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### BETHEL HYMNS FOR MAY

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 May follow: (1) 165; (2) 170; (3) 321; (4) 307; (5) 1; (6) 226; (7) 91; (8) 128; (9) 136; (10) 10; (11) 326; (12) 160; (13) 145; (14) 310; (15) 279; (16) 119; (17) 109; (18) 305; (19) 303; (20) 221; (21) 293; (22) 63; (23) 333; (24) 235; (25) 188; (26) 194; (27) 217; (28) 164; (29) 43; (30) 78; (31) 162.

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### JEHOVAH'S CHARACTER MANIFESTED IN HIS GREAT PLAN OF THE AGES

WHY was Jesus Christ called upon to suffer and die? Could not the great God have accomplished the salvation of humanity in some other way, without the agony and death of His Son? These are questions which often present themselves to the thoughtful student of God's Word, and which can be answered very satisfactorily. God could have arranged the matter very

differently; He is not an unresourceful God. He is an All-Wise God, an All-Powerful God. We can see, for instance, that God could have decreed that Adam should be excluded from the Garden of Eden for a time, and that after he had suffered somewhat for his disobedience, and had thereby learned a lesson, he should then be restored to favor. By that experience Adam would, no doubt, have been taught a very good lesson. So all of Adam's children might have undergone some penalty, some purging experiences, whereby they might have profited, and then have come back again into harmony with God.

But the Wisdom of God is a Mighty Deep, and He has a great and wise Plan! He had purposed that all of His intelligent creatures--angels, cherubim, seraphim, and humans--who would gain eternal life, must be absolutely loyal to Him, and hence that they should all be tested in respect to their loyalty. They must all be tried and tested characters. It was His purpose, therefore, that all His intelligent creatures in Heaven and on earth should be brought to perceive His goodness and worthiness of all praise, that they might be able to exclaim from the heart: "Blessing and honor and might be unto Him that sitteth upon the Throne...forever!"

Those who prove their loyalty to the Creator shall live everlastingly. Those who will not prove their loyalty shall die--go into absolute extinction. Up to the time man was created, God had not made known this feature of His Plan. He then declared that death should be the penalty for sin, in order that all might know the Law of His Government--that only the righteous shall live, and that all sinners shall eventually be destroyed. Hence God arranged beforehand that man's sin, which He foreknew, should bring upon Adam and his posterity the extreme penalty of His Law.

Many would not have chosen sin if they had known its sure results, and had been born with perfect ability to choose the right. But God purposed that Adam's posterity should come into the world under fallen conditions, as the result of his disobedience. He purposed to make manifest here on the planet Earth what is the natural tendency and certain outcome of sin. Sin's tendency is always downward; and not only so, but it aggregates itself, and leads to ruin and death.

God designed that this great lesson of the evil results of sin should be witnessed by the angels also, who before the creation and fall of man were surrounded by such conditions as presented no special temptation to sin.

#### TEMPTATION COMES TO THE ANGELS

God desires the worship of only such as worship Him in spirit and in truth. Any who will not worship from this motive shall eventually be destroyed. We see that God allowed sin not only to enter the world through the machinations of Satan, but to be a source of temptation

to the angels. We see how all the angels became exposed to a peculiar temptation in connection with fallen mankind. (Genesis 6:1-5; Jude 6.) We believe that Satan instigated this temptation, as he did the temptation of Mother Eve. He himself was the first transgressor.

Some of the angelic host succumbed to this temptation, and some remained loyal to God. So we know that all the angels of Heaven were subjected to a great test as to their obedience to their Creator. All those angels who are in harmony with God, according to the Bible, have stood their test. These, we understand the Scriptures to teach, have been granted the reward of everlasting life, because they proved faithful and obedient and demonstrated their loyalty. Those who fell were bound in chains of darkness unto the Judgment of the Great Day--now present, we believe.

#### GOD'S ECONOMICAL PLAN

Man has for six thousand years borne the penalty, "Dying, thou shalt die"--the penalty which the Bible declares to be the wages of sin--death and all the weaknesses and depravities of mind and of body which are its accompaniments. But God purposes that all shall have a full opportunity of recovery from this condition of sin and death; and the provision for man's recovery has been made in Christ. This provision is the most economical one that could have been arranged. If a thousand perfect men had sinned, it would have required a thousand perfect men to redeem them--one redeemer for each sinner. "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," a man's life for a man's life, is the requirement of God's Law.-- Exodus 21:23-25; Deut. 19:21.

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Before the creation of our first parents God had arranged that only one man should have the opportunity to fall and to be sentenced to death, that thus only one man would be required as a Redeemer. This Divine arrangement was most economical because it will bring all the masses of humanity back to life at the cost of but one human life as the redemption-price. No fallen man could be a ransom, a corresponding price, for the perfect man Adam. Therefore God purposed from the very beginning that His Only Begotten Son, the First-born of all creation, should become man's Redeemer and that in order to become the Redeemer He should become a man.

The death of an angel could not have redeemed man. Divine Justice required that a perfect human life must be given for a perfect human life. And God, knowing all this, sent His Son to carry out His great Plan of human Redemption and Restitution. Neither was there anything unkind or unjust to His Son in this, although for the Almighty to have forced the matter upon His Son would have been an injustice; and God could not be guilty of

injustice.

Thus the Scriptures inform us that the coming of the Logos into the world was a voluntary matter. He did this "for the joy that was set before Him," by the Almighty. The Father set before the Son that if He would suffer the ignominy of the transference of His being from the higher plane to a lower, a human plane, in order that He might redeem the lost race of Adam, He should be highly exalted, next to Jehovah; He should be made a partaker of Jehovah's nature--the Divine nature. All this was the inspiration of our Lord's course--the joy of doing the Father's will and of having His approval; the joy of restoring mankind and of being exalted to His Father's glorious nature. He who thus humbled Himself to become a man and die the ignominious death of the cross, has indeed been highly exalted as promised, and has sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High.--Hebrews 1:3.

#### INFINITE WISDOM OF GOD'S GREAT PURPOSE

Thus we see that the Plan which God has adopted furnishes opportunity for the manifestation of the principles underlying His own glorious character, which neither angels nor men could so clearly have understood by any other means. When the great work of restoration is fully accomplished, angels and men will see the Justice of God--a Justice which permitted the penalty of death to be executed upon our race for six thousand years--a Justice which provided a Redeemer to pay this penalty for Adam, that he and all his posterity might go free--a Justice, too, which provided a great reward for the faithful Son who carried out, at such a cost to Himself, the Father's Purpose! This is the highest conception of Justice of which men or angels could conceive!

By this means God will also manifest His sympathetic Love, which otherwise neither angels nor men might ever have known. Had there been no sin, no death, no sorrow, no pain, they might never have known the depths of Divine Mercy. After sin had entered the world, the angels beheld the Love of God, in that He "gave His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever [of mankind] believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life" for another! The Father's Love was thus shown in His Plan to send His Son to die for the world. This Love will be manifested to all men in the incoming Age, now very near at hand.

Through His Plan God will manifest His Power also; for while His Power has been shown in the creation of the worlds, of men and of the various orders of angels, still this manifestation of energy is small in comparison to the Power which He will yet exercise. This Power will restore every individual of the race to his former condition; every soul of man will be awakened from the tomb. This will be a manifestation of Power that is beyond

the comprehension of humanity.

Then, too, God's Wisdom will be wondrously manifested. When the grand outcome of the Divine Plan of the Ages shall have been seen in its glory and majesty by all the created intelligences of God, all will hail Him as the infinitely Wise One--who fittingly ordained that every creature formed in His image should be tested as respects absolute loyalty, that only the loyal and obedient should have life, and that all others should be destroyed!

Thus we see that in His wonderful Program for dealing with sinners, angelic and human, God chose the very best way, the one most profitable to angels and to men, the one which most redounds to His own ultimate glory and honor. "Who shall not reverence Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name?...All the nations shall come and worship before Thee, when Thy judgments are made manifest!"--Revelation 15:4.

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#### JUSTICE--RIGHTEOUSNESS--THE FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

"To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice." "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."--Proverbs 21:3; 1 Samuel 15:22.

THESE words were addressed to God's chosen people, the Jews. The nation of Israel had come into special relationship with God. At Mt. Sinai, they had entered into a Covenant with Him and had pledged themselves to do justice and judgment. This was a requirement of Jehovah. But there seemed to be a tendency to think of sacrifices as being especially pleasing to the Lord. Some seemed inclined to feel that no matter how unjust they had been, they could offer a sacrifice and make it all right. But Jehovah pointed out that this would not do. His Law was a requirement, and must come before all else; whereas these special sacrifices of thanksgiving for victories, etc., were privileges, voluntary offerings. The Law demanded full allegiance to God.

The relationship of Israel to God as His people was based upon the Law. This Law comprised justice and judgment. The Israelites were to do according to its commands--first Godward, then manward. They were not to steal, not to kill, not to covet, etc. The essence and substance of the Golden Rule was there embodied.

To do justice is to do that which is just, right, equitable; to do judgment would be to render righteous decisions in the mind, to decide justly. One might be very just in his business dealings with his fellows. He might be very careful not to cheat any one out of a cent; and

yet in his mind he might have unkind, uncharitable views of others, and perhaps say things about them that would be very unrighteous. This counsel of the Wise Man seemed to guard not only against the doing of injustice, but against having wrong thoughts. The decisions of our

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minds, as well as our actions, should be in harmony with the principles of righteousness.

#### OUR INABILITY TO JUDGE OTHERS

We are not to judge, decide, in an unfavorable manner in the case of any with whom we have to do, without indubitable proof. If they claim to be trying to do right, we should give them credit for sincerity wherever possible. We are not to call them hypocrites, for we cannot judge their hearts. Our Lord called some hypocrites in His day; but He had a superior power of discerning the heart, and we have not that power. We are not to judge the motives of others. We are not to go beyond their declaration, for we are not competent to do so.

We may at times judge the outward action as wrong or improper, but we are not to attempt to judge the heart, where there is possibility of misjudgment. We have pledged ourselves to strive to observe the Golden Rule in our every action and word and thought, and we are to remember that God would be more pleased with us if we did not sacrifice and merely maintained our relationship to the Golden Rule, than that we should manifest ever so much zeal in sacrifice and yet violate the rule of justice. This rule requires love for our neighbor as for ourself. As the Apostle Paul reminds us in that matchless chapter on Love--1 Cor. 13: "Though I give all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing."

The proper course for us as disciples of Christ is that we observe the Golden Rule in our conduct, watching over our thoughts and our lips; and also that we present continually all that we have and are in sacrifice to the Lord. But obedience, justice, must come first, for this is demanded by the Law of God. Before we can make much development in the cultivation of sacrificial love, we must learn to have a love of justice, righteousness. There is a trite and true proverb that a man must be just before he is generous. It behooves the children of God, as members of the New Creation, to study with diligence this subject of strict justice toward all, and to put into practice day by day this quality of character which is absolutely essential if we would be acceptable to God; for it lies at the foundation of all Christian character.

We are not able while still in the fallen flesh, to keep perfectly this Law of strict justice in act, word and thought. But it should be our prayerful endeavor to do so as far as possible. The merit of Christ will then make

up for all unintentional and unavoidable deficiencies. Those only who have this foundation of character well laid can make proper progress. A love which is built on a foundation of injustice, or wrong ideas of righteousness, is delusive, and is not the love which the Lord's Word enjoins and which He will require as a test of true discipleship. Obedience to God demands that we strive to be just in deed and word and thought.

#### OBEDIENCE A TEST OF LOYALTY

The lesson taught in the Lord's rebuke to Saul at the mouth of the Prophet Samuel, given in our second text, applies with much force to Spiritual Israel. How often today we see the need for this counsel amongst the professed followers of Christ! Many of these are Christian workers in the various denominations of Christendom, and many are their sacrifices of time, strength and money; but inasmuch as they are not obedient to the Lord they fail of the blessing they might have, and indeed cut themselves off from greater privileges and opportunities.

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Yea, many of them, we fear, are cutting themselves off from the Kingdom--from glory and joint-heirship with the Master in that Kingdom. We should learn from this lesson given us in the experience of Saul that our Heavenly Father wishes us to be very attentive to His Word, and not to think for a moment that we can improve upon it, nor that any circumstance or condition will excuse us from obedience to Him.

Had King Saul obeyed God, and the results had seemed to prove disastrous, he would have had a clear conscience. He would have been obedient, and could have left the results with the Lord. God would have been responsible for the results. How many of the Lord's people in Babylon would be blessed by following the instructions in this lesson!

Many have said to themselves again and again: I see that present arrangements and conditions in the churches are contrary to the simplicity of the Gospel of Christ and the practise of the early Church. I see that much is practised and taught that is not sanctioned in the Scriptures. But what can I do? I am identified with this system and am engaged in sacrificing for its upbuilding. If I now withdraw myself, it will mean more or less disaster or loss to it as well as to myself. I wish I were free from human institutions and that I had my hands filled with the Lord's work along the lines of His Word, but I cannot let go; necessity seems laid upon me. This seems to be the most convenient place for me to work and to sacrifice.

The Lord is not pleased with such arguments. His message to us is that to obey is better than sacrifice, however active and busy we may be. He tells us plainly



that no sacrifice we can offer will be acceptable to Him unless we are first obedient to His Word. He calls now to all the followers of Christ who are still in Babylon: "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues; for her sins have reached unto Heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities."--Revelation 18:4,5.

#### THE FRUITS OF DISOBEDIENCE

We remember that Saul's error was his failure to carry out the command of the Lord in every particular. He slew all the Amalekites, old and young, except the king, whom he kept alive, possibly thinking to exhibit him in some kind of triumphal display. As for the flocks and herds, he consented that his people spare all that were goodly and desirable, but everything that was vile and refuse he destroyed utterly.

As we study the narrative and note the indignation of Samuel, and the Lord's positive declaration of His displeasure and of the punishment to be meted out to Saul, we see clearly that the king had not misunderstood his instructions, but with considerable deliberation had violated them. Consequently we must understand his words of explanation to Samuel to have been to a considerable extent hypocritical. He first saluted the Prophet with blessings and assurances that he had performed the command of the Lord. But Samuel replied: "What means, then, this bleating of sheep and lowing of oxen which I hear?" He understood at once that the destruction had not been complete, that Saul had only partially obeyed the Lord.

Saul, noting the displeasure of the Prophet of the Lord, began hypocritically to assure him that these fine sheep and oxen had been preserved that they might be sacrificed to the Lord. Alas, how fallen human nature ever seeks to justify itself in its course of perversity and disobedience to the commands of God! How much wiser and better would it be to obey under all circumstances! Saul reaped the result of his disobedience in being rejected as king of Israel. How bitter are the fruits

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of following our own course, of compromising our conscience, of seeking to evade the responsibility which rests upon us as professed children of God! It is sure to bring trouble and spiritual disaster to the Lord's people, and the hiding of our Father's face.

Ordinarily considered, sacrifice is a step beyond mere obedience. Obedience is a duty toward God. We ought to obey God. To His creatures God's will is Law. This is duty of the very highest type. But the privilege of sacrifice granted to the people of God goes beyond duty, beyond obligation. We may give unto the Lord what He has not required of us; but what we give in sacrifice is

voluntary, not commanded.

The question now arises, How can we apply these texts to ourselves? In the first place, we find some who desire to be the Lord's people, who seem to grasp the thought that there is a privilege of sacrifice in the present time, but who fail to note that the Lord has given some direct commands which must be considered first. Such should come to perceive that obedience is a prime requisite. No one can perfectly keep the Law of God, but he must exhibit the true spirit of obedience, the earnest endeavor to be in harmony with that Law. Then consecration to sacrifice is in order. For all who have met these conditions full satisfaction has been made, and they are accepted in Christ. And "if any man be in Christ, he is a New Creature; old things have passed away, and all things have become new."--2 Cor. 5:17.

St. Paul says of these, "The righteousness of the Law is fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Romans 8:4.) If we are not thus walking after the Spirit, we are not hearkening to the Lord; and while we are in that condition, He does not take pleasure in what we do. Even though we sacrifice some of our time for the Colporteur work, the Pilgrim work, etc., we shall not be pleasing to God if we do not keep His requirements of justice toward others.

If when one decides to make a consecration of himself to God he realizes that he has been unjust to another, restitution must be made. No one has a right to be generous with the money of another--to take another man's money and offer it in service to God. This is a form of injustice which must be very offensive to the Father--one which He would disdain altogether as a sacrifice. Yet we see that this is very largely practised. There are a great many who have gotten money in a way not altogether right, and who, to quiet conscience, give some of it to religious work. This class are overlooking the weightier matters of the Law of God. They have taken from others unjustly; then they desire to give to the Lord that which belongs to another. God's Law demands justice, and it is no wonder that He is not pleased with this course of action.

Coming down to the ordinary affairs of life, we see that justice should be the very foundation of everything --between husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters, teachers and pupils, employers and employees, etc. The lesson of our text is a very important one to us of the Church. In Christian character justice, obedience to God's Law, comes first; mercy and benevolence come afterwards. We do not know of a principle that the Lord's people need to learn more particularly than this one of justice.

Injustice seems to crop out in many ways in the fallen human nature. Little injustices are daily practised in respect to trifles. These are thought not worth considering. But whoever cultivates injustice in even a small way is building up a character which will be unfit

for the Kingdom. As justice is the foundation of God's Throne and of God's character, so justice must be the foundation principle governing the lives of His people.

