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THE BABE OF BETHLEHEM

"For unto you is born this day in the City of David a Savior, which is Christ, the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger."--Luke 2:11,12.

WHY WAS THIS BABE EXPECTED?

WHY WERE all men in expectation of Him at the time of His birth? What was to be peculiar about Him to lead Israel to expect His birth? The answer to this question is that God had made a certain promise centuries before and the promise had not been fulfilled. This promise contained the thought that a holy child would be born, and that in some way, not explained in the promise, this child would bring the blessing the world needed. Therefore every mother amongst the Israelites was very solicitous that she might be the mother of a son rather than a daughter, that perchance she might be the mother of this promised child. Thus the matter went on for years until, finally, the child was born.

The promise back of the expectation was that which God made to Abraham, saying, "In thee and in thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." From that time forward Abraham began to look for the promised Seed--the promised child. He looked first of all to his own children, and was finally informed that it would not be one of his children direct, but that through their children, at some remote date, this child should be born--the Seed of Abraham. From that time onward, all the Israelites were waiting for the birth of the child that should bring the blessing.

But why was a Messiah necessary? Why wait at all for the birth of the child? The answer to this question is that sin had come into the world; that God had placed our first parents--holy, pure and free from sin--in the glorious conditions of the Garden of Eden with every favorable prospect and everlasting life at their command if they continued in harmony with God. But by reason of their disobedience they came under Divine displeasure and sentence of death. This sentence of death has brought in its wake aches, pains, sorrows, tears, sighing, crying and death--all of these experiences as the result of sin.

Our heavenly Father said to our first parents--and this was the first intimation that He gave them of a deliverance --that "The Seed of the woman shall bruise the Serpent's head." The serpent in this expression means Satan--all the powers of evil, everything adverse to humanity, everything adverse to the blessings which God had given them, and which they had lost by disobedience. But the promise was vague and they understood little about the "Seed of the woman" and "bruising the Serpent's head." It merely meant in an allegorical way a great victory over Sin and Satan, without explaining how it should come.

So mankind continued to die; they continued to have aches and pains and sorrows; they continued going down to the tomb. They realized that what they needed was some Savior to come and deliver them from the power of sin, to deliver them from the death penalty of sin--a Savior who would be, in other words, a Life-giver. They

were dying and needed new life. This is the meaning of the word Savior in the language used by our Lord and the Apostles. They were hoping and expecting that God would send a Life-giver.

It was on this account that they were so greatly concerned regarding the promise made to Abraham--"In thee and in thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed"--they shall be granted a release from sin and death. In no other way could mankind be blessed. It would be impossible to bless mankind except by releasing them from sin and death. Hence, the Scriptures tell us of God's sympathy; that God looked down from His holy habitation, and beheld our sorrow, and heard, figuratively, "the groaning of the prisoners"--humanity--all groaning and travailing under this penalty of death--some with few aches and pains, and some with more aches and pains; some with few sorrows, and some with greater sorrows, but all groaning and travailing in pain.

But God's sympathy was manifested; and we read that, "He looked down and beheld that there was no eye to pity and no arm to save" and with "His own Arm He brought salvation." This is what was promised to Abraham--that one should come from his posterity who would be the Savior of the world; and because this promise was made to Abraham and to his Seed, they were marked out as separate from all other nations and peoples. To the Jewish nation alone belonged this great honor--that through them should come this salvation. Hence, from that time onward the Jews spoke of themselves as God's people, the people whom God had promised to bless, and through whom He would bring a blessing to all others. Therefore, all other people were called heathen (or nations, which the word means). Israel was thus separated because God's Covenant was with them, and not with the others. But God's Covenant with Israel was for the blessing of all the others: "In thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Now, we have the "Why" of this wonderful babe's being born.

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HOW WAS THIS BABE PECULIAR--HOLY, HARMLESS, UNDEFILED?

How could He be a Savior? In what way could He be different from any other babe? Why not use some other babe as the one through whom salvation should come? The answer of the Bible is that salvation could not come to mankind unless there should be a satisfaction of Justice on account of Original Sin. That must be the first consideration. The penalty, "Dying, thou shalt die," pronounced against the first man, must be met before the world could be blessed.

Why not let any man die? Because all were under the sentence of the original condemnation, and none could be a Ransom-price or a substitute. Hence the necessity for

a specially born babe, different from any other babe. In what way was this One differently born? The Bible explains to us very distinctly that He was not begotten of an earthly father. Although Joseph was espoused to Mary, yet this child was not the child of Joseph. The Bible explains that this child was specially begotten by Divine power, in the mother, though she was still a "virgin" when she brought forth the child.

This is the Scriptural proposition; and while it may not seem clear to some, yet the Word of God standeth sure. If the Redeemer was not perfect then He could not be the Savior of the world. The promised redemption implied that Jesus would be perfect; it implied that He would be as the first man was before he sinned. "For since by man came death, by man shall come also the resurrection of the dead"; "As all in Adam die, even so shall all in Christ be made alive."

So this one must be, as the Apostle declares, "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners." (Heb. 7:26.) He must be entirely distinct and separate from humanity so far as sinful features were concerned. If we had time it would be interesting to go into the scientific features--of how a perfect child could be born from an imperfect mother. If we can have a perfect life germ we can have a perfect child from an imperfect mother. If a breeder of stock wishes to raise the standard of his stock, he selects a fine bull, a male goat, or a male ram, and thus he improves the entire herd. And so, if we had perfect fathers, we would soon have a perfect race. But there is no father who can produce a perfect child. Hence it was necessary in this case (and the Scriptures declare it was accomplished) that God should beget this Son by power from on high. Therefore, that which was born of the "virgin" was separate and distinct from all humanity. His life came not from an earthly father, but from His Heavenly Father.

WHO WAS HE THUS BORN?

It is written that before He became flesh Jesus had an existence; as He declared, "Before Abraham was, I am." Again, in one of His prayers He said, "Father, glorify Thou Me with the glory that I had with Thee before the world was." The Revelator tells us that "He was the beginning of the creation of God," and Paul says that "by Him all things were made." And so our Lord Jesus was not only the beginning, but also the active agent of the Father in all the creative work in the angelic world and in the creation of humanity, and in all things that were created.

The whole matter is summed up by the Apostle John. We will give a more literal translation of "In the beginning was the Word." [This expression, Word, in the Greek is Logos. The thought behind the word Logos is that in olden times a king, instead of speaking his commands directly to his people, sat behind a lattice work, and

his Logos, or messenger, or word, or representative, stood before the lattice work, and gave the message of the king to the people in a loud tone of voice. The king himself was not seen by the people--the Logos was the one seen. So this is the picture the Scriptures give us of how Jesus was the express representative of the Heavenly Father, the One through whom the Heavenly Father made Himself known--the Word, or the Logos. So we read in the first chapter of John], "In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with the God, and the Logos was a god. The same was in the beginning with the God. By Him were all things made, and without Him was not anything made."

In other words, Jesus was the direct Creator of all things. He was the Divine Power, Agent, Word, Messenger, the Logos of Jehovah. He did all the great work of creation; but He Himself was the first of God's direct creation, the First-born of all creatures, that in all things He might have the pre-eminence--the first place.

When the time came that our Heavenly Father made known His great purpose that He would bless the world, He gave opportunity to this First-begotten One--this One begotten of the Father--to be the servant in this great work He intended to accomplish for mankind. Consequently, the Scriptures state that "for the joy set before Him He endured the cross, despising the shame." And now He has sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. He has this great reward because of His obedience even unto death, the death of the cross.

The Apostle speaks of Him as having been rich, but for our sakes becoming poor, that through His poverty we might be made rich. He tells us how He left the glory which He had with the Father and humbled Himself to the human nature. Why? Because, as already stated, it was necessary that some one should become man's Redeemer; an angel could not redeem man, neither could an animal redeem man. The Divine law is "an eye for an eye; a tooth for a tooth; a man's life for a man's life." This was to teach us a great lesson: that perfect human life having been condemned to death, it would require a perfect human life to redeem it. It was therefore necessary that Jesus should become the "Man Christ Jesus," in order "that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for every man."

WHAT RESULTS HAVE FOLLOWED?

The results that have followed have been that He Himself proved His own faithfulness. "Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross"--the most ignominious form of death. It pleased the Father thus to prove Him, not only by Death, but by the most ignominious form of death--dying as a culprit, being crucified between two thieves. What a terrible ignominy to die thus!

It would be ignominy enough for us in our imperfection, but for Him, perfect, "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners," it must have been a cause for deep and poignant sorrow. Having completed the laying down of His life, at the end of the three and a half years, He cried, "It is finished!" What? Not His work, for much of that lay before Him! He merely finished this part of the work, finished laying down His life a ransom-price.

What next? After His death came His resurrection; and we read that "God raised Him from the dead on the third day." According to the Scriptures He was raised up from death a glorious being--"sown in corruption, raised in incorruption; sown in dishonor, raised in glory; sown in weakness, raised in power; sown a natural body, raised a spirit body"; "Wherefore God hath highly exalted

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Him and given Him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, those in heaven, and those on earth, and those under the earth; that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."--Phil. 2:10.

But we see not yet all knees bowed to Him. Why not? The Scriptures tell us that before He begins His great work for the world of mankind, He first does a work for the elect, the Church, those who desire to walk in His footsteps, to gather out of the world a Bride, to be co-workers with Him in all the great work of the Father.

This is the only work yet in process of accomplishment, and this has been going on now for over eighteen centuries. We see how He gathered out the saintly ones from amongst the Jews, "Israelites, indeed, in whom there was no guile." Not finding enough to make the desired number, He proceeded to gather them from all nations, kindreds, tongues and peoples.

The Apostle tells us that when this Bride class is united with Him they shall be parts of the Seed of Abraham; as we read, "And if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's Seed, and heirs of the promise." (Gal. 3:29.) This statement relates to the promise made to Abraham, that through him and his Seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Thus we see the work that Christ is accomplishing now.

The invitation to become the Bride of Christ is a very special invitation and those who would be His must walk in the "narrow way." If they will sit in His Throne, they must suffer with Him. If they suffer with Him they shall also share His glory. So "the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that shall follow," were not only to be accomplished in our Lord Jesus, personally, but He was an example for all the Church who are justified through faith in His blood. They have a share with Him in His sufferings, and will share in His glory; they have also a share in the First Resurrection; as the Revelator declares,

"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the First Resurrection, on such the Second Death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."--Rev. 20:6.

Saint Paul says, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord," "that I might know Him and the power of His resurrection" (the special resurrection) to the divine nature. How? By being made conformable to His death; for, "If we suffer with Him we shall also reign with Him."

WHAT ABOUT THE FUTURE?

All the families of the earth are to be blessed, as originally promised in Eden: "The Seed of the woman shall bruise the Serpent's head." Also, as St. Paul states in the 16th chapter of Romans, "The very God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." So, then, the next thing in order in the outworking of God's Plan will be to bruise Satan and destroy sin.

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When and how will this be done? Just as soon as this Age shall end; because this Age is merely for the development of the Bride class; then will come the promised Free Grace to all the families of the earth. Messiah's Kingdom shall come. He has promised that when He shall reign, all His faithful shall reign with Him: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My Throne, even as I overcame and am set down with My Father in His Throne." All the Church will be associated with Him in His great Messianic Kingdom; and "He shall reign from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth"; and "Unto Him every knee shall bow and every tongue confess, to the glory of God the Father"; "The knowledge of the glory of God shall fill the whole earth." The whole earth will become as the Garden of Eden. Paradise Lost will be Paradise Restored. The Divine Image lost in Adam will be restored to man. Human nature will be brought to perfection. But the glorious reward to the Church will be the divine nature, to be like her Lord, to sit at His right hand, and to bless the world of mankind. Man will become not only perfect, having all that Adam had, but will have additional knowledge and character; and there is every evidence that this shall be an eternal blessing.

SHALL NONE BE LOST?

Yes, the Scriptures tell us that some will be lost, and that the loss they shall sustain will be loss of life, and therefore all the pleasures of life. "They shall be as though they had not been"; "They shall be destroyed from amongst the people." St. Peter says, "They shall be destroyed as brute beasts."--Acts 3:23; 2 Pet. 2:12.

When? When the eyes of their understanding shall have been opened to see the Lord and to understand His glorious character, and they shall have had opportunity to appreciate and enjoy His blessing. When such intentionally reject the grace of God, they shall die the Second Death, from which there is no resurrection, no hope of recovery. But, thank God, there shall be no knowledge of suffering for them; they shall be destroyed as brute beasts.

In proportion as we believe in this Babe of Bethlehem shall we rejoice today. In proportion as we believe He was manifested on our behalf; in proportion as we believe He died for our sins; in proportion as we recognize Him as the glorified Savior; in proportion as we have surrendered our hearts to Him and seek to do the things well pleasing to him shall we have the peace of God.

Our hope on behalf of mankind in general is that in God's due time His blessing shall reach all--not the same as that for the Church, but as St. Peter tells us in Acts 3:19-21, "Times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord, and He shall send Jesus Christ, who before was preached unto you, whom the heavens must retain until the Times of Restitution of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy Prophets."

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THE BODY OF CHRIST

QUESTION.--Is the "body" mentioned in Hebrews 10:5 and Hebrews 7:27 the same?

Answer.--The body which God prepared for sacrifice may properly be viewed from two standpoints: First, the Father prepared the body of Jesus, in that He was born holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners, and of the human family through His mother. This is the foundation of the whole matter. But the Apostle Peter and also the Apostle Paul inform us that God foreknew the Church, "the Body of Christ," and, therefore, foreknew the sufferings of the Body as well as the sufferings of the Head--foreknew our share in the sufferings and also in His glory.

In speaking therefore of the body which God prepared we should properly enough think how the Father prepared a body for Jesus which was actually, physically perfect and corresponding to the body of Adam, who was afterward condemned, and also prepared the way by which the "Body of Christ" should be justified from the sinfulness of the flesh, that thus He might offer not only Himself,

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the Head, but also "the Church, His Body," a "living

sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God."

TYPICAL AND ANTITYPICAL ATONEMENT DAY SACRIFICES FOR SIN CONTRASTED

In Hebrews 10:10 the Apostle is contrasting the atonement day sacrifice of the typical high priest with the antitypical atonement day sacrifice of the antitypical High Priest, Jesus. The typical high priest needed once every year, repeatedly (not daily), to offer up sacrifices. The first part of the sacrifice was for his own sin, and the second part of the sacrifice was for the sins of the people. The first part was the bullock, and the second part the offering of the goat. These two offerings constituted the one sacrifice for sin on the day of atonement! And so, in the antitype, the offering of our Lord Jesus, when He offered up Himself, was for "himself," that is, for His Body, those who are to be His Church, the household of faith. And then, a further part of His sacrifice has been the offering up of these members of His Body, in harmony with their wills and in harmony with the Divine provision.

Thus the antitypical atonement day sacrifices for sin have been in progress for eighteen hundred years. The special merit of the sacrifice was that which our Lord Himself offered, through which our offerings are made acceptable. It is one sacrifice in the sense that it is all one Body of one Priest that is offered, for the Apostle said, "We are partakers of the sufferings of the Anointed," and, "if we suffer with Him we shall reign with Him"; "if one member suffer all members suffer."

ALL OFFERING MUST BE DONE BY THE PRIEST

In Hebrews 7:27 the Apostle said, "This He did once when he offered up Himself." The question arises, To whom does this refer? Does it mean Jesus, and the members of His Body offering up Himself? We answer, No. The members of the Body do not offer up themselves; they present themselves; but the offering, so far as God is concerned, must be done by the Priest, Jesus, the "High Priest of our profession." The Apostle says that this He did once, and we answer, Here the thought is one fulfilment of the one type. In the type there were two sacrifices offered, and it is here called His sacrifice.

Our Lord offered up Himself at Jordan, and He offered up all the members of His Body, the Church, at Pentecost. The offering of Himself personally at Jordan was accepted of the Father, and the remainder of Christ's sacrifice was merely the fulfilling of the terms of the sacrifice. So the presentation of the Church before the Father was accomplished at Pentecost, though it has required the entire Gospel Age to complete the sacrifice.

This, too, was shown in the atonement day type: The high priest, after offering up the bullock, took the blood into the Holy and later into the Most Holy and sprinkled

it on behalf of himself and his household--the members of his body and the household of faith--the underpriests and the Levites.

Next the high priest came to the door of the Tabernacle and slew the goat, representing the acceptance of justified believers as His Body and their consecration to death. In the type this did not represent the second coming of Christ, but merely His manifestation in connection with the sacrifice of the Body, which is the Church. In the antitype our Lord as the High Priest manifested His power in the Church at Pentecost by sending the Holy Spirit upon them and thus giving the intimation that their sacrifice was made and acceptable in the Father's sight. All of the Church who have since come in were counted in there--just as in our Lord's prayer He said, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for those also who shall believe on Me through their word." Similarly the acceptance of the Church at Pentecost as joint-sacrificers, as part of Christ's sacrifice, has continued ever since and we are members of His Body, each in his turn being sacrificed until the entire sacrifice of the Great High priest once for all shall have been accomplished, and that accomplishment, we believe, is near.

