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THE LAW MAGNIFIED AND MADE HONORABLE

"The Lord will magnify the Law and make it honorable."--Isa. 42:21.

"WHERE THERE IS NO LAW there is no transgression" (Rom. 4:15), would seem to be an axiom--a self-evident truth. No one could transgress a law that was not given to him, that was not applicable to him. In his discussion of the Jewish view of the Mosaic Law, St. Paul used this statement to show that the Jews misunderstood the matter. They had the thought that because God had given them the Law at Mt. Sinai, they were justified in God's sight by that Law. But receiving a Law is not keeping that Law. Therefore, the Apostle shows them that by the deeds of the Law no flesh could be justified in God's sight.--Rom. 3:20.

Continuing the argument a little further, St. Paul shows that the entire human race was once in God's favor, as represented in Adam before sin entered. While the race was in that condition of perfection mankind was just before God. But when sin entered, it brought the penalty of alienation from God and of death. Thenceforth the human race was dead in trespasses and in sin, having no right to everlasting life. In that condition God did not give mankind a law, but permitted the world to go without law up to the time of Moses. And even in the time of Moses God did not give the Law to the whole world, but only to the Jewish nation. If Israel had been able to keep the Law that was given to them at Mt. Sinai, they would have been a living nation--not a dying nation, as the other nations are.

The Apostle proceeds to say that the commandment, which was ordained to life, Israel found to be unto death. (Rom. 7:10.) A man cannot be justified by receiving the Law, but by keeping the Law. The rest of the world were less condemned than the Jews, for, says the Apostle, God did not give them that Law and they never came under

the penalty of that Law. So, then, Israel found the Law to work death; and they were under more condemnation than were any other people in the world; for they were condemned, not only in Adam, but also by failure to keep the Law. By the Law Covenant given on Mt. Sinai, they were lifted out of the Adamic condemnation and put on trial afresh; and when they failed to keep that Law, they had a second condemnation put upon them.

St. Paul is here demonstrating the mistake of thinking that the Law Covenant gave Israel a special immunity from condemnation. Then he shows that there are some Gentiles who have never come under the Law Covenant, as did the Jew, but who, nevertheless, show a work of progress, which the Jew had not done; for these Gentiles show a law of love ruling in their hearts. In some respects they judge themselves, and in other respects their consciences excuse or accuse them.

GOD'S LAW ORIGINALLY WRITTEN IN MAN'S HEART

The Apostle says that since the Jews are condemned by the Law given at Mt. Sinai, and since the rest of the world recognize by their consciences that they are condemned, then the whole world stands guilty in God's sight. What then is that which condemns the Gentiles? The answer is, the original Law of God remaining in their hearts, though marred by the fall.

God created our first parents in such a condition of perfection that the Law of God was clear, or manifest, to them instinctively. Now, because of the fall, if a man were to use his moral perceptions alone, one man might say that a thing is wrong, and another might say that it is right; each would be guided by his own mind, his own conscience. St. Paul's argument is that no matter how fallen a man may be, he still has so much of the original Law in his heart that his conscience will either accuse him of wrong-doing or excuse his conduct; and unless extremely degraded he will know that it is wrong to steal or to take human life.

To whatever extent a man retains this original Law of God to that extent he is responsible. No one can sufficiently excuse himself so as to say that he is worthy of eternal life. The Jew could not claim that he had kept the Law, for his atonement for sin was an acknowledgment that he had failed to do so; and the Gentile's conscience testified to his unworthiness. Therefore, neither was deserving of eternal life. Continuing his argument the Apostle explains that none of the fallen race can obtain eternal life except by the way that God has provided; and that way is in Christ alone. By the Divine arrangement Christ, who was perfect, was made flesh and gave Himself on behalf of Adam and his race, so that God can be just and still be the Justifier of him who believes in Jesus. --Rom. 3:26.

Neither Jew nor Gentile can have eternal life except as the result of faith in Jesus Christ. The Apostle tells

us that we cannot merit eternal life, but that we must do all in our power to manifest that if we were perfect we would keep God's Law, and that in proportion as we know the Divine will, the Divine Law, we should prove our desire to be in harmony with God by doing His will to the best of our ability. The merit of Christ will off-set,

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compensate for, the weaknesses of the flesh through heredity, and ultimately we shall attain to full perfection. But none except those who show their willingness to keep the Law will reach this perfection; they must be willing to spare no efforts to keep that Law, so far as in them lies.

TWO CLASSES RELEASED FROM ADAMIC CONDEMNATION

"Where no Law is there is no transgression," for "sin is not imputed when there is no Law." (Rom. 4:15; 5:13.) The world has not yet come under individual condemnation; for the world has not yet been placed under Divine Law. Why not? Up to the present time the world is under the Adamic sentence, and only those who are lifted out of that condemnation can come under another sentence. The whole world was condemned to death under Father Adam, and mankind cannot be sentenced again until they get out from under the first condemnation. The only ones who have, in any sense of the word, been released from this Adamic condemnation are two classes; the Natural Israelites and the Spiritual Israelites. The Jews could not be tried for life or death without a release in one form or another from the Adamic condemnation. This release they obtained by the Law Covenant; but it was only typical, for the blood of bulls and goats can never take away sin.--Heb. 10:4.

The only ones who have been actually released are those Jews who came under the Covenant of sacrifice, the Covenant which began with the Gospel Age with Christ, and those Gentiles who have entered into this Covenant relationship with Christ. As many of these as have entered into this relationship are on trial before Divine Law, and subject to eternal life or eternal death under that Law. If obedient to that Law they will get eternal life. If disobedient to that Law of the spirit of life, and if they wilfully sin after having been begotten of the Spirit, they will get death.

In the case of the Jew it would be the Second Death if their Law Covenant had been the full and complete Covenant which God intended for them. But it was not; it was merely a tentative Covenant to give them a tentative offer of eternal life; it was simply a typical Covenant. The real one is that which God intended should come in the New Covenant. "The days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; not according to the Covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I

took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt" (Jer. 31:31,32); God will make a New Covenant with them. He will take away the stony heart out of their flesh and will give them a heart of flesh, that they may keep His statutes and ordinances and do them (Ezek. 11:19), under this New Covenant--the real Law Covenant.

Under that real Law Covenant every Jew will have the fullest opportunity of coming into harmony with God. And the basis of that harmony will be the "better sacrifices" than the typical ones, which Moses offered. The great Mediator will be the Messiah--Christ the Head and the Church His Body. And that great Mediator has the basis of His power in the fact that He has provided the "better sacrifices." He provided first His own sacrifice; and during the Gospel Age He has been providing other sacrifices--those who come unto the Father by Him.

THE LAW AN INDICATION OF GOD'S WILL

The Church of this Gospel Age is not under the Jewish Law Covenant; for that Law Covenant was given to the Jew and not to the Gentile nor to the Christian Church. We are not to speak of ourselves as "Gentiles" or as "Jews," but as the Church of God. God has made a different Covenant with us; it is spoken of as a Covenant of sacrifice "Gather My saints together unto Me; those who have made a Covenant with Me by sacrifice." (Psa. 50:5.) This Covenant has been made individually with the entire Church of Christ.

Shall we say, then, that the Gospel Church is without a Law? By no means! We are not under that Law Covenant--the Covenant which demands of us to keep that Law and which binds us to keep it. But we are under a Covenant of Grace--a Covenant which makes special provision for us--for our inability to do perfectly. Nevertheless we are still under Divine Law. Every intelligent creature is under Divine Law. To the extent of her knowledge the Church will be responsible to the Law of God.

How may we know the Law of God? We may know of it in part by the Jewish Law and the Ten Commandments. Do we ignore the Ten Commandments? By no means. We appreciate them as showing us the Law of God. It is one thing to strive to keep them in mind, in spirit, and a totally different thing to keep them inviolate, as those under the Law covenanted to do; for whoever breaks one of the commandments breaks them all. (James 2:10.) We are therefore not under the Law, but under grace. (Rom. 6:14.) That same Law which God gave to Israel, so beautifully represented on tables of stone, is not over us; but the spirit of that Law is applicable to us. St. Paul says that the righteousness of the Law, the true keeping of the Law, is fulfilled in us, the Gospel Church, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.--Rom. 8:4.

With the Gospel Church God is dealing differently from the manner in which he dealt with the Jewish people. God's arrangement with the Jews was that they should keep that Law both in letter and in spirit, or else they would be condemned. His arrangement with the Gospel Church is that they should fulfil that Law to the best of their ability, and that the merit of Christ will make up for their deficiency. While we of the Gospel Church would like to keep the Law we are as unable to keep it, as were the Jews, on account of the weakness of the flesh. Every Christian should feel that he is strictly under obligations to the Divine Law more than are those who are not Christians, because of his greater enlightenment in Divine things, in the instructions of Christ and the Apostles and of the Holy Spirit. Not only is he to seek to live up to the requirements of the Law, but he covenants to do much more. He covenants to sacrifice even those rights which he would have under the Law, and to present his body a sacrifice, not even calling for his own rights under the Law.

OBEDIENCE TO THE EXTENT OF ABILITY

We keep the spirit of the Ten Commandments because it is the spirit of righteousness, the Spirit of God. We have become God's children; and having His Spirit, we are to do those things which are pleasing to Him. If, therefore, we can from the Ten Commandments learn what things are pleasing to Him, then they are lessons that we should learn. If any other thing shows us what is pleasing to God, we are to do it. But we are not under the Law Covenant. We do not hope for eternal life by keeping it. God's arrangement for us is that being obedient to the extent of our ability and having the spirit of the Law in our hearts, we are counted as perfect in His sight and will receive His blessing.

Some of the Jews thought that they kept the Ten Commandments, yet to their surprise they did not get eternal life. The teachings of Jesus and the Apostles show us that every one of the commandments of the Law had a deeper meaning than the Jews could discern, and that their failure to perceive the spirit of the Law was one of

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the reasons why they could not get eternal life. Take the commandment which says, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." Some people really have another god in their hearts; some idolize their husbands; with others their wives have the first place; with some it is their stocks and bonds. This is idolatry.

The Scriptures tell us that the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," has a still deeper signification than to take life. He who is angry with his brother, he who would like the opportunity to kill and who abstains from so doing merely because of fear, is in his heart a murderer. Similarly,

the Master says, He that looks upon a woman to lust after her commits adultery in his heart; he is restrained only because of lack of opportunity.

When we begin to get this deeper view of the teachings of the Ten Commandments we see how the Lord magnified the Law and made it honorable. (Isa. 42:21.) But the fact that Jesus was able to keep the Law shows that God did not give an unjust Law; that it could be kept; that the weakness was in the fallen condition of humanity, and not in the Law.

THE SABBATH OF FAITH IN JESUS' FINISHED WORK

Now as these other commandments have a higher and deeper meaning than that which appears upon the surface, so also has the Fourth Commandment, which relates to the Sabbath Day. The Apostle Paul gives us the key to this higher meaning when he says that this Seventh Day typifies the rest of faith for the people of God. (Heb. 4:9,10.) Whoever abides in Christ is a Sabbath-keeper, and those who do not abide in Him lose this rest and thus fail to be Sabbath-keepers. There is a still further expansion of the Sabbath in its typical significance to the Thousand-Year Day. Then humanity will be at rest from Satan, from sin, from the trials, besetments and difficulties of the present time; and all mankind will have an

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opportunity of entering into this rest. The Church will enter into it first, in her resurrection. Next the Jew will enter into that rest, when he shall understand God's plan and become the recipient of God's blessing and eternal favors in the Millennial Day; and finally, before its close, all the world will come under its blessed influences. This was the promise of God to Abraham when He said, "In thee and in thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 12:3.) They will be blessed in the wonderful provisions of that great Sabbath Day.

The Fourth Commandment was never given to us, and we are not enjoined to keep the seventh day either in the letter or in the spirit. The Sabbath Day was never given to the Church. A higher thought than that of physical rest is given to us. God has provided for us a rest of faith in Christ's finished work. We may enjoy our rest seven days of the week, and every day in the year. If we begin to appreciate that thought we have a rest about which the Jew knows nothing. This is an earnest of the future when we shall be through with all our difficulties and shall remain ever in the rest of God.

SUNDAY AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE NEW ORDER OF EVENTS

We are not under commandments ourselves in God's sight; we are not under obligation to keep any day of the

week. Why do we observe a Sabbath? Because of our own volition. The Law of this land provides for the keeping of Sunday. We are glad that the Law makes this provision for a quiet day once a week. We are pleased to have it so, and would not have any objection if there were two Sundays each week. We do think that the day chosen is a beautiful reminder of our Lord's resurrection. It is also a very fine illustration of the new order of things so soon to be established; and it is a very appropriate day for us. As for the world, quite probably, under the New Covenant there will be a day set specially for them in which they will rest from labors, etc. Perhaps it will be the seventh day.

SONS NOT UNDER LAW OF SERVANTS

It is nowhere said that Christians are to keep both the spirit and letter of the Ten Commandments. If it were so stated, we would be under that Law as were the Jews, who although bound by their Covenant to keep every jot and tittle of the Law, could do no more than to observe the spirit of the Law and to endeavor to keep, so far as possible, the letter also.

Christians are under grace; for they are sons of God by adoption. A son has many privileges which a servant does not have. To illustrate Suppose we had been adopted into a millionaire's family. Upon going to the new home, as we look around we notice certain inscriptions over doorways; as, for instance, "Servants' Entrance," "Tradesmen's Entrance," "Servants' Washroom," "Servants' Quarters," etc. Upon further observation we discover various rules put up, regulating the duties and affairs of the servants in general. These we read, and thereby gain information as to the will of our kind friend. We ask ourself, "Do I come under this classification? No, for I have been adopted into the family. These are not for me. Yet, from these instructions I perceive something of the law of the house, but I have duties and privileges far beyond those of a servant; I am a son and have privileges corresponding thereto."

So, the Apostle says, God deals with us as with sons. He has not given us the Ten Commandments. Why not? It would be an insult to give us of His Spirit, His mind, etc., and yet put us under a command which would imply that we had not received His Spirit. It would be quite inconsistent to say to a New Creature, "Do not steal, do not commit murder." The New Creature would not want to steal or to murder. The more we know about the Law given to Israel the more we appreciate it, the better we comprehend the Divine standpoint for everything. So while we may get some good out of that Law given to servants, we realize that it is not a command given to us, although it gives us some idea of what a son should do. Those commands should make us know better what is the Father's will; and thus we are the better able to do that will.

In proportion as we learn to appreciate the Father's will and to copy the principles underlying the Divine Character, we as New Creatures are "changed" from glory to glory of heart quality. And thus changed in our hearts, our minds, our wills, our conduct, we become fit or "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."--Col. 112.

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"THE MYSTERY HIDDEN FROM AGES"

"Wondrous mystery, long concealed,
Unto us has been revealed.
Herald wide the gracious story--
'Christ in you, the hope of glory!'

"Christ in you the world's sore need,
Christ in you the promised Seed.
Canst receive it? Then thou art
Of the Christ, indeed, a part."

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"YE ARE NOT UNDER THE LAW, BUT UNDER GRACE"

GOD HAS ONE LAW only for His intelligent creatures. This Law, therefore, in whatever form it may be stated, whether more elaborate or more condensed, is applicable to angels, to men and to the New Creation. There is no higher Law and there could be none.

This Law is based on Justice, and finds expression in Deut. 65; Matt. 2237-40; Lev. 1918. It would not be reasonable to demand that one should do more for another than for himself. To do so may be invited; it may be suggested to us; but there would never be a command that a man should do more for another than for himself; for such a command would be unjust. Thus we differentiate between Justice and Love. "Love is the fulfilling of the Law" (Rom. 1310) and might go much further than would Justice. In the case of the Church, however, there is a special proposition made--not merely that we shall love, but that we shall love on the highest plane of life.

A HIGHER COMMANDMENT

The consideration set before Jesus and before His followers for carrying out this proposition is glory, honor and immortality--the divine nature; and for this joy we

have engaged, not only to keep the Law, but additionally to seek to have love beyond the commandments of the Law. Under this arrangement we have agreed to do more than to love our neighbors as ourselves. We have agreed to lay down our lives for the brethren. This is a special requirement, which could not be expected from anyone aside from sacrifice.

Our relationship with the Lord is under this special covenant of sacrifice, as expressed in the words, "Gather My saints together unto Me; those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice." (Psa. 505.) These, the Apostle tells us, are not without Law, but are under Law in Christ. This Law in Christ is the law of their covenant, which is the Law of Love. A sacrificing love being beyond any requirement of Justice, it necessarily follows that anything which they would do beyond the requirement of Love would also fulfil the requirements of the Law laid down by Justice--the lesser being comprehended in the greater. This Law of Love would be a still higher law; as Jesus expressed it, "A new commandment [a higher commandment] I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."--John 1334.