#### THE OBEDIENCE OF THE CHRIST

The lesson of obedience is one which should be deeply engraved upon the hearts of all the sanctified in Christ Jesus. It is necessary, too, that we have the spirit of obedience and not obey merely the letter. Whoever has the true spirit of obedience will not only obey the expressed commands of the Lord, given in His Word, but will seek to know the Divine will in everything. He will seek to note the providences of his life, that he may be guided in the way the Lord would have him go. It is such faithful, obedient children of God who exclaim in the language of the Prophet: "Thy words were found, and I did eat them, and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart!" (Jeremiah 15:16.) These can say with our dear Master: "Lo I come! I delight to do Thy will, O my God!" Let all, then, who would be wholly acceptable to our Father in Heaven be very diligent to build character in harmony with His Law, having justice in thought, in word and in deed at the foundation, justice in our relationship to God, to the brethren and to all, and then building thereupon all the various qualities of love, that thus we may grow up into Christ our living Head in all things, and be able to render up our account at last with joy and not with grief.

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#### PEACE WITH GOD AND THE PEACE OF GOD

"Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1). "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee."--Isaiah 26:3.

TO HAVE come into a condition of Peace with God means that one has become reconciled to God. This implies a former condition of alienation, of "enmity through wicked works." Peace with God, then, means that this estrangement from God is a thing of the past, and that the estranged one is now in harmony with God--that he has turned his back upon sin and is seeking to walk in the path of righteousness. This is a step of faith, and is accompanied by reformation of life. We rejoice with all who have come thus far; we are glad that they have this position of advantage over the masses of mankind whom the god of this world has so blinded

that they cannot see the beauty of the Lord nor the desirableness of peace with Him, and who have not learned the bitterness of the fruits of sin.

But in our second text above, the Prophet is referring to a class who have gone further than the condition of peace with God. He is speaking of a class who have come into possession of "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding," as the Apostle Paul declares. This peace can come only to those who have given themselves unreservedly to God--their time, their talents, their influence, their life, their all. These have a peace that none others can know. This peace of God rules the heart even amid turmoil and trouble; it is an inward tranquility and rest which is the direct result of a close, personal relationship of the soul with God. It is the peace of God because it is a peace that God only can

give, a peace which only His very own can fully know.

What a precious legacy our dear Lord left with His disciples when He went away from them! He said: "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you; let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." (John 14:27.) This was truly a legacy of priceless value, and it is the inheritance of the entire Church throughout the Age, even unto its close. To the world it may seem that the course of the Christian is far from peaceful, for the Lord's saints often have a stormy voyage. But if our hearts continue to be stayed on Christ by faith, and we do not let go our anchor, we shall be kept through all the tempests of life, however severely we may be tossed, however fiercely the storms may rage.

Faith can exclaim with the Prophet Isaiah, "For the Lord will help me, therefore I shall not be confounded; therefore have I set my face as a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed." (Isaiah 50:7.) On the assurances of the Lord we may rest, because our anchor holds fast to the Throne of God. The language of our Master's heart was, "O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee; but I have known Thee." He had been with the Father from the beginning and He knew His love and goodness; He had seen the manifestations of His power; He had marked His loving-kindness. So we who have come into similar relationship to God have come to thus know and trust His love and faithfulness.

#### PEACE IN THE LORD

The Lord does not bless His people with peace in an outward sense. The Master's special associates, the Apostles, were buffeted, and so all His followers have been. The Adversary does everything in his power to

make their lives anything but peaceful and happy. This is true of all who walk in Jesus' footsteps. We have fightings without and fightings within, rather than peace without and peace within. We have fightings with our own flesh; and it is part of our victory that we "fight a good fight," a conquering fight. We are to put forth our best efforts in fighting against the world and the Adversary, against all the things that Satan would put into our minds and hearts, and we are to get the better of these things. The Lord blesses His people with strength to surmount these difficulties.

We are not to be at peace with the flesh, but always at warfare with it. Yet there is a peace in the Lord that is born of faith in Him and in His promises. He has promised us grace sufficient; He has promised that we shall not be overcome through having trials and difficulties that are too great for us. We are assured that we shall have the victory if we trust in His strength. This gives us a rest and peace in all our experiences.

"Through all the tumult and the strife  
I hear the music ringing!  
It finds an echo in my soul;  
How can I keep from singing?"

We are resting in the Lord's promises--we are resting in His strength and in His ability to make good His promises; for we know that He who has called us is able to fulfil all His good Word. This peace, or rest, is the special blessing of the Holy Spirit. Only in proportion as we receive the Holy Spirit, the holy mind of God, the holy disposition, can we have this peace fulfilled in us. It is a matter of simple ratio. As we grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord, in the knowledge of the Truth, we shall have this to comfort and strengthen us; and we shall thus have more of the peace of God every day, and be able to abide in His love.

It has been written for our instruction and comfort--  
"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith." This faith is built upon the testimony of God's Word--a sure foundation. It is only through strong and unwavering faith that the peace of God will abide with His children. God has made us His sons and heirs, joint-heirs with our Lord. "No good thing will He withhold" from these; "All things shall work together for their good"; "He shall bear them up in His hands, lest they dash their foot against a stone"; "The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry." Then let us be strong!

#### PEACE FOUNDED UPON FAITH

This peace of God is not dependent upon the smile of fortune, nor upon physical health, nor upon a host of friends. But it is a peace which abides even when health fails, or poverty comes in, or death steals from us the treasures of our hearts. It is a peace which none of the changes and vicissitudes of this life can take from us,

and which enemies are powerless to touch. What gift so rich could our Father give to His children!

How poor would be our inheritance today if we were without our anchorage in Christ! But with it we can endure all things which the Father's loving providence shall permit. Then let us face the coming days with calmness and courage. He who was with His dear disciples upon the stormy Sea of Galilee, and whose word of power quelled the mighty storm and stilled the raging of the sea, has the same care over His disciples today. When they cried out in fear, He quieted their hearts, saying, "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" Nothing can in any wise hurt us if our hearts are stayed on Him.

In order to enjoy this perfect peace we must have unswerving trust in our Father's love and abiding faithfulness. As we look out into the starry heavens we see a manifestation of God's mighty power and majesty, but our hearts and minds would not be stayed and sustained by this; we might receive gifts from Him, but without knowledge of His abiding faithfulness we would not know whether these might be only traps for our injury from the Adversary. But if we have this proper foundation for faith, if we learn to know our Father through His Word (the only way we can know Him), we come to have confidence in Him.

If we trusted to our own reasoning, we would be in a very unsatisfactory condition. All would be uncertain; we would have no sure basis for faith or assurance. But when we see that the testimony of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, reveals to us a God of Justice, Wisdom, Love and Power, our minds and hearts have something reasonable and convincing to lay hold upon, and we say: We can trust such a God, because He is trustworthy. This conviction deepens into joy as we step out upon His promises and prove them for ourselves, thus learning their reality and realizing their fulfilment. We rejoice that this loving God has called us to redemption through His Son. We rejoice that He has offered us eternal life, and has called us even to a glorious joint-heirship with this Son.--Romans 8:17.

#### PEACE DEPENDENT UPON FULL OBEDIENCE

We rejoice, further, to know of the wondrous provision for the whole world in the future. All these things form a firm basis for peace and joy and confidence in the Lord. But our peace is proportionate to our constancy --our staying qualities. No one can retain this peace of God whose mind is not "stayed," fixed, on God. It is not a peace of recklessness nor of sloth, but a peace begotten of God Himself, through His promises, which we have made our own. It is dependent also upon our full obedience to the Lord. It is the peace of Christ--

"My peace." This peace and the faith which inspires it, can look up through its tears with joyful expectancy for the glorious fruition of our hopes, which God has promised and of which our present peace and joy are but the foretaste.

"Peace, perfect peace? our future all unknown?  
Jesus we know, and He is on the Throne!

"Peace, perfect peace? death shadowing us and ours?  
Jesus has vanquished death and all its powers!

"Peace, perfect peace? 'mid suffering's keenest throes?  
The sympathy of Jesus brings repose.

"It is enough! Earth's struggles soon shall cease,  
And Jesus call us to Heaven's perfect peace!"

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#### FAITH THE BASIS OF TRUE REST

"We which have believed do enter into rest."--Hebrews 4:3.

IN OUR text St. Paul refers to the fact that the Law provided for the Jew a physical rest for the seventh day of the week, for the seventh year and for the forty-ninth and fiftieth years; and that these Sabbaths were typical of a better rest. He points out that all who believe in Christ enter into rest, and thus keep a continual Sabbath. As New Creatures we rest all the time, if so be we abide in the Lord and in His promises.

The Apostle says that faith is necessary to rest. He tells us what to do in order to avail ourselves of that which God has already provided for us. He shows us that God made promises to Abraham, and these were reiterated to Isaac and to Jacob. God declared His purpose to have a special, holy nation, and promised Abraham that the blessing of the world should come through his Seed, who would constitute this chosen nation. The promises were great and precious.

Abraham believed the Message and was glad. He rested. He did not know the way by which God would bring about the blessing, but he had the promise of God, confirmed by His Oath. He did not need to know then about the Lord Jesus or the Plan of Salvation. He had full rest in fully believing God; and so did as many of his posterity as exercised the same faith as Abraham. Isaac and Jacob and many of the Prophets, including the Prophet David, thus trusted God. Their writings show that they were fully in harmony with God. They realized that He had made a gracious provision for the future, and

that this provision was for the world in general; yet they knew that they were to have a "better resurrection" than that of the world. They had a rest of faith in these things that God had not yet accomplished.

Our Lord Jesus declared that Abraham saw His day and was glad. He did not see it with his natural eye, but with the eye of faith. He saw the Day in which Christ, who has died for all men, will uplift the human family, raising the world up out of sin and death--first exalting His Bride, and finally causing the blessing of God to extend to every creature. This is just what God promised to Abraham--"In thee and in thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Abraham was glad, and everybody else is glad who sees it. Abraham was content to see that there was to be a great blessing for his posterity, and through them for the world. He did not see God's Plan clearly, as we see it, but he saw enough to make him rejoice.--John 8:56.

#### INCREASING LIGHT AND GREATER TESTS

Coming down to our own Age, we see that a greater light, a greater privilege, has brought greater tests of faith in many respects. Abraham was tested in that he was told to offer his son Isaac in sacrifice. He knew that the promises were to be fulfilled through this son, but he said, It is for me to be obedient; God can raise my son from the dead. This shall not hinder my faith in the outworking of God's Plan.

We of the Gospel Age have not heard God's voice speaking to us audibly, as did Abraham; but we live in the time of a further development of the great Plan of God. He has sent His Son into the world, who was made flesh and dwelt among us, and who died, "the Just for the unjust."

Unbelief would assert that if Jesus had been the Son of God He would not have died; but there was a mortgage held on the human race by Justice, and their case was hopeless unless a Redeemer should be provided. So the eye of faith today is able to grasp God's purposes in a fuller way than did Abraham. Yet we do not know that our faith is any greater than his; for even if we have more trials and difficulties, we have also greater opportunities and greater light. Abraham had full faith, full confidence in God, and no one could have more than this.

The Lord's people of the present time believe that mankind are to be rescued from sin and death. Some have more knowledge than others, and more testing; some who have less capacity cannot endure so severe testing, nor can they enjoy so fully. But all can have the same rest that Abraham had--the rest of faith in God. God has promised to His saints a resurrection to glory and honor and blessing. But these are not actual as yet. We have now only the earnest of this inheritance. It is for faith to triumph and to realize that God can bring us to that glorious condition which He has promised; and He



will, if we are faithful. Each in proportion to his knowledge and faith will have rest. The most learned and the most ignorant can have this rest, if only they believe God.

#### REST PROPORTIONATE TO FAITH

The rest we have entered into is not our ultimate rest. If we have the faith today, we may have the rest today; if we lose the faith, we also lose the rest. But a perfect, permanent rest awaits us. God has promised us certain great and precious things. He is our Creator and our Father, and will do for us the things He has promised. And according to our faith it will be unto us--much faith, much rest; little faith, little rest. Those who are in harmony with God believe His testimony.

This does not imply that all who have been of God's children have believed all of the Divine Plan; for we see that this would not be possible. Some have had greater opportunity for believing; and some have had less. We who live today have much more advantage than those who lived prior to our day. Our test, then, does not come so much from lack of knowledge; but it is a test of faith in God, and obedience to the light now given us. Having this great flood of light now granted at the close of this Age, our faith should be very strong, and we should seek to increase it more and more by gaining all the knowledge now due. We should grow in faith, grow in grace, grow in knowledge and grow in love. We enter into a deeper and more intelligent rest if we avail ourselves of the helps which the Lord has provided for us. If we truly believe, we will manifest our belief by works in harmony therewith.

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In Scriptural usage the word believe implies much more than merely to acknowledge a fact or a truth. The great Truth before us all is what the Bible calls the Gospel, the Good Tidings. The belief referred to in our text is belief in this Gospel: We who believe the Gospel do enter into rest. What is the Gospel that we believe? It includes all the features of God's love and mercy to us as a fallen race--His proposition for eternal life through Christ, with all the blessings this involves. To the Church the Gospel--the Good Tidings--includes also the offer to us of joint-heirship with Christ in the Kingdom.

One might have an intellectual belief in these promised blessings without entering into the rest mentioned in our text. But this form of belief is evidently not in the Apostle's thought. To the extent that the individual recognizes those facts, accepts them and acts upon them, to that extent he enters into rest. If he believes partially, he rests in that proportion; if he believes more, he rests more; if he believes perfectly, he has perfect rest, and will show his faith by his works. The Gospel Message is so wonderful that any one who believes it will desire

to avail himself of its blessings. If the opportunity is presented of becoming a joint-heir with Jesus to the Divine nature, and the mind can grasp the proposition, one would really be a fool if he did not accept such an offer. So any one who does not accept does not believe, in the sense the word is used in our text. All who truly believe will accept such an offer and will enter into rest by faith.

#### HEART CONFIDENCE ESSENTIAL

The expression of the text, "We who have believed," implies that the belief has reached the heart, and will thus affect our course in life. And the second part of the statement, "do enter into rest," implies that the rest is gradually coming to him because he has believed. He has first believed; and the fulness of rest is a condition to be attained gradually as his faith grows stronger, and as he learns to appreciate more fully what he has accepted.

"With the heart man believeth," and not merely with the head. It is not a mere intellectual belief. When we accept the Gospel as a fact, and enter fully into it, we begin at once to have a measure of this rest; and as we learn by our experiences how true the Lord is to all His promises to us, the rest becomes more deep and abiding. The belief was at first a full belief in the Message of God; but as we grow in grace and in the knowledge of God, the more firm and established does our faith become, and our rest is proportionate.

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#### THE PHOTO-DRAMA OF CREATION

NATURALLY our readers are deeply interested in the PHOTO-DRAMA OF CREATION. All of you have heard more or less concerning its preparation during the past two years. The work has been much more tedious than we expected. All who have seen it concede that it is very beautiful. A minister, after seeing two parts, said, "I have seen only one-half of the PHOTO-DRAMA OF CREATION, but already have learned from it more about the Bible than I learned in my three years' course in the theological seminary." A Jew after seeing it remarked, "I go away a better Jew than when I came in." Several Catholic priests and nuns have visited the DRAMA and expressed great appreciation. It is our opinion that no one can see the four Parts (two hours each) and not be benefited for the remainder of life. We believe it to be the very best method of preaching the Gospel yet found. It gives a broad, comprehensive scope of the Divine Plan--a breadth of intelligence sure to be helpful to all who desire the right, the Truth. While

it tells the Truth very plainly, it is not told offensively. Many ministers are visiting it--and Sunday School teachers and their classes. A very few of our friends have felt a little disappointment, we think, because the DRAMA Lectures are so mild and gentle in their language. We believe, however, that in this the DRAMA is right. The Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, is quick and powerful. It is merely for us to present it and to allow it to do its own work of cutting to the heart, in its own way--without human force and asperity.

It treats CREATION from the broad, general standpoint of the Bible and the Divine intention which it presents. When God made man in His own image and placed him in Paradise, that was not the end of the Divine intention, but merely the beginning of it. The CREATION there begun will be completed only when the earth shall have been filled with a population as perfect as was Adam before he sinned; and when Paradise shall have been extended to the utmost bounds of the earth. This fulness of the CREATION purpose of God He expressed to Adam, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it." Had Adam and his children remained perfect, gradually, as needed, they would have subdued the earth, extending the boundaries of Eden until the whole earth would have been Edenic and fully populated. Then the Divine CREATION would have been completed.

The interruption of this Divine Program by sin, the Lord foreknew. From the very beginning His wisdom arranged a plan whereby man would be permitted to have six days (of a thousand years each) of labor, sweat of face and failure, so far as extricating himself from sin and death is concerned. But God had purposed from the beginning that He would provide a Savior and Great One, who, as the Messiah, during the seventh day (a thousand years) would restore and uplift the willing and obedient of humanity from sin and death conditions to perfection--meantime also extending the boundaries of Eden worldwide. In a word sin has not caused the Almighty to change His original purpose one whit. He has merely adapted His Plan to the conditions. The permission of sin indeed will constitute a great, everlasting lesson for men and for angels, illustrating, as it does, the downward course of sin and the Justice and Love and Power of the Creator. When all those preferring sin shall have been destroyed in the Second Death, at the close of the Millennium, the creation of the world will be complete, perfected --man will again be in the image of God.