The expression, "If one member of the Body of Christ suffer, all the members suffer with it" (1 Cor. 12:26), does not, of course, signify that the dead members of the Church would suffer with the living members, nor that those not yet begotten of the Spirit would suffer with the Apostles, nor that members in different parts of the world would suffer with the other members of whom they were ignorant. It merely means that there is such a sympathy and union and fellowship in the Body of Christ that each is intimately and deeply interested in each other member, so that the interests of one are the interests of all. As, for instance, where there are two or three of the Lord's people in fellowship, as a little ecclesia or class, they are, in this sense of the word, a Body of Christ and are interested in each other, and suffer with each other in the tribulations, persecutions and difficulties of life. And, in a larger sense of the word, any of the members of the Body of Christ, in any part of the world, learning of the sufferings of other members of the Body would correspondingly feel an interest, a sympathy and fellowship in their sufferings, or in their joys.

NOT A PART OF THE RANSOM

In the statement, "A body hast thou prepared me," we must be careful not to read in what is not stated. It is not stated, "A body hast thou prepared me as a ransom-price,"

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but, "A body hast thou prepared me" (Heb. 10:5), "for the suffering of death." (Heb. 2:9.) The suffering of death on the part of our Lord Jesus constituted

the ransom-price for the sins of the whole world. But the Body, which is the Church, the Father prepares through justification for association with Jesus in the "suffering of death," but this does not constitute the Church partakers in the ransom-price. Only one ransom-price was necessary, and that was one perfect man's death, and that had already been arranged for before the Church was invited to become joint-sufferers and joint-heirs with the Redeemer as His members.

The word "sacrifice" seems to be confusing to some. We are exhorted to present our bodies living sacrifices, but our presentation of our bodies to the Lord should not be confounded with the Lord's presentation of us. Going back to the type we find that two goats were presented to the Lord at the door of the Tabernacle. They were presented to be sacrificed, and so, when speaking of them, one might properly say, Those are the sacrificial goats; and whoever presented the goats might in one sense of the word be said to be the sacrificer.

But the word sacrifice, when used in the sense of devotion, or setting apart for sacrifice, should not be confounded with the sacrificing work by the high priest. The goats were not sacrificed merely because they were presented or devoted. God dealt not with the people, but with the priest, and only when the priest had slain the animal was it sacrificed, from the Divine standpoint. Then, and only then, was it really acceptable to God as a sacrifice.

Applying this, then, we may desire to come to God and learn that now is the acceptable day, now is the time when the Body of Christ may be devoted, or presented to the Lord. But something more is necessary than our presentation, and that further thing is the work which is

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accomplished for us by the High Priest, Jesus; namely, His acceptance, or His endorsement of our consecration, and the presentation of our offering as a part of His sacrifice. When the High Priest presents us with His merit imputed, then, and not until then, does our offer become a "sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God."

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"SOME BETTER THING"--"OUR HEAVENLY CALLING"

LIKE MANY of our Christian friends, for a long time we did not understand how to "rightly divide the Word of Truth." (2 Tim. 2:15.) We did not comprehend that God's Plan provides, first, a heavenly salvation for the Church, and then an earthly salvation for mankind in general. The study of the Bible along Dispensational lines

clears away all of our difficulties. It shows us that the promise that the redeemed "shall sit every man under his own vine and fig tree," and "long enjoy the work of his hands" (Mic. 4:4; Isa. 65:22), is God's provision for Israel restored to Divine favor, and for all the families of the earth, but not for the Church. Of the true Church, the Bride of Christ, it is declared that her members shall, in the resurrection, be like unto the angels--heavenly or spirit beings.

St. Paul distinctly says of these, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God." (I Cor. 15:50.) Jesus tells these that He has gone to prepare them a place in the Father's house on high. (John 14:2,3.) But the place for man, the earth, already provided from the foundation of the world (Matt. 25:34), is a very different one from ours, of which we read, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." --I Cor. 2:9; Isa. 64:4.

THE CALL TO THE SPIRIT NATURE

Now we understand why it is that from Genesis to Malachi there is not one suggestion of a heavenly or spiritual hope for any natural man. Every promise is earthly. In Abraham's case, for instance, we read, "The Lord said unto Abram, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward, for all this land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth, so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee."--Gen. 13:14-17.

St. Paul refers to this difference between the hopes of the spirit-begotten Church, founded at Pentecost, and those of all others. Pointing to the faithful of the past, he declares that although they had God's testimony to their faithfulness, nevertheless, they "received not the promise, God having provided some better thing for us, that they, without us, should not be made perfect."--Heb. 11:38-40.

As soon as we get our "better thing," our higher reward of "glory, honor, and immortality," in joint-heirship with our Lord as figuratively His Bride--then the worthy ones of ancient times will get their reward of resurrection to human perfection. Under Messiah's Kingdom, those perfect men will be "princes in all the earth." (Psa. 45:16.) Then from the spiritual to the perfected earthly ones the blessings and instruction will descend for the poor, ignorant, selfish and superstitious world to help them, to uplift the obedient to the perfections illustrated in the perfected Worthies.

We have heard of the Sunday School teacher who told her class about heaven, about its pianos, harps, organs,

horses and carriages, fruits and flowers, etc. We see that she was merely thinking of the blessings God has provided for the faithful and obedient of the world--"in due time." She had no conception of the "heaven of heavens" promised to the faithful followers of Jesus in the "narrow way." The Great Teacher explains that it is impossible to describe heaven with its beauties and charms. He said to Nicodemus, "If I have told you of earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?"--John 3:12.

In line with this, the Bible makes no attempt to describe heaven itself, nor its inhabitants. We are merely told that "God is a Spirit," "dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor can see"--personally. (John 4:24; I Tim. 6:16.) Men must discern God in His works--the noblest of which is the perfect man--made in His moral likeness, on the earthly plane, "a little lower than the angels" on the spirit plane. The most that His Word declares of our heavenly inheritance is that "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." --I Cor. 2:9.

But while refusing to inform us of the heavenly condition, God gives us a soul-satisfying portion. Through the Apostle He declares (I John 3:2), "It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He [the glorified Jesus] shall appear [at His second advent, in power and great glory] we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." Others, not thus changed from human to spirit nature by the First Resurrection power, will not "see Him as He is," but only as He shall be revealed in His providences and judgments, which every eye shall recognize.

How satisfactory! Beyond all that we could have asked or thought! "Like Him!"--what more could we ask? "Like Him" whom God hath highly exalted "Far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named!" (Eph. 1:21.) We stand amazed at such grace! Moreover, we can realize that He who called us to become "partakers of the divine nature" and joint-heirs with the Redeemer in His Mediatorial Kingdom has provided for our every comfort and joy in that heavenly state, the details of which we may not now grasp. Prophetically of these it is written, "I shall be satisfied, when I awake with Thy likeness."--Psa. 17:15.

It is the hope, the desire, the aim of every one of us to make our calling and election sure--to so run that we may obtain that great "prize" of participation in the First Resurrection. Of that resurrection we read, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the First [chief] Resurrection; on such the Second Death hath no power, but they shall be Priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." (Rev. 20:6.) Let us have this in mind, dear friends, that our participation with our

Lord in the glories of the Kingdom is dependent upon our faithfulness here in following Him through evil report and through good report; through honor and through dishonor; in the bearing of the cross along the way of self-denial.

THE FIRST-BORNS PASSED OVER

When God would bring typical Israel out of Egypt, the first-borns had a peculiar salvation, or preservation, first. The night before the deliverance all the first-borns were

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in danger of death, and were saved only when under the blood of the passover lamb. We see the significance of this beautiful type. St. Paul tells us that Christ is our Passover Lamb, slain for us. We each have appropriated His flesh, His human nature, which He sacrificed on our behalf. We recognize His sacrifice, the blood of Atonement. We see that this entire Gospel Age is the antitype of that night. We are hoping to belong to the First-borns (begotten of the Holy Spirit) who, during this night-time of sin and death, will be passed over and, on account of the blood without and the lamb within, be accounted worthy of being passed over--accounted worthy of eternal life on the spirit plane as members of the Church of the First-born--participants in the First Resurrection, to glory, honor and immortality, with our Lord and like Him.

All of the first-borns of Israel passed over typified all of the Lord's people, in all denominations and outside of all denominations, who are now passing from death unto life. In the type, however, the first-borns of every tribe were exchanged for the one tribe of Levi--the priestly tribe--which thereafter typified the Church of the First-borns --the "Household of Faith." Further, the Lord divided that tribe into two classes. A little handful were made priests and occupied a special position of favor and relationship and nearness to God. The remainder of that tribe were honored in being used as the assistants or servants of the priests. This is an allegory, or type.

The Church of the First-borns will consist of two classes, a "little flock" of priests, and a "great company" of the "household of faith," antitypical Levites, who will serve. The "little flock" of priests do their sacrificing now and, if faithful, will shortly be made a Royal Priesthood, a reigning Priesthood, joint-heirs with the great King of Glory and High Priest of our profession--Jesus. The "great company," however, typed in the ordinary Levites, will not be in the Throne, but serve before the Throne. They will not be "living stones" of the Temple, but will serve God in the Temple. They will not wear crowns of glory, though they will be granted palms of victory.

Which place will you or I occupy in the resurrection,

in the General Assembly of the Church of the First-borns?
Shall we be of the Royal Priesthood, or of the
less honorable, but still blessed servants? Shall we be
of the Bride class, or of the less honored "virgins, her
companions, that follow her"?

It is for us to make our calling and election sure by
our zeal, our earnestness, our devotion to the great King
and His cause. He has called us to the highest plane of
existence. It rests with us, under His wonderful and gracious
arrangements, to determine whether we shall be
passed over or not passed over; and if passed over, to determine
whether we shall accept the place to which we
are called, or the inferior place, which will be granted to
those who do not keep their garments unspotted from the
world and who, therefore, must come through "great
tribulation" in order to enter into the Kingdom at all.

We exhort, therefore, that we strive, not only to be
present at the Great Convention, the "General Assembly
of the Church of the First-borns," but to make our "calling
and election sure," that we may be of the Bride class,
the Royal Priesthood class, the members of the Body of
the Great Prophet, Priest and King of Glory! Let us
encourage each other and be encouraged to maintain the
good fight of faith, and to gain the victory, so far as our
hearts are concerned, over the world, the flesh and the
Adversary. Let us be so filled with the spirit of the
Truth, the spirit of meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering,
brotherly-kindness and love, that we shall be a
blessing to those in our homes, that they may take knowledge
of us that we have been with Jesus and have learned
of Him; and that this blessing may thus overflow and
abound to many hearts.

BURNING AND SHINING LIGHTS

One of old was declared to be "a burning and a shining
light." There is force in this expression. Some
lights are cold, austere, unsympathetic; but the kind approved
of the Master was the burning kind--warm, glowing,
sympathetic, helpful, intensive! The Master Himself
furnishes the best of all illustrations of the principle
enunciated. He was the Light which came down from
heaven--undimmed, resplendent, shining forth to the
utmost the light of Divine Truth! Not a cold, forbidding
recluse was He, holding Himself aloof from the people
with a haughty and disdainful spirit, telling coldly "Wonderful
words of life." On the contrary, His entire life
was sympathetic, whole-souled. One of the charges
brought against Him by the cold Pharisees was, "He receiveth
sinners and eateth with them." Even His disciples
were shocked that He should converse with a woman of
Samaria. But the common people heard Him gladly.
While recognizing that He was far above their plane--
while beholding in Him the glories of the "Only-begotten
of the Father," they nevertheless were drawn to Him because
He was the burning as well as the shining light.

And they declared, "Never man spake like this man."--
John 7:46.

Bible students are all Christians; though, alas! all "Christians" are not Bible students. True, God's Book may even be read through by some who are unbelievers; and it may be scanned critically by opponents who seek to find fault with it and to entrap it, as they sought to find fault with the Master. These, however, are not Bible students in the proper sense of the word. Only those who have made a consecration of their lives to the Lord and are anxious to know the Divine will that they may conform their lives to it, and who, to attain this end, have entered the School of Christ to be taught of Him--only these are Bible students from our standpoint, searchers after the secrets of the Lord, because they love Him, and are appreciative of His glorious Plans and desirous of understanding them fully.

Such Bible students should be burning and shining lights in the world and amongst our fellow-Christians of all denominations, many of whom, alas! have much of the spirit of the world and are lacking in the spirit of the Truth itself--because they are not sufficiently Bible students.

"Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." We are not enjoined to make a show of carrying our Bibles everywhere in an ostentatious manner. We are exhorted to show forth in our daily lives the lessons we learn from its precious pages. As the Bible is the Lamp provided by the Lord to all those who walk in His footsteps, so each of these in turn is a lamp which should shine forth upon others the light, the knowledge, the Spirit of the Truth, for their satisfaction. In other words, the Holy Spirit is not poured out upon the world of mankind, but merely upon the Lord's servants and handmaidens. It is an anointing for these, and upon these, evidencing to them that they have been begotten again, to the new nature, and making of them light-bearers for the benefit of others--burning and shining lights, sympathetic and helpful lights, "that they might show forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvelous light."

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"THE LIGHT SHINETH IN DARKNESS"

While keeping the lamp trimmed and burning--while seeking to glorify God as burning and shining lights in the world, we must not forget that the Bible assures us that we shall be no more successful in converting the world than was our Master. His great light shone in darkness, "and the darkness comprehended it not." And the religionists of His day instigated His crucifixion.

The Master's prophecy concerning His followers will prove true to the end of the Age. The darkness hateth

the light. "Marvel not, My brethren, if the world hate you"; "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you." (I John 3:13; John 15:18.) It is altogether a mistake, therefore, to suppose that the Lord's consecrated people, letting their light shine faithfully before men, could convert the world. Such was not God's intention. It is the Church, not the world, that is being tested at the present time. The opposition of the world and all the powers of darkness serve to test us as New Creatures--to test our loyalty to God and to His Truth.

Whosoever receives the light of Truth intelligently must rejoice in it; and, rejoicing in it, he must let it shine out upon others, or, by covering his light with a bushel, he will demonstrate his lack of courage, lack of appreciation, lack of earnestness--qualities which the Lord is now specially seeking amongst those whom He has invited to be sharers with Jesus in the glories of the Mediatorial Kingdom about to be established amongst men. It is important, therefore, that we let our light shine before men; that we be willing, nay, glad, if need be, to suffer for our loyalty to the Lord and to His message. And we have His Word for it that whoever is ashamed of Him or of His Word now, of such He will be ashamed by and by. He will not own them as members of His Bride class, will not accept them as assistants with Him in His glorious Throne.

"The Light of the world is Jesus"; "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." (John 1:9.) Thus far Jesus has not been dealing with the world, but merely with the blessed ones who have the eye of faith and the ear of faith. "Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear." (Matt. 13:16.) The time for the enlightenment of the world will be after the special call of the elect. Then the Church, as the Bride, will be with the heavenly Bridegroom in His Throne. Then all now found faithful in the matter of letting their light shine will be associated with the great Light, Jesus, as members of His Body. Altogether they will constitute the great Sun of Righteousness, which will then arise with healing in its beams for the blessing of all the families of the earth; "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father; who hath ears to hear, let him hear." (Matt. 13:43.) He that hath a desire of heart, let him be obedient and thus make his "calling and election sure" to this glorious, chief salvation.

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WHAT CONSTITUTES SPIRITUAL-MINDEDNESS?

"To be spiritually-minded is life and peace."--Rom. 8:6.

ABILITY TO UNDERSTAND the Scriptures,

to talk fluently upon them and to expound them clearly is a qualification which we think should follow in the wake of spiritual-mindedness; but some might be able to expound Scripture very well, and to express truths in very good form who are not necessarily very spiritually-minded. A parrot can repeat certain words and phrases; but no one would accuse a parrot of being spiritually-minded. So there are some people who can repeat certain spiritual truths, apparently with a good deal of zest.

To be spiritually-minded is to have a mind in harmony with the Spirit of God, and fully surrendered to the Divine will--fully consecrated to the Lord. It would not be enough merely to have a preference for good, saying, "I prefer not to do any gross sin; I prefer to live a life that will be honest and decent." This attitude would not be spiritual-mindedness. Adam was not spiritually-minded, but in his perfection he had a mind to do right. He had the mind of God in the sense that he had a balanced mind, not one having a preference for sin, or one that was weak. He was sound-minded and could appreciate things from the standpoint of righteousness and justice. But even in his perfection Adam had not a spiritual mind, in the highest, or Scriptural sense of the word.

In Romans 8:6 the Apostle Paul uses the expression "spiritually-minded" in describing a certain class who have become followers of Christ, who have made a full consecration of their lives to the Lord and who, in harmony with this consecration, have been begotten of the Holy Spirit. These are spiritually-minded. These are granted a spiritual insight into Divine things.