When the Apostle says, "Ye are not under the Law, but under grace," he probably has special reference to the fact that Christians who had come from among the Gentiles had never been under the Law arrangement, but that their first experience under law was under this Grace arrangement in Christ. However, in the case of the Jews who had been under the Law Covenant, he declares that they were freed from the Law to which they had been bound; and he speaks as if the Law was a very severe requirement which they had been unable to keep, and from which release was a great blessing. The Law Covenant proposed everlasting life upon the terms of keeping the Law. "This do, and thou shalt live."--Lev. 185; Rom. 105; Luke 1028.

Since all the Jews, like the rest of mankind, were imperfect because of the fall, therefore no Jew could keep that Law, and consequently no Jew could ever attain everlasting life. Being unable to keep the Law he could not get a reward. But he was really bound by that Covenant; for there was no other Covenant offered to him up to the time when the Gospel was offered. Then, for him, a special arrangement was made--a Covenant of sacrifice. He was freed from the Law Covenant in the sense that he was released from the Law.

By becoming dead to the Law the Jews had an opportunity to get life in another way. By abandoning all hopes of getting everlasting life through the Law, they could receive a new hope in Christ; namely, that under the arrangement in Christ, the great Advocate, they might have fellowship with Him now in His suffering and later in His glory, which, by the Father's arrangement, He will share with all those who become His followers.

From the time, then, that the Jew became dead to the

Law, by abandoning all hope of getting life by obedience to it, he came into this one hope, which could be attained only through sacrifice. But he was still bound to do what is right. But this arrangement to do what is right is for the New Creature, not for the old creature, which is reckoned dead. The New Creature, however, has purposed to do God's Law and more. Such sacrifice all earthly hopes. So of these it is said, "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new!" (2 Cor. 5:17.) They are no longer under the Law Covenant, but under the arrangement of grace, or God's favor.

It is a great privilege to offer ourselves in sacrifice and to get so great a reward in return. This is a great favor under grace. But there is another sense in which we are under grace; namely, the arrangement was made not only by which we get so large a reward for doing so

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little, but by which our sacrifice is made acceptable. This also is grace. Grace means what the Lord does for us freely, not as a reward of any kind.

What our Lord does for us is to make our sacrifice acceptable. Then grace still pursues us and grants us blessings all the way; for, having undertaken to follow Jesus, we could not carry out our sacrifice. We find it impossible to do things perfectly, because we have imperfect bodies. But through the arrangement made for us in Christ, these imperfections will be forgiven. In order that these may be forgiven, it is necessary that we come with courage to the Throne of heavenly grace, that we may obtain help in time of need.--Heb. 4:16.

A REWARD IS NOT OF GRACE

So then we see three things First, that there is a Law higher than Justice, a Law of Love, a Law of Sacrifice; second, that God proffers us a reward for walking in the footsteps of Jesus, sacrificing self even unto death; and third, that He covers our unwilling imperfections by the Robe of Christ's Righteousness, in order that we may perform acceptably our part of the contract.

Now, a reward is not of grace. If we offer a man \$5 for doing a certain piece of work, we should not say after the work is done, "This is a matter of grace, and we will not give you the \$5, but \$1." To do so would not be right. To pay what we agreed to give is a matter of justice. So, then, it was grace to offer a reward for walking in the footsteps of Christ Jesus. But once the offer has been made, it becomes an obligation. It is a contract; it is a covenant, of sacrifice on our part, of reward on God's part. Jesus said, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My Throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with My Father in His Throne." To give the reward after the terms have been complied with, will not be grace, but justice.

Again, grace provides the Redeemer's sacrifice on our behalf--not only for our original sin, but for all trespasses on the way. When the Apostle says that the righteousness of the Law is fulfilled in us, he is not speaking of the Church as under that Law Covenant; but he is saying that while the Jews could not keep that Law because of the imperfections of their flesh, yet the Church

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keeps that Law; for it does not apply to our flesh, but to our spirit. Hence, the ability to keep that Law we, as old creatures, do not have; and we could not thus keep the Law any more than they. But we as New Creatures should be accounted as not only keeping that Law, but as keeping the Law of Sacrifice.

The Little Flock will keep the Law of Sacrifice. The Great Company will keep the Law in the spirit of their minds; but failing to do more they will lose the great reward of glory and honor. So, then, those of the consecrated who keep the Law of Love, the Law of Sacrifice, will be accounted as worthy of glory and honor with Christ Jesus. And those who fail to keep this Law of Sacrifice, but who maintain the Law of Justice, will finally be accounted worthy of everlasting life, but not of immortality.

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THE LIFE-RIGHTS OF THE ANCIENT WORTHIES

RIGHT TO LIFE is one thing, but right to eternal life is another. Adam had the right to live, which would have been eternal if by obedience he had demonstrated his worthiness to live forever. So with the Ancient Worthies; when raised from the dead they will have the right to live, but only through the Mediator. They will not have life-rights of their own, for there are no such rights except those which are recognized by the Father and Justice. The Apostle Paul tells us that already the Ancient Worthies have the Divine approval. But although they pleased God, He did not give them eternal life; and although they shall please the Mediator, He will not turn them over to the Father, to Justice, until the end of the Millennial Age.

The Scriptures say also that all live unto God (Luke 2038), for from His standpoint they only sleep. (See Deut. 3116; John 1111, etc.) Not the Ancient Worthies alone, but the rest of the world live unto God in the same sense, although they were not counted acceptable to Him. He has made provision for them through the Mediator, but that provision will not be complete until the end

of the Millennial Age. The Ancient Worthies, approved of God, had this testimony, that they "pleased God," in that they came up to the standard--perfection of heart-intention and obedience to the extent of ability. While He approved them, nevertheless they did not have eternal life given them nor was any right to eternal life recognized.

God has, however, made provision whereby all of Adam's race will be redeemed and have the opportunity of gaining eternal life. This provision will, of course, include not only the Ancient Worthies, but also the remainder of mankind.

LIFE THROUGH THE MEDIATOR

This arrangement made by God is not, however, outside of the Mediator, for through the Mediator alone will mankind, including the Ancient Worthies, obtain eternal life. (The only exception to this provision of the Mediator is the Church Class, who come to the Father through Christ's acting as their Advocate.) Hence the Ancient Worthies cannot come by any different route. They must be recognized of the Father through the Mediator; for since they are not joint-heirs with Christ, they must come in under the other class, during the period in which the Mediator will deal with the world as a whole. The process of dealing with the world as a whole will go on, and not until the end of the Millennium will The Christ deliver any of them over to the Father.

The Lord Jehovah has made a plan by which he can, through His Son, deal with mankind. That plan is that "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." (John 522.) Hence the Father, aside from His Son, did not judge the Ancient Worthies. But they may expect a blessing in God's own time and season--in "due time"--when Messiah will have taken His power and begun His reign; and particularly at the end of that reign, when the Son shall have delivered up the Kingdom to the Father.--I Cor. 1524.

The Father is not taking any cognizance of this arrangement for the blessing of the world, but is leaving it all for the great Messiah, who will be their Mediator, their great High Priest, making reconciliation, mediation. When the mediation, arranged for from before the foundation of the world, shall have been accomplished, it will be satisfactory to the Ancient Worthies, who will have been "rulers in all the earth," and to mankind as a whole.

ANCIENT WORTHIES UNDER THE MEDIATOR

The question as to whether the Ancient Worthies will have life-rights when they come forth, may be viewed from different standpoints. According to the teaching of the Scriptures, whoever is perfect is worthy of eternal life. We understand the Scriptures to teach that the Ancient Worthies will come forth from the tomb perfect,

lacking nothing. We would be inclined to say, then, that being perfect they would come within the Divine arrangement that whoever is perfect shall live. But we must remember that God is the Judge of all. (Heb. 12:23.)

Yet, even so far as the Ancient Worthies are concerned, they will not have direct dealings with God during the Millennial Age. Personally, they will be ready thus to deal; but God in His wisdom has seen fit to deal with them through the Redeemer, the Prophet or Teacher, the Priest, the Mediator of the whole world of mankind. And since the whole world of mankind is not ready to be turned over to the Father, the Ancient Worthies must wait until the remainder are delivered over into the hands of the Father, the Great Judge of all.

At the end of the Millennium, the whole world of perfected humanity will be turned over to the Father. (I Cor. 15:24.) As soon as He accepts them they will stand in the same position in which Adam stood when He was perfect. But as Adam was required to be tested, so the whole world of mankind will be tested in that same condition of perfection in which Adam was. Divine Justice must test their worthiness of life eternal before it will be granted.

SECOND RANK IN THE WORK OF SALVATION

The various statements regarding the Ancient Worthies all give the impression that, by their voluntary course, they reached the point where they were pleasing to God. And the Apostle Paul declares that these Ancient Worthies all died in faith, not having received the blessing of eternal life, because God had some better thing for us, the Church, that they without us should not be made perfect. (Heb. 11:13,39,40.) In other words, while they had the testimony that they pleased God, they are not to have first rank, but second, in the work of salvation. They could not receive their blessing, their perfection, until, in the outworking of the Divine Plan, Messiah has taken His Kingdom and His Bride has been perfected. Then they shall have their restitution blessings.

The fact that the Apostle says also that the Ancient Worthies desired "a better resurrection," implies that the

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resurrection given to them will be better than that given to the remainder of mankind, in that they will be worthy of having perfection of life at the time of first coming forth from the tomb, while the resurrection of the others will be gradual after they come forth. "Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets"--all the Ancient Worthies--will be awakened from death fully restored to human perfection; and will not require a "resurrection by judgment," a thousand years long, as will the residue of mankind.

These Ancient Worthies will come back in exactly the

same condition that Adam was before the fall; but they will have the advantage of greater experience than he had. Adam was perfect; these will be perfect. Adam had no experience with sin; these will have had much experience with sin. These experiences tended to develop character; that is to say, they brought about a favorable determination in respect to righteousness; the testing that came to them was to demonstrate their obedience to God, their loyalty to His will. To maintain this loyalty many of them laid down their lives.

While these Ancient Worthies will have neither part nor lot in the Spiritual Kingdom, because not called thereto--that high, or "Heavenly calling" not being possible until after the Ransom had been laid down by our Lord Jesus--yet they will occupy a position of preferment above the world, having attested their faith and love during the reign of evil, in a manner approved of God. Thus they were prepared and proved worthy to be the earthly ministers and representatives of the Spiritual Kingdom. In harmony with this it is written by the Prophet David, as addressed to The Christ--"Instead of [being longer considered] Thy fathers [they] shall be Thy children, whom Thou mayest make Princes [chief ones, captains] in all the earth."--Psa. 4516.

The resurrection of these Ancient Worthies will also be "better" than that of the remainder of mankind in that they were tried severely during their life and received a "good report through faith," and will have attained the reward of that faithfulness. They will be perfect men, having completely restored to them all that was lost in Adam--mental and moral likeness to God, and perfection of physical powers.

ELEMENTS OF CHARACTER-DEVELOPMENT

If these Worthies of the past have had large experience with sin and have proved themselves faithful in that they remained loyal to God, even unto death, why should they not receive life-rights as well as perfection of life at once? Why should they be obliged to wait until the end of the Millennial Age for recognition by Jehovah, instead of receiving it at the beginning? The answer is that God has included the whole world in the Mediatorial work of Messiah, as He has included all the Church in the preparatory work of the Royal Priesthood, through the great Advocate, the Redeemer; and the Mediator's work will continue for a thousand years. Hence, all who come under that work will be obliged to wait for the end of that Epoch before the recognition of any of them will be effected.

The Ancient Worthies "had this testimony that they pleased God." They pleased Him in that when they ascertained His will they set about doing it, even before He gave it to them as a Law, or obligation, even before He could ask them to obey Him and promise them eternal life for their obedience. Abraham, one of these, manifested

his faith in God although there was no redemption yet accomplished in the world. Christ had not yet come. And although Abraham was not on trial for life or for death, God granted him His favor and declared that he pleased Him. He and all those Ancient Worthies will have this resurrection to human perfection. But since human perfection--to the world of mankind--will come only under the Mediatorial reign of Christ, the Ancient Worthies cannot be introduced to the Father until the close of the Millennial Age.

Hence they will not have life in its fullest sense until the time when at the close of the Millennial Age the Kingdom shall have been delivered over to the Father. What they will have in the meantime--during the thousand-year period--will be perfection of human nature and all the blessings that God provides for mankind through the great Mediator.

ESTABLISHED CHARACTER NECESSARY

If perfection of organism makes character, then Adam was perfect in this respect. He was created perfect in mind and body. His mind was in the image of God; no blemish was there, no preference for sin, but the reverse of this; he had an appreciation of righteousness and a tendency toward it; he was all that would constitute a good man, for God so made him.

In another sense, Adam never had perfect character; that is, he had no character developed, tested and proved. God tried him, and because of his inexperience he failed, even though his character was good and his organism perfect. He failed in the very first feature of his trial. So we might wonder in what manner the Ancient Worthies received any testing which would constitute a full proof of character. When we examine the records of these men we find that they manifested great faith, and that they endured some severe ordeals and testings of their loyalty to God and their confidence in Him. It does not surprise us, then, that the testimony that they pleased God was given respecting them. This assures us that they had considerable character development. God must have seen their hearts to be very loyal, else He never would have considered them worthy of a better resurrection. Yet we believe they will have need of further experience and testing.

These Ancient Worthies will not be begotten of the Holy Spirit, as is the Church; but we are informed that "after those days" God will "pour out His Spirit upon all flesh." (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17.) The Ancient Worthies lived prior to the time of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, therefore, if they receive any measure of this blessing to come upon "all flesh," it must be in the future, and the giving of the Holy Spirit to them will have much to do with fixing, establishing, crystallizing their already perfect characters. They will be brought to greater knowledge, and having already endured severe testings

and having proved their thorough heart-loyalty, they will have to learn only how to use their talents and powers in fullest conformity to the Divine will.

While this class will be mortal and hence liable to death, it is almost unthinkable that any of these would come short of eternal life. Men who have stood crucial tests under conditions of ignorance and superstition, who have endured temptation from the world, the flesh and the Adversary, and proved loyal under such conditions, would, it is only reasonable to suppose, maintain their perfection under the more favorable conditions of the Millennial Age.

It is not probable that they would make mistakes; but if, upon their awakening, they should be at once turned over to Jehovah, and, as in Adam's case, the slightest deflection would mean death, we can see that their position would be much less favorable than it will be under the New Covenant arrangement during the Millennial reign of Christ. This is a very gracious arrangement for their

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best interests, for any possible mistake would be covered by Christ's mediation and not bring them under sentence of death.

The history of some of these Ancient Worthies is very meager and does not always imply that they were "overcomers" in the sense in which the Church is to be. Take, for example, the case of Samson, who is mentioned as one of these Ancient Worthies. The last we read of Samson, still in the hands of the Philistines, is that he was still loyal to God and prayed for the opportunity of serving God's cause; the Lord granted his prayer, permitting him to push down the pillars of the building in which he was making sport for the Philistines; they were the middle pillars upon which the house stood, and in its fall more than three thousand of the enemies of the Israelites were killed along with himself.

Faith seems to have been the chief element of character that was developed under Samson's experiences. We do not know how much patience, long-suffering, brotherly kindness, gentleness, meekness, etc., were developed in his character; nothing is stated in regard to the matter and we have no reason to suppose that Samson was a very gentle man. Indeed, we have never thought of gentleness and meekness as being amongst his characteristics. The slaying of one thousand men with the jaw-bone of an ass, as well as other experiences of his, would not seem to indicate this.

We may reasonably suppose, therefore, that although Samson will be brought back in an absolutely perfect condition, and under the favorable environments of the Millennial Age, there will probably be experiences in life that he never encountered and that will be so new to him that he might be in danger of making mistakes. Assuredly he will have much to learn respecting the things

of the Spirit of God, in the days of the blessing of "all flesh."

Summing up, we would say, The Ancient Worthies will not come into actual and personal relationship to God, so as to be determined worthy of eternal life, until the completion of the Millennial Age, because that Age is set apart for the very purpose of determining who of all mankind may have eternal life--aside from the spirit-begotten ones of the present time. At the close of the Millennial Age, when all mankind shall have reached perfection of being, they shall be tried of the Father for their worthiness or unworthiness of eternal life--just as Adam, while enjoying perfection, was tested as to whether or not he was worthy to have his life made perpetual.

Since the Ancient Worthies will be a part of the world under the New Covenant arrangements, it follows that they will not have the decision of the Divine Court, Divine Justice, respecting their worthiness of eternal life, until the completion of the Millennial Age, until the conclusion of the trial at the end of that Age, which will bring to them, as it will bring to all others who are faithful, the great reward of life eternal.

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TORONTO AND WASHINGTON CONVENTIONS

NEARLY ONE THOUSAND of those of "like precious faith" assembled in Convention at the National Exhibition Park, Toronto, Ont., Canada, beginning Sunday, June 30. The weather was ideal for such an occasion, and the spirit of the friends indicated their joy in the Lord, their oneness of purpose and implicit faith in the great Creator of the Universe. Those in attendance were mostly from Canada, although quite a number were present from the United States.