#### DRAMA SHOWN IN FOUR PARTS

The title of the DRAMA is along the lines foregoing. It therefore includes everything appertaining to the creation of earth--animals, man, the experiences of mankind for the past six thousand years and the work of the thousand years of Messiah's Kingdom. It divides these into four Parts--four Entertainments with appropriate

music, etc.

Part I. carries us from star nebula to the creation of the world and down to the Deluge--down to Abraham's time.

Part II. reaches from Israel's deliverance from Egypt, wilderness experiences, etc., down through the period of the Kings to the time of Elisha, the Prophet.

Part III. continues the story from Daniel's time down to the time when the Logos was made flesh

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at the birth of Jesus, His boyhood, manhood, baptism, ministry, miracles, crucifixion, death, resurrection.

Part IV. begins at Pentecost and traces the experiences of the Church, during the past nineteen centuries to our day and beyond for a thousand years to the glorious consummation.

One of the great difficulties in our day seems to be that the people are losing all faith in God and in the Bible. And when faith in the Bible departs, when there is only human speculation in respect to a future life, hope becomes very vague. It is estimated that probably one-half of all the people of Germany have ceased to believe in a future life--believe that they die like brutes. Without hope of a future life, none but the well-to-do can be happy, contented. This accounts for the general growth of discontent --lack of faith. The DRAMA, we believe, will help to re-establish the faith of many, and thus not only prove a valuable instruction for the Church, but also a valuable aid to a hopeless class of the world. It makes for peace, by showing all that God is at the helm, and that ultimately "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Visitors to the DRAMA are presented with a little Peace Pin as a souvenir. It is of celluloid and bears the head of the boy Jesus, with the Latin word for peace, PAX.

The DRAMA is made up of pictures from all parts of the world--panorama, stereopticon views and films. Many of these are beautifully hand-colored, works of art. And art costs money! Some of our slides cost Ten Dollars to paint. Others of them, of course, were cheaper. The paintings from which these pictures were made cost large sums. For instance, we have one panorama representing Nero's Circus, the original of which was destroyed by fire and was valued at Two Hundred and Fifty Thousand Dollars. We have, we believe, the only panorama reproduction of it in the world. This large sum of money invested in the PHOTO-DRAMA OF CREATION was not allowed to interfere with the general harvest work, as noted in our last Annual Report; yet it is all under the care and supervision of the Watch Tower Society. In its operation we are seeking to avoid drawing upon the Pilgrim force and the Colporteur force, and, so far as possible, are enlisting those not already engaged in any department of the harvest field.

## TWELVE DRAMAS IN THIRTY-ONE CITIES

Only twelve sets of the DRAMA are yet complete--more are in process. Nevertheless we have already reached and are serving thirty-one cities with the DRAMA. Over thirty-five thousand per day are seeing, hearing, admiring, thinking and being blessed. Each set of the DRAMA is capable of serving four cities. After serving one it is passed to another, another, another, and then back again to the starting point. This is giving the desired opportunity to many of the dear friends who have been learning how to operate the Moving Picture Machines. More is needed than merely to know how to turn the handle--a thorough knowledge of the Machine is necessary, and a considerable knowledge of electricity, wiring, etc. Friends who are unincumbered and who have learned the operation of a Moving Picture Machine, and especially those so proficient as to be capable of obtaining a license, are invited to advise us of their readiness for this means of serving the Lord.

## APPLICATIONS FOR THE DRAMA

Applications for the DRAMA are coming from every quarter. All who desire it are requested to observe the following course at once:

(1) A Committee of one, two or three of most businesslike Brethren, of good address--a PHOTO-DRAMA COMMITTEE--should be appointed. This committee should immediately address the I.B.S.A., DRAMA Dept., No. 124 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, N.Y., giving us the Committee's address, stating the population of their community, and the number usually in attendance at the I.B.S.A. gathering, male and female.

(2) To all such we will as soon as possible communicate letters of instruction, outlining their further procedure. If your city is very small, and especially if it be remote from a large city, you may not hear from us very soon; but your letter will be on file and will have attention as soon as the general interests of the work will permit. We must serve the large cities first, and, while serving them, may have opportunity to serve smaller ones nearby. All this information may preferably be given on a postcard, as these can be more easily filed. Please keep strictly to these suggestions if you would advantage the work. Some, with best intentions, merely hinder by failure to follow directions explicitly.

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THE PRODIGAL SON

--MAY 3.--LUKE 15:11-32.--

"I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto Him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven and in thy sight."--V.18.

RESPECTING the parable of the Prodigal Son the following comments have been made:

"One of the masterpieces of the Great Teacher."--David Gregg, D.D. "This has been fitly called the crown and pearl of all the parables--the Gospel within the Gospel!" --D. S. Clark, D.D. "Its beauty and its pathos are unequaled in the realm of fiction."--R. H. McKim, D.D. "It is more like a complete allegory than any other of our Lord's parables."--New Century Bible. "No other parable has touched so many hearts."--W. E. Burton, D.D.

The setting of the parable shows the Master's object in giving it. He was seeking in this parable, as in those considered a year ago last fall, to show the Pharisees that their position respecting the publicans and sinners

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was wrong. He here pointed out that their wrong attitude toward the common people was likely to cost them their own share in the Kingdom.

In the parable the father who had two sons evidently represents Jehovah God. The two sons here represented the two general classes into which the Jewish nation divided itself. The elder son represented those who sat in Moses' seat, and who remained loyal to God in their outward profession, at least, and in their endeavors outwardly to keep His Law. The younger son represented the common people, not so religiously strict as to their ideals. This class, the younger son, misused their privileges and opportunities as members of the nation of Israel, as beneficiaries of the Divine promises. They wasted their opportunities in self-gratification. They were known to others, and acknowledged by themselves, as publicans and sinners--not attempting to live godly lives.

This younger-son class of publicans and sinners felt their degradation, just as described in the parable. They were spiritually hungry. They were ragged. They felt a longing to be back in the Father's House, yet they hesitated to go back. It was just such characters that Jesus especially encouraged, saying, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden; and I will give you rest."

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Jesus represented the Father's House, and prompted the younger-son class of the Jews to have confidence that the Father would receive them when they had come to Him penitently.

The parable tells us that some of this class, repentant, came back to God and were abundantly pardoned. And not only were they pardoned, but because of their penitence

they were granted special manifestations of God's favor. Recurring to the parable, all this was illustrated by the prodigal's feeling his hunger and wretchedness and saying, I will return to my father's house. And while he was yet a great way off, the father saw him, ran to him, embraced him, had compassion on him and kissed him. And the prodigal said, "Father, I have sinned against Heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf and kill it. Let us eat and make merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.

#### APPLICATION OF THE PARABLE

How grandly this illustrates to us the Love of God--its lengths and breadths and heights and depths! The best robe and the other attentions given to the repentant one well illustrate the provision God has made for all who return to Him from the ways of sin. The robe and all the blessings are provided through Christ--covering for all the imperfections of the fallen nature. The fatted calf well represents the "feast of fat things" which God has provided for the penitent class.--Isaiah 25:6-8.

Making a particular application of the parable, we might say that the time when the Father accepted the prodigal, kissed him and put upon him the robe of Christ's righteousness, provided in His sacrifice and freely granted to all who during this Age come unto the Father through Him, was at Pentecost. The feast and merrymaking may well represent the blessed promises of God, which become applicable to those who are covered by the robe of Christ's righteousness and accepted into God's family by the begetting of the Holy Spirit.

This is the Marriage Feast represented in another of our Lord's parables. (Matthew 22:2-14.) The elder brother of our lesson was indeed bidden, but refused. He would not go in. He was jealous that the father should receive the young spendthrift. This jealous spirit on the part of the Pharisees apparently kept many of them from appreciating the gift of God in Christ. Just as shown in the parables, they refused to enter in.

The parable represents the father as entreating the elder son to come in and join in the feast, rejoicing in the reclamation of his brother; but he was angry and declined. Likewise the elder-brother class of Jews did not show the right spirit for those for whom the kingly privileges were intended, all of whom must be meek, loving, copies of God's dear Son in their generous good will toward all who desire to come to the Father.

The refusal of the elder brother to participate in the festivities reminds us of another of the Lord's parables respecting the Marriage Feast. (Luke 14:15-24.) Those who were originally bidden appreciated not; one went to

his farm and another to his merchandise. They dishonored the host who had invited them to his banquet. Then the servants were sent out into the streets and lanes to gather any who desired to come, and afterward they were sent to invite all everywhere who desired to share the feast; and finally the full number foreordained to be of this class was found.

#### THE PRINCIPLES APPLY BROADLY

While the parable of our lesson illustrated the two classes of Jews, the principles set forth in it are more generally applicable. For instance, there are noble characters in the world who love to do right--people who are well-born, and well-environed after birth, and who apparently should be the very first ones who would be chosen of God to be the joint-heirs with His Son in the great Kingdom that is to bless mankind in general. Nevertheless, the Scriptures make clear that not many of this kind may be expected to be of the Kingdom class--not that God is unwilling to have them because of their education, wealth and good morals, but that these very qualities make them less ready to accept the terms.

All are sinners, whether they know it or not. All should be honest enough to confess the fact; and God requires this very honesty, this very confession of our need, before the merit of Christ can be imputed to us as covering our blemishes. This better class, represented in the elder brother, seem to feel that in contrast with the lower strata of society they are perfection itself, and that God would be sure to desire them. His declaration, however, is that not many great, not many noble, not many learned, not many wise, are being chosen, but chiefly the mean things of this world, rich in faith, to be heirs of the Kingdom.

God evidently wishes to have a class honest enough to acknowledge their own imperfections and their own unworthiness of His favors. So doing, He will bless them with a knowledge of themselves and of His righteousness; whereas others, self-satisfied and unwilling to accept the grace of God in Christ or to confess their need of any covering for their blemishes, are not humble enough to be of the class that the Lord desires for the great work of glory by and by.

Thus it comes about that the majority who accept God's favor and become His children are from the younger-brother class--that described by the Apostles--not many rich, not many noble, not many learned, and not many wise, but chiefly the poor of this world, rich in faith. These have the ear to hear the invitation, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden; and I will give you rest." These have the hearts to respond to this invitation. They realize their wretched condition and their need of help, while frequently the others who have lived more open lives do not recognize their need of forgiveness and help.



Perhaps no other parable has been so helpful to the poor and needy, the sinful and the weak who have a desire to return from the ways of sin and to be received back into the family of God. They see their own picture in this parable, and are encouraged by its representing the Father as willing to receive them. It is quite contrary to the thought generally entertained by sinners. The Heavenly Father's character has been so misrepresented to them by the creeds of the Dark Ages that they fear Him and expect no kind reception from Him. As the proper thought of God's character reaches the poor and the depraved, they receive a suggestion of hope from this parable and other Scriptures. This hope leads and assists many of them to a full return and a full surrender to the God of all grace.

The prodigal is represented as coming to himself, as awakening to a realization of his dire necessities, as coming to a knowledge of the fact that his father has an abundance, and probably will be willing to let him have a share of the blessing which he no longer merits. His expression, "I will arise and go to my father," represents

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what should be the attitude of all repentant ones  
--the attitude which all Christian people should help them to attain--reliance upon the love and mercy of the Heavenly Father and the provision which He has made in Christ Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins and for their reception again to His love and care, for their return to the fold and to harmony with the one from whom all blessings flow.

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#### THE UNJUST STEWARD

--MAY 10.--LUKE 16:1-13.--

"He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and he that is unrighteous in a very little is unrighteous in much."--V.10.

BECAUSE the Pharisees were the leading exponents of the Law, Jesus pointed many of His parables against them, while He comparatively ignored the irreligious Jews--the Sadducees, who made no profession of faith. Today's lesson is in line with this. This parable was spoken as a rebuke to the spirit of the Pharisees, who bound heavy burdens upon others, but shirked them themselves, while pretending hearty obedience to the Law.

In olden times, more than now, it was the custom for rich men to appoint stewards. Such a steward had as absolute control of his master's goods as had the master himself; he had, as it were, the power of attorney. Some stewards were faithful; others extravagant. The one mentioned in our Lord's parable was extravagant, unsatisfactory. His master had concluded to dispense with his services, and had asked him to render up his accounts.

On his books were the accounts of certain debtors who apparently were left with no chance of being able to meet their obligations. The steward concluded that he would scale off these debts, so that the debtors probably could pay before he turned over his office to his successor. He did so. One owing a hundred bath of oil was told that he might scale off the debt to fifty. Another owing a hundred measures of wheat (500 to 1400 bushels) was told that he might scale it down twenty per cent. And so he went down the list. Such a use of his authority made him friends amongst those whom he had favored; and his lord complimented him upon the wisdom he had displayed.

Applying this parable, Jesus proportionately condemned the Pharisees for taking an opposite course. He had declared that the Scribes and the Pharisees sat in Moses' seat as interpreters of the Mosaic Law, and that, had they followed the course of this steward, they would have made friends of the poor publicans and sinners by trying to minimize their shortcomings, and to encourage them to do the best they could to comply with the demands of the Law. Instead, they bound heavy burdens upon the people and discouraged them.

All this on their part was hypocrisy; for they could not help knowing that they themselves were unable to comply with the requirements of the Law, which is the full measure of a perfect man's ability. Their proper attitude would have been to confess their own shortcomings, to strive to do their best, to appeal to God for mercy and to teach the common people to do similarly. So doing, they would have been better prepared to be received into the Gospel favor in the end of their Age. As it was, by their hypocrisies they were hindering themselves from becoming disciples of Jesus and from seeking grace and forgiveness of sins. They were also hindering others from becoming disciples by claiming that it was possible to have God's favor through keeping the Law.

#### APPLYING THE PARABLE

Jesus then said to His disciples, Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when ye fail--at the end of your stewardship, at death--the results of your benevolence may cause that ye be received, in the resurrection, into the everlasting habitations.  
--Verse 9, paraphrase.

There is room for dispute in respect to the teachings of this parable, but to us it seems clear that Jesus meant that the wisdom of the unjust steward should be exercised

by His disciples in their dealing with the mammon, the riches, of the present life. From the moment God's people give themselves to Him, they give also their earthly rights and interests, and become merely stewards of their time, talent, influence, wealth, etc. "Ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God." Use all that you have energetically in the Divine service.

These stewards of the mercies of God have His approval in the use of all of earthly things to the forwarding of their spiritual interests; they will not be counted unjust squanderers, as they use their earthly opportunities for advancing their Heavenly interests. On the contrary, this will be reckoned to them for wise stewardship; and being found faithful in the use of earthly things in God's service, they can safely be entrusted with the greater things of the future. They will be received into the everlasting habitations and be granted a share with Messiah in His glorious Kingdom. They will be entrusted with all of God's favors to be bestowed upon mankind. Their unselfishness in the present time, their willingness to sacrifice, will be the basis of the Divine approval and glory to follow.

Unfaithfulness in the present time respecting things of trifling value in comparison would mean unfaithfulness in the future great things. Whoever therefore selfishly appropriates to himself the things of which he is steward will not be trusted with the future great things; and whoever is sacrificing will thus demonstrate his faithfulness, his loyalty to God, and to such the greater things will be entrusted. Would God entrust the riches of the future life and glory and honor to any who now prove themselves unfaithful, selfish, covetous, using present blessings merely for self-gratification? Surely not!

Jesus asks, "If ye have not been faithful in that which is another's, who shall give you that which is your own?" With the followers of Jesus all things of the present time are God's--the things of the present life belong to God, because we have consecrated or devoted them. The things of the future life belong to us, because God has promised them to us. But there are conditions; namely, our faithfulness, our loyalty. If we are not faithful in handling the things which we have devoted to God, He will not give to us by and by those things which He has promised shall be ours conditionally. If, then, we should misappropriate the things consecrated to God--if we should abuse our stewardship and use those opportunities selfishly, could we expect God to give us the things which He has promised to give only to the faithful?

## SERVING TWO MASTERS

There are two great impelling powers; one evil, the other good. These are known by different names and are in every way opposite. God is the Good Master; Satan is the evil master; but each has representatives and various

interests. Thus God, His Spirit and His teachings, are represented by the word Love; while Satan and his course are represented by selfishness, covetousness, mammon. Through the fall of man the whole world has lost the Spirit of God, and has been under the domination of Satan for centuries. All have become more or less evil. The spirit of selfishness, covetousness, leading on to unrighteousness in general, has gotten hold upon our race, so that even after we see the wrong course it is with great difficulty that its power over us can be broken. "We cannot do the things which we would."

But here comes in the proposition of the Gospel: God desires some faithful souls to be associated with Jesus in dispensing His blessings. He offers this great prize of the Kingdom to those who will demonstrate that they have the right spirit. This prize is a pearl of great value. No other consideration can compare with it. Whoever intelligently accepts the Gospel call turns his back upon sin, selfishness and all the works of the flesh and the Devil related thereto, and sets his face Godward, loveward, rightward.

But it is not sufficient that he shall enter into a covenant to give up the world and walk in the footsteps of Jesus. It is not sufficient that God accepts that covenant and begets such a one of His Holy Spirit. More than this is needed. He must demonstrate not only that he prefers right to wrong on equal terms, but that he is willing to suffer the loss of all things that he may be on the side of right, on God's side.

