moses and through all the prophets, he explained to them in all the Scriptures concerning himself." Luke 24:25-27--Diaglott.

THE OCCASION of this utterance will be remembered: our Lord thus addressed two of his disciples on the way from Jerusalem to Emmaus after his resurrection. They were discussing the strange and wonderful event of the few days previous, when a stranger suddenly drew near and, walking with them, said, "What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another as ye walk and are sad?" And, not recognizing the stranger as the Lord himself, one of them said, "Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?" And he said unto them, "What things?" And they said unto him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how the chief priests and our rulers

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delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel; and beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women, also of our company, made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre, and when they found not his body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. And some of those with us went to the sepulchre and found it even as the women had said; but him they saw not."

Then follow our Lord's words, "O thoughtless and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Was it not necessary for the Messiah to have suffered these things, and to enter his glory?" The necessity of those things was the great lesson which he endeavored to impart to these confused and bewildered but earnest disciples.

From the standpoint of Christians today, the necessity of those things is much more easily discerned than from the standpoint of the early disciples in close proximity to those marvelous events. But, nevertheless, there are some now who thoughtlessly stumble into very erroneous conclusions, drawn from a reckless and heedless interpretation of the Master's plain teaching. They say, Yes, it was necessary for Christ to suffer because the path of suffering is the only path to glory. Christ had to suffer and so all must suffer; and the glory will follow as a natural consequence, as these words of the Lord teach. This is a very plausible argument to many who lean too much to their own understanding. A more reflective mind

would say, No, that is not sound logic; for the glory of Jehovah was not attained through suffering; neither was that of the angels, nor of the Son of God in his pre-human existence. And a more attentive mind would say, No, that was not the ground of necessity for his sufferings to which the Lord referred; for he called attention to the divinely inspired prophecies which of necessity must be thus fulfilled; that the suffering was necessary, because it was a feature of Jehovah's plan for human redemption, and was so expressed by the prophets; and we know that unless it were a feature of that plan, Jehovah would not have required it. The Apostle Paul tells why it was necessary to the plan, saying that it was in order to manifest Jehovah's righteousness in remitting the sins of the already condemned world, showing that he is just, and yet the justifier of the condemned ones who believe in Jesus, whom God sent forth to be a propitiation, a satisfaction, a substitute for them--who also freely gave his life as a man, his humanity, a ransom for the many--for the numerous posterity of Adam who had inherited his sin and condemnation.--Rom. 3:26.

Hear again the significant query of the Master, "Was it not necessary for the Messiah to have suffered these things?" The query is designed to awaken the thoughtless to a close observance of the justice and wisdom of Jehovah's course in this matter. Suppose for a moment that God had promised mankind salvation from death without this, which our Lord terms a "necessary" provision, what would have been the result? Thoughtful minds will at once see that such a course would have proved: (1) That God is a changeable God, declaring at one time that the wages of sin is death, and afterwards reversing his decision and granting life to the condemned; (2) That either in the first or in the second case he was unjust--either that the penalty of death was too severe and, therefore, unjust, or else, if it were not unjust but a righteous penalty, that he was unjust in reversing such a righteous decision; (3) Such a variable course would unsettle all confidence in God. We would be led to question continually his righteousness and wisdom, and could never feel assured against a sudden and unaccountable change of his attitude and dealing toward us. If he promised us life and happiness today, we could not know that tomorrow he would not take back his word and consign us to misery or death.

Such would have been our sad condition had not this necessity to which our Lord referred been fully met by the sufferings, even unto death, of "the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all," in compliance with the wise and just plan of God for human redemption. (I Tim. 2:6.) By this means mankind is justly released from the just penalty which God pronounced against us; for a loving, benevolent Redeemer took our human nature and then sacrificed it

in our behalf--thus bearing, in our stead, the exact penalty due to Adam and inherited from him by all his posterity. Thus our debt was paid, and all who have faith to believe in the promise of life through Christ are now legally free from the condemnation under which they were born, though the appointed time for their actual release has not yet come. They hold in their possession a promissory note--the sure covenant of Jehovah--sealed with the precious blood of Christ, and payable at the "time appointed," the Millennial Age. Thus they are free men in Christ; they are saved by faith, though they still "walk through the valley of the shadow of death." And, comforted by the rod of divine discipline and the staff of divine counsel and favor, they fear no evil, knowing that in due time the promise of everlasting life shall be fully verified to them.

But there was another feature of necessity in the divine plan, to which our Lord referred--"Was it not necessary" also "for the Messiah to enter his glory?" The question is to you and to me, as well as to those early disciples; and the fact of its being propounded implies our ability to discern the necessity. Yes, it was necessary. Why? Because we needed, not only a redeemer to assume and cancel our past indebtedness, but also an able teacher and leader--a prophet and king--to break the fetters of sin and death and lead us out of our bondage. If the promise of life and liberty were given alone, without such help, we would still be in the same sad state; for the prison-doors of death are strong and securely barred and bolted, and we cannot burst them open; and the fetters of sin and sickness, of mental, moral and physical imbecility, are firmly clasped about us, and we have not the power to shake them off. And so we feel the necessity of a mighty deliverer, as well as of a loving redeemer. And, thank God, in his only begotten and well beloved Son we have both. He is our Deliverer, as well as our Redeemer, our Saviour, our Prophet, our Priest, and our King--strong to deliver and mighty to save; for though as a man he sacrificed all that he then had--his humanity--even unto death, God, accepting that sacrificed

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humanity as the price of our redemption, renewed his existence in a higher nature--even in his own divine likeness. And thus this second necessity of the divine plan is met in the provision of one who has "all power in heaven and in earth given unto him," and who is therefore abundantly able, not only to awaken the redeemed race from the silence of death, but also to establish fully all of those who desire and will accept of his favor in everlasting righteousness and consequent worthiness of eternal life. Thus, through the blessings of his kingly and priestly office, he will, in

due time, present all the willing and obedient faultless before the presence of Jehovah's majesty, to receive his benediction and to enter fully into the eternal joys of his loving favor. "In his presence is fullness of joy, and at his right hand [in his favor] there are pleasures forevermore."--Psa. 16:11.

Consider, then, oh thoughtless ones, how necessary it was that the Messiah should both suffer death, and also enter his glory. Both the humiliation and the exaltation meet our necessities in such a marvelous way that we clearly recognize the fact that only divine wisdom and love and benevolence and grace could have planned the wondrous scheme. "Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Not only was the death and resurrection and exaltation of Christ thus necessary to God's plan of salvation as viewed from a philosophical standpoint, which the Lord would have us thoughtful enough to observe, but as viewed from the standpoint of prophecy the necessity is also clear; and we should not be slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.

Beginning at Moses, the Lord traced this line of prophesy for the two with whom he conversed, showing how it had been fulfilled in himself; and though his words are not recorded, we still have Moses and the prophets and can read them for ourselves. Moses said to Israel, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him shall ye hearken." (Deut. 18:15.) And here, in the risen Christ, was the beginning of the fulfilment of that promise. Moses had also in the typical ceremonies of the Day of Atonement prefigured both the sacrificial sufferings and the subsequent glory of Christ. The sacrifice of the bullock (Lev. 16:11) prefigured the former, and Aaron--in his robes of typical glory and beauty coming out of the tabernacle after the sacrifice had been accomplished and the blood presented in the "Most Holy" as a typical propitiation for the sins of Israel, and lifting up his hands and blessing the people, who until then were lying prostrate on the ground to represent the whole human race in death--prefigured the resurrection glory of Christ and his coming out of the Most Holy presence of Jehovah to bless the whole world in the Millennial Age. (See "Tabernacle Shadows of Better Sacrifices.") Was it not indeed necessary to the fulfilment of these divinely instituted types, says our Lord, for the Messiah to suffer these things and to enter his glory?

Again, Moses testifies of Christ in recording the incidents of the typical sacrifice of Isaac by his father, Abraham, who received him again from the dead in a figure (Gen. 22:1-18; Heb. 11:19), thus prefiguring Jehovah's offering of his only begotten Son and receiving him again from the dead.

Again, there were all those prophecies which so particularly described the circumstances of his death-- "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth;" "He made his grave with the wicked (the sinful human race), and with the rich (in the tomb of the rich man, Joseph of Arimathea--Matt. 27:57-60), in his death" (Isa. 53:7,9); "He keepeth all his bones; not one of them is broken" (Psa. 34:20); "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell (sheol, the grave), neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption" (Psa. 16:10); "They pierced my hands and my feet;" "They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture;" "They gave me also gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." (Psa. 22:16,18; 69:21.) How minutely all of these have been fulfilled!

And Isaiah (53:5) said, "He was wounded [not for his own, but] for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." And Daniel (9:26) said, "Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself." And Zechariah (13:1) said, "There shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness." Then they told of his glorious reign, saying, "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin,....the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand," "He will swallow up death in victory."-- Isa. 53:10; 25:8.

Yes, it was necessary to the fulfilment of all these prophecies that Christ should both suffer death and that he should also enter his glory; and in these blessed facts all thoughtful believers may rejoice. A little while and all the faithful, as members of his Body, shall have filled up the measure of his sufferings and shall enter his glory. Then shortly his glory will be revealed, and all flesh shall see it; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.--Isa. 40:5.

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"I GO THAT I MAY AWAKE HIM"

--JOHN 11:1-57.--APRIL 12--

Golden Text:--"I am the resurrection and the life."--V. 25.

TOWARD the conclusion of our Lord's ministry the opposition of the rulers of the Jewish Church became very bitter, causing Jesus to leave Judea for Berea. He remained for some little time near the place where John was preaching at

the time of his own baptism. It was while he was there that word was received from Martha and Mary at Bethany, saying, "Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick." From this we know that Lazarus, their younger brother, was a very dear friend of Jesus. The message was brief; it did not urge him to come nor ask a miraculous intervention; it merely stated the fact.

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In some respects it was a grand model of a Christian prayer. The Lord's people may always go to him with full confidence in his sympathy and loving interest in all of their affairs, temporal and spiritual. At first they may feel disposed to ask that their own wills be done on earth if not in heaven, but subsequently, if their spirit of consecration and growth in grace continue, they should reach the place where, like Mary and Martha, they would be content to state their troubles to the Lord and wait for him, thankfully accepting as wisest and best whatever he may be pleased to grant.

Then Jesus said, doubtless in the hearing of the messenger that he might report the same, "This sickness is not unto death, but that the Son of God may be glorified thereby." We are not to suppose that our Lord was mistaken, that he expected that Lazarus would not die, rather that the result would not be continuous death, knowing that he would awaken him. When, two days later, Jesus proposed returning to Bethany in Judea, and the disciples were fearful, our Lord indicated to them that there would be no particular danger. He foreknew all the circumstances and perceived that the miracle he intended to perform would disconcert his enemies long enough to permit of his return to Berea a little later. He explained to them the reason for the visit saying, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go that I may awake him out of sleep." Later he brought this statement down to their comprehension by saying to them plainly, Lazarus is dead.

There is so much in the view point on every subject. From the standpoint of actual fact, barring the divine purpose of mercy and resuscitation, it would have been proper to speak of Lazarus as being dead in the same sense as we would speak of a brute as being dead. But from the standpoint of faith in God and in the promise made to Abraham, that in his Seed all the families of the earth should be blessed--from this standpoint Lazarus was not dead as a brute beast, but was merely inanimate for a time, awaiting the Lord's due time to call him forth, to re-animate him, to awaken him from the sleep of death. Our Lord stated this on another occasion to the Sadducees, who denied a future life, denied a resurrection, saying, "That the dead are to be raised, Moses showed at the

bush, when he called the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." (Luke 20:37.) Our Lord's argument on this is that if Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were dead in the sense that a brute beast is dead, without hope of an awakening, a resurrection, he would not call himself their God. Our Lord closes up the argument by saying that from God's standpoint all live unto him.

And our standpoint must be the divine standpoint; we must learn to think in harmony with this divine testimony. Hence we have hope, not only for Christians, saints who have died in Christ, but we have also hope for the world of mankind--"asleep in Jesus." Their condition would indeed be actual death, the same as a brute beast, were it not that the Lord has provided in Jesus for their resuscitation. But since such provision has been made, we are to think of the world of mankind as not being extinct, but merely asleep. All those, therefore, who accept the teaching of the divine Word, "sorrow not as others who have no hope; for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, let us also believe that those who sleep in Jesus [those who are included in the benefit of his sacrifice, those who are redeemed by the precious blood, all the race of Adam] will God bring from the dead by him." (I Thess. 4:13,14.) By him the Church will first be raised up, to be made partakers of his resurrection, the First Resurrection, the Chief Resurrection, sharers of his glory, honor and immortality. By him, then, during the Millennial Age, all the families of the earth shall be awakened, brought forth from sheol, from hades, brought to a knowledge of the truth--yea, and if they will receive the message into good and honest hearts, they will be lifted entirely out of sin and death conditions up to the full perfection of restitution and life everlasting through him. Well, indeed, may all those who trust in Jesus rejoice in him and sorrow not in the presence of death, as do others.

"FRIENDS SORROWING AND JESUS GLAD"

The celebrated Charles Spurgeon, preaching on this subject, took this as the title of his discourse from the text, "I am glad for your sakes I was not there, to the intent that ye may believe; nevertheless let me go unto him." It is well for the Lord's people, when in a time of stress and trouble, sickness, pain and sorrow, to look with faith toward the Lord, remembering that their tears and troubles may be made to them, under the Lord's providence, a great blessing. We have an illustration in this lesson: Martha and Mary, ministering to their sick brother, thought of how the Lord loved him and sent him a message respecting Lazarus' condition, leaving the matter in his hands, trusting to his wisdom and grace,

and yet were allowed to pass into the still darker shadows of the sepulchre. The brother died and was buried. Yea, the Master whom they trusted

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in as the Messiah had not alleviated the sickness, had not hindered the dying, had even allowed several days to elapse without a message to them, and Jesus, speaking of all this, said, "I am glad." How shall we understand this? The explanation is given further in our Lord's words, "I am glad for your sakes." So with us it may likewise be true that the Lord will be glad to permit our trials and sorrows and tears and difficulties for our sakes, that we may thus receive some important lessons which we could not otherwise so well learn. One of our lessons is that we must trust the Lord where we cannot trace him, that we must remember his promise that "all things shall work together for good to them that love him." In the case under consideration the sickness and death of a brother were part of the all things, and doubtless were inscrutable providences to the two sisters. Nevertheless, these very experiences no doubt helped in the working out of valuable lessons, and no doubt were preparations for closer communion with the Lord and for the eternal things.

