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VOLUNTEER EXTENSION WORK

The Volunteers this year are doing nobly and we have splendid ammunition. No doubt the results will be great. However, we must not hope to know the details until we reach the Kingdom. Meantime it is ours to do faithfully what our hands find to do--what our Lord privileges us to do.

We suggest that Class Extension work find parallel in Volunteer Extension work. After you have served your place of residence, seek the Lord's blessing in an endeavor to extend the distribution of free literature to other towns and cities within a reasonable radius. The Society is pleased to supply the ammunition free of all charges. It merely wishes, with the order, the names of the places to be served and the assurance that the work undertaken will (D.V.) be promptly done--that the literature will not be permitted to lie by unused. Remember that census population includes infants and that a proper estimate of one paper to the family would be one to five of the population.

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BETHEL HYMNS FOR OCTOBER

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 October follow: (1) 165; (2) 166; (3) 305; (4) 179; (5) 58; (6) 4; (7) 102; (8) 330; (9) 42; (10) 39; (11) 7; (12) 230; (13) 16; (14) 12; (15) 147; (16) 208; (17) 105; (18) 145; (19) 135; (20) 8; (21) 281; (22) 109; (23) 12; (24) 176; (25) 160; (26) 222; (27) 293; (28) 101; (29) 235; (30) 244; (31) 168.

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SUPERIORITY OF THE ORIGINAL ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

THE Scriptures mention three great Covenants, typified by the three wives of Abraham. These Covenants are represented in the order of those wives. Sarah was the first wife of Abraham--the only acknowledged wife. Then came Hagar, Sarah's maid-servant; and later Keturah. Sarah and Hagar each had one son, but Keturah had six. The Scriptures show that Abraham made Isaac his heir (Gen. 25:5), and

that through Isaac both Ishmael and the sons of Keturah received their portion. The fact that Ishmael was born before Isaac did not alter the fact that Isaac was the heir.

From the very beginning, the Covenant which God had in mind was the one which is in operation in the Church--the Abrahamic Promise, or Covenant. St. Paul declares (Gal. 3:8) that God preached the Gospel to Abraham in advance, saying, "In thee and in thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 12:3; 28:14.) The same Apostle also shows that the original Abrahamic Covenant mentions two seeds, represented in the statement, "I will multiply thy seed (1) as the stars of heaven, and (2) as the sand which is upon the sea shore." (Gen. 22:17.) As Abraham here typified God, the Promise shows two classes developed as God's children--(1) Christ and the Church, on the spirit plane; and (2) the Restitution class of mankind, on the human plane.

St. Paul refers to these two seeds in Rom. 4:16,17, the one developed under Faith, and the other under Law and Works. The first, the Spiritual Seed, has been in process of development during this Gospel Age. The second, the seed according to the flesh, the Restitution class (with the exception of the Ancient Worthies, developed previous to the Gospel Age), will be developed under the New Covenant and by its Mediator, according to Law and Works, and not by Faith merely.

The Law Covenant, made at Sinai, was a type of the New Covenant, and had for its mediator Moses, the man of God. This Covenant brought nothing to perfection, however, for its mediator, as well as the people, was imperfect. St. Paul explains that Israel, typified by Ishmael, did not receive the blessing, but that The Christ received it. Later, however, Israel is to receive a blessing, as the Apostle points out; and that blessing will be brought by the New Covenant, after the glorification of the Church.

The question naturally arises, If the Abrahamic Covenant contained the Divine Promise to the full, both for the Church and for the world, why did God arrange for two other Covenants; namely, the Law Covenant, instituted at Mount Sinai with Israel, and having Moses for its mediator, and the New Covenant, which is to follow, and under which the whole world is to be blessed?

PURPOSE OF THE ADDED COVENANTS

We answer that these two Covenants were added to further elucidate the Divine Purpose, and to help us to appreciate the operation of Divine Love and Justice.

(1) The Law Covenant was added to the Abrahamic Promise, or Covenant, as St. Paul explains, to fill up the time until the promised Seed should come, to whom the Covenant applied, and this was necessary because of sin, that the high Divine standard for the Seed might be shown. The Law Covenant with Israel rendered this very service; for it set up the standard which approved Jesus and condemned all others. It also helped to develop the Jewish

nation toward God and righteousness, and to fit and prepare some of them for the glorious High Calling of the Gospel Age, which ultimately came to them, inviting them to Divine favor and joint-heirship with Messiah in the Millennial Kingdom.

The Law Covenant also provided certain typical transactions and prophecies, which have been very beneficial to Spiritual Israel during this Gospel Age, illustrating to us in these types and shadows of the Law, and enunciating to us in the prophecies of the Old Testament, various matters appertaining to the blessing of the Church during this Age, and that of the world during the next Age.

(2) Through the New Covenant--the second addition to the original, Abrahamic Covenant--the world is to get all of its blessings and favors of Restitution. This New [Law] Covenant has not yet been inaugurated; for the Mediator who is to inaugurate it, and to cause its blessings to reach every member of Adam's race during the Millennial Age, has not yet been completed. This New Covenant will be inaugurated in the end of this Gospel Age, and its work will embrace the entire period of the Millennium.

Jesus, our Redeemer and Head, is the appointed Mediator of the New Covenant by virtue of the merit of His own sacrifice at Calvary. He could have sealed it and begun at once its operation, had not the Father "provided some better thing for US" (the Church, the Bride of Christ, whom God foreknew as Jesus' members), than for the Ancient Worthies. This is the Mystery--that the Gospel Age has been devoted to the development of the Body of the Mediator.--Ephesians 3:3-6; Colossians 1:27.

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THE CHILDREN OF THE OATH

The Scriptures clearly show that our Lord was the Messiah, the long-promised Seed of Abraham. (Luke 1:32,33,55,72-74; 2:11; John 1:41; 4:25,26.) "The Church, which is His Body," is also developed under the original Abrahamic Covenant, which God bound with an oath. St. Paul calls it "the hope set before us, which we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil." (Heb. 6:13-20.) Again, he says to the Church, "Ye, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of the Promise." (Gal. 4:28.) The Church are the children of the Oath.

Our begetting Promise, through Christ, to the new nature, is very different from that by which the Jews were constituted the House of Servants, and wholly different from those promises by which restored Israel and all the families of the earth will be brought to human perfection through Restitution processes, as children of the Keturah, or New Covenant. Since our Lord was developed under the Abrahamic Covenant, the Church also must be developed under that Covenant; for the Spiritual

Seed cannot be the child of two mothers. It is written, "In Isaac shall thy Seed be called."--Gen. 21:12.

THE NEW COVENANT EVERLASTING

It is very evident that the world does not enter into New Covenant relationship with God individually at the beginning of the Millennial Age, and will do so only at the end of that Age. Throughout that period, the matter will be strictly and solely in the hands of the Mediator. During that time He will uplift mankind, and make them individually and collectively (as many as are willing) worthy of God's everlasting life and blessing. So then, we see clearly that the end of the Millennial Age will be the end of the Mediatorship of Christ, and will mean the personal and individual New Covenant relationship of each one of the world.

There is another view, however, which should have our consideration, and that is this: The same New Covenant that starts with the beginning of the Millennial Age will continue through all eternity. There is not to be an additional New Covenant at the end of the thousand years of Christ's reign. This New Covenant will be operated, not directly between God and man, but through the Mediator. In this Covenant, God agrees that He will remember the sins and iniquities of the world no more, that He will have nothing against them, and that they may have His blessings the same as though they were personally received of Himself. They will be received through their Representative, The Mediator, The Christ.

The whole world during the Millennial Reign will be in Covenant relationship with God, in exactly the same

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way that Israel was in Covenant relationship with God--through the Mediator. The Law Covenant persisted after Moses died. So this New Covenant will continue after Christ shall have finished His work. The whole world will be under that Covenant arrangement. But before God finally accepts them, He will give them a test to see how many of them will be found worthy of everlasting life. Hence the test at the close of the thousand years is a test by Jehovah, a test to prove the worthiness of each to enter into everlasting covenant relationship with Him. They will not be tested as a nation or as a race, but each individual must establish his own right to this covenant relationship--a new covenant relationship in that the original, similar relationship was vitiated by Father Adam's disobedience.

Throughout the thousand years of Messiah's Reign, He as Mediator has absolute control of the whole human family. His Law and His arrangements, in full harmony with those of Jehovah, will be the ones that will be operative. They will be more favorable than any arrangement Jehovah could directly make; for mankind being imperfect,

would be incapable of perfect thoughts and words and deeds for awhile, and Jehovah's Law cannot recognize sin in any degree.

The Mediator will have mankind fully under His control and regulations for the purpose of uplifting all who will. This will include the right, also, to destroy in the Second Death any who will not obey. He can exercise the full powers of an autocrat in the matter. No one will have any authority but Himself. The Son having bought the world, He will be an Autocrat for those thousand years. The Kingdom will be a Reign of compulsion. This will be necessary for the correction of the world in righteousness, with a view to their perfecting.

A FULL TRIAL GUARANTEED TO ALL

The Scriptures are clear in their declaration that God has purposed from the beginning that mankind shall have another, an individual, trial for everlasting life, wholly free from the injury received by them as a result of the failure of Adam in the first trial. Provision has been made for this, so that Justice can sanction the arrangement. To this end, Christ tasted "death for every man." He "gave Himself a Ransom for all, to be testified in due time." The due time for some is in the present Age. The due time for others will be in the Messianic Age.

Those who die during the thousand years of Christ's Reign will be those only who will have had a full trial. They will be those who remain unconverted, those whose wills are not right. But God purposes that none shall perish because of ignorance, misunderstanding. Therefore God has made full provision for the enlightenment of all (I Tim. 2:3-6), and that all who will be obedient shall be saved; and this full opportunity will be brought to all through Christ's Kingdom.

If, under the Messianic Reign, some will die a hundred years old, who are still imperfect, not fully restored to perfection, how can such be said to have had a full trial? The answer is that God's arrangement for every member of the race is that Christ in His Mediatorial Kingdom will help them out of their fallen condition, if they will. The condition required is that they shall accept and seek to obey the Divine will. After coming to a clear knowledge of the Truth, all such will be helped out of their weaknesses, allowance being made for all their failures through imperfection. But those who would sin wilfully under such knowledge and opportunity, would do the same if they had full knowledge and ability.

This last class are spoken of as angels, or messengers, of Satan and Sin; for whoever wilfully and intelligently sins against the Divine arrangement is of Satan's spirit. All who develop such disobedient wills shall go into the Second Death. There is nothing further for them. The whole Plan of Salvation is with a view to rescuing those who with knowledge and opportunity will be glad to come into harmony with God and to walk in the ways of

truth and righteousness.

THE THREE GREAT COVENANTS IN BRIEF

As heretofore stated, the Abrahamic Covenant is first in order of time and importance. This Covenant has two parts. The first applies to the Spiritual Seed of Abraham, The Christ, Head and Body--the antitype of Isaac, or, in another figure, of Isaac and Rebecca. These are the Seed of Abraham--the Seed of Promise--not fleshly, but Spiritual.

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The second part of the Covenant applies to the world of mankind--"all the families of the earth." These are to be blessed by the Spiritual Seed with an opportunity of becoming Abraham's natural seed, and heirs, with him, of the earth and the fulness thereof. The conditions upon which they may obtain God's favor, and a Restitution to all that was lost, are that they shall exercise faith, and render obedience to the Divine provision which will be represented in Messiah's Kingdom, when it shall be inaugurated.

The Seed of Abraham--Jesus and the Church--is the legitimate Heir of this Abrahamic Covenant, wholly regardless of the Law Covenant which was made with Israel at Sinai, or of the New Law Covenant that is to be made with Israel at the close of the Gospel Age.

This Abrahamic Covenant has no mediator; but the Law Covenant had Moses for its mediator, and the New Law Covenant will have Messiah, the Spiritual Heir of the Abrahamic Covenant, as its Mediator.

The Abrahamic Covenant needs no mediator; for there are no terms and conditions upon which to base a mediation. In it God merely declared His purpose to find a Seed of Abraham, by certain selective processes of His own, and to bless and honor this Seed in connection with the remainder of mankind. This especially selected Seed of Abraham, as the Apostle points out, is Christ and the Church--God's Elect.--Gal. 3:8,16,29; Rom. 8:29,30.

GOD'S SELECTION OF THE SPIRITUAL SEED

God has taken certain steps whereby He is making a selection of those worthy and pleasing to Him, to constitute this Messianic company. His arrangement for finding these is shown by the Scripture which, referring to this call of the Gospel Age to membership in that Seed of Abraham, says, "Gather My saints together unto Me; those that have made a Covenant with Me by sacrifice." (Psa. 50:5.) This Covenant of sacrifice of the human will, and of all the rights and privileges and liberties of the flesh, proves a most drastic test, and demonstrates to the Lord the very peculiar people whom He desires to be the Spiritual Seed of Abraham. They become a Spiritual

Seed by renouncing the flesh and all its rights and liberties--even unto death.

The Head of this Seed is the portion which contains the life for the entire Body. All the members added to Him needed, first of all, to be justified by His merit. These were not justified under the Law Covenant, which made nothing perfect; nor were they justified under the New Covenant; for it is not yet completed. But the blood which by and by will be effective for the sealing of the New Law Covenant for Israel and the world, is effective now, in advance, for the justification of those accepted as the Body of the Mediator. This is possible because these Body members were selected from the same human family as the rest of mankind. Therefore the blood which by and by is to seal and make operative the New Covenant to the world, is the same blood, or merit of Christ, which justifies freely all those now called to be saints, and joint-heirs of Jesus.

SECOND AND THIRD COVENANTS--TYPE AND ANTITYPE

The Second Covenant, in order of time, was the Law Covenant. (Exod. 19:3-8.) This was an addition to the Abrahamic Covenant, which addition could not interfere with the original Covenant. It was typical. It had a typical mediator, typical sacrifices of bulls and goats, a typical Atonement Day, a typical Holy and Most Holy.

The third and last is the New Law Covenant, to be instituted in the future. (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:6-13.) This cannot set aside, or make null or void, the original Abrahamic Covenant of Grace, any more than could the Law Covenant of Sinai. The New Law Covenant cannot be introduced, sealed, made operative, until the Abrahamic Covenant shall have brought forth the Seed of Abraham and invested Him with glory, honor and Divine majesty. Then this antitypical Moses, The Christ complete, Head and Body, will mediate between God and the world of mankind for a thousand years.

The basis of this New Covenant's blessings will be the merit of Messiah; but this merit will not be presented on behalf of the world, or to seal the New Covenant for Natural Israel and mankind, in order to the Restitution blessings, until first the entire Seed of Abraham, Head and Body, shall have been completed; and it cannot be completed until all the sacrificing has been finished. The sacrifice of the Head was finished eighteen centuries ago, and was typified by the bullock, in the Atonement Day sacrifices of Israel. The sacrifice of the consecrated Church, His members, who have been accepted by Him, has been going on now for eighteen centuries, and was typified by the goat, in the sacrifices of the same Day of Atonement.

Not until the Messiah shall have finished all of His sacrificial work of the Gospel Age, not until the last member shall, under His hand, have passed from the earthly condition of membership to the Heavenly condition,

will the sufferings of The Christ be finished, will the sufferings which He left behind be filled up; and not until then will He usher in the blessings of the Messianic Kingdom. And those blessings will be secured to mankind by the great Mediator's applying the merit of His sacrifice on their behalf.

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"LABORERS TOGETHER WITH GOD"

"We are laborers together with God."--1 Cor. 3:9.

DURING this Gospel Age there has been a work of God, arranged for and carried on by Him. And that work is the selection of the Seed of Abraham. The first opportunity of being of this Seed was granted to the natural seed of Abraham--Israel after the flesh. The work succeeded so far as the gathering of an elect company from among them was concerned. And having accomplished this part of the work, God set the Jewish nation aside, while the further work of the selection of the Elect from among the other nations has continued for eighteen centuries.

"Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for, but the Election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." The blindness is merely until the remaining members of the elect class have been found; and then God's favor will return to Natural Israel. "And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is My Covenant with them, when I shall take away their sins." Israel made a failure respecting the Election, except a few. And yet they are still beloved for the fathers' sakes.--Romans 11:7,26-28.

The one work of the Gospel Age has been the selection of the Spiritual Seed of Abraham, through whom all the families of the earth shall be blessed--shall become of the earthly seed. This Promise, that all the families of

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the earth shall be blessed, cannot be fulfilled until the Spiritual Seed shall first be completed. "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's Seed, and heirs according to the Promise." There has been but one work from first to last. And so we read: "One soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labor; other men labored, and ye are entered into their labors." (John 4:35-38.) Whether it was at the beginning, or now at the close of the Age--the time of the reaping--it is all one work, and there is the one purpose being served,

the gathering of the Elect.

HUMANITARIAN WORK

If asked as to the reason why we will not enter into and engage in humanitarian work, building hospitals, looking after the poor, doing slum work, etc., our answer would be, We are so engaged. We have agents all over the country attending to that very work. In every county in the state there is an almshouse. The hospitals are taking care of the sick and the blind. The money to do this with is provided by the state--and it is the money of the citizens which is used. If anybody assists in doing some additional work for the poor, he has that privilege, he has that right.