Then comes in the trial and testing. He seeks to serve God and to gain the reward of glory, honor and immortality in the Kingdom with Jesus; but he finds a tendency in his flesh to look after and appreciate the rewards of mammon, selfishness. This brings about the great battle. One or the other must conquer. In addition to growing in grace, in knowledge and in love, the New Creature in Christ must feed upon the Divine encouragements and promises of the Bible. Otherwise he will be discouraged and utterly give up the fight against the world, the flesh and the Devil.

The Lord has promised grace sufficient in every time of need, to the faithful. He tells us that He knoweth that we are dust; He remembereth our frame, that we cannot do what we would like to do. But at the same time He requires that we do all that we are able to do, assuring us that for all such His grace will be sufficient; that is to say, to all such He will make up the deficiency.

In our lesson Jesus forewarns us that the choice we make must be a permanent one, that the supposition that we can serve God and mammon at the same time is a mistake. In proportion as we are faithful to one, we are unfaithful to the other. It is therefore for us to choose the service of God, counting it the greatest of our privileges, and its rewards the greatest of all rewards, and

these for eternity.

After all, much will depend upon the degree of our faith. If we have faith in God, in His promise of great reward, if we have faith in the promise of the Savior to give us His grace and assistance in every time of need, it will be quite possible for us to fight the good fight and to gain the crown which the Lord hath in reservation for all those who love Him supremely.

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### "UNDER HIS WINGS"

"He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust."--Psalm 91:4.

THE 91st Psalm very clearly applies to the Church, and would seem to be especially applicable to the Church in the end of this Age. But since it is addressed in a personal way, as though to one person, it may be The Christ as a whole that is referred to, from the Head to the last member of the Body. Our Lord Jesus had trials and difficulties, and needed protection and care. He went to the Heavenly Father and sought the necessary aid. And so with all the Lord's people continually.

But the Psalmist seems especially to refer to our day: "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee." Of course, there have been times in the past when thousands have fallen through persecution, etc., but the falling away mentioned here seems to be the falling away from God's people. Many will be turned aside, injured, wounded, if not killed, in the great battle pictured.

This battle, we understand, is at the conclusion of this Gospel Age. The powers of darkness are now specially arraying themselves against the consecrated people of God, and all associated with them. There never was a time when God's people, as a whole, had so large opportunities or so great success as Christendom has had in the past century. Under the attacks of Satan that have been in progress for the last fifty, sixty or seventy years, many have fallen into unbelief, Higher Criticism, infidelity, the various features of which are represented as a great pestilence. We see that there is a pestilential infidelity abroad in the land. Its votaries are misled by the Adversary--quite probably without any such intention on their part.

Very probably in the future, as they see the Truth, many of these will acknowledge their error; but for the time being there is a great drouth in Christendom. Church attendance is falling away. Many of the ministers are

preaching what they themselves doubt. They have fallen from grace, fallen from Divine favor, fallen from an appreciation of the Word of God.

#### THE FEET OF THE CHRIST

This Scripture points out, too, the "feet" of this Christ class living in our day. "He shall give His angels charge over thee, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." All the members have a relationship to the Head and to one another. These "angels" we understand to represent Divine promises and helpful assistances of the saints. These "angels" are represented as bearing up the feet, that they may not stumble over the Stone of Stumbling at this time. (Isa. 8:14.) Instead of stumbling over this Stone, they will be lifted up by it to greater appreciation and higher conditions. The feet shall not be moved.

In the figure of our text, these who are to be covered represent all who are of this one class. As a hen gathereth her brood under her wings, so God will be as a mother-hen to His people, and will gladly gather them close to Himself and give them the necessary protection --under His wings. They may fully trust that all things shall work together for their good, because they are His, abiding "under the shadow of the Almighty."

The Almighty here represents Himself as a mother-bird. The patience of the mother-bird with her young is remarkable, and she would sacrifice her own life for her little nestlings. So the Lord represents that He is ready to do anything for the protection of His own, who are under His care. Jesus would have received the Jews thus under His protecting care; but the people as a nation did not appreciate their need, and hence were overthrown in a great time of trouble. Jesus said to them, with weeping,

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"How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"

#### OUR FATHER'S "WINGS" AND "FEATHERS"

We might exercise a particularity of inspection of our text, and say that the word feathers might carry a little further thought than the word wings. "He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust." The soft, downy feathers under the mother-hen's wings serve to keep the little chicks warm and to shield and hide them from enemies that would attack them. Not only the strong sheltering wings, but also the feathers of the hen-mother's breast are used to protect her young. We have seen alarm on the part of a mother-hen at the approach of danger, and heard her cluck to her little ones. Then they would run to her, nestle under her wings, and seem perfectly satisfied and free from fear in their place

of safety. Presently you would see the little heads or eyes peeping out; but the chicks felt perfectly secure.

And so with us. Our Heavenly Father's love and care and protection are His wings and His feathers, shielding us from all harm, keeping us warm and safe. He is able to make every experience in life work out for our good. We are, however, to remember that the promise that God will make all things work together for our good is a promise to the New Creature, not to the old creature. Oftentimes the interests of the New Creature and of the old creature are diverse. God has an interest in all that concerns us, but He overrules our temporal affairs for our best spiritual interests. If we were too prosperous, it might not be of advantage to us as New Creatures.

Our temporal affairs may be permitted to go awry. We are not wise enough to know what is for our own best interests as New Creatures, and what would help us the most in our fight against the world, the flesh and the Devil. We are, therefore, to flee to the Lord and accept whatever experiences may come, as those which will be best for us; and we are to seek to get the designed lessons of faith and obedience from them.

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#### THE MOUNT OF OLIVES THE KINGDOM OF BLESSING

"And His [Jehovah's] feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south."--Zechariah 14:4

THIS text refers to the closing of the Day of Trouble and the manifestation of God's Power in connection with that trouble. The literal Mount of Olives may have, and probably will have, somewhat to do with the matter. It is referred to here as experiencing a great earthquake. No doubt the Israelites will be gathered at Jerusalem at this time, and no doubt the Lord's favor will be manifested to them there. This will be at the close of "Jacob's trouble," from which the Lord will be present to deliver them. Our thought is that this will be after the Church shall have passed into glory. The execution of what is here described seems to be a part of the work of the glorified Church.

We understand that the Ancient Worthies will then appear, and that God's favor will have returned to the Jews, and that Israel's temporal blessings will there begin. This would imply that the Jews will then be under

the New Covenant arrangement, and hence that the Church must have been completed.

Symbolically, a mountain represents a kingdom. The Scriptures elsewhere declare that Jehovah will make the place of His feet glorious. The word olive always associates itself in the minds of the people of the Orient with the thought of light and nourishment. The olive oil they use regularly instead of butter. As the olive furnishes both light and food, the Mount of Olives would represent the Kingdom of God. Olive oil was poured upon the head of the Jewish kings and priests, and symbolized thus the Holy Spirit. God's Kingdom will be for the blessing of mankind. It will be of two phases--the Heavenly and the earthly--and all people may eventually come under its blessed condition.

See STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, Vol. 4, pp. 649-656, for further elucidation of this passage.

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#### THE COLOR LINE FOUND NECESSARY

WE might have anticipated that many colored people would be deeply interested in THE PHOTO-DRAMA OF CREATION. But it did not impress itself upon us until gradually their number increased to about twenty-five per cent. of the whole audience. Of course, we were glad to see them, glad that they were interested in the DRAMA. We had the same feeling respecting them as others; but it was quickly discerned that it was not a case of feeling, but that, whereas the colored people of New York City are about five per cent. of the population, in our audiences they are about twenty-five per cent. and the number increasing. What shall we do? As the attendance of the colored people would increase, proportionately the number of the whites would decrease; for explain it how we will, a majority of whites prefer not to intermingle closely with other races.

Recognizing that it meant either the success or the failure of the enterprise of the DRAMA as respects the whites, we have been compelled to assign the colored friends to the gallery, which, however, is just as good for seeing and hearing as any other part of The Temple. Some were offended at this arrangement.

We have received numerous letters from the colored friends, some claiming that it is not right to make a difference, others indignantly and bitterly denouncing us as enemies of the colored people. Some, confident that Brother Russell had never sanctioned such a discrimination, told that they believe it would be duty to stand up for equal rights and always to help the oppressed, etc. We were obliged to explain the facts, assuring all of our



loving interest in the colored people, and of our desire to do them good, and not injury. We again suggested that if a suitable place could be found in which the DRAMA could be presented for the benefit of the colored people alone, we would be glad to make such arrangements, or to co-operate with any others in doing so.

Our explanations were apparently entirely satisfactory to all of the fully consecrated. To these we explained that it is a question of putting either the interests of God's Cause first, or else the interests of the race first. We believed it our duty to put God first and the Truth first--at any cost to others or to ourself! We explained that we thought that all the colored brethren should know our attitude toward them--they should know that we love to serve them in any way possible and to give them the very best we have to give of the Gospel Message; and that it is only a question of whether our giving to them in one way would deprive us of giving the Truth to others.

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Some who were still tenacious and quarrelsome we merely reminded of our Lord's declaration that in inviting visitors into the house it is the place of the host to say where they shall sit, and then we showed them the parable of the man who chose the chief seat of honor and was given a lower one.

In answer to the query as to how our course of conduct squared with the Golden Rule, we replied that it squares exactly. We would wish others to put God first. If our personal interests are or ever have been in conflict with the real and apparently best interests of the Lord's Cause, it is a part of our consecration vow to ignore our interests in favor of the interests of the Lord's Cause. This is what we mean by the declaration that we are dead to self and alive to our God as New Creatures.

We reminded one dear sister that the Lord enjoins humility, and assures us that unless we humble ourselves we shall not be exalted. If nature favors the colored brethren and sisters in the exercise of humility it is that much to their advantage, if they are rightly exercised by it. A little while, and our humility will work out for our good. A little while, and those who shall have been faithful to their Covenant of Sacrifice will be granted new bodies, spiritual, beyond the veil, where color and sex distinctions will be no more. A little while, and the Millennial Kingdom will be inaugurated, which will bring Restitution to all mankind--restitution to the perfection of mind and body, feature and color, to the grand original standard, which God declared "very good," and which was lost for a time through sin, but which is soon to be restored by the powerful Kingdom of Messiah.

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## INTERESTING LETTERS

### HE KNOWS GOD

BELOVED BROTHER RUSSELL:--

For some time I have been wanting to write you re my special appreciation of the recent issues of THE WATCH TOWER, but circumstances would not permit before. Everywhere along the line I have heard the same general expression of approval; namely, "The articles in THE WATCH TOWER are getting better and better."

What a flood of light came to me through reading your wonderful exposition of "Spirit-Begetting and Anointing," in the February 1st issue! I have been accustomed to thinking of and using these terms interchangeably; and while you state that the fact is one, you make a fine and most marvelous distinction in the viewpoint from which each is to be regarded. Your wonderful analysis makes the matter as clear as it seems possible to make anything by words.

I wish to express my especial appreciation of the several timely articles which have appeared in THE WATCH TOWER recently, bearing upon the time features. You have stated your views therein as clearly and as pointedly as it seems possible to present any thought; nevertheless, I have found it necessary in several instances to interpret your perspicuous language for Elders as well as for others. You have even emphasized the thought in some instances, without its being noted by some of the dear friends. A few have seemed to think that you are changing your views along this line, but I have failed to note anything whatever in your recent articles which indicates that your present views are materially different from those expressed in the Second Volume of the STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES.

I have declared, "Brother Russell has not changed in his teachings so far as the Church is concerned. He has always set forth that the Chronology is a Faith Chronology; but to my mind it is as soul-satisfying, and, for the purpose, as easily demonstrated as that two and two make four. But all have not faith, therefore cannot exercise faith.

Words fail me when I would express my appreciation of the article in THE WATCH TOWER of August 1, re "The Peace of God." You have written many things that are really sublime, inspiring, yet always in plain, simple English. But your wonderful analysis of Jehovah's character in this article is the most marvelous thing I have ever read from any pen. I have read and re-read this article many times, and each time with increasing joy and wonderment. It lifts me away from the earth and all things earthly, and in spirit seats me in the very presence of Jehovah. This sense of presence becomes almost a reality to me, as I follow your wonderful pen-picture of the Almighty God and loving Heavenly Father, who changes not at any time, yet is possessed of an emotional nature, as you so beautifully show. As I dwell on your presentations they cause me more and more to long to see Him face to face, and to redouble my energies.

While in a vague way I have been able heretofore to comprehend the source of your marvelous strength and endurance, I can now appreciate, as never before, why and how you have been sustained in all your severe trials, your painful tribulations, your bitter, relentless persecutions, and under all have maintained a serene composure, even in great commotion, confusion, conspiracies. Outwardly nothing has seemed to "move" you, even when division has occurred and disorder has reigned in the "family of God on earth." The secret is now revealed to my mind: You KNOW God, "whom to know is life eternal."

Every day seemingly increases my love for you and my confidence in you as the servant of Jehovah, raised up to give "meat in due season" to the entire household of faith. With much sincere Christian love in our dear Redeemer,

Your humble brother by His grace, W. M. WISDOM.

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#### HOW HE FOUND THE NARROW WAY

BELOVED PASTOR AND BROTHER RUSSELL:--

Greetings in the name of the Lord! Please accept the enclosed money as a birthday present. It comes from a sincere and honest heart, desirous of doing more and more each day for you and others of "like precious faith." It was through your Helps and Bible STUDIES that I found the Narrow Way. I was so far down on the broad road that it required considerable effort to get back and into the Narrow Way.

I pictured myself in a canoe floating down stream, and attracted by the birds and flowers of worldly pleasure on the steep banks on either hand. Then, figuratively, I heard the Lord's voice calling me back and warning me of the shoals of trouble ahead. My attention drawn to it, I could see that I was approaching something terrible. What could I do? The banks were too steep for a landing. I called to the Lord to help me out of the difficulty. But the Message was, "I cannot help you where you are; you must turn your back to sin; you must put forth effort to stem the downward course." I seemed too weak to do this; but, encouraged with assurance from the Savior's sympathy, took courage to do my best in opposition to the course of sin in which I had been drifting. His Message then was, "Use the oar of faith; turn you! why will you die? But be careful not to strike the rocks of False Doctrine and Unbelief, lest you break your oar."

I heeded, and I found no time to listen to the birds nor to look at the flowers of earthly pleasure. I had a new ambition --to get near to God. Thus striving against sin, I gave myself to the Lord to be His disciple and to have His blessing and care. The Lord's answer, through the Scripture was, "You must now be washed, justified, and put on the clean garment of My righteousness--justification by faith. Thus you will be acceptable to the Father." Washed and robed by faith, a child of God, I was taken into the Lord's Banqueting-house and given a foretaste of coming blessings, through a clearer understanding of the Divine Plan. I enjoyed the spiritual food so much that I prayed the Lord for more and more, and He

has directed me onward in the Narrow Way with the assurance that so long as I am faithful to Him I shall never want; and I am finding it so. With much Christian love,  
Your brother and servant, M. L. STAPLETON.

OUR REPLY

DEAR BROTHER:--

Thanks for your welcome letter written on my birthday, and for the money which was enclosed! My earthly needs are few, and these are abundantly supplied in the Lord's arrangement by the WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY-- food, shelter and \$11 per month for clothing and incidentals. Your donation, therefore, received with much appreciation, is turned into the Tract Fund for the general use of the work --printing tracts, sending out Pilgrims, and now the presentation of the Divine Plan in the PHOTO-DRAMA OF CREATION.

I am glad to note, dear brother, your progress in the Narrow Way. Remember the Lord's words, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." With Christian love, I remain

Your brother and servant, C. T. RUSSELL.

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The Ohio Capital city has been selected as a central location  
for a General Convention this year. The dates are almost  
identical with those apportioned to Clinton, Iowa; they  
are June 26 to July 6. Able speakers will attend both conventions.  
Brother Russell expects to be present at both.

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THE PHOTO-DRAMA OF CREATION

We are being swamped with applications for the PHOTO-DRAMA.  
Evidently the whole country wants it. Not only is  
our supply of pictures inadequate, but we would not have  
nearly enough operators to meet the demand; and the rent for  
the theatres would be impossible for us to pay.

Under these conditions we shall be limited at first to the  
larger places. Later on, the DRAMA can be extended to smaller  
places. But do not expect too much; we cannot work miracles.  
Before the summer is ended we hope to have the work  
so expanded as to be able to reach many more cities and  
towns. Our plan for the present must be to prepare duplications  
of the DRAMA and to offer it free with booth operator

to such cities as indicate their ability, willingness and desire to furnish suitable auditoriums, supply ushers, etc. Please exercise a little patience. Be assured the Society is doing all in its power to serve you and the Truth. Do not spend money going afar to see the DRAMA, but save your dimes to assist in getting it to your own town.

We are pleased to remark that the public is taking a deep interest in the DRAMA, recognizing its educational value, the beauty of the pictures and the wider scope which it gives of human history. Unencumbered brethren of fair education and of experience as newspaper writers may be used in the work. We shall be glad to hear from volunteers.

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#### BEREAN QUESTION BOOKS

The six volumes of STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES are being used as text books in Bible Study quite extensively. This led to the preparation of lessons, or questions, on the topics covered by the volumes. These are arranged in the form of Lessons for Berean Bible Classes. We now have these Question Books for all six volumes. Price postpaid, 5 cents (2-1/2d.) each, any quantity.