OUR LORD BECAME SPIRITUALLY-MINDED AT JORDAN

This was true of our Lord Jesus. Having left the glory which He had with the Father, and having humbled Himself to take the human nature, He was found in fashion as a man. We read that He was not an imperfect man, but "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners." (Heb. 7:26.) Yet with all these special qualities He did not have the spiritual mind to which the Apostle has reference. Our Lord had a mind such as Adam had before the fall--a mind in perfect harmony, perfectly balanced. Our Lord received the spiritual mind, however, at the moment when He was begotten of the Spirit, when He made full consecration at baptism, and as a consequence the Holy Spirit descended and lighted upon Him in bodily form like a dove.

Following that begetting, the Lord had an enlargement of understanding and was granted to see certain deep things of God which He had not seen before His consecration; so we read in that very connection that "the heavens were opened" to Him--the higher things became clear to Him--the more spiritual things. These things

St. Paul calls "the deep things of God." "The natural man," St. Paul says [the natural man would be a perfect man; fallen man is imperfect, unnatural], "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God,...neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (I Cor. 2:14.) Then he proceeds to say that we have received the Spirit of God through the begetting of the Holy Spirit; and that having the new mind, this spirit begetting, we are enabled to understand the deep things of God. "The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God; and we have received...the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." Thus to us is it given to know the deep things of God.--I Cor. 2:11,12.

NO NATURAL MAN IS SPIRITUALLY-MINDED

So, then, the one who has been begotten of the Holy Spirit is spiritually-minded. He sees things from the new standpoint which God specially brings to the attention of the spirit begotten. As the Apostle John says, "Ye

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have an unction from the Holy One, and ye all know it." (I John 2:20.) Whoever receives this begetting of the Holy Spirit, this anointing, has an understanding of heart and of mind which is different from that which any natural man would have, a quality that will progress with him. He has the privilege of growing in grace and in knowledge and in the appreciation of the deep things of God; and he should grow.

The Apostles Peter and Paul go on to explain (I Peter 2:2,3; Heb. 5:13,14; 6:1,2) that one thus begotten of the Spirit of God is at first only a babe, and, as a babe, should desire the sincere milk of the Word--the first principles of the doctrine of Christ; but as he goes on, he should feed upon the strong meat of God's Word. Some of those who have the begetting of the Spirit may be blessed with the special gift of language, so that they can make the matter very clear to others; some others who have also received the begetting of the Spirit may not be blessed with this gift. But all certainly would have the desire to tell forth the blessings which they have received from the Lord, that others might know and might glorify God in their bodies and spirits, which are His.

As these spiritually-minded ones would thus endeavor to tell the good tidings, we have no doubt whatever that the Lord's blessing upon them would more and more qualify them as ambassadors and representatives, that they might tell the Message to others--if not in one form, then in another. We have noted, however, that some who speak with stammering lips have sometimes accomplished very wonderful things, while some with a great deal of eloquence have failed to obtain the same results. The

victory is not always to the strong nor to the swift; for the Lord may grant His blessing with the feebly spoken word, particularly if the whole life be in harmony with the message given out.

We have been surprised at times to find that some who have apparently considerable understanding of spiritual things, in the sense of being able to tell about them, do not always give the best evidence in their lives that they really have the Spirit of the Lord. Sometimes in their private lives there is that which is quite contradictory. This condition surprises us; causes us to wonder how it is that those who apparently understand the Truth should be without the power, or manifestation of the power of the Truth in their daily lives. We should bear in mind that whoever speaks the words of the Lord with his mouth, should uphold it in his every act, word, thought, in private life as well as in public.

THE LIFE, NOT THE WORDS, A TRUE INDEX

The Truth should be the standard. Everything else is certainly quite contrary to the Divine will; and that person who fails to uphold the Truth in his daily life gives evidence that he has not the Spirit of the Lord in the proper degree. If, therefore, any of us should find that in our daily lives we have not been living in conformity with the message of our lips, it would be a matter of serious concern, for we cannot doubt that whoever is out of harmony with the Lord in his heart, will sooner or later get out of harmony in his utterances.

We think, therefore, that if in a congregation of the Lord's people any one were proposed as an Elder or a Deacon who outwardly had ever so great ability as a teacher, but who did not in his daily life give good evidence of being fully consecrated to the Lord, and of seeking to walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, he should be regarded as a very dangerous person to put into the high position of Elder or Deacon. The sooner he is left quite by himself the better. For the more such people are put forward in public, the worse it will be for them and for the congregation whom they are supposed to serve.

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DRIVEN INTO THE WILDERNESS

--FEBRUARY 25.--MARK 1:9-11; MATT. 4:1-11.--

"For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted."--Heb. 2:18.

OUR STUDY for today is a most interesting one. It points to the time when Jesus

reached the age of thirty and consequently was permitted to offer Himself without spot to God as the world's Sin-offering. Saint Paul quotes as applicable to Him the words of the Prophet, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, oh God," as it is written in the volume of the book concerning Me. I now present myself to be the Antitype, the fulfiller, of every prophecy that Divine wisdom has caused to be recorded, and the Antitype of every feature of the Law applicable to Me.

There the Redeemer became the antitypical Passover Lamb, the antitypical bullock of the Atonement Day Sin-offering. There He gave up His life to the doing of the Father's will; there He as the Man Jesus died; there He as the antitypical bullock was slain; there He was begotten of the Holy Spirit and became the antitypical Priest--the Sacrificer. Through the following three and a half years of His ministry He carried out this consecration and completed it at Calvary, crying, "It is finished!"

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LED OF THE SPIRIT--INTO TEMPTATION

When Jesus received the begetting of the Holy Spirit at His baptism it was the begetting to the divine nature, and with it came great enlightenment to His mind, as represented in the words, "And the heavens were opened unto Him," literally, rent asunder. Forthwith He could see clearly into the Divine arrangements and purposes respecting Himself in a manner not possible to Him prior to His consecration. And so it is with all those who follow in His steps. The deep things of God are revealed to them gradually, as they are able to receive them, but never until after they have made their consecration vows to the Lord. With His followers as with Himself, the trial or temptation or testing as to loyalty comes more particularly after consecration than before. Hence the importance of Jesus' injunction: "Sit down first and count the cost."--Luke 14:28-33.

But with us as with Jesus the Father provides not only a clearer appreciation of our trials and responsibilities, but also a clearer perception of the glories which will follow to the faithful. In Jesus' case the opening of the heavens --the enlightenment of His mind respecting the Divine Plan--was a much more wonderful matter than it is with us, because with His perfection of brain and of heart He was able to realize instantly the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of His undertaking, in a manner only partially attained by us after years of progress and study. At once the Master realized the full import of the Day of Atonement sacrifices, of the Passover Lamb slain, of the prophecies that spoke of Himself as being led as a lamb to the slaughter, and of the type which pictured

Him as the Antitype of the brazen serpent, lifted on high for the healing of Adam's sin-bitten race.

As these thoughts began to rush into the Savior's mind, He was first of all pressed of the spirit (His own spirit or mind) to go apart for awhile and to study out afresh the full import of the Law and the Prophets and His own obligations according to the covenant He had just made. For forty days and nights His intense earnestness made Him oblivious to almost everything else. Apparently He neither ate nor slept until the forty days were ended; and He "afterward hungered." Then it was that the Adversary appeared as a tempter--at the moment of His physical weakness as the result of fasting--at the moment when His soul was overwhelmed with the realization of the importance of the great contract He had made and of what it would cost Him to fulfil its terms. It was the severest test imaginable. Would the Redeemer prove Himself loyal to God--to the Divine Program--to His covenant of consecration, unto death? Or would He feel that the Father had poured too bitter a cup for Him --that God had made the tests of loyalty and obedience too severe--that it was neither just nor loving to allow Him to enter into such a contract?

How glad we are to note the loyalty which triumphed over every temptation! With the angels we acclaim, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain!" Not merely in the sense of consecrating His will, but in maintaining His full submission and deadness, according to the flesh, faithfully even to Calvary and the death of the cross. To Him be glory, honor, dominion and might everlasting!

TEMPTED AS WE ARE

The Savior was not tempted with the habits of a drunkard nor with the weaknesses of a debauchee or a libertine, neither are those the temptations which come to us--His footstep followers. We are to remember that the Scriptures clearly differentiate between us and the world: "Ye are not of the world even as I am not of the world." "Tempted like as we are" therefore signifies that the temptations or trials which Jehovah permits to come upon His consecrated people are of the same kind that He permitted to come upon our Redeemer.

It is important, therefore, that we notice the character of our tests. God is not testing us to see whether or not our flesh is perfect, for He knew all along that amongst men there is none righteous, no, not one. The Father's tests for those whom He receives as sons are tests of loyalty to Him, loyalty to the principles of righteousness, loyalty to the Truth, loyalty to the Divine methods--a refusal to take our own way or to seek our own glory or our own ease at the expense of Truth or of the Divine method.

JESUS' THREE TEMPTATIONS

When the Master was weakened through fasting, at the end of the forty days of Bible study, the Adversary appeared--not as an enemy and a fiend of darkness, but as a friend, "as an angel of light." (2 Cor. 11:13-15.) Professing interest in the Savior's welfare and an interest also in His work, he said, You are hungry, man, and unnecessarily so. Do you not know that the holy power which came upon you forty days ago is more than sufficient for your every need? Do you not know that now you may command even these stones to be made bread, and therefore have no need to be hungry? Do so, at once, please, before we have a conversation, for I have a great interest in you. I remember you well from the long ago when we were in fellowship, before my deflection.

But Jesus replied, The power received was not to be used for ministering to My own flesh. It was received, rather, because I had made a consecration of My flesh to death. The Divine power which I possess I may use in any manner for the Father's glory, but not for self-gratification, however apparently legitimate. Besides, My eternal life is not dependent upon bread, nor upon the maintenance of this physical body. Rather, My hope is in God and in His promise that, if faithful in the use of this holy power which He has committed to Me--if faithful in My consecration unto death--He will give Me a crown of life--glory, honor, immortality.

That temptation failing, Satan tried another. We assume that He took our Lord in mind to Jerusalem and the temple, saying, If you will go to the pinnacle of the temple and cast yourself down therefrom, it will be a means of proving to the people that you are the Son of God, and it will be the quickest method by which you can convince them of your mission and gain their adherence and loyalty and make them your disciples and thus accomplish your mission. I will quote you the prophecy in proof that this was God's intention for you: "He shall give His angels a charge concerning Thee and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest Thou dash Thy foot against a stone." (Psalm 91:12.) But Jesus declined this proposition also.

If He had been thrust off the Temple pinnacle by the hands of an angry mob before His time was come, surely the Father's power would have interfered that He should not be injured; but to deliberately defy the laws of nature and to expect Divine protection from the natural consequences of His own course would have been to tempt God; this Jesus refused to do.

The third temptation also was a mental presentation. A high mountain, in symbol, is a high kingdom. From no mountain on earth could all the kingdoms of the world be seen, since the world is round; but Satan's own kingdom was called to the attention of Jesus. Satan said, "You realize, of course, that I am the Prince of this world,

that I am the God of this world and that I now have practical control, through ignorance and superstition, of the masses. I have a proposition to make to you. I confess to you that I am weary of the reign of sin and death which has progressed in the world because of my domination. I would rather share the Kingdom and have it uplifted and blessed. In other words, I propose to you a federation--that together we shall unite in the bringing of humanity out of sin and death conditions. What do you say? I on the spirit plane and you on the human plane will be quite masters of the situation, for you see I have the power in my hand and can easily turn the thing to our favor, and quickly the world will be blessed. Thus you will attain the glorious consummation of your hopes, and that without the awful trials, sufferings, experiences, etc., which you are now anticipating through following God's arrangement outlined in the prophecies. Come, let us federate and co-operate. Speedily I will turn things your way; victory will begin to come from the very hour of our federation!

Our Lord was indignant that it should be thought for a moment that, having left the heavenly glory to do the Father's will, He would now prove traitor to His covenant, and for fear of the cross and the shame and the death He would enter into a confederacy with the great Arch-enemy of righteousness--Satan. He answered, "Get thee hence, Satan, for it is written: Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." I will not serve you nor co-operate with you in any sense of the word. "Then the Devil leaveth Him." So far as we know, Satan never thought it worth while to return to

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the attack on the Savior. Then by Divine arrangement angels came to the famished Overcomer and ministered unto Him--strengthened Him, revived Him.

The Lord's followers are to note how these same temptations are the very ones by which the Adversary assails them: (1) He would be their friend and helper and would thereby induce them to violate their covenant of sacrifice by requests for physical healing, physical blessings, which they have agreed to sacrifice. (2) He would suggest to them some wild, foolish way of capturing the world for God by some great exploits or prayer tests. (3) He would have them compromise with the world and its spirit and its methods by Church Federation and otherwise. We are to resist the Adversary courageously that he may leave us permanently, seeing no hope of winning us.

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LABORERS IN THE HARVEST

--MARCH 3.--MARK 1:14-28.--

Text.--"The Harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the Harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His Harvest."--Matthew 9:37,38.

EVERYWHERE the New Testament teaches that the work done by Jesus and His Apostles amongst the Jews eighteen centuries ago was a harvesting work. Thus Jesus said, "I send you forth to reap that upon which you have bestowed no labor. Other men labored and ye have entered into their labors"--ye are reapers of the fruits of their labors--gatherers of the "harvest" of the fruitage of the Jewish Age.

The ripe characters of that Dispensation were ready to receive Messiah and His Message upon terms of full devotion of their time, talents, influence and lives as servants of the New Institution--the New Covenant--which God purposes to inaugurate with Israel in due time, and under which all the families of the earth will be blessed. The service of the present time is sacrificial--the preparation of the Royal Priesthood, after the order of Melchizedec, to stand as Mediator between God and men--the world.

The labors of Jesus and the Apostles found about five hundred brethren worthy of the garnering during His ministry. Subsequently, at Pentecost and after, several thousand more Jews were harvested--brought into the Spirit Dispensation--begotten of the Holy Spirit as New Creatures, Members of the Body of the Anointed, members of the Royal Priesthood. But of these there were not a

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sufficient number to complete the Divine foreordination; hence, after all the "Israelites indeed" had been harvested, the Jewish people were thrust aside from Divine favor for a time, and God's Message of Grace was sent to the Gentiles, "to take out of them a people for His name"--to be associated with the Jews as members of the great Mediator of the New Covenant, under the Headship of the glorified Christ.

GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

Today's lesson relates to our Lord's inauguration of the "harvest" work amongst the Jews. John the Baptist and his disciples had preached and baptized many under the announcement that the Kingdom of God was at hand, and that all desirous of participating in its great blessings should come into full harmony with the Mosaic Law, and thus be prepared to be transferred from typical Israel to antitypical Israel--from membership in Moses, the type,

to membership in Christ, the Antitype. In due time the preaching of John the Baptist was brought to a close--when Herod cast him into prison. From that time onward Jesus and His disciples became more prominent, but their Message was the same as John's; as we read, "Jesus came to Galilee preaching the Kingdom of God and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the Gospel." Whoever believed this Message recognized Jesus as the "Sent of God," the Messiah, who, in God's due time, will be the King of Israel, and the Monarch of the earth. "The time is fulfilled" meant that the foreordained time when the offer of the Kingdom would be made unto the Jewish nation had arrived.

But God foreknew that Israel would not be ready--that only a few would be prepared to become the Bride of the Messiah, His associate in the Kingdom work, and that it would require eighteen centuries to select the remainder from amongst the Gentiles.

Hence St. Paul points out in Romans 9, 10 and 11 that the Prophets foretold the stumbling of Israel, their temporary rejection as a nation, the fact that a remnant of them would be the nucleus of the Bride class, and that the remainder would be made up of Gentiles. St. Paul declares, "Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh, but the election obtained it and the rest were blinded"--"until the fulness of the Gentiles has come in" and the "elect" class is completed.

However, God proceeded with His portion of the proposition just as though He had not known in advance the course the Israelites would take. The Gospel was preached to them first and all the saintly ones were found in advance of any move being made to open the door of this special favor to the Gentiles.

"TO BECOME FISHERS OF MEN"

The Wisdom of God is foolishness with men, and the wisdom of men is foolishness with God--say the Scriptures. This is exemplified in our Lord's choice of the twelve Apostles, the calling of four of whom is noted in this study: Simon, Andrew, James and John. However able they were as men, they lacked the polish or education which people were accustomed to expect in religious teachers. The Bible record of them is, "People perceived that they were ignorant and unlearned men."

This reminds us that the Apostle declared that this "high calling" of God to joint-heirship with Jesus reached and influenced merely the poor of this world, rich in faith; that amongst the "elect" will be found "not many great, not many rich, not many wise, not many learned, not many noble." (I Cor. 1:26,27.) Success in life leads to more or less of self-confidence, self-esteem, self-will, whereas the Gospel Message appeals to those who feel their own weakness and imperfection and unworthiness, and who correspondingly with great earnestness lay hold

upon the Divine promise--the Divine aid, giving God the glory.

The words of Jesus, "Woe unto you rich" (in wisdom, property, fame, in learning, in nobility of character) must not be understood to mean that the great, noble, wise and rich are all or nearly all condemned to eternal torment, or to any punishment, on account of their riches of education, character, etc.