The noble devotion of the Lord's apostles is well illustrated in the words of one of them: Thomas, addressing his fellow-disciples, urged that they should not abandon the Master, that if he intended to go to Judea they should go with him--"let us also go, that we may die with him." This was the spirit of courage which the twelve shared when they accompanied the Lord, and it helps to reconcile us to their apparent cowardice on the night of his betrayal, a cowardice which was incited by our Lord's own refusal to accept

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assistance. It was these men who risked their lives to accompany the unpopular Prophet, as they supposed, to death, and who later forsook him and fled. The lesson to us in this connection is that some of us who feel courageous for the Lord and his cause and ready to die therefor, need indeed to watch and pray that we maintain this disposition and not succumb in the hour of stress.

THE JEWS WAILED, JESUS WEPT

It was the custom of the time to have a funeral service of mourning for seven days. Apparently Martha and Mary and Lazarus were of a wealthy, influential family and on the occasion of their bereavement many friends came to sympathize with them,

to mourn with them. Jesus did not consider it the part of wisdom to go to the home, which he knew would be crowded with mourners, and then go to the tomb, so he remained a little distance from Bethany and sent word. When the word came that Jesus was nearing, Martha went out to meet him; but Mary, bowed with her grief and perhaps disappointed that the Lord's word, "This sickness is not unto death, but unto the glory of God," had seemingly failed, still sat in the house, went not to meet him, as though by her actions she would say, "We hoped much, Lord, down to the very last, but now it is too late; you allowed the favorable opportunity to pass. We are in the midst of our sorrow. How could anything now avail us? Lazarus is dead." Martha's greeting, when she came to the Lord, was, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother would not have died; but I know that even now whatsoever thou shalt ask of God, he will give thee." There was in this remark something of a suggestion of chiding, as though she had said, Why did you not come? but still I have faith in you, I realize that you are the Messiah. Our Lord's reply was,

"THY BROTHER SHALL LIVE AGAIN"

It should be noticed that our Lord did not say, Thy brother is not asleep, thy brother is not dead, but that he pointed her mind to the resurrection. Are we wiser than he? May we, as his disciples, teach anything different or in contradiction to what he said? Martha's answer showed that she understood him well and that she had the general view of all believing Jews at that time, namely, that there was a hope for the dead, both of the just and of the unjust, in the resurrection, at the last day, at the end of the age when the last great day of the great seven-thousand year week shall be ushered in. Our Lord did not contradict her thought, but wished to lead her gradually to a realization of what he desired to do on this occasion and therefore explained that the resurrection power by which all the dead should be awakened in due time was lodged in himself--"I am the resurrection and the life." Every believer in him, even though he were dead, shall yet live, and whosoever then shall live and still believe in him shall never die. Our Lord inquired of Martha if she believed this view of his power and future work. She replied that she did, that she accepted him as the Messiah, the Son of God foretold to come. Then she went secretly to her sister Mary, saying, "The Master is here and calleth for thee."

Whatever disposition Mary had to resent our Lord's apparent indifference and carelessness of their interest, it all vanished now when she heard that the Master had called for her. She went forth to the place where he was, which evidently was in the direction of the tomb, for the Jews who were mourning with

her in the house followed her, saying, "She is probably going to the tomb to weep there." And so when later on our Lord inquired, "Where have you laid him," we are not to take it as an indication that he did not know, but rather that it was his polite manner of saying, Shall we now go to the tomb? Lead the way. Truly he who saw Nathanael under the fig tree not only knew that Lazarus had been dead four days, but also knew where he was buried. He who "needed not that any man tell him what was in man" would surely know of lesser matters more easily discerned.

When Mary saw the Lord all thought of resentment fled; she fell at his feet and embraced them and through her tears merely said, "Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother would not have died." The occasion was a soul-stirring one--our Lord's beloved friend in tears at his feet, numerous Jews weeping with her, or, according to the Greek original, wailing. What effect did this have upon our Lord? Was he cold, stern, forbidding? No! True to the record, he was "touched with a feeling of our infirmities." (Heb. 4:15.) He was full of sympathy, he fully appreciated the real meaning of death--that it is a curse, an awful curse, which rests upon our race. He said nothing by way of assuring Mary that Lazarus was in heaven, for he spake the truth, declaring on another occasion, "No man hath ascended up to heaven."--John 3:13.

On the contrary, entering deeply into the affliction that is resting upon our race, under which the Apostle says "the whole creation groaneth," our Lord wept. This verse, "Jesus wept," the shortest in the Bible, brings to us a wealth of assurance that our Lord is sympathetic, that he knoweth our frame, that he remembereth that we are dust; and it is one of the best assurances that he appreciates all that he has promised us in the declaration that our trials shall all work together for good to us if we are his and if we are rightly exercised thereby. It is worthy of note here that while the word used in connection with the weeping of the others indicates wailing, it is not so with the Greek word which refers to our Lord's weeping; he shed tears, but lifted not up his voice in grief; he groaned in spirit and was troubled, he heaved sighs, he entered fully into the sorrow of his friends. And is not this a lesson to all of his followers, that they, with propriety also, may weep with those who weep, as well as rejoice with those who rejoice?

The Jews who were with Jesus noted and commented upon his sympathy, saying, "Behold how he loved him," but others criticised him saying, This is the miracle-worker. Could he not have helped his friend if he really loved him?

So there are some to day inclined to criticise the Lord for permitting sickness, sorrow and death and who inquire whether the power of God is lacking or the willingness of God lacking that he does not overthrow,

restrain these adverse influences now afflicting the human family. The language of faith is,--

"Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust him for his grace;
Behind a frowning providence,
He hides a smiling face."

The tomb was a grave with a stone at its mouth, and Jesus directed that this should be moved. Of

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course, the same power that could awaken the dead would have been quite sufficient to roll away the stone also, but it seems to have been a rule with our Lord never to do anything by miraculous power that could as well be done by human agency. We may profitably apply this lesson to all the affairs of life and, in harmony with it, when we come to our Lord with our griefs and troubles and perplexities and ask for his blessing and overruling providences, should not expect any special intervention in matters that are possible to us. Indeed, we doubtless would lose a blessing thereby. Who can doubt that the men who rolled away the stone from the mouth of that sepulchre had a blessing afterward in connection therewith as they thought over the matter or told others that they themselves had rolled away the stone! Who can doubt that it helped to impress the importance of the miracle upon them! Let us, then, do with our might whatever we may be able to do and wait patiently for the Lord in connection with things for which our arm is too short.

"HE HATH BEEN DEAD FOUR DAYS"

It was the same Martha who a little while before had said, Even now I know that whatsoever thou shalt ask of God, he will hear thee, and who now protested against the moving of the stone from the sepulchre, saying, "Lord by this time he stinketh, for he hath been dead four days." She probably knew that

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the Lord had awakened Jairus' daughter and the widow of Nain's son, but those were cases in which the animation had been suspended but a little while. In this case, after putrefaction set in, neither she nor others would expect that any power imaginable could recover the dead. It was with this in view, doubtless, that our Lord said beforehand, "I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent that you might believe." It was to be a special lesson not only to his dear friends, Martha and Mary, but also to his dear disciples, and more than this, to all those who would

believe through his Word. It was a most stupendous miracle!

Before commanding Lazarus to come forth our Lord prayed audibly before his disciples and before the multitude of mourners. Here our Lord gave sanction to public prayer, showing that when he objected to the prayers of the Pharisees on the street corners, it was because the time and place, etc., were unsuitable and because they prayed to be seen and heard of men. But in his own case he was acknowledging the Father that all those who stood by might take knowledge that not by his own power, but by the Father's power, as the Finger of God, he worked these miracles.

"I know that thou hearest me always, but because of the people which stand by, I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me." After this brief prayer he cried with a loud voice, or commanded in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth"--not secret mumbling, not incantations, not legerdemain. Quite to the contrary. And this miracle in various particulars evidently foreshadowed our Lord's coming glorious work, when, surrounded by his glorified Church, the message from on high shall be to all that are in their graves, "Come forth." (John 5:28.) Then Lazarus came forth bound hand and foot, wrapped with linen cloths. We can imagine better than describe the wondrous awe of those who stood by. And it was necessary that Jesus should call them to a realization of their privilege, saying, "Loose him and let him go," for in his burial his jaw had been bound, his limbs wrapped, etc. The miracle was well timed, not only for the benefit of the sorrowing sisters, but also for the benefit of their Jewish friends, many of whom, seeing this miracle, believed on him; and in the interest of the apostles, also, who would be better prepared thereby for the tests which were to come to them a little later in connection with our Lord's crucifixion.

Meantime, some of the witnesses went their way and related matters to the Pharisees, with the result that the latter became all the more determined that our Lord must die--not because he had done evil works, not because they believed him a bad man, but because they were so thoroughly wrapped up in their own plans and purposes in connection with their nation. Their argument was that if Jesus proceeded with his work it would not be long before the masses of the people would be ready to flock to him, with the result that the Roman government, which had given them much liberty in the control of their national and Church affairs, would take matters entirely out of their hands and thus their rebellion and their government would be entirely overthrown. It seemed to them to be an emergency case which called for drastic treatment. Similar, we believe, will be the attitude of ecclesiasticism a little later on in the present harvest time toward the last members of the Body of Christ. What

the Sanhedrin there did in determining to oppose Jesus, the federation of churches will probably do in the way of opposing "Present Truth"--after the federation shall have become thoroughly organized and vitalized. (Rev. 13:15.) The plea was that we must do this for the good of the cause. Their mistake was in too much self-confidence, too much self-reliance upon their own theories as to how the Kingdom of heaven was to be established. The mistake which will be made by the Sanhedrin of our day will be along similar lines. Praying for centuries, "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done," they have entirely misconceived the meaning of the words, so that the preludes to the Kingdom will appear to them inharmonious and as causing destruction.

WHERE WAS LAZARUS?

We have our Lord's word for it that Lazarus was not in heaven, for he said, "No man hath ascended up to heaven." Indirectly we have the Apostle Peter's testimony also to the same effect, for, speaking of the Prophet David, he declares, "David has not ascended into the heavens." (Acts 2:34.) Where was Lazarus? What account did he give of himself? Not a word is there written on the subject. He had no account to give of himself; he was nowhere, he was dead. Our Lord lifted his eyes in addressing the Father in heaven, but afterwards, when he spoke to Lazarus, he addressed the tomb, "Lazarus, come forth," and the dead came forth from the tomb. This, as we have seen, is a picture, a demonstration, of the power of the Lord to testify in advance of how he eventually will be the resurrection power to the whole world. And he himself describing that coming exercise of power represented it in the same general tenor, saying, "Marvel not at this: the hour is coming in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth" (John 5:28), some to full perfection in the First Resurrection, the remainder to be merely awakened

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as was Lazarus, but, unlike him, to be then granted an opportunity for anastasis, raising up completely out of sin and death conditions to the full perfection of human nature--a resurrection by judgments or disciplines, rewards and stripes.

According to the erroneous view which has become so popular throughout Christendom, Lazarus, who was a special friend of Jesus and one whom he loved, must have been in heaven--not in either purgatory or hell. But how strange it would be, if after he had been in heaven for several days, Jesus should do him the unfriendly act of calling him back to earth life--and with what haste he must have returned if he laid

aside a crown or palm or harp! No! no! All this belongs to the foolish imagination and is thoroughly out of harmony with the precious lesson of our Golden Text--that Jesus is the resurrection and the life. By his death he secured for Adam and his race a right to re-live and the resurrection power is that by which he will bring mankind forth from under the dominion of death. Lazarus lost consciousness in his sickness at the time of his death, and received consciousness again at the moment of his awakening. In this interim of four days he was in death, asleep; as Jesus said, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth." He was not awake in any sense of the word; as Jesus testified, "I go that I may awake him," and, as the Scriptures elsewhere declare, "The dead know not anything," "There is neither wisdom, knowledge nor device in sheol [hades, the tomb, the sleep of death], whither thou goest."-- Eccl. 9:5,10.

We can fancy the awakening of the whole world, and what a joyful occasion it will be, as one after another they all come forth from the great prison-house of death to be received and welcomed by their friends, and to find the earth enjoying a large measure of restitution blessings and progressing gradually toward the full perfection of Eden, and their friends so far advanced along the way toward perfection and themselves surrounded by the blessings and privileges and opportunities which the Kingdom will afford, with the light of the knowledge of God flooding the whole earth! Oh, how different this will be from what the heathen have been taught and imagined respecting the crossing of the river Styx or their re-incarnation in other forms of animal life! Oh, how different it will be for many who have heard the false doctrine of eternal torment or purgatorial anguish and who died in terror lest this should be their portion! What thankful hearts toward God they will have! Perhaps Satan's lie may eventually redound to the glory of God, and perhaps this is why the Lord has been silent for so long and has permitted his holy name to be so smirched and slandered and his character so traduced!

"THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE"

There is a still deeper thought connected with our Golden Text which we must not pass by. It is this: We who now believe in the Lord and are thereby justified through faith in his blood, and who have heard the call to glory, honor and immortality and who have accepted the same by a full consecration to the Lord--we are sometimes spoken of as already having a new life, the resurrection life, as already having passed from death into life. This, of course, is a figurative use of the words resurrection and life. Reckonedly, we have left the old nature and received the new nature from the Lord through the begetting

of the holy Spirit, and it is this new nature which is to be perfected in the First Resurrection. And since our human natures are reckoned dead from the moment that we are begotten of the Spirit, it is quite reasonable and proper that the Scriptures should speak of our present condition as a resurrected condition; that we have risen out of the old order of life and hope and aim to new conditions; that we have started on the new way to life; that the present experiences are transforming, and that the grand consummation of all this transformation will be the actual change from weakness to power, from the natural body to a spiritual body, from dishonor to glory, when we shall participate actually in the glorious change of the Lord's resurrection.

Let us strive to enter into this rest, this blessing! Faithful is he who has called us to so high a station and privilege, he will also do for us exceedingly, abundantly better than we could ask or think, according to the riches of his grace. "All things are yours, for ye are Christ's and Christ is God's." (I Cor. 3:21,23.) In the meantime, to us who live this figurative resurrection life, the Apostle's words are applicable, For me to live is for Christ to live, for he is represented by us; we are his ambassadors. Meantime we are also to remember that our resurrection hopes are in him; as it is written, "Your life is hid with Christ in God," and, "when he who is our life shall appear, we also shall appear with him in glory."

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JESUS ANOINTED AT BETHANY

--JOHN 12:1-11.--APRIL 19--

Golden Text:--"We love him, because he first loved us."--1 John 4:19.

THE last week of our Lord's earthly ministry was a busy one. The sixth day previous to the Passover was the Jewish Sabbath, which ended at six o'clock in the evening, and it is possible that it was at that time that our Lord and his disciples were entertained by Martha and Mary at "the house of Simon the leper"--probably their father. Lazarus, their brother, whose recovery from death was noted in the previous lesson, was also one of the table-guests.