We believe it to be our duty to be humanitarian, and our state laws are humanitarian. New York is a first class state. And if we were in Pennsylvania, we would be able to say the same. And so in respect to any state we know of in this country. As respects these humanitarian efforts, the reason we do not engage in them more particularly is that we think they are well managed by the "powers that be," according to the Government and the will of the people. And any one who thinks differently holds different views from the majority. We stand in with the majority as to the proper way of dealing with these questions. Why do we not more particularly take part in slum work? We understand that it is not for us to do. We cannot do better along this line than the majority. To interfere in these matters would imply that we have not confidence in the laws. We have no right to go about interfering with the laws.

Why do we not engage in holding revivals? For the reason that those who engage in the holding of revivals are doing something that the Scriptures never instructed us to do. Nothing in the Bible says that we are to go and pull the people in to hear some one speak. Let each do as seemeth him best. If there is any one who thinks differently, and he can do any good, all well and good; if he does more harm than good, then that, also, is his responsibility. Our responsibility is to follow the course laid down by the Bible. And the Bible does not say anything about holding revival meetings. Those who wish to do this have the privilege of so doing. This is a free country. But we do not find that Jesus did this. To any one who thinks differently, we give full liberty to do according to his will, and find no fault with him.

Why do you not take up collections for the missionary societies? is asked. We answer, You have a right to contribute to your missionary society. It is not ours, it is yours. You will be responsible to the Master for what you do, so you have full right and privilege to do whatever you think proper--and we have the same. What we are trying to do for the heathen is to show them that God is Love.

We are trying to show them that the theory of

eternal torment is not the Truth, and that if they really knew the teachings of the Bible, they would see that God is a God of Love, and they would love Him; and this would be a helpful thing to them. You have a right to create a missionary fund. We would not throw a straw in your way. By and by you will hear whether the Master says, "Well done!" to your work or to ours.

As to why we do not engage in Socialism: Socialism is impracticable. We are glad that Socialism has done a great deal for the world. We are glad that we have a measure of Socialism--the street railways and cars, gas and water systems, etc. If, for instance, any family wanted to make its own gas and have its own plant for filtering water, etc., to do so would be quite an expense. And if each wanted to have its own street car lines, etc., the streets would be crowded up too much. But when Socialism goes on to tell us that it is the savior of the world, we dispute the claim. We hold that, on the contrary, Socialism is about to bring the world into anarchy. Not that Socialists wish to do so, but they are unwise.

We would be very much inclined to favor many phases of Socialism, were it not that we see in the Bible that God has a very much better way of accomplishing the same results. However, the Bible assures us that there is a great time of trouble coming, before the blessings can come. But first God is gathering out a saintly company, and testing and proving them, so that He can entrust to them the government of the future. They will constitute the theocracy of God.

We are fully convinced that the Bible is correct, that it is the Truth, and that nothing can bring about the desired result but the Kingdom of God. We are laborers together with God. He is working with us, and we are working with Him. What is the work? God's present work is finding the saintly, the true, and guiding them, fitting them for the spiritual Kingdom to be introduced. Therefore we are working for Socialism to an extent, but working in a different manner. Socialists are working according to their light, and we according to our light.

SOME GLARING INCONSISTENCIES

The various denominations represent Christian people with good desires, good intentions, and having certain fixed ideas respecting God and His will. No two of these agree. Many of their beliefs are thoroughly inconsistent. There are over six hundred different denominations. It is unreasonable for us to believe, as the Baptists do, that any one will go to a place or condition of everlasting torment for not having been put into water over his head! We cannot believe anything so unreasonable. And just the same with our Presbyterian friends and their doctrine. They are certainly sincere. They have taken hold of the doctrine of John Calvin.

If John Calvin had had the proper view, he never could have signed the death warrant to burn his Christian

brother Servetus at the stake. This fact teaches us that he was not a proper teacher of theology, however good he might have been in mind and heart. And when we come to look at his theology, that God fore-ordained that a little handful of humanity should be saved, not for any good that they had done, but of His sovereign will; and that He equally fore-ordained all the non-elect to an eternity of torture--if we believed such doctrine as this, we would believe that God was the veriest devil we could imagine--to cause hundreds of millions to come into existence, knowing that He had nothing for them but an eternity of suffering! That is a most devilish thought! We cannot believe that theory. If we did, we could not worship God!

And then as to the Methodists, and their Free Grace! This does not give one much show. How could that Grace be free?--only one in ten thousand ever having a chance of getting it! We are sorry for them if that

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view appears to their minds as rational. We would not be a Methodist or a Presbyterian for a million dollars a year! Not that we do not love our Presbyterian, Methodist and Catholic friends, etc., but it would not be right for us to so believe. We find so much error in any one of their doctrines! We find that not one of them is in accord with the Bible.

We prefer to stand by Jesus and the Apostles and all who are in harmony with them. We prefer to stand for what the Bible calls the Church of the First-born, and for whatever the Bible teaches. And when we thus take our stand, we find that the Bible teaches something beautiful--that God is indeed preparing a Church, to be associated with Jesus in His Kingdom; and we find that nobody is to be roasted eternally--quite to the contrary, they are all to be blessed with an opportunity to live forever.

The Elect are the Spiritual Seed of Abraham, through whom all the non-elect are to be blessed. According to the Bible, the dead are all asleep; they do not know anything.

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"Their sons come to honor and they know it not," because "There is no wisdom, nor knowledge, nor device in Sheol, whither thou goest." We find that Jesus went to Sheol. We find that, having thus given the Ransom-price for Adam and his family, all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and come forth.

We find that during the thousand years of Messiah's Kingdom, Christ and His Church will be reigning--not to oppress the world, but to lift them up, to break the shackles of sin and death. We find that under this blessed arrangement, all will be brought to a knowledge of the Truth; and that at the close of that thousand-year period Christ will have finished His work; and that as a result

of His Reign, not only will all be destroyed who love unrighteousness, sin, and who refuse to live in harmony with God, but all who were willing to come into harmony will have bowed the knee. "Unto Him [Christ] every knee shall bow and every tongue confess."

These are the reasons why we cannot work hand-in-glove with those who have opposite theories and opposite ideas. We cannot associate with systems and be bound up to creeds that are dishonoring to God and contrary to His Word, the Bible!

THE LAW OF RETRIBUTION

There will be many who will have their chance in the future who do not have their chance now. But whatever knowledge they have now will not do them any harm. A certain cast of mind cannot receive the things of God now. The Scriptures say that they cannot appreciate a God of Justice and Love. Therefore "none of the wicked shall understand" is the statement of the Scriptures. If they could understand, if they could get the right thought, they would see that every transgression, in proportion to its degree of wilfulness, will be punished in the future; hence they would know that they are treasuring up to themselves wrath.

God has established, as a general law, the principle that whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he reap. Every step a man takes down must be retraced. If every one knew this, it would make mankind very much more careful. If a man knows that there is to be a just punishment, it will make him very much more careful than if he thinks it will be an unjust punishment. Our thought is that if the people could get the proper focus on the subject of the penalty for sin, it would be the most potent factor in convincing them of the propriety of righteous living. Furthermore, we might cite to the denominations the fact that with all their preaching of eternal torment, they succeed in driving but a comparatively small number into holiness of life--into becoming footstep followers of Jesus, character copies of God's dear Son.

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GOD'S WORK IN OUR WILLS AND HEARTS

"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."--Phil. 2:12,13.

IN EVERY instance where the Apostles use the word we, they evidently refer to the New Creation, the spiritual New Creatures in Christ. When St. Paul says, "Work out your own salvation," he is addressing the

Church, not the world. The world is not now on trial for salvation. "Work out your own salvation; for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do." But when addressing the New Creature we are to remember that the personality is still maintained. For instance, the Apostle says, "Ye were bought with a price" --before you became New Creatures. It is the same ego, the same personality as before.

In the words, "It is God that worketh in you," the Apostle does not mean that God began to work in you when you were bought, but it means that from before the time of your begetting and quickening He has done so; for as the Scriptures elsewhere say, we were drawn of God, and we were called of God, before our consecration.

GOD THE MAGNET TO LOVERS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

God is represented as the great Magnet, drawing all who love righteousness. He drew us before we became Christians at all--the truth and righteousness of our Heavenly Father was the magnet. Man having been originally created in God's image and likeness, a measure of this image and likeness still remains. And to whatever extent the natural man loves righteousness and truth and mercy, he has something that is approved of by God, who is the great Center of Righteousness, Justice, Truth and Mercy.

Some of humanity have fallen so low that the drawing power of the Magnet has very little influence upon them. In others of our fallen race there is a larger measure of our Lord's character-likeness remaining. Such as have some love for righteousness, some degree of mercy, would realize a drawing toward the great Heavenly Father. Perhaps every one of us who are disciples of Christ felt something of that drawing before we came to the Father at all. The Lord Jesus says, "No man can come unto Me, except the Father which sent Me draw him." So we must first be drawn of the Father.

But God has appointed only one Way for us to come unto Him--and this Way is Christ. Those who desire to come unto God, then, must come by this Way, and must learn the terms upon which they may come. They are told that they can come only by humbling themselves, and sacrificing self. "If any man will be My disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me." So the Lord puts the barrier there, and none will come in except those who have a real, earnest desire. In the next Age, God has something to offer the rest of mankind. He will deal with them under different conditions. But now He is not looking for those who are merely feeling after Him.

To those who seek the Lord there comes the question,

Do you love God and righteousness? Will you surrender all human will and preference, and accept instead the Divine will? If they accept these terms, then they will become Jesus' disciples. If they say, No, I cannot go so far as that! then they cannot become His disciples. As one minister said not long since, "I have not taken my consecration so seriously as that yet." So it is with a good many. They would like to go to Heaven on flowery beds of ease.

But those who make a full consecration of their lives, who through Christ come into vital relationship with the Father, are New Creatures. Does God cease to work in them after this step has been taken? No. God has provided further ways by which He works in them. It is the spirit of character-likeness to God--their love of righteousness--that so worked in them that they were willing to give up their earthly rights. That is a powerful working. God thus first works in us to will. All that we did, then, was to give ourselves to Him, through Christ. We willed that we would give ourselves up to God, if He would receive us. And He did receive us.

THREE WAYS OF DETERMINING GOD'S WILL

We receive the instruction to know the will of God through His Word, through His providences, and through all the experiences of life, in order that we may both will and do His good pleasure. When we made our consecration we willed to do God's will. But we did not see that will fully. As we go on, we see His will more and more distinctly. And as we see the leadings of His providence in all the experiences of life, we become more and more imbued with His Spirit--the Holy Spirit. Thus God gradually works in us to do. The willing comes first, then the quickening, energizing, doing.

The power that works in us to do is the same power that works in us to will. Can we will perfectly? Yes. Can we do perfectly? No. Why can we will perfectly and not do perfectly? Because the will of God has become our will, our mind. The Apostle says, "With the mind I myself serve the Law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin." (Rom. 7:25.) The flesh has inherited various weaknesses and fallen tendencies; therefore we are unable to do perfect works, and the flesh continually needs the Robe of Christ's Righteousness.

We need continually that the great Redeemer shall be our great Advocate, that we may come with courage to the Throne of Heavenly Grace and find mercy and help in time of need. So God is working in the New Creatures, first to will and then to do His good pleasure. And every promise of God is to this end--not merely that we should submit to His will, but that we should rejoice to do His good pleasure, that we should delight to do His will at any cost. Thus shall we work out our own salvation and please our Heavenly Lord.

WORKING OUT OUR OWN SALVATION

In order to appreciate our text we must study it in its proper setting, remembering that it is not addressed, as some people are inclined to suppose, to the world. It is addressed to a special class whose sins have been forgiven, and who through Christ have been brought into a special relationship with God, into the position of sons of God. And it is from this standpoint that they must work out their own salvation. Our salvation is to be

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brought unto us at the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

No one has salvation now except in a reckoned sense. In this sense we have been saved, and can draw near to the Father. But we are still under the general dominion of Sin and Death. We are not actually saved as yet. We must work out our salvation. In this text the Apostle is showing how it is to be done. He shows this further when he addresses the Church as Beloved. He would not thus address vile persons, or those who had no knowledge of Christ--who were either heathen or worse. The Epistle itself shows that he is addressing saints of God.

What kind of salvation is this of which the Apostle is speaking--that has to be worked out? It is not salvation in the general sense, out of sin and death back to human perfection, when conditions will all be favorable, when Satan will be bound for a thousand years, and when all the active influence of Messiah's Kingdom will be in operation. When the Apostle here says, "your salvation," he is particularizing the salvation peculiar to this Gospel Age--"so great salvation."--Heb. 2:3.

As we enter more particularly into this matter, to see how great a salvation it is, we are more and more astonished at its depth and height. It is not merely a salvation from sin, but it is very much more. Not only is it to be everlasting, but it is a salvation to glory, honor and immortality, joint-heirship with Messiah in all the glorious things that are His in His exalted position, far above angels, principalities and powers and every name that is named. (Eph. 1:21.) The wider our eyes of understanding open to see the length and breadth and height and depth of this great salvation, the grander it appears. As we think of the possibility of obtaining it, we are filled with enthusiasm--and also with fear. For what if any of us should come short of so glorious a salvation--so high a calling!

The Apostle says, "Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." (Heb. 4:1.) The slightest intimation that we are coming short of the glorious Divine standard should fill us with fear lest we miss the great salvation. This is not the fear of torment, begotten of ignorance and misunderstanding of God, such as the heathen have. They have a fear of

God, a dread of God, which amounts to torment; as the Apostle John says, "Fear hath torment." But this kind of fear is cast out of us as we come to a knowledge of the Lord and are privileged to call Him Father. It is the holy fear that actuates us, altogether. We have no slavish fear, either of men or anything else. We belong to this special class, the Beloved, who have a special offer of a special kind of salvation.

OUR GREAT PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

The expression, Work out, has a peculiar force and meaning. It suggests something that is difficult, that requires time and patience. The decision has already been made, or we would not be of this class. We settled the matter when we first made this determination. We have already presented our bodies living sacrifices. And now we are beloved sons of God; and this that we have undertaken lies before us. We see how our Master laid down His earthly life, and we see from the Scriptures that He is to be an Ensample to us. So we are to submit ourselves rejoicingly to all the providences of God--glad to have God's will done in us, whatever it may cost, whatever it may mean to sacrifice.

It is by painstaking care that we work out our great salvation. God has provided the way--made all the arrangements for us. There is nothing lacking, so far as God is concerned. The whole matter lies with ourselves. God has begotten us of the Holy Spirit. All the influences necessary for us are at our command, because at His command, because we have been called, because we have been accepted, because we have been introduced into His family through the merit of the great Advocate!

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And so much the more are we disposed to feel a sense of fear and trembling as we think of all this! There is this great position--glory, honor and immortality! The result lies in my own hands! There is not another person in the universe responsible for my success or failure but myself! I must gain that great prize! The Lord will not gain it for me. He will merely assist me in the performing of this great Covenant.

So it is very proper for us to have this fear, a realization of the fact that we are each making history for eternity. We are to be either on the great plane of glory, the Divine nature, or else on a lower plane, as the Levites; or we may go into the Second Death, and lose everything, from which there will be no recovery.

THE WORK DONE IN OUR HEARTS

As we realize these facts, it is no wonder that we tremble and fear, and feel our need of walking, as the Apostle says, circumspectly, and of weighing our thoughts,

so as to be in conformity to the will of God in Christ. This is indeed a condition that might be called fear and trembling. It is a condition of great earnestness. There is no room for foolishness here, or lightness, or frivolity. God is testing every power we possess to see whether we know what we have said in our consecration vow, to prove whether we were sincere and meant it all, to prove whether to any extent we overstated ourselves and did not mean entire devotion to Him.

If we were not wholly in earnest about this matter, then we shall show it. God has done His part in making all the conditions and in accepting us. Now everything is for us to work out. Surely we should have fear and trembling as we remember this. We know that it is God that is working in us. God Himself has begun a work in us. None of the angels ever had such a work take place in their hearts. None of the angels had the offer of this salvation.

We who were of the Adamic family are being transformed and developed along the lines which the Father has marked out for us, that He may make of us a New Creation. It is He that first worked in us, through all His providences, to will. And then, after we had presented our bodies living sacrifices, He worked in us to do --not that we could do perfect works according to the flesh; God knew we could not, and is not expecting perfection in the flesh. But He is expecting perfect heart intentions. He says, My child has had the imperfections of the flesh to contend with, and by his good warfare with these he has shown his obedience to My will. If by and by I shall give to this child a perfect body, a spirit body, in the resurrection, then I am sure he will do My will. My Spirit has worked in him to will, and is now working in him to do. And he is showing Me, by doing to the best of his ability under present conditions, what he will do with a perfect body. Sown in weakness, this New Creature will be raised in power; sown a natural body, it will be raised a spirit body.--I Cor. 15:42-44.