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#### WHO COMMITS THE SIN UNTO DEATH?--PART I

"Whosoever is begotten of God doth not commit sin, for His seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God."--1 JOHN 3:9.

#### PRIVILEGES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND DANGERS OF THE NEW CREATURE

THERE is a certain amount of complexity attaching itself to questions relative to the Church's change of nature from human to spiritual. In order clearly to understand the initiatory process of that change, the begetting of the Spirit, we should have a proper understanding of what constitutes the human will; for it is that will which is changed.

We cannot think of anything better as an illustration of the subject than a legislative body, such as Congress or Parliament. In these assemblies, a large number of members sit in session; but they are divided into groups known as parties. Some members belong to one party, others to another. But the dominating party is in control.

So it is in the human brain. There we have numerous organs, representing variously religious sentiments, intellectuality, morality, the affections, etc. Then there are some that represent energy; others, acquisitiveness; others, combativeness. These different faculties, when called to consider a question, divide themselves into groups, the strongest of which is very apt to sway the others.

When, for instance, any matter involving the interests of self comes up for consideration, acquisitiveness being strong, may lead combativeness to fight for possession of the thing desired. It may also lead destructiveness to help in the fight. And it may to some extent drown the voice of justice, or conscience, and offset the quality of love; for acquisitiveness may have schemes which would interfere with the operation of love.

On the whole, the organs which dominate the world are the organs of self-protection, self-gratification, etc.--all the organs whose names begin with the word SELF. Even if the religious organs--veneration, hope, benevolence, spirituality, etc.--are strong, the selfish propensities generally overpower them, so that they co-operate with selfishness. For example, benevolence overpowered by the selfish propensities, will say, I will give some money to this project, in order that it may show a large return; but I will not give it unless it show such return. Thus the quality of acquisitiveness and others pertaining to self will go into agreement with benevolence, by bending it to the service of self.

It is the usual thing to see such combinations in worldly people today. There are generous men with naturally noble impulses which they like to gratify. But in all that they do, SELF has become the preponderating factor. SELF gets in somewhere--self-esteem, self-interest, etc. This combination makes the selfish man; and though he may have considerable benevolence, veneration, etc., yet these noble qualities are under control of the selfish propensities.

#### FIRST STEP TOWARD TRUE CONVERSION

To this selfish man the Gospel comes, and offers a proposition which is unique, peculiar. It appeals to him through a new set of organs. It shows him that he should put God first, not self; that he should begin to see that the highest and noblest organs of the brain are those which recognize the Creator and man's responsibility as His creature. It shows him that he is thinking of self-aggrandisement, self-honor, self-everything!

Such a person, hearing the Gospel proposition, may be influenced to decide the matter either one way or the other. He may say, I do not like that thought. Selfishness may suggest that if he accepts the Gospel offer he must stop his questionable business methods. Then he concludes that he does not care to take such a step; for it would demand more than he is willing to give, and he

might have trouble with his conscience. Later on, perhaps, something in the nature of adversity or calamity will awaken him to take a different view of matters, and he will see the subject in a different light and be glad to do God's will. Then he may say, I realize that my life must be different. I am God's creature. Therefore it is right that I should consecrate my all to Him. But I see that consecration will work a great transformation in my life. I shall be obliged to change my course. I must drop certain habits.

This is the first step of true conversion. This is a turning from sin toward righteousness. It does not follow, however, that the person who takes this step will come up to the Divine requirements of a disciple of Christ. The rich young ruler who asked Jesus what he should do to gain eternal life was told to keep God's commandments. He replied that he had done this all his life. And Jesus loved him! The young man was trying to do right in every way. Was he not all right then? No! Jesus said to him: "One thing thou lackest. Go and sell all that thou hast and distribute unto the poor, and then thou shalt have treasure in Heaven; and come, follow Me."

The young ruler thought this strange advice: for he had all along been living a most exemplary life. He was

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correct in his estimate of himself; but he was merely doing his duty in so living. No one has a right to live a bad life; no one has a right to do wrong. That he was merely doing his duty--no more--was practically what Jesus told the young man.

Continuing, the Master said: I have only one offer to make, but it is a very high one--joint-heirship with Me in the Messianic Kingdom. The life into which you may enter by becoming My disciple is a life of glory, honor and immortality--the Divine nature. If you desire this high position, you must do more than merely avoid sin. God is now calling for sacrificers. If you do not sacrifice yourself, you cannot become My disciple; for those only who thus sacrifice are received of the Father and begotten of the Holy Spirit, and can share My glory. Those only will be granted a part in the First Resurrection. And the young ruler "went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions." Alas; how many are likeminded!

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To turn away from sin is but a step toward conversion. That movement is an antitypical going toward the Tabernacle. "Draw nigh unto Me, and I will draw nigh unto you," is the Father's proposition. The Word of God points out to the seeker that only through Christ who gave Himself as our Ransom, can any come to the Father.

He is also instructed that if he would retain God's favor he must become a disciple of Christ, by laying down



his life in the service of the Lord and the brethren, doing good unto all men as he has opportunity. In this way he may become a member of Christ's Body. Then, after a while, if faithful unto death, he will have a share in the glory and honor which the Father has given our Lord. He will become a joint-heir with Jesus in the Kingdom.

#### WHAT CONSTITUTES A NEW CREATURE?

So this one becomes a New Creature when he has accepted the Divine will in this sacrificial sense; or, as the Scriptures present it, when he has made a full consecration unto death. "Gather My saints together unto Me," saith the Lord, "those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice." (Psalm 50:5.) Those accepting this call to enter into sacrifice are received of the Father; then they are begotten of the Holy Spirit. Thenceforth they are New Creatures: To them "old things are passed away, and all things are become new."--2 Cor. 5:17.

The question may arise: What part of the individual becomes the New Creature? It is the will that becomes new. The will is the determination, or decision, of the majority of those organs of the brain which form the mentality. The will considers the matter: Shall I continue to sin? No; I will abandon sin. Shall I go further and make a full consecration of myself to God? Yes; I will make this consecration.

When he does so, God accepts him and begets him of the Holy Spirit, thus making him a New Creature. He makes up his mind--he determines the matter. He changes the direction of his will. At one time his will was inclined to sin. That was wrong. Then his will turned toward righteousness. This was right, so far as it went; but it did not make him a New Creature. Then he came to the place where He said, Lord, I consecrate my life to Thee--myself, with all my aims, hopes and ambitions. Thenceforth he is counted as dead to the world, and reckoned alive toward God, as a spirit being. This new will, this new mind, then, with its Heavenly hopes and aspirations, constitutes the New Creature.

#### THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE NEW CREATURE

To be begotten of one signifies to be a son of that father. The Only Begotten of the Heavenly Father--the only one directly so begotten--was our Lord Jesus--God's Son. And all the Church are also recognized as being sons of God; "and if sons, then heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ." The first One of the spirit-begotten class was our Lord Jesus. When the Holy Spirit was given Him at Jordan, in this begetting sense, He was no longer counted of God as the Man Jesus. But He had this treasure of the new nature in an earthly body, an earthen vessel, until He finished His sacrifice at Calvary. Then, in the resurrection, God gave Him a perfect spirit body of the Divine nature.

So it is with all of Jesus' disciples: They are invited to surrender themselves to God, consecrating their earthly interests to become followers of the Master. Jesus states the conditions: First, faith in Him as the Messiah, the Redeemer; and second, denial of self and the taking up of the cross and following Him. These New Creatures are all sons of God, though the world does not understand that they are in any way different from others in their relationship to God. "The world knoweth us not, because it knew Him [the Master] not." (1 John 3:1.) This new mind must increase. This New Creature must grow in knowledge and capacity.

All of this makes the individual now very different from what he was as the old creature. If by nature he was depraved, and had violent passions prevailing in his flesh, he will now, having a better mind, be guided in the way of the Lord, and gradually become a copy of God's dear Son. This copy is primarily a heart-copy, though the change by degrees affects his life, bringing his body more and more into conformity to the new mind.

#### THE NEW CREATURE ON TRIAL

Since this new mind, the new will, the spirit-begotten New Creature, has its present residence in the old body, and since this body, the New Creature's only instrument of operation, has still its old tendencies toward sin--its weaknesses, its depravities--therefore there is a continual struggle between the New Creature and the old. It is a daily warfare, and either one or the other must perish. If the New Creature be not alert, thoroughly active, thoroughly loyal to God, the weaknesses of the flesh will gradually assert themselves, and the New Creature will be in danger of death.

If, on the contrary, the New Creature remain loyal to God, the old creature will perish. The one or the other must die before the conflict is over. It is a fight to the finish. And this conflict is a test of the New Creature--not of the old creature. The New Creature has been called to glory, honor and immortality. In order to attain this state, it must prove unquestionably its loyalty to God. In proportion as the new mind controls, and we love righteousness and hate iniquity, in that same proportion shall we have strength in battling with the forces outside, with the conditions of the present time; and the greater success shall we have in battling with our own flesh.

In this warfare there may be sometimes more and sometimes less success. But not until the victory is won will the Lord grant the reward. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My Throne." The thing to be demonstrated is loyalty to God, loyalty to the principles of righteousness, and to our covenant. Those who are most loyal and most devoted to God will come off "more than conquerors" and will gain the highest reward, will sit with Jesus in His Throne.

Some will come off overcomers, but not on so high a

plane, needing the special tribulations to assist them. But even though they fail to come to the highest standard, they will, nevertheless, come off overcomers; else they would never get any share in the Heavenly reward, nor life at

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all. These will form the Great Company, who come up out of the great tribulation and wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. (Revelation 7:14.) They will be greatly favored in that they will be the honored servants of the glorified Bride class, who are to constitute the "more than conquerors."

#### FALLING INTO TEMPTATION NOT SIN

During this time of battling between the New Creature and the imperfections of the body in which the New Creature resides, the new mind should be developing and growing gradually stronger. The will of the body was reckoned entirely dead before the individual could be counted a New Creature. But the body has the old brain, which has the same tendencies as formerly. The work of the new mind is to bring this body into full subjection to the will of Christ. The child of God may, however, be attracted by business or pleasure, which may lead him as a New Creature into more or less of stupor. In such stupid condition of the New Creature, the flesh, wide awake, might get the advantage, not because the child of God has wilfully sinned, or because he has been intentionally negligent, but because he has yielded more or less to temptation. But it is one thing to yield thus under temptation, and another thing to go deliberately into sin. Whoever sins wilfully is counted a child of Satan, because he has Satan's spirit instead of God's spirit.

If any of those who were once begotten of God should get into that attitude where they would wilfully desire to commit sin, it would indicate that they had ceased to be sons of God and had become sons of Belial. It would signify that the spark of the new life to which they had been begotten had become extinguished. "He that is begotten of God sinneth not." If he sin--deliberately, wilfully-- he ceases that moment to be a son of God. Sons of God do not love sin. Any one, therefore, who would thus intentionally go into sin would give evidence that his new mind had entirely passed away, and that he had become dead to God, even as previously in consecration he had become dead to the flesh.

We believe that not very many have ever taken this step of bold opposition to God, wilfully and intelligently; and we hope that there will not be a great many to go into the Second Death. However, it is for God's people to keep as far away as possible from this disastrous condition. This condition is reached by a gradual process, step by step. When we come to God we first repudiate sin. Later we come to the point of presenting our bodies

living sacrifices, and are accepted. So, contrariwise, those who repudiate righteousness usually go back gradually. Step by step of indulgence in sin gradually leads away from God, until the New Creature ceases to exist.

#### NEW CREATURE HANDICAPPED BY FLESH

When the Apostle John, in our text, says that those who are begotten of God sin not, he means that the sin is not wilful. Is there, then, any other way to sin than to sin wilfully? We answer, Yes. It is wilful sin that is unto death. The Scriptures tell us that "all have come short of the glory of God"--there is none perfect, "none righteous, no, not one." The righteousness which is imputed to the members of the Church, is imputed to their flesh. The New Creature itself is perfect. But as a New Creature the disciple of Christ desires to put off from its flesh all the former things of sin and death and to be fully conformed to the image and likeness of God. Yet he is more or less handicapped, not only by the imperfections of his own fleshly body, but also by the imperfections of others. He has to contend with the evil tendencies in his fallen nature, and also with those around him.

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The same Apostle declares that if any shall say he has no sin, the truth is not in him, and he is making God a liar. (1 John 1:8-10.) And these two statements of the same writer are in harmony. The statement of our text applies to the New Creature itself, and the other applies to his fleshly body. He cannot fully avoid sin in his flesh, on account of its weakness, and the deceptiveness and unfavorable conditions surrounding him.

These New Creatures, however, can maintain themselves in the love of God and as sons of God. "We have an Advocate with God, Jesus Christ, the Righteous." (1 John 2:1.) God knows our weaknesses, and has made this very provision for us. The Apostle says we may keep ourselves in the love of God by keeping ourselves clean. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9.) Our daily trespasses are to be acknowledged to the Lord, and forgiveness sought and obtained. Thus we pray daily, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."

#### STRIPES FOR PARTIALLY WILFUL SINS

If these trespasses are merely weaknesses of the flesh, or of ignorance or stupidity, they are sins which will be fully forgiven of the Lord on application. If they be sins in which the new mind has been slack, in which it has been more or less culpable, through lack of sufficient positiveness, then to that extent the New Creature must be held responsible. And for all such trespasses, for which

the New Creature is in any way at fault, there will be stripes, or punishments. It is for this partially wilful portion of the sin that the New Creature is responsible. This does not come under the head of Original Sin and its resulting imperfections.

A Christian might have a natural tendency to anger, and it might be impossible for him fully to control this tendency. Before he as a New Creature would be able to realize the situation, his natural tendency to lose his temper would involve him in trouble. The New Creature in such case should do everything possible to overcome this, through prayer and persistent effort, and if necessary, by imposing upon himself a penalty for every failure in this direction--some self-denial, perhaps. But if the New Creature should say, Well, that is my flesh; I cannot help it, he might receive stripes, and an earthborn cloud might arise between him and the Lord; and that one would be spiritually sick until he should return to the Father and make proper amends and be re-instated. If this attitude continued, it would seem to make against his ever becoming a member of the Little Flock. He would have to decide positively for or against the right.

So, then, there are sins that are not forgivable, but punishable. If the transgression should come to the degree of full, wilful sin, it would be a sin unto death. This means that the New Creature had ceased to be; for the Spirit of God, operating in the sons of God, always makes for righteousness and hates sin. Whoso loveth God "keepeth himself, and that Wicked One toucheth him not."--1 John 5:18.

#### THE PURPOSE SERVED BY TRIALS

But, as the Apostle states, we have this treasure of a new mind in an earthen vessel. We are a combination of the Heavenly and the earthly--a Heavenly will and an earthly body. Sometimes the body will put the New Creature to the test, urging it to give up this matter of consecration. So he has trouble; for the earthly body is merely reckoned dead. But God, in harmony with His promises, ignores the old nature--the earthly--and recognizes

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only the Heavenly, so long as the will is loyal; and He has promised grace sufficient for every time of need.

As before stated, there may come a time when the new will temporarily becomes drowsy, dormant. This is a cause for serious concern; for then the New Creature is in grave danger. There must be a determined will, a positive will for God, which will keenly regret any temporary deflection; otherwise there is no New Creature.

As the battling goes on between the new will and the old body, the new will becomes stronger and stronger, if it is properly awake to the situation. Yet God may permit the flesh to have more and more severe temptations. He

allows the world and the Adversary to bring pressure to bear upon the flesh, so that He may test, prove, the loyalty of the New Creature. It was because our Lord was found faithful "unto death, even the death of the cross," that He was counted worthy of the Divine nature. So it is to be with His footstep followers. The Father knows just how much we can stand, and will never suffer us to be tempted beyond what we are able to bear, but with every temptation will provide a way of escape.--1 Corinthians 10:13.

#### WHY SOME FAIL TO OVERCOME

So the experiences of the way go on. As the Apostle suggests we are risen to walk in newness of life--our resurrection is already begun. (Rom. 6:4; Col. 3:1.) And this new walk will become more and more courageous, more and more successful, in proportion as we respond to the Lord's touch--the disciplinary experiences. And if we allow Him to mould us as He wills, we shall finally finish our course and be brought forth in full resurrection from earthly, human nature to Heavenly, Divine nature. Then the new will that has all along been progressing in an earthly body will thereafter make progress in a spiritual home; it will have a body like unto that of the risen and glorified Jesus.--1 John 3:1,2.

In the case of those not overcoming fully, we find this condition; they yield more or less to the besetments of the Adversary, and strive to avoid being too peculiar, to avoid giving any offense to their friends. Thus they become more or less overcharged with the cares of this life, or with the deceitfulness of riches, pleasures, etc. The Apostle urges that these lay aside all such weights, and run with patience the race set before them. Such a class never for a moment think of giving up the race; but in due time they will be put through fiery tribulations, which will destroy their flesh. Nevertheless, they will fail of the reward of the High Calling, which the more faithful will receive.

(TO BE CONCLUDED IN OUR NEXT ISSUE.)

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"HIS LOVING-KINDNESS, O HOW GREAT!"

"Because Thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise Thee."--PSALM 63:3.