Our Lord knew that the time of his death was near at hand, and he had given intimations of this to his beloved disciples, but they were so accustomed to having him say wonderful things beyond the power of their comprehension that they probably failed to realize their closeness to the great tragedy of Calvary. This need

not surprise us when we remember the Scriptural declaration that our Lord spake in parables and dark sayings --"and without a parable spake he not unto the people." For instance, his declaration, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." And again, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man shall eat of this bread he shall live

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forever." And again, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." (John 2:19; 6:51,53.) Having in mind such unusual language, the apostles would be entirely excusable in doubting the proper meaning to be attached to our Lord's declaration, "The Son of man must be lifted up," and other similar expressions foretelling his death.

Before coming to the consideration of the Bethany supper and the anointing on that Sabbath evening, let us have before our minds the incidents of the days following it, that we may be able to appreciate our Lord's declaration that the anointing with the spikenard was preparatory to his burial. The next morning (the first day of the week, now usually called Sunday), having sent after the ass, our Lord rode upon it to Jerusalem. The people, recognizing the wonderful miracle wrought upon Lazarus, congregated and hailed him as Messiah, the Son of David, fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah (9:9), and strewed clothing and palm branches in the way (hence this is generally known as Palm Sunday). It was on this occasion that our Lord wept over Jerusalem, and declared, "Your house is left unto you desolate."-- Matt. 23:38.

It is supposed that it was on the second day (Monday) that our Lord scourged the money-changers out of the temple, and taught the people there; and we gather from the narrative that it was in his journey on this day that he pronounced the curse upon "the barren fig tree," supposed to represent the Jewish nation--barren of fruit and therefore rejected. It would appear that the third day (Tuesday) was again spent teaching in the temple, answering questions, etc., and that evening, as they returned again to Bethany, he discoursed with his disciples respecting the great events near at hand. The fourth day (Wednesday) apparently was spent quietly at Bethany, and on the fifth day (Thursday) the disciples made ready the Passover supper which was eaten after six o'clock that evening--the beginning of the sixth day (Friday) according to Jewish reckoning--the 14th of Nisan. The Gethsemane experiences followed that night and the trial before Pilate the next morning, and the crucifixion later.

"BE NOT FORGETFUL TO ENTERTAIN"

Now we come back to witness the hospitalities extended to our Lord six days before the crucifixion, at the house of Simon the leper, the home of Martha and Mary and Lazarus. We are to remember that our Lord was a visitor in those parts--his home, to the extent that he ever had one, being in Galilee, where the most of his time was spent. "He would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him." (John 7:1.) But now the time for his sacrifice had come, and in harmony therewith he came amongst his enemies--although it was known that prominent Jews sought to kill him and also sought the death of Lazarus, who was a living witness to his Messianic power.

We may suppose that this was no ordinary supper, but in the nature of a feast or banquet in our Lord's honor. Nevertheless, one incident connected with it so outshone all its other features that the narrator mentions it alone--the anointing of our Lord with the "spikenard ointment, very costly." Our Lord himself declared, "Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." (Mark 14:9.) It is entirely proper, therefore, that we should examine with some particularity the details of this service so highly esteemed by the Master.

Prof. Shaff says, "By the 'ointment' we are to understand rather a liquid perfume than what we commonly know as ointment." The alabaster box was rather in the shape of a flask or vase, and the breaking of the box (Mark 14:3.) signifies the opening of its tyings and seals by which the precious odors were confined. Judas' words of dissatisfaction furnish us a clue respecting the costliness of this perfume, for he says that it "might have been sold for three hundred denarii." A denarius, translated "penny" in v. 5, is represented as being the average daily wages at that time--"a penny [denarius] a day." (Matt. 20:2.) If we compare these values with present money values, counting farm labor at fifty cents a day (which is certainly a moderate valuation), the three hundred denarii would be the equivalent in wages of one hundred and fifty dollars of our money. Thus we see that the perfume was indeed "very costly." There was nearly a pint of the perfume, a Roman pound being twelve ounces. Nor need we question the possibility of perfumes being so expensive, for even today we have a counterpart in value in the attar of roses made in the far East. It is claimed that four hundred thousand full-grown roses are used to produce one ounce of this perfume, which, in its purity, sells as high as one hundred dollars an ounce, or twelve hundred dollars for the quantity used by Mary in anointing our Lord. It is said that Nero was the first of the Emperors to indulge in the use of costly perfumes for his anointing; but one much more worthy of tribute, homage and anointing with a sweet perfume

was the One whom Mary had the honor to anoint. He was--

"PRINCE OF THE KINGS OF THE EARTH"

Judas was first to object to this as a waste, the difficulty with him being that he loved the Lord too little and money too much. The amount that love is willing to expend for others is, to some extent, at least, a measure of the love. Another Evangelist informs us that several of the disciples, under the influence of Judas' words, took the same view of the matter and spoke disapprovingly of Mary's action. The Apostle John, however, takes this opportunity to throw a little sidelight upon the character of Judas--more than is apparent in the common translation of v. 6. His declaration is, "Now he said this, not because he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the box, and stole what things were deposited in it."--Diaglott.

Our Lord's words, "Let her alone!" were in the nature of a severe reproof to those whose sentiments of love had no other measure than that of money. It was indeed true that there were plenty of poor, and there would still be plenty of poor, and plenty of opportunities

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to minister to them; but the opportunity to specially honor the Lord, and to pour upon him the fragrant odors so beautifully expressive of Mary's love and devotion, would not be for long, and our Lord declares that the circumstances fully justified the costly expenditure. He shows himself out of sympathy with the sentiments which balance themselves too accurately with money values. Moreover, we may esteem that in many instances like the one here recorded the persons who are so careful lest money should be spent except for the poor are often like Judas, so avaricious that very little of whatever money gets into their possession reaches the poor.

On the contrary, it is the deep, loving, benevolent hearts, like that of Mary, which delight in costly sacrifices at times, which also are likely to be deeply sympathetic and helpful to the physically poor. And in our ministrations to others we are not to forget that money is not the only thing of which people are sorely in need--some need love and sympathy who do not need money. Our Lord was one of these: his own heart, full of love, found comparatively little companionship in the more or less sordid minds of even the noblest of the fallen race represented amongst his apostles. In Mary he seemed to find the depth of love and devotion which was to him an odor of sweet incense, of refreshment, of reinvigoration, a tonic: and Mary apparently appreciated, more than did others, the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the Master's character;

she not only delighted to sit at his feet to learn of him, but now delighted, at a great cost, to give him some manifestation of her devotion, her love.

She poured the perfume first upon our Lord's head (Mark 14:3), the usual custom, and then the remainder she poured upon his feet. But the Apostle John, in recording the matter, seems to have forgotten entirely the anointing of our Lord's head, so deeply was he impressed with the still more expressive devotion manifested in the anointing of the feet and the wiping of them with the hairs of her head. It is indeed a picture of love--a devotion well worthy of being told as a memorial.

ACTIONS LOUDER THAN WORDS

Some one has said:--

"She took 'woman's chief ornament' and devoted it to wiping the travel-stained feet of her Teacher; she devoted the best she had to even the least honorable service for him. It was the strongest possible expression of her love and devotion. She gave her choicest treasures in the most self-devoted manner. She was bashful and retiring, and could not speak her feelings, and therefore she expressed them in this manner."

We are not surprised to learn that the whole house was filled with the odor; and we doubt not that the odor remained for a long time: but far more precious than that was the sweet odor of Mary's heart-affections which the Lord accepted and will never forget, and the sweet odor of her devotion which has come down through the centuries to us, bringing blessing to all true hearts who have honored her service and desired to emulate her conduct.

"UNTO ONE OF THE LEAST OF THESE"

It is not our privilege to come into personal contact with our dear Redeemer, but we have, nevertheless, many opportunities for doing that which to some extent will correspond to Mary's act--it is our privilege to anoint the Lord's "brethren" with the sweet perfume of love, sympathy, joy and peace, and the more costly this may be as respects our self-denials, the more precious it will be in the estimation of our Elder Brother, who declared that in proportion as we do or do not unto his brethren, we do or do not unto him. (Matt. 25:40,45.) Moreover, he represents these "brethren" in a figure as "members of his Body"; and from this standpoint we see that, while it is not our privilege to pour the perfume upon the Head of the Body--now highly exalted far above angels, principalities and powers, and every name that is named, next to the Father--it is our privilege to pour the perfume upon the feet of Christ, the last living members of his Church of this

Gospel Age.

We know not to what extent the closing years of this Gospel Age may correspond to the closing days of our Lord's ministry; we know not how similar may be the experiences of the "feet" of the Body of Christ to the experiences of the Head of the Body; we do know, however, that in any event it is our blessed privilege to comfort one another, to encourage one another, to sustain one another, in the trials incident to our "filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ." (Col. 1:24.) And to whatever extent we would improve these opportunities as did Mary, we must first appreciate them as she did.

"LOVE BEGINS AT HOME"

Nothing in this suggestion is intended to imply any neglect of the members of our natural families "according to the flesh"; attentions to these are proper always, and are generally so understood, and should more and more be appreciated and used in proportion as the Lord's people receive freely and fully of his spirit of love--kindness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering. But we emphasize that which the Scriptures emphasize, namely, that our interest and efforts are not to be confined to those of fleshly tie, but, on the contrary, are to be "especially to the household of faith." (Gal. 6:10.) There will be other and future opportunities of doing good to mankind in general, but the opportunity for serving "the Body of Christ" is limited to the present age.

Apropos of this propriety of doing good to others --expressing our love by our conduct as well as by our words, to the members of our families as well as to the members of the Body of Christ--we quote the words of another:

"The sweetest perfume that the home circle ever knows arises from deeds of loving service which its members do for each other. The sweetest perfumes of our homes do not arise from elegant furniture, soft carpets, elegant pictures, or luxurious viands. Many a home, having all these, is pervaded by an atmosphere

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as tasteless and odorless as bouquets of waxen flowers."

Another has said:--

"If my friends have alabaster boxes full of fragrant perfume of sympathy and affection laid away, which they intend to break over my body, I should rather they would bring them out in my weary and troubled hours, and open them, that I might be refreshed and cheered with them while I need them....I would rather have

a plain coffin without a flower, a funeral without a eulogy,
than a life without the sweetness of love and sympathy.
...Flowers on the coffin cast no fragrance
backward on the weary road."

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"HUMBLE YOURSELVES, THEREFORE"

--JOHN 13:1-15.--APRIL 26.--

Golden Text:--"A new commandment I give unto you, that
ye love one another, as I have loved you."--John 13:34.

OUR Lord's ministry was about ended. He met
with his twelve chosen disciples to celebrate
the Passover supper, declaring, "I have
greatly desired to eat this Passover with you before I
suffer." (Luke 22:15.) The passover lamb which they
were to eat typified our Lord himself, and the eating of
it by his disciples represents how believers of the
Gospel Age feed upon Christ in their hearts, and
by faith appropriate to themselves the blessings secured
to them through his death, "For even Christ our Passover
[Lamb] is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep
the feast." (I Cor. 5:7,8.) But, inasmuch as Jesus
was the antitypical Lamb, it was appropriate that the
type should be discontinued; and hence it was that our
Lord, following this last typical Supper, instituted the
Memorial Supper of unleavened bread and fruit of the
vine as representing the antitype--his broken body and
shed blood.

According to the Jewish custom the Passover supper
was celebrated by families, and the twelve apostles,
specially chosen by our Lord and giving their allegiance
to him as their Head, constituted the nucleus of the
family of God--whose hearts and hopes and aims were
one--for "ye are all called in one hope of your calling."
(Eph. 4:4.) Judas was not excluded, although our
Lord evidently knew beforehand that it was he who
should betray him. This furnishes us the lesson that,
as followers of Christ, we should not judge one another's
hearts, nor surmise evil. After the evil of the
heart has manifested itself in words or deeds is quite
time enough to separate ourselves from others who
profess the Lord's name and desire to fellowship with
us. True, the evil begins in the heart, before the outward
act, but we should always hope that the brethren
may gain the victory, and should seek to do nothing to
stumble any, but everything to help them to overcome
the influence of the Adversary and the weaknesses of
their own flesh.

John does not give a particular account of the
Passover supper, but seems to bring in merely certain

valuable features and lessons connected therewith and omitted by the other evangelists. His declaration is that our Lord knew beforehand that he had reached the end of his earthly career and was specially solicitous of improving the closing hours with his particular, chosen friends and companions by inculcating some good lessons. "He loved them to the end"--completely, fully; his own sharp trials, present and approaching, did not distract him nor absorb his attention. He was, as heretofore, still thinking of and endeavoring to bless others. Nor need we suppose that this love for the twelve applied to them exclusively; rather that he viewed the twelve as the representatives of "them also which should believe on him through their word"--as he expressed the matter in his prayer to the Father. With this view in mind we can realize that what our Lord said and did to the apostles was intended to be applicable and instructive to all who have been his since then.--John 17:20.

SELF-SEEKING A MISTAKE

From Luke's account it would appear that on this occasion there was a strife amongst the apostles, a contention respecting which of them should be esteemed greatest. (Luke 22:24-31.) This strife may not have been solely one of selfishness, in the evil sense of the word, but, partially prompted by love for the Master, it may have been in respect to their several positions at the table, the coveted position possibly being closeness to our Lord's person. We remember how James and John had made request that they might be on the right and on the left of our Lord in the Kingdom, and we remember that in connection with this narrative it is declared that John was next to our Lord, and leaned upon his bosom.

Quite possibly this dispute respecting greatness arose in part from the fact that they were not in this instance treated as guests, but merely had the upper room put at their disposal; having no host, no provision was thereby made for the usual washing of the feet, and it was neglected. The matter of feet-washing in eastern countries, when sandals were worn, was not merely a compliment, but a necessity, the heat of the climate, the openness of the sandals, and the dust of the roads, making it almost indispensable to comfort that the feet be bathed on arriving at the house after a journey. Apparently this question as to which of the twelve was greatest, and as to which should perform the menial service of feet-washing for the others, had developed the fact that none of them was anxious to take the servant's position.

Apparently our Lord permitted them to thus disagree, without settling their dispute, without appointing any of their number to the menial service. He allowed them to think the matter over--time to relent

and reconsider--and they even proceeded to eat the supper, contrary to custom, with unwashed feet.