Horticultural Hall proved to be a splendid Convention auditorium, having a capacity of about fifteen hundred. The friends were quite comfortably lodged in the vicinity of the Park, and a substantial luncheon was provided each noon, affording at the same time an excellent opportunity for sociability and Christian fellowship. The Exhibition Park is located on the lake front with a magnificent view of the water, and is artistically laid out with winding paths, fountain sprays and flower beds.

With such beautiful surroundings praise to the Almighty filled every heart from the very first, and the opening day of services was appropriately designated "Praise Day." The speakers of the day magnified the name of the Lord and forcefully depicted the Divine program. "Hope Day," "Kingdom Day" and "Fruitage Day" each in turn proved equally interesting and helpful to the

assembled Bible Students as they had further word pictures painted before their mental vision illustrating God's wonderful provision for all mankind, and the special favors in reservation for the members of "the Church of the First-Born."

At one of these sessions a resolution was unanimously adopted expressing the sense of the Convention "that we do not find the Bible to teach the doctrine of a literal hell fire, or place of fire and brimstone, for the punishment of the wicked, but that secular history of the formation of the creeds of the Middle Ages reveals the fact that for various reasons, either wisely or unwisely, the doctrine of punishment in hell fire was added to the Gospel as taught by Jesus and the twelve Apostles. We, therefore, now unreservedly repudiate as thoroughly unscriptural the teaching of a place, state or condition of a literal lake of fire and brimstone for the punishment of the wicked, and further, that we believe from many personal testimonials that the vast majority of ministers of all Protestant denominations have privately repudiated the 'hell fire' theory, but have, for supposedly good reasons, hesitated to inform their congregations; and further, that we believe, on this account thousands, and perhaps tens of thousands, are being driven into skepticism or infidelity. We appeal to every minister in the Dominion of Canada to publish in his local newspaper, over his own signature, a statement declaring whether or not he believes the Bible

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to teach the doctrine of a literal lake of fire and brimstone, and ask every editor to invite the ministers of his constituency to avail themselves of his columns for their statement."

On Thursday, "Fruition Day," Brother Russell arrived in the afternoon and found the Convention at its height; and on Friday, "Harvester's Day," the enthusiasm and zeal seemed, if anything, to excel any former occasion. We trust that many of the Harvesters were encouraged to renewed activity in the Lord's service for the ensuing year, and, too, that others may have received an incentive to enter into some department of the grand Harvest work. The prevailing sentiment seemed to be expressed in the words of our Master during that other great Harvest period eighteen centuries ago--"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."--Matt. 9:37,38.

Saturday was designated "Spirit Begetting Day." At the conclusion of the morning praise and testimony service Brother Russell addressed the Convention on "Baptism-- Its Import and Its Symbol." This was followed

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by an immersion service at the lake, where 97 adults symbolized

their full consecration unto death. The Convention proper, according to program, concluded an Saturday afternoon with a Love Feast. The elders of the Toronto Class, all the Pilgrim brethren present, and Brother Russell, enjoyed the blessed privilege of a personal hand-shake with each and all in attendance. The singing of appropriate farewell hymns and the breaking of bread made the scene most impressive, never to be forgotten.

Although not on the program, on Sunday morning a large number of the friends gathered again at Horticultural Hall for a praise and testimony service and an address by one of the Canadian brethren, followed by a Berean lesson. In the afternoon the public of Toronto were addressed by Brother Russell in the Royal Alexandra Theatre on the subject, "Beyond the Grave." The meeting was well advertised, and although this is a large auditorium, and the day was extremely warm, the place was crowded to its capacity and, according to various estimates, five hundred to one thousand were turned away from the doors unable to gain admittance. The witness to the Truth, God's character and plan thus given, we trust, may serve to awaken the interest of some who heard for the first time. Closest attention was given and at the conclusion many were the warm greetings and expressions of joy, hope and pleasure respecting the "good tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people."

AT WASHINGTON CITY

While the concluding sessions were being held at Toronto, Ontario, Bible Students from thirty-six different States were entering the Capitol City of the United States by the gateway of its magnificent Union Station, previously mentioned in the columns of this journal on account of the appropriate inscriptions of Biblical texts so precious to the hearts of our readers, to be found above the archway entrances, viz., "Thou hast put all things under His feet"; "The Truth shall make you free"; "The desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose," etc.

Via special trains, special cars, electric lines and automobiles the friends continued to pour in until by Saturday evening, the day before the Convention opened, the city was fairly filled with Bible Students, who were assigned to over six hundred different homes, private boarding houses and hotels. This distribution of the visiting Students, we believe, afforded an excellent opportunity for witnessing to the Truth before many families and persons who might not otherwise have been reached. So far as we have heard all were quite comfortably located.

The opening day's sessions were all held in the Auditorium at the Glen Echo Chautauqua Grounds, and in spite of the extreme heat the place was filled to overflowing. Observing the extraordinary numbers in attendance, which more than taxed the capacity of Glen Echo Park and the electric car facilities, the committee

on arrangements concluded that it would be best to transfer the majority of the meetings to Washington City proper. Accordingly, on Monday morning the Washington Academy of Music, a fine auditorium with a seating capacity of about 2,500 persons, was secured, and at 9 o'clock on Tuesday morning the same was packed to its limit, with about 300 on the platform. This necessitated the securing of another auditorium for overflow services, which were arranged for in the beautiful new Masonic Temple, seating about 1,400 people. Besides these two places the G.A.R. Hall was engaged for Book Stall, Colporteur Department, Post Office, Information Bureau and a general meeting place for those who desired to make appointments with one another.

We believe we can see the overruling hand of Providence in having these various auditoriums, as they served to bring before the attention of the public the actual size of the gathering of Bible Students. It was a surprise to many of the Washington residents to know that there were so many people so interested in Bible study as not to give their time to sight-seeing or other attractions of that beautiful city, but on the contrary would pour into each of the auditoriums at each session, morning, afternoon and evening, notwithstanding the heated weather.

Besides the regular features, as designated on the program, a reception was held in the G.A.R. Hall on Monday evening, attended by six hundred. Another reception, in the nature of a special discourse by Brother Russell, was held on Tuesday evening in the Academy of Music, which was crowded to its capacity. On Wednesday night a most inspiring prayer meeting, attended by fully 2,500 persons, was conducted at the Academy of Music. The testimonies all evidenced remarkable growth in grace and in knowledge of the Lord and a desire to "praise Him for His goodness and wonderful works to the children of men."--Psa. 1078.

Another feature not on the regular program was the "Christian Workers' Service" on Thursday afternoon at the Glen Echo auditorium, over one thousand being present. The discourse by Brother Russell on the subject of Baptism on Friday morning was listened to with quiet interest, and at its conclusion 167 adults indicated their desire to symbolize their baptism into the Body of Christ by water immersion. After directing a few personal words and extending the right-hand of fellowship to each of the candidates, they were conducted to the bathing pool at the foot of the imposing Washington Monument, where the ceremony was performed with befitting dignity and solemnity.

In the evening Brother Russell addressed a splendid assembly of Pilgrims, elders and deacons at the Academy of Music, and all seemed greatly rejoiced, comforted and encouraged by the remarks, which were based upon the text, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which He hath purchased

with the blood of His Son."--Acts 20:28.

Harvesters' Day, with its usual enthusiasm, brought together the active Colporteur workers to learn more about the wonderful privileges of the season in which we are living. The Master's words, as recorded by St. John, seem best to express the sentiments of this blessed day at the Convention "Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work. Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh the harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal; that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together."--John 4:34-36.

At one of the early sessions of the Convention a similar resolution to that passed at the Toronto Convention, repudiating the doctrine of the Dark Ages--the eternal torture of nearly all mankind--was presented and carried unanimously by the Bible Students gathered at Glen Echo. Already we learn of considerable discussion having been agitated amongst the various clergymen in all parts of the country.

Holiness Day concluded this last, and we must again say, "the best yet" of all our Conventions. On account of the great numbers in attendance the usual custom of breaking bread and shaking hands with all the Pilgrims and

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Brother Russell was not deemed practicable, but instead the Pilgrim brethren and Brother Russell were stationed at the various points of exit of the Academy of Music and bade the friends farewell while they sang, "Blest Be the Tie That Binds," "God Be with You till We Meet Again," and other hymns of similar sentiment. As this leave-taking was in progress many eyes glistened with tears of mingled sorrow and joy while we said farewell to one another and "God bless you." Let us hope to meet again in the Great Convention on High, where we surely shall be if faithful to "Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light."

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PREACHING THE KINGDOM

--MATT. 9:35 TO 10:15.--SEPTEMBER 8.--

Text "He that receiveth you receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me."--Matt. 10:40.

WE HAVE MORE about the Kingdom in the study appointed for today. Not only did

Jesus preach the Kingdom, as our lesson says, but realizing that the Harvest work of the Jewish Age was great, He sent forth His twelve Apostles two and two--to preach what? Hark! He said, "As you go, preach, saying, The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

As the Savior cast out devils and healed the sick, not with the view of doing a restitution work and general healing, but to allow the people to hear the Message which He preached, and to illustrate the healing and restoring work which His Kingdom will do in its appointed time, so also He gave the same power to His Apostles, for the reason that He gave them the same Message of the Kingdom to proclaim.

He told them that the Harvest was plenteous and that the laborers were few, and intimated that it was their privilege to note this fact and to be all the more energetic because of the great "field" and the few to reap it; but in the meantime to "pray the Lord of the Harvest to send forth more laborers." That is to say, He wished them to feel a measure of responsibility in the work, even though He Himself was the Lord of that Harvest, and even though He was the responsible One. So the Master would have every one of us feel a deep interest in the

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Harvest work now in process, in the end of this Age, and similarly to pray to Him for more laborers, in the similar proclamation, "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

These messengers of the Kingdom were not to go to the Gentiles, but merely to "the lost sheep of the House of Israel," said our Lord. Why? Did He not love the Gentiles? Was the Lord Jesus prejudiced so that He cared only for His own nationality? No; the answer is a different one. God's Covenant promised the blessed privilege of the Messiahship to Abraham's Seed. Jesus was the Seed of Abraham in particular and the Messiah. But God had another feature in mind in connection with that Messiahship, of which Abraham did not know; namely, that He would have associated with Messiah in the Kingdom others who would share His glory, honor and immortality. This blessed privilege, which Abraham could not have fully understood, God nevertheless fulfilled to Abraham's children, as fully as though He had particularly stipulated it in the promise. God would keep the very spirit of His engagement as well as its letter. Hence, no favor could go to the Gentiles until after natural Israel had received the opportunity and used it as far as they would.

HARVESTING THEN AND NOW

Another reason why the blessing should not have been given to the Gentiles was that it was to be a harvesting

work, and not plowing, harrowing, nor sowing, which had not been done with the Gentiles, but only with the Jews. It was appropriate, therefore, that the Harvest, which belonged to the Jews, should be confined to them. What was done for the Gentiles was the seed-sowing, as represented in the parable of the Wheat and Tares.

But now we are in the Harvest of the Gospel Age. It is not the Jews that are being harvested now, nor the heathen, nor the world in general. The reaping is to be done amongst those who have received the seed-sowing --the reaping work belongs to Christendom--to whatever part of mankind the Gospel Message has been made known and wherever received and professed. This, therefore, is an intimation to us that the Lord would now have the harvesting done chiefly amongst those who profess to be His people, nominal Spiritual Israel. The Trumpet is to be blown in Zion, to awaken those who are at ease in Zion.

Jesus specially instructed the reapers of that Harvest that they should go forth fully trusting to Divine providence. They were not commissioned to beg nor to take up collections, so far as the records show. They assumed therefore that they were merely to accept what might be voluntarily tendered. If they were not hospitably received they were to consider it the Lord's will that they should go elsewhere. They were sent to search out the worthy ones; they should keep this in mind. In going from house to house, a prayer should be in their hearts, if not upon their lips, that if there were worthy ones there the peace of God, and their peace, might be there. If not, they were to take their blessing with them to bestow it upon those more worthy, as they should find them. "Whoever will not receive you and hear your words, when you depart out of that house," or out of that city, "shake off the dust from your feet."

"MORE TOLERABLE FOR SODOM"

Jesus declared that in the Day of Judgment it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah than for the city refusing to receive His representatives. What does that mean--"more tolerable"? It implies that the treatment will be tolerable in any event. But why more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah and others in the Day of Judgment?

It was Jesus' declaration that, aside from a saintly few who received His Message gladly, the remainder of the people of that time were more hardened and more blameworthy in God's sight than were the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, whose sin was of a different kind. Let us notice that feature. The sins of Sodom were certainly grievous in the sight of God and all good people. But, think of it! the sin of carelessness in respect to the glorious Message of the Kingdom is in God's sight an indication of a still meaner condition of heart, of a still

more wicked person, one of whom there is less hope of an eventual salvation.

The Sodomites mentioned by Jesus were not so illuminated as those living in His day, yet He declares, "Fire rained down from heaven and destroyed them all." (Luke 17:29.) And that took place nearly twenty-five centuries before Jesus' birth, yet He declares that those Sodomites

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had not up to that time been judged--their judgment was still future; and, "In the Day of Judgment, it will be more tolerable" for them than for the people of Bethsaida and Chorazin. Sodom sinned grievously, but they had little light, practically no knowledge of God.

THE DAY OF JUDGMENT

But why should the Sodomites have a Day of Judgment at all? Were they not judged, condemned and destroyed? Oh, yes; but then, all men, Adam and all of his race, were judged and condemned. Those Sodomites were condemned to death before they were born, as are all of Adam's children--born in sin, "shapen in iniquity." The death penalty which came upon Adam reached to them as it has reached to us. The only thing that came upon the Sodomites specially, in addition to what comes upon all mankind, was that they died violent deaths, probably accompanied by great sufferings.

In this blotting out as a Divine punishment, the Apostle tells us, they were made an example of the ultimate doom that will come upon all who reject God's grace and die the Second Death. (2 Pet. 2:6.) However, the Sodomites and all of Adam's posterity are included in the Redemption work of Jesus. Hence they are no more dead than Abraham, but merely sleeping with their fathers, as Abraham sleeps with his fathers, waiting the glorious morning, when the Redeemer of Adam and his race shall take to Himself His great power, shall establish His Kingdom, bind Satan, glorify His Church, and begin His work of blessing the world.

The world's blessing will consist of an awakening from the tomb, and there will be an opportunity to the Sodomites, as well as the people in Jesus' day, to rise out of their sinful and fallen condition, and, if they will, to return to full harmony with God and have everlasting life. In that glorious Judgment Day of a thousand years (2 Pet. 3:7,8) the Sodomites will find it easier to make progress than will those who repudiated the message of Jesus and the Apostles. However fallen and degraded the Sodomites were in some respects, their hearts and consciences were less seared than those who refused God's Message.

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"BROUGHT DOWN TO HELL"

--MATT. 11:20-30.--SEPTEMBER 15.--

Text "Come unto Me, all that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."--V. 28.

TODAY'S STUDY links well with the closing of our lesson of a week ago. We there heard Jesus say that it would be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah, in the Great Judgment Day of a thousand years, in which He will reign and give the world a full knowledge of God and a full opportunity of returning to Him--more tolerable for the Sodomites than for some who have enjoyed greater privileges and rejected them.

Today's study tells of how our Lord upbraided the city where most of His mighty works had been done, because they repented not, because they did not note the power of God in their midst and gladly receive the Message, the indications of Divine favor. Such, Jesus declared, will be less prepared to appreciate the Kingdom in the future than will some who have never known Him. Tyre and Sidon, heathen cities, would have repented with far less preaching. It is but in harmony with Divine justice, therefore, that when the Great Day of God's favor and of the Messianic Kingdom shall dawn, the people of Tyre and Sidon shall have things still more favorable than the people of Chorazin and Bethsaida.

Capernaum, above all the other cities of Palestine, was favored, because there our Lord did most of His miracles, and uttered more of His wonderful words of life than anywhere else. In this sense of the word Jesus declared that Capernaum had been exalted up to heaven --highly lifted up in point of privilege and Divine favor and blessing. This being true, it meant that in justice Capernaum's fall would be proportionate. She would fall from the heights of heavenly privilege and favor down to hell--to the grave.

And so today we find it difficult to locate that once great and beautiful city, so thoroughly has it been obliterated, brought down to the dust. Hearken further to the reason for this denouncement "If the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained unto this day; but I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the Day of Judgment than for thee."

Let us not mistake the lesson While only those who fully accept Christ and consecrate their lives to His service will receive the spirit-begetting, or any share in the Heavenly Kingdom, all the remainder of mankind who come to any knowledge of the Lord and His mercy

and blessing, and who refrain from rendering homage and from striving to walk in God's way, will proportionately disadvantage themselves in respect to the future life and the great blessings and privileges and opportunities to be brought to all mankind through Messiah's Kingdom and its reign of a thousand years.