GOD has a kindness of nature and disposition, a loving-kindness, that is general, that goes out, in one sense of the word, to all of His creatures--not only the intelligent, but the unintelligent creatures of His hand. He bestows His kindness, His favors, upon the

just and the unjust. He sends His sunshine and His rain upon the good and the evil. But there is a special loving-kindness, a special love which He reserves for those who have lovable qualities of heart--those who have such traits of character as permit Him thus to love them--just as every good person loves every other person who is good and noble-hearted.

God has such a love for the holy angels. He had such a love for Adam before he sinned. And since the sin, He has a sentiment of loving-kindness toward those of Adam's race who, realizing their sin, desire to turn back to Him and to do His will. His loving-kindness has led Him to make a wonderful provision for these. He has provided that some shall be of the earthly nature, to receive the blessing of life everlasting here upon earth, after it has been brought to Edenic perfection. He has provided for others to be of the spiritual nature. Truly,

"There's a wideness in God's mercy  
Like the wideness of the sea!"

But God does not love the wilful sinner. This is in harmony with righteousness. We may love the ignorant, who violate the Law of God because of a lack of knowledge, of proper information; but we could not rightly love one who is wicked, whose intention of heart, of will, is to do wrong. God has no love for the incorrigibly wicked. "All the wicked will He destroy." He has arranged that only those who shall come into accord with His righteousness may enjoy the blessing of eternal life. These shall have an eternity of happiness; they shall be the recipients of His loving favor everlastingly.

The Psalmist had a taste of the loving-kindness of God in his own experiences. When he was anointed to be king of Israel, he knew that he had found favor in God's sight. And later, when he did things that were wrong, God chastised him, punished him in love, because David was a man after the Lord's own heart--had a desire to do right--to do God's will. As the needle of a compass may under certain circumstances be detracted from its normal condition of pointing toward the pole, just so some attraction at times influenced David and led him into a wrong course. But as soon as the besetment was past, or he was led of the Lord to see his sin, his heart returned fully to Jehovah, as the needle of the compass returns and again points to the pole. Therefore King David declared that life without God's loving-kindness would be worth nothing to him; he would not appreciate his life if cut off from the favor of the Lord. This being the case, his lips would always confess the Lord--tell forth His loving-kindness, show forth His praises.

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#### OUR ANOINTING FAR SUPERIOR

And this is still more true of us who are now the

Lord's truly consecrated children, who are daily striving to serve Him and to follow the Master. We who by the grace of God have come into covenant relationship with Him since the Atonement for sin has been made have become sons of God, and have been begotten of the Holy Spirit. We have come thus into the anointed Body of Christ. We have not been anointed to an earthly throne, as was David, but our anointing does more: it anoints us to a Heavenly Throne, to share in the rulership of the entire earth.

No king or emperor on any earthly throne can hope to reign for more than a few brief years. But those who shall be accounted worthy to reign with Messiah, to share His Throne, shall reign for a thousand years. And this is only the beginning of their glory. Our Father in Heaven, who is now training and preparing us for this glorious exaltation through His Only Begotten Son, with whom we are to reign, gives us the assurance that He will be with us to guide our way; that all things shall work together for good to us, because we love Him and are called according to His purpose.

So we, above all other people in the world's history,

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have the loving-kindness of God manifested toward us. We have His exceeding great and precious promises. We are the recipients of His special love. And the more we appreciate this love and these glorious promises and the bountiful provisions of His grace, the more our hearts respond in gratitude, the more His loving-kindness becomes a reality to us, and the more are we ready to lay down our lives in His service.

It was thus with Jesus. He preferred the Father's favor above all else. And He, through the Father's arrangement, opened up this new and living way for us, that we, by becoming His disciples, may share with Him God's special loving-kindness and matchless promises, granted only to those "who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." Surely our lips shall praise our God! And not only so, but our pocketbooks, our bank accounts, and our influence shall praise Him! All that we have shall praise the Lord; and all that we ever hope to have!

"I LOVE TO TELL THE STORY!"

We who have come to realize our Father's unspeakable favor to us as better than this present life with all it could have to give, we who have joyfully laid upon His altar every earthly good thing, every hope and ambition, every power of our being, rejoice to tell the Good Tidings of Salvation to others. We rejoice to sound forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. The Message is too good to keep! If we could not proclaim it, it would be as a burning fire shut up in our bones; so we must tell it. And we are



willing that the telling of it shall cost us trouble, cost us money, cost us the misunderstanding and persecution of former friends, and possibly the breaking of home ties. We are willing that it shall cost us the frown of the world and of organized churchianity.

#### TEXT APPLICABLE ONLY TO SAINTS

The Prophet David in our text spoke prophetically of the Church of Christ. These words could apply to none other than saints of God. None but those who walk and talk with God would esteem His favor more precious and desirable than their earthly life. If we ask the average nominal Christian to weigh this matter, and tell us if he would exchange this life for the favor of the Lord--putting in one side of the balance all the good things, hopes, ambitions, family ties, social position, churchianity, esteem of men, and putting in the other side of the scale God's favor--he will hesitate, and will eventually decide in favor of the things of this life.

The reason for this is that such do not highly appreciate Divine favor. They have heard and believed certain things about the Almighty, some of them true and some false; but the misrepresentation of God's character and Plan, together with the worldly influences surrounding them, have largely neutralized and offset and made noneffective the truths which they have learned, and they lack confidence in the things unseen. Hence worldly interests outweigh their appreciation of Divine favor--ten to one.

Those who have, through the Plan of the Ages, come to see the loving-kindness and mercy of the Lord are, if they are children of God at all, being put to the test. If they are merely glad to find out that there is no place of eternal torture, and that God's loving Plan includes the whole human race, their hearts are not touched to responsiveness by this manifestation of His great love. They will go on their way, rejoicing that they have been delivered from the bondage of error, but will be like the nine lepers who were healed by the Master, yet did not return to give Him the glory, nor to offer themselves in service to Him. And these, alas, are the majority! We are now in the great day of proving. Who will be able to stand the test in this evil time?

#### GOD THE SUN OF OUR SOUL

This loving favor of God, which is so appreciated by the true saints, is not a favor respecting future prospects and hopes merely, but it is the blessed possession also of the present life. Gradually these come to prize the communion and fellowship of the Lord to such a degree that any interruption of this communion produces misery of soul. It brings an aching void that nothing else can fill. This sentiment is beautifully expressed in the hymn we often sing:

"Sun of my soul, my Father dear,  
I know no night when Thou art near;  
O, may no earth-born cloud arise  
To hide Thee from Thy servant's eyes!"

The true child of God will walk so closely with Him that nothing, however sweet or precious to the natural man, will be permitted to shut from him his Father's face. This would be esteemed a calamity with which nothing else could compare. He would rather cut off anything as dear as a right hand, or pluck out of his life anything as precious as an eye, than that it should come between himself and his Heavenly Friend, whom He has come to love above all else beside. God is truly to these the Sun of their soul, without whom life would become the blackness of night.

#### "THE DARKNESS HATETH THE LIGHT"

Some professed disciples of Christ may say that a Christian life will not cost earthly friendships; that such an idea is an exaggeration; that it is an extreme view of what is required of a Christian; that a course which produces such a result is an unreasonable one. But no! Our Master's words are as true today as when they were spoken: "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you." (John 15:19.) The declaration of the Apostle still holds good: "Yea, and all who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."--2 Tim. 3:12.

Why did the Master suffer the loss of social position and of favor with the churchianity of His day? Why did the Doctors of Divinity and the notables among the religionists hide their faces from Him? Why did they finally become so embittered against Him that they crucified Him? Was it because of evil-doing on His part? Nay; for He went about doing good. It was because He told the truth. He declared truths which they themselves recognized as such, but with which they had so mixed the "traditions of the elders" that they were too stupefied, drunken and blinded to take anything but a perverted view of our Lord's work and teachings. Their hearts were not in the right attitude before God. "The darkness hateth the light."

The Master's persecutions came not from the outside world, but from the professed holy people of His time. So has it ever been since, and so is it today. Those who now oppose the Truth are not worldly people outside of the churches, with but few exceptions; but they are zealous sectarians, whom Satan has blinded with his false doctrines and misrepresentations. We are not to be surprised, therefore, that wherever the Truth goes it will be a Sword to separate, as our Lord declared. These conditions prove a test to the followers of Jesus. Are we willing to bear the hatred, the scorn, the contumely, which loyalty to the Truth brings? Is our Father's loving favor more, far more, to us than the favor and smiles of the

whole world--even more, far more to us than life itself?

#### THE GLORIOUS HARP OF THE AGES

If so, we can go forth in His name, rejoicing as we go, praising Him with our lips, singing the New Song which he hath put into our mouths, "even the loving kindness of our God." It costs something to sing this song. Only those who have learned to play upon the Harp of God, who have all its strings attuned to perfect harmony, can properly render this "Song of Moses and the Lamb." Never until today has it been possible to produce such melody from this wonderful Harp; for never before have all its chords been properly placed and attuned. Now its music is entrancing! Then let us take this wonderful Harp of the Ages, and as we sweep its chords, let us sing with the spirit and with the understanding this wondrous, glad New Song!

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#### THE GREAT DAY OF JUDGMENT--ITS NATURE AND OBJECT

"Behold, the Lord cometh with myriads of His saints, to execute judgment upon all and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed." "Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein. Let the floods clap their hands; let the hills be joyful together before the Lord; for He cometh to judge the earth; with righteousness shall He judge the world, and the people with His Truth."--JUDE 14,15; PSALM 98:7-9.

THE above texts relate to the great Day of Judgment, which is to end the Gospel Age and inaugurate the Millennium. We should notice first of all what these texts do not say. They do not say that our Lord Jesus will come to destroy the earth, to burn up the world. They do not say that there will be a partial judgment at death, and that later all will be brought out of Heaven and Purgatory and a Hell of torment, which are their proper places, only to be sent back to these same places again. Not so. But this is supposed to be stated in the Scriptures, and is what we have thought. Our prejudices and misunderstandings have attached to the words of Holy Writ a wrong meaning. It is the Love of God which brings judgment to the world.

The first judgment, or sentence for sin, was a sentence

of death. Under that sentence the whole world was to perish, to be cut off from life, because of Adam's sin. But God had mercy, compassion, on humanity, and has provided that mankind shall have another trial, with experiences granted to enable them to realize the nature and results of sin. The first trial was a trial of Adam and Eve alone. Every member of the human family, however, will be given an individual trial for life everlasting, to demonstrate whether he will under favorable conditions come into harmony with God.

#### CHARACTER THE BASIS OF JUDGMENT

All hopes of eternal life for the race, therefore, hinge upon the results of that future trial. Men and women are in this life forming character--they are either improving or degrading themselves. Whoever is trying to do his best under present unfavorable conditions will enter upon that individual trial, or judgment, in a very much better condition than otherwise, and will progress more rapidly to perfection in that Day.

The Church of Christ is an exception to this arrangement for the world. They will not have a part in that trial, because the Church is a special, called-out class, and will receive their trial in advance of the world. They are now on trial for life or death everlasting. But their trial is for life on the Divine plane. Those who are now being dealt with by the Lord will, if faithful, be with the Lord the Judges of the world in the next Age; as we read: "Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?" (1 Corinthians 6:2.) It will be a time when punishments and rewards shall be meted out.

Every evil-doer shall then be dealt with and receive punishment for his evil intent, and stripes for his correction. Every well-doer shall receive a reward. The work of that thousand-year Judgment Day will show men to what extent they are out of harmony with God, and will show them how to come into harmony with Him. By the conclusion of the Millennial Age none will be in ignorance. As it is written: "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Isaiah 11:9.) Furthermore, the Scriptures tell us that the judgments will be graded according to the light previously had and sinned against. The wilful sinner, after a hundred years' trial, will be cut off in the Second Death.

All who shall make use of the opportunities of that time, making progress in character, will gradually go up the Highway of Holiness. They will be blessed more and more until they shall attain the full perfection of the earthly image and likeness of God which was lost in Adam. This will be the glorious outcome of the redeeming work of Christ. Then every knee shall bow and every tongue confess, to the glory of God. All who continue to prefer sin shall eventually be utterly destroyed in the Second Death. Then God will have a clean Universe.

## GREAT DAY OF THE LORD NOW PRESENT

We are now in the beginning of this great Day of the Lord. All the forces which are to play a part in this mighty upheaval which is to introduce the Reign of Messiah are rapidly gathering. The nations of earth and all the various elements which form society as at present organized --political institutions, financial institutions, ecclesiastical systems, etc.--are now before the bar of Judgment, and are being found wanting. All Christendom is trembling before the mighty forces that are coming in today. Morals are at a low ebb. As the glorious Messenger of the Covenant is now present to sit as the great Judge, we may well ask the question propounded by God's Prophet of old: "Who may abide the Day [now present] of His Coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap. And He shall sit as a Refiner and Purifier of silver; and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver."--Malachi 3:1-6.

Ah, the world is longing for the blessing! Men are realizing more and more every day their great need of a strong arm to deliver them as they face the grave crisis which they feel is drawing very near; but they see not to what extent the inbred sin of man is incompatible with a Reign of Righteousness which is desired and so sorely needed. Before the help and the blessing can be realized the Day of Wrath must come; the "fire of God's jealousy" must burn fiercely, and consume all the giant evils so entrenched in the world and in the hearts and minds of men. It is not to be a fire merely of destruction, but, thank God, also of purification! It will not be a literal fire, but a symbolic fire, following which the Lord will turn unto the people a pure language, a pure Message, and a clear declaration of the Divine will and Plan of Salvation.

## SONS OF LEVI JUDGED FIRST

The earlier part of the judgment upon Christendom

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will be especially upon the antitypical sons of Levi, the silver class. These made a consecration of themselves to the Lord, as did the gold class, the faithful overcomers, "more than conquerors." This silver class we understand to be the Great Company, who are to "come up" out of the Great Tribulation, and to "wash their robes [which have become spotted and soiled] and make them white in the blood of the Lamb." (Revelation 7:9-17.) These will be dealt with by the great Messenger of the Covenant, not with a view to their destruction or injury as individuals, but with a view to the destruction of their flesh, which they have failed to sacrifice in harmony with their Covenant--"that the spirit may be saved in the Day of the Lord Jesus."

The fire of this great Day shall "try every man's work, of what sort it is." It will prove who of the professed disciples of Christ have built upon Him as their Foundation with the gold, silver, and precious stones of Divine Truth, and thus have constructed a true, strong, worthy character, unswervingly loyal to the Lord; and it will prove who have built with wood, hay and stubble. It will likewise discover who have built upon a foundation of sand.--1 Corinthians 3:11-15.

#### FLESHLY ISRAEL'S SHARE IN THE JUDGMENT

A part of the prophecy of Malachi 3 seems to have an application to fleshly Israel. The Lord reproves them, showing that His course toward them as a people had been in conformity to His Covenant with them at Mt. Sinai. But they had been unfaithful to their part of the Covenant. At the appearing of this great Messenger of the New Covenant, which is to supersede the old Covenant, He will purge God's ancient people. The time is now due for favor to begin to be restored to them; but before their full restoration they must experience further chastisement for their purification and preparation for the great Messiah.

In the "time of Jacob's trouble," now near at hand, Israel will come to see and recognize their King, whom they refused when He offered Himself to them at His First Advent. "They shall look upon Him [with the eye of faith] whom they pierced, and they shall mourn for Him as one mourneth for his only son." (Zechariah 12:10.) He will then receive them back to favor, under the terms of the New Law Covenant. "Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years." (Malachi 3:4.) They shall then be used of Messiah as a channel of blessing to all the world.

#### BLINDED TO THE REAL DIFFICULTY

In this great Time of Trouble, the Lord will be a swift witness against every evil thing and will rebuke it, and thus all men will be taught of Him in the ways of righteousness. But as yet the poor, blinded world, bound by the shackles of Satan, do not know themselves. They do not yet see that selfishness is the basis of their every move and ambition; that the number who are not thus moved and controlled are so insignificantly small as to be without weight and influence.

It is not our thought to deride any efforts toward righteousness, even though inspired by selfishness. We merely point out that the true, Christian view of matters is a much different one. It is the Bible view. It recognizes God, the Divine will, purpose, plan, revelation, as having to do with all this world's affairs. It sees in the present upheaval of politics, the present uncovering of financial and social scandals, etc., another force making

ready for the great trouble time, the great "earthquake" predicted in prophecy, the great cataclysm, now about to be precipitated upon the whole world. The Scriptures indicate that this Time of Trouble will be upon us in 1915, and will be gradually approaching in the meantime.

In the providence of God the gross superstition and ignorance of the Dark Ages has been gradually dissipated to a considerable extent, that the minds of the people might be set free, not only from religious superstition, but also from superstition respecting the Divine right of certain families to inherit the kingdoms, the dominions of the world, and to live on a higher plane of social privilege than others. All these matters are now coming in review before the world, and Socialism is rapidly coming to the fore as the world's savior, their deliverer from priestcraft and superstition, and from political and financial autocracy. The world is being invited to look, not to Him who redeemed us with His precious blood, and who promised to come again and establish His Kingdom in righteousness, but it is being called to look to itself, to its own affairs and selfish interests, as the only hope, thus ignoring God and His overruling providences, and ignoring Divine Revelation respecting the future outcome of present conditions, in the glorious Millennial Kingdom for the blessing of all the world.