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GOD'S SUPERVISION IN THE WORLD AND IN THE CHURCH

"Promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge; He putteth down one, and setteth up another."--Psalm 75:6,7.

THE Scriptures declare that "The earth hath He [God] given to the children of men." Father Adam was the first great king of the earth. After his fall, this kingdom over the beasts of the field, the fish of the sea and the fowl of the air, was bereft of the power of the perfect man, because man had

begun to deteriorate. This kingdom was also bereft of the Heavenly Father's guidance by His Spirit, because of man's disobedience. It was originally intended that humanity should have God's guidance in the affairs of the earth. But humanity became insane, or mentally unbalanced. This is their condition from the deterioration which sin and death have wrought.

Satan has been blinding and deceiving and misleading mankind on various subjects, putting light for darkness and darkness for light. This power of Satan is spoken of in the Scriptures as being that of the "prince of this world." And we are told how he rules. By promoting sin, he promotes that which is in opposition to God. He "now worketh in the hearts of the children of disobedience." This work has been going on for centuries, and particularly since the time of the Deluge. Before that time Satan operated in a somewhat different manner, because men were more generally acquainted with the proper standard and less fallen than they have been since. Longevity before the Deluge was greater than now, the average length of life today being thirty-five years.

Very rarely has God interfered with the arrangement which He put into the hands of man. As mankind look back they see the blunders that have been made. Being under the power of the "prince of this world," and allowing Satan to mislead them, they have fallen into various traps. Mankind has had a more severe experience with sin and death than would have been thought possible. The Apostle Paul calls our attention to the fact that man was not always in this degraded condition. He says that when man sinned, God gave him over and allowed

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him to take his own way--to lose himself in sin and the misguidance of the Adversary.

Why should God do this? We believe that His intention was that thus, eventually, during the next Age, mankind shall see what the real nature and outcome of sin is; that they shall learn a great, permanent lesson--that any deviation from the Divine standard is injurious; and that that lesson shall be recognized by the angels--that they also shall see what is the result of sin, and that they shall have this great, horrible object lesson before them. One can hardly read in the pages of history what humanity has done in this course of sin without being disgusted and horrified.

Then we see how humanity could have helped themselves by seeking to follow God's way. We see that when God gave man over to a reprobate mind, and did not hinder him from taking an evil course, it resulted in terrible excesses. (Romans 1:28-32.) We see that God merely intervened when, in the condition of things before the Deluge, to have permitted this course to continue would have been a serious wrong. The thoughts of men

were evil, and only evil continually. Therefore God brought that condition of things to an end in the Flood. And He started things afresh with Noah and his family, who were saved in the Ark. God has interposed only here and there, as in the case of the Ninevites, the Sodomites and the Amalekites. In the case of the Sodomites, God rained down fire from heaven, setting forth an example, and the kind of destruction that would better conditions--not thereby settling the future of the Sodomites, but making them an example.

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WORLD EMPIRES ILLUSTRATED GREAT PRINCIPLES

When the Babylonians essayed to be the rulers of the world, they apparently had good intentions, good sentiments toward mankind. They wished to give the world a good government. In some respects, perhaps, their rule was a benefit. At all events, it was not long before their success brought in a measure of arrogance. And then God permitted another nation to gain the ascendancy--the Medo-Persians. After them, the Grecians tried to rule the world, with a better government; and again, after them, the Romans. Each of these World-Empires, after a measure of success, toppled over and made wreck of their progress.

And so God has in a general way been permitting things to go thus, keeping humanity within general bounds in their sort of loose governments, and has merely hindered them when they went too far and were likely to hinder the Divine Program.

There was some promotion in some manner. The Scriptures say that Nebuchadnezzar became the head of gold--the head of the Gentile governments. Promotion came to him because God was pleased that Nebuchadnezzar should have this opportunity, because God permitted him to have it, and that nation to have the ascendancy. And thus with the other universal governments; and God had to do with the setting up and the pulling down. He thus permitted the world to have a variety of governments. As another instance, a certain Pharaoh was in power in Egypt at the time for Israel to be delivered from their bondage. According to the account given by the Apostle Paul, the Lord said to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose have I raised thee up."--Rom. 9:17; Exodus 9:16.

Pharaoh thus was given an opportunity of illustrating certain great principles along the lines of which God was dealing. There are some who think that God worked in Pharaoh to make his heart hard and to make him a bad man such as he was. But this is not so! He was a bad man naturally. God may have let other heirs drop out so that this particular man would come to the throne at that particular time. God set him there at that time--not that He might influence Pharaoh to evil, but that He might show the influence of an unregenerate heart.

The plagues came. "Let My people go," said the Lord. Thus after each plague had come, Pharaoh would entreat Moses, the servant of God; and when the plague was gone he would say, "Well, you did not have much to do with it. The plague has gone anyway." And so another plague would come. And time after time Pharaoh illustrated the mercy of God, who time after time lifted the plague and had mercy on the Egyptians.

It was a lesson, not of God's working in a man to make him a bad man and make him do evil things, but a lesson of the hardening effect of God's Mercy--in taking away the plague--of its having only a bad effect, instead of softening the heart. And so it is with many in the world. They are told that God is willing to forgive them, and they think, "Well, then I can go on and sin more!" We learn from this a great lesson of God's Mercy and of His method of dealing with men. Finally came the last plague. Yet even after that Pharaoh and the Egyptians went out to capture the Israelites. The finale was that the Egyptian pursuers were drowned in the Red Sea.--Exodus 14:5-31.

ACCORDING TO GOD'S WILL

By faith we believe that God has a supervision of all the affairs of today. Therefore if we voted for a candidate at the last Presidential election, and if the one we thought the most suitable for election was not elected, we are not to believe it was a matter of chance. We are to assume that the Lord knew all about the election; and that in the Divine arrangement certain things were permitted to go in certain ways; and that therefore, the President, Mr. Wilson, was the most suitable as in harmony with the Divine arrangement.

We are to believe that all things are working according to the counsel of God's will--not that God touches every thought or act of every individual. Not so! But God is able so to regulate the winds of strife or contention that the results will come about not contrary to the Divine arrangement. We may be assured that so far as mere man is concerned, God does not care whether it is one or another. So far as the world is concerned, the Lord has no preference or favorites at all. It is along the line of principles that He is directing and ruling, to work out, eventually, good to all.

Thus God is arranging that all the affairs of the world shall reach a crisis soon, whether He is permitting this king to rule, or that one; or this one to be President, or that one. All things are working in harmony with His great Program. God will set down the "prince of this world," Satan, and all the arrangements he has made--set them down by a severe fall, by a great overthrow, and will set up His own Kingdom, that will bring blessing to all mankind--His own Kingdom that will be the "desire of all nations." It will be the Kingdom of Messiah and His Bride, who is to be His Joint-heir in the Kingdom.

It is the Kingdom for which we pray, "Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as in Heaven."

MATTERS OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE

We would apply our text particularly to the Church--the Church being especially guided of the Lord, and those in which He is especially interested. In His arrangement He has provided for the setting of these members in the Church. "God hath set the members every one in the Body, as it hath pleased Him." "God hath set some in the Church, first, Apostles, secondarily, public orators, thirdly teachers, pastors, after that workers of miracles," etc.--indicating different stations in the Body of Christ. We are to remember that, as the Apostle says, God hath set the members in the Body.

In proportion as twenty or thirty or three hundred or five hundred or a thousand put themselves in harmony with His will, He will set some to be Elders and some to be Deacons, etc. How will He set them? Through the voice of the Church. Whoever should receive the appointment to be a Deacon in the Church should be faithful to the Lord and to the brethren. And whoever should be appointed as an Elder should consider it a matter of privilege, and be faithful to the Lord and to the brethren, so that he might profit the Church and be pleasing to the brethren, and above all, be pleasing to the Lord.

This is the thought the Apostle gives in his parting words to the Elders of Ephesus. (Acts 20:17-38.) He tells them to take heed to themselves that they may feed the flock. And he goes on to give varied advice--how they should take heed as those who should give account of their opportunities and responsibilities, which they must recognize as from both the Lord and the brethren.

Sometimes in the Lord's permission--certainly not without His permission--the classes, in their endeavor to express the Lord's will, may say, This brother was chosen as Elder last time, and we will not choose him as an Elder this time. Or they may say, He was a Deacon last time, and we will not choose him as a Deacon this time, but we will drop him. What should be the attitude of the brother thus dropped?

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SUBMISSION TO THE LORD'S WILL

We have had experience along this line--letters from those thus dropped, intimating that they think the Class has made a mistake in not recognizing their ability and not re-electing them. And our answer has been that we did not know what had been the thought back of the action of the Class, and we did not know whether the Class had acted wisely or not, but that our thought would be that the brother should accept this decision as from the Lord.

Such a one should say to himself, I have been the servant of the congregation and have appreciated it very much. I recognize that such a promotion is of the Lord, and that the service given me was of the Lord. But now, in God's providence, I am not to be an overseer for a year, or six months, or what-not. Perhaps the Lord has

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a good lesson in this for me. Perhaps the Lord wishes to show whom He will set up and whom He will not. So instead of feeling hurt or miffed or moody over the matter, I am going to say, If I can see anything in which I was derelict in my duty, I will consider it a chastisement from the Lord. I will remember the words of the Scripture which say, "Let the brother...rejoice in that he is exalted, and let the brother...rejoice in that he is abased." I am glad to see that the Class exercise independence enough to do what they consider the Lord's will. At all events, I will try to recognize that promotion cometh not from the East nor West nor South, but that God is the Judge, the Decider, and that He putteth whomsoever He will over the affairs of the Church.

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GRAVES OF GREEDINESS

--OCTOBER 5.--NUMBERS 11:4-34.--

"The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working."--James 5:16.

THE ISRAELITES remained at Mt. Sinai about a year. This was a time of preparation. The people were learning important lessons, as a result of their new conditions, so different from those of Egypt. The component parts of the Tabernacle were prepared, and it was set up as a meeting place between God and the people. God was represented in it by the pillar of cloud, which rested upon the top of the Tabernacle, and which at night had a flame like a torch at its top.

God's presence on the inside of the Tabernacle was seen only by Moses and Aaron, in conjunction with their privileged services. He was represented by the glorious Shekinah brightness, which rested upon the Mercy Seat. Thus the Tabernacle became the center of the nation's life and interest in relation to their God, who was their Captain and Leader, and who communicated to them through the mediator of the Law Covenant--Moses.

The people had flocks and herds; and these would necessitate their being at some distance from the Camp,

but the pillar of cloud by day and its fiery torch at night would always indicate the center of the Camp, and always guide their minds to the thought that they were God's adopted people, to whom, by first right, belonged the gracious promises made to Abraham.

Similarly, antitypical Israelites may realize that God has called them from the world to be His peculiar people, and may well exclaim, "God is in the midst of her, she shall not be disturbed"--overthrown! The center of our interest is our great Advocate, who on our behalf has entered into the Most Holy, and is proceeding with His great work of antitypical Atonement.

THE SIN OF MURMURING

Those who become the people of God, who accept Him as their Guide and Leader, should never murmur, never complain. To do so is to dispute the Divine Wisdom and the Divine promises, and to that extent to break their covenant of faith, obedience and loyalty. St. Paul reminds us that the murmuring of the Israelites on this occasion carries such a lesson to us (Hebrews 3:7-19; 4:1-11), which appears great or small to us, according to our standpoint and standard. The Lord's dealings with the Israelites show us that justice, love, mercy, loyalty to God and to principle are in the Divine estimation the highest qualities, and violations of these the most serious crimes. If this is not the way we have looked at matters, it behooves us to change our viewpoint and to take that of the Almighty.

This murmuring against the Lord was on the score of the manna, for which at first the people had been so thankful. They allowed their minds to grow so vexed that they wept like children as they thought of the meat and garlic and flesh pots of Egypt. They murmured against the Lord and against Moses in desiring that they might have back the conditions which they had left. Little did they comprehend the true situation. Had they been returned to the bondage in which they previously were, after even a year's experience in freedom, their lot would have seemed much more wretched than ever.

It was with Israel, however, as often with us, "Distance lends enchantment to the view." As they looked backward, they forgot the trials and difficulties of the bondage of Egypt. As they looked about them, they forgot their comforts, privileges, liberties under Divine leadership. Like peevish children, they reasoned not clearly.

MOSES TOO GREATLY BURDENED

The result of the murmuring was severe upon Moses. He was the people's representative before the Lord, and the Lord's representative before the people. Murmuring against the Lord in their experiences meant murmuring against Moses also. Heart-broken, that Prophet sought the Lord, pleading that his burden was too heavy, that the

people cried to him as children to a father, and that he could endure it no longer. He rehearsed that the Lord had promised to take this people as His people and to bring them to the land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He urged, therefore, that if this burden must remain with him it would be better for him to die: "Kill me, I pray Thee, out of hand, if I have found favor in Thy sight; and let me not see my wretchedness."

Then it was that God directed the institution of the Jewish Sanhedrin--seventy of the heads or the Elders of the people, to be the court of judges, responsible to the people and to deal with them, to hear their murmurings and to counsel them properly. In this arrangement, while Moses was still the head of the nation, the seventy Elders shared his responsibility before the people, and would more or less, therefore, be his defenders with the people.

By Divine direction Moses made out the list of these Elders, and directed them to meet him at the Tabernacle. All but two of them came. There God manifested the honor he had bestowed upon Moses as the head of the

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people, by communion with him, and then, as foretold, placed a share of the responsibility of leadership upon the seventy. This was indicated by their miraculous prophesying. This prophesying became a sign to the Elders themselves and to all who heard it. Even the two who remained in the camp prophesied at the same time. The Lord thus indicated that they should be co-laborers with and under Moses in respect to the guidance and direction of the people.

QUAIL IN OVER-SUPPLY

God then sent word to the Israelites through Moses, the message probably being conveyed through the seventy Elders selected from all the different tribes, that He was about to send them flesh food, such as they had been murmuring for. He declared He would send a thirty-day's supply for the whole people. Even Moses was astonished, though he trustfully gave the message. Under the Lord's providence, a strong wind across the Red Sea drove thousands of small birds, quail, to the vicinity of Israel's Camp and for a considerable distance all around it. As a result, the people ate freely, and prepared dried quail for future use for a full thirty-days' supply, as the Lord had said. Two days and nights they ceased not to gather in the quail.

Some agnostics have questioned this statement, thinking it to be a declaration that the birds fell in a solid mass two cubits high. The proper thought is that the birds, driven by the wind across the sea, were so fatigued by their flight that they flew low down, about two cubits in height above the ground, where they were easily caught

with the hand or hit with sticks and captured. A writer on conditions in that vicinity says:

"These quail cannot sustain themselves long on the wing when exhausted. They would be easily taken when they flew at a height of about two cubits (three feet) above the ground."

Those who had been murmuring discontentedly suddenly got their desire for flesh food; and they ate it so greedily and so much of it that an insidious pestilence broke out amongst them, a fever from over-eating, called "a fire from the Lord." Many died and were buried there, and thus the place was called "Kibroth-Hattaavah," which signifies "Graves of Greediness." Thus did the Lord permit the murmurers, the unthankful, to do themselves injury and to cut themselves off from further opportunities for murmuring.

The most happy condition of mind conceivable is the one of full rest and confidence in the Lord--satisfied with God's appointments and provisions. And this is especially appropriate to the Spiritual Israelites, and particularly the Royal Priesthood, who have made a full surrender to the Lord, a Covenant by sacrifice, which includes all earthly rights and interests. Happy is it for such if they can sing with the spirit and with the understanding also:

"Content whatever lot I see,

Since 'tis my God that leadeth Me."

The spirit of discontent looks away from the Heavenly Manna of Divine provision, longing for other food of their own provision or of other earthly supply. The Lord grants such an opportunity of feasting to the full on what they are desiring, and as a result, the murmurers

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cease from being members of the Lord's family and have no further opportunity of partaking of the Manna He provides in sufficient quantity.

To give an illustration: the Bible supplies the Manna of Divine Truth. The Truth needs to be gathered, and to be ground and to be baked, but it is God's provision. It is wholesome, it is nutritious, it is the very thing that we, as the people of God, need for our strengthening and perfecting. Yet some crave the flesh pots of Egypt--the world's theories. Then He allows these to come within their reach. They fill themselves with Higher Criticism and Evolutionary theories, and as a result perish as New Creatures, cease to be the people of God, cease to walk in the Master's footsteps. They are consumed by the fire, or fever, which the errors they crave produce.

GRAVES OF GREEDINESS

Greed, selfishness, stands connected with sin of every kind. It leads to every form of immorality, to satisfy its selfish propensities. It leads to injustice and untruthfulness in its endeavor to acquire a large share of the blessings

of God. It leads to anger, malice, hatred, envy, strife and murder in its endeavor to get and to hold a superabundant share of this world's goods. Selfishness is thus unrighteousness, and "all unrighteousness is sin."

As we think of the graves of greediness filled with the Israelites, we are reminded of how many Spiritual Israelites have made similar mistakes. Greedy for the things of this world, they have neglected their Covenant with the Lord and the higher interests of the life to come. Jesus said that the thorns that sprang up amongst the wheat and choked it were the cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches; in other words, greediness.