"I THANK THEE, O FATHER"

It was in Jesus' day as it has ever since been, that not many of the great or rich or wise or learned had ears to hear the Gospel Message. The difficulty with this class is that the things of the present life so fill and satisfy that they have no hungering for the better things. They have their consolation now, they have their pleasures now; they say, Soul, take thine ease now, look out for number one, and do not feel too much interest in or concern for other people and their troubles; there are millions of poor, groaning fellow-creatures, and if you stop to sympathize with them you will mar your own pleasure.

Thus it has been that the majority of the followers of Jesus in every Age have been chiefly the poor of this world, rich in faith. There are two ways of viewing this matter. On the one hand we can rejoice with the poor and less influential who have received the Gospel Message, that doubtless their poverty, etc., were favorable factors to their advantage. And, similarly, we can sympathize with the great and rich and learned, that their earthly blessings are blinding them to the still greater opportunities of this Age, so that not many of them will be of the Kingdom class--not many of them members of the Bride company, joint-heirs with Jesus in His Messianic Kingdom.

But hearken again to the words of Jesus--how peculiarly they read "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy

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sight." How strangely those words once sounded to us, when we supposed that all who failed to receive the Message of Jesus, all who failed to make their "calling and election sure" to membership in the Bride class--all such would suffer some kind of an eternal torture!

How strange it seemed that Jesus should thank the Father that these things were hidden from some of the grandest and noblest and most brilliant of our race! We could not understand. But now, how clear! how plain! Jesus was preaching the Kingdom, and all who rejected His preaching rejected the Kingdom, and will lose it. This does not mean that they may not receive ultimately a blessing under that Kingdom, when it shall rule the world, and when all that are in their graves shall come forth to receive those very blessings which Jesus died to

procure for them--the blessings of a trial, or judgment of a thousand years, to determine whether they will be accounted worthy of everlasting life, or of everlasting death, destruction.

Now we see what Jesus intimated, namely, that there is a wisdom in God's course in this matter which is not apparent on the surface. Had those rich and great seen fully, distinctly, clearly the true situation, it would have increased their responsibility; their condemnation in not receiving and accepting Christ would have been greater. Besides, some of them, of strong character and determination, might have been impelled thereby to take a course of still more violent opposition than they did take; or, if they had known and seen the Truth, it would have made them either opposers or defenders of it. If they had defended Christ, then He would not have been crucified, and the Divine Plan would not have been carried out; or, if they had intelligently permitted His crucifixion, they would have had a tenfold condemnation. St. Peter declares that the extenuating circumstance connected with our Lord's crucifixion was ignorance. He declared, speaking by inspiration at Pentecost, "If they had known, they would not have crucified the Prince of Life."

FEW KNOW THE FATHER OR THE SON

All men are to be brought to a knowledge of God. The Scriptures declare, "The knowledge of the glory of God shall fill the whole earth." Jesus declared that no one can know the Father except as first they come to know the Son, or as the Son reveals the Father to him. Hence those who have failed to recognize Jesus as the Son of God have not yet come to the full appreciation of their privileges. Blessed are our eyes, that now they see, and our ears that now they hear, that we may know Messiah, and through Him know the Father; and Jesus may come in to us and sup with us, and we with Him.-- Rev. 320.

We are glad that all mankind in due time will be brought to a clear knowledge and full opportunity. But oh, how much greater is our blessing, besides the privilege of now being the sons of God, and joint-heirs in his glorious Kingdom! We may well rejoice with the Lord in His thanks to the Father, not only that some cannot hear, see, or understand, but also that some of us can hear, see and understand the Divine Message now, and thus share its blessing.

The special call of God through Jesus, therefore, is to the poor, the broken-hearted, the heavy laden, the unsatisfied "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls, for My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

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SCRIPTURAL USAGE OF THE TERM SALVATION

HIGHER CRITICS and Evolutionists have much trouble in their endeavor to hide from the common people the fact that their theories are diametrically opposed to all the teachings of the Scripture respecting human salvation. These latter-day philosophers do not like to be called "infidels," "unbelievers," but prefer to take their texts from the Bible in their weekly endeavor to undermine faith. If Evolution theories were true, the word "salvation" would be wholly inappropriate. If mankind have been climbing upward for six thousand years, out of monkeyhood into perfect manhood, and if they are gradually to become angels by processes of evolution, then the word "salvation" is altogether out of place when applied to them. They should rather be let alone in their glorious upward progress. They would need no Savior, or Redeemer; for according to this theory, mankind never was lost--never fell from perfection.

But the Bible proposition is the very reverse of the Evolution theory. The Scripture teaches that man was created perfect and holy, in the moral likeness of His Maker. It declares that when on trial to determine whether or not his life and favors might be continued to him everlastingly, Adam sinned and was sentenced to death. It tells that through Jesus, God has made a provision for the recovery of mankind out of the sin and death condition into which he fell; that the work of Jesus primarily is that of the satisfaction of Justice; that He died, the Just for the unjust, and that sinners are to be reconciled to God through the death of His Son. The Bible teaches that this redemptive process, this salvation of mankind from sin and death, has already begun in that Christ has already given His life a Ransom-price, and has been exalted and declared to be the Savior, the Life-giver of the world.

But the world has not yet been saved. It lies in the Wicked One. Satan is still the "Prince of this world." Sin and death reign. The world has only the Divine promise which was given to Abraham, but of which the majority of mankind do not even know. That promise, however, is sure--that eventually all the families of the earth shall be blessed by Messiah; and that to effect this salvation Messiah in due time will set up a glorious reign of righteousness, the Kingdom of God under the whole heavens. It shall rule; it shall conquer; it shall destroy sin, death and everything opposed to Divine righteousness and to the best interests of mankind. Thus eventually the knowledge of the Lord shall be made to fill the whole earth (Isa. 119), and every knee shall bow and every tongue confess the Lord. (Isa. 45:23.) Thus shall come

the glorious opportunity for salvation through the knowledge of the Lord, and of His will--Jer. 3134.

Those who desire to do God's will shall be assisted by the Redeemer, thus to cultivate a righteous character. That assistance will include an uplifting out of, or saving from, sin and death and all the terrible associations of mental, moral and physical imperfection. That salvation will be to life, health and strength--mental, moral and physical. The earth also shall be saved--recovered from the Divine sentence, or "curse." No longer will thorns and thistles cause sweat of face; but the earth shall yield her increase and be styled, "The garden of the Lord." (Zech. 812; Isa. 513.) The earth is God's footstool, which He will make glorious.--Isa. 6013.

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But that salvation of man and of his earthly home and future dominion is preceded by another phase, or kind, of salvation. Before dealing with the world, God elects, calls, draws, instructs a saintly class. These by faith may now speak of themselves as saved, although their salvation will not really be accomplished until they share in the First Resurrection. Now they reckon themselves as passed from death unto life, as New Creatures, brethren of Christ, children of God. Into all this glorious condition the saintly ones will enter with their resurrection change, experiencing a transfer from human nature and conditions to spirit (heavenly) nature and conditions.

Thus, eventually, there will be two classes of saved ones--two classes saved out of the sin and death conditions which now prevail

(1) The Church changed from earthly to divine nature.--I Cor. 1551-54.

(2) The willing and obedient of the world, who, during the thousand years of Messiah's glorious reign, will be gradually changed, not to a different nature, but from the imperfection to the perfection of human nature.--Acts 319-21.

Meantime all the wilfully wicked, disobedient or rebellious will be utterly destroyed in the "Second Death," "as natural brute beasts."--2 Pet. 212.

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SOME INTERESTING QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS RE THE REDEEMER

Question (1).--At what period in Jesus' life was He a perfect man?

Answer.--He was always perfect, but did not become the perfect man until the 30th year of His life. In the very beginning, "the beginning of the creation of God"

(Rev. 314), He was sinless, perfect on the spirit plane-- next to the Heavenly Father. When He humbled Himself, in harmony with the Divine Plan and in order that He might be man's Redeemer and Restorer, He still maintained His perfection, His sinlessness. When born of the virgin, He was still "Holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners." He was the perfect babe. As He grew to manhood, His perfection was maintained-- He was the perfect boy, the perfect youth and finally the perfect man. Thus we read, "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man."

Question (2).--Was Jesus, at the time of attaining the perfection of manhood, possessed of everlasting life, or was it necessary for Him to be placed on trial as a perfect man before He would be accounted worthy of everlasting life?

Answer.--According to the Divine Law, under which Jesus was born into the world, His perfection proved His worthiness of everlasting life, just as Adam's perfection meant everlasting life to him. But as Adam, who when created was in covenant relationship with God, by disobedience, by breaking the Covenant, lost the right to life which was His by that Divine Covenant, so Jesus, as a perfect man, was in covenant-relationship with God, and as a human being could have forfeited His right to life only by sin or, otherwise, have disposed of it by sacrifice --the latter of which He did.

Question (3).--Was Jesus at the age of thirty years qualified to give Himself a Ransom-price for Adam and His race, or was it necessary that first He should have a personal trial, or testing, in respect to His loyalty to God before His sacrifice could be accepted as the Ransom-price for Adam and his race?

Answer.--Jesus was at thirty years of age qualified and competent to present His body a "living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God," as man's Ransom-price--and this He did. God accepted the offering and sacrifice and signified His acceptance of it by the anointing of the Holy Spirit, by which He begat Jesus again, this time to the divine nature as a reward for the obedient sacrifice of that which He had consecrated unto death.

Nevertheless, the necessity for a testing of One who would become man's substitute was not overlooked in the Divine arrangement. Two tests, or trials, proceeded at the same time, and both were necessary. As a man He must prove loyal to the principles of righteousness represented in the Divine Law, otherwise He could not be a suitable substitute or Ransomer for Adam and his family. On His own account, to prove Himself worthy of the divine nature, Jesus needed to have trials as a New Creature. His begetting of the Holy Spirit could reach the fruition of the divine nature only by His faithfully carrying out His covenant of sacrifice. Hence, if He had failed to perform the sacrifice as He covenanted, He would have failed entirely, and would not have received the great reward of Divine glory, honor and immortality

which came to Him in His resurrection.

As St. Paul declares, "Wherefore, God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name." (Phil. 29.) The entire test of our Lord Jesus was along the lines of His faithfully sacrificing Himself, in the doing of the Father's will--in submitting to all things "written in the Book"--in the prophecies and in the types of the Law. Had He failed to keep His covenant of sacrifice, not only would He have failed to gain the exaltation to the divine nature, but He would have lost everything--even life itself.

But the keeping of His covenant of sacrifice, obligatory upon our Lord as a New Creature, meant also that He kept the Law, obligatory upon Him as a human being because the things required of Him under His covenant were in harmony with the Law. To keep His covenant meant that He should keep the Law, and much more than that--to sacrifice His rights and interests which the Law did not demand should be sacrificed.

Question (4).--If Jesus had kept the Law blamelessly, yet had failed in some feature of His covenant of sacrifice, what would have been the status of human redemption? Would the Ransom-price of humanity have been paid by Jesus' keeping the Law perfectly, even though He had failed in obedience to His covenant of sacrifice, and thus failed to attain to glory, honor and immortality--the divine plane? If not, why not?

Answer.--Under the circumstances mentioned in the above question, the entire matter of redemption would have failed, so far as Jesus was concerned. His death would not have ransomed man from the death penalty. Indeed, the question pre-supposes an entirely wrong view of the Ransom. Jesus' death was a Ransom-sacrifice. That is to say it was a sacrificial death intended to effect the ransom of Adam and all lost through his disobedience. But a Ransom-sacrifice is one thing, and the payment of the Ransom-price is quite another thing. For instance Jesus did His work perfectly; it had the Divine approval; the Ransom-price was laid down and was satisfactory to the Father, and Jesus has been rewarded for His loyalty and obedience manifested in that Ransom-sacrifice; but the value of that sacrifice, quite sufficient to be the off-set, or satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world, has not yet been applied.

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The merit of that sacrifice is in the hands of Divine Justice, subject to application for the sins of the whole world as soon as God's time shall have arrived. But that time has not yet quite arrived, and the world is still not redeemed, even in a judicial sense. Hence we read, "The whole world lieth in wickedness" and are all "children of wrath." (I John 5:19; Eph. 2:3.) If the Ransom-price had been applied and accepted, the world would not lie in the hands of the Wicked One, and would no longer

be "children of wrath."

Before the merit of Jesus' sacrifice can be applied as a Ransom-price for the world's sins--to secure the world's release from Divine condemnation, and the turning over of the world to Jesus and the establishment of His Kingdom for its blessing--before all these things, or any of them, can take place, another matter must, according to the Divine Program, be attended to. That other matter is the calling and acceptance and begetting to the divine nature of an elect "Church of the First-Borns, which are written in Heaven." (Heb. 1223.) This is the work which has been in progress for nearly nineteen centuries. As soon as it shall have been completed the glorious Redeemer with His exalted Bride class will inaugurate His glorious reign of a thousand years, by binding Satan and ushering in the New Dispensation, for which the whole groaning creation has so long waited.-- Rom. 8:22, 19.

Thus it will be seen that our Lord's testing, which began at Jordan at the time of His consecration and which ended at Calvary, was two-fold, and the two trials progressed simultaneously, and to have failed in either particular would have lost all. As a man from the human standpoint, born under the Law, He was obligated to keep the Law in every particular. To have failed would have been death. As a New Creature, who had entered into a covenant of sacrifice, our Lord was obligated to sacrifice willingly and obediently, His life, His rights, everything that He possessed, in harmony with the overrulings of Divine providence. "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" (John 18:11.) To have failed of the full, complete sacrifice would have cost Him everything, and He would have accomplished nothing by all of His previous experiences and loyalty.

Our Lord's faithfulness in sacrificing during the three and a half years of His ministry added nothing whatever to the perfection which He had at Jordan. He was perfect and an acceptable sacrifice to begin with, and He merely maintained that perfection and that acceptance with the Father "faithful unto death." Wherefore He has attained His present exaltation and is in readiness to be the world's merciful and faithful High Priest, and He has also the merit of His sacrifice in the hands of Justice ready at the appropriate time in the end of this Age to be applied for the cancelation of the sins of the whole world.

The Church shares in the benefits of our Lord's death in a different way from that of the world. She has her Redeemer's merit imputed to her by (because of) faith--to cover the weaknesses and blemishes of her flesh, so that her flesh may be presented holy and acceptable to the Father by the Redeemer, who imputes the merit of His sacrifice to it and makes it acceptable as a part of His own sacrifice. "For if we suffer [with Him] we shall also reign with Him"; "If so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together"; "Present your

bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, your reasonable service"; "Fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ." (2 Tim. 2:12; Rom. 8:17; 12:1; Col. 3:12.) These are some of the invitations offered to the Church who are now qualifying to be members of the Royal Priesthood in the great work of blessing and uplifting mankind as God has foreordained and promised.

AN INTERPOLATED TEXT

Question.--Kindly explain Rev. 20:5 "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished."

Answer.--Scholars are agreed that this text is an interpolation. We must remember, however, that it is one thing to be legally, or officially dead, and another thing to be actually dead. But as Jesus said to some, He recognized as alive only those who accepted Him. Those who had not the Son had not life in any sense or degree; those who have the Son, have the beginning of life reckoned to them. The world, however, during the thousand years will have the opportunity, not only of being awakened, but of having fulness of life. If, therefore, after they are awakened, they will go on and render obedience to the laws of the Kingdom, they will be lifted up, up, up out of death to perfection and life.

BIBLE QUESTIONS A MINISTER'S GREATEST TROUBLES

Question.--If the Bible has been misinterpreted on many vital points, how are we to understand the Bible, if we are not educated enough to know these things?

Answer.--Ministers are less able to interpret the Bible than any other class of people in the world. The Theological Seminaries do not teach Bible interpretation, but instruct the student how to defend the various creeds, and how to choke off investigation, and to make the investigator feel foolish. Nothing troubles a minister more than Bible questions.

Our advice to those who want to know the Truth is to search the Scriptures and use Concordances and every Bible help that will assist them in a proper and rational understanding of the Scriptures. But be sure that the subject is approached honestly and prayerfully, with a desire to know the Truth and without sectarian prejudices. Remember the words of the Master, "Sanctify them through Thy Truth; Thy Word is Truth."

THE GREAT TEACHER EXPOSED SADDUCEES' IGNORANCE

Question.--"Whose wife shall she be in the resurrection," who had several husbands?

Answer.--The Sadducees, the agnostics who did not believe in the resurrection, tried to entrap the great Teacher by asking one of their stock questions. Seven different brothers in turn married the same woman and all died before she did. "To which of them shall she be wife in the resurrection?" They did not ask, "To which of these will she be wife in heaven or purgatory or eternal torture?" for neither Jesus nor the Jews held any such teaching. The Pharisees and Jesus taught the resurrection of the dead; and it was against this teaching that the Sadducees aimed their sarcastic question.