Rather, we must remember the standpoint of the Great Teacher's Message--"Woe unto you" as respects the Kingdom

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--you are less likely to gain this wonderful "high calling" of God than if you were in humbler circumstances. You have your consolation now, and correspondingly have less interest in the glorious things of God's Message. You are so well satisfied with the things of this present life that it will be the more difficult for you to sacrifice all these for the prospect of a share in Messiah's Kingdom. But, said the Master, "Blessed are you who are poor in spirit," humble-minded, and therefore the more teachable, for the more you will look out for the great Gift of God--the "pearl of great price," a share in the Kingdom of God's dear Son.

TAUGHT AS ONE HAVING AUTHORITY

The first five verses of our study tell how the fishermen forsook their earthly all for the prospect of sharing with Messiah in His Kingdom. Verse 21 shows that the Redeemer was recognized in Capernaum as a great Teacher and a man of learning, to whom others gave place in the synagogue; and the people marveled, saying, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned at school?"

Moreover, they were astonished at His teaching, "for He taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes." The Jewish scribes and rabbis then, as today, were evidently quite perfunctory and quite unable to give the people any understanding of the teachings of the Law and the prophecies. Jesus had a thorough grasp of the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, and His applications and interpretations therefore were convincing to His hearers.

Had the Scribes and Pharisees and Priests accepted Him, the whole nation would have done so. But this would not have outworked the Divine Program. Hence the Master's works and teachings were largely parabolical and in dark sayings, because it was the Divine intention that only the saintly Jews should fully appreciate the Teacher and become His followers. The same principle, under God's providence, has applied to the Message and the messengers of the Kingdom throughout the entire Gospel Age. Hence at no time has the real Message been attractive to any except the saintly--others were content

with forms of godliness devoid of power and out of accord with the Word.

EVEN DEMONS OBEY HIM

While Jesus was teaching in the Capernaum synagogue a young man, obsessed by a demon, "an unclean spirit," cried out. The demon recognized Jesus and His teaching and used the young man as his mouthpiece, his medium, saying, "Art Thou come to destroy us? I know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God."

The demons cast out of human beings by our Lord and the Apostles, the Bible tells us, were once holy angels. They fell from Divine favor through their sinful relationship to humanity in the days of Noah. (Gen. 6:1-5.) These fallen spirit beings still desire human relationship, and are styled "unclean spirits," because, however they may begin by presenting themselves as angels of light, they later reveal their true characters by unchaste, impure suggestions.

As St. Paul refused to allow a young woman medium to proclaim him and Silas servants of God (Acts 16:16-18), so Jesus refused to allow this demon to give testimony respecting Himself--even though it was complimentary. He commanded the demon to come out of the man. In leaving the man the demon caused him great pain so that he cried aloud. The effect upon the congregation at the synagogue was amazement. Not only the teachings of Jesus captivated them, but also His power to deal with the evil spirits, corroborating His authority as a Teacher sent from God. His fame began to spread throughout all the region of Galilee.

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"A SAVIOR AND A GREAT ONE"

"A ghastly sight shows in the shivering air
On Calvary's brow;
The Savior of mankind, in love, hangs there,
While followers bow
The head low on the breast and sadly sigh,
'How can He be Messiah--if He die?'

"A jeering mob surrounds the cursed knoll
And mocks the Lord;
Yet to His lips and from His stricken soul
Cometh no word
Of vengeance or reproach--ah, no; and when
In anguish came the final moment, then

"'Tis finished!' rings in triumph through the sky;
He bows His head;
And, while the querying soldiers mark the cry,

The Lord is dead.
All anguish past, His triumph doth begin,
The world is saved, a death blow dealt to sin.

"Jerusalem, amazed, hears fishers tell,
With courage bold,
How Christ has vanquished Satan, death and hell,
As He foretold.
Humble disciples forcefully proclaim,
'There is Salvation in no other name.'

"A Sabbath's journey from the city gate,
With sorrow shod,
Two sad disciples bear their sorry weight
To their abode.
The Christ appears, while holden are their eyes,
And doth expound wherefore Messiah dies.

"Emmaus reached, the Lord would further go;
They gently chide--
'Thou hast beguiled our grief and tears, and so
With us abide.'
He brake their bread--then vanished from their sight--
Their hearts did burn with holy joy that night.

"Still thus He comes; and though the faulty sight
Of clouded eyes
Perceives Him not, He makes the burden light,
And stills our cries;
For, like weaned babes, we mourn, the while He would
Our hearts sustain with stronger, richer food.

"The tale is old, but ever sweetly new,
Why Jesus died.
The nail prints, doubting one, He shows to you,
And in His side
A spear thrust gapes--a passage rent apart,
For easy access to your Savior's heart.

"It was for you, my brother, that He shed
His life so free;
For you, for me, He bowed His godlike head
On Calvary's tree,
That, trusting in the merit of His name,
We might be saved from sorrow, sin and shame.

"The past sufficeth, surely, to have spent
In sinful deeds.
Come, join our band; and be our footsteps bent
Where Jesus leads.
So, in His righteousness serenely dressed,
We'll meet Him face to face among the blest."

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INTERESTING QUESTIONS

USE DISCRETION AND WISDOM

Question.--We are told that from him who would borrow of us we should not turn away. (Matt. 5:42.) How shall we understand this?

Answer.--There is nothing in this Scripture that says that we should lend to everybody who wishes to ask for a loan, either of goods or money; but we should not turn away with a deaf ear from those in need. The Scriptures say, Do good and lend, hoping for no recompense. (Luke 6:35.) We should also have that beneficent disposition which desires to do good to all men, especially those of the household of faith. But we should use discretion and wisdom. Often the very best thing to do to a person is to lend him something, even if sure that he would not return it; for thus the way to his coming any more would be barred to some extent at least.

WE FIND WHAT WE SEEK

Question.--Please give the meaning of the text, "Seek and ye shall find."--Mark 7:7.

Answer.--The above text illustrates a principle to which we have frequently called attention. We find what we seek! Those who approach the Bible with earnest desire to find in it God's Message, will be guided of the Lord. As it is written, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness [Truth], for they shall be filled."--Matt. 5:6.

On the other hand, those who approach the Bible from the standpoint of cavil, unbelief, antagonism, are equally sure to find what they seek--flaws, contradictions, etc. Note how Thomas Paine and Robert Ingersoll illustrated this principle; and compare their experiences and findings with the blessedness of those who feast upon the Bible as the Lord's bountifully spread table of good things--"Meat in due season" for "the household of faith."--Luke 12:42.

The same principle holds true with the SCRIPTURE STUDIES. As those who so desire can pick flaws with the Bible and turn and twist its statements into unreason, so the same class would surely be successful in similarly picking to pieces "The Divine Plan of the Ages."

"ONCE IN GRACE, ALWAYS IN GRACE," CONTRADICTED

Question.--What is meant by the Scripture which says that if one who has been righteous shall depart from his righteousness, his former righteousness shall not

count, but that he shall die for his sin? And also the statement that one who was unrighteous and turned from his unrighteousness shall be saved?--Ezek. 33:13-16.

Answer.--This Scripture emphatically contradicts a doctrine held by some Christian people, "Once in grace, always in grace"; or that one who has been favored of God can never lose His favor. The principle of this Scripture applies, at the present time, to those who pass from death unto life as New Creatures. They are on trial for life or death. Adamic sin no longer counts in their cases. If they remain faithful to the Lord they will get the blessing of eternal life; if unfaithful, they will die. If one should make a covenant with God and then fail to keep that covenant, he would lose his covenant-relationship with God as soon as he abrogated the contract. If we are faithful, He will be faithful in giving us life eternal.

But this Scripture specially applies to the Millennial Age; for at that time all are to be brought to an opportunity for life everlasting. People will then realize that "the wages of sin is death." Then it will no longer be a proverb that the parents have eaten a sour grape and the children's teeth are set on edge, but each "shall die for his own iniquity." (Jer. 31:29; Ezek. 18:2.) There will be a test for life or death, just as there is now with the Church. Only those who are faithful in their trial will be granted everlasting life, in either case. All others will be cut off in death.

"HE THAT JUDGETH ME IS THE LORD"

Question.--Suppose one addicted to the use of tobacco and who began to realize its filthiness should resolve to discontinue it and should really desist from using it for a time, but later should resume the occasional use of it, and thus did not conquer in the matter, the spirit being willing, but the flesh being weak--would this cause the loss of the crown and relegate such an one to the "great company"--or might it lead to the Second Death?

Answer.--The use of tobacco is a very filthy habit; and there are other habits that are esteemed filthy by some people, but not by others. We are not to draw any line which the Bible does not draw. It is not, therefore, for any of God's people to judge another in the meat offered to idols, or in the chewing of tobacco, or in any such matters. We should encourage each other in cleanliness of life. To our understanding, no one would be condemned to death for not controlling the tobacco habit or the coffee habit or the morphine habit. God alone knows how each is struggling; He alone knows those who are fighting courageously day by day to the end. We are not competent to judge. St. Paul says, "With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of any man's judgment; yea, I judge not mine own self.

...He that judgeth me is the Lord." (I Cor. 4:3,4.)
We may not even too hastily judge ourselves to be worthy of the Second Death. It is to be left to God as to whether we are overcomers or not. With this in view it is our duty to strive earnestly and not to be discouraged ourselves nor to discourage others, but rather to uphold them and help them to greater courage, to greater zeal in the service of our Lord.

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SOME INTERESTING LETTERS

BLESSINGS OF COLPORTEUR SERVICE

DEAR BROTHER:--

I want to tell you in just a few words how very many blessings our dear Heavenly Father is bestowing on me in the little service I am privileged to render Him. I have been drawn so close to the Lord in my work, and am daily relying more on His help, looking for His leadings, and trusting His providences. It is so blessed to be close to the Master, to see and feel His guiding hand, and realize His presence. How sweet prayer becomes, and how precious the communion with Him!

I have lately made six calls on interested ones, and hope to find more. It seems a mere coincidence, but I know it is God's hand, that when I give my canvass, often not even mentioning the Bible Society (for some are ever alert to prejudice), the first thing I know people take me in and show me the STUDIES, which perchance are in their bookcases. They seem somehow to associate us. Of course, I first draw them out, then I can more wisely, perhaps, make comments. I have three or four parties in mind that I have just found these last two weeks; they have become quite aroused and interested.

We have no large class here, but are served from Dayton, bi-weekly, and meet for study semi-weekly. I shall urge our class to give public meetings, perhaps a series, shortly, for these people want to come.

I can see that all Christians are more or less, even unconsciously, absorbing the Kingdom message, and other co-related matters, as given out by our dear Pastor, no doubt through the sermons and PEOPLES PULPIT distributed. And some are so truth-hungry! They confess themselves that

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there is a true famine in the land for the Word of God. I tell you we still have opportunities and find receptive hearts. Praise the Lord!

One peculiar case we have found is a good, intelligent man who has read all six volumes; he reads the Bible continually. (He bought a Bible, Manna and gave a TOWER subscription.) We invited him to class, but he believes the churches have

done so much harm that Christians ought to stay apart and not meet in congregations. We will call on him and ask others, especially brethren, to do so.

One dear woman had one first volume of DAWN, and not knowing, even now, that I represented the same Society, confessed that about one or two years ago she ordered the other two volumes of a colporteur, but refused to take them when delivered. She said he was so nice about it, and it has troubled her ever since, so she had to confess to me. He told her he believed some day all would see the Truth. This was evidently Brother Bryant Campbell, who now, we are sure, is with the Lord. He canvassed here at the time, and one Methodist minister persecuted him, and prejudiced the people against him and his work.

I thank you for your kind words of encouragement. The Lord bless you. Pray for me!

Yours in the Harvest work,

MRS. GEO. H. KELLER.--Ohio.

"PUT ON THE WHOLE ARMOR"

DEARLY LOVED PASTOR AND BROTHER IN THE LORD:--

With Christian greetings and a prayer of thanksgiving in my heart for this blessed privilege of fellowship, I wish to write to you for a little while. My dear husband wishes to be included in the spirit of this letter.

It is seldom that he and I have the pleasure of meeting our beloved Pastor, so, every once in a while the desire to write you an expression of tender, Christian love becomes so great that the heart will no longer retain it, and out it comes at the end of this pen!

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If, partially, the consequence be an encroachment upon your time, I know you will forgive, as our dear, gracious Heavenly Father does when we make mistakes.

On your return from abroad we cannot greet you as some others who love you, but let this letter convey to you our glad, loving "Welcome home!"

And now, a few words relative to a little matter upon which I shall much appreciate having your opinion:

Twice, recently, I have met friends who are studying the Truth and show every evidence of love for it.

The question of Spiritism arose, and in each case the friend was not acquainted with the truth on this important Bible subject. I inquired, Would you not like the truth about this matter? Receiving an affirmative reply, I told the one-- a brother--of the little book on SPIRITISM and he promised to read it, saying his thought had been to have absolutely nothing to do with the subject.

To the other--a sister--I loaned my own book with the same words, that in this "evil day" it is our business to follow what the dear Lord indicates is necessary to our salvation,

namely, the putting on of the "whole armor that we may be able to stand" in this particularly evil period.

When next I met her she exclaimed, "O, Sister Erb, I could not read that awful book! I am sure that our Lord will never allow His children to come in contact in any way with anything so unholy as the demons." She quoted, "He will keep them, that that Wicked One touch them not."

I have thought that possibly others are in doubt upon this subject so pregnant with awful possibilities--some, perhaps, who have recently embraced the true faith--and that a word of emphasis from yourself with respect to giving attention to the truth regarding Spiritism would be a help to them.

With one more prayer now, added to the many I have offered at the Throne of Heavenly Grace on your behalf, I will close, hoping before very long to meet and greet you face to face.

Your sister, by the grace of our dear Heavenly Father and through our dear Redeemer,

MRS. JONATHAN R. ERB.--PA.

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BEREAN QUESTIONS IN SCRIPTURE STUDIES

Series VI., Study VII., The Law of the New Creation.

MARCH 3

(25) During the interim between the fulfilling of the Law Covenant and the inauguration of the New Covenant, is there any Covenant in force? P. 360, par. 1.

(26) What is this Covenant, and who are under it? P. 360, par. 2.

(27) Explain how the Apostle Paul clearly distinguishes between fleshly and spiritual Israel, as shown in Galatians 4:22-31. P. 361, par. 1, 2.

(28) What is the Apostle's argument with respect to Gentiles who would attempt to come under the Mosaic Law? P. 362, par. 1, first part.

(29) What is his teaching in Galatians 5:1-4 with respect to both Gentiles and Jews? P. 362, par. 1, last part.

(30) In this type (Gal. 4), how is the New Creation represented? P. 362, par. 2.

MARCH 10

(31) What did Mount Sinai and the earthly Jerusalem typify? P. 363, par. 1.

(32) Under what Covenant is the New Creation? P. 363, par. 2, first part.

(33) What proof have we that the Decalogue is not binding upon the New Creation? P. 364, top.

(34) Explain how the New Creation is separate and distinct from all others in its relation toward God and His Law.

P. 364, par. 1, 2.

(35) Are the angelic sons of God under the Sinaitic Law? If not, why should we expect the New Creation to be under it? P. 365, par. 1.

(36) Why was it necessary that Jesus as a man should be under the Mosaic Law? P. 365, par. 2, first part.

(37) What is His position as the risen Lord and Head over the New Creation? P. 365, par. 2, last part.

MARCH 17

(38) What is the heart-attitude of the New Creation toward the Mosaic Law? P. 366, par. 1.

(39) Are these New Creatures absolutely without a law? If not, what is the law that controls them? P. 367, par. 1.

(40) At what time did the Law of Love become the Law of the New Creation? and what does obedience or disobedience to this Law imply? P. 367, par. 2.

(41) How does the grace of God compensate for all our imperfections of the flesh? and under what conditions would we forfeit this grace? P. 367, par. 3.

(42) How may we distinguish between stumbling and wilful falling from grace? P. 368, par. 1.

(43) What lesson do we learn from our failures, and what encouragement is given us in God's Word? P. 368, par. 2.

MARCH 24

GROWTH IN APPRECIATION OF THE PERFECT LAW

(44) While the Law of Love was the foundation of our covenant with the Lord, did we at first fully appreciate that Law? Should we not expect to increase more and more in love and thus be made ready for our final examination? P. 369, par. 1.

(45) What illustration does the Apostle apply to our present experiences as embryo New Creatures? P. 369, par. 2, first half.

(46) What is this "race-course," and what kind of love is represented by our entering the gate to it? P. 370, top.

(47) What is our experience as represented by the first quarter-mark? P. 370, par. 1.

(48) What growth in love is represented in our attaining the second quarter-mark? P. 370, par. 2.

MARCH 31

(49) What further development in love do we experience when we reach the third quarter-mark? P. 370, par. 3.

(50) What is the final mark to be attained--the standard of perfect love? P. 371, par. 1.

(51) Are we to love our enemies as we love the brethren? What example has the Heavenly Father set us in this respect? P. 371, par. 2.

(52) How is God testing our professions of Love? P. 372, par. 1.