Oh, how much all the followers of Jesus should be on guard against this spirit of the world! It is not our suggestion that none should look out properly to have a reasonable share of the blessings and comforts of the present life. The danger is that of setting our hearts upon these things, coveting them and serving them, in an idolatrous manner, and thus causing our spiritual interment, over which might well be inscribed "Graves of Greediness."

THE TEXT OF THIS STUDY

The text assigned evidently is meant to apply to the prayer of Moses for help and relief. "The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working." God granted the prayer of Moses, which was of a proper kind in that it was requesting help whereby the will of God might be fully submitted to, that the people might be rightly instructed to bow to the Divine arrangements. It availed much; it brought the desired result; it was in harmony with the Divine will.

On the other hand, the prayer of the unrighteous will avail much also in an opposite direction. The murmurings of the people were classed as their prayers. They got what they desired; but with it they got, not the Divine blessing, but a punishment. Let us take heed to how we pray, and that we pray for things in harmony with the Divine will. Thus will our prayers bring blessings upon our heads, and not injury.

SELFISH PRAYERS ANSWERED

We know of many prayers answered; some of these were uttered selfishly, not with the desire to know and to do the Lord's will, but with the desire to have the Lord do according to the human will and its selfish desire. Such prayers are always dangerous. God sometimes answers them.

We note one instance told us by a mother. She was a true Christian woman and had given her son to the Lord; but when he fell seriously sick and lay at death's door and the physicians said that he could not recover, the mother went before the Lord in prayer and earnestly pleaded, not that God's will should be done, but that her will might be done--that her son's life might be spared. Almost miraculously,

she says, her boy began to recover. For a time she rejoiced that she had had a triumph.

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Later on, however, she learned a very bitter lesson. The son grew to manhood, but was far from a comfort to her. He had a vicious character, which often brought the mother pain and tears. She said afterwards, "I have rued that prayer, which was contrary to God's will, and which He answered according to my will. I see better now. I have learned my lesson. Henceforth I will seek to know and to do the Lord's will, and will pray that His will, not mine, be done in all my affairs. My selfishness brought me years of misery, which I had assumed would be years of pleasure and comfort." How careful we should be to "abide in Him and in His Word"!

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JEALOUSY AND ENVY PUNISHED

--OCTOBER 12.--NUMBERS 12.--

"Love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly."--1 Corinthians 13:4,5.

ST. PAUL includes envy, and therefore jealousy, in his enumerations of the works of the flesh and the Devil--together with anger, malice, hatred and strife. These are works of the Devil in that they are characteristics of Satan. According to the Bible account, Satan's ambition led him to envy the Almighty and ultimately to attempt to establish in the earth, with man as his subject, a rival empire to the Heavenly domain of Jehovah. His ambition and jealousy led to strife or opposition--led to a misrepresentation of the Divine character in order to deceive our first parents.

The evil traits mentioned are works of the flesh in the sense that after our race, poisoned by Satan, had come under Divine sentence, the dying process, which Satan encouraged, included evil works, evil desires of every kind.

More and more our race has become subject to these adverse influences, as it has become weak, dying, unbalanced.

St. Paul urges all of the Lord's people to put off these Satanic characteristics and to adopt instead the Divine characteristics--those which have the Divine approval, and which work in us and make us more and more Godlike. These are described as meekness, gentleness, peace, long-suffering, brotherly kindness, love. We are assured that those who will ultimately become God's saintly people on the highest plane of Heavenly glory will have

these characteristics well developed, dominant. The Apostle indicates that such will be granted an abundant entrance into the "everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ."--2 Peter 1:11.

That Kingdom will not represent all the saved of humanity, but will be the Divine agency for carrying salvation to all the families of the earth. Nevertheless, only this one offer of salvation is now open; and only by following the prescribed course and cultivating these various qualities will any now be fit for, or be received into the everlasting Kingdom. Thus all the members of that Kingdom, as St. Paul declares, must be copies of God's dear Son, our Redeemer--not copies in the flesh, but copies in our hearts and in our intentions. This will mean to be as nearly perfect in the flesh, as nearly in harmony with the Divine requirements, as possible.

Indeed, the Bible clearly teaches that all who will ever attain everlasting life and Divine favor, even on the earthly plane as perfect men in an earthly body, must entirely get rid of everything appertaining to the spirit of Satan and sin; that they must thus get back to the original image and likeness of God as exemplified in Adam before he sinned in the Garden.

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MIRIAM'S JEALOUSY AND ENVY

The lesson of today's Bible Study tells us of a serious error made by Aaron and Miriam, the brother and the sister of Moses, both his seniors. We may safely conclude that while the two participated in the sin, Miriam's was the leading spirit. This view is fully justified by the outcome of the lesson, which shows that God's punishment rested upon her, and not upon Aaron.

The start of the matter was a question of family pride. Moses had married an Ethiopian, or Cushite, woman. We know not if this was his first wife, whom he had married in the land of Midian, and who only now joined him as the Israelites were about to start on their journey toward Canaan. Some have surmised that Moses' first wife had died, and that Zipporah was his second wife. No matter which, the fact remains that at this time she came to live with Moses in the Camp of Israel, and thus became, as wife of the great and influential leader, the first lady of the nation.

Previous to this, Miriam had undoubtedly filled the office of chief lady. It was but natural that she should feel the loss of her position and of the influence which went with it. She felt especially keenly upon the subject as she reflected that her new sister-in-law was of an alien race. This fact seemed to give Miriam's jealousy a religious footing; and she doubtless reasoned to herself, and convinced herself, that her hostility to her sister-in-law was not based upon jealousy, but upon a high moral ground, affecting the honor of God, the honor of

His nation, Israel, and the future possibilities of Abraham's seed in the Land of Promise.

We are to remember that it was this same Miriam who, as the little maiden, watched Pharaoh's daughter when she went to the bathing place on the Nile where Moses was found in the little basket of bulrushes. This same Miriam hastened to bring to the premises her mother to be the nurse for the foundling, Moses. This same Miriam, doubtless, with Aaron had enjoyed special privileges in the confidence of Moses in respect to all the affairs of Israel under the Lord's leadings. This same Miriam had been recognized of the Lord as a prophetess. She it was who, with her timbrels, after the crossing of the Red Sea by the Israelites and after the sea had returned with destruction upon their Egyptian pursuers, led the Israelitish women in the song of triumph.

Thus seen, there was what we might call an excuse for Miriam's jealousy. Indeed, we cannot imagine any jealousy which could not find an excuse for its existence-- good or bad. No good people can harbor jealousy, envy, etc., without in some manner deluding themselves into thinking that the peculiar circumstances of their case fully justify their attitude.

After thinking slightly of her brother as foolish in his course, Miriam became more and more convinced that God would not think of using especially in His service one who had thus lost caste with herself. Her poisoned mind began to see evidences that the Lord had forsaken Moses, and that otherwise he would not have fallen into what she was sure was a great mistake. She communicated her fears to her brother Aaron, and the two doubtless thought seriously and prayed much respecting the sad fall of Israel's leader and the necessity thus laid upon them to make good his dereliction.

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Aaron apparently must have been a weak character, and merely used and useful as the mouthpiece of Moses. He showed much weakness on this occasion, as he did during Moses' absence in the mountain, when in response to the persuasion of the Israelites he made for them the golden calf and assisted them in their idolatrous worship, which they desired. Miriam also probably assented at that time that such would be the only course to take to satisfy the rebellious spirit of the people.

The text implies that Miriam began to spread her seditious suggestions throughout the Camp of Israel, referring to her brother Aaron as holding similar sentiments: The people were to be prepared and the Lord was to be helped, of course, by the primary suggestion that Moses was not the only leader of the nation, that Miriam and Aaron were also prophets and in relationship with the Lord in exactly the same manner and degree as Moses. This insidious preparation of the people would make ready for the expected time when God would entirely

disown Moses and speak entirely through Miriam, Aaron being her mouthpiece.

AND THE LORD HEARD IT

Too often do the Lord's people and others forget that the Lord is not inattentive to His own business, the interests of His own cause, but is working all things according to the counsel of His own will. As Bible students, we should more and more learn to appreciate this great fact and to remember that prosperity in the Lord's work cannot come by might or human power or cunning, but only by and in harmony with the Lord's Spirit, the Lord's Power, the Lord's Will.

The Lord nipped the conspiracy in the bud by suddenly calling Moses, Aaron and Miriam into His presence before the Tabernacle. All three obeyed the summons, Miriam doubtless supposing that now the moment had come when the Lord would show that she had rightly divined His intentions in ousting Moses from the leadership and appointing herself. The denouncement, however, was very different. God did, indeed, declare that Miriam and Aaron had to some extent occupied the place of prophets, in that God had been pleased so to use them; but with equal distinctness the Lord pointed out that His dealing with Moses was on a very much higher plane. To him God had spoken directly, not through dreams and visions, but in plain language. Thus the ambitions which were the grounds of the jealousy, envy and conspiracy and evil speaking, God promptly set aside.

Additionally, however, God gave a punishment. As the Divine Presence, represented by the pillar of cloud, departed from them, Moses and Aaron beheld that their sister Miriam had been smitten with leprosy. Aaron recognized that all this signified that he had assisted and upheld his sister in a sinful course. He recognized that his brother Moses was indeed the chief of God's people; and to him Aaron uttered this cry of distress and prayer for relief, saying, "O my lord, lay not, I pray thee, this sin upon us; for that we have done foolishly, and for that we have sinned. Let her not be as one dead!"

Then Moses cried unto the Lord, saying, "Heal her now, O God, I beseech Thee!" And God heard Moses and healed her then, but directed that she should be treated as every other person was treated whose leprosy was declared to be healed. All such were required to remain seven days outside the Camp, under inspection, to see that no further symptoms of the disease appeared, before they would be admitted to the Camp again.

"THE LAW WAS A SHADOW"

The Apostle explains to us that the various things commanded Israel under their Law Covenant were prophetic shadows illustrating higher things--things appertaining to Spiritual Israel. Thus, for instance, the disease

of leprosy, practically incurable, except by Divine interposition, was a type of sin; and the seven days of excommunication from the favored people represented a full and complete period of tests as respects a putting away of sin, a cleansing, a return to harmony with God.

Various lessons might be drawn from today's Study. But the one in which all can probably best agree is that jealousy, envy, based upon selfishness, is amongst the most deceptive of all sins and one very serious in the sight of God, whatever may be thought of it by others.

The text supplied us is St. Paul's exhortation to the Church. And the Church, we must remember, is that special class called out from humanity in general by the Gospel Message to become followers of Jesus and joint-heirs with Him. Their call is to a sacrifice with Jesus of all earthly rights and claims, and to a full submission to the Divine will and arrangements in everything. Their covenant is to be fully submissive to the headship of the Savior and, like Him, to be loyal to every principle and arrangement of the Divine Program.

This leaves no room for any work of the flesh or the Devil. All these are to be put off, discarded, as displeasing to God. On the contrary, the fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit are to be substituted, that thus the followers of Jesus, like Himself, might ultimately attain to the fulness of Divine favor and glory, honor and immortality-- at His right hand of Power.

While, therefore, all people should strive to throw off the works of darkness and to conform themselves to the Divine arrangements under the guidance of the Prince of Life, nevertheless, the Church, especially consecrated to God, should remember that all their hopes of glory, honor and immortality are associated with the development of right characters and the opposition of the wrong. Let us also remember that "Love envieth not; Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly." And Love, therefore, represents the full standard of the Golden Rule and the full character of God; for "God is Love."--I John 4:8.

The prompt punishment of Miriam and its effect remind us of the fact that such prompt dealing with sin will be the regular order under the Messianic Kingdom and will bring prompt results then. All men realize to some extent that whosoever sins will suffer; but the penalties, or sufferings, resulting from sin are often so far removed as not to be identified by the sufferer. Hence with many the lesson is lost.

Besides, our erroneous theology of the Dark Ages led many of us to misrepresent the punishment of sin as being eternal torture. Thus we directly contradicted God's arrangement, drew attention away from the present punishment and wages of sin, and made the future punishments so absurdly unreasonable that nobody believes them, or, believing them, are misled into the supposition that a dying prayer for forgiveness will permit an utter escape from their penalties. We cannot improve

upon the Divine arrangement, "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap"--either in the present life or in that which is to come--but in no case a devilish and eternal torture.

"Upon Thy Word I rest,
So strong, so sweet, so sure;
So full of comfort blest,
So wonderful, so pure--
The Word that changeth not, that faileth never!
My King, I rest upon Thy Word forever!"

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SOME INTERESTING LETTERS

DEAR BRETHREN:--

I am noting a few incidents which transpired in this town last Autumn, which will interest you, I know. They are as follows: The pastor of the Episcopal Church at that time was the Rev. K_____; of the First Presbyterian, Rev. M_____ (there was another Presbyterian Church in town). The Wesleyan (official organ of the Methodist Church in these provinces) is published in this town. (You may recall that we sent you, last Autumn, quite a number of issues of the Wesleyan treating Pastor Russell and the Truth in a very unchristian manner.) Rev. K_____ became very much excited because of the circulation of some volunteer matter, and concluded the best thing to do was to send for a sufficient number of copies of the Brooklyn Eagle to cover the town and considerable outlying territory, making the statement, to one of his parishioners, at least, that the circulation of our literature "must be stopped." He had some of the supply put into the hands of some other clerical brethren, and thus the distribution was made.

About the same time Rev. M_____ preached a very severe sermon against our Pastor and the work, calling attention to the "Vow," holding it up to ridicule. Within a few weeks Rev. K_____, who was a very dignified man (and apart from theological narrowness a very nice man), died one of the most undignified deaths possible. In making a call on a parishioner, in the fire house of the town, he missed the doorway and in some unaccountable manner attempted to enter through a window leading into the ash-pit. The window had been left open, but he had to step up some distance from the ground to enter--no one can understand why it should occur. He was found two hours later dead on the concrete floor of the pit, eight feet below, from a broken neck. Recently his son, in closing up his affairs, auctioned off his walking stick, and even his overcoat. He was for years, up to his death, Archdeacon for the province.

Very shortly after, Rev. M_____ 's Church was burned

to the ground--he has left the town. The two congregations have voted to unite and rebuild (that is, the two Presbyterian congregations), but are now fighting amongst themselves. About the same time the pastor of the leading Methodist Church took sick and died. This means that through death and changes owing to the fire, half the ministers of a few months ago are gone. We wonder, in this Day of the Lord's judgments, how close may be the connections between these incidents.

We are glad to report the work prospering in the town. Sister Black joins me in much Christian love to you all.

Your brother in the Kingdom Hope,
W. W. BLACK.

MY DEAR FRIENDS:--

I should like to be put on your mailing list. I am getting THE WATCH TOWER and I have your STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES; but I want your pamphlets also, as they come out, and the BIBLE STUDENTS MONTHLY. Please send me your booklet on "Spiritism," and any treatise you may have on Revelation. You will, of course, forward bill for any charge, and I shall remit at once.

I enclose check for \$5.00, which you may use as you see best in furthering the work. If possible, I shall send a like amount monthly.

I want to advance the cause of the Kingdom. The Message as you put it appeals to me in such a way that I know it to be true. It accords with our blessed God's character and Word, and stands at once so reasonable and satisfying, and so full of promise to every creature, that it must be the Gospel. I believe in Jesus Christ as my personal Savior, and that, through His precious blood. And as surely as anything ever happened to a man, I have been called by Him. I cannot neglect "so great salvation." Will you help me to work in His vineyard--even though it is the "eleventh hour"? The wages matter not. Only to know Him is worth more than heart can dream of. To be like Him in character would be the greatest blessing of Heaven.

Yours sincerely,
A. MURRAY.--Calif.

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THE HARVEST CALL

Come, labor on.
Who dares stand idle on the harvest plain,
When all around him waves the golden grain,
And every servant hears the Master say,
"Go, work today"?

Come, labor on.

The laborers are few, the field is white,
No rest have they who labor for the right;
From distant voices far, or near at home,
The call is, "Come!"

Come, labor on.
No time for rest till glows the western sky,
And the long shadows o'er our pathway lie;
Then a glad sound comes with the setting sun,
"Servants, well done!"

Come, labor on.
The toil is pleasant, the reward is sure;
Blessed are those who to the end endure;
How full their joy, how deep their rest will be
O Lord, with THEE! Unknown.

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BEREAN QUESTIONS IN SCRIPTURE STUDIES

Series VI., Study XVI.

THE PRESENT INHERITANCE OF THE NEW CREATION

OCTOBER 5

Read p. 659 to p. 661 par. 1.

(1) What are the first-fruits of the Spirit--a foretaste of future blessings--which are possessed by the New Creation in the present life? P. 659, first 18 lines.

(2) What is the nature of earthly hopes and joys? P. 659, 18th line to end of par.

(3) How do the joys, hopes, ambitions of the New Creation differ from those of the natural man? P. 660, par. 1, 2.

TRUE VERSUS FALSE HOPES

(4) When and for what purpose does Satan transform himself into an "angel of light"? P. 660, par. 3.