Note the majesty of the Master's answer "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, neither the power of God!" (Matt. 22:23-33.) You do not understand the Scripture teaching respecting such questions, and you ignore in your question the great Divine power which, at the resurrection time, will be exercised to straighten out all the difficulties of the situation. Then the great Teacher proceeded to inform them that such as would (gradually) attain to the resurrection--such as would get a complete raising up out of sin and death, would "neither marry nor be given in marriage," but would be sexless, as are the angels. Thus the supposedly unanswerable question of the Sadducees fell flat, and their ignorance was exposed.

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BETHEL HYMNS FOR SEPTEMBER

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 September follow (1) 299; (2) 313; (3) 53; (4) 125; (5) 7; (6) 191; (7) 170; (8) 117; (9) 145; (10) 130; (11) 43; (12) 154; (13) 167; (14) 16; (15) 127; (16) 12; (17) 238; (18) 101; (19) 54; (20) 72; (21) 78; (22) 8; (23) 37; (24) 307; (25) 209; (26) 96; (27) 293; (28) 279; (29) Vow; (30) 296.

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THE MARK OF CRYSTALLIZATION OF CHARACTER

"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things that are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."--Phil. 3:13,14.

IN THE EPISTLE to the Philippians, St. Paul expresses his full appreciation of his opportunity to gain a prize, something worthy of laying hold upon, of grasping fully, of getting possession of. What was that for which the great Apostle was striving and which he had not yet attained? He spoke of this thing as a prize, which he was pressing along to win.

We may view "the mark for the prize of the high calling" from two standpoints, both of which are correct. From one standpoint, this mark is that of heart-likeness to God's dear Son, of perfection of intention, of love for righteousness, for God, for the brethren of Christ, and for the world, even our enemies. This degree of character-development should be attained as early as possible in our Christian experience, and should be such that, were we to die at any time after its attainment, God would count us worthy of a share in the First Resurrection.

From the other standpoint, this "mark for the prize of the high calling" is that of crystallization of character in the likeness of our Lord. After having attained a heart-likeness to Christ, we must hold it fast, and see that in all the testings which the Lord permits to come upon us, we are counted by Him as overcomers, not in our own strength, but in that of our Redeemer. This

mark of crystallized character is not attained so early in our Christian experience as is the mark of character-development. But by fighting the good fight until the end of our course, we crystallize our characters in love for the principles of righteousness, for God, for the brethren and even for our enemies. If thus faithful, we shall win the prize of glory, honor and immortality.

PERFECTION, NOT CONSECRATION, THE MARK

There is no reason to think that our consecration is the mark; for our testing, our proving comes after our consecration, and not before it. No one would be at the mark merely because he is consecrated, but because he had endured the testing, thus proving that his consecration was from the heart and that he was sincere in the devotion of his every power to the service of God. We cannot suppose that the mark is reached the next moment after consecration. Some degree of character-development must be possessed; there must be some mark of character, in order that God may count that person worthy of everlasting life.

God's standard of character is perfection, which must be manifested by loyalty and obedience under whatever tests He permits to come to individuals upon any plane of life. No one will get the prize of everlasting life unless he successfully passes those tests. We realize that the Church has been under trial throughout the Gospel Age, as to her worthiness to obtain "glory, honor and immortality"--joint-heirship with her Lord.--Rom. 8:17.

From the Scriptures we learn that throughout the Messianic Age the world will be tried by The Christ, and that even after passing that test they will not receive the reward of everlasting life until God shall have proved them at the end of Christ's reign by loosing Satan for a "little season." (I Cor. 15:24; Rev. 20:7-10.) The fact that the world is thus to be tried by both The Christ and God confirms the thought that God has a standard, or mark, of character to be attained by all those who are loyal and obedient to Him--on any plane of existence.

While this mark of character to be attained by the world during Messiah's reign is not the one to which St. Paul refers in our text, nevertheless there is such a character-mark to be reached by mankind. Those who then attain the mark will have everlasting life on the human plane. But those who attain the mark to which the Apostle refers will be given eternal life on the divine plane.

THE MARK OF CHARACTER-CRYSTALLIZATION

The Apostle was a noble example of one who had reached the mark. So far as we know, he was ready to die at any time; hence it was not this mark of character-development to which he had not attained. He had not

yet attained to the prize itself, and could not do so until his change should come. He was constantly pressing along, trusting that God would give him all the things that are in reservation for "them that love him." (1 Cor. 29.) We could not think the Apostle to mean that he would reach this mark of character-development just at the moment before death. This would be an absurdity of thought.

Our Lord Jesus was at the mark of perfect character at the time of His consecration; and He maintained Himself at the mark. As a sacrifice He would have

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been acceptable at any time. It was His part to consecrate His life and not to hold it back. It was the Father's part so to arrange matters that the Jews might not take our Lord until the Father's hour for Him had come. In everything that He did He submitted Himself to the Father's will. Our Lord spoke of His "cup" as the one which the Father had prepared for Him.--John 18:11.

If our Lord had determined for Himself the time and the manner of His death, then He was pouring the cup. If the Jews had determined these points, then they were pouring the cup. But neither our Lord nor the Jews did so, for both time and manner were foretold by the Prophets. Our Lord took the cup and accepted it as the Father's providence for Him. If the Father's providence had led to His death a year sooner or two years sooner, if the Father's will had been expressed in our Lord's crucifixion at an earlier time, even then it would have been well with Him. But He "learned obedience by the things which He suffered."--Heb. 5:8; 2:10.

At Jordan our Lord was shown to be perfect and to have made a perfect consecration, both by the descent of the Holy Spirit and by the voice of Jehovah. (Matt. 3:16, 17.) He had also a perfect body--though it was earthly--in which the New Creature operated. But His obedience must be tested--His loyalty even unto death. Whatever the degree of testing to which our Lord might have been subjected, it was just the right amount, according to the Father's wisdom. Our Lord would have been just as much an overcomer had He died at any time after His consecration. But if He had died sooner than He did, it would merely have proved that the Father did not require as much evidence of our Lord's faithfulness and loyalty as He did require.

OUR LORD AN OVERCOMER AT CONSECRATION

Here some one may ask, "Is it proper to say that our Lord was an overcomer as a New Creature at the time when He made His consecration?"

Our answer is, Yes. An overcomer is a victor. The word does not imply that a man has completed the victory, however; for we sometimes say, He will lead them

from victory to victory. So with our Lord. He continued faithful as an overcomer down unto death; but He was not counted as an overcomer unto death. Between the Father and our Lord as a human being there was no Mediator, and as a New Creature there was neither Robe to cover nor Advocate to represent in case of any deviation from the will of God; and the slightest deflection therefrom would have meant the Second Death.

The Scriptures give us two pictures of our Lord as an overcomer at His consecration, where He gained the first great victory over His flesh. The first of these pictures (Lev. 1611), the killing of the bullock on the Day of Atonement, represents the death of our Lord's humanity at the moment when He consecrated Himself at Jordan. There He gained a victory and continued victorious until the end of His course.

The second picture is found in Rev. 52-7. Here our Lord is represented by a newly slain lamb. He was not this newly slain lamb at His death when He had finished His course, but at His consecration, when He began His course. The proclamation which the Revelator heard was, "Who is worthy to open the Book, and to loose the seals thereof?" We read that John wept much. "And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the Book and to loose the seven seals thereof...And He came and took the Book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the Throne." Our Lord alone was worthy of the honor of receiving the Divine Plan into His care. We also read that John looked and saw the newly slain Lamb open the Book.-- Rev. 6.

After our Lord had entered upon His consecration He was the newly slain Lamb. Then the Father gave into His hand the scroll of the great Divine Plan of the Ages--the scroll written on both inside and outside. The outside He was already able to read. But the inside, which contained information on spiritual things, remained sealed.

As soon as our Lord came up out of the water after His baptism, He was begotten of the Holy Spirit and began to understand spiritual things. "The heavens [higher things] were opened unto Him." The time when He began to be considered the slain Lamb, the time when the scroll was delivered to Him, was the time of His consecration.

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SUBMISSION THE FIRST REQUISITE--PATIENT ENDURANCE THE SECOND

A good illustration of the process of character-development and crystallization is afforded by the work of a potter. First, he must select the right kind of clay, for some clays would produce very coarse ware, others would

crack or warp in the drying, and still others would not stand the intense heat. Having selected the proper clay the potter subjects it to very many processes of grinding, mixing and wetting until it comes from the mill a soft, plastic mass of the consistency of tough dough, ready for the potter's use. Then comes the moulding into the article desired. The dish is formed, or shaped, with care and dried. Next it is placed in the kiln and fired with an intense heat for two or three days and nights. Then it requires a long time to cool before it can be removed from the kiln. But even then it is only a porous, leaky vessel, altogether unfit for use until it has been dipped into a liquid glaze, or slip, which it readily absorbs.

Again it is subjected to the heat of the glaze kiln, which not only melts the glaze, but converts it into a perfectly transparent glaze all over the surface, making the article beautifully smooth and comely. But if the vessel is of very choice porcelain, to be made still more attractive to the eye by decorations, the ornamentation and gilding must be done at this stage, and the vessel must again be placed in the kiln for a third firing. Some vessels which have stood all the other tests, fail at this point and are cast into the waste heap. But if the vessel passes successfully the last test, it is ready for the service for which it was designed.

So in our Lord's case. Not only was He perfect as a man, but His own will was in complete subjection to the Father's will. When trials came, there was no swerving, no twisting, no bending. He was of the proper material. His heart (applying this word to the mind) was of the proper character. So must it be with us. Those who will be accepted and found worthy of the great reward will be of His character-likeness in this respect; they will be loyal to God's will. Not only will they endeavor both to ascertain and to do the Father's will, but they will be in heart submission to that will in every degree. The "cup" they will be required to drink is the same that our Lord drank--and "all of it!"

To follow in His steps, we must first reach this mark of character-development; and having done all, we must stand there. It is well to repeat the thought that it will not do for us to think that one reaches the mark of proper character-development just at the moment of

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death. Character should be attained as soon as possible. But having reached this character-development called the "mark," it is for us to stand faithful, and not be thrust away from it by the opposition of the world, the flesh and the Devil. All such opposition must be endured before we can win the prize. Some of the noblest characters, who have been in an acceptable condition, and used of the Lord, did not get to the mark until they had passed through certain severe experiences.

"WE HAVE THE MIND OF CHRIST"

The thought of the Apostle seems to be, Here is a certain line of conduct and character-development which God has marked out; and it is the same for all who are in the race. The life of Christ is the rule. If we would attain the mark, obtain the prize, we must follow this line, or rule, or mark.

The Apostle Paul had but one mind or will. "This one thing I do," he said. He was not a double-minded man, at one time thinking he would like to serve the Lord, at another time himself, and then again the Adversary, etc. He had accepted the Divine proposition to give all his talents to the service of the Lord. He had before his mind the great promise that God had made. For him there was but one thing in life.

The Scriptures tell us that during the Gospel Age God has sent out a special call, or invitation, and that those who have accepted that call have "exceeding great and precious promises" of wonderful things to look forward to. All who accept the call should practically forget all the trifling things of life in order to attain these promises. There is but one way to win the prize--by manifesting to God faithfulness, obedience and loyalty. Character, not talent, makes us acceptable. God could give any one intellectual powers as good as ours or better. He will not grant any one a place in the Kingdom on account of physical strength or endurance. He will not admit any one to the Kingdom because of worldly prosperity or honor of men, or because of riches.

CONDITIONS REQUIRED IN THE RACE

What then is God seeking? To what has He called us? The Apostle Peter says that God has "called us to glory and virtue." (2 Peter 13.) Certain conditions God requires of those who will run in the race. He requires that none be proud, but that they possess humility. And He will have no one in the Kingdom of His Elect who is weak, vacillating, so far as his mind is concerned. He may not have a strong intellect; but he must manifest to God that he has a strong will and firm determination, and that he has cut off everything in life in order to win the prize. He must also demonstrate his loyalty to God. He must not merely seek glory, but he must recognize and appreciate his responsibilities to God.

Loyalty is one of the great tests of character--loyalty to God, to His Word, loyalty to principle. Whatever follows, the Christian must be submissive to God, trustful and faithful. To such alone could we expect God to give the great blessings promised to overcomers. Hence we see that the Apostle was quite right in giving up all that he might serve God, that he might please the Father, and thus attain to this glorious reward of joint-heirship with His Son.

"EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVETH"

Not necessarily all who make a consecration, but all whose consecration God accepts, all whom He begets of His Holy Spirit to become New Creatures, will have the opportunity of reaching this mark of crystallization of character before they die. These will have full testing-- "Every son whom He receiveth." (Heb. 126.) This promise guarantees that they shall have trials and difficulties to develop them in the proper character-likeness of our Lord; and that none of their experiences will be cut short of this attainment. God will see to it that they have the full opportunity to develop character-likeness to Christ. Those who turn to sin wilfully, deliberately, will fall into the Second Death. Others may fall from the priestly class into the Great Company. But even these must have sufficient time to manifest their loyalty to God.

At the time of His consecration, our Lord was at the mark by virtue of His perfection. We are not at the mark at the time of our consecration; for we are imperfect. But we wish to do the Lord's will; and we have given ourselves to ascertain what that will is in order that we may render intelligent obedience thereto. In our Lord's case He had no such imperfection to overcome as we have. At the time of His consecration He loved His neighbor as Himself, and He loved God with all His heart.

When we consecrate ourselves, we agree to do this; but we do not know what it means; just as St. Peter "wist not" what he said at the time of the transfiguration in the Mount "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If Thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." (Matt. 174.) Neither did the two Apostles know what they were asking when they requested Jesus that they might sit the one on His right and the other on His left hand in the Kingdom. Our Lord said to them, "Ye know not what ye ask."--Matt. 2022.

Since at the time of our consecration we do not fully understand what we do, therefore we do a great deal of running to reach the mark. This our Lord had no need to do; for He was perfect. At consecration He was at the mark of perfect character, so that had He died at any subsequent time He would have received the reward of the Father, who said, "This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. 317.) At His baptism our Lord was at that mark of character which merited the promised reward of the Father, and to which we must attain before we can secure everlasting life, either on the plane of glory or otherwise.

Stephen, who was martyred very soon after Pentecost, must have lived habitually near to the Lord; for he, like Nathaniel, was an "Israelite indeed" in whom was no guile. The fact that the Truth of God came to such as

these men means that so far as their heart attitude was concerned they had been very near to the Lord under the Law as their schoolmaster (Greek, pedagogue,) so that when brought to Christ they could quickly learn of Him. So it appears to be with us now. The differences in our natural education in right and wrong, in truth and error, are such that we cannot tell just how long it will take for each to attain to the character-likeness of our Lord and thus to prove worthy of eternal life.

"PUT YE ON THE LORD CHRIST"

We have suggested that the Lord's people, at the time of their consecration and begetting of the Holy Spirit, are not ready for the Kingdom, but require development, which time alone can accomplish. Notwithstanding this suggestion, is there not a sense in which God's people are regarded perfect at the time of their consecration--at the moment of their acceptance? Our answer is, Yes; they are counted so, but are not so actually. The flesh is reckoned perfect so that God can accept their offering.

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But at this time the New Creature is merely a babe in Christ and has not yet attained to the stature of manhood. Therefore, the necessity exists for entering the School of Christ and for "putting on Christ," as the Apostle expresses it. We begin to put on Christ after consecration, and after our begetting of the Holy Spirit. The babe grows into a child, and the child into a man. (Eph. 4:14,13.) The work of growing up into Christ is necessary before the child of God would be fit for the Kingdom. The difference between a babe in Christ and one fit for the Kingdom is that the latter has been tried and tested and has proved himself to be an overcomer.

When our Lord Jesus was at Jordan He was an overcomer. (Heb. 10:9.) He was perfect and had correspondingly a larger appreciation of what He did than we have respecting our course when we consecrate. But He tells us, "Fear not, little flock," "be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."--Luke 12:32; John 16:33.

Yet even in our Lord's case, while He was an overcomer at the moment of His consecration, He really did not win the prize of the divine nature until the end of His race-course, until there had been demonstrated a sufficiency of worthiness for that high exaltation; and we know that the Father continued tests of obedience even unto the death on the cross. It was not until after this that our Lord was fully accepted as an overcomer, to whom it was granted to sit with the Father in His Throne.

THE GREAT TEST IS TO REMAIN AT THE MARK

The possession of perfection necessarily means that one is at the mark, as in the case of Adam. The test is, not whether one can reach the mark, but whether one will remain at the mark--"having done all, to stand." (Eph. 6:13.) When we reach the mark of character which God approves in every sense of the word, let us continue there. When our Lord came into the world He was perfect, loyal, at the mark--God's standard, perfection. Whether or not He would be moved away from the mark by the contradiction of sinners against Himself, was to be proved. But none of these tests led Him to abandon His determination to continue at the mark. So it should be with us--to the best of our ability.

The Spirit of God is the same whether manifested in Himself or in angels or in men or in New Creatures. We do not find the Spirit of God manifest in the majority of men, because of sin. We would find the Spirit of God manifest in angels. We should find the Spirit of God very manifest in the saints, who should carry with them into the new relationship all that they have naturally of the character-likeness to the Lord. The graces of spirit exhibited in the Lord's people are properly to be considered fruits of the Holy Spirit; for their possessors have become New Creatures, have entered into the race for the prize of the high calling. Some saints might be able by reason of natural qualities to make more rapid progress than would others in developing and perfecting these fruits and graces of the Spirit.