(53) Why was it not necessary for our Lord Jesus to run this race? P. 372, par. 2.

(54) Why do some run the race and reach the mark more quickly than others? P. 373, par. 1.

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DATE OF THE MEMORIAL SUPPER

The date for the celebration of the Memorial will be Sunday evening, March 31, 1912, after 6 p.m. According to the Jewish calendar the fourteenth day of the month will begin at the time mentioned, and it was on that day that the lamb was to be slain, and that our "Lamb" was slain. And it was on the night preceding that our Lord instituted the Memorial and symbolical eating of His flesh and the blood as the antitype of Israel's Passover Lamb.

We refer our readers to the Sixth Volume of the SCRIPTURE STUDIES, Chapter XI., entitled "The Passover of the New Creation." There we have endeavored to set forth this subject in detail. We hope that all of God's dear people who trust in the merit of the precious blood of Christ for justification will celebrate this Memorial of the great Sacrifice of our Lord. And let us not forget that it also memorializes the consecration to death of all the members of the Body of Christ: "If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him"; "If we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him"; "This cup is the New Testament in My blood."..."Drink ye all of it."
--Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25; Mark 10:38.

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THE WATCH TOWER BIBLE

Those of the friends who are using the Bibles containing our special Berean Helps write that they are in love with them more and more as the days go by and they learn their usefulness. Some, however, forget what a valuable assistance

to Bible study they have close at hand, with comments or other information on the major portion of God's Word and references to SCRIPTURE-STUDIES, TOWER, etc.

We have these in two different styles and five different grades--the cheapest as low as \$1.65, the very best and most complete at \$3.65.

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BETHEL HYMNS FOR MARCH

After the close of the hymn the Bethel Family listens to the reading of "My Vow Unto the Lord," then joins in prayer. At the breakfast table the MANNA text is considered. Hymns for March follow:--(1) 145; (2) 330; (3) 78; (4) 307; (5) 107; (6) 16; (7) 103; (8) 191; (9) 160; (10) 135; (11) 257; (12) 165; (13) 320; (14) 47; (15) 20; (16) 30; (17) 105; (18) 299; (19) 313; (20) 7; (21) 210; (22) 263; (23) 217; (24) 32; (25) 87; (26) Vow; (27) 249; (28) 46; (29) 179; (30) 170; (31) 273.

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"WHAT IS MAN?"

"When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained, what is man, that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, that Thou visitest him? for Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor; Thou madest him to have dominion over the work of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet; all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas; O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth!"--Psalm 8:3-9.

THE SUGGESTION of the Prophet respecting man is one which we believe has occurred to every intelligent being. As one upon the deep looks out upon the vast expanse of water and the riding of the vessel upon it, he thinks, How little is man! How small a speck in the Universe! When we look up into the heavens and realize that they represent so much more of Divine power, we are still more surprised. When we consider the heavens, and realize that all these stars, except the planets which belong to our own system, are really suns, and that around each of these suns revolve planets, as

our earth revolves around our sun, and when we think of the number of these suns and their planets, we are amazed, and we feel our own littleness all the more!

We ask astronomers as to the number of these suns, and they tell us that there are a hundred millions of them in sight. And if we would average the planets around these hundred million suns at ten, it would be ten hundred millions of planets. And then they tell us, further, that if we could take our stand upon the very farthestmost one of these we would see still beyond us as many more, and as many more.

Our minds are appalled as we begin to think of the heavens, the work of God's fingers, and then consider man, how small a work in God's sight! We have an appreciation then of what the Scriptures say man is like in God's sight--as "the dust in the balance," that is not worthy to be taken into account. We have all been in the grocer's shop and noticed that he pays no attention to the dust in the scoop of his scale. So man is so small in the sight of the great Creator that we wonder that God should have any interest at all in humanity.

"THOU MADEST HIM TO HAVE DOMINION"

Except for the Bible we should have no knowledge of God's interest in us, and we might think that God is so great that He would pay no heed to us. But, when God reveals Himself to us in the Bible, we begin to see that there is not only Divine power exercised and manifested in the creation of all these worlds, but we see also this Divine power manifested in God's dealings with us, and also the love of God, which the Scriptures state "passeth all understanding." What wonderful condescension on the part of the Creator that He should give heed to us!

But our text goes on to give us further information on this subject: "What is man that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that Thou visitest him? for Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels." Only a little lower is the thought! Of the holy angels the Scriptures give us to understand there are various ranks, some higher and some lower, but all perfect. Then in the world we have various orders of animal life--the beast of the field, the fish of the sea, the fowl of the air--and man, as the highest of these earthly beings; and he stands related to all these lower creatures as God does to the entire Universe; and this is the honor with which our great Creator endowed His human creatures!

So we are told in this Psalm, "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet." What a wonderful creature man is, then, from this standpoint! While he is a little lower than the angels, so far as his nature in connection with the earth is concerned, and whereas the angels are more excellent so far as their natures are concerned, this Psalm speaks of man as being superior in that he has a dominion. The angels do not have dominion

over other angels, but all are subject to the great Creator, God.

But man, in the likeness of his Creator, has been given a dominion over the lower creatures, and in this respect it is a wonderful honor with which he has been crowned --"Thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and hast set him over the works of Thy hands."

It might be asked with great propriety, If God is thus careful of humanity and has so highly honored His human creatures, why should He not have made a still better preparation for them in the world? Why is it that they are subject to the unfavorable conditions under which they now exist? Why are there sorrow, pain, sighing, crying and dying? Why are there tempests, storms, cyclones and tornadoes, famine, drought and pestilence-- why all these things if God is so careful of us as His creatures?

We would have no answer for all these questions were it not provided in the Bible. In this wonderful Book of all books, we have the key to the matter, the explanation,

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and that is: God provided originally that man should be subject to none of these difficulties and disasters. Man was made perfect and placed in favorable and perfect surroundings, in a perfect garden, eastward in Eden, with everything necessary for his welfare--no storms, no sickness, no tempests, no difficulties--and he might have lived forever. Such was the wonderful dominion of this human son of God.

Why, then, the change? This wonderful Book answers that the change all came about because of sin.

And so we read: "By one man's disobedience sin entered into the world (there was no sin in the world before), and death as a result of sin." (Rom. 5:12.)

There was no dying on the part of man until sin came. So all the aches, pains, sorrows and sicknesses which we experience are parts of this dying process. And so the difficulty with us all is that by nature we are "children of wrath."

Is Divine wrath eternal torture? No, indeed! That teaching was handed down to us, perhaps, by our well-meaning forefathers. The wrath of God, we see on every hand; as the Apostle Paul declares, "The wrath of God is revealed"--in our own bodies, our aches and pains, mental imperfections, physical imperfections and moral imperfections--these are all parts of this great penalty for sin. We read that when man became a transgressor God sent a holy angel to drive our first parents out from the Garden of Eden, away from the trees of life that were to sustain them in perfection, out into the unfinished earth.

While the whole earth could just as easily have been made perfect, God left it unfinished, unprepared for man, and merely "prepared a garden eastward in Eden" for

the trial of our first parents, because Divine wisdom foresaw

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that man would sin; and instead of making the whole earth perfect, God left it in an imperfect condition, except the Garden of Eden. So we read that when God thrust our first parents out of the Garden of Eden, He said, "Cursed is the earth [not I will make it unfit, but it is already] for thy sake, thorns and thistles shall it bring forth, and in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread until thou return to the ground; for out of it wast thou taken, for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

In other words, the great penalty against our race is a death penalty--"Dying, thou shalt die." (Gen. 2:17.) This has been upon our race for six thousand years, from the time that sin entered into the world. So all the pages of history from Adam's day to this are marked with sin and sorrow, pain and sighing, because we are all sinners; and because we are sinners, God is treating us according to His own purpose, "Dying, thou shalt die."

But this is the sad side of the matter. Is there no other side, is there no hope for us? The same blessed Book--the Bible--tells us. The Gospel Message, which signifies "good tidings," declares that God has some good message for those whom He condemned to death.

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL MESSAGE?

We inquire, What is this good message? The Scriptures answer that the good message is that He who condemned us as unfit for eternal life has provided for our redemption; that His Son became our Redeemer; that Christ died, the "Just for the unjust," that He might bring all back into harmony with God. O, some may say, but did not Jesus die eighteen hundred or more years ago? Yes, truly. And have we not the same reign of sin and death as then? Yes. Where, then, is the blessing which was to come through Jesus? Well, we answer, a two-fold blessing has been provided. First of all, there is a blessing of hope, which some of God's people enjoy, a blessing of knowledge, that in God's "due time" He will bring in the wonderful things of which this Gospel Message tells.

God having provided a Redeemer, there will be a resurrection of the dead; they shall not remain dead, but come forth. There shall be a New Dispensation, a glorious morning, in which all sin and sorrow will be done away. So the Scriptures assure us of that time that there shall be no more sighing, no more crying, no more dying, because all the former things, all the things of sin, the things of death, will have passed away.

"THE CHURCH'S ONE FOUNDATION"

And, we inquire, who is so powerful as to overthrow

sin and death, and lift up humanity and bring them back from sin and weakness and imperfection and death? The Bible answers this question, that the One who will do this is the Great One who sits upon the Throne of God; as we read, "He that sitteth upon the Throne said, Behold, I make all things new!"

But who is this? O, the very same One, who, by the grace of God, became our Redeemer--Jesus. He is to be the great King of kings and Lord of lords, and is to "reign from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth." And under the blessed influence of that Kingdom the full blessing of God will come to the earth again! "All the blind eyes shall be opened, and all the deaf ears shall be unstopped." "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together." These are words of the Prophets given to us for our hope and the strengthening of our hearts, that we might turn from sin and become more and more the children of God.

We have referred to the world and how it is to be blessed by the Messianic Kingdom, the Kingdom of God's dear Son, the Kingdom for which Jesus taught us to pray, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." But we see not all these things accomplished yet. We see not mankind brought back to perfection, nor the promise of the good tidings fulfilled amongst men. But we have a word from the Apostle upon this subject. He said, "But we see not yet all things put under man"; they are still out of harmony. But, says the Apostle, we see a beginning of God's work; we see Jesus, who, "by the grace of God, has tasted death for every man." We see more than that. More than eighteen hundred years have passed. Not only has Jesus tasted death, but a great many have been going into death, in answer to the call to be of the Bride of Christ, the Church of the First-born, to be associated with our Lord. This is the Church we sing about in our hymn:--

"The Church's one Foundation,
Is Jesus Christ her Lord;
She is His New Creation
By water and the Word.
From heaven He came and sought her
To be His holy Bride;
With His own blood He bought her,
And for her life He died."

This, then, is the first work of God in the redemption of mankind--the gathering of the Bride of Christ, the Church, to share in His glory, honor and immortality. We hope to be of this class; and to this class belong the great promises that they shall share with Him in the First Resurrection, and then bless all the families of the earth with restitution. The world of mankind is to be restored to all that Adam had and lost, for all of which Jesus died at Calvary; and associated with Him will be the Church, called out of the world, a saintly class who have

been walking in the footsteps of Jesus; as we read again,

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"Blessed and holy are they who have part in the First Resurrection, on such the Second Death hath no power; they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."--Rev. 20:6.

This will be the thousand years of Messiah's reign, the thousand years of the world's uplift, the thousand years in which Satan will be bound, the thousand years in which knowledge shall fill the whole earth, the thousand years in which the earth shall be brought to the Paradisaic condition, which was symbolically represented in the Garden of Eden--and when every creature in heaven and earth and under the earth shall be brought to that glorious condition where they will sing praises to God that sitteth upon the Throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever.

And yet there is another side; for the same Scriptures which tell of the exaltation of the Church to glory and the blessings of the world through the Kingdom of Messiah, which tell that the earth will be the Paradise of God--these Scriptures also tell us of a class of incorrigibles who will be punished. After this class shall have been brought to a full knowledge of God and shall wilfully sin against Divine light and blessings, the punishment against these will be, not eternal torment, but destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power. --I Thess. 1:9.

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THE FUTURE INHERITANCE OF THE NEW CREATION

"If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together."--Romans 8:17.

THE DIVINE PROMISE is that the Kingdom of God will be amongst men--"under the whole heavens." The Scriptures state that both our Lord and the New Jerusalem, or glorious Kingdom of Messiah, are to come down from heaven to earth; and they call our Lord, therefore, Immanuel (God with us). During that thousand years God will in this sense dwell with men, walk with men. We already have this to some extent in our experience as Christians. God is with men, and Christ and the Church are with men, more or less contradicting and putting to shame the things of darkness of the present time.

But with all these suggestions it is not necessary for

us to suppose that the Kingdom will be earthly. On the contrary, the assurance of the Scriptures is that the Church must become spirit beings before they can inherit the Kingdom: "We shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," while those of this class who have been previously dead will have an instantaneous resurrection; and thus we shall be "forever with the Lord"--not forever with the Lord on the earth, but always in the spirit condition. The angels are always in the heavenly condition, whether they are in heaven with the Father or on earth, and we shall always be in the heavenly condition--the spirit condition.

Nothing in the Scriptures indicates that there will be a restriction upon the Church, that she should remain in one place more than another. The intimation seems to be that, after she shall have experienced her change, the Church will be for a short time absent from the earth and in the presence of the Heavenly Father. We read in the forty-fifth Psalm that the Bride is to be brought into the presence of the Great King, arrayed in glorious clothing of wrought gold--"in raiment of needlework." The members of the Body of Christ will all be on the spirit plane, whether they are afar off or near the earth. This is what our Lord meant when He said, "I go to prepare a place for you"--in the Divine family. This particular place is one that has never been filled by any others.

The various orders of spirit beings created by the Father occupy each its own sphere. But there is no Church of Christ amongst these. The Church of Christ is invited to occupy a place next to the Lord, next to the

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Father, higher than all the other planes of spirit beings. At the first advent this place had not been prepared for the Church, although the Lord had it in mind. Our Lord ascended up on high to prepare this place. He did so by making an application of His merit to the Church class, by imputing His merit to them and permitting them to become participators with Him in His sufferings in the present time, that they might also become sharers with Him in the divine nature. Thus He prepared the way to enter into that highest of all spirit planes, the divine.

We are not sufficiently informed respecting the spirit condition to know just how it would be possible for the Lord and the Church to remain in the Father's presence and maintain the government of the earth. Perhaps this course is possible. Yet again, such would perhaps not be a wise arrangement. Perhaps it would be necessary for them to be absent from the immediate presence of the heavenly Father and to approximate the earth, just as with Satan and his angels, who are in tartarus--cast down, separate because of sin. But Satan is to be bound for a thousand years; and the position which he has occupied is to be vacated. The entire Church is to be "caught

up in the air" to be with the Lord forever--not necessarily in tartarus, but "forever with the Lord," that where He may be there they may be also, in harmony with the Divine will, to execute the Divine purposes.

Our thought, then, is that The Christ will be very closely associated with our earth, just as Satan's kingdom has been; and that they will be equally invisible to men, who will not see them during the thousand years, just as men have not seen Satan and his fallen angels. But as Satan and his angels have been doing an evil work, so Christ and His Church will be doing a powerful work, a good work, a work on the spirit plane; and associated with them will be various agencies, one of which undoubtedly will be the "great company." The members of Christ are the ones that are mentioned as "kings and priests unto God," who shall reign on the earth.

THE EARTHLY PHASE--INTELLIGENT, WILLING MEN

Then there will be earthly agents of this Kingdom, just as Satan has his agents, who are sometimes under his control through ignorance and superstition, sometimes from mesmeric power, all of which will be removed at that time. But the agents of Christ will be intelligent and willing. At that time the Ancient Worthies will be "Princes in all the earth." All mankind will gradually come into fellowship with the Kingdom and, proportionately, indirectly, become associated with the Kingdom itself. Just as any good man helps a government, so all mankind will be blessed in proportion as they approve and uphold the Divine arrangements.

Thus the Kingdom will be spreading for the thousand years, not only from one individual to another, but gradually bringing them back to full perfection. We read that

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"of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end." It will conquer everything before it. Nothing shall stop it. Every evil thing having been destroyed, every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth will be heard praising God. Every knee will bow and every tongue confess; and His Kingdom will be without an opponent "from the river unto the ends of the earth"--having accomplished its purpose.

The Kingdom will then cease, in the sense that Christ will deliver the authority over to the Father. (I Cor. 15:24-28.) This does not mean that the Law of God will be disregarded, as it has been during the reign of sin and death. To meet the exigencies of the fallen condition of mankind, and to bring back as many as possible into harmony with the Divine arrangements, a special Kingdom will be established--the Messianic Kingdom--which will come in between the Divine government and mankind, because mankind in its weak condition will be unable to meet the requirements of the Divine Law. But when this

Kingdom has restored mankind to perfection, it is the Divine purpose for Messiah to relinquish this subordinate Kingdom, which will merge into and become a part of the great Kingdom of Jehovah. Justice will then operate. There will be no place for mercy, and the Heavenly Father is not then represented as being a merciful King to His creatures. The Heavenly Father will then have made them perfect, so as to need no mercy, and they will be glad to meet all the requirements of the Divine Government, and will be blessed in so doing.