(5) What false hope respecting the dead has been introduced by the Adversary? P. 661, par. 1.

OCTOBER 12

Read p. 661, par. 2, to p. 663, par. 2.

(6) How has Satan deceived the Church by a false hope respecting the time for the rewarding of the Lord's faithful followers? P. 661, par. 2.

(7) How have these false hopes been especially injurious to the Lord's people? P. 662, par. 1.

(8) In view of the foregoing, what is the reason for our

present hope of an instantaneous change for the faithful members of the New Creation? P. 662, par. 2.

(9) What is our hope as respects the faithful of the entire Gospel Age prior to 1878, and of those who have died and are dying since that date? P. 663, par. 1.

(10) How have the hopes of the New Creation become the dread of the "Christian World"? P. 663, par. 2.

OCTOBER 19

Read p. 664, par. 1, to p. 668, par. 1.

(11) Why do nominal Christians dread the resurrection of the dead? P. 664, par. 1.

(12) Note the joyful hopes of the Second Advent of Christ, and the Resurrection, as set forth in Scripture. Pp. 664 to 666.

THE THIEF IN PARADISE

(13) What is the proper interpretation of the incident of "the Thief on the Cross"? Luke 23:42,43. P. 667, par. 1.

(14) In order to properly understand this Scripture, how must we consider the circumstances, surroundings and connections? P. 667, par. 2, 3, 4.

(15) Did the thief request the Lord to take him to Heaven? And how does changing the position of the comma clarify the whole subject? P. 668, par. 1.

OCTOBER 26

Read p. 668, par. 2, to p. 671, par. 1.

(16) What further explanation might the Lord have given the repentant thief? P. 668, par. 2, 3.

(17) What is the Scriptural significance of the word Paradise? P. 669, par. 1.

(18) Explain why we have a perfect right to change the position of the comma, and cite other instances in which the word "today" is similarly used. P. 669, par. 2, to P. 670.

ST. PAUL'S EARNEST DESIRE

(19) How does the Emphatic Diaglott render Phil. 1:21-24, and how does this translation differ from the Common Version? P. 670, par. 1, 2.

(20) How is the word Analusai, "return," used in Greek literature, and in the only other instance in the New Testament, namely, Luke 12:36? P. 671, par. 1.

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MERCY AND TRUTH COMPONENT ELEMENTS OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

"Let not mercy and truth forsake thee; bind them about thy

neck; write them upon the table of thine heart." "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"--Prov. 3:3; Micah 6:8.

MERCY and Truth are great principles of righteousness. Truth and righteousness are, we may say, synonymous. That which is right is true, and that which is true--firm, faithful, steady, genuine--is usually right. The record does not say that we shall bind justice about our neck. Justice is a quality which we are not permitted to exalt too highly, except in our hearts and minds, as a principle of the Divine standard. We are to remember that there is none righteous, no, not one--none perfect. Hence our course in respect to Justice cannot be the same as that of our Heavenly Father. He recognizes no lower standard than justice, up to which everything must measure.

GIVE MERCY AND TRUTH PROMINENT PLACE

If we are acceptable to the Father, it can be only by righteousness. And if we have not righteousness, it must be obtained from Christ; for God receives nothing short of perfection. Though imperfect in ourselves, we are to come up to the standard of justice as nearly as possible in our own personal conduct, but we are not to exact full justice from mankind. Since they have no one to make good for them, it is our duty to be benevolent toward them, and thus emulate the character of God, who is merciful. While He keeps the two qualities, Justice and Mercy, distinctly separate in His dealings, it is not for us to do so.

For one to keep the principles of truth and of righteousness before his own mind, is to be a thoroughly upright man or woman, one in whom truth, purity, goodness, will be in control. But a person who has merely these principles in control should cultivate more and more the quality of mercy. We should bind these about our neck. The thought is that of a necklace, or ornamental band. As a man puts around his neck a cravat, with a jewel in it as an ornament, placed where it will be displayed, so these qualities of character are jewels. Give them a prominent place; for they will help to make you better, help to make you more acceptable to the Lord.

The preferable place for the display of a jewel is the neck. There a jewel is especially conspicuous and ornamental. So we should fasten these noble qualities of character where they will be manifest in all the affairs of life. Whether we buy or sell, or whatever we do, we should wear these ornaments. They will show what is the character of the man or woman--right on the outside, in the very front. They should be seen as we meet others. There should be nothing mean, nothing contemptible,

nothing niggardly about us.

RE-WRITING MERCY AND TRUTH UPON THE HEART

More than this, we are to write mercy and truth in our hearts. We are to remember that originally God wrote the Divine Law in Adam's heart. We know that in the Divine heart, the Divine character, are the quantities of Truth and Mercy. God is merciful, kind and loving. And as God has these traits of character, so when He made man in His own image, His own likeness, man was created with these qualities in his character. Man was not created an unrighteous, an untruthful being.

But man fell from his original perfection. With the centuries of falling and imperfection of mind and body, and with every interest pressing for self-gratification at the expense of others, these principles of mercy and truth have become largely effaced from our hearts, just as the constant dropping of water, and the general wear and tear of the weather would tend to efface the original inscription on a stone. In time one could scarcely discern the characters. So we see in mankind that some have apparently lost all sense of justice, all sense of mercy, nearly all sense of patience, gentleness, brotherly kindness and love. All these qualities that belong to the heart, as originally placed there by God, have been more or less effaced--in some more than in others.

PURPOSE OF GOD'S PROVIDENCES

Under the terms of the New Covenant and through the ministrations of Christ's Kingdom, God purposes to re-write upon the heart of man the original character which was in his heart, and which has been effaced by selfishness. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a New Covenant with the House of Israel, and with the House of Judah....I will put My Law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts." (Jer. 31:31-33.) "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh."--Ezekiel 36:26.

God's Law is the Law of truth and mercy. Truth

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would include everything righteous, toward God and toward man. Mercy includes all the graces of character. The Millennium will be the time for the re-writing of these qualities in the character. And this work of re-writing the Divine character in the heart, which will progress in the world by and by, for a thousand years, is already begun in the Church. We write these qualities within our own hearts. The entering the School of Christ is voluntary, not compulsory. In the next Age mankind must write these qualities in their hearts, through

the assistance of the Mediator. There will be stripes to bring mankind to righteousness. And if they are intentionally unwilling to obey the Laws of righteousness, they will be destroyed.

But now obedience is a voluntary matter. We declare that we desire to have these lessons written in our hearts; and to attain this end, we enter the School and submit ourselves to the great Teacher. Then, by the various providences of our lives, He shows us where we have not yet engraved these qualities within our hearts. As we pray for patience, He gives us lessons of experience that will engender this quality in our hearts, and that will strengthen it more and more. As we pray for love, He gives us tests of love. As we pray that we may develop mercy, we find more opposition, which will develop mercy. Thus God gives us opportunities for the writing of truth and mercy in our hearts.

We must attain to that condition of heart where we shall love truth and righteousness, and where we shall hate iniquity and unrighteousness. As the people of God, we have the first opportunity now to develop these traits. And the Lord tells us that if we prove faithful in learning our lessons, it is His intention to use us during the Millennial Reign, His intention to make us judges of the world--its rulers, teachers.

THE JEWISH LAW HELPFUL TO CHRISTIANS

The words of our second text were addressed to the Hebrew people and not to Christians; for there were no Christians at that time, of course. The words do not seem to be prophetic, but an exhortation to the people. Apparently the Jews thought that the Lord was asking too much of them; and since this was so, they felt that they should not take the Law too seriously. The Lord seems to bring the matter down to a specific statement: What is required of thee but three things; namely, to deal justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? This would seem to be the sum total of the Law.

The Lord was looking to see Israel live as nearly up to the requirements of the Law as possible. And He purposed to bring them, in due time, the promised New Covenant, which would take away the stony heart out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, thus making them tender-hearted. But if now they would walk as nearly as possible in harmony with the requirements of this law, doing justly, loving mercy and walking humbly with their

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God, they would be blessed accordingly.

While this Law was given to the Hebrews alone, nevertheless the principles inculcated therein are applicable to the whole world. Everybody who would have any standing with the Lord, is required to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly. Therefore every statement

of the Law, in that it gives the Christian a conception of God's standards, is helpful to the Christian; it shows him the standards of perfection. But the standard of a Christian goes higher than that of the Law. The Law is merely an amplification of the Golden Rule--Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you. Deal justly with others, if you would expect them to deal justly with you; and be merciful to others, if you would expect them to be merciful toward you.

In thinking of these qualities and considering which should be put first, we decide that in our conduct toward another, we could not think for a moment of giving anything less than justice. Additionally we might be as merciful as the circumstances would permit. But nothing less than justice should be thought of. In our requirements of others, however, we are--as before stated--not to expect full justice. Remember that the whole human family are imperfect. If by the grace of God we are able to be more just or more merciful than the average, it is through God's Spirit.

GOD'S STANDARD OF RIGHTEOUS CONDUCT

To walk humbly with the Lord would imply that we were in that condition of mind in which we could be taught of Him, could appreciate His goodness and our own insignificance; that we were receiving whatever instructions He was sending. While God made our race in His image, we have largely lost that image. Therefore we should be very humble and teachable in all things.

Comparing God's requirements of Israel, as given in the text, with His requirements of the Church, we would say that God requires nothing more than this from the Church. This is as much as justice could require from any creature. The peculiarity of the position of the Church is that it is not one of requirement, but of privilege. But we see operating in the Church a still higher principle than that of Law; namely, that of sacrifice. As Jesus loved the Father and loved righteousness, and sacrificed His earthly will and earthly ambitions and privileges, so He set us an example that we should walk in His steps. It was not required of Him that He should do more than justice, but He was permitted to do more. And so with the Church. We are not required to do more than justice, but are permitted to do more. If we present our bodies living sacrifices, and are faithful to the end, the Lord will count us among those to whom He will be pleased to give, very soon, the glorious Kingdom, the Kingdom for which we pray.

VARIOUS DEGREES OF LOVE

After we came voluntarily into this condition of sacrifice, it became a bondage to us in that we had taken vows to this effect, and we are bound by our own vows. We vowed that we would lay down our lives in harmony

with the invitation: "Gather My saints together unto Me; those that have made a Covenant with Me by sacrifice." Still the Lord is not requiring more of us than justice. But He is waiting and watching to see to what extent we will be faithful to the agreement of our Covenant. If we are joint-sacrificers with Jesus, then we shall become joint-heirs with Him. At our consecration, we took His yoke upon us. Could we go back and take up the privilege of Restitution? No; this we gave up entirely! The only thing for us is to fulfil our Covenant of Sacrifice; and rebellion against that Covenant would mean the Second Death, everlasting destruction.

There are various degrees of love. That degree to which we have consecrated ourselves is the sacrificing love, which goes beyond what would be just to a brother, a neighbor or an enemy. This is the Love of God, which is an all-absorbing, an all-comprehensive love.

That the requirements of the texts are very reasonable will be conceded by all. That God could not require less from those whom He is educating for the future judging of the world, is evident, and yet all of these qualities specified through the Prophet are comprehended in the one word--Love. Love requires that we shall deal

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justly with our neighbors, with our brethren, with our families, with ourselves; that we shall seek to cultivate our appreciation of the rights of others--their physical rights, their moral and intellectual rights, their liberties; and that, appreciating these, we shall in no sense of the word seek to abridge or deny them. But, additionally, Love leads us to have the spirit of sacrifice that gladly lays down life itself for the brethren.

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PRAYER THE VITAL BREATH OF THE NEW CREATURE

"And He spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint."--Luke 18:1.

JESUS spoke a parable, of which the gist, or import is, "That men ought always to pray and not to faint." That parable tells how even an unjust judge would, because of importunity, heed an appeal for justice and would finally yield to its demands, although he cared little for the principle itself. In the parable the woman was importunate in her petitions for justice against those who were doing her injury. The Lord seems to inculcate just such importunity in prayer, and gives this as an illustration of how His people should continue in

their prayers; not that they should pray all the time, in the sense of never getting off their knees, or of never doing anything except to pray, but that they should continue in their prayers and not grow faint or disheartened.

In order to pray properly, the child of God should know what he may pray for. Otherwise he might be asking for the wrong things, such as God would never be pleased to give him. How may we know what things are proper to pray for? The Lord gives us an intimation along this line, of what is proper. He says, If earthly parents are pleased to give good gifts to their children, how much more is the Heavenly Father pleased to give good gifts to His children. The things which earthly fathers give to their children are earthly things. The things that the Heavenly Father is pleased to give to His children are Heavenly things. The world of mankind are not permitted to call God their Father. He disowns them as children. There is only one way to come back into relationship with God, and that is the way that Jesus opened up by His death.

Were not the Jews children of God before Jesus came and died? We answer, No. The very highest expression of God's favor toward any of them was shown in Abraham. And he was called only a friend. "Moses verily was faithful in all his House, as a servant." Those Jews who were not faithful were not even servants. But when Christ came, He made it possible for some to come out and pass from the House of Servants into the House of Sons. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God." (John 1:11,12.) This privilege was not actually granted immediately, but merely in a reckoned way, up to the time when Jesus finished His course, ascended up into Heaven and poured out the Holy Spirit upon His followers. Then they were privileged to become sons of God.

All down the Gospel Age those who receive Him have been privileged to become sons of God. All the good promises of God's Word appertain to these. This class includes not only Jews, but Gentiles, to whom the door of opportunity was thrown open, after the special opportunity which had been granted to the Jews came to an end. Thus we have become Spiritual Israelites and heirs of all the things God promised to this class of sons of God. So when we go to the Father in prayer, it is the privilege of prayer as a New Creature. Whoever has not ceased to be an old creature and has not become a New Creature has no privilege of prayer whatever. The only exception to this is in the case of the children of consecrated parents, and God's favor to them is only on account of their parents' spiritual interests.

THE NEW CREATURE'S GREATEST NEED

Our text means that New Creatures should be persistent in their petitions to God. These may know

what is proper to pray for, by studying the words of Jesus and the Apostles and the Prophets of old. The spirit-begotten ones may thus understand what are the rights and privileges of sons of God. To these the Heavenly Father is more willing to give the Holy Spirit than earthly parents are willing to give good gifts to their children.--Matthew 7:11.

The Holy Spirit is the one thing which the New Creature needs. The New Creature is on trial for the new nature--for glory, honor, immortality. And he can receive these only as he is worthy. The terms on which he is received into spiritual relationship with the Father are that he shall mortify, deaden, the earthly impulses and seek to have the spiritual impulses quickened. What, therefore, he especially needs to strengthen him and bear him up as a New Creature is the Holy Spirit of God. Consequently God is particularly willing to give us this, and especially pleased that we ask for it. This does not mean that earthly interests will be ignored. It means that our Heavenly Father knoweth what things of an earthly character we have need of, just as He knows what

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we have need of for our spiritual welfare.

The Scriptures indicate that God has given us the instructions we need in His inspired Word, the Bible. This Word will make us more and more wise, as we grow in grace and knowledge and in His Spirit, so that in time we shall know exactly what things to pray for and what things not to pray for. At the beginning of our experience, we might not know this so well. The Lord said in speaking of prayer, that the heathen think they shall be heard for their much speaking, and that they use vain repetitions. Their prayers are all vain repetitions. The first petition was vain and all the subsequent petitions were vain, because they are not based upon the conditions necessary to acceptable prayer.

THE MOTIVE AN IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION

All who have come into the Covenant of Sacrifice with Christ may realize that they have the privilege of prayer. What may they pray for? They may not pray with definiteness for earthly things, as the Heavenly Father would not answer any petitions that would not be for the good of His children. St. James speaks of some who offer improper petitions. He says, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts."--James 4:3.

The word lusts here signifies desires. We are not to ask to gratify fleshly desires. For instance, suppose we should pray to the Heavenly Father to send us a million dollars, telling Him that we knew what to do with the money, and how to use it in His work. The Lord probably would not give it--for we would probably be asking

amiss. But it might be that we would think that we were asking wisely. Whenever we ask anything from the

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Lord, we should scrutinize our motives to see if there is any personality connected with the matter. In our own case we should ask ourselves: Do we want that million dollars in order that we may shine in the use of it? If so, such a prayer would be a grossly improper prayer. We might offer such a prayer at the beginning of our Christian experience, and the Father would not chide us for it. We would excuse a child for doing what we would not excuse in one of adult years.

In respect to this matter of prayer our Lord gives us a cue. It is this: "If ye abide in Me and My Words abide in you, ye may ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." (John 15:7.) How broad a statement this is! It might seem at first as though we might ask for anything. But it has very particular limitations. Who are these who may pray thus? These are such as have already become members of His Body--such as have made a full consecration of themselves, and have received the begetting of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, the word abide means not only that they have entered into this relationship, but that they are remaining there, dwelling there; that they are members of the Body of Christ in good standing with Him.