#### CHURCH FEDERATION NOW FORMING

From our standpoint, the present gathering of the churches into a great Federation is the fulfilment of Scriptural prediction; and the Lord's intelligent, faithful, consecrated people are warned against having any part in any such Church Federation. The Word of the Lord regarding the matter is, "Say ye not, A Confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A Confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid; but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and let Him be your fear."-- Isaiah 8:11-16.

Dread to displease Him, but fear not men. It is the tares which have all along associated themselves with the wheat that are to be bundled, to be gathered together for a great trouble time. This is in the mighty revolution of society shortly to set fire to all the social, religious, and financial institutions and arrangements of this present time, eventuating in anarchy, which, through God's overruling providence, will overthrow all things incompatible with righteousness and prepare for the Kingdom of God, which will be manifested in power and great glory, for the deliverance and blessing of all the human family.

We remember that as the Jewish Age drew near its close, John the Baptist, the forerunner of Messiah, declared to the Jews: "One mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose; He

shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire." (Luke 3:16.) We remember the fulfilment of this. The "Israelites indeed" were gathered into the garner of the Christian Church, and baptized with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The remainder of the Jewish nation, who "knew not the time of their visitation," were burned as "chaff," in a great time of trouble, which overthrew their nation. This great trouble is shown in Scripture to be a picture on a small scale of the conditions which will prevail in the closing days of this Gospel Age.

In that trouble time which came to the Jews, though various steps were taken to hinder the destruction of the nation of Israel, all efforts failed. Even the Roman Emperor was desirous of preserving the nation and of establishing order; and the Roman army was sent, not to destroy them, but to establish peace in their midst. But the Lord had declared that the fire of trouble which He enkindled should not be quenched by any power, that it should do its work to the full; and it did.

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Likewise it will be with the great fire of trouble with which this present Age will end, and into which the "tare" class of Christendom will be cast. It will not be an utter destruction of life (although many lives will be lost in the awful trouble of this Day of Wrath), but it will completely consume all earthly governments and institutions and will overthrow Churchianity. These will be consumed in the fire of anarchy. Nothing shall be permitted to quench that fire, or hinder the utter destruction of present systems. But, praise God, when the fire shall have devoured the stubble and the falsities and deceptions of the present order, it will but have prepared the way for the great blessing which God has designed and provided, in His coming Kingdom. "When the judgments of the Lord are abroad in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." (Isaiah 26:9.) It will be a terrible chastisement, but it will be the necessary work of the skilful Surgeon, who wounds but to heal.

#### "REFUGE OF LIES" SWEEPED AWAY

In our Lord's parable of building a House upon the Rock or upon the Sand, He gives a forceful picture particularly of the tests to come upon Christendom at the close of this Age. Here His figure is that of a fierce storm, a flood, with mighty winds beating upon the faith structure of His professed followers, overthrowing the faith of those not built upon Christ, the Rock, but built upon the sand. And so we see it today. A mighty downpour of Truth is now in progress throughout Christendom. The great storm is now raging. The denominations of Churchianity are trembling under the shock. Their foundations of human tradition, man-made theories, ignorance, "doctrines of demons" (1 Timothy 4:1), are



realized to be unsatisfactory. They are unable to stand before the great searchlight of Truth now being turned upon them. Ere long the storm of Truth will wash out the quicksand foundation upon which nominal Christianity is built, and her utter wreck will follow. Only the true people of God will be able to stand the test of this great Day--now upon us!

This is the same storm and flood mentioned by the Lord through the Prophet Isaiah: "The hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding places. When the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then shall ye [false teachers] be trodden down by it. From the time that it goeth forth it shall take you; for morning by morning shall it pass through, by day and by night; and it shall be a vexation only to understand the report [the Message, the Truth]."-- Isaiah 28:17-19.

This overwhelming trouble will soon reach the entire world. Indeed, it has already begun among all nations to some extent. All men must be awakened by the judgments of the Lord and brought to a realization of their need of the Arm of Jehovah, to deliver them and to uplift and save. The whole world is to be judged by The Messiah. All will witness that this judgment, trial, could not come before the great Judge takes His seat and authority: hence none of all those who died before our Lord's First Advent could have been judged by Him. All should likewise be aware of the fact that the world in general has not been on trial since our Redeemer was appointed the Judge, that the world has not been on trial previous to the present time. Indeed, the great mass of mankind neither know the Judge nor understand His Law, nor have they any conception of the conditions and requirements necessary to life everlasting. This is in harmony with the presentations of Scripture on this subject.

#### JUDGMENT DAY A TIME OF BLESSING

The Apostle Paul declares (Acts 17:31), that God "hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained [The Christ, Head and Body]; whereof He hath given assurance unto all, in that He hath raised Him from the dead." That appointed Day was future in the Apostle's time, and is still future, though now about to dawn. The Gospel of Christ, Good Tidings, is to the effect that He who bought the world with His own precious blood is to become the Judge of all men, the living and the dead. "All in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth," "and they that hear shall live."--John 5:28,29,25.

A new trial is to be granted to Adam and all his race. It will be an individual trial, under the enlightenment and uplifting influence of the great Messianic Kingdom. Truly, this is "Good Tidings of great joy" to the world, the "groaning creation." Even though the great Adversary has succeeded in deceiving the vast majority,

even of Christians, into thinking to the contrary, this Trial Day, the Day of Judgment, is to come to all the sons and daughters of Adam for their deliverance and blessing, if they will. This Great Day, which will be "the desire of all nations," is forcefully depicted by the Prophet David. (Psalms 96-98.) The saints of the Lord, the faithful followers of Christ, those who "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth," shall be associated with their great Head as assistant judges, in His glorious work of human uplift and restitution to all that was lost in Adam.

How glad we are that our eyes have been anointed to see all these wonderful arrangements of our God! How glad we are that we can understand the significance of the dark clouds now hovering over the world and soon to break! How we rejoice that we can discern the silver lining to these clouds of trouble, and know that the end will be glorious--that beyond the yawning chasm just before us, beyond the blood and tears of the coming whirlwind and tempest, the blessed Sun of Righteousness will rise with healing and blessing in His wings, and mankind, broken and helpless and despairing, shall be led into the light and glory of the Kingdom of God's dear Son!

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#### RICH TO HELL--POOR TO HEAVEN

--MAY 17.--LUKE 16:19-31.--

"Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard."--PROVERBS 21:13.

DID our Lord mean that all rich men and all rich women are to spend eternity in misery because of faring sumptuously every day, and wearing purple and fine linen? Can it be true that in order to get to Heaven we must be poor beggars, covered with sores, and have them licked by dogs, and must eat crumbs from a rich man's table? Has character nothing to do with future rewards and punishments? Again, will it be so that for all eternity the rich, tormented in fire, will see the poor in bliss, and the honored poor see the rich in eternal misery? Can this be the arrangement of an all-wise, all-loving Creator--one who knew the end from the beginning?

For many years this parable has caused distress of mind to the more saintly of God's people; both heart and head have rebelled. We remembered that Abraham was very rich, likewise Isaac, Jacob, King David, King Solomon, etc. We remembered that God Himself is very rich. Then we looked up the subject in the Hebrew and the Greek, and found that Abraham did not go to

Gehenna, the hopeless condition, the Second Death, but to Sheol, Hades, the tomb, the grave, the state of death, where there is no fire.

Our greater knowledge increased the mystery; for the Scriptures declare that Sheol, Hades, the tomb, is to be destroyed, that all are to be brought forth from it in the resurrection. No other Scripture seemed to agree with this parable. It stands in a class by itself, except as we might use for its support one text in Revelation which speaks of a symbolic beast and a symbolic false prophet in torment. Thus have the thinking people of the Church been stumbled and perplexed by the story of this lesson.

#### NOW ALL IS CLEAR, PLAIN

Now we see that our lesson is a parable. It is not to be taken literally, any more than are the other parables and dark sayings of our Savior; such as, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you"; or again, "If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out...; if thine hand offend thee, cut it off." Indeed, we find that Jesus spoke to the people only with parables. (Matthew 13:34.) None were ready for the depth of His teaching until after the Holy Spirit at Pentecost began to give qualification.

How simple it all seems now! how beautiful! Many of God's people are rejoicing that in the light of the present understanding of the Bible the Divine character is shining forth, beautiful in its Justice, Wisdom, Love and Power.

It is not difficult for us to understand that our lesson is a parable. To take it literally, as we have seen, would involve the absurdity of supposing that all beggars go to Heaven, and that all wealthy go to Hell; for the parable says nothing about character--either that the poor man was good or that the Rich Man was bad. Viewed as a parable, we see that the thing said is not the thing meant. Thus in other parables wheat and sheep represent children of God; tares and goats represent those dominated by the Adversary, the god of this world.

#### THE RICH MAN OF THE PARABLE

In the parable under consideration, the Rich Man represents a class, and the poor man, Lazarus, another class.

Let us see: The Rich Man was the Jewish nation, which had been in God's favor for more than sixteen centuries. To the Jew had been given the promises, the Prophets, the blessings and privileges of the Law Covenant. These symbolically were their purple, fine linen and sumptuous table. The fine linen symbolized their typical justification through typical sacrifices. Their purple raiment symbolized royalty; for they were the typical Kingdom. Their

sumptuous fare represented the Divine promises, as St. Paul's words imply.--Romans 11:9.

In Jesus' day Jewish favor began to wane. They were completely cut off in A.D. 70, as all Jews will admit. During the interim of forty years the Rich Man, the Jewish nation, sickened, died and was buried. Nationally, they went to Hades, to the tomb; and their resurrection has not yet been accomplished, although Zionism is the beginning of it.

But although nationally dead and buried, the Jews individually have been very much alive during the last nineteen centuries. They have had anguish of soul, as they have received persecutions--sometimes, alas! from those who profess the name of Jesus, but who deny Him in their practises. For all these centuries the Jews have cried out to God, who in the parable is represented as Abraham, the Father of the Faithful. The only answer that they have had is that there is a gulf of separation between them and God. Thank God, this cannot much longer be the case! The New Dispensation dawns, in which the Rich Man will return from Hades. Israel will be nationally rehabilitated, and God's favor will again come to those of them who shall learn needed lessons.

#### THE POOR MAN OF THE PARABLE

The poor man of the parable represents an outcast class. It included publicans and sinners, who had alienated themselves from God's favor. It also included Gentiles, to whom Divine favor had never been extended--"aliens and strangers from the commonwealth of Israel." (Ephesians 2:12.) These had no fine linen of typical justification, and no purple, representing a share in God's favor as part of His Kingdom. None of the promises belonged to them. All that they could have would be merely such crumbs as would fall from the Rich Man's table.

The Scriptures illustrate two such crumbs given to this class by Jesus. When He healed the Roman centurion's servant, it was a concession at the request of the Jews, who declared that this man was a friend and had done them good, by building a synagogue, etc. The healing of this servant was a crumb. Similarly, the Syro-Phoenician woman got a crumb when she came to Jesus entreating the recovery of her daughter, who was possessed of a demon. The Master answered, "It is not proper to take the children's bread and give it unto dogs." He here used the customary Jewish phraseology respecting Gentiles--Gentile dogs. The Syro-Phoenician woman was not a Jewess and had no claim on God's favor, but she replied: "Yea, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from the children's table." Jesus noted her faith and gave her the crumb which she desired.

As the Jews died to their favor, so the outcast publicans, sinners and Gentiles died to their disfavor; such of them as desired the favors of God, hungering and thirsting for His Word of promise, were received by

Him. The early Church was made up of this Lazarus class, rejected by the Pharisees as publicans, sinners and Gentiles. Instead of being any longer alienated from God, these became the children of God and heirs of His promises. In the parable they are represented as children of Abraham--in his arms. In the type, Isaac was the beloved son of promise to the literal Abraham. In the antitype, Jesus and His followers are the Spiritual Seed of Abraham, received to God's bosom and favor. Thus St. Paul writes, "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's Seed, and heirs according to the Promise"--made to Abraham.--Galatians 3:29.

#### "A GREAT GULF FIXED"

The great gulf between Judaism and Christianity has been fixed for more than eighteen centuries. During all this period no Jew has been permitted to come near to God, and no Gentile permitted to take the former position of the Jew, or in any manner to claim favor aside from Christ. In the Divine Plan the gulf was fixed unalterably. "There is none other name given under Heaven amongst men whereby we must be saved"--whereby we may come into heart relationship with God. This gulf dates from the time that Christ came and offered Himself to Israel, and was rejected and crucified.

Thank God, His Word points us to another change of dispensation at the Second Coming of Christ! Then the Lazarus class, now children of God by faith, will be made actually and gloriously His children beyond the veil. In association with Jesus their Lord, they will take control of the world; for they will be His Bride and Joint-heir in the Kingdom. What will happen to the Rich Man then? Oh, he is to have a resurrection from Hades!

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While God's Kingdom will be represented on the spiritual plane by the Lazarus class, it will be represented on the earthly plane by another class, which will be Jewish. The Jews who crucified Jesus will not be made princes in the earth in association with Messiah's spiritual Empire, but some of their brethren will be--a class whom they have been accustomed to call fathers will be made Princes. These Scripturally are known as "Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and all the Prophets," and all who during the Jewish Epoch proved themselves loyal to God and faithful, described by St. Paul in Hebrews 11:32-40.

St. Paul refers to this recovery of the Jews to Divine favor in Romans 11:25-33. He there points out that as we who are now the people of God were not always so, but were received to Divine favor when Israel was broken off from God's favor, so in due time those Israelites cut off from the favor of God will receive favor through our favor. That is to say, when the Church shall have attained the prize of glory, honor and immortality, as

Spiritual Israel, then the gulf separating Natural Israel from God's favor will have been passed. Then favor will return to Natural Israel. Coming to them through the

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glorified Spiritual Israel, it will extend through them to all nations, peoples, kindreds and tongues of humanity, during the Millennial Age.

This is the Divine Promise, "In thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." The Spiritual Seed of Abraham, the Church, gets the first share in this Promise, and the natural seed of Abraham gets the second part; but both together will be used by the Lord in rolling away the curse and pouring out, instead, favors and blessings upon humanity, upon whomsoever will accept them.

#### DIVES' FIVE BRETHREN

The parable represents Dives as praying for a drop of water to cool his parched tongue. Symbolically, parabolically, this represents the Jewish people in great distress, asking God to allow Christians to give them some help from their troubles. Have the Jews ever appealed to God for help? Have they prayed for relief from the persecutions which have come to them in the past and which to some extent still continue in Russia? Surely they have! Moreover, they have appealed to representatives of the Lazarus class--representatives of Christianity--desiring that their release and relief should come through them.

An illustration of this prayer for relief in our own day was afforded in the appeal of the Jews to President Roosevelt that he would use his influence with the government of Russia for the amelioration of Jewish persecutions. Did they get this drop of water? Nay! Mr. Roosevelt replied that the comity of nations would not permit such a communication from a friendly nation.

The parable goes further and develops the fact that the Rich Man had five brethren in danger of joining him in the trouble that was upon him. Who were his five brethren? We reply that the Jews of Palestine in Jesus' day represented chiefly the tribes of Benjamin and Judah, while the majority of the other ten tribes were scattered abroad in various lands. The question raised is, Did this trying experience affect merely the Jews of Palestine, who had enjoyed most of God's favors, or did it include also the Jews scattered abroad? The answer is given in the parable, "They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them." This proves that Jews only were referred to; for no Gentile had Moses and the Prophets. The number five is in full accord, also. Whereas two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, were represented by the one Rich Man, so proportionately the other ten tribes would be represented by five brethren.

And so it was. The Message of the Gospel, which began

with the Jews in Palestine, was extended to every land; and the Apostle Paul, in going to any cities amongst the Gentiles, preached first to the Jews, saying, It is expedient that the Gospel should be preached first to you; but seeing you reject the grace of God, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. (Acts 13:46,47.) In other words, the test upon all Israelites was the same.

Thus we are finding a depth of wisdom in Jesus' teachings beyond anything we could even have dreamed. We are finding, too, that the horrible nightmare doctrines of the Dark Ages poisoned our judgments, crossed our spiritual eyesight, and hindered us from seeing the beauty of the Lord's Word. Thank God for the New Day and the light that it is shedding upon the Bible!

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#### WE ARE UNPROFITABLE SERVANTS

--MAY 24.--LUKE 17:1-10.--

"He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."--1 CORINTHIANS 1:31.

TODAY'S lesson is in four sections, each apparently distinct and separate. Even the connection in which these words were uttered is not given. Nevertheless, they manifest the Wisdom from Above. We shall consider them in their order.

"It is impossible but that offenses will come." The word offenses more particularly signifies stumblings, or still more literally, ensnarement. The consecrated followers of Jesus are called little ones, because they are New Creatures who have only started in the new way of full consecration to God's will. "Babes in Christ," St. Paul styles these. (1 Corinthians 3:1.) "Little children," writes St. John. This infantile condition, however, should not continue. There should be growth in grace, knowledge, love. Strength of character should be attained, which would not only be wise, strong and difficult to ensnare, but able also to assist others less developed.

Thus in the Church the more developed ones are styled Elders--literally, elder brothers. Such more particularly represent the Lord amongst the brethren; and Heavenly comfort and advice, reproofs, etc., may at times be sent through these to their younger fellows. The dangers of ensnarement exist because Satan is the prince of this Age, and because he has the majority of mankind more or less under his influence--blinded by error, superstition, sin, etc. "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of all those who believe not." (2 Corinthians 4:4.) That Jesus did not refer to infants is manifest from the words

"One of these little ones which believe in Me."