THE CHRIST TO BE ASSOCIATE RULER OF THE UNIVERSE

Having terminated this work our Lord will not be without an occupation; but, according to the Scriptures, He will continue to be at the right hand of the Majesty on High--next to the Father. He will relinquish the oversight of the affairs of earth, and will assume again the general position as Associate-Administrator of the affairs of the Universe in connection with the Heavenly Father. We are not to suppose, however, that the Heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus will be kept busy hearing and deciding cases and administering Justice, for the equilibrium will be such that there will be no necessity for such a course. The whole Universe will go on practically without any head; and yet there will be the Head. The Son will be next to the Father in authority; and next to the Son will be the Bride. The work that will thenceforth progress is not revealed to us except in a very indefinite manner.

We understand by the power of telescopes that the suns have each a planetary system. If God made this earth a planet to be inhabited, it is only reasonable for us to infer that all the planets of the Universe will be inhabited, and that The Christ will behold the Heavenly Father and His wonderful Universe. The Power of the Heavenly Father is boundless, so far as we can understand. If after we have considered the hundred millions and more of suns and planetary systems beyond the power of human mind to contemplate--if then we realize that the Heavenly Father has made the position of Christ illimitable, and He has exalted the Bride of Christ with her Lord, then it is reasonable to assume that the work of Christ and the Church will be limitless, and that some blessed work for creatures not yet born is the work of all eternity. We simply wonder in amazement! We wonder at the greatness of His goodness to us, which is to lift us--the faithful few who make their calling and election sure--from our low condition to future glories interminable!

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"Having, therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."--2 Cor. 7:1.

IN OUR TEXT the expression, "filthiness of the flesh," seems to be a general one, in contrast with the Divine purity in which man was created. All violation of Law is sin; and all sin is symbolized by leprosy, a very filthy disease. The Apostle, however, does not mean that he and the other brethren were filthy in having the very gross sins that the world has; for any one worthy of the name of brother in Christ would have turned his back upon all gross sins and would have put away all those before he could have become a brother. But the Apostle is speaking of the "dearly beloved" who have left all these, who have left the "wallowing in the mire," as the Apostle Peter puts it.

To what extent we may cleanse ourselves will depend upon the viewpoint from which we speak. The Apostle's thought seems to be that we continue cleansing ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, as though he were pointing to a progressive work--to a high standard toward which we progress: "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matt. 5:48.) In one sense, this is impossible. With imperfect bodies, we cannot always do perfectly, even with the best of intentions and motives. But God's provision is that the blood of Jesus Christ keeps cleansing us from all sin, so that His people should maintain this very condition in the Lord's sight--a condition of perfection at all times. That is to say, if they find they have come short, they should go to Him for a covering of their blemishes.

But even if the Lord's people do not recognize where they have done wrong, they should know that all have sinned and come short; therefore, they should entreat the forgiveness of their trespasses. They should come to the frame of mind where they will be willing to cover the weaknesses of others, as they desire to be forgiven by God. We cannot suppose that God would be in love with any one who is practising sin. But He has made that arrangement by which we may be cleansed from sin. Thus the Lord's people are exhorted to be "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing." Their robe is to be wholly without filthiness of the flesh. If a spot should appear, small or great, it would be the duty and privilege of the one whose garment is soiled to have it cleansed without delay and not to remain in filthiness. This matter of keeping our garment unspotted from the world is one that should have our continual attention if we would have the Lord esteem us without spot or wrinkle.

WHAT CONSTITUTES FILTHINESS OF THE FLESH AND SPIRIT?

"Cleanse yourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit." It is the New Creature that is addressed. It is the New Creature that is to do the cleansing--the new will. The flesh is what remains of the old creature which has been reckoned dead as respects domination of mind or will. But the old body has been turned over to the new will to be its servant of righteousness, to be its tabernacle, until it receives its glorious body in the resurrection. The new will has the stewardship or responsibility over the

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old body. Not only are we not to permit it to practise sin, but we are to control it in the service of righteousness.

The Apostle here says that we are to cleanse ourselves from the filthiness of the flesh; and we are to judge of what might be filthy habits--or of habits we have that we might afterwards think filthy, impure, undesirable. As rapidly as we come to recognize these, we, as New Creatures, will seek to expunge them, eradicate them, remove them. Sometimes filthiness of the flesh is manifested by uncleanness of the hands, uncleanness of the teeth, etc. From the time the Holy Spirit begins to operate, the Lord's people want their bodies washed literally; they want their hands clean; they want their teeth clean. Again, filthiness of the flesh might be in the nature of rubbing snuff on the nose, for instance. This would not be quite so bad as the chewing of tobacco, not quite so filthy as the smoking of tobacco. The same person at different times in his experience might have different conceptions of this matter, but as we come to see we should correct these habits.

But above all, the Lord's people desire purity in their inward parts; and the Apostle says that we should cleanse ourselves from filthiness of the spirit. This does not imply that the New Creature is filthy, but that the mind is filthy. How could the mind of the New Creature be "filthy" or unclean? We answer that the New Creature must use the old brain; and it is for the New Creature to exercise control, not only in the things which we chew and take into our bodies, but also in the operation of the brain, so that we shall think purely; for the brain, as well as the hands and feet, is the implement, the servant, of the New Creature, who is responsible for these things. He is to show his loyalty to the Lord by the way he deals with these things entrusted to his care.

Considering the latter part of the text, we are to understand that God will look even deeper than our words and actions--even to the thoughts and intentions of our minds, to see to what extent we would harbor an impure thought. If we find that there has been harbored in our mind a thought disloyal to the Lord and to the brethren, or a malicious thought, whether spoken or not, it is a sin, a blemish, a filthiness of the mind; for it is something

out of harmony with us as New Creatures--out of harmony with our God.

The Apostle puts cleansing the flesh first; not that we are to have the flesh clean before the mind, but we are more liable to see the defilements of the flesh than those of the mind. As we get into the practise of looking for the imperfections of the flesh, we are not to forget to look after the imperfections of the mind, as the Apostle exhorts. He proceeds to say that we are learning more and more, under the instructions of our Lord and Head, the Father's Representative. We are in the School of Christ, learning what the standards of truth and righteousness are. Now, if we would not do the things which would offend our earthly friends, then we should be very zealous lest we come short of doing the things which would be pleasing in the Father's sight.

THE MISRULE OF THE MIND OF THE FLESH

There is a difference to be observed between the spirit, which stands for mind, and the will, which is the New Creature. As an old creature we had both a mind and a body; and the mind in a more or less riotous manner had more or less irregularly governed the body. Sometimes one organ was in control; sometimes another; at one time the organ of alimentiveness, at another time, another faculty. But these qualities of the mind are more or less unbalanced by our conditions in life and our environment.

The world in general seems to be running along this line. Today they find pleasure in one thing; tomorrow in another. Sometimes it is ambition. One may say, "I will be a great general," and that thought becomes the mastering element of his mind. With another, the chief thought is some scheme of motherhood; with another it may be pride of dress and show; with another it may be the love of money, which becomes the controlling element of mind; with still others it may be politics which takes possession of the life. In either case, it rules the life. Anything which would interfere with these aspirations would be pushed aside; and anything that would help them would be encouraged.

But with the Christian the matter is different. His aspirations and ambitions are that he may be in harmony with God and have the blessings of eternal life, which it is God's will to give to any who are of the right attitude of mind. With the world, the first thought is, "I have been working for some time to be a politician, and I will continue"; or "I have been striving for a certain position in society, and I will still strive for it"; or what not. Frequently the thought of becoming children of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord, is set aside as being too hard to strive for. Their thought is that they do not know whether or not they would ever get the things which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man" (I Cor. 2:9)--the things which God has

prepared for those that love Him--for at first these things are not great inducements. This appreciation of righteousness is what the Scriptures intimate to be God's drawing influence.

But if the right influences prevail, there will be a radical change of life, the reward of which, if faithful, is to be a high and glorious future. Our Lord said that we should first count the cost. Those who take heed to His counsel, in proportion as they may realize what that cost is, find it to be the putting aside of all earthly ambition or honor. These must all be laid aside or counted as loss or dross in contrast with God's glorious promises. In making up one's mind the decision is reached after a discussion of all the qualities of the mind. If there is not such a discussion, there is likely to be trouble afterward. Some element will say that it had not been consulted. Hence, one should do as the Lord said, "Count the cost!"

LET THE WILL OF GOD RULE YOUR HEART

To those who count the cost and make a full submission to God, it means not only a turning from sin, but more than that. It means the full surrender of all one has, every talent possessed, to the Lord Jesus. That function of the brain by which the various qualities of the mind are consulted and a decision reached, depends upon the force and weight the higher qualities of the mind have. By "higher qualities" we mean justice, appreciation of Divine mercy, reverence for God, for righteousness and for all things which are holy, etc. The individual who has not such a constitution of brain is not on trial for life at the present time. Only such as possess these qualities belong to the household of faith. Only such are begotten of the Holy Spirit.

This action of the mind, of the spirit, when it determines or wills to accept the Lord's will, is best represented by a legislative chamber, as, for instance, the Congress of the United States or the Parliament of Great Britain. These bodies are composed of different members. The person who receives the largest number of

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votes has the largest influence, and may be said to have control of that Body, for he is the representative of the majority. So in our minds; having decided to surrender to God, these higher qualities have accepted the Lord Jesus as the great Head of the Church. Thenceforth the person is subject to the will of God.

It is not that we put any quality of our mind to be ruler, but that we put the will of the Lord there and accept Him to be Ruler in our wills, in our minds. Now, having reached this position in which Christ is the great Head, we should seek not only to cleanse the expressions of our tongues, and our actions, but to cleanse our minds also and bring them into subjection. It is our

reasonable service that we cleanse not only our bodies and our words, but the very inmost thoughts of our minds. Anything that could be injurious either to ourselves or to another--envy, strife, hatred, bitterness--is to be put down and submitted to the new regulations, the new will which has taken control.

The very object of the begetting of the New Creature, the very object of giving it the opportunity of the present life, is to develop character and to crystallize that character. This seems to be the thought of the Apostle when he says, "Whom He [God] did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son"--not partly conformed, but fully conformed to the image of His Son. Our mental state, our will, must be fully fashioned after the mind of Jesus Christ. And His will was full obedience to the Father's will, to the extent of self-sacrifice, even unto death.

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"PERILOUS TIMES SHALL COME"

"This know also, that in the last days
perilous times shall come."--2 Tim. 3:1.

WE ARE to distinguish clearly between the restraint of the fallen angels "in chains of darkness," and the binding of Satan, who is the Prince of demons. The binding of Satan, as the Scriptures set forth, is at the second coming of Christ: "And He laid hold of the dragon, that Old Serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years." (Rev. 20:2.) And during that thousand years Christ and His saints shall reign as Kings and Priests unto God. The restraint of the inferior angels is mentioned by St. Peter and St. Jude. Speaking of these fallen angels, St. Peter says, "Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah."--2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6; I Pet. 3:20.

As we examine the Scriptures we see that there were angels of light who became disobedient, who left their primary estate as angels, and sought to become men, who assumed the human form. We find the record of them in Gen. 6:1-4: "The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose." There were children born to them. "And there were giants in the earth in those days,... mighty men which were of old, men of renown." Then the whole world was filled with wickedness more than during the sixteen hundred preceding years. And God swept away all mankind except those saved in the ark.

SPIRITS SEEK TO MAKE VOID THE WORD OF GOD

The Apostle proceeds to show what was done with the angels who fell. They have less power, less privilege, than formerly. Then, they had the power of materialization, and could not only eat and drink, but perform all the functions of men. After the flood they were restrained in chains of darkness; that is to say, they were restrained from materialization and from working their power in light, as they had previously done. However, they were still working, as when Saul sought the witch of Endor to inquire as to how the battle would go.--I Sam. 28:7-20.

The Prophet Isaiah says we should not have anything to do with those "who peep and mutter" and who pretend to have communication with the dead. (Isa. 8:19.) But these fallen angels seek to make void the Word of God; hence the various personations of the dead, as in the case of Samuel to Saul. It is not to be supposed that Samuel would come and give the information which God had said that Saul should not have. The same principle applies down to our day. The fallen angels have not been able to do their work except as they have gotten possession of human bodies by getting possession of their wills.

So we read in the New Testament that there are many possessed--not of devils, but of demons. Of these demons various accounts are given. When our Lord addressed the man who dwelt among the tombs, the Lord inquired, "What is thy name?" and the answer was, "Legion; for we are many." Not only one evil spirit had gotten into the man, but a host of them. When Jesus commanded them to come out of the man, they asked that they might go into the herd of swine. Jesus permitted them to go; and the swine ran down into the sea and were choked. It is recognized as a fact that swine are not easily stampeded. You could whip one of the swine, but if you want them to move, you must whip every one of them. Yet there were enough demons to enter the whole herd of swine.

The fallen spirits seem to be thoroughly degraded in their appetites and desires. And while they prefer to obsess human beings, yet, rather than have no animal body at all, they prefer, as shown in the foregoing, to have the bodies of swine. No doubt our Lord knew what the result would be. It was intended to give illustration as to what are valuable things for us to know: First, as to the number of evil spirits indicated by the number in the herd of swine; and, secondly, to demonstrate that they have no power to enter even into dumb animals, to show that poor, dumb creatures are free from them, and to demonstrate that they cannot trouble us, except as we permit them, or tamper with, or allow our minds to come under their hypnotic or obsessing influence.

MODERN UNBELIEF IN EVIL SPIRITS

And there are similar illustrations. On one occasion

the evil spirits spoke out, and when the Apostle Paul could stand it no longer, he rebuked them. In the case mentioned above, the man was clothed and in his right mind, sane enough, when rid of the evil influence. (Mark 5:2-5,15,19,20.) So it has been ever since. There are physicians who tell us that more than one-half of all those in insane asylums are there because of obsession by evil spirits. But there are many physicians who do not believe in evil spirits or in obsession.

When the Apostles were sent out by our Lord, they returned to Jesus, saying, "Even the evil spirits are subject unto us through Thy name." (Luke 10:17.) Those who deny the Scriptures say that these people were deceived, and that our Lord was unscientific. Our holding is the reverse of this--that the Lord and the Apostles were scientific, and that the people of our day are deceived in supposing that there are no evil spirits. We see these operating today, sometimes foretelling the future, clairaudiently, so that mediums are able to hear and to

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know things that others about them are not able to hear and know. God's people should be on guard, lest they come under evil influences. We have known some people who have come under this power.

There was a brother in Florida who held conversation with the evil spirits and explained to them the Bible; and he thought he was about to convert some. They gave very respectful attention for awhile and asked questions which he answered. But after awhile they seemed to have their curiosity satisfied, and talked in all sorts of vulgar language. The brother said he could not get rid of them. He wrote to us asking how to do so. We told him to exercise his will, and meantime to offer prayer to the Lord, as the only One who could rid him of the evil spirits. They finally left him. Their hold was broken. A lady who was a writing medium supposed that it was some dead friend writing through her. She came to believe that there were evil spirits taking hold of her hand to do this writing, and refused to have anything more to do with the matter.

FALLEN SPIRITS REGAINING THEIR LIBERTY

The question may be asked as to how it will be in the closing time of this Age. The Apostle tells us that these evil spirits are to be restrained until the judgment of the Great Day. What would seem to be implied? We answer that this is the Day of Christ, the thousand-year Day. As He has been dealing with the Church, so in the thousand years He will deal with the world. Messiah's Kingdom is the Kingdom for which we pray, "Thy Kingdom come!" The Apostle says that the fallen angels are restrained in chains of darkness until the Great Day. And so we find at this very time, this very Day, not only evidences

of the inauguration of the New Dispensation--the blossoming of the wilderness, the electric light, and all the blessings belonging to this New Dispensation--but also the evidences that these fallen spirits are obtaining more liberty. We have reason to believe, on what we think reliable information, that there have been materializations.

Spiritualists claim that, more and more, spirits will exercise this power of materialization. They say that it will be only a little while until the dead will be walking around amongst the living. And materialization is only one of the powers which they can use. It is the fallen angels who are representing themselves as dead humans, in order to deceive and operate contrary to the Divine arrangement and Plan; and these are still working as adversaries of God and opponents of righteousness. We should not be much surprised if there are some very startling things--very wonderful things--to happen in the near future. If we get any conception of the time before the flood, we realize that the earth was full of violence. God perceived that the thoughts of men's minds were evil and only evil. And so today.