Then it was that Jesus arose from the supper, laid aside his outer garment, and attaching a towel to the

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girdle of his under-garments, took a basin and a ewer for the water, and began to pour the water and wash the feet of his disciples. It was not the custom of the East to pour the water into the basin and put the foot into the water, but to pour the water upon the foot being washed; thus each had clean water, and little was wasted--for water is much more scarce and precious there than with us. We are to remember also that in the East at that time tables and chairs such as we use were not in vogue. On the contrary, the tables were low and shaped somewhat like a horseshoe, and those who sat really reclined, lying upon the table, with the left elbow resting upon a pillow or divan, their heads toward the inside of the horseshoe, where there was a space provided for the food, and also a space for a servant to enter and place the food. Thus it will be seen that the feet extended backward, and could quite easily be reached without disturbing those who were eating.

"YE ARE CLEAN, BUT NOT ENTIRELY"

Our Lord very evidently had already washed the feet of several of the disciples before he came in turn to Peter. Seemingly none of them offered objection, although no doubt the thought of their own contentions upon this subject, and unwillingness to serve one another, brought them blushes of shame and confusion of face. But when it came to Peter's turn he protested. It would never do, he thought, to permit our Lord to perform so menial a service. He asks, "Lord, dost thou wash my feet?" But our Lord did not stop to reprimand Peter--to give him a thorough "setting down" and scolding, as some of his followers might be inclined to do under such circumstances: he merely insisted on continuing, and treating Peter the same as the others, saying that he would explain the matter later, and that if he washed him not, he could have no part with him.

One cannot help admiring the noble traits in Peter's conduct, even though with the same breath we be forced to acknowledge some of his weaknesses; and herein all the Lord's followers find a lesson of encouragement, for though they find weaknesses and imperfections, if they find also the heart-loyalty to the Lord which was in Peter, they may continue to have courage and hope and to press on as did he, from victory to victory, and at last to have the prize, the reward of faithfulness.

When Peter learned that there was more meaning to the washing of the feet than merely its kindness and

comfort, and its reproof of the lack of the spirit of humility amongst the disciples, he wanted, not only his feet, but also his hands and his head washed. Noble, thorough-going, whole-hearted, fervent Peter! But our Lord explained that this was not necessary, saying, "He who has been bathed has no need except to wash his feet, but is wholly clean." (V. 10--Diaglott.) Public baths were in use at that time, but even after having taken a general bath, on return to the home it was customary to complete the matter by washing the feet; and this seems to be the inference of our Lord's remark. The apostles had been with our Lord, for three years, and under the influence of his spirit of love, meekness, gentleness, patience, humility, had been greatly blessed--by "the washing of water through the Word" spoken unto them.--John 15:3; Eph. 5:26.

HUMILITY DESPISED BY THE WRONG-HEADED

There is an intimation in the Lord's words that the spirit of pride which had manifested itself among them had been inspired to some extent by their treasurer, Judas,--as evil communications always are corrupting. (I Cor. 13:33.) This final lesson from their great Teacher was a very impressive one upon the eleven, whose hearts probably were in the right condition to receive the reproof and the lesson; but upon Judas, although his feet also were washed, the effect evidently was not favorable. The spirit of evil which had entered into him before the supper--the desire to obtain money, and the proposition to obtain it by betraying the Lord, evidently continued with him, and instead of being moved aright by our Lord's humility and service, he was the more moved in the opposite direction--to think little of him. So it is with all who have professed the Lord's name in every time. Those instructions, examples and experiences, which are working out blessing and proving beneficial to some, are proving injurious to others. The Gospel, in its every phase, is either "a savor of life unto life, or of death unto death." As it was God's goodness and mercy that hardened Pharaoh's heart, so it was the love and humility of Jesus that hardened Judas' heart, and these principles are still at work, and may be witnessed in the harvest siftings today.--2 Cor. 2:16; Exod. 7:13.

After accomplishing the work of washing the feet of all, our Lord resumed his outer garment and reclined again at the supper (this was the Passover Supper--the Memorial Supper of bread and wine being instituted afterward). Our Lord now improved his opportunity and explained to them the meaning of what he had done. He pointed out to them that this menial service did not signify that he was not the Lord and Master, but signified that as Lord and Master he was not unwilling to serve the lesser members of Jehovah's family, and to minister to their comfort, even in the

most menial service; and that they should not have been unwilling, but glad to render such service one to another.

The example which our Lord set was not so much in the kind of service (feet-washing) as in the fact of service. Nothing in this example, as we understand it, was in the nature of a ceremony to be performed by the Lord's people annually, weekly, monthly or at any other time; but the principle of his service constituted the example, and is to be observed amongst his followers at all times--they are to love one another and to serve one another, and to consider no service too menial to be performed for each other's comfort and good.

Those who have interpreted this to signify a ceremony similar to the symbolical ceremony of the Memorial Supper and the symbolical ceremony of Baptism are, we think, in error. There seems to be nothing symbolical in it. It is merely an illustration of the principle of humility which is to attach to every affair of life. If any of the Lord's people need washing, or need any other assistance of a menial character, their brethren should gladly and joyfully serve them; and whosoever possesses the spirit of the Lord will surely render such service; but to insist, as some do, that each of the Lord's people should first wash his own

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feet and have them clean, and then that each should wash one another's feet ceremoniously, is contrary to his example which he instructs us to follow. The example was a service, and not an inconvenience and ceremony.

Once a year, on the day before "Good Friday," the pope washes the feet of twelve aged paupers, who are brought from the streets and duly prepared by a preliminary washing in private. The pope's ceremonious washing is done in the presence of many notables. A similar ceremony is performed annually by Emperor Francis Joseph of Austro-Hungary. Neither of these ceremonies, however, is, to our understanding, according to our Lord's example, but contrary to it--likewise the ceremonious washing performed by some denominations of Christians.

All who are truly the Lord's followers should heed carefully and follow exactly the true example of the Master's spirit of meekness, humility and service to the members of his Body. The whole thought is contained in his words, "The servant is not greater than his Lord, neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things [if you appreciate these principles applicable to all the affairs of life], happy are ye if ye do them [if you live according to this rule, loving and serving one another]."--Vs. 16,17.

Feelings of emulation, strife and vain-glory seem to specially beset those of the Lord's people who are

possessed of any degree of talent or ability or honorable situation in life, and especially those who are in influential places in the Church. These, therefore, need to be specially on guard against these besetments of the flesh, remembering that, as some one has said, "There is a pride that looks up with envy, as well as a pride that looks down with scorn." The Lord's followers are to remember that pride in any person, in any station, respecting any matter, is highly reprehensible in God's sight and displeasing to him. "The Lord resisteth the proud, but showeth his favor to the humble." Hence, all who would abide in the Lord's love have need to be very careful along this line--to keep very humble, very lowly in conduct, and particularly in mind.--Jas. 4:6; I Pet. 5:5.

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BEREAN STUDIES ON THE ATONEMENT

THE TEXT BOOK USED FOR THIS COURSE IS
SCRIPTURE STUDIES, SERIES V. (E)

Questions on Study II.--
The Author of the Atonement.

MAY 3

(1) Was the arrangement for an atonement for human sin an afterthought or an original purpose? Who was the author of the arrangement? Has he accomplished his purposes? Page 33, par. 1.

(2) Are the prevalent views on the relations between the Father and the Son correct? If not, wherein is the error? Page 33, par. 2.

(3) State the proper view of the question. What is God's relationship to the plan of atonement? And what Christ's? Page 34.

(4) State the error of the view that our Lord Jesus stands weeping for sinners and importuning the Father for their forgiveness and, as the hymn declares,
"Five bleeding wounds he shows,
They intercede for me."

(5) Let us have five texts on the subject from the apostolic writings, with a brief explanation in each case showing how they apply. Page 35.

(6) Quote from our Lord Jesus' own words on this subject eleven texts and show briefly the application of each. Page 35, last par., and 36.

MAY 10

(7) What does the "scroll" of Rev. 5 represent? Whose was it originally and in whose possession was it when Christ

died? Page 36, par. last.

(8) What is signified by the giving of the "scroll" to the Lamb of God, for him to open it and fulfil its provisions? Page 37.

(9) Did that "scroll" represent the Abrahamic promise or Oath-bound Covenant or "Everlasting Covenant"?--Heb. 6:17-20.

(10) Is it because of the Father's honoring of his Only Begotten Son that we as well as angels should honor him? Page 37.

(11) If the Scroll is the Covenant, how is our Lord Jesus the servant or "Messenger of the Covenant"? And how does he fulfil this service of the Covenant?

(12) Has Christ through his Spirit, the holy Spirit, made known to some the "hidden mystery"--"Christ in you the hope of Glory"? Has he shown us "things to come"?--Rev. 1:1; 4:1; John 16:13-15; Psa. 16:11; 25:14.

MAY 17

(13) What divine law was illustrated in the exaltation of our Lord? Page 38, par. 1.

(14) Cite some Scriptures showing that our Lord's exaltation was dependent on his faithfulness to the Father's will, and that his exaltation is a proof of his faithfulness even unto death. Page 38, par. 2.

(15) What was our Lord's reward and what is the proof thereof? Page 39.

(16) Give the meaning of the name Jehovah. Page 40.

(17) Cite some Scriptures and elucidate them in proof of the heavenly Father's excellent glory and honor and dignity and power. Pages 40 and 41.

MAY 24

(18) To whom is the great name Jehovah applied in the Bible? Page 41, par. 2.

(19) By many it is supposed that the name Jehovah belongs also to our Lord Jesus. Is this correct or not? Page 42, par. 1.

(20) How about the term Jehovah-Tsidkenu found in Jeremiah 23:5,6, apparently applicable to our Lord Jesus? Explain its significance and application. Page 42, par. 2.

(21) Are other Hebrew words used in the Bible showing compounds with the word Jehovah? Page 43, par. 1.

(22) Is the fact that our Lord appeared amongst men before he was "made flesh" (before he assumed the human nature) a justification for the application of the Father's exclusive name, Jehovah, to him? Page 43, par. 2,3.

MAY 31

(23) The Apostle styles our Lord Jesus "The Lord of Glory" (I Cor. 2:8); and in Psa. 24:7-10 Jehovah is mentioned as "King of Glory." Does this justify the thought that Jesus is Jehovah? Page 44, par. 1.

(24) A fifth proof that our Lord Jesus is Jehovah is deduced from the comparison of Isa. 2:2-4 with Micah 4:1-3. What is the proper answer? Page 44, par. 2,3.

(25) What is the proper thought respecting the sixth objection based on a comparison of Psa. 90:1,2 and Micah 5:2? Page 45, par. 1,2,3.

(26) What is the seventh claim on this subject and how should we understand Isaiah 25:6-9? Page 45, last par., and 46, par. 1.

(27) Consider the eighth text offered in proof--Isa. 9:6. Do the titles, Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace prove that Jehovah is another proper name or title for our Lord Jesus? Page 46, par. 2,3.

(28) Do the Scriptures which refer to Jesus as the Arm of Jehovah prove that Jehovah is the proper title for our Lord Jesus? If not why not? Page 46, par. 4, to 47, par. 5.

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1908--VOLUNTEER MATTER--1908

FOR TRACT DISTRIBUTION we always recommend the January issue of the "Old Theology Quarterly." Thus the same matter is being circulated everywhere. We still advise that the distribution be from house to house except where Catholics or Jews are predominant. The tracts are "nested" --four different kinds folded together--so that when they are unfolded in a home several persons may be served and exchange with each other; and one of the four tracts is pretty sure to interest some one. We have orders with the printers for over 4,000,000 of these quadruple tracts and some of them are already being shipped. Order all you can and will use wisely as free samples. We prepay freight charges. Remember to co-operate with other WATCH TOWER readers in regard to this work. Confer, lay out the territory and order together, stating population you can serve as well as quantity desired.

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DISCIPLES AND BAPTISTS

We desire the co-operation of such of the friends as live in cities and towns where "Baptists" and "Disciples" reside. If you are willing to assist address us so stating, and reporting how many of their churches are in your town and the attendance at each, as well as the number who would co-operate with you in the service. "He that reapeth receiveth wages."

FRIENDS NEAR POLISH CHURCHES

We have some Polish literature for those who desire to serve the Polish of their vicinity. Write us, saying how many of these churches you could serve and the attendance at each.

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"THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD"

--I TIMOTHY 3:15.--

"As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ; for by one spirit are we all baptized into one body." ... "There is one body, and one spirit; even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all." ... "After the way which they [many] call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers." ... "Am I become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" If so, then, "I have become a fool for Christ's sake."--I Cor. 12:12,13; Eph. 4:4-6; Acts 24:14; Gal. 4:16; I Cor. 4:10.

THAT during the Gospel Age God has been selecting a Church is admitted by all Christians except Universalists; and that all thus selected constitute the one Church, and that a membership in that one Church can be secured only during the present life--during the Gospel Age--are also generally admitted to be the teachings of the Bible.

And many will admit, also, that our present union with Christ's Body, the Church, though precious, is but a probationary membership, which will be confirmed and made everlasting only by introduction into full membership in the Church triumphant, at the close of this probationary period of the present life.--John 15:5,6; Phil. 3:12-16.

But, while we and other Christians agree that the Church triumphant is to be one Church, and not many churches, there are parts and bearings of the subject regarding which we are not agreed.

We hold that the conditions of the present trial, of all accepted as probationary members of the heavenly Church, are very severe and exacting, and that the selection is consequently much smaller than Christian people generally suppose; that only a "little flock" is now being selected. (Luke 12:32.) Many suppose that the object of our God in calling the Church and promising her high exaltation was merely to save them from everlasting torment. We claim, and find and produce abundant Scripture proof of it, that God's object in this selection, training, discipline and final

exaltation of the Church, is for the ultimate purpose of blessing through them all his fallen, sin-stricken creatures (human and angelic), by granting to all a full, perfect judgment or trial under most favorable conditions, of which perfect knowledge and sufficient help will be the chief elements of favor. Thus seen, the Church is being selected for the great work to be accomplished during the Millennial Age, of restoring "whosoever will" of the fallen ones back to their former estate, and of consigning the wilfully unholy to the Second Death--everlasting punishment--everlasting destruction.

Nor can it be denied that this Scriptural view is much more elevating than the common, selfish view which originated in the great Papal apostasy. Those called out by the hope of sharing in God's plan for doing good to others--blessing "all the families of the earth"--are sure to be few, and spiritually above the masses, who are moved only by a selfish hope of escaping torment.

We also differ from most Christians in that we regard the Church in its present condition as merely in a probationary state. And we further claim that there is only one Church now, even as there will be but one Church in glory; that our Lord and the apostles never recognized any but one Church on earth; that so far from establishing many, or recognizing many, they denounced all efforts to separate into different parties and under different names, as schismatic, sectarian, and contrary to God's will; as injurious, and as an evidence of carnality in all who consented to or aided such divisions of the probationary Church.