"If My Word abide in you." For God's Word to abide in us implies that we have a knowledge of God's Word. This necessitates the studying of the Word of God, that we may know what to pray for. We should not hasten to offer petitions, and make a great mistake, and then say, I have made a mistake, and have asked for the wrong things. We should consider what the Word of God teaches on this subject, and if any one has become well acquainted with the Word of God, he should know whether or not he has met the conditions which will sanctify his prayer. It is only after he has come to this position that he may continue to make his request, nothing doubting. But very likely he will then find that he has not a very large list of petitions that he can present. What are some of the things we may ask for?

SOME THINGS FOR WHICH TO PRAY

One of the things for which we may pray is that God's Kingdom may come. We may go continually to the Throne of Grace, then, appreciating the fact that God has said that He purposes to have a Kingdom here on earth. And nothing doubting, we are to pray for that Kingdom. And as we pray, we are strengthening our faith more and more. What else may we pray for? We may also pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." But is not this something for the flesh? This is a necessity, and the Lord has warranted us in praying for our necessities.

We are to use our judgment the best we may; yet we are not to trust to our own efforts alone, but to the Lord's supervising care. If, therefore, the temporal supply be scant, we are to learn the lesson of frugality and care of what we have.

We should learn very early in life not to be wasteful. When Jesus fed the multitude with the loaves and fishes, and then instructed His disciples to take up the remainder of these in their baskets, He illustrated His economy. We are to eat with thankfulness what we have, if it is merely bread and water, or potatoes and salt. There is nothing to indicate that we are to ask for pie or cake or ice-cream, but for the necessities. If in God's providence He furnishes the necessities and withholds the luxuries, then we are to be satisfied, to be thankful. But we are to pray and not to be fearful.

What if we do not get anything, tomorrow? Did you waste anything today? Did you eat too much today--twice as much as you had need for? If so, the Lord will probably teach you some lesson, and it will be for your good as a New Creature. But if you have used wisdom and economy, He will provide the things needful. As the Prophet says, "Bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure."

We may pray for deliverance from the Evil One. This should lead us to see that there is an Evil One, and that we are not sufficient of ourselves to resist his attacks successfully. We need the Lord's help at all times, and we need to pray continually and not to faint.

We may pray for the forgiveness of our trespasses. What the Lord indicates in His model prayer is the forgiveness of our daily trespasses--"day by day." And these trespasses are the result of our fleshly imperfections. Our trespasses of the flesh today should be a great deal less than similar trespasses with us ten years ago or five years or even one year ago.

It is best not to use any set form of words in prayer, but merely to think in advance what you desire of the Spirit--more faith, more patience, more meekness, more love. Of course, we shall want to express thanks for Divine care and to request a continuance of the same. With such prayers, however simple, the Heavenly Father is pleased. The prayers recorded in the Bible are generally not lengthy. God accepts as our prayers all the good thoughts and sentiments of our minds, as well as those expressed by our tongues.

Other statements of our Lord and also of the Apostles seem to imply that we should not grow faint-hearted. After we have prayed for a certain thing, we should continue to keep it before our mind, and not conclude that because the prayer was not answered quickly God would never answer it. This would seem to apply to particular, individual things. Our text seems to include the thought that we should have in mind the advantages of prayer in all the affairs of life, coming repeatedly to the Throne of Grace to obtain the necessary aid.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF PRAYER

Will God forget us if we do not ask Him for things, and neglect to do the part of a Father? The answer of the Scriptures is, that this is not so. God has made abundant provision for His children. But we are so constituted that reverence for God and desire for prayer are among the highest qualities of our nature. The organs of veneration and spirituality lie at the top of our head. And those who are not enjoying the exercise of these highest qualities are not getting the proper blessing out of life. Instead of living in the parlor of their brains, so to speak, some people live in the basement. Our true enjoyment comes from the exercise of the highest faculties of the head. Here we can commune with God respecting the highest things, the noblest things, the best things.

The natural tendency of some is toward the baser qualities of the human mind, rather than the higher ones; that of others is toward the nobler sentiments. But all are imperfect. Therefore when any have turned from sin and come into the School of Christ, they are instructed to pray, because this will enable them to get the best results from their own natural combination of faculties. By coming to the Lord with regularity in prayer they are enlisting the best qualities of their own minds. Thus the New Creature is using the highest faculties of the old nature to wean the old creature from the natural habits which he had cultivated through weaknesses of the flesh.

BLIGHT FOLLOWS NEGLECT OF PRAYER

There is a great blessing that comes from prayer! We see that if prayer be neglected, a certain amount of blight comes in; whereas if the New Creature persists in coming to the Lord in prayer, he thus uses the higher organs

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of the mind. He brings out the highest qualities, which will make for Righteousness and Truth, and for the growth of the New Creature. And the New Creature, making use of the higher organs of the brain, makes progress in character-structure and in the Lord's service.

Prayer is the vital breath of the New Creature. We cannot control, nor get the best out of our old bodies except we conform to our Lord's instruction to pray. If prayer was appropriate for our Lord, who was perfect, if He needed to go often to the Father in prayer, even so it is necessary for us to go to the Lord in prayer that we may be more and more transformed by the renewing of our minds. This does not mean that we should be always on our knees, but that we should go with regularity; if possible at least every night and morning.

Some may prefer to stand when they pray, and some to kneel; some to have their eyes open, others to have them closed. In all this the Lord leaves us free to exercise

our own judgment. But some formal approach to the Lord every day should be observed. Not only should we have special seasons of prayer, but we should have the spirit of prayer, which should be with us in all life's affairs. As we are going about the duties of life, we should think, Now I am looking for the Lord's will and way. What shall I do about this matter? And, not stopping to pray again, we think as to what would be the Lord's will. Thus we shall have the Lord's blessing and guidance on that day in everything that is good.

Some persons of active mind have the tendency to make light of Divine guidance and to say, I know what to do. Nobody need tell me--neither the Lord nor anybody else. Such are likely to have this tendency grow on them, and to be unlikely to seek any special counsel.

But the child of God should feel that it is a privilege to have the Lord's approval of every thought, every act and every word. What we do is God's work, not ours. And because it was done a certain way today, does not mean that it would necessarily be done so always. There are certain things that are as fixed as the hills, and others that are not. So with our experiences. The Lord may give us one experience today, and another tomorrow. Today He may be leading us by the still waters and in green pastures; tomorrow the pathway may be thorny and through rough places. Thus day by day we grow in knowledge and grow in love, and we should be ready for whatever experiences may come to us:

"Content whatever lot I see,
Since 'tis God's hand that leadeth me."

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THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN FLESH AND SPIRIT

"Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."--Matt. 26:41.

THESE WORDS were uttered by our Lord to His disciples at the close of His earthly ministry, when the hour was fast approaching in which He would be betrayed and crucified. He knew of this trial that was so close at hand; He had repeatedly mentioned the matter to His disciples; but outward appearances were so contrary to this that they could not appreciate His words. He had often spoken in parables and dark sayings (which they did not fully understand until after His resurrection, though they indeed got many lessons from His sayings). So when He told them that He would be crucified, they thought that it was another dark saying--one of the deep, hidden things, just as when He said, "Unless ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and

drink His blood, ye have no life in you."

They did not understand these things. They saw no evidence that the Roman Government would take any hand in crucifying Him, and they knew that their own nation had no authority for crucifixion. While they knew that some of the Scribes and Pharisees were very indignant, yet they remembered how the people had cried, "Hosanna," and hailed Him as King.

The disciples had been discussing the Kingdom, and questioning as to who should be greatest in that Kingdom. Two of them had made special requests at that time for seats next to Himself. Thus evidently their minds were far from the things that were approaching. When finally He said that some one should betray Him, one after another asked, "Is it I?" And finally St. Peter said, "Though all men shall be offended because of Thee, ...though all should deny Thee, yet will I not deny Thee." But Jesus said, "This night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice."

They thought that the Lord was acting strangely simply because they did not know what He knew of the things near at hand. So this night, in the garden, He said, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation"; He meant for them to be on the alert, for He knew the trying times just at hand for them. But they did not know the battle that was being waged between Christ, the Prince of Light, and Satan, the Prince of Darkness.

They did not understand this in the way we do. They had not yet received the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. The most that they could understand then was that there were temptations, and that they should be on the lookout, guarding themselves and being earnest of spirit--not drowsy nor frivolous, but on guard lest they should fall into some kind of temptation. They were not only to watch, but to pray. The praying would signify that they were watching, and that their own watching was not sufficient, but that they would need, additionally, Divine assistance. What they would be praying for they would be striving for. And the earnestness of the praying would help them in the watching.

The events for which they were to watch included not only our Lord's betrayal, trial and crucifixion, but also their experiences of the subsequent days when the disciples met within closed doors, and those which they were undergoing when Jesus appeared and explained to them that He was risen from the dead. In various ways He manifested Himself to them. If they were in the attitude of watchfulness, in the attitude of praying for wisdom from on High to help them to know the will of God, it would be a very great blessing to them, and the Lord knew this. He knew that they would need help during those days of trial. If they had not had strong faith, the events of the next few days might have overwhelmed them and their faith in the teachings of Jesus. But they were kept in that time of special trial and testing. Jesus prayed for them, and they came off victorious--but some of them

with scars, as St. Peter and St. Thomas.

A SPECIAL SEASON OF TRIAL

This lesson is applicable to us as respects watching and praying. We live in this favored period since Pentecost, in which God's people are privileged to have the leading and guiding of the Holy Spirit; therefore our watching and praying may be, and should be, still more earnest than that of the disciples at the time of our Lord.

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And as they were then entering into a time of special temptation, so we in the end of this Age are living in a time of special trial regarding all that we have learned in the School of Christ as New Creatures, along the lines of meekness, gentleness, brotherly-kindness and love. If we be found short in these, so far as the heart is concerned, we would not be counted worthy to be of the Kingdom class, and therefore would be separated in some way from those who were found worthy.

The Lord had temptations; and all of His faithful disciples must also have temptations. And the Apostle James assures us that the having of temptation and the resisting of temptation will bring us special blessing in our development of the character-likeness of Christ. The Lord, then, did not mean that by watching and praying we would not have temptations come to us, but that we would not fail in those temptations. We might even be ensnared, as St. Peter was, yet he wept bitterly and repented. We know not what his prayers were, but we may be sure that they were full of deep contrition that he had denied his Master.

"The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." This cannot be understood to mean what it would mean in our own case. The disciples at this time were not New Creatures in Christ. They did not receive the begetting of the Spirit until Pentecost. It means more to us than it did at that time to them. To them it merely meant that they were willing in spirit, in mind, in intention. These intentions were to be good. They were to demonstrate that they were "Israelites indeed," and that they were not hypocritical, even though their flesh was weak and had the depravity that had come down through the several thousand years since man fell into sin. Their intention was better than their ability to perform; consequently they needed specially to watch and to pray.

THE NATURE OF THE BATTLE

The same thing is true of the Church from Pentecost to the present time. We note, however, a special distinction between the spirit and the flesh. To the New Creature in Christ Jesus, old things have passed away and all things have become new. (2 Cor. 5:17.) But

the New Creature is weak in one sense of the word, though strong in another sense. It must be strong in the sense that it is of strong determination to have no sympathy with sin or unrighteousness or evil-speaking.

The New Creature represents the power of God, so to speak, that has become identified with us. We have accepted God's will as our will, and have been begotten by His Holy Spirit to a new life. We are therefore styled New Creatures by this begetting. As New Creatures we are at first represented as babes. The difference between the New Creature and the old creature is that the New Creature expects to attain the Divine nature--glory, honor and immortality--while the old creature desires earthly things and comforts of the present life--honor of men, etc.--and is continually pulling toward the things which it desires and craves.

The New Creature must conquer the old creature and its desires, which more or less interfere with the New

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Creature's engagements in the Covenant of Sacrifice. Thus there is a conflict between the New Creature and the old creature. The New Creatures, who realize themselves to be at first but babes in Christ, must grow in grace--grow in the Lord and the power of His might--grow up into Him in all things. Thus gradually the New Creature becomes stronger and stronger.

But, alas, there is often difficulty here. Many of the Lord's people have not been fed on the strong meat; as the Apostle says, "When for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat." (Heb. 5:12.) Many of these do not know what justification by faith means; many do not understand what consecration or sanctification means.

They do not understand that they are merely babes. They have taken the first step, and there is a tendency to believe the word of the ministers, priests and bishops who have told them that they are not to know these deep things, but that their elders and pastors are to know them, and to do the thinking for them. This condition is quite contrary to God's Word. He wishes all of His people to be qualified for telling forth His Truth to others as they have opportunity. Therefore the Apostle advises that we "henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine," but that we become New Creatures in the Lord and thus prepare ourselves for the glorious things to which we have been invited by the Divine promises.--Eph. 4:14,15.

The flesh is weak in that it is not up to the standard of righteousness. Father Adam was perfect, and his fleshly mind was a perfect mind, strong for righteousness. But as the fall brought our race lower and lower, mentally, morally and physically, this flesh gradually became

weaker and weaker. Therefore all flesh is weak in its natural tendencies, the fallen nature strongly in the ascendancy. But we are strong in proportion as the New Creature overcomes these tendencies, so that the flesh is kept as a servant of the New Creature, that the New Creature may be ultimately developed into the character-likeness of the Master.

But people will say, "John ought to make a good business man; but he can talk or think of nothing but religion." Or in the social set, they will say, "Mrs. So-and-so was once very attractive, but now she can talk only about religion." And so it will be with everything else pertaining to the world, if we are true men and true women--performing our Covenant vows unto the Lord, walking faithfully in Jesus' footsteps.

Yet every one is dissatisfied with those who are double-minded. "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." Jesus tells us that before becoming His followers we should sit down and count the cost of discipleship --the cost of serving God. If we do so and make the right decision and continue to serve in harmony with it, we shall get not only the future reward of everlasting life and Divine favor, with glory and honor, but we shall also have the present reward of the Lord's favor, the Lord's care, and fellowship one with another.

LUKEWARMNESS UNDESIRABLE

If after counting the cost of service you decide to serve Mammon, selfishness, then try to be a millionaire. If you desire to enter politics, aspire to be president. If you intend to enter social life, go into it with all your might. A man who is wishy-washy, who does not know what he is doing, does not accomplish much of anything. The Lord says that he likes men to be either hot or cold.

If we are determined to be servants of the Heavenly Father, we are to recognize no other master. This does not mean that we are not to recognize headship. Some one may be master of much of our time. But the controller of our time is not master of our hearts, which are given to the Lord. We seek to use our time, energy and strength in the service of the great King.

A certain portion of our time is necessary for providing for our physical needs and for the needs of those

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dependent upon us. In thus caring for our own we do not lose allegiance to the great God; for we should refuse to become servants of any earthly master if it would be in conflict with our service to the Heavenly Father. This would not interfere with the thought that in the Church of Christ there are varieties of service and activities, each department having its own organization and head. But the Body of Christ working together is to recognize Jesus as the Head over all things, and to seek to know

each his own part in all the affairs of the Body.

We read, "One is your Master, even Christ." And yet Christ is not the one referred to here in our text-- "No man can serve two masters"; these are God and Mammon. Jesus said, "I delight to do Thy will, O God." "I came not to do Mine own will, but the will of the Father who sent Me." So, then, in serving Jesus and recognizing Him as our Master, we are not ignoring the Father. Likewise in recognizing order in the Church we are not ignoring the Father or the Son. And in serving an earthly master, we are not to think of this service as conflicting with the service of our Heavenly Father and of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are to see that we have been directed to provide things honest and decent in the sight of all men.--Romans 12:17.

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THE REPORT OF THE SPIES

--OCTOBER 19.--NUMBERS 13:1-3,17 TO 14:25.--

"If God be for us, who can be against us?"--Romans 8:31.

THE first journey of the Israelites was from Egypt to Mt. Sinai, where they remained about a year. Their second journey began after the appointment of the seventy Elders, and after Miriam had been received back into the Camp. The start was with some ceremonial --the blowing of silver trumpets, the leading of the pillar of cloud and fire, and Moses' invocation, "Arise, O Lord, and let Thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate Thee flee before Thee." This was the morning call of the Israelites; and in the evening, as the host rested for the night, Moses prayed, "Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel." In other words, "Abide with us."

Their journey led through a waste, barren wilderness, scorched by the sun, very different from Sinai's valleys, in which they had recuperated and rested. The journey to Kadesh-Barnea, on the border of the land of Canaan, was approximately 160 miles. It was beset with unknown dangers--serpents, wandering bands of Arabs, lack of water, etc. The Israelites, including women, children, household goods, cattle and sheep, etc., necessarily journeyed slowly. Apparently one or two months were spent on the journey, as they arrived at the time of the first ripe grapes--July.

Kadesh-Barnea, their objective point, is a delightful place, well watered, and is a sharp contrast with the Desert of Paran. Here they rested and refreshed themselves, and looked toward the mountains north of them, their Land of Promise; for they were on the south border.

TIMIDITY OF THE ISRAELITES

Moses, full of faith, proposed that they should forthwith proceed--enter the land of Canaan, the Land of Promise, full of faith in God, who already had manifested His favor toward them in so many ways--in their deliverance from Egypt; in the crossing of the Red Sea; in the sweetening of the waters of Marah; in giving them the victory over their enemies, the Amalekites; in sending them the manna, and later the quail; in manifesting His favor toward them in the Covenant at Mt. Sinai, and in the manifestation of His presence with them in the Tabernacle and in the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night.