"RESPECT UNTO THE RECOMPENSE OF THE REWARD"

Sometimes the question arises, Should not the Lord's people preferably strive for character-likeness to Christ, with no particular desire as to what the Lord's reward will be? We answer, No. We should have "respect unto the recompense of the reward." In order to have the proper respect for the reward which God promises, it is necessary that we hold it up before us continually, and that we never lose sight of the prize.

Our Lord Jesus does not deprecate this looking at the prize. Listen to His words "Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine Own Self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." (John 17:5.) Thus He prayed to the Father for the reward which the manifestation of His obedience would bring. So it should be with us; not that we have a right to insist that our efforts be rewarded, but that we should think of the blessing which God has promised those who love Him, as "exceeding great and precious." Many in the nominal church do not see these things.

Let us keep the goal distinctly before our eyes. Doubtless the Lord meant the knowledge of the prize to serve as a stimulus for our upbuilding and strengthening. We look for "glory, honor and immortality"; and it is right for us to seek for them. Any other attitude would be false modesty. If the thought that it is presumption

for us to aspire to the high calling comes before our minds, let us remember that our Lord wants us to be so inspired by the "great and precious promises" that we will work for these things which He has set before us, and that it would be presumption for us to refuse what He offers to us.

FREE MORAL AGENCY A FACTOR IN CHARACTER-DEVELOPMENT

Character may be viewed from two different standpoints. When Adam was created, he was a man of great and good character--"crowned with glory and honor." He was perfect, the image of God. There is a difference, however, between a character thus given, and one that is developed and tested by the exercise of free will. Our Heavenly Father desires that His intelligent creatures exercise their wills. Therefore instead of giving Adam a part of His own character-likeness and eliminating that which we call moral choice, He chose to give Adam His character-likeness, including free moral agency. "So God created man in His own image." God foreknew the fall of man and all the circumstances connected with it. He knew that the permission of evil for a time would ultimately result in great blessings for all. He knew that the time would come when every creature in heaven and in earth would be obedient to Him, not only because there was no opportunity of doing otherwise, but from choice.

Those who are appreciative of God's character should desire to have this character-likeness. Only such will merit everlasting life amongst either angels or men. God is testing along these lines the worthiness of those who are on trial for life eternal. Hence, "The Father seeketh such to worship Him" as "worship Him in spirit and in truth"--intelligently.--John 4:23,24.

WE MUST "LOVE RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HATE INIQUITY"

In the formation of character, we see that the lessons which we learn in the School of Christ are very helpful to us. Originally, man was made in the image of God. Yet in us the image is blurred, indistinct. Those who learn the lessons now and appreciate them to the full will be given no further trial. Those who have not had a sufficiency of opportunity will have a full trial in the Age to come. Under the discipline, the chastenings and the rewards of that time, they will learn how much better is righteousness than sin, Truth than error. They will develop in the character-likeness of God, which Adam lost, and will see the exceeding sinfulness of sin. They will learn both to will and to do righteousness. All who fail to learn this lesson will be judged unworthy of eternal life.

We see that the angels willed of themselves whether

they would be obedient, or be disobedient and enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. All the holy angels, who are now in favor with God, are such as have had their testing and have come off victors. Their example will prove more and more a lesson to us as we come to understand it. As a result of this knowledge, we see in God the noblest sentiment that could actuate our Creator and Father in dealing with His creatures; and we are glad that we have chosen to do His will concerning us.

Finally it is important that we should keep in mind the fact that since true love on our part will manifest itself in obedience, then disobedience is an evidence of a loss of love, as viewed from the Lord's standpoint, a deflection from loyalty, a failure to endure the tests. We must agree that the Lord's standpoint of judgment is a reasonable one. Should one ask, How would it be if we should disobey through ignorance? The answer is, that the Lord has made provision against our ignorance first, He has given us the Word of Truth, "that the man of God may be perfect [perfectly informed], thoroughly furnished unto all good works"; and second, He has promised to supply such helps to the spirit of holiness and the understanding of His Word, as will enable us to do what is pleasing in His sight.--2 Tim. 3:17; John 16:13,14.

Love is the crown of all graces, "the fulfilling of the Law." Without a fervent, glowing love, it will be impossible to render obedience or to stand the tests for development and crystallization of character arranged for by Divine Love. Our Lord tells us that He was beloved of the Father; and the Father Himself declared, "This is My beloved Son." We can readily see why our Lord Jesus was greatly beloved, for He expressed and fully manifested the Father's love. But it astounds us to know that this same love is exercised by the Father toward us! "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" "The Father Himself loveth you!"--1 John 3:1; John 16:27.

LOVING OBEDIENCE BRINGS JOY AND PEACE

Let us, dearly beloved, be more than ever careful respecting the Word of the Lord; let us not by negligence give evidence of a decay of love. Our Lord points out that His continuance in the Father's love, as the well-beloved Son, with all which this implies, was because of His obedience to the Father's will; and that following the same line, He must require that we should be obedient to Him if we would abide in His love and share His Throne and glory.--John 15:10.

Our Lord's instructions and commandments are not intended to terrify us, nor to deprive us of happiness. On the contrary, "These things have I spoken unto you that My joy may be in you, and that your joy might be

filled full." (John 15:11.) Those who give surest evidence of living nearest the Lord well know that obedience to the Lord's words, together with the privilege thus obtained of abiding in Him and His love, is the greatest joy, a joy which wholly outweighs all the trifling pleasures which the world has to offer. It is the joy and peace which "passeth all understanding," which rules in the heart, and which brings with it the promise, the assurance, "not only of the life which now is, but also of that which is to come."--I Tim. 4:8.

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THE WORLD CALLED TO REPENTANCE

"God now commandeth men everywhere to repent because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained."--Acts 17:30,31.

WHEN GOD sentenced Father Adam to death He very properly said nothing about repentance, for He offered Adam no hope of a future life. If, then, no hope of a future life was known to Adam or revealed to him, why should God deal with him at all? Adam was sentenced to death, to destruction. There is no basis upon which to command a man to repent unless something is offered him as a reward for repentance.

God had put upon Adam the sentence of death, which could be removed only by the payment of a ransom-price. God fully intended that some day all mankind should have an opportunity of coming into harmony with Him and of having another trial, or judgment, for life; but it was not His due time to explain His program. Therefore, Adam lived and died without any command whatever to repent. And so did his children.

The first intimation of what God might do was given by the Prophet Enoch. But the revelation made by Enoch was not a sufficient basis for offering hope to mankind nor for telling them to repent.--Jude 14,15.

A SUGGESTION OF HOPE FOR THE WORLD

So years passed by until the time of Abraham. Then God told Abraham that He would reveal a secret to him, because Abraham was His friend. That secret was not a message to be preached, but to be believed by himself and by those who would be heirs of that promise, which was not yet applicable to any outside of Abraham's descendants. The secret was, "In thee and in thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 28:14.) I intend to bless the world, Abraham. If you are obedient to My instructions, your Seed will get the blessing and

transmit it to the world in general. It was only by implication, therefore, that Abraham had any suggestion that a life of repentance would be rewarded.

In due time God called the children of Israel and dealt with them through Moses. Practically He said, "Do you wish to be My people? If so, come now, enter into a covenant with Me; I will be your God and you shall be My people."--Lev. 26:12.

Israel was not commanded to repent, nor were any of the rest of the world. It was an invitation, not a command. God was ready to make a covenant with them.

That covenant was that they were to obey the Law, and that by their obedience to the Ten Commandments and the spirit of their covenant they would become God's people. But when they tried to keep the Law they found that they could not do so, because of inherited weakness. Hence there was nothing more to be said to them along that line. They had had their opportunity and they had failed.

THE CALL TO REPENTANCE

When Jesus came He kept the Law, and inherited all the promises of the Law Covenant. Then He offered a share of the Kingdom which God had promised to set up (Dan. 2:44), and blessing, honor and glory to as many of the Jews as would come into harmony with Him, as many as would walk in His steps of self-sacrifice and thus have God's favor. (John 11:2.) In substance He

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said, "This is the way. Trust in Me and walk in My steps. Thus you shall be My disciples. You shall share in My sufferings now, and by and by in My glory and Kingdom."

In due time, after a certain number had been gathered from the Jews, this message was extended to all the Gentiles who were in the right condition of heart. The Gentiles not having indicated their desire to come back into harmony with God as the Jewish nation had done, God then commanded them everywhere to repent. (Acts 17:30.) This He did through those who were the representatives of His teaching, the Apostles and the Church. In proportion as they understood the Plan of God and were in harmony with it, they could tell their neighbors that a new condition had been established and that God would deal henceforth with the Gentiles.

THE RANSOM THE BASIS OF HOPE FOR THE WORLD

Why should God deal with the Gentiles now, when He had refused to deal with them before? The explanation of this new condition is that Christ had died, and God's great Plan had now matured enough to be made applicable to all men everywhere. God had appointed

a day in which to judge the world in righteousness. (Acts 17:30,31.) That great Day is the next Age, the Day of Christ, the Day of Messiah's Kingdom. God has made this provision for the redemption of all through the death of Christ. Mankind were all under the death sentence, and God could not deal with them until that sentence was lifted, or until provision was made for lifting it. He has not annulled the death sentence, but He has provided a Ransom for all.--I Tim. 26.

Whoever knows of this Plan of redemption knows that God intends to give every individual of Adam's race an individual trial for life. That trial will not be merely to determine whether mankind will try to do right and battle against all the evil influences of the world, but God will subdue sin and uplift all of Adam's race who are desirous of being uplifted.

God has declared that no member of Adam's race need die. Everyone who will may return to God through the great Atonement to be effected by the Redeemer. He has not completed this work yet, but to those who have an ear to hear, the word has gone out that there is to be a future trial, and that the manner of one's life now will have a bearing upon that trial. It is proper to tell this now, because the provision has been made through Christ's death.

THE PRESENT MESSAGE TO THE WORLD

Prior to the Gospel Age it was of no use to tell the people to come into harmony with God. But now the whole world is to be brought into a trial to help them and not to condemn them--a trial to see whether they are worthy to have the everlasting life that God will provide for them and assist the willing to attain. Wherever people are willing to hear, the message is, Repent! repent! Cease from sin, and this reformation of character will have an influence upon your everlasting life.

If one is not of the Church class he is not on trial for life or death. But it will be to his advantage to live uprightly, for there is a time of reckoning coming. God has provided for this day of trial in the death of Christ. Beforehand, however, the Lord is selecting a Church class. The Lord is thus preparing a great class of missionaries who will do everything possible to assist men out of sin and degradation back to harmony with God.

In times past God acted as though He did not notice when sin was committed--unless it was a grievous sin. Then He merely took the lives of the sinners under unpleasant conditions--they went to sleep. The Prophet Ezekiel says that God took all of the Sodomites away as He saw good. (Ezek. 16:50.) After the Church's trial, or judgment, shall have been finished and the overcomers shall have been found worthy, then, in that time of the world's judgment, the Sodomites will have an opportunity as had the Jews who heard Jesus at the first advent. And it will be much more tolerable then for the people of Tyre

and Sidon and Sodom and Gomorrah than it will be for the people of Chorazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum, etc.; for the latter had had opportunities of knowledge, against which they had sinned; they therefore had more wilfulness in the matter than did the Sodomites.--See Matt. 1121-24.

At that time God had sent no command to the Sodomites to repent. So God merely "winked at" (overlooked) the ignorance and sin of that time. (Acts 1730.) He neither threatened nor did anything else in the matter. He merely blotted the Sodomites out of existence. Their fate served as a foreshadowing, as the Apostle says, that God will not forever permit mankind to remain in sin, but that He will destroy the sinner. None shall be destroyed, however, until first he shall have had the opportunity for everlasting life, secured for every member of Adam's race, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

JESUS' RESURRECTION THE ASSURANCE OF GOD'S FAVOR

The Apostle recognizes the fact that the judgment had not begun in his day. He points forward to the Day of Christ and declares that God's assurance now set before the world of mankind is that there will be a future time of judgment. Through Christ's sacrificial death the opportunity for everlasting life will come to all. Mankind have already been condemned in Adam. They could not have another trial until the condemnation of the first trial was lifted. Therefore, not until God had provided a Redeemer would He command any to repent. The Apostle says that God's assurance to mankind in this matter is based upon the fact that He had raised Christ from the dead.--Acts 1731.

When God had raised Jesus from the dead it became a testimony that His was a sacrificial death, an acceptable offering. And Jesus' ascension was a still further demonstration that this One whom the Father had raised from the dead by His own power, was to be the great King to rule, the great Priest to succor, assist and instruct, and the great Judge to direct and order the affairs of the world and to give proper rewards in the great Day of God.

Whoever therefore hears about Jesus' death and resurrection should understand that this was God's redemption arrangement. They should also be informed that mankind are all sinners and that death is the penalty of sin. If any should ask, How does Jesus' death affect humanity? we show that God has highly exalted Him to be a Savior. In God's due time, as soon as the elect class shall have been completed and the reign of six thousand years of sin and evil shall have ended, then He will grant redemption from sin to all--to the Jew first and afterwards to the Gentile.

As many as hear now should repent; but as many as do not hear in the present time are not commanded by God to repent. St. Paul's thought seems to be, Repent now and thus influence your future conditions, even if

you do not wish to become a member of the Body of Christ. Thousands of millions of mankind have gone down into death. When they are awakened during the period of Messiah's reign, this will be the great message --"God has opened up a fountain for cleansing from sin and uncleanness. Whosoever will may partake of the

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blessing and reconciliation with God and thereby attain everlasting life."--See Zech. 131; Rev. 2217.

At present the god of this world hath blinded the world's eyes of understanding (2 Cor. 44), but soon their eyes will be opened. The time is coming when all shall see and hear, and when none, from the least to the greatest, will need to say, Know ye the Lord, for all shall know Him. Then when they know, each will be responsible. At the end of the Millennial Age when they shall have received their full blessing through the Mediator they will be required to do God's will on earth even as it is done in Heaven.--Jer. 3133,34.

FUTURE LIFE INFLUENCED BY PRESENT CONDUCT

It is a very important feature of our work to let our light so shine that men may see our good works and glorify our Father which is in heaven--not their Father, but our Father. (I Pet. 212.) The present time is not the world's, but the Church's visitation. God is seeking the people who are in a voluntary condition of righteousness. This is not the time for dealing with the world, but for God's people, as burning and shining lights, to reprove all sin. In proportion as the light shines out it will reprove darkness.

If we speak at all about a future Age it is a special part of our duty to make clear to our hearers that the conduct of life at the present time will have a bearing on the future life. To say that there are two chances--a chance now and a chance by and by--is wholly wrong. We say to them that during this Gospel Age there is only one chance, and the only way to get that chance is to walk in the footsteps of Jesus.

But for those who are by and by to be under the Mediatorial Kingdom it is proper to tell them that a life of obedience to God in harmony with the principles of righteousness will be a blessing to themselves in the present, and also in the future. There are a great many people who are living upright and honorable lives and who are doing a great deal of good in this present time. If they thought they were not doing good, they would be discouraged. An incentive to a high standard of life would be taken from them; for they believe that righteous living now has a bearing on the future. In this they are right. But their standard is not so high as that set forth in the Scriptures for the Church. That standard is necessarily high; for saints, and saints alone, are to be joint-heirs

with Christ and members of the Bride class.

A great mistake was made in the past when Brother Calvin declared that the non-elect were to be roasted to all eternity. On the contrary, we find the teaching of God's Word to be that the non-elect are to be blessed by the Elect with an opportunity for life on the earthly plane. God will use the elect class for the purpose of blessing the world of mankind. God has a loving, sympathetic Plan for all of His creatures, which will be revealed to them in His own due time.

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MENTAL SUGGESTION A MEANS OF TEMPTATION

"Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."--Matt. 4:10.

SHORTLY after our Lord's baptism, He was led of His own spirit, illuminated by the Holy Spirit received at baptism, to go apart to the wilderness of Judea for a season of quiet study. It was at the close of this period of Bible study and prayer, when our Lord was weak from His forty-day fast, that the Adversary assaulted Him with subtle temptations.

We are not told how Jesus recognized Satan, but we are inclined to think that the Adversary was not visible to our Lord's natural sight, but to His mental vision--His eyes of understanding; for Satan, like the other fallen angels, has been under restraint of darkness until the Judgment of the Great Day. It is our thought that Satan was permitted to bring mental suggestions before our Lord's mind. Evidently our Lord recognized the source of these presentations as evil, in whatever way they came to Him.

The popular conception of Satan as a monstrosity with hoofs, horns, etc., is a superstition belonging to the Dark Ages. Really in his own personality he is a very glorious being, who has not been impaired by the six thousand years of alienation from God, although his countenance may have lost some of its Godlikeness.