Paul's able and pointed reasoning upon this subject is partially obscured by the common translation, yet even there, when attention is called to it, the trend of the Apostle's reasoning is clearly discerned; much more so in that valuable and generally very faithful translation, the Emphatic Diaglott. He exhorts that those teachers who favor divisions in the flock of Christ be "watched," and turned away from; because they are not following the Lord's will, but their own. And he adds, by kind and complimentary words they

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mislead the unsuspecting. (Rom. 16:18.) He reproved the Corinthian Church because of a tendency toward sectarianism among them. (I Cor. 1:10-13; 3:3-6.) They were dividing into Paulites, Apollosites and Peterites, while a few rightly clung to the name Christian.

Each of these teachers had his peculiarities of manner in teaching, which caused some to esteem one, and others another, most highly. But they all had the one Gospel--the one Lord, the one faith and the one

baptism. The spirit of favoritism, which led to factions and divisions, and to the exaltation of sectarian or party names, or to the name of an individual teacher, to be the standard around which to rally, the Apostle declared was an evidence of carnality--proof of a worldly spirit.

While the taking of different names was wrong, it was an evidence of a deeper wrong--of a selfish, party spirit. It was an evidence that those Corinthians who took the party names had never appreciated the oneness of the Body of Christ; that they did not really appreciate that Christ is the only Head, leader and standard; and that his is the only name by which his followers should recognize themselves and each other. Where scoffers apply a name in derision, it is not the fault of the faithful; but the true, loyal soldiers of the cross should never own or recognize such a name. Instances of names so originating are "Methodist" and "Baptist," both of which were given in derision, but were afterwards adopted as party names, representing sects, factions or divisions in the Body of Christ. All true teachers are not only sent by Christ, but receive their instructions from him; and any man who attempts to put his own or any other name upon all or any portion of the Church is an opponent, and adversary to the true and only Lord and Head of the Church. He is a mis-leader and an evildoer, no matter what his claims or motives may be.

The Apostle, upbraiding the Corinthians and seeking to show them their error in owning any other teacher besides Christ to be their head and standard and leader, asks, "Has Christ been divided?" Are there several seeds of Abraham now, each an heir of a promise? Is this the reason you countenance divisions into different parties? Or, is it because one of these leaders--Paul, Apollos or Peter--has specially favored you and put you under obligation to him, that you requite him by calling yourselves his servants and followers, bearing his name? Was Paul crucified for you? or were you baptized in his name?

Nay, nay, dearly beloved; one, and only one, deserves all the honor of the Church, both now and forever, and that one is her true Lord and Master; and his name only should she own in any manner. He leads, he teaches, he feeds; and the various human agents used by him, as channels for his blessings to his espoused, should neither take his place in her heart nor share his honor before the world. We may, however, and should, honor his servants "for their works sake," and count those who serve well as worthy of double honor; but we must always "hold the Head," and render him supreme reverence and obedience. (I Thess. 5:13; I Tim. 5:17; Col. 2:19.) Our esteem for others should be "in the Lord."

For a long time, in fact until very recently, Christians recognized this true principle, that there is but

one Body or Church on earth, even as there will be but one in glory. And, following this idea, each sect claimed to be that one, the only true Church, and persecuted others. But by and by each began to see in the other certain good features of doctrine and practice, and gradually their ideas changed, until today they claim boldly, and in opposition to the word of our Lord and of the apostles, that sects are a decided advantage; that the human mind is so constituted that a common faith, which Paul urges upon the Church, is an impossibility; and that the various sects of today with their contradictory diversities of faith are necessary accommodations to human prejudices and imbecility.

Yet, still clinging to the idea that somehow there should be but one Church, they are anxious to reunite all the larger sects so as to make (nominally) one Church, while each sect therein may retain its own special features of faith or disbelief as at present. All in such a union (of which the Evangelical Alliance was a beginning--advanced a stage, now, in this country, by the organization of the "Federation Council of the Churches of Christ of America," representing thirty different denominations) merely agree to disagree, live and let live, and to recognize each other, in this general way, because of an increased influence, power and protection which the association will bring to each, and because it would detract from the influence of other sects not so associated, and thus hinder independence of thought. This would serve to fix and establish an "orthodox" boundary line, inside of which there would be bounds to individual liberty, and yet a measure of freedom--a permission to choose a preference among the forms and doctrines of these associated sects, and still permit them to be recognized as "orthodox."

This is, in fact, the case now, among the so-called "liberal minds" of all denominations; and it is being urged that an organization of this sort, already founded in the Evangelical Alliance, be fully consummated, and that an attempt be made to have such a composite Church in some degree recognized by the government.

But, even when fully consummated, this could be no more than a union in name, with the same divisions and differences in fact--one church nominally, but many sects really.

The first danger against which the Apostle warned the Church was sectarianism; and he was evidently heeded at the time at least, for no great sects of Paulites or Apollosites developed. But, as usual, the great enemy, thwarted in one direction, moved to the opposite extreme, and attempted to insist upon a oneness very different from what our Lord or the apostles ever taught. This attempt was to have every recognized member of the Church think exactly alike, on every minutia of Christian doctrine. This attempt finally developed into Papacy, where every matter of doctrine

was decided by the popes and councils; and every man who desired to be considered a church member was obliged to accept such decisions fully, and to profess that such decisions were his belief, his faith; whereas they were not his in any sense but that of adoption. They were generally either blindly received or hypocritically professed with mental reservations.

This was not at all the oneness urged by Paul. He urged a oneness of heart and mind, and not a thoughtless, heartless or hypocritical profession. He urged a oneness such as naturally results from the

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proper exercise of the liberty which we have in Christ --to search and believe the Scriptures, and to grow in grace and in knowledge, every man being thus fully persuaded in his own mind, and firmly rooted and grounded in the one faith as set forth in the Scriptures. The oneness of faith which Paul urged was not that elaborate faith which touches and embraces all subjects, heavenly and earthly, divine and human, revealed and unrevealed. Quite the contrary: Paul's letters, weighty with logical reasoning, do not even mention the subjects upon which sectarians do most insist, and which are by them generally made tests of fellowship.

Paul said nothing about an everlasting torture of sinners; he said nothing whatever about a mysterious trinity, in which three Gods are incomprehensibly one God and at the same time three Gods; he said not a word about man being of a nature such as could not die but must live everlastingly, in a place of either pleasure or woe; he said nothing, either, about the present life ending all trial for all classes; and he entered into no entangling discussion about the bread and wine used in commemoration of the Lord's death --as to transubstantiation or consubstantiation; yet it can easily be discerned that he was not in harmony with any of these errors.

Notice particularly, however, that without so much as mentioning a single one of these sectarian tests of fellowship, Paul declares--"I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God." (Acts 20:27.) From this it is very evident that none of these points, which are today regarded as the very essence and substance of Christian doctrine and as the proper tests of faith is the one faith, or in any sense or degree part of "the faith once delivered unto the saints."--Jude 3.

The one faith, which all should hold, was a very simple one; one so simple that all, the learned and the unlearned alike, could grasp it and comprehend it, and be "fully persuaded in their own minds" concerning it. It was not a dose of incongruous mysteries, inconsistent with themselves and inharmonious with reason as

well as with the Bible, to be swallowed by the ignorant with credulity, and by the learned with hypocritical mental reservations; but it was so simple, so clear, so reasonable, that any and every honest follower of Christ could be fully persuaded in his own mind regarding its truth.

What is this one faith? The basis of it is stated by Paul, thus: "I delivered unto you first of all, that which I also received [first of all--as a foundation truth or doctrine, upon and in harmony with which all other doctrines must be built], how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures." (I Cor. 15:3,4.) "There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."--I Tim. 2:5,6.

This, in a word, confesses sin and utter helplessness; it acknowledges God's loving plan for our redemption; it owns that our Lord's death was our ransom price; and that forgiveness (justification), and reconciliation to God, and the restitution of believers, come as a result of faith in this Redeemer, when in due time that place is made known to each and all.

These brief statements contain the whole Gospel, in the same sense that an acorn contains an oak tree. Without this Gospel kernel, the true Gospel can never be possessed; hence this must be insisted on as a test of Christian fellowship. This must be received, else the Gospel is not received. When it is received, the Gospel is received. Then a work of growth begins--a development of this Gospel. It may vary in rapidity of growth according to temperament and surroundings; it can develop into a sprout, a sapling, a sturdy oak successively, but the nature of the seed will appertain to it in every stage of its development. So is faith--the true faith; it must begin with the one kind of seed-faith in all, no matter what stage of development each may attain. This one gospel acknowledges man's fall and sinfulness, and God's mercy and love manifested through Christ's great work of redemption, forgiveness and final restoration of all the willing and obedient, but of no others. All theories, and they are many, which omit any of these items are spurious.

Some deny God's love in the matter, and claim that all the love was Christ's and that he interposed and thwarted the Father's original plan; but those of the one faith are guided by our Lord's own testimony, that God so loved the world that he devised the plan as it is being carried forward, and sent his only begotten Son to do what he has done and is yet to do for the world. (John 3:16,17.) Others deny that any redemption was accomplished by the death of our Lord Jesus, deny that his life was substituted as a corresponding price or "ransom for all," and claim that the Father does all by simply pardoning the sinners. But

again the one faith is clearly pointed out by the words of Paul--"There is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom [corresponding price] for all."

When received into honest hearts, this simple Gospel, the true Gospel, will gradually open up and spread its roots of reason and its branches of hope in every direction, feeding upon the promises of God, building itself up as he designed, and grasping, as it progresses, the "one baptism" and every other feature of the Gospel in its fulness.

Note the difference between this, God's test, on the simple first principles of the Gospel, and the wrong course of men who attempt to enforce upon all an entire system of faith (and that when they are the merest babes in Christ), so fettering them, then, that their growth is hindered. To ask babes in Christ to assent to thirty or forty articles of faith arranged by fellowmen, and to agree to take those as the infallible truth, and to promise never to believe either more or less than they contain, is like selecting in an orchard one gnarled and crooked tree, as a standard, and requiring all the other trees to be padded out to make them look as thick and as gnarled as the sample, and to be bound with iron bands that they might never grow larger or straighter.

This true Gospel, this simple faith, easily understood and confessed by the weakest babe in Christ, must also be, and always, and equally, the faith of the most developed sons of God. This one faith (and not the endless ramifications and details of faith which lead

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out from it) Paul placed as a standard or test of all claiming the name Christian. All the consecrated who agreed on this one standard, or foundation truth, Paul counted as in and of the one Church. While each member was to grow in grace, knowledge and love, there would always be harmony and oneness in the faith and fellowship of the Church, if all growth were kept in line and harmony with this foundation truth.

Here was a perfect basis of union, which allowed for all the various stages of individual development in the truth, and which most effectually guarded against errors. For if this simple creed were to-day made the standard by which all doctrines should be tested, it would speedily lead to the discarding of every error and to the true union of the Church in the "one Lord, one faith and one baptism."

The endeavor to compel all men to think alike on all subjects, culminated in the great apostasy and the development of the great Papal system; and thereby the "gospel," the "one faith," which Paul and the other apostles set forth, was lost--buried under the mass of uninspired decrees of popes and councils. The union

of the early Church, based upon the simple Gospel and bound only by love, gave place to the bondage of the Church of Rome--a slavery of God's children, from the degradation of which multitudes are still weak and suffering.

The Reformation movement of the sixteenth century came as an effort to regain liberty of conscience; but, deluded by the idea of an elaborate creed, insisted upon for so many centuries, the reformers and their followers formed other systems of bondage very similar to that of Papacy, though slight modifications gave liberty to fuller ideas on some subjects. And so it has been ever since: each new reform movement has made the failure of attempting to make a creed just large enough for its prime movers.

A "CHURCH TRUST" UNDESIRABLE

But while divisions in the Church of Christ are very wrong, and very contrary to the will and Word of our Lord, they are better far than a union in bondage under Papacy's system, creed, etc. Instead, therefore, of attempting to get all the sects to combine in a sort of "Church Trust," an image or likeness of the Papal system of oneness (though on a higher plane), to regulate and restrict further investigation and further growth, we need to do the very opposite--to abolish all sects and all elaborate creeds and confessions of faith. Instead of being further bound (by such a Church Trust Union--or wheel within a wheel, double imprisonment), all bondage should be set aside, except the simple tests first imposed in the one faith once delivered to the saints; and all party sectarian names should be repudiated, and the name of Christ should be the only name borne by his Church.

Such a breaking down of sectarian fences would leave the true children of God willing to accept the original and simple test--"all one in Christ Jesus"; and this is what is needed. It would destroy sectarian pride, which so often counterfeits true Christian zeal and love, but it would tend to develop the truth, and thereby to develop the real zeal for the truth which our Lord desires in his followers. The term Church of Christ would no longer mean to any "our denomination," but, when they would sing,

"I love thy Church, O God,
Her walls before thee stand,
Dear as the apple of thine eye,
And graven on thy hand,"

they would think, instead, of the one, true and only Church.

Under such conditions, recognizing the true and only test, as above quoted from Paul, those who formerly championed opposite sides of the various questions

of doctrine would join heads and hearts in carefully weighing the various statements of the Scriptures; and, truly seeking the divine plan, they would ere long, as promised, be guided into all truth.

They would join hearts and hands as Christians, and while their heads might not at once agree on certain points, it would be a question of only a short time; for the unbiased study of God's plan, with no sectarian theory and organization to uphold, would bring the heads of all into union and general harmony, even though, as at first, the growth of faith-roots and faith-branches might vary. All would believe the "same things," even if some could see and believe more elaborately than others.--Phil. 3:15,16.

This freedom, and yet harmony and union, which is the result of a full acceptance of God's will and Word, will not be attained in the present age except by the few, the "overcomers." Others, the Scriptures show, will continue in sectarian bondage, and even increase their bondage-union by a Church Trust or "confederacy" (Isa. 8:12), until, in the close of this time of trouble, all this is corrected by the fall of sectarian systems as well as of present political governments.--Dan. 12:1; Rev. 18:2-5.

In the next age, during the world's trial, such great deceiving systems will not be permitted; but now they are permitted in order to accomplish the testing and manifesting of the "overcomers."

Let the dear saints who now walk the narrow way, and whose names are "written in heaven" as probationary members of the one, true Church of Christ, patiently persevere in worshiping God after the manner which others term "heresy"--closely studying and believing all that is written in the inspired Word, however it may conflict with human creeds and the opinions of so-called great theologians. Be simple enough to take God at his Word, however church monopolies or trusts may seek, either willingly or unintentionally, to wrest it to their own advantage. Flee all so-called unions, which are merely bondages. What is needed is fewer of such unions, not more. Each individual needs to feel and exercise the same liberty on doctrine that each sect now claims. From this standpoint the bondage-union of the Church under Papacy was the worst and most complete enslavement of the individual Christian; and the full breaking up of all sectarianism, so that no two persons will be bound to hold one faith (except on first-principles) is the most desirable condition. The breaking of Papacy into a hundred sects, each free from the other, was a good work, tending to the realization of the liberty wherewith Christ makes free. Though at first regarded as a calamity, it soon came to be known as the Reformation.