But the Israelites were timid. They had no knowledge of war, excepting a little experience with the Amalekites near Mt. Sinai; and they had been worsted until God helped them while Moses' hands were uplifted in prayer on their behalf. Their caution over-balanced their faith. They urged upon Moses the sending of the twelve spies. These apparently were divided under two leaders, Caleb and Joshua. One party went the full length of the land, and returned in the short space of forty days; the other took a shorter journey, and returned sooner. The spies were cautious men, and gave a truthful report of the land, declaring that its cities had high walls and would be difficult to overcome, especially without up-to-date military equipments. They reported also that they had seen giants, probably some of the same families afterwards represented by Goliath, whom David slew in battle. The report of these ten is described as an evil report, because they presented the matter from the viewpoint of its difficulties, as in contrast with the report made by Caleb and Joshua, which is styled a good report, because it was encouraging. These two emphasized the favorable features--the fruits, the honey, the fertility of the country. Their report was backed by faith, while the adverse report was backed by fears, which forgot the Divine providences and leadings.

The spies really should have considered themselves a

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committee on ways and means for entering the land of Canaan rather than a committee to decide whether it was possible to enter it or not. The possibilities were already determined by God's promises, hence Joshua and Caleb left these out of account. If God could deliver them from the Egyptians and from the Amalekites, could give them water in the desert and bread from Heaven, He surely could do all that was necessary to fulfil His promise to bring them into possession of Canaan.

THE LESSON FOR SPIRITUAL ISRAELITES

Various lessons may be drawn by Spiritual Israelites

from the experiences of the typical people. If we view the matter from the personal standpoint, we may see that each Christian has from the Almighty a special invitation to enter into Canaan's rest and to take possession of the blessings promised by the Lord. He turns his back upon Satan and the world, typified by Pharaoh and the Egyptians. By faith he puts between him and the Adversary a firm resolution for righteousness and obedience to God, through whose providential leadings he reaches the place of making the covenant.

Thenceforth as a New Creature he journeys on, beset by the trials of the wilderness journey, until he comes to the position of an advance soldier of the Cross. There he perceives the new life, the new experiences before him, in harmony with God's promises. He would at once with faith and courage enter in and possess himself of all the good things of the spiritual life.

The enemies of the land to him would represent the weaknesses of the flesh and the oppositions of his fallen nature, all of which are to be overcome. To the extent that he can overcome these, he enters into and possesses and enjoys his inheritance promised of the Lord. Some can do this promptly, by reason of faith; others make

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investigation of the trials and alas! too often become discouraged, fearful, distrustful, murmurers--sometimes wishing that they had not left the world at all, and that they could return thither.

The reports of the spies represent the different viewpoints from which the promises of God may be seen. To the eye of faith, all things are possible; to the eye of unbelief, all things, in the way of the conquest of the flesh, are impossible. Let us go up and possess the Land! Let us be of good courage and fight the good fight! God will be with us and give us the victory, with the proper exercise of faith!

DID GOD ENCOURAGE WAR?

In studying this lesson, remembering that the Israelites were invading a land possessed by other people, remembering that this invasion meant the loss of many lives amongst the Israelites, as well as amongst the people of Canaan, many are perplexed. They say, It does not seem reasonable to believe that God gave such a message to Moses and to the Israelites. They say, Contrast this with the Scriptural declaration that Jesus is the Prince of Peace, and that God "will make wars to cease unto the ends of the earth." Agnostics inquire, How are these things reconciled? Where is the justice of commissioning the Israelites to steal the lands of the Canaanites, yea, to murder them? And according to some Scriptures, they were to utterly exterminate all the peoples of the land, Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, etc.

We reply that to understand the Bible we must view it from the Bible's own standpoint, and not from the standpoint of our creeds formulated in the darker days, nor from the standpoint of our own imperfect reasoning. The Bible is consistent, beautiful, Godlike, only when viewed in its own light.

In the first place, we must remember that the Bible entirely antagonizes the theories of our creeds, which tell us that all those slaughtered Canaanites went straight to an eternity of torture, and are suffering there yet, because they did not know the true God and Jesus Christ, whom He sent to be the Savior. The Bible tells us that those people and all the people in the whole world are children of Adam, and all perishing because of the death sentence. When they die, they are not alive anywhere. They are dead. Whether they die by pestilence, or famine, or consumption, or pneumonia, or otherwise, it is all the same. They are suffering the penalty that God pronounced; namely, "Dying, thou shalt die."--Genesis 2:17, margin.

It matters not, therefore, in what way we die, or very much whether our experiences be longer or shorter. In the case of the Amalekites and other peoples of Canaan, God declared that their iniquity had come to the full. That is to say, Divine Justice determined that for them to live longer would not be to their advantage, nor to anybody's advantage. They were merely cumbering the earth.

God was using the Israelites as a typical people, through whom He was making types and shadows of coming blessings. He would give Canaan to Israel, and thus make another type of how the antitypical Israel will enter and possess the antitypical Canaan. He would make the slaughter of the people of the land to illustrate the destruction of the works of the flesh and the Devil which His people are to accomplish in themselves by fighting the good fight of faith and overcoming the evil tendencies which have become entrenched in their own flesh.

NO INJUSTICE TO THE CANAANITES

Although God is not bound by Justice to give any future life to anybody, He has arranged so to do. To this end Christ already has died for the sins of the whole world--including the Canaanites, as well as the Israelites. Aside from this Plan of redemption the whole race would have perished under the death sentence. By God's grace, however, we are not to perish, but to be recovered from the death sentence. So we read, "God so loved the world that He gave His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish."--John 3:16.

As all the world came into the death condition by one man's disobedience, so all are to be rescued from death conditions by the obedience of another One, "The Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a Ransom for all"; "As by a man came death, by a man also comes the resurrection of the dead"; "As all in Adam die, even so all in Christ shall be made alive"--the Church the First-Fruits.--

I Corinthians 15:21,22; Revelation 20:6.

In a word, God's proposal is that Messiah's Kingdom, the members of which are now being selected from the world--the Church, the Bride--will for a thousand years, with the Redeemer, bless and uplift and restore all the nations of earth--from sin, degradation, death, the tomb.

Jesus explains that the Sodomites will be of this class to be restored by resurrection processes, and so also will, with those Canaanites, be subjects of Restitution.--Ezekiel 16:55; Mark 6:11; Acts 3:19-21.

DEAF EARS TO BE UNSTOPPED

Nobody will receive God's blessing except through faith in the Lord Jesus as the Redeemer. But the promise of God is that He as the true Light shall yet enlighten "every man that cometh into the world." The Canaanites, the Sodomites, and all the people that lived before Jesus' day must have an equal chance with others to hear the Message of God's favor--the opportunity to believe in Jesus as the Redeemer and to obey His voice.

The same will apply to all the heathen of our day, and the thousands of millions from Jesus' day until now. And the same will apply to the great mass of heathen who have lived in Christian lands, but whose eyes and ears have been holden by Satan--by false doctrines--so that they could not understand and appreciate the Message of the Love of God. The assurance of the Scriptures is that all the blind eyes shall be opened and all the deaf ears unstopped, and that the knowledge of the glory of God shall fill the whole earth.

The Church, under the Headship of Jesus, is the Spiritual Seed of Abraham, and in and through these will come the blessing of Messiah's Kingdom for a thousand years unto every nation, people, kindred and tongue.--Gal. 3:29.

All men are to be rescued from the penalty of the Adamic death. All are to have a full opportunity of knowing about the Savior and of accepting Him. With the knowledge will come responsibility. Whoever willingly and knowingly rejects the grace of God, and chooses sin in preference to righteousness, will be esteemed a wicked sinner, unworthy of everlasting life or any further favors of God. Such, the Bible says, will die the Second Death. From it there will be no redemption; for Christ shall die no more. Hence from it there will be no resurrection. As St. Paul declares, they shall be punished with everlasting destruction. (2 Thess. 1:9.) As St. Peter declares, they shall perish like natural brute beasts.--2 Peter 2:12.

The present life does not end hope for any except those who have come to a clear knowledge of God and who have chosen sin with wilful deliberation. As for other trespasses, the Bible assures us that they will all receive a just penalty: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." But the horrible doctrine of eternal torment, which has been driving so many away from God and the Bible, is not a Bible teaching, but a part of what

St. Paul styles the "doctrines of devils."--I Timothy 4:1

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A GOOD MAN'S SIN

--OCTOBER 26.--NUMBERS 20:1-13.--

"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my Redeemer."--Psalm 19:14.

ISRAEL'S fortieth year after leaving Egypt was God's appointed time for them to enter the land of Canaan. Moses was in his one hundred and twentieth year, but yet quite vigorous. His sister Miriam had died previously; Aaron, his elder brother, still lived, but died the same year. For thirty-eight years the Children of Israel had resided in the wilderness, making Kadesh-Barnea their camp center, but really occupying a considerable portion of the wilderness with their flocks and herds.

It was in April of the fortieth year that, by Divine command through Moses, they assembled at Kadesh, prepared to enter into the Land of Promise. But the water supply was scant. The people and their cattle were famishing. Murmurings arose, and inquiries if it were not as well to have perished in Egypt or elsewhere as to perish there from thirst.

The burden naturally fell upon Moses, shared, however, by his brother Aaron. All leaders of honor and influence carry weighty responsibilities. Moses and Aaron in turn went to the Lord with the matter, not complainingly, but inquiringly--desiring guidance from on High--from the real Leader of Israel. Nor did they go in vain. The Lord graciously manifested Himself--"The glory of the Lord appeared unto them"--quite possibly also manifest to the people of Israel, who looked on. This glory is surmised to have been a ray of light emanating from the Mercy Seat in the Most Holy.

They were to take the rod, presumably "Aaron's rod that budded," and that was kept in the Ark in the Most Holy. That rod would be a reminder to the people of the Lord's special acceptance of Aaron as the High priest and assistant of Moses. It would be a sign to them of the Divine favor which hitherto had guided their nation, and which still would continue to guide all who would trust in the Lord and in the power of His might.

SMITING THE ROCK A SIN

The Lord particularly directed that Moses should

speak to the rock, and that in response to the word waters would rush forth. On a previous occasion, about thirty-eight years before, in a similar experience near Mt.

Sinai, Moses had been instructed to smite the rock; but in this case the rock was not to be smitten. Here Moses and Aaron sinned. "The meekest man in all the earth" forgot himself, and allowed a spirit somewhat akin to pride, self-sufficiency and anger to control him for the moment. Smiting the rock, he cried aloud to the people, "Ye rebels, must I bring you water out of the rock?"

The water indeed came forth, as the Lord had promised. The people indeed got the blessing needed, but one of the most illustrious men and servants of God there fell under Divine disapprobation. The Lord's decree was that neither Moses nor his brother should enter Canaan. Moses, however, was permitted to go with the people to the end of their journey, and then from Mt. Nebo to see the land across the Jordan.

This condemnation does not signify the Divine reprobation to eternal torment or to any lasting dishonor.

Moses got his entire punishment then and there, before death, as do all of God's saintly ones. Whatever stripes, chastisements, punishments, of the future shall be meted out to mankind in general because of wrong doings in the present life, there are none reserved for the saints. The Apostle explains that they are chastened in the present life, that they may not come into condemnation with the world by and by.

THEY DRANK OF THE ROCK--CHRIST

St. Paul points out to us that the smiting of the rock was symbolical. As the manna, the bread from heaven, represented Jesus, so the smitten rock represented Him also. The refreshing water from the rock symbolized the blessings which flow from Christ's sacrifice. The smiting of the rock at the beginning of Israel's experience was authorized of God. It was necessary that upon Jesus should fall the rod of affliction, even unto death:

(1) "The Lord laid upon Him [the death penalty for] the iniquity of us all";

(2) "By His stripes we are healed."--Isaiah 53:5,6.

St. Paul's words are, "They did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ."-- I Corinthians 10:4.

Just what was symbolized by the second smiting, which God did not authorize, is not explained by St. Paul. The fact that this second smiting was punished tells us that it was wrong, and that it symbolized some improper course on the part of the professed people of God. Two suggestions come to us, either or both of which may be applicable.

(1) This second smiting, at the end of the forty years and just as the people were about to be led into the Promised Land, may symbolize a smiting of the people of God

--the Body of Christ which is the Church. A number of Scriptures appertaining to the Gospel Age give the inference that some of the saintly members of the Body of Christ in the end of this Age will be put to shame, or, perhaps, put to death--and thus enter into glory, as did the Master, when He was smitten. In His case the high priest declared that it was expedient that one should suffer, rather than that the entire Jewish people should perish as a nation.--John 11:50.

The religious rulers conspired against the Master--as they supposed, for God's glory. The suggestion has been offered that similarly, in the end of this Gospel Age, religious leaders, moved by similar motives of self-preservation, may conspire for the smiting, the injury, of some of the Lord's followers. If this be a proper interpretation of the type, it indicates that under the Divine providence blessings will flow from the wrong course, yet no greater blessing than might have come by pursuing the right course--of speaking to the rock, asking for the water, the Truth, the refreshment, instead of smiting it.

(2) The other thought, closely related to this one, is that any denial of the Redeemer on the part of His consecrated followers would signify a crucifying afresh, a putting to open shame, a smiting of the rock the second time. St. Paul explains that such a repudiation of the Word of Christ by those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the Heavenly gift and of the powers of the world to come, etc., would mean for them an unworthiness of any place in the Heavenly Kingdom--that they would die the Second Death.--Hebrews 6:4-7.

The fact that both Moses and Aaron participated in the type, and that neither entered the land of Canaan, signifies that the very highest dignitaries and most enlightened members of the Royal Priesthood might be in danger of committing the sin typified, or pictured, in the second and unauthorized smiting of the rock. On the

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contrary, those who smote the antitypical Rock the first time--those who crucified Christ--the Scriptures assure us did so ignorantly and merely fulfilled the Divine intention. "I wot, brethren, that in ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers"; "for if they had known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."--Acts 3:17; I Corinthians 2:8.

LESSONS FOR SPIRITUAL LEADERS

If "the meekest man in all the earth," after long years of training and experience, made such a failure, even typically, the lesson to all spiritual leaders should be an impressive one. It says to us in inspired words, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." The Lord declares (v. 12) that the sin of Moses and Aaron was one of unbelief, "because ye believed Me not--to

sanctify Me in the eyes of Israel."

It did require faith in God for Moses to smite the rock. Apparently his lack of faith was in the people. Apparently he wished to produce a dramatic effect--to impress upon them a lasting lesson, "Ye rebels, must I bring you water out of the rock by a blow from this rod?" The effect may have been dramatic. The people may have stood in awe of Moses, but all the same, that was not the best way for dealing with the matter; for it was not God's way. Better would it have been for Moses to have hidden himself--humbled himself--and to have asked water from the rock in Jehovah's name.

Class leaders, Elders, ministers in the Church of Christ, will do well to remember that the blessings which God has arranged shall flow to His people from the smitten Jesus and will come for the asking; and that they are not authorized either to smite the "rock" or to pose dramatically before the people of God as necessary to the supply of the streams of grace and Truth.

On the other hand, the Lord's people, Spiritual Israel, thirsting for grace and Truth now due, are to feel a great deal of sympathy for those who occupy teaching positions. There never was a time surely when the honesty and the faithfulness of the Lord's servants were more severely tested than now. What all need is meekness, patience, longsuffering, brotherly-kindness, love--loyalty to God--faithfulness to their Covenant.

EDOMITES, MOABITES, MIDIANITES

The various nations inhabiting the Promised Land, whose iniquity had come to the full and who were to be dispossessed by Israel, were not related to Abraham; but the Edomites, Moabites and Midianites, who dwelt to the south and the east of the Promised Land, were of blood relationship to Israel. The Midianites were children of

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Abraham by Keturah. The Moabites were children of Lot, Abraham's nephew. The Edomites were the descendants of Esau, Jacob's brother. The Divine Program was that Israel might leave these related peoples unmolested, except when they made the attack.

When the time came to enter Canaan from Kadesh, the nearest route would have been through Edom. The Israelites asked permission to cross Edom without injuring their people, and offered to make good any damage of any kind. They were refused permission, and, in harmony with the covenant between Esau and Jacob, Israel's host detoured to the south and passed through the land of Moab--the land of the children of Lot.

This detour of so vast a company through the desert was disheartening, "and the soul of the people was much discouraged." Again there came murmurings against Moses, who really represented God to them. Their murmurings

were promptly punished--they were not protected from the serpents prevailing in that vicinity. The result was terrible. Many died from the serpents, until Moses made a brazen one and erected it on a pole. Throughout all the Camp went messages, directing the people to look to the brazen serpent, exercise faith and be healed of their sickness.

POINT THE SIN-BITTEN TO THE SAVIOR

Thus not only were the Natural Israelites corrected, chastened, punished, but a lasting lesson was written for the benefit of Spiritual Israelites. We see that the fiery serpent of sin has bitten our race, that we are all dying, and that only by the exercise of faith in the Crucified One can any be healed. Our mission has been during the reign of Sin and Death to point the sin-bitten to the Savior. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up." "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me," said Jesus. --John 3:14; 12:32.