SPIRITUAL POWER NOT TO BE USED SELFISHLY

In approaching our Lord, Satan did not attempt to lie outright, nor to distort facts, but rather to put a false color on them. He may have approached Jesus as a friend, who had known Him in His pre-existent state and who was deeply interested in His welfare. Satan's intrusion was, first of all, to give our Lord some kindly advice, by suggesting that since Jesus had been fasting for a long time, He was doing Himself injury; and that if He really

knew what power He possessed He would command those stones to be made bread.

Thus approached by one who was of a higher order of being than Himself, one who had not taken upon himself a bondman's form, it was natural that Jesus did not repulse Satan, but answered in a kind manner. Our Lord said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Matt. 44.) I have made a full consecration of Myself to God, and am seeking to know His will, in order that I may do it, whatever difficulties may be involved therein. Therefore, since My life is consecrated, I will not use this holy power which I possess, to do anything for My own comfort or benefit in any manner.

SPIRITUAL POWER NOT TO BE USED FOOLISHLY

Foiled in his first attempt, the Adversary quickly changed the subject, not even dissenting from our Lord's decision. He then presented a second subtle temptation to use the Divine power given our Lord. We do not understand that Satan took our Lord bodily to the pinnacle of the Temple in Jerusalem, but that he suggested a plan by which our Lord could bring Himself into prominence before the people and at the same time demonstrate that the power of the Most High God was upon Him.

Our Lord's quick mind detected the error, and He promptly answered "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." (Matt. 47.) Again changing his method of attack, Satan endeavored to give the impression that he himself was tired of the condition of rebellion against God in the world, and that he was ready to join our Lord in a great social uplift. Jesus probably knew that Satan was the Prince of this world and that his influence was everywhere felt.

SPIRITUAL POWER NOT TO BE USED CONTRARY TO GOD'S WILL

As in the second temptation, we do not think that our

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Lord was taken out of the wilderness, but that mental suggestion was used to influence Him to disobedience to the Father. In all the world there is no mountain from which all the kingdoms of the world can be seen. We understand the "mountain" to be a symbol of Satan's Empire, which is world-wide. Satan doubtless brought before the Lord's mind all that He knew of the great Roman Empire, and the wonderful influence which He as a perfect man could exert if He occupied a prominent position therein.

We can imagine Satan as saying, "Messiah is to be King over all the earth. I can easily and quickly help You into that position. Let us co-operate. I will make

You chief ruler of the earth on the sole condition that You recognize me. I do not ask that You shall not recognize Jehovah; but that You shall be under my supervision. I can give You all this dominion without any trouble. Never mind the future; let me show You how to make progress now. I will get You into a good position, without removing anyone else. You will not be required to do anything very bad."

During the forty days in the wilderness our Lord had come to see that the dominion of earth could be attained only through great suffering. He was weak from His long fast, and all the details of prophecy were before His mind. He saw Himself as a lamb dumb before its shearers; as the serpent lifted up in the wilderness. Satan's suggestion was a temptation. But after consideration He saw that Satan was asking Him to violate His covenant --to go contrary to God's will. Immediately He answered, "Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

Then the Devil left our Lord, finding nothing to work upon--so loyal was Jesus to the very Word of Jehovah. Afterwards the angels came and ministered to Him.

EVEN FALLEN ANGELS EXCEL IN STRENGTH

The fact that Jesus discussed matters with the Adversary does not furnish us with an excuse to try our ability in this direction. For any of us, with our imperfect

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reasoning faculties, to get into a discussion with Satan or any of the fallen angels would be very unwise. There are doubtless reasons why our Lord conversed with Satan; but it would be very unsafe for us to do so. If we are sure that we have had a communication from fallen angels, let us remember that we are commissioned to preach to men, not to angels.

Some of the Lord's people have gotten into difficulty by not using the spirit of a sound mind along this line. Evil spirits have a way of drawing the unsuspecting on, little by little. They are "seducing spirits," as St. Paul tells us. (I Tim. 41.) A brother in the Truth once told us of his experience with them. Strange to say he was in the Truth when he had communication with the spirits. He did not say how he first got into communication with them, but he explained the Divine Plan of the Ages to them and told them what would happen to the fallen angels. For several days they manifested interest, coming frequently to hear him. After a while they began to dispute among themselves and finally to curse one another.

The brother had so cultivated the clairaudient power that he could hear them. In disgust he tried to get rid of them. Not only would they not go, but they made matters intolerable for him. Finally he wrote us in distress,

asking what method to use to get rid of them. We advised him to go to the Lord in prayer, confessing that he had done wrong, and asking the Lord's forgiveness; then, in the name of the Lord, to command them to leave him. Afterward he wrote us that he had followed our advice, and after a tedious time had finally gotten rid of his unwelcome visitors.

POWERS OF EVIL INCREASING

As the time of trouble draws near, we can readily suppose that our Adversary will have increased power. Satan and his fallen angels will have a very baneful influence upon humanity.

Some peculiar occurrences have been brought to our attention. One was an account of a picture manifestation. A picture had been taken of a piece of property. When the photograph was developed it showed the likeness of a man who was recognized as a former owner who had been dead for some time. It seems evident, then, that evil spirits are able to exert some influence even upon a camera.

Another case was that of a person who declares that he actually saw certain things which could not possibly have taken place. How this could be we do not know. We do not know what powers evil spirits may possess. We have all heard of cases of mesmerism, hypnotism, etc., where the person under control of evil spirits was able to describe accurately things taking place at a distance. We cannot tell how these things are done. We assume that it is the fallen angels who have power so to impress the brain of the medium that she would seem to see what was being done in another city. In our dreams we see people walk and hear them speak. If we can have such mental pictures naturally, we may easily suppose that evil spirits may have power in this direction.

RESIST EVERYTHING AKIN TO OCCULTISM

The facts, however, do not make us understand the philosophy of the matter. Nor do we know to what extent these things will be used in the future. We have no doubt that some very startling events will occur. Even to those who have the knowledge of the Divine Plan the things permitted will be strange. We should be prepared for almost anything that may be told.

We have great confidence in the power of these evil spirits who claim to do wonderful deeds. In fact, we can see that while materialization would be possible to them, yet a representation to the mind would be much easier. To impress a picture upon the brain would also be easy. Suppose such power were to be exercised, and the Lord's people misrepresented by the Adversary as doing some desperate act. Be prepared for all such things. It is too near the end of the race to think of turning back!

MY CONFIDENCE

"You ask me do I fear?
Should that child fear
Whose Father owns earth's store of precious things;
Whose Will carves destinies, whose Wish sways kings;
Whose Love surpasses fondest mother-love,
And whose unsleeping eye guards from above?

* * *

"My Father is the Lord; I am His child.
His storehouse groans beneath a golden weight,
And I shall never want, though sore my strait.
When danger threatens and the way seems drear,
My Father's guiding hand is ever near;
His kindly counsel will my way attend
And bring me safely to my journey's end."--Unknown.

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THE SACRIFICE OF THE CHRIST

AT JORDAN our Lord made a consecration of Himself, even unto death. That is to say, He was baptized, immersed. He said, "Henceforth, I shall have no will of My own. Whatever is Your will, Father, shall be My will. I shall do anything that You will have Me do; not merely those things required in obedience to the Divine Law --failure to do which would be sin--but all the things written in the Book. I have given up My life. Direct Me through Your providences and through Your words that I may see Your will and do it." This was not a giving away of life in the sense of giving it to the world; for He was giving Himself to God. When He made His consecration unto God, He was prepared to face even death itself and to give up His existence if such should be the Father's will.--Psa. 407,8; Heb. 107.

Following His consecration He began His ministry. As He advanced in the service of fulfilling the Father's will, He submitted Himself to everything that was written in the Book. The language of His heart was, "Lo, I come (in the volume of the Book it is written of Me), to do Thy will, O God" (Heb. 107), and in His submission of Himself He gave out His power, strength, to such an extent that it is stated that great multitudes of people out of all Palestine and beyond, "came to hear Him and to be healed of their diseases; and they that were vexed with unclean spirits; and they were healed. And the whole multitude sought to touch Him; for there went

virtue [vitality] out of Him and healed them all." (Luke 617-19.)
He kept back nothing for the purpose of recuperating His vigor, but was daily yielding His life in obedience to what He understood to be the Father's will; He was, therefore, doing the things pleasing to God--everything that God wished to have Him do, as well as the things written in the Law.

"IT IS FINISHED!"

When on the cross our Lord cried, "It is finished!" He had "poured out His soul unto death"; He had "made His soul an offering for sin" (John 1930; Isa. 5312,10); He had permitted His life to be taken from Him in obedience to the Father's arrangement. These things had all been prefigured in the type. On such a day and in such a month the passover lamb must be slain. Our Lord recognized everything particularized in the Law--whether by direct command or in type--as God's will. He declared that men did not take His life from Him, in the sense of doing something that He was unwilling to have them do. He had truly said, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God; Thy Law is within [in the midst of] My heart" (Psa. 408), and He permitted them to put Him to death, because He was submitting to God's will.

Our Lord realized that His life was taken away fraudulently. He did not resist, but allowed this to be done. He had agreed that He would not resist, that He would do whatever the Father sent Him to do. After He had once made a consecration could He have withdrawn? No; for He had covenanted to submit to whatever Divine providence might indicate to be the Father's will. He had entered into a positive contract under which He had obligated Himself to be faithful to God's will, and God had bound Himself that He would give our Lord the exceeding great reward of exaltation to the divine nature because of that faithful obedience. God had given Him the Holy Spirit as a bond of that contract.

HUMAN LIFE-RIGHTS BELONG TO OUR LORD

There is a wide difference between making an exchange and bestowing a reward. To exchange is to part with something in return for something else regarded as an equivalent. To reward is to give something in acknowledgment of merit. This word conveys no idea of obligation. Whoever gives a reward acts altogether of his own free will.

The arrangement made between the Father and our Lord did not, therefore, involve our Lord's right to earthly life; for the Father did not contract to give Him life on the highest plane of existence in exchange for His life as a human being. Had this been the case our Lord would have had nothing to give to any of the human race--either to the Church or to the world of mankind.

On the contrary, the Father was to reward our Lord

by exalting Him far above angels, principalities and powers as an acknowledgment of the Son's obedience

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even unto death. The earthly life-rights are still our Lord's. The fact that He is to give human life to mankind is evidence that He has the right to that earthly life.

We do not understand that our Lord Jesus agreed with the Father merely to lay down His life. So great was His love for and His confidence in Jehovah, that He was eager to carry out the Father's plan for the blessing of mankind, whatever the cost might be to Himself. The Scriptures set forth His position at consecration, in the words, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." How much of God's will did this assertion involve? "In the volume [the roll] of the Book it is written of Me," I come prepared to do everything that is written in the Book. Not only had He come with God's Law written in His heart, but He had offered to do everything written in the scroll of the Book.

How could Jesus know what was written in the Book? There is every reason to believe that He did not, at the time of His consecration, know all that was therein written. The things written in the Book, written in the types and shadows of the Old Testament, were understood by none of the Jews. Many of them, doubtless, our Lord did not fully understand before His baptism. God's will is expressed in the types of the Law Covenant. Our Lord had said, "Everything written in the Book." But who will say that at that time He knew how much was involved? As a matter of fact, He did not know until after His baptism, when the higher things were opened to Him and made known to Him; and following this enlightenment He went into the wilderness to study and meditate upon them.

DEAD TO EVERYTHING BUT THE WILL OF GOD

Although prior to His consecration, Jesus did not know everything written in the Book about Himself, yet His consecration was complete. He had pledged His whole life to the doing of God's will. His own will was dead to all else. Later, He realized that His Covenant meant also actual death as a malefactor.

The question has been asked, Did Jesus after His resurrection have human life-rights by reason of the fact that they were not relinquished in death, or by virtue of the fact that He had been appointed "Heir of all things"? --Heb. 12.

This, like many other subjects, is capable of various shades of thought and expression. Our Lord possessed a right to human life and to all earthly things. This right to life and all its blessings Adam had forfeited by disobedience, but Jesus had secured it by obedience and held it absolutely free from risk of loss. Then, if some one,

contrary to Law, cut Him off from His rights, this cutting off did not cause Him to forfeit any of them.

In other words, we cannot see how anyone could deprive our Lord of His life-rights in a judicial way. To our understanding, Jesus was cut off from His life and

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from all the rights that pertained to it by a fanatical company of fallen men; but their action could not destroy any right which God's Law had given to Him. So, then, when God raised Him from the dead and rewarded Him with a higher nature and certain wonderful blessings connected therewith, this exaltation could not interfere with the RIGHT which God's LAW had given and which He had neither given away nor forfeited. He had merely allowed men to take His life from Him, thus separating Him from His RIGHTS, which remained His.

HOW OUR LORD BECOMES FATHER OF MANKIND

Since our Lord therefore had neither forfeited those rights nor given them away, then when God highly exalted Him because of His obedience unto death, this right to human life was amongst the things that He possessed. This right was His irrespective of anything which the Father gave Him. It is because He holds this right to human life as an asset--His legally and not as a gift--that He is said to be the LIFE-GIVER.

During the Millennial Age, in fulfilment of the Divine promise, our Lord will give mankind restitution to perfect human nature. In doing this He will not be giving something that the Father has given Him, but He will be acting in a special sense in His own name. If He did not have this right to everlasting life to give, then He could not be spoken of as the LIFE-GIVER. But since He possesses this right to human life, it is His to bestow during the thousand years of His reign.

At the end of the thousand years our Lord will no longer be the Life-Giver. He cannot be the Life-Giver to angels nor to any other than mankind, for His right appertained merely to Himself as a perfect human being. What He will give away to humanity in general, is what He now imputes, or loans, to the Church, to permit us to share with Him in sacrificial work and in His glorious work of the future.

RIGHT TO HUMAN LIFE OUR LORD'S PERSONAL GIFT TO MANKIND

We do not see how as "Heir of all things" our Lord could gain any additional control of His earthly nature and earthly life-rights which were His by obedience to the Law. As Heir of all things He will be the representative of the Father to all eternity. He takes the position at the right hand of authority on High. In due time,

every knee shall bow to Him, and even the angels shall be subjected unto Him.

All these things came to our Lord as a part of the reward which the Father promised. But this one particular feature, the restitution of all things lost by Adam, is a special privilege coming as His own gift to humanity-- that which He purchased at His own cost; that is to say, the laying down of His earthly life is the basis upon which He obtained the new nature and the right to control that earthly life, which shall be applied in restitution in behalf of the world.

If He had already applied that life and had actually given it up, then we do not see how He could accomplish anything special for mankind. But since He has this asset of earthly rights and privileges to give away, the process of bestowing it will continue during the Millennial reign; and what He will give is what He has by reason of His obedience to the Law.--Lev. 185.

SCRIPTURAL USAGE OF THE TERM "SACRIFICE"

The word "sacrifice" may be used from different standpoints. If an animal were killed for some benevolent reason or purpose, it might be spoken of as a sacrifice, particularly if it were something done in harmony with the Divine arrangement. But the mere killing of an animal would not be sacrifice. A dog might be killed without being sacrificed. But if the dog's life were surrendered for the purpose of scientific experiment, we might say that it was given in sacrifice to science. From this standpoint we should view the matter of sacrifice. The lives of God's consecrated people are surrendered for a purpose.

At our consecration we present our bodies as living sacrifices. We give up to the Lord our life, our human bodies and everything that we possess. It does not follow, however, that God accepts this sacrifice to be put to death in some special manner. Some may spend their lives in serving the Lord's Truth, and may be said to be sacrificed as truly as though they had died at the stake. We may say to the Lord, All my life is in Your hands; do with it as You please. If it means joy or pain, sacrifice or pleasure, we surrender our own will in the matter and become like unto Jesus, who said, "I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me."--John 638.

WHAT DO WE SACRIFICE?

The sacrifice of Jesus was made at Jordan, but it was finished at Calvary. His consecration was absolute. The killing of the bullock is symbolical of what Jesus did when He surrendered His will. And so with us. Following in His footsteps we become dead in the sense that we sacrifice our wills. But in what manner the Lord may accept that sacrificed will is His affair. We give it freely,

that the mind of Christ may dwell in us richly.

We part forever with the right to our wills, but we do not sacrifice our lives, although we know that the giving up of our wills ultimately leads to the giving up of our lives. But we have nothing to do with the parting with our rights. When Jesus becomes our Advocate, He takes us in charge. From the time we give up our wills, our bodies are counted as His Body. We merely give up our wills in the matter and leave everything for Him to dispose of. He attends to the sacrificing; for He is the High Priest; we are not.

Similarly, the great outcome is in the Lord's hands. During the Gospel Age He imputes of His merit to the Church. When He has finished the work of sacrificing He will apply the merit of this great sacrifice, which He calls His own, for sealing the New Covenant for the world. But we have nothing to do with the sacrificing. We leave it all to our Attorney, or Advocate.