And now the breaking up of these numerous sects, so that each individual will be free, is essential to a fuller growth in grace, knowledge and love than is at present possible. This breaking up of sectarianism, now regarded as a calamity, will by and by be recognized as truly the greatest of all religious reformations. The signs of the times indicate that such a reformation is impending, and the Scriptures declare it. A little more light, a little more knowledge, and these sectarian shackles upon the individual conscience will fall. Then whatever union shall exist will be upon right principles --a union of hearts and principles and not merely a heterogeneous confederacy. Recognizing each other's personal liberties, each disciple of Christ will be bound to the other by his love of the Lord and of his Word alone; and others will be separated.

Sectarianism has woefully distorted that beautiful figure of Christian union given by our Lord, recorded in John 15:1-6. To fit it to sectarianism, and to make their error in this appear to be supported by God's Word, it is claimed that the "vine" is the whole Church, and that the various denominations of "Christendom" are the branches. But that the Lord's words will bear no such construction must be evident to any one who will give the passage candid consideration. The branches are the individuals, and "any branch" is defined by our Lord's own words to be "any man." Let this, our Lord's illustration of the proper union of all the branches in One Vine, connected and nourished by the same sap, from the same roots, teach us of true union and personal freedom in the Body of Christ.

* * *

Suppose that the salaries and "livings" of all ministers, bishops, priests, etc., were cut off, all churches, chapels and cathedrals destroyed, all theological seminaries broken up, and their professors turned to other pursuits, all religious guilds and societies disbanded, including all sectarian organizations--what would be the effect?

Who can doubt that it would be a real blessing under the disguise of a great and terrible catastrophe? The effect would be to bring true Christians together as the family of God, and not as sectarian bands; to study God's Word, and not human traditions and creeds formulated in the dark ages. Very soon, unhindered, God's Word would be heard by all truly his; and one Lord, one faith and one baptism would soon be the result, while the worldly mass would speedily drift apart, and the true distinction between the Church and the world would be discernible. The Scriptures seem to indicate that very much of this sort of destruction of present systems must take place before all the "wheat," the true Church, will be separated from the "tares," the mere professors. Party spirit and love

of sect are so strong that, apparently, nothing short of a complete wreck of all the sects will suffice to set free all of God's children now bound and blindfolded in and by them.

This catastrophe--sectarian destruction, the fall of Babylon--is what is referred to in the Book of Revelation under the symbol of the seven last plagues. (Rev. 15-18.) The pain from these will consist largely of mental chagrin, the disappointment of sectarian hopes and plans, and the wounding of sectarian pride. When the Master said, "Watch ye, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things coming upon the world," he included the pain of these plagues, as well as other annoyances to which the world will be subject because of ignorance of the real plan of God. It is of escape from these plagues that the Revelator (our Lord--Rev. 1:1) speaks to us, saying, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."--Rev. 18:4.

THREE VIEWS OF THE CHURCH

A dear brother sent us the following clipping, with the remark, "Two views well stated. Please give us the third and true one, Brother Russell."

"There are two conceptions of the Church, which, for convenience, I shall designate as the Protestant and Catholic conceptions. The Protestant idea of the Church is that it is a voluntary association of believers in Christ; that those who think alike upon religious subjects join together in a society and choose their pastor, who derives his commission and his authority from them. Consequently they are at liberty to prescribe what he shall and shall not teach, or to unmake their church and make another, precisely as the members of a club, or of a political party, have a right to withdraw and form a new organization. The Protestant theory of the Church is that of an aggregation of individuals, 'who can rearrange themselves at will, and thus create new churches at every rearrangement.' (Ewer.) The Catholic theory, on the other hand, is that it is an organization which God Almighty has founded once for all, to last to the end of time, and into which he invites men; it is his family, his household, his kingdom, his city. Its officers are commissioned by him and hold their authority as teachers only from him. In a word, the Catholic Church is not a democracy but an empire, not a republic but a kingdom. As such, it comes to man with divine authority; its officers are under oath to the Eternal King, and they are to minister to man in his name, and for him."--The Living Church.

In presenting the true view of the Church, we labor under the disadvantage that for fifteen hundred years people have been taught one or the other of the above views, or combinations of both, while the true idea has been generally lost sight of since the second century. The true view, as we conceive it, is as follows:--

God's Church, when completed and organized, will be all that is given above as the Catholic or Episcopal view. But it is not yet completed, and hence not yet organized. When organized, it will be clothed with power, and will be, "not a democracy, but an empire; not a republic, but a kingdom. As such it [will] come to man [the world--during the Millennium] with divine authority [and with power to back up that authority]. Its officers are [then to be] under oath to the Eternal King, and they are to minister to man in his name, and for him." All this, it is to be noted, fits exactly to the coming reign of the Church, when it shall "bless all the families of the earth"; but it does not fit at all to the present state or condition. There is no organization today clothed with such divine authority imperiously to command mankind. There is no organization doing this today; though we are well aware that many of them in theory claim that they ought to be permitted to do so; and many more would like to do so.

This was the fatal mistake into which the Church began to fall in the second century; and the effort to

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realize this false conception culminated in the boastful, imperious counterfeiting of the coming Kingdom in Papacy, which for centuries sought to dominate the world, by claimed "divine authority." This idea has more or less pervaded and poisoned the ideas of all the Protestant "clergy" as well; who, copying Papacy's false ideas of the Church, claim also that the Church of Christ is now organized, though they make less boastful claims to "divine authority," to teach and rule mankind in general, than Papacy does.

God's Church is not yet organized. On the contrary, the Gospel Age has been the time for calling out and testing the volunteers willing to sacrifice and suffer with their Lord now, and thus prove themselves worthy (Rev. 3:4,5,21; 2 Tim. 2:11,12; Rom. 8:17) to be organized as joint-heirs in his Kingdom at the close of the Gospel Age, when he shall "set up" or organize his Kingdom in power and great glory, to bless and rule the world with "divine authority."

In the meantime, these unorganized but merely called out ones, who are seeking to make their calling and election sure, that they may obtain a share in the Kingdom (2 Peter 1:10; 2 Cor. 5:9), are "a voluntary association of believers," drawn together for mutual assistance in seeking to know and to do the Master's will, that they may be accounted worthy the honors and glories promised, and not now to rule men by divine authority; for they have as yet no such authority. In this "voluntary association" of the consecrated, there is no imperial authority of one over another; and no lording over God's heritage should be permitted;

for the one and only Lord has left the instruction, "Be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren."--Matt. 23:8.

Instead of the kingly and lordly rule prevailing in the customs of the world, the Master gave all another and an opposite rule, saying, "Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you; but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister [literally, servant]; and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all [or greatest servant]; for even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto [to be served], but to minister [to serve], and to give his life a ransom for many."--Mark 10:42-45.

The Lord was chief servant; and those among the apostles who served the Church at greatest cost to themselves--Paul, Peter, John and James--are esteemed, by those who have the spirit of the truth, in proportion to their service, and not in proportion to their titles, their priestly vestments, or their praise among men, etc., of which they had none.

The Church, or company of believers, probationers for coming glory, in its "voluntary association," was indeed to recognize "teachers," "helps," "apostles," etc., but not to make them. If they recognize a man "mighty in the Scriptures," "apt to teach," able to make clear the divine plan, and specially qualified to build them up in the most holy faith, they gladly acknowledge God's favor in raising up among them such a servant of all to assist them in the understanding of his Word. But they should be careful always, even while rejoicing in and thanking God for such a servant, to require a "thus saith the Lord" for every point of doctrine, and to search the Scriptures daily to see whether these things be so--whether the deductions and arguments of the teacher agree with the whole testimony of God's revealed plan.

Thus the Lord is the teacher of his followers, sending, now and again, of their own number, certain ones to call attention to truths being overlooked, or to injurious errors being entertained. The "meek" among the probationers will hear the Master's voice by whomsoever he speaks; and these will be guided into the truth, and prepared in due time for organization as his Kingdom. "The meek will he teach his way."--Psa. 25:9.

Thus seen, both the Catholic and the Protestant views of the Church are erroneous. The Catholic view gets the future organization applied to the present time, and the Protestant view, though ridding itself of some of Papacy's error, carries along enough of it to injure itself; for, instead of admitting all consecrated believers into a "voluntary association," in which God would raise up his own teachers, Protestantism attempts

also to organize and bind with creeds and confessions into various sects, each of which, anxious to perpetuate itself and its ideas, selects and makes its own teachers in its own seminaries.

THE TRUE CHURCH

Today there are many organizations claiming to be the Church, and having various bonds of union; but we wish now to show, upon the authority of God's Word, first, what Church our Lord established, and what are its bonds of union; second, that every Christian should belong to that Church; third, the injurious effects of joining the wrong church; and fourth, having joined the right Church, what would be the results of losing our membership.

First, then, the Church which our Lord Jesus began to gather during his ministry, and which was recognized by the Father at Pentecost, after the ransom price for all was paid, was the little company of disciples who had consecrated earthly time, talents and life, a sacrifice to God. Theirs was a "voluntary association" for mutual aid; and this society was under the laws and government of Christ, its Head or recognized ruling authority. The bonds were bonds of love and common interest. Since all were enlisted under the captaincy of Jesus, the hopes and fears, joys and sorrows and aims of one were those of the others; and thus they had a far more perfect union of hearts than could possibly be had from a union on the basis of any man-made creed. Thus their only union was of the spirit; their law for the government of each was love; and all, as a whole, were put under obedience to the "law of the spirit," as it was expressed in the life, actions and words of their Lord. Their government was the will of him who said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

There are two senses in which the true Church of Christ may be considered: All who, like the early Church, are fully consecrated to the doing of our Father's will, amenable only to Christ's will and government, recognizing and obeying none other--these, the saints, from the beginning of the Gospel Age down

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to its close, when all of this class are sealed--constitute

THE CHURCH OF THE FIRST-BORN

[whose names are] written in heaven." These are all one in aim, hope and suffering, and in due time will be joint-heirs with Christ Jesus to the great "inheritance of the saints in light"--joint-heirs with him of the Kingdom which God has promised to them that

love him.

The other sense, in which this same class is recognized, is by counting a part for the whole. Thus all the living of this class may be spoken of as "the Church"; or, again, any part of this class of living followers who may meet together may properly be called the Church; for, wherever two or three are assembled, the Lord has promised to be among them. Consequently, that would be a Church meeting--an assembly of "the Church of the First-born." The general assembly will be when all the Church are made like their Head, and glorified with him.

Such, then, is our definition of the Church of Christ. It is perfectly illustrated by Paul (Rom. 12:4,5), when he compares the Church to a human body. In this figure the head represents our Lord, and all who are his constitute the body, over which the head rules. Jesus has been and always will be the Head over his Church as a whole; he is likewise the Head and ruler of the entire living Church; and in every assembly where two or three meet in his name (when his Word is sought and heeded), he is the Head, ruler and teacher.--Eph. 1:20-23.

If it be asked, In what sense does he teach? we answer, by exercising the qualities of the Head or teacher; by using one or more of those present as his mouth-pieces in unfolding truth, strengthening faith, encouraging hope, inspiring zeal, etc., just as the head of the human body calls upon one member to minister to another. But here a word of caution: If one become as useful a member as a right hand, he should take care that he assume not the position and authority of the Head, to put forth his own words and ideas as truth. He must ever remember that his highest honor is to be an index-finger to point out, or a mouthpiece to express, the will of the one Lord and Master. Be not puffed up: pride will paralyze and render useless. "Be not ye called Rabbi [master, teacher], for one is your Master [head], even Christ, and all ye are brethren." And let not the least member despise his office, "for if all were one member, where were the body?" "Nay, those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary"--"God hath set the members, every one of them, in the body, as it hath pleased him."--I Cor. 12:12-31.

How simple, beautiful and effectual is God's plan of the "voluntary association" of his children!

This brings us to our second proposition, viz.: that all Christians should be joined to this association or incipient organization. In the light of what has just been said as to the class constituting the Church which our Lord is calling, it is evident that if you have given up all your will, talent, time, etc., you are recognized by the Lord as a probationary member of the Church, of which he is the Head, and whose names are written in heaven. Thus, by consecration, we join the true

Church, and have our names recorded in heaven. But, says one, must I not join some organization on earth, assent to some creed, and have my name written on earth? No: remember that our Lord is our pattern and teacher, and in neither his words nor acts do we find any authority for binding ourselves with creeds and traditions of men, which all tend to make the Word of God of none effect, and bring us under a bondage which will hinder our growth in grace and knowledge, and against which Paul warned us, saying, "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."--Gal. 5:1.

Another says: If it is not proper to unite with any of the present nominal churches, would it not be well to form a visible association of our own? Yes, this is what we have--a society modeled after that of the early Church. We think we have come back to primitive simplicity. The Lord Jesus alone is our Head or law-giver; his Word is our rule of faith and practice; the holy Spirit is our interpreter and guide into truth; our names are all written in heaven; and we are bound together by love and common interest.

Do you inquire--How shall we know one another? We ask, How can we help knowing one another when the spirit of our Master is made manifest in word and act and manner and look? Yes, the living faith, the unfeigned love, the long-suffering meekness, the childlike simplicity, coupled with the constancy and zeal of maturity, make manifest the sons of God, and we need no earthly record, for the names of all such are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Do the sick need visiting or assistance? These stand ready with consecrated time. Does the Lord's work require money? These stand ready with consecrated means. Does his work bring upon them the reproach of the world, and of a degenerate nominal church? These have also sacrificed reputation and all else to God.

But, again, do you inquire, How shall we deal with one who walks disorderly in our midst? if we have no organization such as we see about us, how can we free ourselves from such, as the Lord requires us to do? We answer: Do just as the Scriptures direct.