The Apostle tells us that in the dawning of this New Dispensation and the closing of this Gospel Age, men shall be truce-breakers--violent. He proceeds with an entire list. (2 Tim. 3:1-5.) This description is prophetic, we believe, of the time in which we are living. And this condition, we think, will be due largely to the evil spirits, just as in the days of Noah. Our Lord, giving an illustration of how things will be at His second coming, says that it will be as in the days of Noah--people will be eating and drinking, planting, etc. He mentions that people will be ignorant of the time of His coming; that as the flood came suddenly, so would come the time of the ushering in of the New Dispensation. Our thought is that probably there will be a good deal of similarity--not that the evil spirits will be able to break the bands, or chains, which have been put upon them, but that it will be part of God's Plan to let this happen. God has been restraining these evil spirits during the four thousand years since the flood.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH A SAFEGUARD

Speaking of ourself: if we were living today under the ordinary knowledge of mankind in general, and no more, we feel sure that we should not be able to maintain our position as a Christian. Our faith might waver; we might not be able to believe in the existence of God. But we think the hour is coming when there will be a test of this kind. Mankind will have reason to doubt whether there is any other God than nature, which is a very cruel god. Many are coming to believe even now that the Lord is merely a God of nature, and by processes of evolution has been creating the race in the earth. These will certainly come to a place where there will be a severe trial of

faith.

Already many are falling; many are standing aloof from God and the Bible. Incidentally, the Lord describes that time when He says He will proceed to "do His work, "His strange work"--the procedure which will seem most

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strange to mankind, causing great trials and difficulties to come upon the earth and upon the nominal Church systems and all who have identified themselves with nominal Church Christianity. Many will be thus caused to lose all faith. We know to expect these things and we have, therefore, blessing and keeping-power now. And perhaps we shall need this special help more in the next few years. Who can say?

We can readily suppose that our Adversary will have increased power as this time of trouble comes on. We can suppose that the evil work which will be done will be done by Satan and his fallen angels, who will exercise a very baneful influence upon humanity. Some cases have been brought to our attention recently. One was a statement about a person who had had a picture manifestation. When the picture was developed, it showed a man who had been dead for some time. It is evident, then, that the evil spirits are able to exercise some influence which can produce a picture upon a camera. Another case drawn to our attention was that of a person who has "seen things." This person thoroughly believes that he has seen the things with his own eyes. How could this be so? We may not know all the powers which the evil spirits may be able to use, as, for instance, with those who are clairvoyant and are able to see at a distance. We have all heard of mesmerism--that a person under this spirit control would be able to tell accurately things taking place at a distance. This power was tested by having a person do certain things at a certain time; and the person under the influence of the evil spirits was able to fully describe the things that were taking place. We are not sure how these things were done. The person must have seen the thing pictured in the brain in some manner beyond our comprehension. We assume that it must have been the fallen angels who could give this picture upon the brain of the medium, who could give the medium the things she would see. In our dreams we see people walk and hear them talk. And if we could have such things given naturally, we can easily suppose the power the evil spirits could have in this matter. This does not, however, make us understand the philosophy of it.

To what extent these things will be used in the future, we know not. We have no doubt that the things which will be permitted will be very startling. Even to

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those who have the right understanding of the Divine Plan of the Ages, the things which will be permitted will be very strange. We are prepared for almost anything that might be told. We are convinced of the power of these evil spirits who pretend to do these various things. In fact, we can see that while materialization would be possible to them, a representation upon the mind would be much easier; it would be easier to paint a picture upon the brain.

The Lord's people should have on at all times the whole armor of God that they may be able to stand in this particularly evil day.

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RIGHTEOUS REPROOF AND FORGIVENESS OF WRONG

"Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head."--Psa. 141:5.

IN THE SCRIPTURES the word righteous is used in a two-fold sense. In one sense, absolute righteousness is referred to, as when we read, "There is none righteous, no, not one." In the text under consideration the intimation is given that our Lord Jesus is the Righteous One who smites. In this sense, of course, the chastisements would come from our Lord; and the one chastised would receive them with appreciation, knowing that the Wisdom, Justice and Love of God are connected with such reproof. But there is a secondary use of the word righteous, applying to mankind. Various persons are spoken of in the Scriptures as being righteous, not because they were perfect, but because they were right-intentioned, right-willed, and manifested in their conduct the Spirit of God, the spirit of righteousness.

In this use of the word righteous, the text seems to imply that all who are the Lord's people should be able to give reproof and correction in righteousness in a manner that would be helpful to those corrected, and for their good; in a way that would bring a measure of comfort and blessing and refreshment; in a manner that would be like excellent or fragrant oil, whose perfume would linger for hours. With this thought before our minds, there is a valuable lesson here. First of all, we should be of those who receive the corrections as of the Lord; and who are glad to be set right if we are wrong in any manner; secondly, we should be of those who recognize that if reproof be proper to give, it should be of a kind that would not be injurious, but such as would be spiritual, uplifting and refreshing.

In order to accomplish this end a reproof should be

sympathetic. We should remember that all of the Lord's people are fallen according to the flesh, but are New Creatures in Christ; and, if they be New Creatures in Christ, they must have the mind of the Lord and desire to glorify Him. Any of the brethren giving a reproof from this point of view would recognize that the person reprov'd had not bad intentions, and would explain as gently and kindly as possible what are the real facts. A reproof of this kind should not be given suddenly; and the person reprov'ing should judge of the punishment to be given and of the proper time, etc., as of the Lord. Thus should any one that is righteous do in administering reproof to another. It should be done only after careful consideration and prayer, and after having arrived at the conclusion that this is the best possible way to help the brother or the sister. If all reproof were given under such conditions we may readily suppose that it would be much more helpful than is the usual reproof.

CRUSHING REPROOF IS UNRIGHTEOUS

The expression, it "shall not break my head," would mean that a reproof should not be disastrous, not be crushing, but it should be an anointing or blessing. To crush the head would be to kill the person. The righteous are not in the world for the purpose of doing injury to others or of harming them, but for doing good in the world. Those who injure others are to that extent unrighteous. Those who use their criticism and reproof, etc., so as to exercise a crushing effect upon the reprov'd are not righteous. Such should learn how to properly administer criticism. They should learn that the Apostle's statement, "reprove," "rebuke," etc., was not made to all of God's people, but to Timothy, who was an Elder. And only those should be chosen as Elders who are men of moderation, men of development, men who have learned to control their own lives and their own tongues, so that they would not crush, but that their rebuke would be helpful and intended to draw the person nearer to the Lord, and to be encouraging and helpful generally.

"REBUKE NOT AN ELDER"

When St. Paul instructed Timothy not to rebuke an Elder, but to entreat him as a father, the Apostle did not refer to an Elder of the congregation, but a person older than one's self. Do not rebuke a person older than yourself. Treat him as a father; likewise the elder women as mothers; and the younger men as brothers, and the younger women as sisters. In other words, an Elder is not appointed in the Church to brow-beat or to trample down the liberties of others. The spirit of kindness, gentleness, etc., is the Holy Spirit. If an Elder rebukes in another spirit than this, he should remember that the person

rebuked is not a child and should not be treated as a child--not reprimanded or denounced or told "This is all wrong!" Such an unwise course in administering a rebuke is a fruitful cause of difficulty.

It would not be wise or kind or gentle for a younger person to lose patience with older people whom he feels should know about a matter and to say, "You ought to know all about this. I will give you a lesson." This kind of spirit has made difficulty in various places. Apparently the Apostle's remark is to the opposite of this course of conduct, and exhorts to kindness, gentleness, consideration of age and everything that might enter into the matter. It is very evident from different Scriptures that there was a family sympathy in olden times that we do not see exemplified today, as shown in the Apostle's statement: "Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren; the elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters."--I Tim. 5:1,2.

Today it is the custom to be very polite toward strangers and very impolite toward those of one's own family; and some will be very polite amongst those who are outside and very impolite to those to whom they ought to give kindness and help and sympathy. The same thought seems to be given in connection with the admonition to "love as brethren." But today, if you want to find true, real friends, you do not often look for them in the same family. In this respect our progress has surely not been

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of the evolutionary kind. Father, mother, brothers and sisters should be treated with consideration, with kindness, with love. And this principle should be applied to the household of faith.

"LOVE WORKETH NO ILL TO HIS NEIGHBOR"

In 2 Tim. 4:2 the Apostle, as a minister of the grace of God, explains that the declaration of the Gospel may include three features: (1) reproof; (2) rebuke; (3) exhortation. But it is safe to caution all of the Lord's people against too liberal use of the first two features. In order to reprove properly, the heart should be very full of love and sympathy; else the reproofs and rebukes might be sharp and possibly do more harm than good. Even with the heart full of love, it requires a head that is exceedingly well balanced to be able to make use of reproofs and rebukes to good advantage to those who really need them. And herein God's people are to be "wise as serpents, harmless as doves." Exhortation is the form of service which quite evidently can best be used by the majority of the Lord's people. And even this form, as well as the other efforts, should be characterized by patience, long-suffering, brotherly-kindness.

WHEN FORGIVENESS IS PROPER

"Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him."--Luke 17:3,4.

God does not forgive our sins until we acknowledge them and ask His forgiveness. Our Lord expressly states the propriety of expecting those who trespass against us to make some acknowledgment of their fault before we express our full forgiveness. If he "turn again to thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him."

We are not to accept one portion of the Divine direction and to ignore another portion. We are not to say that our Lord meant it when He said, "Forgive him," and that He did not mean it when He said, "Rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him." With the majority of people, however, it would be quite unnecessary to urge the propriety of repentance--unless they were the transgressors whose duty it is to repent. Most people are sufficiently disinclined to forgive to wait until their forgiveness is asked.

WE SHOULD LIVE ABOVE TRIFLES

On the other side of the question, however, a caution is necessary. The Christian is to have the loving, generous disposition of heart, a copy of the Heavenly Father's disposition. In trivial affairs he is to have so much sympathy and love that he will take no notice of the little wrongs, just as God for Christ's sake deals with us, unless it represents knowledge and wilfulness. Such a rule operating amongst Christians--a determination not to recognize as offense anything that is not purposely done or intended as an offense--would be a great blessing to all, and the proper, God-like course. The transgressions to which our Lord refers are not trivial affairs, things of no consequence, are not evil surmisings or imaginings, are not fancied insults, but positive wrongs done us, which are susceptible of proofs and on account of which it is our duty, kindly and lovingly and wisely, to give some proper rebuke--some intimation that we recognize the wrong and that it has grieved us and hurt us. Then comes the Divine rule respecting the one and only proper manner of rebuke given by our Lord (Matt. 18:15-17) and more than once elaborated in this journal and in our other publications. Our Lord intimates that disobedience of His commands evidences a lack in discipleship. Though He gave very few specific commandments, this command which He carefully marked out as the one, only way of adjusting a grievance, is utterly ignored by many advanced Christians.

"EVEN AS CHRIST FORGAVE YOU"

The disposition to forgive should be with us always,

and should be manifested by us at all times. Our loving generosity and kindness and desire to think no evil--or as little as possible--should be shown in all the words and acts of life. This course is God-like. God had a kind, benevolent, generous sentiment toward us, even while we were yet sinners. Nor did He wait for the sinners to ask forgiveness, but promptly manifested His desire for harmony and His readiness to forgive. The whole Gospel message is to this effect: "Be ye reconciled to God." Our hearts should be so full of this disposition toward forgiveness that our faces would not have a hard look, nor our words of reproof a bitter sting. On the contrary, they should manifest the loving forgiveness that we should have in our hearts at all times.

Our Lord particularly called attention to the difference between an outward and formal expression of forgiveness with smooth words, and the true forgiveness which is from the heart. The former, or outward forgiveness is only lip-deep, and means that a rankling of an evil, unforgiving spirit is within, and that it will be only a matter of time until the pent-up force of malice and hatred will break forth in words of slander. God reads the heart, and, whatever the lip-professions may be, He will not consider these unless the heart and the life correspond with them. It is vain, therefore, that anyone should say, "I love my brother," and at the same time seek, either by word or act, to do him injury. All the evil-speaking, malice, hatred, envy, strife, proceed from evil in the heart; hence the necessity, on the part of all who desire to be of the Lord's Body, that they "purge out the old leaven of malice" that they may be members indeed of the unleavened loaf--the Body of Christ.

Forgiveness "in your hearts" is the condition which is always to obtain there. We should never harbor any other feeling than that of forgiveness and good-will toward all, no matter how seriously they may have trespassed against us. If this be the case, we shall be longing and anxious to exercise the forgiveness outwardly and to express it to the repentant ones. Hence we shall not seek to compel the most elaborate statement on the part of the penitent; but, like the father of the prodigal, to see the repentant one coming in an attitude of humility will touch our hearts and prompt us to go out part way to meet him, to forgive him, to greet him kindly and to put on the robe of fullest fellowship and brotherhood.

"If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."--Matt. 6:15.

HATE THE SIN, BUT NOT THE SINNER

Our earliest definition of "Injure not" would probably have been that we should not kill or wound our enemies physically; but as we look at the Teacher and heed His words we hear Him say, "Learn of Me," and we note with the Apostle that though He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth, yet, "When He was reviled He

reviled not again [in return]; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed His cause to Him that judgeth righteously."--I Pet. 2:22,23.

If we are faithful pupils it will not be long until we see that the perfect law of liberty, the law of Christ, is a discerner

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of the very thoughts and intents of the heart; and that while we must hate all sin, we cannot hate any sinner and yet have the love of God perfected in our hearts. We see that this means, not only that we must not retaliate and revile our foes, but that we must not even wish to do so. The evil wish must be conquered and the selfish conditions which gave it birth must be utterly destroyed and replaced with love--the Spirit of Christ.

"COPIES OF GOD'S DEAR SON"

We may learn a lesson from the fact that those two grand characters, John the Baptist and our Lord, each fulfilled his own mission, according to the Divine arrangement; but that they had different missions. John's mission was pre-eminently that of a reprover and reformer, and we are to understand that as a Prophet he was supernaturally guided in respect to the various features of the course he took. Our Lord's mission, on the contrary, was a different one; He was gathering to Himself those whom John's ministry served to arouse to righteousness and to zeal to know and to do the Lord's will.

We who are called to be the Body of Christ and to follow Him may learn a lesson in this as respects our proper course. We are not sent forth as John was, to dwell in the wilderness, living and dressing uncouthly, and to criticise and denounce everything and everybody. Some of the Lord's dear people fail to notice that such commissions are special and very rare; and sometimes in following the wrong copy, they undesignedly bring reproach upon the Lord's cause.

We are to be copies of God's dear Son, our Lord, and not to be copies of John the Baptist. We are not to stir up strife by trying to mind other people's business, nor to seek to govern all the affairs of this world, reproving emperors, kings, governors, etc.; but, on the contrary, we are exhorted by the Apostle to remember that what God sees fit to permit, we can see fit to endure. Even though we find many things which we cannot endorse, we may equally find ourselves able to avoid any special denunciation of them--especially of things which have no bearing whatever upon the proper understanding and fulfilling of the Lord's Word. The Apostle points out the proper position, saying, "As much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." And our Lord emphasized the same thought, saying, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."--Rom. 12:18;

Matt. 5:9.

AN UNWISE COURSE

Some of the holiest of the Lord's people err on this subject in their own families, and needlessly arouse prejudice and opposition, and make their homes unhappy, by continually finding fault with things which, though not up to the standard of saintliness and cross-bearing, are, nevertheless, not immoral or wicked, even in tendency. Parents and guardians are surely to guard against all tendencies toward immorality, etc., but to find fault with those they love, merely because they are only nominal Christians and have the spirit of worldliness, is certainly unwise. The general life of peace and joy in the Holy Spirit is the very best reproof of worldliness they can give, and the very best recommendation of the glorious Gospel they profess. This is the epistle that will be read, the light that will reprove darkness.

In other words, we must not expect from, nor try to force upon the unconsecrated the details of our own self-denials. We must wait until they shall see full consecration

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to be their "reasonable service" and present their bodies living sacrifices to God. Pastors and teachers, however, should seek to keep continually before the Lord's consecrated "flock" the high Scripture standard, realizing that many influences are continually at work to lower the standard of holiness and devotion.

"WHAT MANNER OF PERSONS OUGHT WE TO BE?"

How highly we, who belong to the Gospel Dispensation, should value its privileges and opportunities, seeking to "make our calling and election sure!" (2 Pet. 1:4-11.) If those who were called with an earthly calling, to be a "house of servants," rendered but a reasonable service when they engaged in the Lord's work zealously, as did John the Baptist, and were faithful, how much more zeal and energy ought we to put forth--we who have been favored so much more highly? "What manner of persons ought we to be, in all holy conversation and godliness!" --2 Pet. 3:11.

Let us remember that this "high calling," this "heavenly calling," to joint-heirship with our Lord in the Kingdom, is a very special and a very limited call, that it will soon end, and that so far as the Divine revelation shows, it will never be repeated. In view of these things, let us lay aside every weight, and run with patience the race set before us in the Gospel, looking unto Jesus the author, until He shall have become the finisher, of our faith.-- Heb. 12:1.

"No looking back on Sodom's plains

No listening still to Babel's strains;
No tears for Egypt's song and smile,
No thirsting for its flowing Nile.

'Tis but a little and we come
To our reward, our crown, our home!
Another year, or more, or less,
And we have crossed the wilderness;
Finished the toil, the rest begun,
The battle fought, the triumph won!"

THE FATHER HIMSELF LOVETH YOU

John 16:27.

Be still, my soul, Jehovah loveth thee!
Fret not, nor murmur at thy weary lot;
Though dark and lone thy journey seems to be,
Be sure that thou art ne'er by Him forgot:
He ever loves; then trust Him, trust Him still;
Let all thy care be this--the doing of His will.