The New Creature is certainly the owner, or controller, of the body and is made so by the Lord. We as New Creatures have a work to perform with our body. When our Lord accepts us as His servants, we are to use all our talents as His stewards. In that sense of the word, the body will be under the control of the New Creature until death.

LIFE-RIGHTS MERELY IMPUTED TO THE CHURCH

Our position is somewhat different from that of our Lord. We had no earthly life-rights to begin with; and we had, therefore, none to give away. They were forfeited by Adam's sin. But if we become the Lord's disciples, if we surrender all to Him and accept the merit that He is willing to impute to us, our great Advocate will count us as members of His Body and permit us to share in His sufferings. When He imputed His merit to us all rights passed to Him. He gave His members whatever right they have and whatever privilege of earthly right comes to them.

When it shall be necessary for our Lord to use these rights in the future for the world, He will be quite competent and privileged to do so. Having never violated

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the Divine Law He will have the full right to use, command and direct in respect to all of His earthly rights, which He did not forfeit, but which He laid down with the understanding that He should use them again in giving life to the world, so that He would be called the Father of mankind, in respect to their future life.

Nowhere in the Scriptures is the statement made that Christ came to sacrifice Himself. What the Scriptures say is that He came to do the Father's will. He did not refuse to drink the "cup" which the Father prepared for Him, but drank it to the dregs. And for His obedience to

this Will, even unto death--no matter how long or how short a time the Father should be pleased to have that life continue--He received the reward. He gave over all into the Father's hands. This was a sacrifice; for He had a right to use His life. But His obedience to His Father's will led to the sacrifice for which He obtained the reward.

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FIVE LOAVES AND TWO FISHES

--MARK 630-44.--SEPT. 22.--

Text "Jesus said unto them, I am the Bread of Life."--John 635.

WHEN THE TWELVE APOSTLES returned to Jesus they exclaimed, "Even the demons were subject to us in Thy Name." But He said unto them, Rejoice not specially because of this, let your special rejoicing be that your names are written in Heaven. They explained to Jesus the instance of their tour and what they had taught; and He called them away to a desert place to rest awhile, because of the crowd and because they had not even time to take nourishment. So they went privately to such a place by ship. But the news went also and the crowd went on foot from various cities.

Jesus would have no time to Himself. His entire life was devoted and being rendered up a living sacrifice to the Divine service, in feeding the sheep of Jehovah's flock, and, of course, His own sheep also, because all that were the Father's were His. As He looked upon the multitude, He felt a yearning compassion for them. He saw their needs "They were like sheep without a shepherd"; and He continued to teach them.

But, says one, did they not have synagogues, and regular reading of the Scriptures? Did they not have Scribes, Pharisees, Priests and Levites? How could they be without shepherding? Ah, well, they had a soul-hunger, which the forms, ceremonies, rituals and burdens bound upon them could not satisfy. They were really wanting the "Bread of Life" which Jesus had --which Jesus was, for He personified the Truth. Why then did they not receive it? What was their defense? They were bound by superstition, prejudice, the fear of man, traditions of the ancients, and the opposition of the great and the learned of their time.

Did they not frequently inquire, "Have any of the Scribes and Pharisees believed on Him?" Again, "Do our rulers indeed know that this is the very Christ?"

The common people always referred to the learned. The learned therefore have the greater responsibility. Jesus declared of them, "Ye have taken away the key of knowledge"; you will neither enter into the favor of God yourselves, nor will you permit others to enter in who so desire. --Luke 11:52.

And is not this in a large measure true today also? The learned of the colleges and principal pulpits are telling the people that the Bible is not the Divine Message which Jesus and the Apostles declared it to be. They are telling the people that Moses and the Prophets did not write the books accredited to them; and thus indirectly they are telling the people that Jesus and the Apostles were deceived when Jesus said, "Moses wrote of Me," and the Prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah said thus and so. Thus the people are becoming more and more unbelievers in respect to the Bible.

But what will the great and learned teachers of today give to the masses as a soul-satisfying portion instead of the Bible? Oh, they tell us, "This is the good tidings, the Gospel Your forefathers were apes; a law of Evolution prevails. As a result we have come as far as we are. We need no Savior, because we had no fall. We have no Redeemer, because if we were restored to our original condition it would make monkeys of us. God has allowed the law of Evolution to operate in you and in your children. You thus live in your children, and by and by will reach a very high plane of existence--not that you yourself will have any knowledge of that, for you will be dead, but your children will have that joy instead."

What is there in this to satisfy soul-hunger? Ah, nothing! No wonder the lament is going up all over Christendom that the public no longer care to go to church; that they can scarcely be bribed to go, even with the attractions of talented essays and choirs rendering operatic music, nor even be attracted by vaudevilles and worldly trash. Alas! what we need is that all of God's people should unite their hearts and voices in proclaiming the Gospel which Jesus and the Apostles taught--the Gospel of the Kingdom--Messiah's Kingdom--and the glorious work it will accomplish for men, and the glorious privilege it will be to obtain a share in that Kingdom. Surely then church attendance will be better and without any of the attractions and gewgaws now thought necessary. Let us with one heart and with one mind return to the Gospel Message of the New Testament.

THE SYMPATHY OF JESUS

The multitudes in their enthusiasm went a long journey from home without making proper provisions for food. The disciples urged that the meeting break up and that the people be sent home. Jesus suggested, "Give ye them to eat." But they declared they had nothing wherewith to feed so many, and that if even they should

go to purchase it would cost much for even one satisfying portion.

Finally they found five loaves and two fishes. By Jesus' direction they seated the multitudes in companies on the grass, and the five loaves and two fishes, under heavenly blessing, were divided and divided, again and again and again, until all had portions and ate to their satisfaction; and the fragments amounted to twelve baskets, while those who had partaken were 5,000.

This wonderful miracle not only attests our Lord's sympathy, but it also spoke volumes to the people of the Divine power that was in the Great Teacher; but there is still another lesson which it teaches us. Like all of the miracles which Jesus performed it was merely another foregleaming, or illustration, of His coming glory and of the coming blessings. He who provided the nourishment for the 5,000 is shortly to be the Great King of Glory, whose Kingdom will extend from shore to shore, and bring blessing and refreshment to all mankind.

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This miracle speaks to us of the power that our Lord will then have for providing for the necessities of the whole world. True, we do not expect that during the reign of Christ the world will be miraculously fed, but rather in accordance with the Scriptural promise, "The earth shall yield her increase"; and again, "I will call for the wheat, and will increase it," etc., etc. But specially the feeding of the multitude reminds us of the fact testified in our text that Jesus is "The Bread of Life"--the Divine Provision for the necessities of the whole world.

"I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE"

As the Church now partake of the merit of Christ's sacrifice, and become members of His Body, the one Loaf, and thus are made partakers of the eternal Life through Him, so in God's due time the Bread from Heaven is to feed the multitudes of earth. During the thousand years of His reign, the Bread of Life will be freely distributed amongst all mankind. That Bread of Life is the Truth --particularly the Truth related to and connected with the great redeeming work of Jesus. He is to be the Bread of Life to the world, because He bought the world with the sacrifice of His own life. The Bread that came down from Heaven they may all freely partake of and live.

The Church, however, in this present time, has another privilege which the world in the future will not share, and that is represented in the Lord's "cup." His "cup" to us represents our privilege of suffering with Him and becoming His joint-heirs in the Kingdom.

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TEACHING BY PARABLES ONLY

--MATT. 13:34,35,55.--SEPT. 29.--

Text--"The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life."--John 6:63.

TODAY'S LESSON declares, "All these things spake Jesus unto the multitudes in parables, and without a parable spake He not unto them; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Prophet, I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept, secret from the foundation of the world."

Bible students and Bible scholars have generally expressed surprise that the Great

Teacher, in harmony with the above Scripture, spoke always to the people in symbolic language, "dark sayings," the meaning of which they rarely understood. Another Scripture informs us that the reason was that the true invitation was not intended for the ordinary multitudes, but merely for the consecrated.

To those who accepted the Lord as the Savior, and who took upon themselves the required vow of faithfulness in walking in His footsteps unto death--these were granted special enlightenment, as it is written, "To you it is given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to outsiders these things are spoken in parables, that they might not see and understand."

The simple explanation of the matter is that an understanding of spiritual things would do harm rather than good to those not spiritually begotten--to those not fully consecrated to the Divine will. But with the views we once entertained, and which are voiced by all the creeds of the Dark Ages, none of the explanations would be tenable; because, according to those creeds, only the Elect are to be saved, all the non-elect are to be lost, and the Elect would be the only ones permitted to understand the things pertaining to the Heavenly calling.

The entire matter is clarified when we recognize the difference between the salvation of the world to the human nature, during Messiah's reign of a thousand years, and the salvation provided for the Elect, called during this Age, and specially instructed and guided with the view of their making their calling and election sure.

THE APOSTLES JESUS' MOUTHPIECES

It has been claimed that the doctrines of Christianity

can be better gleaned from the writings of the Apostles than from the sayings of Jesus, as reported in the Gospels. There is considerable truth in this claim, and the reason is manifest; namely, Jesus' words were addressed mainly to the multitudes, and when He addressed the disciples He could not discuss even with them deep, spiritual truths, because they had not been begotten of the Holy Spirit, and therefore could not understand spiritual things. Jesus Himself declared, "I have many things to tell you, but ye cannot bear them now."

On one occasion our Lord's words were so deep, so highly figurative, that many of His followers left Him, saying, "This is a hard (difficult) saying, who can understand it?" (John 660.) The saying was, "Unless ye eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man, ye have no life in you." God's consecrated and spirit-enlightened people can understand that statement, but none others can even yet understand it. St. Paul explains the reason why, saying, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God,...neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned."--I Cor. 214.

"AFTER YE WERE ILLUMINATED"

St. Paul gives the key to the situation in one of his Epistles, saying, "After that ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions." (Heb. 1042.) The illumination received was the begetting of the Holy Spirit. Similarly, the Apostles at Pentecost received an illumination of the mind which enabled them to understand the things of God, yea, the deep things of God; for He hath given unto us His Spirit, "that we might know the things which are freely given us of God."--I Cor. 212.

Jesus had this same thought in mind when He declared that there were certain things His disciples could not understand at that time, but would know afterwards, because He would send the Holy Spirit, which would bring all things to their remembrance whatsoever He had spoken; and would show them things to come. (John 1426; 1613.) This was not only true with the Apostles, but has been true with respect to all the members of the Body of Christ throughout this Age. Each one presenting his Body a living sacrifice has been accepted by the great Advocate, and presented as a part of His own Offering; and then the offerer has been begotten of the Holy Spirit to be a New Creature in Christ.

It is to these New Creatures that the statement is made, "All things are yours, for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." It is to these the Bible has promised, "He will show you things to come." It is these that are to be guided into all Truth as it shall become due. It is for these that the Word of God is a Storehouse, from which "things both new and old" are to be produced under the Spirit's guidance, as they become "meat in due season" to the "household of faith."

BABES IN CHRIST AND MEN

Along the same line we note the fact that even the spirit-begotten New Creatures must make progress in

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their appreciation of spiritual things. The Apostle urges such that "As new born babes they should desire the sincere milk of the Word, that they might grow thereby." And the growth is necessary if they would attain joint-heirship in the Kingdom; hence the Apostle again urges that each seek not to continue a babe, but to become a man, and to use the "strong meat" of Divine Truth. By becoming a man, he is sanctified, developed as a New Creature and filled with the Spirit, and "thoroughly furnished unto every good work," by knowledge of the Word of God.

It must have been a difficult matter for our Lord, in teaching, to follow the rule which He gave to His disciples, namely, to "be wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove." Appreciating the Divine plan fully, completely, He must frequently have had a yearning desire to tell His beloved followers more of the mysteries and deep things of the Divine Plan than they were able to appreciate.

"SPIRIT AND LIFE" WORDS

Now our text "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." Here was another endeavor to impress His dear disciples with the thought that they should not take His words too literally, but should look for the deeper meaning. Furthermore, they were to remember that they could not expect to get that deep meaning until after the Master's ascension; as He said, "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away the Holy Spirit will not come unto you; but if I go away I will send Him unto you"; "for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." --John 16:7; 7:39.

Jesus was not glorified because His glorification would not take place until His resurrection, and in a fuller sense until His ascension to the Most Holy on High, there to appear in the presence of God on our behalf--to make application of the merit of His sacrifice for those who have consecrated to walk in His steps.

It was, therefore, after they had been illuminated that the Apostles and others of the Church understood the meaning of this text, that the words of Jesus were spiritual and could be understood only by those possessing the spiritual key, the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

The Master's words were "words of life" in the sense that they conveyed the great Message of the terms upon which we may have everlasting life and become His joint-heirs. Although the Apostles explain the philosophy

of the Divine Plan in great detail, and mention more than did Jesus, yet in His sayings we find the very essence or kernel of the Gospel. Nowhere are the terms of discipleship more carefully laid down than in Jesus' words, because the disciples could understand what would be the meaning of the figures of self-denial, cross-bearing, and walking in His steps, even if they could not understand the philosophy of justification, sanctification, election and Divine foreknowledge.

From Jesus' words more clearly than from any other words we get the thought of the "water of life," and how it is now in His followers a "spring" of truth, grace and everlasting life. Nowhere else do we more clearly get the general statement that the Father hath life in Himself, and hath granted unto the Son life in Himself, and that He might share this life with His disciples--with whomsoever He would. Thus, as St. Paul says, the words of this salvation in which we rejoice began to be spoken by our Lord. It is He also that declared that He brought life and immortality to light, thus distinguishing between the general reward of everlasting life to be given to the world, and the special reward to be granted to the Church.

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BEREAN QUESTIONS IN SCRIPTURE STUDIES

Series VI., Study X.--The Baptism of the New Creation.

SEPTEMBER 1

(23) Were any others than Jews eligible to "John's Baptism?" If not, how were the Gentiles to be received into Christ's "house of sons"? P. 433, top, to end of par.

(24) Explain how Israel was baptized into Moses, and how Christ became to every "Israelite indeed" the antitype of Moses. P. 433, par. 1.

(25) Would not, therefore, the baptism of Gentiles into Christ imply a much greater transformation? P. 434, par. 1.

BAPTISM INTO CHRIST'S DEATH.

(26) Quote three verses from Romans 6 which gives us the key to the true baptism. P. 434.

(27) Is there any reference to water baptism in these verses? P. 434, last par., and P. 435, par. 1.

SEPTEMBER 8

(28) How may believers be baptized into Christ? P. 435, par. 1.

(29) What part is played by the will in this burial into Christ? P. 436, par. 1.

(30) What is the immediate result of the immersion of our wills into the will of Christ? P. 436, par. 2.

(31) What example was set us by our Lord Jesus Christ in the matter of water-baptism, and why did it thus "behoove Him to fulfil all righteousness"? P. 437, par. 1, 2.

(32) What Scripture proves that Jesus' water-baptism was not his real immersion, or death-baptism? P. 438, par. 1,2.

SEPTEMBER 15

(33) What is the difference between being dead with Adam and dead with Christ? and how does this apply to the Church? P. 439, par. 1.

(34) Quote other Scriptures which declare our relationship to Christ in death-baptism now and in the glory that is to follow, if we prove faithful. P. 439, par. 2.

(35) In Romans 6, what reason does the Apostle give for our baptism into Christ's death? P. 440, par. 1.

(36) Does Romans 6 apply to water immersion? If not, give proper interpretation. P. 440, par. 1, and P. 441, par. 1.

(37) What is the strongest Scriptural proof that baptism into death is the real baptism for the Church, and that water-baptism is only its symbol? P. 441, par. 2.

SEPTEMBER 22

"BY ONE SPIRIT WE ARE ALL BAPTIZED INTO ONE BODY."

(38) Does baptism into Christ's death mean the baptism of the Holy Spirit? If not, please explain the difference. P. 442, par. 1.

(39) Of what typical anointing was this Pentecostal outpouring the antitype? P. 443, par. 1.

(40) Explain how 1 Cor. 12:12,13, shows the relationship between the Pentecostal baptism and our individual baptism into death. P. 443, par. 2.

(41) What further is required of sacrificers after their consecration and acceptance by the Lord? P. 444.

THE BAPTISM OF FIRE.

(42) What is signified by the Baptism of Fire? Matt. 3:11. P. 445, par. 1.

SEPTEMBER 29

SYMBOLICAL BAPTISM IN WATER.

(43) Contrast the real baptism into Christ's death with the various water baptisms generally practised by Christian people. P. 445, par. 2.

(44) From this standpoint, who alone may be considered members of the True Church? P. 446, par. 1.

IS SYMBOLIC BAPTISM NECESSARY?

(45) What was the teaching, and example, of the Lord and his Apostles with respect to water-baptism as a Divine command? P. 446 to P. 449, par. 1.

(46) Should symbolic baptism be made a basis of Christian fellowship? P. 449, par. 2.

(47) On the contrary, what would be the result of refusing symbolical baptism after its Divine authority has been clearly recognized? P. 450, par. 1.

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