We may not suppose that Jesus would unjustly condemn or punish anybody for ignorantly or unintentionally offending His followers, His little ones. We must suppose that He meant to caution those who would deliberately attempt to deceive and ensnare, entrap, discourage, His followers, His little ones. We all have heard of instances of deliberate, intelligent plotting against the followers of the Lord; and to whatever extent this may prevail, it has indicated the Satanic spirit.

Sometimes true people of God have been thus ensnared into the service of Satan, as intimated by the words, "His servants ye are to whom ye render service." Saul of Tarsus was thus ensnared and used for a time by the

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Adversary; and he explains that God had mercy upon him because he did this ignorantly. Had he done it with wilful intelligence, we may assume that God would not have had mercy upon him to the extent of rescuing him by a miracle, but that he would have continued in his intelligently wicked way and that it would have been better for him that a millstone had been hung around his neck and he had been drowned in the sea.

This would be because a person thus drowned in the sea would lose merely the present life, and not the future life during the Millennium, after he had been awakened from the sleep of death. He would then have full opportunity for enlightenment through obedience and for recovery from sin and death. But those who intelligently persecute the followers of Jesus and seek to turn them aside from the way of righteousness, pervert their own conscience and so degrade themselves that it will be much more difficult for them to come into accord with the conditions of the New Dispensation beyond the grave. In a word, whoever sins against light and knowledge is endangering his own opportunities for everlasting life.

#### A FORGIVING SPIRIT NECESSARY

Verses 3 and 4 are apparently a part of the same discourse recorded in Matthew 18:15-22. The lesson is addressed to the followers of Jesus, not to the world. It relates primarily to their duty toward the brethren of the Household of Faith, but secondarily it has a broader application. It may at times be given this broader application; but the injunction in Matthew 18, that the counsel of brethren be brought in and that ultimately, if necessary, the matter come before the Church, proves to us that it is in reality not intended for any but the Church.

The lesson is mercy--boundless mercy. The basis of the argument is that all need mercy, Divine mercy, because all are imperfect; and in order to assist us in the cultivation of this grace, the Lord has arranged that His blessings to us, His favor, shall be dependent upon our



endeavor to exercise this Godlike quality. "Be ye like unto your Father; for He is kind to the unthankful."

It seems strange that our forefathers and ourselves were so deceived by the false doctrines which St. Paul styles "doctrines of devils." (1 Timothy 4:1.) Once we thought of the Heavenly Father as absolutely unforgiving--full of hate for His human creatures, because they had sinned--instead of forgiving their sin. We insisted that the wage, or penalty, of sin must be torment, and that to all eternity. How little we understood the real character of the God of all grace, the Father of mercies!

Some of us, perhaps, endeavored to justify our error by assuming that God Himself was all goodness, kindness and love, but had behind Him an inexorable Law demanding the torture of His creatures--a Law from which He could not escape, and which bound Him to the doing of things which His own Law condemned in humanity.

Others of us deluded ourselves into thinking that all mankind enjoyed at some time between birth and death a full opportunity for turning from sin to righteousness and of becoming saints. Only of late years are Bible students becoming aware of how absurd is this position. Now we are realizing that, for four thousand years, only the one little nation of the Jews had any knowledge of God, or any promise of eternal life held out to them, or any instruction respecting sin and its penalty. And even the Jews, to whom the Law was given, Jesus and His Apostles declared were blinded by Satan. Jesus, addressing

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His Apostles, said, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear." The great nation of the Jews neither saw nor heard. The same is true of nine-tenths of the population of Christendom, not to mention heathendom.

Without the least warrant of Scripture, but in contradiction of it, many of us upheld the terrible theory that all who do not hear of Christ in the present lifetime and also all those who do not become saintly followers in His steps will be eternally tortured at the hands of devils. We now see that the Bible teaches that only a comparatively small class, who now have the hearing ear and the seeing eye and who enter into covenant relationship with God through Christ, can walk in Jesus' steps. For these only does the present life end all opportunity of attaining eternal life. For the remainder of mankind God purposes a future life by a resurrection of judgment.

The resurrection is not merely for the Church class--the First, or Chief Resurrection--but it is for "the just and the unjust." (Acts 24:15.) The Church class will come forth to glory, honor and immortality. The unjust will come forth from the tomb to judgments, disciplines, rewards and punishments. It is in order to give them these judgments and opportunities to obtain everlasting life that Messiah's Kingdom will be inaugurated; and it is

in order that He may appoint proper judges to assist the people and to reward and punish justly that He is now calling out the Church in the flesh. "Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?"--1 Corinthians 6:2.

#### FAITH POWER--CREDULITY POWER

A great deal passes for faith which is merely credulity. If some one were to swear to us that the moon is made of green cheese, it would be credulity to believe him--not faith. We should inquire, "Who is it that says this thing, and what does he know on the subject more than we may know?" The faith commended in the Bible is that which relates to things which God has promised. We are encouraged to be full of such faith in God--nothing doubting--not questioning that He is able to accomplish all His good promises.

Our forefathers had too much confidence in men. What they thought was faith was mere credulity. They swallowed the creeds of the Dark Ages; and the more absurd the proposition, the more faith they thought they had. On the contrary, they should have said, "Where is the proof? Where has God declared such things?" Those who defended the creeds cried out incredulously against sober faith, branded it heresy, and many times burned the truly faithful at the stake. The lesson is that we should accept by faith only that of which the Lord has assured us in His Word; and this means that we should be particularly careful that we have the pure Word of God, sifting out mistranslations and interpolations.

In our lesson, the disciples of Jesus were evidently impressed with the grandeur of His teachings, and the difficulties that must lie in the way of the accomplishment of all the wonderful things recorded in the Law and the Prophets, and told by Jesus--respecting His Messianic Kingdom, etc. They therefore asked the Lord to increase their faith. Jesus replied in words that are greatly misunderstood in our day. He said, "If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say to this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you." On two other occasions Jesus made similar remarks respecting mountains, saying that the word of faith would have been sufficient to remove them to the midst of the sea.

#### WHAT DID HE MEAN?

Evidently the Master did not mean to encourage the Jews to attempt to command the mountain to be carried into the sea; but rather He wished them to realize that

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if they had proper faith in the power of God, and should receive a command from God to move the mountain into the sea, and should give the command with faith, the results

would follow. But God gave no such command in respect to the mountains nor in respect to the tree. Hence faith would have no basis for operation in such cases.

The colored brother had the proper thought. When asked what he would do if God told him to jump through a stone wall, he replied, "I would jump at it." In a word, we are to have absolute confidence in the Word of God, not merely to make sure that we have heard and understood His Message. Then we may go forward with mountain-moving faith to accomplish His commands. But God does not command foolish or unnecessary changes. He leaves it for human ingenuity to uproot the trees and to tunnel the mountains, and never gives commands of this kind. And if some human being told us something of the kind, we would be credulous if we believed him. God is not working that way.

#### NOT PROFITABLE TO OUR MASTER

Some amongst the followers of Christ, naturally progressive, are sometimes too aggressive, self-conceited. Becoming His disciples does not change these traits instantly. The old things pass away gradually, and the new take their place. A lesson for all of His disciples to remember, but especially forceful to the classes mentioned, is taught in this Study. They must remember that the work of God's grace, of which they are subjects, is His favor toward them; and that their obedience to His commands is primarily for their correction and development, and a future life of blessing. They should remember that even their service for the Lord is a privilege--that God is not profited by their services.

We are all unprofitable servants in the sense that God could just as easily do without us, indeed, could more easily do His work otherwise than through us. He could use as His messengers the angels or the various providences of life. None of us is indispensable to His work and to His glory. Quite to the contrary, the opportunity for entering into the Lord's vineyard and laboring therein is chiefly for our own advantage. The service brings us certain joys which we could not otherwise have. It brings us certain experiences necessary to our own development and qualification for higher services beyond the veil.

As the Apostle declares, "By grace [Divine favor] are ye saved through faith." To some extent the faith is a matter of our own development. However, the Apostle hastens to add that the faith is not of ourselves, that even it is the gift of God--we have not the opportunity of glorying even in our faith. What have we that we have not received of the Lord? The elemental faith was based upon certain knowledge that God's providences brought to us, and possibly we were prepared for even that by a favorable parentage.

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## CHRISTLIKENESS THE EVIDENCE OF SONSHIP

"He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk even as He walked."--1 JOHN 2:6.

TO ABIDE in Christ implies that one has first come into Him. This gives us the thought of a Body. The Scriptures everywhere represent the Church as being this Body, with Jesus as the Head. "God gave Him to be Head over the Church, which is His Body." During the Gospel Age an invitation has been given to certain persons to be of this Body of Christ. There is only one door by which these may come into the Body. It is the door of sacrifice, baptism into Christ's death. We are accepted only by giving up our own will, and taking instead the will of God. We pledge ourselves to walk in Jesus' steps, to become His followers, His disciples. We are buried with Him and rise to walk in newness of life.--Romans 6:4.

But it is not sufficient that we take these steps, not sufficient that we have received the Holy Spirit, and have been accepted of the Father. We should be sure that we continue to abide in Christ. Let us ask ourselves, Are we having the experiences common to all who are associated with Jesus? One of the ways to be sure that we are abiding in Him is to realize that we still love Him. Another is to know that we are still in harmony with God's Word. A third way is that we have no will but the Lord's will. Still another is to have His peace in our hearts and lives as the ruling and controlling influence.

## PROFESSION ALONE INSUFFICIENT

Many have made a profession of being members of the Body of Christ who do not give evidence of being His. Our text says that any one who professes to be in Christ ought so to walk even as the Master walked. And how did the Master walk? He lived daily in harmony with the will of the Heavenly Father. He was fully submissive to the Father's will. And this meant sacrifice unto death--the cruel death of the cross.

Whoever has our Lord's spirit, and is controlled by the same will, is a member of the Body of Christ, and will seek to walk after this fashion, to do the will of God in all things. This will mean a walk of holiness, of full devotion to God, and of opposition to sin. Whoever is consecrated to God is opposed to every sinful thing; for God and sin are in antagonism. God stands for His own righteousness, and sin is a violation of that righteousness. (1 John 3:4.) Whoever walks as Jesus walked is in harmony with the Divine Word and will. We are not to trust to our impressions, our own conceptions of what is right

and advantageous, as many others do; but the Word of the Lord is to abide in us, and to govern our lives. Jesus said, "I came not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me"--"everything written in the Book." And so it is to be with us. We must abide in Him, walk

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in Him, and be willing to do "everything written in the Book"--not merely forcing ourselves to it, saying, I will take this course; but saying, "I delight to do Thy will, O my God; Thy law is written in my heart."--Psa. 40:7,8.

### PROOFS OF SONSHIP

All who have accepted Christ claim, in a general way at least, to be sons of God, that Christ is their Elder Brother, and that they belong to this great family that God is selecting from the sons of men. They consider themselves heirs with Christ to the great Kingdom to come. But not all who claim to be sons of God are such. A great many are making this claim. Statistics tell us that there are four hundred millions of professed Christians; but we cannot think that many of these four hundred millions are sons of God. The Apostle Paul calls our attention to the fact that since we cannot read the hearts we must go by the professions which others make by mouth and by conduct. But professions of the mouth are not to be taken as final. We know that those who are sons of God will be led by His Spirit. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

But what is the Spirit of God? Primarily it is the spirit of Truth, the spirit of holiness, the spirit of justice, the spirit of love. And as many as are God's children, begotten of His Holy Spirit, will make some manifestation of their harmony with this general Spirit of God.

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If they are, therefore, walking in unrighteousness, making no endeavor to stem the tendencies of sin in themselves, if they prefer error rather than Truth, their fruits condemn them; for God stands for Truth, and was exemplified in our Lord Jesus.

Whoever, therefore, has the Spirit of God, is willing to sacrifice himself that he may serve the Truth. He loves the Truth, and will manifest this fact by the spirit of love and zeal. Satan is the personification of sin, envy, hatred, malice, strife. Righteousness, love, joy, peace, are fruits of the Holy Spirit. Wherever we see the works of the Devil manifested we have reason to question that such a one is a child of God. The spirit of envy, the spirit of hatred, the spirit of malice, the spirit of opposition to the Truth, the spirit of unrighteousness--these are to be repudiated and overcome by all who would be sons of God.

Yet despite one's best efforts, he might still find in his flesh tendencies to sin which would give him a great deal of trouble. He may take courage from the assurances of the Scriptures that the Lord looketh on the heart. Likewise in regard to others, we should judge according to the endeavor, the intention. Wherever the Spirit of God is, there is the spirit of love. And this spirit will make one wish to make reparation, if he has done wrong or been in error. To do so shows that it was not his spirit, his will to do wrong, but that he was merely entrapped for a time. But one who continues to do according to his natural tendencies, with no evidence of going in the right direction and of serving the Truth, has reason to doubt that he is a child of God.

#### HOW WE CAN WALK AS HE WALKED

The Apostle's thought seems to be that those who profess to be the Lord's followers, profess to be Christians, should see to it that their walk in life is in harmony with their profession. The word disciple signifies one who follows--as a pupil follows his teacher. We recognize Christ as our Redeemer and also as our Pattern, our Instructor, in the glorious things which the Father has invited us to share with our Savior. If, therefore, we say that we are in Him, this profession should be borne out by our walk in life. We should walk as He walked.

But we are not perfect--how can this be done? The answer is that we "are not in the flesh, but in the spirit." God does not look upon our imperfect flesh. As New Creatures we are not fleshly beings, but spiritual. The Apostle is in our text speaking of that walk that the Master had after He made consecration. He walked in this way three and a half years. It was a walk, not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. And so with us. We are walking, not according to the flesh, but according to the New Creature. We reckon ourselves dead according to the flesh, and the Lord so reckons us. If, then, we are dead to the flesh, we are not to walk according to the desires of the flesh.

We are to walk as our Lord walked, in our general deportment. We are to love everything that is good and to avoid everything that is evil. We are to walk as nearly as possible in the footsteps of our Lord and Exemplar. We cannot in an imperfect body walk up to all the perfection of Jesus, who was perfect in His flesh as well as in His spirit. But we are to walk as He walked--in the same path, in the same direction, toward the same glorious goal toward which He walked. And so doing, faithful day by day, we shall by His grace attain the same exceeding great reward.

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## SOME INTERESTING LETTERS

### ORDAINED A MINISTER OF CHRIST

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Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society,

DEAR BRETHREN:--

In view of the fact that on every hand our enemies are opposing us on the ground that our public speakers are not ordained, and that more opposition may be aroused along this line in the future, might it not be well for the Society to give some formal recognition of the Lord's ordination of the brothers who speak in public?

The majority of our Pilgrims, when asked, "When were you ordained?" do not have a ready answer. They may give the date of their consecration, but while we understand the matter to our own satisfaction, this is not satisfactory to the inquirer, who usually entertains the thought that since we have not been regularly (?) ordained, we are not safe teachers for them to listen to.

We realize that here at Bethel, we have by far the strongest Theological School, with daily studies and recitations, in the whole world. I read only today in the Christian Herald, a challenging query as to how many of us were regularly ordained, where we got our education, how many of us had any understanding of Greek or Latin, etc. Now, all of us understand Greek better than most orthodox (?) ministers; and if we could have some formal recognition of our ordination, perhaps referring it to the date of our individual consecration, I believe it would serve to stop the mouths of many, and would give the Truth much impetus in the public opinion, which would well serve the purpose in gathering the Lord's wheat. Even in our newspaper advertising it would be a telling point to state the time when our more prominent speakers were ordained. It seems to be a question which the public mind is always asking, and will never be satisfied till answered. In my colporteur work I sold the books twice as easily when known to be a minister. Others have had the same experience.

I submit this merely as a suggestion, dear friends, and shall know that your decision, whether pro or con, is the Lord's will. With continued love and prayers, I am,

Your brother in the Glorious Harvest work, which we all love so much,  
R. G. JOLLY.

THINKS PHOTO-DRAMA WONDERFUL

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MY DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--

My purpose in writing is to let you know of my strong appreciation of the PHOTO-DRAMA OF CREATION. Throughout it is a wonderful production; surpassing even my most sanguine expectations.

I have met many Truth friends who have seen the DRAMA --at Cincinnati, Toledo, and Indianapolis--all of whom were delighted with and benefited by it. They expressed the opinion that the DRAMA will edify the Truth friends, as well as greatly enlighten and favorably influence others. The writer fully shares their opinion.

I wish all who are interested in the Cause we so much love could see the production. I feel sure it would increase their love for the Truth, and also their interest in the work generally. I was very much in favor of the project before seeing the exhibition; but I am much more so since.

It is marvelous to think of the thousands of people who are, through the PHOTO-DRAMA, hearing the precious Gospel preached, every day and night. I never heard the Gospel preached more plainly and impressively than it is for at least an hour, at each exhibition of the PHOTO-DRAMA. I presume that while the slide pictures are being exhibited, and the lecturing is in progress, at least an hour is occupied. And the motion pictures are so beautiful, realistic and instructive!

Apparently, a large majority of those who witness the production are very favorably impressed thereby. In my humble judgment, the PHOTO-DRAMA is the most successful project the Society has ever inaugurated.

Yours in Christian love and service, FRANK DRAPER.

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