Now, as in the early Church, there are various degrees of advancement among the individual members, and, Paul says (I Thess. 5:14), some are feeble-minded, comfort them; some are weak, support them; but, while you should be patient toward all, warn the disorderly (those who are drifting away from the true spirit of Christ). Don't mistake the disorderly for the weak, and comfort them, nor for the feeble-minded, and support them; but patiently, lovingly, warn the disorderly. Whom does he call disorderly? There are many-ways of walking disorderly. In 2 Thess. 3:11,

he speaks of some who work not at all, but are busy-bodies, and says they should do as he did--work, that they be not chargeable to any; and if any will not work, neither should he eat. Thus he said he did, that he might be an example to others; and (verse 14), after you have warned such a one, if he "obey not, ...note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed....Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother." He warns us also against immoral and unjust persons, and

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those who wrest (twist) the Scriptures, and thus turn the truth of God into a lie. And the following citations clearly show that, in the Apostle's estimation, doctrinal disorders are among the chief.--2 Thess. 3:6-14; I Cor. 5:11; Eph. 5:6-11; Rom. 16:17; 2 John 9-11; Gal. 1:8,9; Tit. 3:10.

Our Lord gives explicit directions where there is a matter of offense between two brethren (Matt. 18:15,17): "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother; but if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church [the company of brethren who assemble together]; but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." If, under the captaincy of our Head, we heed his commands, which we will do if we love him, how few will be the misunderstandings and difficulties among the brethren. And if the true brotherhood in Christ is in any degree realized, the admonition of the Apostle will be gladly heeded-- "Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, and so much the more, as ye see the day drawing on." --Heb. 10:25.

And if new converts be properly begotten by the Word of Truth, they will be far more eager to meet with two or three possessed of the right spirit and seeking to understand the Word of the Lord, than they would be to mingle with those whose religion consists chiefly of forms of godliness. And here will be the opportunity for those who are strong (in the faith and love of God) to bear the infirmities of the weak and not to please themselves merely--in the choice of subjects, studies, etc.

Should the newly enlightened one know none with whom he can meet personally and regularly, let him not forget his privilege of communion with the Father and the Son in prayer, and with the WATCH TOWER by mail; and let him seek for others of the truth-hungry among his neighbors--"holding forth the Word of life," the Truth.

This association has its evangelists, pastors and teachers, appointed and directed by the Lord. (I Cor. 12:28.) They need no laying on of hands by the so-called "apostolic succession"; for the "Spirit of the Lord hath anointed" all the members of the Body "to preach," etc. (Isa. 61:1), and it is the duty of every member of the Body to exercise his office for the edification of the other members. All the true Church are priests, an association of priests, and not an association under the control of a clerical or priestly class. (I Pet. 2:9.) There is one great Bishop or overseer, who, from time to time, raises up and sends his own special messengers to uncover truths, overthrow errors, etc. --Luther seems to have been one of these, and Wesley another. But our Lord retains the Bishopric himself. (I Pet. 2:25.) How complete is the voluntary union of the Church of Christ, with its heaven-written, love-bound, Spirit-ruled membership, and how sad the error of mistaking the nominal for the real Church!

The importance of our fourth proposition need not be urged. It would, indeed, be a dreadful calamity to lose our membership in the true Church or Body of Christ. And no member is out of danger except when keeping a vigilant watch over the old nature, counted dead, lest it come to life again, and assert itself in the form of pride, selfishness, envy, evil-speaking--or what not? But, filled with love (the love that prompts to sacrifice), and clothed with humility, and under cover of the redeeming blood, we are safe in the Church (the Body), having the assurance that it is our "Father's good pleasure to give us the Kingdom."

Yes, the Kingdom is the glorious destiny of the true Church--the "little flock"--now treading the pathway of humiliation, and drinking the bitter cup of death. The glory that shall be revealed in us does not yet appear, except to the eye of faith, but the temptations and trials are very apparent on every hand. "Let us, therefore, fear lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it."--Heb. 4:1.

Thus Paul warned others, and thus he feared, lest even after having preached to others, he himself should be a castaway. (I Cor. 9:27.) We may have our names cast out as evil by those of the nominal church, and yet "rejoice and be exceeding glad because our names are written in heaven." They may frown upon us and despitefully use us and say all manner of evil against us falsely, or they may seek to win us back by flattery, saying they cannot afford to lose our influence, we could do so much good by remaining among them, etc.; but we must let none of these things move us; but, rather, rejoice that we are counted worthy to suffer (Acts 5:41,42) for his name's sake. Oh, how necessary in this "evil day" is the faith

"That bears unmoved the world's dark frown,

Nor heeds its flattering smile;
That seas of trouble cannot drown,
Nor Satan's arts beguile."

Dearly beloved, let us again repeat the warning:
"Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made
you free, and be not again entangled with the yoke of
bondage."

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Humanity longs for fellowship; and, of recent years, the morally inclined have very generally found this in the nominal, Protestant churches--in their committees, socials, prayer-meetings, etc. Such fellowship and such influences have done much to elevate the tone and moral and respectable standard of the world; but such fellowships are seldom worthy of the name Christian fellowship; because, not Christ and his Word, but worldly ambitions, pride, dress, show and social gossip are generally the grounds and subjects of fellowship. Hence, while disapproving church organizations as churches, we do esteem them as the highest order of worldly diversion. For, although they are often schools in which pride, envy, hatred and scandals are cultivated, these evils are less gross than the many vices which flourish outside these schools of morality.

But, however beneficial these social clubs, called churches, may be to the world, as tending to tone down murder to malice and envy, and to moderate theft to slander--the really consecrated believer, who has passed from death unto life, finds in them but little real fellowship, except as he discovers here and there a kindred spirit, similarly begotten to newness of life--

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to new motives, thoughts, words and deeds. Nevertheless, custom draws them together, and the very thought of disturbing that social union is dreadful, because, poor as it is, it is all they have.

Then, to many, there comes the thought of influence --upon wife or husband or child or sister or brother or friend. What if their withdrawal and the admission that their church and all others are really worldly and unsatisfying should hinder some one from joining some church, and thus, outwardly at least, from confessing Christ? What then? Perhaps next winter their social club will get up a revival of religion, and, by dint of an imported revivalist, and hymns, and prayers, and sermons, hot with descriptions or inferences of the everlasting torment awaiting all who do not join some sect, some might be induced to assume the outward forms of godliness without the power; and, by withdrawing now you would be debarred from

helping them in this work.--What then?

So much the better, we answer. If we have found that God's name and character are dishonored and misrepresented by every denomination of Christendom, why should we want our children and friends to join a society under those dishonoring confessions of misbelief? Why should we want to join in such work-- so contrary to all that our Lord and the apostles taught and practiced?--which so seriously misrepresents, to the seeker after God, the real way to find him, and which so deceives the penitent as to what is the real "Church of the living God"--"whose names are written in heaven"? Why should not every one who finds the Truth, or, rather, who is found by the Truth, in this time of harvest, be glad to use every atom of his influence for the Truth, and against those errors which bind so many of God's dear saints?

Surely the more conscientious we are the more we must regret the influence already given in years past toward error, to God's dishonor and to the enslavement of his children; and the more must be our anxiety to reverse our influence as rapidly as possible, in order that our future influence for the truth may as far as possible counteract past influence given to error. And, if we find the bonds of sectarianism difficult and painful to burst, we should the more jealously seek to spare our children similar pain. An outward confession of full consecration to Christ, not lived up to, and of faith in a creed not really believed, is an injury to whoever makes it. Better far teach your children to be honest with themselves, with others, and above all with God, than teach them to stultify themselves by dishonest professions. It will be to their advantage now, as well as in the purgatory of the future. See TRACT NO. 58--Purgatory.

But, still, we shall need fellowship. And the scarcity of the proper sort in the nominal churches should lead us nearer to the Lord, that we may the more appreciate and value his love, his Word, his fellowship, and the love and fellowship of all who are of his true family and spirit. Soon you will learn to appreciate the words of our Master--as true respecting the worldly church today, as in his day--"Marvel not, if the world hate you; ye know that it hated me before it hated you"; "for the friendship of the world is enmity against God." Thus, separated more and more from the worldly-spirit, you will learn what the Apostle meant when he said, "Hereby we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." Your love for Jesus, our Elder Brother, will grow more intense, affecting your every thought, word and deed, and begetting a love for all who bear his likeness; and this love will not depend upon wealth or personal beauty or social conditions. But only those somewhat grown in the Spirit and likeness of our Redeemer can appreciate such counsel or

such fellowship. Others love the worldly because the love of the Father has not been developed in them, and because they do not hate every evil way.

THE TRUE CHURCH NOT A SECT

The Church of Christ is neither a sect nor an aggregation of sects: it is one and indivisible. It is Christ and all who are united to him--joined by a living faith in his redemptive work for them, and in a full consecration to him, his will and his work, even unto death. This true Church is represented by our Lord himself under the simile of a vine, of which and in which all truly his are, individually, branches.

Webster's Dictionary defines the word "sect" to mean, "A part cut off,...hence a body of persons who have separated from others by virtue of some special doctrine, or set of doctrines, which they hold in common."

This description fits all the various denominations of Christendom. All separate themselves from other Christians; all do so by virtue of some doctrine or set of doctrines which they hold in common. But the members of the true Church are each individually united to Christ, and not to each other. As the spokes of a wheel are each separately fastened in the hub, so each member of the Body of Christ is, in his inner or spiritual life, bound only to Christ. And as the tire steadies and gives unity of operation to the spokes at their extremities, so love, the bond of perfectness, is the only bond that should be permitted between those whose wills are buried into Christ's.

Our Lord declared that he did not come to put a patch or amendment upon Judaism, nor to put the new wine of his teaching into the old bottles of Judaism. It follows that Christianity is not a schism or sect or split off from Judaism. It is, on the contrary, a new system of religious teaching, introducing a New Covenant between God and man by Christ, the Mediator, whose blood seals that New Covenant and makes it operative.

The only test of fellowship therefore is,--to be a Christian; one truly united to Christ by faith and consecration; --not without a real consecration, nor without the true faith. But the meaning of a full consecration of thought, word and deed is readily understood by some who doubt and question what is the true faith necessary to the true membership in Christ --the faith at first delivered unto the saints by our Lord and his apostles. This true faith is--that all were sinners, justly under God's condemnation to death through the fall; that Christ Jesus our Lord died for OUR SINS according to the Scriptures, and that he was raised from the dead by the Father, who thus gave assurance to all that Christ's sin-offering on our behalf was complete and fully satisfactory,

under which those of Adam's race who
are sick of sin and desirous of harmony with

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God can be justified and return to his love, favor
and blessing. (I Cor. 15:3,4; Rom. 5:1,6,12,18.)
Whoever holds this simple faith is a believer, a
member of "the household of faith." Whoever with
this faith fully consecrates himself to the Lord's service
is a baptized believer, a probationary member of
the one, true Church, whose names are written in
heaven. If he run the Christian race as he has covenanted
to do, he will win the prize, and be one of the
Elect Church in glory, granted a place with the Lord
in his throne.

This is the basis of our hope: the only foundation
--the one which no man ever could lay, but which God
laid for us (I Cor. 3:11); for, "while we were yet sinners,
Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8), the "just for the
unjust, that he might bring us to God." (I Pet. 3:18.)
Realizing that we are sinners under condemnation to
death, and that we may have peace with God and be
justified to life by appropriating to ourselves the merits
of his death, we gladly accept him as our Redeemer.
"We have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness
of sins." (Eph. 1:7.) This is justification;
and, being thus justified by faith, we have peace with
God. Then, realizing, further, that those who are
thus redeemed should not live the remainder of their
lives to themselves and their own pleasure, but to him
who died for them (2 Cor. 5:14,15), we consecrate
ourselves to his service.

Built upon this foundation are the minor doctrines
and those principles which must be worked out in the
life. Thus we are admonished by the Apostle (2 Pet. 1:5-8)
to add to this faith various graces and further
attainments--of virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience,
godliness, brotherly-kindness and charity (love).

This was the faith of the early Church; and this
is the faith of all who acceptably bear the name of
Christ; and such only are properly termed Christians.
True, the early Church progressed beyond these first
principles, to the use of the "strong meat," and a comprehension,
with all saints, of the deep things of God;
but the "babes in Christ," and those "who, by reason
of use, had their senses exercised," were together one
family--"all one in Christ Jesus." They were not to
leave these principles by displacing them with other
theories, but by adding to them as above explained.
The more advanced in grace and doctrine bore the infirmities
of the weak, each and all seeking to grow in
grace and knowledge, more and more. Where this
apostolic rule was observed, there could be no sect, no
division in this Body. It was only when error began
to develop in the congregation that Paul wrote to

some: I hear that there are divisions (sects) among you, and I partly believe it; for it is evident from what I learn of the worldliness and error coming in among you, that there would of necessity be divisions; for those true to the Lord could not have fellowship with such unfruitful works of darkness, but must rather reprove them.--I Cor. 11:18,19.

Divisions were objected to in the one true Church, and all the apostles taught that there is one Lord, one faith and one baptism. There is one fold and one Shepherd. (I Cor. 12:25.) Christians are a separated class--separate from the world, separate from sinners, separate from all others--in that they accept salvation through the redeeming blood of Christ. Their sympathy and co-operation are not of force, doctrinal or other, but merely of love and common interest, as fellow-pilgrims and fellow-heirs. The doctrine of the ransom serves to guard each one thus in Christ against all professing Christ's name but denying or ignoring this fundamental part of his work. Neither collectively nor individually should the saints have fellowship with works of darkness.--Eph. 5:11.

It is not remarkable that Satan should seek to divide and separate the sheep, and to put up fences, such as the denominational creeds prove to be, which would hinder some of the sheep from following the Shepherd into green pastures of fresh and living truth. This would be but wisdom on his part. But it is strange that he should be able to fetter the reason of so many, that they should think it a mark of spirituality to say, I am of Luther, a Lutheran; I of Calvin or Knox, a Presbyterian; I of Wesley, a Methodist, and so on. The Apostle Paul, on the contrary, said to some of his day, who were in danger of this spirit of sectarianism: While one saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Peter, are ye not carnal? Is it not in direct opposition to the Spirit of Christ to think or act thus? "Is Christ divided?" Did Paul or Peter or Knox or Calvin or Wesley or any one else than Christ die for your sins, and redeem you? They, as servants of Christ and the Church, should be esteemed very highly for their works' sake, but to name the Bride after any other than the Bridegroom is manifestly improper.

Oh, that all could see that in God's sight there is but one Church--whose names are written in heaven --and that God cannot and does not sympathize with or recognize any split in the real Church! He does not recognize the narrow creeds in which so many of the sheep are confined and starving. As we have shown, he has placed but one fence around his fold. Inside of it there is plenty of room, for both the lambs and the fully matured sheep.