In the present time, comparatively few hear the Message, or see with the eye of faith the Crucified One. The great mass are dying in heathen darkness; only the few have had opportunity to exercise faith in Christ. Thank God, the day is nearing when He who was lifted up at Calvary, and afterward lifted up in resurrection power, will be manifested in power and great glory--"the true Light which will lighten every man which cometh into the world!" If they do not respond, the fault will be their own. (Matthew 24:30; John 1:9-11.) That glorious condition will come through Messiah's Kingdom, for which still we are praying, "Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in Heaven."

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THE LONDON CONVENTION--AUGUST 1-4

THERE is necessarily a considerable difference between a Convention held in a great city and one held in a country-side. There is also a slight temperamental difference between the blended English character of America and Canada and the composite English of Great Britain; hence there is always a slight difference between the Conventions held on opposite sides of the Atlantic. But the oneness of spirit of all the dear Conventioneers is manifest to everybody who has attended both. And how reasonable this is! All spirit-begotten, all children of the one Father, all patterning themselves after the same glorious Savior, these dear ones must have many wonderfully harmonious characteristics.

"By one Spirit we were all baptized into one Body."--I Corinthians 12:13.

Find the members of that one Body where we may we find them of that one Spirit. It is always beautiful. It is always separate from the world. It is always showing forth the praises of "Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light." It is always striving to let its light so shine before others as to glorify the Father.

The world-wide Harvest Message could have no more potent testimony than this--the oneness of spirit manifested among the members of the Body of Christ. It is gathering the wheat class to the Lord, to His Word and into sympathy with each other. Some of the wheat is more and some less ripe, but gradually the glorious sunlight of Truth is producing a ripening and separating effect. Wherever it enters it rests, abides. This is one reason, we believe, why it is so generally said on every occasion that the last Convention is the best. All of our joys, all of our spiritual blessings, are

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largely what we make them; or, rather, what the Lord is able to make them for us. We can be filled with His Spirit only in proportion as we become emptied of self and fully submitted to Him. We can be taught in the School of Christ only in proportion as we realize our own insufficiency and need of guidance in the ways of the Lord and submit ourselves to the Master's instruction.

The Convention just closed has been a most interesting and profitable one. So far as we know the sentiment of all present was, "It is good to be here." Although not as abundantly furnished with able speakers as the American Conventions usually are, it was nevertheless admirably served, and a number of very able addresses were given along various lines of Bible study. Helpful thoughts and ennobling impulses were started which, it is hoped, were carried to the homes of many and then scattered further around, to the glory of the Lord and to the comfort of His people. The spiritual fellowship, which is always one of the chief features of the blessing of a Convention, seemed to be thoroughly enjoyed and participated in by all.

The total number in attendance from outside the London Tabernacle Congregation was about nine hundred, the most of these from nearby towns and cities, though some of them came from Germany, Denmark and Sweden, besides an American representation. One hundred and sixty-nine symbolized their consecration by water immersion, symbolized their immersion into Christ's death.--Romans 6:3-5.

Brother Russell arrived in good time for the beginning of the Convention, and was with it throughout.

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LITERAL OR SYMBOLIC FIRE?

"But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same Word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the Day of Judgment and perdition of ungodly men."--2 Peter 3:7.

WE HAVE been asked whether this prophecy may be expected to be fulfilled in some way with more or less literalness as, for instance, by electrical displays of lightning, by storms, or in connection with the zone of electrical energy which some scientists believe is approaching the earth, etc., and whether this thought, if accepted as true, would be in line with Exodus 9:23: "And the Lord sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt."

We still think that the great fire that the Lord mentions through St. Peter, Zephaniah, the Prophet David and others is to be a symbolic fire. The Prophets declare that the fire of that great Day shall burn up the wicked--root and branch. And it would seem to signify that God's Justice, indignation, will burn against every one who is wicked, and that this fire will go on all through the Millennial Age--"that Day," the thousand-year Day. It will leave of the wicked neither root nor branch.

HUMAN MIND BROADENING TO RIGHTEOUS PRINCIPLES

The fire begins in the beginning of that Day, in the great time of trouble. The fire here would seem to be of this same kind. The judgments of the Lord will be abroad in the earth, and the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. The Lord spoke of a fire being already kindled in the Jewish nation. Trouble came upon them until their entire polity passed away--in the year A. D. 70. And so we see now that more or less there are fires burning here and there, exposing, to some extent, the evil-doers.--Isa. 26:9; Luke 12:49.

This has been going on for some time, and is to a certain extent broadening the human mind to the principles of justice and injustice. This is taking hold on business methods in a way that was never before known. We hear a great deal about the political chicanery of the present, but the world has never had so righteous, so just and equitable business arrangements as at the present time. And this is not because the people are more righteous than their forefathers, but because they are coming to see better methods of business. But present conditions will eventuate in a great time of trouble, in which the Capital element and the Labor element will each seek to burn the other up--and it will, no doubt, be a great conflagration.

The whole structure will be involved in anarchy, which, however, will be only temporary, because of the establishment of Messiah's Kingdom.

WATCH, RATHER THAN SPECULATE

As the Apostle Peter seems to imply that the "heavens" will be on fire and the "earth" also, the conflagration might possibly have its beginning in the Church. We see more or less of an excitement now amongst theologians and all classes. We see that people are more or less losing confidence in their leaders of the past, and it looks as though the "heavens" will pass away with a great deal of struggle and great commotion. Just now they are having a little diversion with special attacks on us. They do not yet have so much to do against each other, because they are all busily engaged in doing what they can against us.

All this will not interfere with the facts presented in STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES--re the change of Dispensations. We have the assurance from the Scriptures that Messiah's Kingdom will bring the world great blessings, and we wonder how these blessings will come. There will be a new arrangement of things in the affairs of the earth, but just what will be the nature of the physical changes, or how these will be brought about, we do not know. We are not to suppose that there will be another canopy of water to make another Deluge, for the Lord has declared that there will never be another world-wide flood.

It would be very unwise for us to speculate on anything not revealed in the Bible. We prefer to keep our eyes open and not allow our minds to specially dwell on any one theory. Our confidence is not in any one method, but in the ONE who has all power. We feel sure that all He has promised will be fulfilled. It is not necessary to decide the point in our own mind even, let alone mentioning it to others.

SIGNS OF DISPENSATIONAL CHANGES

Then it is to be borne in mind that Joel's account of the Pentecostal blessing is divided into two parts--the blessing upon the servants and handmaidens, and that upon all flesh. According to this, the servants and handmaidens of the Lord have special blessing at the present time. With the conclusion of the blessing of the servants and handmaidens comes the fulfilment of the other prophecy--the pouring out of the Spirit upon all flesh. This evidently refers to the blessing of the whole world by the Church during the thousand years. And in this connection we see that the Lord will show signs and wonders, clouds, "blood

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and fire and pillars of smoke." We have no positive knowledge that this language is symbolic. It may refer to social upheaval and combustion, political troubles, financial

troubles, and also some great physical manifestations of Divine Power in connection with the time of trouble.

But all this is only suppositionary. We are expecting a change; and if this change shall be accompanied by physical disturbances, now is the time for them to be coming. For the Lord says, "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy Mountain"--Kingdom. The supposition that there would be catastrophe then would be out of harmony with this prophecy. Rather, the appropriate time, if there are to be such calamities and changes, physical or electrical, would seem to be just now--just at the time when, as the Lord forewarned, there is to be "a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation"--at the time, apparently, when the "four winds," the fallen angels, will become loose.

All of these things together will constitute the "time of trouble such as never was." And from this time of trouble, "Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape." Watch that ye may "escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."--Luke 21:36.

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QUESTION ON JUSTIFICATION

QUESTION.--Have you changed your views respecting the justification of the Church, so that the presentations of STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, Volume I, on this subject no longer represent your thought?

Answer.--Surely not! If we have, why would we continue to publish and circulate the Volume? "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." So the subject of our justification is clarifying daily to many of the Lord's dear people. Features of justification not previously discerned by them are now very clear. For instance, many failed to see in the past, and some still fail to see, that justification by faith is a gradual process. Each step of faith brought us nearer to the climax.

But the climax was not wholly reached until our faith manifested its perfection by our obedience and full surrender in consecration to the Lord. Then our great Advocate accepted our consecrated bodies and imputed to them of His merit, absolutely justifying them in the sight of Justice--the Heavenly Father. Then it was that the Heavenly Father accepted that completely justified soul by the begetting of the Holy Spirit. Thenceforth he was a New Creature, and a son begotten to the spirit plane.

During the period of progress in faith, justification was being gradually approached, and the individual had more and more of the Divine favor. But not until the

final step was taken did he become fully justified to human nature--a son on the earthly plane. And only for an instant did he there remain. Then the begetting of the Holy Spirit indicated the acceptance of the sacrifice of the perfected one, and started him as a New Creature.

TENTATIVE AND ACTUAL SONSHIP

All this is indicated in the Chart of the Ages. Plane N represents the justified condition in its various steps. Thus Abraham and others of the Old Testament times were justified before God by their faith. They were not justified to life, not justified even to sonship. They were justified to God's friendship, favor and supervisory care. After Jesus had died, risen, ascended and made application of His merit on the Church's behalf, He became the Advocate of all this class, desirous of walking in His steps in full consecration. The imputation of His merit constitutes for each one the work of justification, and this makes it possible for God to accept his sacrifice and to beget him to the new nature.

Abraham was styled God's friend, because of his faith and desire for harmony with God. So was John the Baptist, of whom we read, "The friend of the Bridegroom ...rejoiceth greatly because of the Bridegroom's voice." The term "servant" is in the Bible specially applied to those Jews who were under the Mosaic Law

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Covenant. By that Covenant they enjoyed God's care and blessing, and were permitted to be His servants. Although many of them, as well as Abraham, were friends of God, and would have been fully qualified for all the sonship privileges, nevertheless it was not possible, in harmony with the Divine arrangement, for them to be recognized as sons. For, as the Apostle explains, a "son abideth forever," and not until Christ's sacrifice had opened the way for the cancellation of sin and death, could any be received to Divine sonship.

Likewise our standing even now as sons of God is tentative. If we abide in God's love, we shall abide as His sons and be perfected in due time. But if any man draw back to wilful sin and its service, he will lose his sonship. His name will be blotted out of the Lamb's Book of Life. The Advocate with the Father would cease to recognize him. He would have no standing with the Son, and another would be permitted to take his place as a member of the Body of the Anointed.

Thus the Apostle declares, "Now are we the sons of God [in embryo], and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear [our Redeemer, our Head], we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." (I John 3:2.) That is to say, our present sonship is tentative. The actual sonship will begin after we shall have passed our probationary trial. As

many as shall prove acceptable by their faith and loyalty will be made sons in the fullest sense, by the glorious resurrection change. Thus we see that as none are fully received to plane N until they have gone the full length of consecration, so none will be fully received to sonship until they shall have reached plane L.

THE "BETTER RESURRECTION"

Although the Ancient Worthies, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, the Prophets, etc. (Hebrews 11:38-40), could not be styled sons of God, and were not so named, it was not because they were not worthy of such a station and such a name. The Apostle draws our attention to this, assuring us that they "pleased God," and nothing pleases Him short of perfection of heart. The only thing which hindered their acceptance as sons was the necessity that first the Atonement blood should be presented on their behalf. In the "better resurrection" which the Ancient Worthies will experience, they will, we understand, come forth perfect men. They will be perfect as was Adam before his sin, and with minds, hearts and wills developed, exercised, tested, proved loyal to God. In that perfect condition they will be samples of what all mankind may attain by obedience during Messiah's Reign.

From the moment of their resurrection, these perfect men would have the same right to come to God as had Adam, and would be as fully entitled to be called sons of God as was Adam, except for one thing. And that is, that

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the Ancient Worthies, as well as the rest of mankind, will be in the hands of the great Mediator of the New Covenant for the thousand years of His Messianic Kingdom. And, according to the Scriptures, not until the end of that period will He deliver up the Kingdom to the Father.

Hence we understand that the Ancient Worthies will have no direct dealing with the Father as sons, and no direct recognition from Him as such, until the end of Christ's Reign, when He will deliver over to the Father all things, that He may be "all in all," and that all may be directly subject to Him. During the thousand years, however, under Christ's Mediatorial arrangements, the Ancient Worthies, perfected, and all others, in proportion to their attainment of perfection, will enjoy privileges and blessings, because they will no longer be under a reign of sin and death and of Satan, the "Prince of this World," but under the Prince of Life and His reign of Righteousness, unto Life.

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ARE SUICIDES MORALLY RESPONSIBLE?

Question.--Please give the correct idea as to the end of one who commits suicide. Will he be punished for it? Or is death his punishment?

Answer.--The theory that suicides are hopelessly lost was formulated during the Dark Ages. The thought was that self-murder, being a sin committed as a last act, indicated a mind and heart out of accord with God's arrangement to the last moment of life. The thought that death ends all hope clinched the theory that eternal torment is the wages of suicide. This, we believe, is thoroughly wrong in every way. The proper view according to the Bible is this:

(1) Adam was disobedient, was sentenced to death. Thus his race was born under unfavorable conditions, mental, moral and physical; in degeneracy, some more, some less; some in very poor physical health, some of very low moral status, some with very weak mental powers. A suicide often has all three of these inducing causes as provocations to such an act. Surely he was either mentally weak or uninformed, ignorant; else he would not take his own life. His trouble, then, was weakness of mind and judgment caused by Adam's transgression. He was a sharer of Adam's penalty--the death penalty; and when he died--no matter how--he came fully under the effect of that penalty--nothing more. Eternal torment is not in any way intimated in the death penalty. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die."

(2) God had mercy upon Adam, not in the way of abrogating the decision of the Divine Court and clearing the guilty one, but in another way--by providing redemption through the death of Christ. Jesus' death, by Divine appointment, is to cover the sin of Adam--not only his original transgression and its penalty, but all the transgressions of his children, the world, which have resulted from his mental, moral and physical impairment.

(3) This provision of God includes not only mental sickness, but moral sickness and physical sickness. All mankind are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ.

(4) The redemption of the world implies its eventual release from the condemnation of death. The time Divinely appointed for the release of all is the thousand years of Christ's Reign--the Millennium. All mankind will then be liberated from the original condemnation, and will be granted a full opportunity for the recovery of all that was lost. The mentally sick, the morally sick, and the physically decrepit--all will have opportunity for a full return to human perfection.

(5) The only exceptions to this rule of restoration to Adam's original perfection will be those who during this Gospel Age--from the death of Christ to His Second Coming--are called out of the world, invited to become New Creatures in Christ, and made associates with Jesus, sharers in His exaltation to the Divine nature and in His office. These are justified (reckoned perfect) by faith in Christ's redemptive sacrifice, and then given the

opportunity to present themselves as living sacrifices.--
Romans 12:1.

(6) As Christians, during this Gospel Age, might sin wilfully and thus forfeit all relationship to God and die the Second Death, so in the coming Age, during the Millennium, the world in general, after having been brought to an accurate knowledge of the Truth, may by wilful sin forfeit all relationship to God, and die the Second Death.

(7) In thus declaring that not only the sins of the Church class, but the sins of the whole world, are covered by God's arrangement through the sacrifice of Christ, we are not to be understood as meaning that the sinner is exempted from all punishment. On the contrary, each one has a responsibility for his own actions, even if he has but imperfect knowledge. His responsibility, as Jesus pointed out, is in proportion to his knowledge.

The Master declared that he that knows his Master's will, and does it not, shall be punished with many stripes--severe punishment; and he who knows less of his Master's will, and does it not, shall be punished with fewer stripes--less punishment. Sometimes those stripes, or punishments, come in the present life. With the Church class it is uniformly so. But often the punishments are not meted out in the present life; however, they will be administered justly in the life to come. So the Apostle declares, "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some they follow after."--I Timothy 5:24.

(8) Along the above lines, we would not be inclined to hope that any suicide could be a member of the glorified Church of Christ, but, at most, a part of the world--to have trial with the remainder of the world for life or death everlasting under the favorable conditions of Messiah's Kingdom. However, even upon this point we may not dogmatize, remembering that some, apparently saintly, have been permitted of the Lord to lose their reason to a greater extent than some of the world who have committed suicide.

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STILL THERE IS ROOM

Day is declining and the sun is low;
The shadows lengthen, light makes haste to go;
Room, room, still room! Oh, enter now!

The bridal hall is filling for the feast;
Pass in, pass in, and be the Bridegroom's guest.
Room, room, still room! Oh, enter now!

It fills, it fills, that hall of jubilee!
Make haste, make haste; 'tis not too full for thee.

Room, room, still room! Oh, enter now!

Pass in, pass in! That banquet is for thee;
That cup of everlasting Love is free.
Room, room, still room! Oh, enter now!

Louder and sweeter sounds the loving call--
Come, lingerer, come; enter that festal hall!
Room, room, still room! Oh, enter now!--H. Bonar