Thy hand in His, like fondest, happiest child
Place thou, nor draw it for a moment thence;
Walk thou with Him, a Father reconciled,
Till in His own good time He calls thee hence.
Walk with Him now; so shall thy way be bright,
And all thy soul be filled with His most glorious light.

Take courage, faint not, though the foe be strong;
Christ is thy strength! He fighteth on thy side.
Swift be thy race; remember 'tis not long.
The goal is near; the prize He will provide.
And then from earthly toil thou restest ever,
Never again to toil, or fight, or fear--oh, never!

He comes with His reward; 'tis just at hand!
He comes in glory to His promised Throne!
My soul, rejoice! ere long thy feet shall stand
Within the City of the blessed One--
Thy perils past, thy heritage secure,
Thy tears all wiped away, thy joy forever sure!
--Horatius Bonar.

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HE HEALETH THEIR DISEASES

--MARCH 10.--MARK 1:29-45.--

"Himself took our infirmities, and
bare our sicknesses."--Matthew 8:17.

TODAY'S STUDY follows closely the one of a week ago. When Jesus left the Capernaum synagogue, He went to St. Peter's home. There St. Peter's mother-in-law lay sick of a fever. It was the work of but a moment for the Savior to take her by the hand and raise her up to health. The fame of Jesus had spread and by evening there were crowds importuning His healing words and touch. "And He healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many demons, and suffered not the demons to speak, because they knew Him."

But He did not remain to increase and deepen the favorable impression that He had made. The next morning, long before daylight, He left Capernaum and went into a desert place for prayer and communion with God. St. Peter and the others who had accepted the call to discipleship followed, and found Jesus later, and apparently urged His return, saying, "All men are seeking Thee." But Jesus replied, "Let us go elsewhere, into other towns, to preach there also." And He went into the synagogues throughout all that section, all of Galilee, preaching and casting out demons.

Nothing is more attractive to the human mind than the miraculous power of healing disease. No one enjoys disease, pain and suffering. People would be glad to be healed of disease, even if they were assured that the cures were performed by the power of Satan himself. It should not surprise us today that many false doctrines, wholly out of harmony with God's Word, commend themselves to the poor, groaning creation by promises of relief from physical ailments, without medicine, and theoretically by the power and favor of God, and supposedly in proof of the doctrines advocated by the healers.

But since these healers hold various and antagonistic doctrines, it is manifest that all are not of God, if any of them are. To our understanding, the Bible teaches that no miraculous healing at the present time is authorized by God's Word. St. Paul declared by inspiration that the gifts granted to the early Church and exercised by Jesus and the Apostles and those to whom they personally communicated them would pass away. We believe that they did pass away--that they gave place to the next and higher manifestation of Divine favor, namely, the fruits of the Holy Spirit--meekness, gentleness, long-suffering, and love--as evidence of God's favor and of membership in the Church of the First-born. The miracles which Jesus and the Apostles wrought were merely with a view to the establishment of the early Church. Nowhere is it intimated that it was the Divine will that all people should be healed of disease during this Age.

The general healing of disease will doubtless be a prominent feature of the work of Messiah's glorious Kingdom after its establishment. Not only will the ailments

of the flesh be lifted, but restitution processes will go on step by step, lifting humanity out of sin, disease and imperfection, up to full and absolute perfection, except in the case of those who wilfully and deliberately oppose the Divine arrangement, and who, in due time, will be cut off from life in the Second Death. All the remainder will ultimately reach the glorious condition of perfection mentioned in the Scriptures, where there will be no more sighing, no more crying, no more dying, because all the former things of sin and death will have passed away; because He that sitteth upon the Throne will make all things new.--Rev. 21:4,5.

SATAN AN ANGEL OF LIGHT

St. Paul intimates that Satan and his messengers, the fallen angels, would seek to transform themselves so as to appear "as angels of light," that they might exercise the greater influence over humanity and that thereby they might inculcate the more successfully false doctrines, subversive of true faith in God and His Word. We believe that the Apostle's words are particularly applicable in our day, and that many conscientious and good people are being deceived, and that miraculous healings are part of the Adversary's bait. It would not be appropriate for us to enumerate here the different doctrines which we believe are thus baited. We content ourselves by giving the Scriptural reason for expecting no miraculous healings from God at the present time.

"WHO HEALETH THEIR DISEASES"

It is quite true that under the Law Covenant which God made with Israel, He agreed that sickness should be a penalty for violation of the Law, and health a reward for the obedient. The statement of the Prophet, "Who healeth all thy diseases," was applicable physically to the Israelites under the Law Covenant. It has also a spiritual application to the Church, the New Creation.

But the healing of the New Creature and the healing of his flesh are different things. The New Creature's soul sickness and heart troubles are all cured by the Good Physician--even though his flesh may suffer pain and go down into death. We are to remember that the condition upon which we were begotten of the Holy Spirit to

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be new creatures was a full surrender of the flesh and its interests as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable, which is our reasonable service.--Rom. 12:1.

Nor is this any change from the Lord's dealings with the Church from the very beginning. So far as the records show all, or nearly all, who were healed by Jesus and the Apostles were "sinners." Surely there is no record of a single instance in which any of the Apostles were healed

of any disease. Although St. Paul healed many sick, yet when Epaphroditus was sick and "nigh unto death" we have no mention of any attempt to miraculously recover him.

Similarly, in the case of Timothy, we find that St. Paul neither sent him napkins and handkerchiefs for his healing, nor advised him to pray for his own healing, nor told him that he would pray for him, nor advised him to have others pray for him. On the contrary, he advised certain medicines, "for thy stomach's sake." Indeed, we believe that for God's consecrated people to ask for physical healing would be to attempt to take back again what they have specifically consecrated to the Lord--"even unto death." That the Lord specially overrules in the cases of many of His people to give them remarkable health and strength for their labors in His service, without their asking it, is another matter entirely. This, however, is in no wise in conflict with the fact that God used miracles amongst outsiders, amongst unconsecrated people, as a foreshadowing of the general blessings which will come to mankind under Messiah's Kingdom shortly to be established.

Furthermore, let us remember that the miracles performed by Jesus and the Apostles were not attempts to heal all sickness, to banish pain and sorrow. They were merely intended to attract attention to the Gospel Message. The time when God shall wipe away all tears from off all faces, and when there shall be no more sighing and crying

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and dying, will be during and as a result of Messiah's reign of a thousand years.--Rev. 21:4.

Today's study furnishes one proof along this line. Jesus did many mighty works in Capernaum, but merely to attract attention. He went to other cities and towns, leaving behind Him in Capernaum many sick and disappointed. Similarly, we read that when Jesus passed the pool of Siloam there was a great multitude of impotent folk there needing healing and waiting the opportunity to go down into the water therefor. Jesus merely observed one of that multitude and said unto him, "Take up thy bed and walk."--John 5:1-9.

A CLEANSED LEPER THANKFUL

Today's study mentions another case of healing. Leprosy was regarded by the Jews as an incurable disease, and as a type of sin. The leper of this lesson had faith in the power of Jesus, and came and kneeled before Him and entreated healing, cleansing. His prayer was answered, not because he was one of Jesus' disciples, nor because he promised to become one of them, but because of his exercise of faith, and in order to make of his case a testimony to the priests that Jesus exercised a power Divine. The cleansed leper was told to go, according to

the Law, and present the customary offering, expressing his thanks to God and giving his testimony to the priest respecting his healing, and to have him examine him as the Law required.

Jesus admonished the leper not to make known so great a miracle; but in his thankfulness he could not restrain himself; he told it everywhere. The result was that Jesus could not thereafter visit the large cities because he would be overwhelmed with the number of sick brought to him for healing. He therefore frequented the rural districts, but even then the people sought Him for healing, from every quarter.

But alas! they were more appreciative of the restitution blessings than the great privilege which our Lord specially offered them of becoming His footstep followers and joint-heirs in His Kingdom, which, by and by, will dispense restitution blessings and healing far and near to every member of Adam's race condemned through the fall of Adam, and redeemed by the precious blood of Calvary.

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SIN-FORGIVENESS AND HEALING

--MARCH 17.--MARK 2:1-12.--

Text:--"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases."--Psalm 103:2,3.

WHEN LATER the Savior returned to Capernaum there was a crush to see and hear Him, and to bring the sick for His healing words and touch. The miracles which our Lord performed were specially with a view of getting the ear of the people for His Message--the Gospel of the Kingdom--the good news of the privilege of becoming sons of God and joint-heirs with Jesus in the Messianic Government, which would bless Israel and all nations with light, knowledge, and uplift from sin and death conditions.

It was while He was thus preaching that some deeply earnest ones brought to Him a palsied man for healing. Unable to come into the house or its court because of the throng, they removed some of the tiling stones of the roof, and lowered the sick man into the presence of the preaching Savior. Such implicit faith, manifested by such heroic effort, could not fail to be appreciated by the Redeemer.

But the unexpected happened. Instead of healing the man of his disease, Jesus exclaimed, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." Under God's arrangement with the Jews,

under their special Law Covenant, original sin was typically atoned for by the typical sacrifices, and the people were held to account for their own transgressions of the Law. Hence, amongst the Jews, serious sickness implied serious sins. Thus Jesus on another occasion said to one of those whom He healed, "Thy sins, which are many, are forgiven thee. Go and sin no more lest a worse thing come upon thee."

We are not to forget that such special dealings were with the Jews only--that they never applied to Gentiles nor to Christians, although it is quite true that certain ailments, such as syphilis, appear very generally to follow the transgressors of Nature's laws, whether they be Jews or Gentiles. The point we make is that God has no such Covenant with the Church, nor with the world in general today. Hence, the righteous are often sick, and the sinners healthy.

"WHO CAN FORGIVE SINS?"

When Jesus declared the sins of the palsied Jew forgiven, some of the audience declared that such language was blasphemy--that Jesus was arrogating to Himself a power which belonged to God alone. They did not stop to consider that if He were indeed the Messiah, the Redeemer, it would imply that He would possess the authority to cancel the sins from which He was redeeming men. Perceiving their thoughts, and knowing that thus they might stumble over a great truth to their injury, Jesus in a few words clarified the matter, saying to them, Which do you consider the easier, to tell a man that his sins are forgiven, or to heal him? He well knew that they would say that the healing was the more difficult, and, therefore, if Jesus were able to heal the man, there would be no reason why He should say, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," if He had not the power to forgive sins. In proof of this, He said to the palsied man whose sins he had forgiven, "Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house." Immediately the man was healed, and departed carrying his bedding. The people made way for him, and with amazement glorified God, saying, Who ever saw the like!

AUTHORITY TO FORGIVE SINS

There are certain great basic principles relating to God's dealings with humanity which should be recognized. Jehovah's Government is based, not upon mercy, but upon Justice; as we read, "Justice is the foundation of Thy Throne." In one sense of the word Divine Justice never forgives and never can do so, as we will explain. We read, "All His work is perfect." It is the Divine method that every creature of God shall be so perfect as to need no forgiveness, no allowance. The angels were created perfect, hence there was no need to provide forgiveness for them, because there would be no excuse for their sinning. Likewise man was thus created perfect, in the

image and likeness of the Creator, and was without excuse, and therefore needed no provision for mercy so long as he was in relation with his God.

When temptation came, man fell from obedience into

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sin, and from Divine favor and life into disfavor and under the death sentence. He was without excuse and Justice made no provision. But another feature of the Divine character, Love, while not in control, was brought into exercise for man's relief. But Divine Love or Mercy could not override or interfere with Divine Justice. In other words, God could not forgive a sinner whom He had sentenced to death. What He could do, and did do, was to provide in due time for man's redemption. All of Divine Mercy, therefore, flows through the channel of Redemption.

Applying this principle to our Savior and to His teachings, we ask, How could He forgive sins when Divine Justice could not forgive sins, nor set aside the penalty of sin? The answer is, Jesus was the representative of Divine Mercy, and was at that time amongst men for the purpose of giving His life as a sacrifice on man's account, and therefore to Him belonged the distinctive honor of forgiving sins. But someone answers that Jesus had not yet died for man's sins, that He had not yet risen for man's justification, that He had not even appeared in the presence of God for the "household of faith."

We answer that while it is true that he had not accomplished this work, and indeed has not yet fully accomplished His work (as the Redeemer and Restorer of men), nevertheless, He had begun the work, He had presented Himself as man's Atonement price at Jordan, at the time of His baptism. According to the Scriptures and the type, He at that moment surrendered His earthly all on man's behalf.

However, His surrender of His all did not give Him the authority to forgive sins. It was the heavenly Father's acceptance of His consecration--Divine acceptance of Jesus' sacrifice that counted. God's acceptance of Jesus' sacrifice was manifested in His impartation of the Holy Spirit, which lighted upon Jesus like a dove, as was testified by John the Baptist, and also testified by Divine power which thereafter operated in and through Jesus for the healing of diseases. We see, then, that our Lord's words to the palsied man, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," were justified by the fact that He was in the position of making satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, and that the Father had already indicated the acceptance of the sacrifice which was then in process.

"BLESS THE LORD, O MY SOUL"

The text for this study comes from the Psalms, and is most interesting. The Prophet David may have appropriated

the words to himself as a Jew, and may have thought of his own physical healing and blessing as evidences of the Lord's favor under the Law Covenant. But the prophetic application of this Psalm to spiritual Israel is still more interesting. The spiritual Israelites are New Creatures, and have this treasure in earthen vessels.

With these it is the New Creature that recognizes his healing, his forgiveness, his reconciliation to God; and, according to God's promise, all things are working together for good to him, because he loves God and has been called according to the Divine purpose. Continually the New Creature has cause to exclaim, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits, who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases!" St. Paul, carrying out this same thought, declared that the great Redeemer will ultimately present His Church before the Father faultless and perfect in love--"sown in weakness, raised in power; sown in dishonor, raised in glory; sown an animal body, raised a spirit body." We shall be like Him and see Him as He is and share His glory.

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SOME INTERESTING LETTERS

TOWER ARTICLE ON JUDAS HAD HAPPY EFFECT

DEAR PASTOR AND BROTHER:--

I write to say that I took the Vow on November 14 last, and request an interest in your prayers on my behalf, that I may be assisted in the keeping of it. Well I know that it is not only in the making of vows to the Lord that we are assisted and blessed, but in the paying of them.

I have hesitated for a long time in taking the Vow, more because I thought it was too much for me than anything else; but the Lord has shown me there is nothing more in the Vow than is included in Romans 12:1,2.

So after reading your article in THE TOWER, under the heading, "Was Judas a Hypocrite?" in the November 1 issue, I decided quickly on binding the sacrifice to the altar.

I might say in closing that the Lord continues to bless me richly through your writings. When I got the Truth I was a member of the Salvation Army, and much taken up with the "doctrines of demons." So you can see the great darkness I was in, and the many pleasant surprises the Lord had in store for me. Truly it was "good tidings of great joy" to me (and it shall be to all people). It is my earnest desire that I shall always be faithful to the dear Lord and appreciate more and more the channel He is using in bringing to the Household of Faith the "meat in due season."

My prayer for you is that the Lord may ever be with you to comfort you under every discouragement, and to enlighten your mind more and more, and to strengthen you for the work He has given you to do. With much Christian love, I

remain

Your brother in Christ, DAVID STRATTON.--N.J.

"PROCRASTINATION THE THIEF OF TIME"

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--

In so many instances the Truth friends come to the meetings, either just at the opening hour, or after service has commenced, that it seems to me something might well be written on the subject, tending to correct this tardiness. The meeting is disturbed more or less by the late arrivals, who in most instances could just as well be present before the meeting begins. They make sufficient haste to get to the meetings on time, but they do not start this hurry early enough to be on time.

Many deplore their inability to better serve the Lord and His Truth. They say, "I would like to do something for the Lord, but have no talent, or no opportunity for service." Bless their hearts! They could readily manifest a greater degree of zeal by being at the meeting thirty minutes before the opening hour, thus showing their love for the brethren and their appreciation of Christian fellowship.

Perhaps in no other way could they so effectually indicate their desire to be of service to God. They are neglecting a golden opportunity, it seems to me. The natural disposition is to take the last possible street car that would bring one to the meeting in time to be at its opening, whereas we should surely seek to go on the earliest car possible.

The fellowship of the saints is oftentimes worth more than what we get from the class lesson. This should prompt us all to be half an hour ahead of time rather than even one minute late.

Should we not resist the temptation to be late in starting to meetings quite as much as the temptation to negligence in other respects?

Your brother in the love and service of the Lord,
J. A. BOHNET.

WATCH TOWER BIBLE & TRACT SOCIETY:--

The postal I mailed you brought in return mail the desired literature. Thank you. I have read and have made the Truth my own. And now I desire to co-operate in spreading the good tidings to others. Please advise how I may do this to the best advantage. I desire to meet all the expense incident to the distribution of literature, which I shall do myself.

I enclose a dollar for The Watch Tower, which I desire to have regularly.

May the Lord continue to bless you in your labor of love.

With earnest prayers, S. L. DAVIS.--Pa.