A PARABLE OF FALSE SHEEP-FOLDS

Picture in your mind a fine, large pasture, surrounded by a strong and high fence (the Law of God), which keeps all the sheep within, but which recognizes no means of access to that fold (justified condition), except Christ, the door, faith in whose sacrifice for sin is the only way into the fold. All climbing into the fold by any other way are thieves and robbers. This is the pasture provided by the Good Shepherd for his sheep, for whom he once laid down his life. Into the true fold of Christ quite a flock of sheep have entered. They belong to the true Shepherd; but, as we look before us at the grassy slopes, only a few sheep, a little flock indeed, seem to be enjoying the liberty of the fold--the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free. Where are the others? We look, and see inside the door, on either side of the pathway, small enclosures. Over each is written a peculiar name--Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Second Adventist, Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, Episcopalian, Lutheran, etc. Looking at these pens we find they differ. Some are built like prisons with iron frames and bars and chains, others less strong, and

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some are merely marked out "dead lines," over which the sheep understand they must not go.

These pens are full of sheep, but they are weak, delicate and sickly for lack of proper exercise and fresh, nourishing food. They are regularly fed, but only upon husks, with occasionally a little milk, but they eat without relish and get no good from it. Many of them are leaner and poorer than when they first entered the fold, and some have become blind. Strange to say, all seem to be perfectly satisfied, each with his own pen, and very seldom does one attempt to escape.

We also noticed that under-shepherds had been appointed to help to pasture the sheep, and that they had constructed these pens, but apparently without the Chief Shepherd's permission.

Perplexed to know why the sheep thus submitted to be penned, we watched to see how they were induced to enter the various enclosures. As they entered the fold through the only door (faith in Christ), each under-shepherd tried to impress upon them, as they passed, the necessity of getting into one of the many pens, and the desirability of the particular one he represented. As a consequence, nearly all the sheep which entered the fold got penned, for they trusted the under-shepherds and followed the majority; and only a few passed on to enjoy all the liberty of the fold. The under-shepherds sought continually to impress upon their sheep that the free sheep were heretics and en route to destruction.

We watched to see the end of this matter, for we learned that the Chief Shepherd was expected by some,

and we knew that his coming would soon demonstrate whether he approved this dividing and imprisoning of his flock. Nearly all the under-shepherds claimed that he would not come for a long time yet.

Presently we heard great rejoicing among the free sheep. We looked, and found that the Chief Shepherd had come quietly, unobservedly ("as a thief"), and was now recognized by some of the sheep; and hence the rejoicing. Some of those imprisoned heard the Shepherd's voice; they looked and listened, yet could scarce believe. It was indeed the voice of the Shepherd as he tended and ordered his flock. His true sheep seemed to hear his voice condemning the penning process, and saying to his sheep, "Come out!"

Some leaped the fences and thus gained liberty and food from the Shepherd's hand, while others were so weak and faint for lack of nourishment that they trembled with anticipation, but did not come out through fear of the under-shepherds. We noticed, outside the fences, that some of the free sheep brought food to the bars, thus nourishing the weak ones until they were strong enough to leap the fence. The under-shepherds, meanwhile, were alert with redoubled vigilance, and by varying policies sought to keep control of their (?) flocks. Some denounced and scoffed at those without, and threatened the sheep within; and others redoubled the customary exercises--the "forms of godliness."

We waited to see the outcome, and saw the unfaithful under-shepherds bound and beaten with stripes, the prison-pens all destroyed, and the fold used as designed--the flock one, its name one, and its Head --the true Shepherd who gave his life for the sheep --Christ Jesus.

"COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE"

In Revelation 18:4-8, we have most emphatic instructions from our Lord, respecting our proper course at the present time. This advice was not always applicable; not until mystic Babylon's fall under divine condemnation, which prophecy shows was in A.D. 1878. As shown in the Scriptures, Babylon, the mother of abominations, had long misrepresented the truth and the true Church, which to a large extent was in her and in her daughter systems (See SCRIPTURE STUDIES, VOL. II., pages 271-282, VOL. III., pages 135-197); but her sentence of rejection was reserved until the time of "harvest."

The expression, "Come out of her, my people," indicates clearly that some of God's true saints have been in Babylon, and that, up to the time of her fall, God did not object to their being in the nominal church systems, and did not call on them to come out. Indeed the Lord himself sometimes spoke to and through Babylon up to the time when, having knocked

at the door, he declared his presence, and, being unheeded by the self-conscious, but really blind and miserable Laodicea, he spewed her out of his mouth (to be no longer his mouth-piece) forever.--Rev. 3:14-22.

But now the judgment of the great Millennial day has begun; and its beginning is with the Church--to separate the true from the false or nominal.

To accomplish this separation, the truth--"the sword of the spirit"--sharper than any two-edged sword, is unsheathed. The conflict now in progress between truth and error, light and darkness, is for the very purpose of testing, sifting and separating the "children of light," who love the truth, from the children of darkness, who love the error. As heretofore shown, the second advent of our Lord is in this respect like his first advent; and his words, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword" (Luke 12:51), are applicable now--until his Church has been gathered and glorified, and his Kingdom set up in glorious authority.

The expression, "that ye be not partakers of her sins, and receive not of her plagues," implies that, in this time in which they are called out, God's people will be brought to a clear knowledge of the truth;--they will see clearly what constitute Babylon's sins--errors of doctrine and of life. And, when so enlightened, those who are God's people, having his Spirit, his love for right and truth, will hate the error and darkness in which for so long they have been. Such will be ready and anxious to know their duty toward the nominal church. The effect of the light of truth upon their hearts will be such that they will instinctively feel and ask themselves, "What communion hath light with darkness?" and they will look to the Lord to indicate to them his wisdom and will. To such the Lord answers, through his Word, "Come out of her, my people."

The expression, "that ye be not partakers of her sins," is in the nature of a reminder, as well as a threat. It is a reminder that, when in ignorance of the truth, they had no responsibility for the errors and the wrong course of Babylon, mother and daughters; but

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that now since they see those errors--those sins--they are responsible; and that if now they stay in these systems they, by intelligently assenting, are as responsible as those who formulated those errors, or more so, and will surely and justly partake of the consequences.

But, for various reasons, some seem anxious to excuse themselves, and to stay in Babylon. Such indicate that they lack the proper spirit of the truth, or else that they have not yet digested a sufficiency of the "meat in due season" to give them the necessary perception of her sins, which in the Lord's estimation are

piled up to heaven. Another confusing thing is that some of the daughters of the Roman Mother have put away many of the mother's outward marks and forms, while retaining much of her spirit and doctrines.

For instance, Baptists, Congregationalists, Second Adventists, Disciples, and a few other denominations, claim to be without bondage; claim that the Bible is their creed and that each group or congregation has charge of its own affairs, and that the meetings in which these independent congregations of each denomination unite are merely voluntary associations, in which denominational supervision or bondage finds no recognition. Then, especially with the "Disciples," the confession demanded is very simple. But they mostly mention the doctrine of the trinity, or eternal torment, or both. And where these are not specified, they are understood, and if attention be called to these subjects, or to the manner of our Lord's second coming, or to "the times of restitution," there is always a strong current of opposition, and, whether written or unwritten, a creed will be found which admits no Biblical examination or criticism; and, unless you assent, you must either keep quiet or get out.

The word "creed" comes from credo, and means I believe. It is entirely proper that every Christian have for himself a creed, a belief. And, if a number of Christians come to a unity of faith upon the lines of the Word of God, their assembling together for fellowship and communion is both proper and helpful, as the Bible declares. The general difficulty is that, when groups of Christians meet as brethren, they either make a written or an understood creed which goes beyond the Word of God and includes human tradition; or else they ignore all faith, and make morality--good works--the only basis of fellowship. But, as the name indicates, Christians are believers in Christ, and not merely moralists. While, therefore, a creed is necessary, and he who has none has no belief, and would therefore be an unbeliever, and while in Christian fellowship harmony of faith is necessary to communion, all should see that the fellowship and faith of the early Church, under divine direction, were built upon the first principles of the doctrine of Christ; and nothing more or less should be the basis of Christian fellowship here and now.

We will suggest a safe way to judge whether your present associations in the name of Christ are part of Babylon or not, and whether, therefore, you are one of those called to "Come out." It is this: If there is no meeting of the congregation at which believers can call up a passage of Scripture for discussion, in which discussion you, with others, can present your views of God's Word, there is something wrong. You cannot long have fellowship there. Your light is under a bushel, and will go out, unless you give it more liberty. You must come out of such condition or your light will

become darkness.

But if there be meetings at which you have an equal opportunity with others of calling up any portion of Scripture and expressing your view of its meaning on a par with others, you may conclude that you have found at least some evidence of Christian liberty; for no Christian has the right to refuse to give, when asked, a reason for the hope that is in him. And since the credo or belief of each Christian professes to be built upon God's Word, it follows that each should be not only willing but ready at all times to change his belief for one more Scriptural, if such can be pointed out to him.

Having found those who follow Berean methods, rejoice--but with fear, until you have tested them further. Do not abuse their hospitality by attempting to monopolize the time; be content and thankful to get your proportion of it. And, when your choice of a subject comes up, see (1) that it is wisely chosen, one that will strengthen, and not strangle, your hearers. (2) Pray that, as a minister (servant) of the truth, you may be "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed." (3) Let nothing be done through strife, contention or vainglorious effort to display yourself or your knowledge of the Word; but (4) "speak the truth in love," while you speak it none the less clearly and forcibly.

So long as you have such opportunities to hear others and to express yourself, you may conclude that you are in a safe place. As you progress, in hearing from others, and in expressing yourself to others freely and candidly, either you or they will be likely to come into harmony with the spirit of the truth. If your views be Scriptural and theirs not, they will doubtless come to hate you and the truth, and soon you will find no fellowship with them.

But in a majority of cases no such proving of spirits will be necessary. Generally you will find that congregations have formulated a creed to which each member is obliged to subscribe--if not in writing or by voice, at least by silent assent. In such a case, get such creed or confession, and see whether or not it fairly, frankly and truthfully represents your faith. If it does not, you should lose no time in repudiating it, however conscientiously ignorant of it you may have been for years past. Now you know, and now if you remain in, intelligently, you belie yourself, and thus prove yourself not a lover of the truth and a pleaser of God, but a lover of error and a pleaser of men.

It does not matter at all that you may have told the minister and some or all of the elders of the church of your disagreement and disbelief. They have no authority with God or men to absolve you from your public confession. If, for instance, you are a Presbyterian;

it is not the minister, nor the Session, nor the local congregation merely that you have joined, but as well the entire body of Presbyterians, everywhere. And so long as you are professedly a member, you are obligated in your belief and conduct to them all. And before the whole world you stand numbered as one of them, and as a partner in all that is professed by them all in common. If you do not believe as they do, it is your duty to them all, and to the world, to withdraw, and thus set yourself and others right before all. If by the Lord's mercy you are one of the few who have passed from darkness into his marvelous light, you will now feel ashamed of the doctrines you once delighted to confess, and will delight to reduce by one the number of errorists, and to add one to the number of the despised little flock--disowned, indeed, of men, but owned and loved and cherished of God.

As you did not join the minister or Session merely, but the congregation and the entire denomination, your dissolution of your membership should, if possible, be as public as was your joining. And, in reply to many inquiries, we suggest below a general outline for a letter of withdrawal which such as desire are at liberty to copy and use. If possible, it should be read aloud at some general congregational meeting, at which general speaking, remarks, etc., are in order--such as a prayer-meeting. After being read, it should be handed to the leader of the meeting as the representative of the congregation and officers. If by reason of sickness or from any other cause this course be not possible, we advise that a copy of the letter be sent to each member of the congregation, that there be no room for misunderstanding or misrepresentation. We will gladly supply copies of this letter printed in typewriter type, together with envelopes, and tracts to accompany same--free, upon being advised of the number necessary.

THE SUGGESTED LETTER:

Dear Brethren and Sisters,

Members and Officers of the _____
Church. The Lord has of late been teaching me some wonderful things out of his Word, whereof I am glad. The Bible has become a new book to me, so widely have the eyes of my understanding been opened. God is now my Father, Christ my Redeemer, and all believers my brethren, in a sense never before appreciated.

I would not have you understand that I saw a vision or had a special revelation; I merely have God's Word, "written aforetime for our learning;" but God has recently made it clearer to my understanding, through some of his servants. Nor do those servants

claim special inspirations or revelations, but merely that God's due time has now come to unseal and make known his glorious plan, wisely kept secret in the past, as the Scriptures themselves declare.--Dan. 12:9.

Of these blessed things I might mention a few, very briefly: I find that the Scriptures do not teach the eternal torment of all except the saints. I find that the full penalty of willful sin against clear knowledge will, in the language of the Apostle, be "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord." But, still better, if possible, I find that, while so many of our race (indeed by far the majority) have died in total or partial ignorance of God and his offer of life everlasting through Christ, God has graciously provided that during the Millennial Age all such of the families of the earth shall be blessed with the needed knowledge, and granted opportunity for obedience unto eternal life. And, further, I find its teaching to be, that we, the Gospel Church, as joint-heirs with Christ our Lord, are to be God's agents in bestowing that great Millennial blessing. And, finally, it appears that this time of blessing for which God's people have so long prayed, saying, "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven," is very near at hand, and even now wheat and tares are being separated, and soon a great time of trouble will overthrow existing institutions and usher in Christ's Kingdom of peace and equity.

I shall be glad to furnish the Scriptural evidences of these things to any who may desire to search the Word, and to prove whether these things be so.

But now, dear friends, comes an unpleasant duty. I find that many of these gems of truth are in direct conflict with our views as held and taught and confessed in our denominational literature; and hence, in honesty to you and myself, I must withdraw from membership with you in this church. To remain would be to misrepresent your views, and to have you misrepresent my views--the doctrine of the eternal torment of nine-tenths of our race being now in my judgment horrible--indeed a blasphemy against the God of love, whose Word, when understood, teaches quite the contrary.

For nearly...years I have tried faithfully to keep my engagements with you as a fellow-member of this church, and have learned to love some of you very dearly--some for social qualities and some for saintliness --Christlikeness. It is, therefore, with pain that I announce to you my withdrawal, and I owe you this explanation. Let me assure you that it is not because my love is less than formerly, for, by God's grace, I believe it is expanding toward him and his, and, sympathetically, toward all our race. This action, therefore, is not to be understood as a withdrawal from the Church of Christ, whose names are written in heaven, but merely a withdrawal from the....Church,

whose names are written on earth. I withdraw in order that I may be more free in my conscience, toward God and men, and that I may most fully fellowship all who are heartily the Lord's people--not only such in this congregation and denomination, but in all others as well. I ask no letter of dismissal, for I could not hope to be better suited elsewhere. So far as I am concerned, I wish to remove every barrier between myself and fellow-pilgrims. So then, to all of you who are in Christ Jesus--members of his Body--I still am a fellow-member, a branch in the true Vine (Christ), whom nothing can separate from the love of God in Christ, my Lord.--John 15:5; Rom. 8:38,39.

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